



**PES Presidency Statement
PES Presidency 16 March 2018
On the situation in Afrin and its region**

This week marks the tragic anniversary of the Syrian war. It has been seven years and the war is not over.

Since more than 50 days, the Turkish army, with the support of several Jihadist groups, is attacking Afrin and the Kurdish-controlled province, adding new elements of violence, additional humanitarian concerns and worries of negative impacts on the efforts for a negotiated solution.

We understand the concerns of Turkey for the security of its borders and the need to provide security to its citizens living near the border of Syria but the attacks against the multi-ethnic, autonomous, democratic self-government and its civilian population in northern Syria region is against all international and humanitarian law and is totally unacceptable.

We see today a dramatic re-escalation of the military activities in Afrin, which could only lead to more violence, humanitarian disaster, human rights violation and have negative impacts on the delicate internal balances in the region and the efforts for a negotiated solution.

The PES recalls that an important number of civilian casualties have been already reported and that other hundreds of civilian lives are at risk. The PES demands full respect for humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians

The PES strongly condemns the action of the Turkish government in Northern Syria and asks for the full implementation of the UN resolution 2401 which demands to all the parties to the conflict to cease hostilities without delay for at least 30 consecutive days to enable safe and sustainable deliverer of humanitarian assistance and medical evacuations in accordance to the international law. This resolution applies as well to Afrin and its region.

The PES calls Ankara to stop its offensive and withdraw from Afrin and its region. Turkey has, as one of the guarantors of the Astana process, a constructive role to play to achieve political negotiation leading to peace in the region but not with arms.

The PES deeply regrets the current failure of the peace process and urges all the involved parties to find a way to cooperate in order to achieve a peaceful, sustainable solution to the conflict and save lives.



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