

**FORMAL RECOMMENDATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY RECOMMENDING SANCTIONS  
AGAINST  
SADAT INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE CONSULTANCY CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY AND TRADE INC. AND ITS KEY OFFICIALS FOR  
INVOLVEMENT IN SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES**

**THIS RECOMMENDATION IS MADE UNDER:**

**THE GLOBAL MAGNITSKY HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT  
AS IMPLEMENTED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 13818**

**RECOMMENDATION PREPARED BY  
ARMENIAN BAR ASSOCIATION**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION:  
September 18, 2024**

## **INFORMATION ABOUT PREPARING ORGANIZATION**

The Armenian Bar Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization formed in 1989 to enable attorneys and judges of Armenian heritage and other interested individuals to better serve the law, the legal profession, and the Armenian community. With the creation of an independent Republic of Armenia, the Association undertook the task of helping to build and encourage the growth of democratic institutions in Armenia. The Association provides pro bono services and legal education in Armenian communities across the country and abroad and sponsors programs to promote democracy and the rule of law.

The Association is a democratic organization. It is supported and directed by its members, who approve its Bylaws, elect its Board of Governors, nominate prominent jurists as honorary members, and set the Association's annual goals and policies. The Armenian Bar Association is committed to serving the profession of law, addressing legal concerns of the Armenian community and fostering respect for human and civil rights.

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## Section 1. Case Summary

Country: Republic of Turkey

Perpetrators (2): **SADAT International Defense Consultancy Construction Industry and Trade Inc.** (SADAT); **Ali Kamil Melih Tanriverdi**, Chairman of SADAT Board of Directors (2016-Present).

Summary:

SADAT International Defense Consultancy Construction Industry and Trade Inc. (SADAT), a private paramilitary contracting firm headquartered in Istanbul, Turkey and **Ali Kamil Melih Tanriverdi**, Chairman of SADAT Board of Directors, recruit and deploy mercenaries in conflict zones throughout the world and have continued to do so with impunity. SADAT maintains a strong connection with known terrorist groups, often recruiting fighters through violent factions of the Syrian National Army. These recruited mercenaries are believed to commit serious human rights abuses in the conflict zones to which they are deployed, including in Libya, Syria, and Nagorno-Karabakh. Further, SADAT's own recruitment tactics are predatory, frequently targeting displaced, indigent peoples who are burdened with the consequences of geopolitical instability as well as minors under the age of 18.

Private military companies (PMCs) like SADAT have spawned an industry in manufacturing shadowy paramilitaries or "armies for hire." State actors such as Turkey have come to rely on these private armies to pursue their expansionist objectives with little or no accountability even when the most fundamental norms of armed conflict are violated. Turkey's uses of mercenaries in armed conflicts is organized and deployed through SADAT, who acts as a proxy paramilitary force for Turkey. With the help of SADAT, Turkey's use of militia groups in creating "manageable chaos" in neighboring countries to its advantage is not likely to end, especially in light of Erdogan's recent re-election. This means more violence, more bloodshed, and countless deaths of innocent civilians in the future.

## Section 2. Perpetrator Information

**Full Legal Name of Perpetrator:** SADAT International Defense Consultancy Construction Industry and Trade Inc. (SADAT). Its official name in Turkish is *Sadat Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi*. Its incorporation charter was published in the Turkish Trade Registry issue numbered 8015 dated February 28, 2012.<sup>1</sup>

**Country:** Republic of Turkey

**Title or Position:** N/A

**Date of Registration:** February 28, 2012

**Other Known Personal Identifiers (place of birth, passport number, address, etc):** N/A

**Past Travel to the United States:** N/A

**Full Legal Name of Perpetrator:** Ali Kamil Melih Tanriverdi

**Country:** Republic of Turkey

**Title or Position:** Chairman of SADAT Board of Directors (2016-Present)

**Date of Birth:** Unknown

**Other Known Personal Identifiers (place of birth, passport number, address, etc):** Unknown

**Past Travel to the United States:** Unknown

We are unaware of assets and facilitators controlled by perpetrators.

### 1. SADAT's organizational chart

SADAT's organizational chart is published on its website.<sup>2</sup> The company is headed by the Chairman of the Board, who presides over the supervisory board and the secretary. Then comes the General Manager, who manages three branches called the administrative activities, defense area activities and internal security area activities. Each of these three branches includes the following personnel:

- (1) Administrative activity: Deputy general manager, personnel and administrative accounts management, financial management and information and communications technology management.
- (2) Defense area activities: Deputy general manager, defense organization and consultancy management, defense area training management, supply and ordinance management.

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<sup>1</sup> SADAT Inc. International Defense Consulting. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/?Itemid=> [See Exhibit 1]

<sup>2</sup> SADAT Inc. Organizational Chart. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/organization-chart.html> [See Exhibit 2]

- (3) Internal security area activities: Deputy general manager, internal security organization and consultancy management, internal security training management, supply and ordinance management.

**SADAT**'s core staff includes retired military personnel, many of them dismissed from the Turkish Military for their extremism.<sup>3</sup> **SADAT**'s website does not include the name of its staff or of its board members.

The board of directors comprises Adnan Tanrıverdi (recently deceased on August 4, 2024), his son **Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi** ("**Melih Tanrıverdi**") (currently the chairman of the board), Mehmet Zelka (vice chairman), Mehmet Naci Efe and Haluk Yıldırım.

Nordic Monitor, a research and monitoring network focusing on Turkey, posted pages from the Official Trade Registry Gazette in Turkey,<sup>4</sup> which includes a list of the **SADAT** shareholders<sup>5</sup> as of November 2020. The document shows that **Melih Tanrıverdi** along with his recently deceased father hold the majority stake in the company. We have been unable to identify updated information regarding changes in stakeholders or board members since Adnan Tanrıverdi's recent death.

## 2. Founders of SADAT and their background

**SADAT** was founded by Adnan Tanrıverdi, a former brigadier general of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK). In 1997, Adnan Tanrıverdi was forced into retirement for harboring an extremist religious agenda; 22 other former TSK officers and non-commissioned officers (NCO's) were expelled from the TSK at that time for political Islamic tendencies.<sup>6</sup>

During his military service, Adnan Tanrıverdi was a member of Turkey's Special Warfare Unit and the Northern Cyprus' Civil Defense Organization. In 2000 he joined "Defenders of Justice" association (Adaleti Savunanlar Derneği, ASDER), comprised of 632 military personnel who were

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<sup>3</sup> Ersozoglu, E., (2020, February 7) *SADAT: Turkey's Paramilitary Wing Take Flight in Africa*. Grey Dynamics. Retrieved from <https://www.greydynamics.com/sadat-turkeys-paramilitary-wings-take-flight-in-africa/> [See Exhibit 3]

<sup>4</sup> Bozkurt, A., (2021, May 2) *Turkish Paramilitary Firm SADAT's CEO Admits Working with Turkish Intelligence Agency MIT*. Nordic Monitor. Retrieved from <https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/> [See Exhibit 4]

<sup>5</sup> Ali Özden, Mehmet Demirtaş, Mustafa Nejat Güvenç, Mustafa Bozgeyik, Mehmet Emin Koçak, Kemal Şahin, Mehmet Zelka, Reşat Fidan, Mustafa Başaran, Ersan Ergür, Hulusi Gülen, Hayati Atalay, Ali Coşar, Ahmet Cengiz Tangören, Ahmet Taylan, Cengiz Uzun, Yakup Evirgen, Yahya Öztürk, Nurettin Yavuz, Mehmet İlhan, Mustafa Hacimustafaoğulları, Eyyup İsmail Kılınç, Mehmet Abdullah Kaplan, Osman Kaçmaz, Zafer Şahin, Çetin Çanak, Orhan Adiyaman, Mustafa Erol, Sabri Balaman, Coşkun Yüksel, Mehmet Çakiroğlu, Mehmet Yüksel Güneş, Ömer Yenici, Selahattin Arslan, Yavuz Sulumeşe, Ahmet Türkan, Fethi Kıran, Gürcan Onat, İrfan Çalışkan, Mehmet İnkaya, Sadı Paksoy, Yavuz Zülkaroğlu, Hayrettin Kocaoğlu, Said Ceyhan, Sefa Göze, İsmail Kaplan and Tansel Cavıt Kulak.

<sup>6</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Erdogan's Private Armies*. Middle East Forum. Retrieved from <https://www.meforum.org/61963/turkish-militias-and-proxies> [See Exhibit 5]

ousted from the TSK. He was ASDER chairman between 2004 and 2009.<sup>7</sup> He later founded a think-tank called Justice Defenders Strategic Research Center (Adaleti Savunanlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Derneği, ASSAM).<sup>8</sup>

In 2012, Adnan Tanriverdi founded SADAT, a private paramilitary contracting firm whose mission is “to establish a defensive collaboration and defensive industrial cooperation among Islamic Countries to help Islamic World.”<sup>9</sup> He remained the Chairman of its Board of Directors until he was appointed as Erdogan’s Chief Military Advisor in 2016, when he stepped down as Chairman and his son **Melih Tanriverdi** took the position.

In 2016, after the July 15 coup attempt in Turkey, Turkey’s President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, appointed Tanriverdi as his chief military advisor.<sup>10</sup> The two had a strong relationship; they had known each other since 1994 when they both served in Istanbul—Erdogan as Mayor and Adnan Tanriverdi as the commander of Maltepe military base.<sup>11</sup> Adnan Tanriverdi led a comprehensive overhaul of the Turkish army, seeking to end the TSK’s secularist tradition. Erdogan shut down military academies, which were a foundation of Turkish secularism, and replaced them with the National Defense University,<sup>12</sup> which recruited students from religious Imam-Hatip schools.<sup>13</sup>

In January 2020, Adnan Tanriverdi was forced to resign from his position as chief military advisor because of a controversial speech he gave in December 2019 at the third International Islamic Union Congress, in which he announced that his organization had been working to pave the way for the long-awaited mahdi (prophesied redeemer of Islam), for whom the entire Muslim world is waiting.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>8</sup> Yonetim, A. (2020, September 21) *Aim of ASSAM*. Retrieved from <https://assam.org.tr/index.php/en/about-us/aim-of-assam-en.html> [See Exhibit 7]

<sup>9</sup> SADAT’s Mission. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-mission.html> [See Exhibit 8]

<sup>10</sup> *Turkey’s Erdogan selects controversial security contractor as his new advisor* (2018, October 10) Ahval News. Retrieved from <https://ahvalnews.com/recep-tayyip-erdogan/turkeys-erdogan-selects-controversial-security-contractor-his-new-advisor> [See Exhibit 9]

<sup>11</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>12</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>13</sup> *Turkish Gov’t detains 16 military officers over alleged links to Gülen movement* (2017, November 26) Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF). Retrieved from <https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-govt-detains-16-military-officers-over-alleged-links-to-gulen-movement/> [See Exhibit 10]

<sup>14</sup> *Turkey’s paramilitary contractor to hold Islamic Union Congress for common defense system* (2020, July 23) Nordic Monitor. Retrieved from <https://nordicmonitor.com/2020/07/assam-led-by-paramilitary-contractor-sadats-chief-to-organize-conference-on-joint-defense-system-for-its-islamic-union/> [See Exhibit 11]

3. SADAT's mission and the philosophy on which it was founded.

SADAT describes itself as a “Private Defense and Consultancy Company”<sup>15</sup> stating that it is the sole Turkish private enterprise that provides defense consultancy and military training and equipment. The company’s website includes a description of its war and special operations services, including conventional warfare training for land, naval and air forces and training such as ambush, raid, road cutting/closing, destruction, sabotage and rescue/abduction operations and “counter tactics and techniques” for unconventional warfare organizations.<sup>16</sup> It also offers special training programs of various levels and program durations, such as individual combat training, basic course for special forces, special advanced course for special forces and alternative specialization courses. The modules and duration, as well as the outcomes for these programs are outlined on the company’s website.<sup>17</sup>

According to the joint research conducted by TRENDS Research & Advisory and the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, SADAT’s clients include the Turkish Police forces special unit (Polis Özel Harekat – PÖH, also known as “Esedullah” – The Lions of God); armed neighborhood watchmen (Bekçi) that act as Erdoğan’s militia against potential street threats; and Erdoğan’s special presidential guards, also known as the “Reinforcements” (Takviye).<sup>18</sup>

The self-stated mission of SADAT as posted on its website is to “establish a Defense Collaboration and Defense Industry Cooperation among Islamic Countries to help Islamic World take the place where it merits among Superpowers by providing Strategic Consultancy, Defense and Security Training and Supply Services to Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces of Islamic Countries.”<sup>19</sup> The company’s vision is to “reorganize or modernize the Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces of Islamic Countries in a modern and effective sense to ensure national defense and internal security set with the consideration of threat assessments up on their geopolitical situation.”<sup>20</sup>

SADAT’s logo indicates that its area of operation is the entire Muslim world, including European countries such as Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>21</sup> The company’s website makes it clear that

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<sup>15</sup> SADAT’s Mission. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-mission.html> [See Exhibit 8]

<sup>16</sup> SADAT’s Training (for Military). Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/our-services/training/training-military.html> [See Exhibit 12]

<sup>17</sup> SADAT’s Training Modules. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/our-training-modules/general-training-modules.html> [See Exhibit 13]

<sup>18</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>19</sup> SADAT’s Mission. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-mission.html> [See Exhibit 8]

<sup>20</sup> SADAT’s Vision. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-vision.html> [See Exhibit 14]

<sup>21</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Erdogan’s Private Armies*. Middle East Forum. Retrieved from <https://www.meforum.org/61963/turkish-militias-and-proxies> [See Exhibit 5]



it is much more than a consultancy, stating: “SADAT was established to help the Muslim world reach heights that match its status and realize its destiny among the great powers”.<sup>22</sup>

### **Section 3. Factual/Contextual Background**

SADAT Recruited, Trained, Organized, And Deployed Syrian Jihadi Mercenaries In Several Zones of Conflict.

1. The role SADAT plays in Recruiting, Training, Organizing and Deploying (“RTOD”) Syrian Jihadi Mercenaries.

The U.S. Department of Defense’s (“DoD’s”) lead Inspector General, in its 2020 quarterly report to Congress on counter-terrorism operations in the U.S. Africa Command, states that Turkish-supported Syrian mercenaries were one of the key destabilizers of security in Libya following the Turkish military intervention to reinforce the Government of National Accord (GNA<sup>23</sup>). The report describes SADAT as a “Turkish private military company” that deployed “several dozen military trainers” “to Tripoli to train both GNA-aligned militias and Syrian fighters” and that “Sadat maintains supervision and payment of the estimated 5,000 pro-GNA Syrian fighters in Libya.”<sup>24</sup> The U.S Africa Command described these Syrian mercenaries as “inexperienced, uneducated, and motivated by promises of considerable salary,” adding that there were reports of theft, sexual assault and misconduct by those mercenaries. USAFRICOM also stated that extremists with previous terrorist links were involved in the Tripoli fighting.<sup>25</sup>

In a report submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (“OHCHR”) on 17 June 2020, the OHCHR’s Working Group on the use of mercenaries (“Working Group”) reviewed information that Turkey has engaged in large-scale recruitment and transfer of Syrian fighters to take part in hostilities in support of the GNA. The Working Group report states that thousands of Syrians fighters, including boys under 18 years, have reportedly been sent to Libya via Turkey. The report states: “These fighters were recruited through armed factions affiliated with the Syrian National Army that have been accused of serious human rights abuses in Syria”.<sup>26</sup> This report, which covers the same time period as the aforementioned US DoD quarterly report to Congress, which names SADAT as the organization deploying Syrian mercenaries in Libya.

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<sup>22</sup> SADAT’s News – Defense Reform; Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/news/653-savunma-reformu-en.html> [See Exhibit 15]

<sup>23</sup> O’Donnell S.W., Shaw D. R., & Barr, A. C., (2020, April 1 to June 30) *East Africa Counterterrorism Operation North and West Africa Counterterrorism*. Inspector General, Department of Defense (USA). Retrieved from [https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488340/-1/-1/1/EA-NWA\\_Q3\\_JUNE2020\\_FINAL\\_508SIGNED.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488340/-1/-1/1/EA-NWA_Q3_JUNE2020_FINAL_508SIGNED.PDF) [See Exhibit 16]

<sup>24</sup> Id.

<sup>25</sup> Id.

<sup>26</sup> *Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN Experts* (2020, June 17) United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25970&LangID=E> [See Exhibit 17]

Furthermore, a letter<sup>27</sup> addressed to the OHCHR on 10 June 2020 from several special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council cites SADAT's involvement in recruiting and preparing documentation of mercenaries including children under 18 to take part in armed conflict in Libya. The letter highlights the various human rights abuses in the recruitment and deployment of mercenaries, and expresses grave concern especially towards the recruitment of Syrian children. The letter also mentions that the Turkish private military and security companies, in facilitating the recruitment and contracting of Syrian fighters, acted in coordination with Turkish authorities.

SADAT has developed a close relationship with the Turkish military and the Turkish intelligence agency MIT (Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı). This strategic relationship has involved coordination and collaboration with these agencies in the recruitment, training, and logistical support of Syrian mercenaries as well as intelligence sharing and operational integration, enabling Turkey to pursue its geopolitical objectives and foreign policy goals in various conflict zones in a covert manner. According to one report, MIT was tasked to use SADAT in the recruitment process of Syrian mercenaries.<sup>28</sup> One of SADAT's functions was to provide Turkish passports to the new recruits.<sup>29</sup> Once recruited, SADAT, working under the supervision of MIT, would transfer the mercenaries to one of its training camps in Turkey and Syria to undergo both conventional and unconventional warfare including guerrilla warfare, sniping, demolition, and other military tactics.<sup>30</sup> SADAT would also provide extensive logistical support to the mercenaries. This would include arranging transport to conflict zones, supplying weapons and other military equipment, and coordinating with local factions and Turkish military units on the ground.<sup>31</sup>

SADAT's ties to the Turkish military are no less extensive. According to published reports, SADAT partnered in Libya with Fawzi Boukatif,<sup>32</sup> a former commander of a militia that fought

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<sup>27</sup> *Public Communication File - Working Group - Letter Addressed to OHCHR* (2020, June 10) United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25292> [See Exhibit 18]

<sup>28</sup> *SADAT: Erdogan's Private Army*, Sound of Silence Group. Retrieved from <https://purgednato.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/sadat-erdogans-private-army-2017.pdf>. [See Exhibit 19]

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Bozkurt, Abdullah (2024, January 3) *Turkey prevents UN visit to hide its use of mercenaries in armed conflicts* - Nordic Monitor. Retrieved from <https://nordicmonitor.com/2024/01/turkey-prevents-the-un-visit-to-hide-its-use-of-mercenaries-in-armed-conflicts/> [See Exhibit 20]

Bozkurt, Abdullah (2021, May 2) *Turkish paramilitary firm Sadat's CEO admits working with Turkish intelligence agency MIT* - Nordic Monitor. Retrieved from <https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/> [See Exhibit 21]

Guest Author (2023, March 4) *Meet Erdogan's Private Army - SADAT - That Looks To Rival Russia's Wagner & Wage Proxy War In Kashmir*. Retrieved from <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/meet-erdogans-private-army-sadat-that-looks-to-rival-russias/>. [See Exhibit 22]

<sup>32</sup> Ghanmi, M. (2020, June 28) *Fawzi Bookft...a new arm for Turkey in Libya*. EG 24 News. Retrieved from <https://www.eg24.news/2020/06/fawzi-bookft-a-new-arm-for-turkey-in-libya.html> [See Exhibit 23]

Gaddafi (the Martyrs of 17 February Brigade).<sup>33</sup> Together with Boukatif, SADAT deployed Syrian fighters in Libya.<sup>34</sup> The Turkish military sought to integrate SADAT-trained fighters by overseeing joint-operations and providing the fighters with operational planning, logistical assistance, and air support thereby ensuring that SADAT's operations would be effectively aligned with Turkey's military's interventionist objectives in Libya.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Arabiya, a Dubai-based Arabic news organization, published a report in July 2020 stating that Turkey transferred about 1,400 Tunisian fighters affiliated with extremist organizations from Syria's Aleppo and Idlib to Libya. The piece states that as of mid-June 2020, some 13,000 Syrian mercenaries had been sent to Libya by Turkey. The head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based war monitor, confirmed these reports, adding that "Ankara sends militants to Libya, not just mercenaries."<sup>36</sup>

In a column published in the Turkish press, Zafer Yörük writes that during the period between July and September 2019, 10,000 tonnes of weaponry and ammunition, along with armored vehicles, missile launchers and drones, were shipped to Tripoli from Turkish ports, in parallel with 1,000 jihadists who were brought from Syria to Libya, citing Russian sources. This transfer was supervised, according to Russian media, by 88 men, all of whom are SADAT personnel, who also train the jihadists to operate the new arms.<sup>37</sup>

In August 2020, The Emirates Policy Center (EPC) an independent think tank based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, issued a report stating that SADAT recruits and trains mercenaries from Syria and Asian and African countries, and that the company receives a commission of 10,000 dollars for each fighter taking part in the fighting,<sup>38</sup> citing a report by the Stockholm Center of Freedom.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Militia Leaders in Benghazi (2013, December 28) NYTimes.com.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/29/world/middleeast/militia-leaders-in-benghazi.html> [See Exhibit 24]

<sup>34</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) Turkish Militias and Proxies. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Abuesh, T. (2020, July 13) *Turkey Sends Mercenaries Militants of different nationalities to Libya; Reports*. Al Arabiya News. Retrieved from <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/north-africa/2020/07/13/Turkey-sends-mercenaries-militants-of-different-nationalities-to-Libya-Reports> [See Exhibit 25]

<sup>37</sup> Yörük, Z. (2020, February 22) *SADAT: the horsemen of apocalypse?* duvaR.english, Turkey's own independent gazette. Retrieved from <https://www.duvarenglish.com/columns/2020/02/22/sadat-the-horsemen-of-the-apocalypse> [See Exhibit 26]

<sup>38</sup> Bashir, H. (2020, August 23) *The Role of Turkish Security Companies in Africa; Incentives and Risks of Expansion*. Emirates Policy Center (EPC). Retrieved from <https://epc.ae/details/brief/the-role-of-turkish-security-companies-in-africa-incentives-and-risks-of-expansion> [See Exhibit 27]

<sup>39</sup> Bozkurt, A. (2017, May 26) *Commentary – Libyan Jihadist cells in Turkey protected by Erdogan regime* Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF). Retrieved from <https://stockholmcf.org/commentary-libyan-jihadist-cells-in-turkey-protected-by-erdogan-regime/> [See Exhibit 28]

Adnan Tanriverdi and those closest to him have denied that SADAT recruits and trains mercenaries. In an interview with AFP in October 2021 his son, **Melih Tanriverdi**, claimed "We haven't sent any mercenaries or other personnel to Syria or Libya," but in the same interview, he confirmed that "[SADAT] operates in every continent, including Africa".<sup>40</sup>

Thousands of Syrian mercenaries were deployed by Turkey and Azerbaijan in 2020 in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>41</sup> A European Parliament Resolution of 11 March 2021 confirmed that Syria transferred Syrian Mercenaries to Nagorno-Karabakh, citing a report by the OSCE Minsk Group and firmly condemned Turkey's use of Syrian mercenaries in violation of international law in the Libyan and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts.<sup>42</sup>

In a letter to the U.N. Secretary General, dated 10 December 2020, the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations annexed a Report on the use of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) by Azerbaijan in the Aggression to Suppress the Inalienable Rights of the People of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to Self-Determination. The report mentions the recruitment of FTFs in Ankara-controlled territories in Syria "by employees of the private military company SADAT, with the assistance of field commanders of the SNA." The report, which cites the Kommersant news agency, states that the recruitment occurred in the Syrian cities of Afrin, Al-Bab, Ras Al-Ain and Tel Abyad. The fighters were transported to the city of Sanliurfa in Turkey, which is 40km from the border with Syria, and then transferred to the conflict zone by SADAT charter flights.<sup>43</sup>

Similar reports regarding SADAT's transfer of mercenaries to Nagorno-Karabakh have been released from the Republic of Armenia. The National Central Bureau of Interpol in Armenia released an internal investigative report confirming that Syrian mercenary recruitment was conducted by Adnan Tanriverdi through SADAT.<sup>44</sup> The report found that SADAT recruitment has been conducted in Syrian regions that are under Turkish military control, particularly in the Afrin region of northern Syria, in the suburbs of Aleppo, as well as within terrorist militant groups including Ahrar al-Sharqiya, Ahrar al-Sham, Arhar al-Sharqiya, the Sultan Murad Division, Suleiman Shah, and Sham legion.<sup>45</sup> These facts are further confirmed in the Investigative Committee of Armenia's November 8, 2020 charges against Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim (Abu

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<sup>40</sup> *Turkey's Islamic defense consultancy takes on West* (2021, October 22) France 24 (Live News). Retrieved from <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211022-turkey-s-islamic-defence-consultancy-takes-on-west> [See Exhibit 29]

<sup>41</sup> *Nagorno-Karabakh's Syrian Mercenaries | Turkish government continues recruitment in complete secrecy, number of fighters in Azerbaijan jumps to 1,650 with over 125 killed so far* (2020, October 15) Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.syriahr.com/en/188272/> [See Exhibit 30]

<sup>42</sup> *Joint Motion for Resolution on the Syrian Conflict – 10 years after uprising* (2021, March 3) European Parliament. Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088_EN.html) [See Exhibit 31]

<sup>43</sup> Margaryan, M. (2020, December 14) United Nations General Assembly, Security Council 75th session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/75/644> [See Exhibit 32]

<sup>44</sup> Police of Armenia Interpol Report, Dated December 24, 2020 [See Exhibit 33]

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Amsha), the head of the Suleiman Shah Brigade.<sup>46</sup> The conviction found that Al-Jasim organized three-month-long trainings in the military center of the northern Syrian town of Shaykh Hadid during which the mercenaries underwent skills and weapons training.<sup>47</sup> Al-Jasim was recently sanctioned by the U.S. Government.<sup>48</sup>

Additional Intelligence from the Republic of Armenia, including direct testimony from Muhrab Muhammad al-Shker, a captured mercenary, and the Armenian Interpol report detail how mercenaries were recruited, trained, and deployed to Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>49</sup> Al-Shker's testimony confirmed that he traveled to the Syrian town of Shaykh Hadid where he agreed to serve as a mercenary for \$2,000 USD or the equivalent amount in Turkish lira.<sup>50</sup> Thereafter, he traveled to the checkpoint of Al Ghus.<sup>51</sup> The Armenian Interpol Report confirms that the mercenaries were taken through the border checkpoint of Kilis which was populated with terrorist groups including Al Hamza Brigade and the Caucasus Martyrs.<sup>52</sup> Al-Shker testifies that upon his arrival to Kilis, there were 250 mercenaries who were split up into 5 groups.<sup>53</sup> From there, Al-Shker along with other mercenaries were led by Abu-Hamsha across the Turkish border by foot. This border crossing occurred without any identification for the mercenaries and with the permission of the Turkish border guard services.<sup>54</sup>

From Kilis, the mercenaries were transported to Gaziantep and other Turkish airports by Turkish Special Forces.<sup>55</sup> Thereafter, those mercenary groups were transported, group by group, to Azerbaijan. There are additional reports that on October 4, 2020 and October 17, 2020, Turkish Special Forces transported mercenaries from the Ahrar al-Sharqiya and Al-Hamza terrorist factions from Ras al-Ayn to the Syrian-Turkish border. From there the mercenaries were transported to Turkey, and from there to Azerbaijan to fight in the Nagorno-Karabakh war.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Republic of Armenia's Investigative Committee's November 8, 2020 charges against Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim [See Exhibit 34]; *Involvement of armed terrorists and mercenaries is proved by sufficient evidence – Prosecution* (November, November 27) Retrieved from <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1036107> [See Exhibit 35]

<sup>47</sup> Id.

<sup>48</sup> *Treasury Sanctions Two Syria-Based Militias Responsible for Serious Human Rights Abuses in Northern Syria* | U.S. Department of the Treasury (2023, August 17) Retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1699> [See Exhibit 36]

<sup>49</sup> February 23, 2021 decision of Judge M. Martirosyan regarding Criminal Defendant Muhrab Muhammad al-Shker's mediation, case number 69108320 [See Exhibit 37]

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Police of Armenia Interpol Report, Dated December 24, 2020 [ See Exhibit 33]

<sup>53</sup> February 23, 2021 decision of Judge M. Martirosyan regarding Criminal Defendant Muhrab Muhammad al-Shker's mediation, case number 69108320 [See Exhibit 37]; *Syrian militant detained in Armenia says Suleyman-Shah chief Abu Hamsha brought them* (2020, November 1) Retrieved from <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1033493> [See Exhibit 38]

<sup>54</sup> Id.

<sup>55</sup> Police of Armenia Interpol Report, Dated December 24, 2020 [See Exhibit 33]

<sup>56</sup> Police of Armenia Interpol Report, Dated December 24, 2020 [See Exhibit 33]

The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (“JISS”) reported in January 2021 that Turkey’s use of SADAT to recruit, organize and transport Syrian mercenaries in Nagorno-Karabakh was similar to Turkey’s use of SADAT in Libya. The report claimed that the mercenaries deployed in Nagorno-Karabakh were primarily fighters from the SNA, and that the deployment took place together with the use of specialists from the official Turkish armed forces.<sup>57</sup> For serving in the southern Caucasus for 3 - 6 months, fighters were offered monthly salaries of \$1,500-2000. According to fighters’ testimony obtained by the JISS, the mercenaries were transported out of Syria was through the Kilis border to the Gaziantep Airport, and from there flown by a SADAT-chartered A-400 transport aircrafts to Istanbul Airport, where they boarded flights to Baku, Azerbaijan.<sup>58</sup>

The Washington Post conducted interviews with family members of Syrian mercenaries killed in Nagorno-Karabakh. The family members confirmed the presence of “mercenary recruiters” in northern Syria, saying that young men in their family were offered \$2,000 per month to fight for Azerbaijan.<sup>59</sup>

Although Azerbaijan and Turkey have denied using mercenaries in Nagorno-Karabakh, researchers have compiled an overwhelming amount of photographic and other evidence to the contrary<sup>60</sup> posted by fighters and journalists on the field.<sup>61, 62</sup>

## 2. SADAT's collaboration with the SNA and other umbrella mercenary organizations in Northern Syria

From the beginning of the Syrian uprising in 2011, Turkey was a crucial backer in the armed effort to overthrow the Assad regime. Turkey trained, equipped, paid and deployed Syrian rebel militias known as the Syrian National Army (“SNA” Previously known as the “Free Syrian Army”), who

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<sup>57</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>58</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>59</sup> Fahim, K., Khurshudyan, I., & Zakaria, Z., (2020, October 14) *Death of Syrian mercenaries show how Turkey, Russia could get sucked into Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*. The Washington Post. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794_story.html) [See Exhibit 39]

<sup>60</sup> Mckeever, A., (2020, October 26) *SNA mercenaries in Azerbaijan; the Visual Evidence*. Akmckeever.com. Retrieved from <https://akmckeever.com/2020/10/26/sna-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-the-visual-evidence/> [See Exhibit 40]

<sup>61</sup> Cookman., L., (2020, October 5) *Syrians Make Up Turkey's Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabkh*. Foreignpolicy.com. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/> [See Exhibit 41]

<sup>62</sup> Butler, E. (2020, October 10) *The Syrian mercenaries used as 'cannon fodder' in Nagorno Karabakh*. BBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-55238803> [See Exhibit 42]

operated under Turkish command.<sup>63</sup> Dr. Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak and Dr. Jonathan Spyer refer to Syria as the first and prime example of Turkey’s new method of proxy warfare, using local mercenary forces recruited with the involvement of SADAT, “a quasi-governmental agency.”<sup>64</sup>

### 3. SADAT's collaboration with the Turkish military.

In a radio interview with a Turkish radio station on January 22, 2021, **Melih Tanrıverdi**, son of Adnan Tanrıverdi, admitted that SADAT works with the Turkish intelligence agency (MIT) and coordinates actions with Turkish diplomats and defense officials. In a video of the interview published on Nordic Monitor, **Melih Tanrıverdi** stated that SADAT communicates with the MIT when considering requests from foreign entities to provide military, defense and technical assistance. “We do the following when we receive an offer that meets our own service provision criteria. We communicate the offer from a country to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. We also provide information to the National Intelligence Organization [MIT] and the Ministry of Defense about the request and ask for their views. This is the way we work.”<sup>65</sup>

There have also been reports in the Turkish press that SADAT maintains a series of bases in Turkey’s north-western Marmara region to train the proxy forces. At least one of these bases in the Kocaeli province (called Ulaşlı camp) formerly belonged to the Turkish Navy, according to a 2012 report by the Turkish daily *Aydınlık*.<sup>66</sup> SADAT has denied the claim.<sup>67</sup>

The *Aydınlık* article reports that SADAT personnel working in these facilities transported fighters from Syria for training activities in groups of 300-400. JISS has noted that activities at this scale cannot possibly be undertaken without the knowledge, and tacit support, of the MIT and Turkish government.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>64</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

<sup>65</sup> Bozkurt, A., (2021, May 2) *Turkish Paramilitary Firm SADAT's CEO Admits Working with Turkish Intelligence Agency MIT*. Nordic Monitor. Retrieved from <https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/> [See Exhibit 4]

<sup>66</sup> *Important information about SADAT emerged* (2021, November 28) ULUSAL.com. Retrieved from <https://www.ulusal.com.tr/gundem/sadat-ile-ilgili-onemli-bilgiler-ortaya-cikti-h5201.html> [See Exhibit 43]

<sup>67</sup> *Light's Dark Slander; Aydinlik's DARK Slander* (2012, September 06). SADAT.com. Retrieved from <https://www.sadat.com.tr/tr/hakimizda/haberler/213-aydinlik-in-karanlik-iftirasi.html> [See Exhibit 44]

<sup>68</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]

In September 2012, a member of the Turkish parliament, Ali Riza Ozturk, submitted an official inquiry<sup>69</sup> with a list of questions to the government about SADAT’s alleged training and equipping of fighters in Syria and Turkey, including ISIS. Ozturk also asked whether the government’s refusal to allow MPs to inspect a camp in the Hatay province was related to SADAT’s presence and training in that camp.<sup>70</sup> The government did not provide any substantive response and the questions were subsequently expunged from the record.<sup>71</sup>

In an interview with the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Prof. Howard Eissenstat, an expert on Turkey at New York’s St. Lawrence University stated that there is no doubt that SADAT has worked closely with the Turkish government in Syria and Libya, adding that the company is very explicit about the idea for projecting Turkish power in the Muslim world.<sup>72</sup>

A report by U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Army officer Matt Powers called SADAT a “facilitator between Ankara and Syrian proxy fighters” that Turkey then sends to other war zones.<sup>73</sup>

Dr. Jonathan Spyer, senior fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security has referred to SADAT as Erdogan’s private military and paramilitary system.<sup>74</sup> He writes that as the sole and leading provider of military training in Turkey, SADAT can be considered a continuation of the “deep state” informal units that existed in the pre-Erdogan period.<sup>75</sup> Former U.S. Pentagon official Michael Rubin wrote in 2017, “It is clear that SADAT follows and enforces Erdoğan’s agenda without the constraints of being a government entity,” comparing the organization to the Turkish

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<sup>69</sup> Rubin, M. (2017, May 30) *Has SADAT become Erdogan’s Revolutionary Guards?* American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Retrieved from <https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/middle-east/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/> [See Exhibit 45]

<sup>70</sup> Id.

<sup>71</sup> Jacinto, L. (2017, July 13) *Turkey’s Post-Coup Purge and Erdogan’s Private Army*. Foreign Policy Magazine (FP) Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/13/turkeys-post-coup-purge-and-erdogans-private-army-sadat-perincek-gulen/> [See Exhibit 46]

<sup>72</sup> *Erdogan nurtures elite mercenary force to rival Russia’s Wagner Group* (2020, September 28) Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.syriaahr.com/en/185997/> [See Exhibit 47]

<sup>73</sup> Powers, M. (2021, October 8) *Making Sense of SADAT, Turkey’s Private Military Company*. Warontherocks.com. Retrieved from <https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/making-sense-of-sadat-turkeys-private-military-company/> [See Exhibit 48]

<sup>74</sup> Spyer, J. (2018, April 24) *Erdogan’s Shadow Army: The Influence of the “Sadat,” Turkey’s Private Defense Group*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/spyer-erdogans-shadow-army-influence-sadat-turkeys-private-defense-group/> [See Exhibit 49]

<sup>75</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Turkish Militias and Proxies*. The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Retrieved from <https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/> [See Exhibit 6]



equivalent of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard.<sup>76</sup> In local media, Turkish journalist Çiğdem Toker wrote that SADAT increasingly appears to act as Erdogan’s personal militia.<sup>77</sup>

#### **Section 4. National Interest Argument & Explanation of Foreseeable Impact**

It is in the U.S. government’s interest to ensure that use of mercenaries and other forms of ill treatment and human rights abuse will not go unnoticed or unpunished. As demonstrated in the preceding, SADAT, and **Melih Tanriverdi**’s abuses are well-known and well-documented. The designation of **Melih Tanriverdi**, and SADAT as an organization, would demonstrate the commitment and leadership of the United States to promoting accountability among human rights violators.

These designations are aligned with the aims set out in Executive Order 13818, in which the President articulated a finding that human rights abuses outside the United States “undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies” and “degrade the rule of law.” SADAT and **Melih Tanriverdi** are, and have been, engaged in systemic and widespread human rights abuses, which are the type of activity specifically targeted under Executive Order 13818.

In addition, the U.S. Congress and President Biden have specifically recognized the geopolitical significance of the use of mercenaries in the Armenia-Azerbaijan war of 2020. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (P.L. 117-81), which President Biden signed into law on December 27, 2021, requires the Secretary of Defense to report on this conflict, including “involvement of foreign actors... and efforts by parties to the conflict or foreign actors to recruit or employ foreign fighters or private military organizations during the conflict” (Section 1302).

Sanctioning SADAT and **Melih Tanriverdi** for the human rights abuse documented herein is consistent with the intent of the Global Magnitsky Statute, Executive Order 13818, and the ongoing attention of the President and the Congress in the use of mercenaries and other foreign influence campaigns.

The U.S. government has also shown grave misgivings with respect to the so-called private military companies (PMCs) that have spawned an industry in manufacturing shadowy paramilitaries or “armies for hire.” State actors such as Russia and Turkey have come to rely on these private armies to pursue their expansionist objectives with little or no accountability even when the most fundamental norms of armed conflict are violated. Perhaps the most egregious example of a PMC is the Wagner Group, whose fighters have been unleashed on the Ukrainian people.<sup>78</sup> The world has become all too familiar with the innumerable war crimes committed by

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<sup>76</sup> Rubin, M. (2017, May 30) *Has SADAT become Erdogan’s Revolutionary Guards?* American Enterprise Institute (AEI). <https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/middle-east/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/> [See Exhibit 45]

<sup>77</sup> Toker, C. (2016, August 17) *Erdogan is setting up a guard regiment for himself.* Cumhuriyet.com. Retrieved from [https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/586244/Erdogan\\_kendine\\_muhafiz\\_alayi\\_kuruyor.html](https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/586244/Erdogan_kendine_muhafiz_alayi_kuruyor.html) [See Exhibit 50]

<sup>78</sup> The Wagner Group recruits and deploys mercenaries, primarily Russian nationals, to conflict zones and its fighters are often former military personnel, including special forces veterans.

the Wagner Group not just in Ukraine but also in Syria and in many parts of Africa. It has become an invaluable tool for Russia in pursuing Kremlin’s foreign policy objectives.

Turkey under Erdogan has followed suit in the use of mercenaries, organized and deployed through SADAT, which in its role as a facilitator between Turkey and Syrian proxy fighters, has borrowed heavily from Wagner Group’s modus operandi. SADAT is in the same sanguinary league as these heinous Wagnerites but with the additional attribute that SADAT is also infused with an anti-Western Islamist ideological bent, courtesy of its founder, Adnan Tanriverdi. SADAT’s own manifesto reveals the company’s intention to “contribute to the emergence of the world of Islam as a super power.” It has embraced Erdogan’s foreign policy objectives which are animated by overtly Islamist and jingoistic themes that are deeply antagonistic to American interests and values.<sup>79</sup>

Over the course of the Syrian conflict, factions associated with the SNA have developed affiliations with extremist groups such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham or other Islamist factions. These groups espouse ideologies and engage in activities that are contrary to the principles and goals of the United States, including promoting extremist ideologies and posing a threat to regional stability and security. SADAT’s Syrian mercenaries have also contributed to the proliferation of arms within Syria and other parts of the Middle East. Such proliferation has resulted in the arming of extremist groups that are hostile to US interests and which has had a destabilizing effect in the region. Finally, the litany of human rights abuses committed by the SNA militias, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced displacement, are directly contrary to US interest and values in promoting respect for human rights and rule of law in Syria and throughout the Middle East.

With the help of SADAT, Turkey’s use of militia groups in creating “manageable chaos” in neighboring countries to its advantage is not likely to end, especially in light of Erdogan’s recent re-election. This means more violence, more bloodshed, and countless deaths of innocent civilians in the future. The U.S. has sanctioned the leadership of the Wagner Group and numerous entities and individuals globally that support the Wagner Group under various authorities.<sup>80</sup> SADAT is of the same ilk. It is time for the U.S. to sanction SADAT and its leadership, sending a message that PMCs like SADAT and their private armies and the destruction they bring will not be tolerated.

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<sup>79</sup> Erdogan’s vision of an Islamist expansion continues to be implemented. Soon after the United States left Kabul, Erdogan proposed that Turkish “private military contractors” – viz. SADAT – be used to provide security. According to Ali Cosar, a retired colonel and board member of SADAT, Turkey must build a new Afghanistan that is run by the Taliban. On the website of Turkey’s Association of Justice Defenders Strategic Studies Center (ASSAM), Cosar argues for “the historical parallel between modern Taliban religious warriors and Seljuk and Ottoman Turks in following Sharia law during their rule and considers the Taliban as “the 21st century’s religious warriors who once again prioritized asymmetrical warfare and embraced martyrdom and becoming veterans for their homeland, and prevailed over the conventional superpowers backed by special forces in the mountainous Central Asian terrain.” SADAT’s Tanriverdi is ASSAM’s president.

<sup>80</sup> *Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization* (2023, January 26). Retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1220> [See Exhibit 51]; *Treasury Sanctions Wagner Group-linked Companies in the Central African Republic* (2024, May 30) Retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2384> [See Exhibit 69]

## Section 5. Summary of Evidence

Serious Human Rights Abuses in Syria:

### HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA BY THE SYRIAN NATIONAL ARMY

#### *The Syrian National Army*

There is little doubt that the SNA is a product of the Turkish military. More than simply an umbrella term for various pro-Turkish factions fighting in Northern Syria, the SNA is a unifying organization with a well-defined command-and-control structure.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, its precursor, the Free Syrian Army, was founded in Turkey by Sunni-Arab defectors from Assad’s Syrian Arab Army. Initially, the FSA was a collection of decentralized and irregular armed groups united by their antipathy for the Assad regime and sympathy with Erdogan’s religious conservatism. Turkey saw an opportunity in the alignment of political objectives and used it to transform the FSA into something more organized and capable of carrying out military operations under the control of the Turkish military. Through its military intelligence services, Turkey trained and equipped FSA fighters. This partnership was put into use in 2016, when the FSA fought alongside the Turkish military in Operation Euphrates Shield, which led to the Turkish occupation of northern Syria.<sup>82</sup>

In 2017, the Syrian Interim Government, with active support from Turkey, rebranded the original FSA groups, apart from factions that split off to form the National Front for Liberation (NLF), as the SNA. In 2019, Turkey forced a merger between the SNA and the NLF, subsuming the NLF under the command-and-control structure of the SNA and effectively placing approximately 80,000 Syrian fighters under the Turkish military’s control.<sup>83</sup> The biggest factions within the SNA are Ahrar al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sharqiyah, Faylaq al-Sham, Firka Hamza, Firka Sultan Murad, Free Idlib Army, Jabhat Shamiyah, Jaysh al-Islam, Jaysh al-Ahrar, Jaysh a- Nasr, Jaysh al-Sharqiya, and Jaysh al-Nukhba.<sup>84</sup>

While the SNA proclaims to be the army of Syria’s opposition, its factions are under the command of the Turkish military and intelligence. Strategic decisions are made inside “the operations room.”<sup>85</sup> Turkey pays their salaries; Turkish hospitals care for the wounded; and SADAT along

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<sup>81</sup> Yüksel, E. (2019, November) *CRU Report – Strategies of Turkish proxy warfare in northern Syria*, CRU Report. Clingendael.com. Retrieved from <https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2019/strategies-of-turkish-proxy-warfare-in-northern-syria/> [See Exhibit 52]

<sup>82</sup> *Turkey’s Operation in Syria’s Afrin: The key players* (2018, January 22) Al Jazeera Staff. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/1/22/turkeys-operation-in-syrias-afrin-the-key-players> [See Exhibit 53]

<sup>83</sup> Biden, S. (2024, May 6) *The Militarization and Exploitation of Northern Syria*, The Human Security Center. Retrieved from <http://www.hscentre.org/uncategorized/militarization-exploitation-northern-syria/> [See Exhibit 54]

<sup>84</sup> Al-Khateb, K. (2019, April 25) *Syria Opposition Receives Military Training from Turkey Ahead of Potential Battle Against SDF*. Almonitor.com. Retrieved from <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/04/syria-fsa-turkey-army-training-battle-kurds-sdf.html> [See Exhibit 55]

<sup>85</sup> Yüksel, E. (2019, November) *CRU Report – Strategies of Turkish proxy warfare in northern Syria*, CRU Report. Clingendael.com. Retrieved from <https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2019/strategies-of-turkish-proxy-warfare-in-northern-syria/> [See Exhibit 52]

with the Turkish forces give them military training. Although limited autonomy is ceded to the militias, ultimate control remains firmly in the hands of the Turkish military and intelligence services, ensuring Turkey’s military and political objectives within these territories are maintained.

In 2018, the Turkish army together with its SNA proxies launched a major cross-border operation into the Kurdish-majority Afrin district. Dubbed “Operation Olive Branch,” the invasion of Afrin involved aerial attacks on well over 100 locations, a force of 6,400 Turkish troops, and up to 25,000 members of the SNA. Around 500 civilians were killed and another 700 injured during the Turkish offensive. Moreover, key facilities and services were targeted including hospitals, schools, and water-supply facilities. Many of these attacks were not isolated incidents but repeated and meant to deprive the population of essential civilian infrastructure. As a result of the 2018 invasion, close to 300,000 persons were forced to flee Afrin.

Following Operation Olive Branch, the Turkish armed forces commenced Operation Peace Spring in October of 2019 “with the launch of air strikes and artillery shelling on Syrian border towns, including Ayn al-Arab (Kobane), Tall Abyad, Ra’s al-Ayn and Qamishli.”<sup>86</sup> The SNA, financially and logistically supported by Turkish forces, formed the majority of the ground forces of the offensive, with some units deploying “tanks, light personnel carriers and several types of artillery.”<sup>87</sup> By November, Turkey secured an area referred to as a “safe zone”, stretching between Tall Abyad and Ra’s al-Ayn.

Much like the previous invasion in 2018, the launch of Operation Peace Spring caused mass waves of displacement as more than 100,000 civilians fled the initial attack. This number swelled to more than “175,000 displaced individuals” by late October, including “approximately 80,000 children” as hostilities intensified and access to essential services was severely diminished.<sup>88</sup>

#### *Human Rights Violations (Afrin and Ra’s al-Ayn Regions)*

The SNA holds control over vast swaths in northern Syria including Afrin and Ra’s al-Ayn regions. Areas under the SNA’s control are operated as local fiefdoms and hubs of criminal activity. Kurdish civilians still living in these areas are subjected an “onslaught of violations,” including “hostage-taking, cruel treatment, torture, and rape” as well as economic deprivations and abuses.<sup>89</sup> Over 10% of all arable land has been expropriated in Afrin. Factions and their commanders line their pockets through looting, extortion, and forceful expropriation of real estate. Dispossession occurs in a “systematic” manner and routinely by way of intimidation and threats of violence.<sup>90</sup>

Civilians of Kurdish origin are detained, beaten, and tortured, and systematically displaced from their homes through threats, extortion, murder, abduction, and detention. Abductions and

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<sup>86</sup> *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic* (2020, January 28) United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 43<sup>rd</sup> Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/57> [See Exhibit 56]

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

detentions especially of Kurdish men is a common occurrence. When detained, civilians are often beaten, tortured, deprived of food or water, or denied of due process. In one case cited by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, a boy was held in detention for nine months. While detained, “the boy was handcuffed and hung from a ceiling,” and then “blindfolded and repeatedly beaten with plastic tubes” in the presence of members of the SNA and Turkish officials.<sup>91</sup> Other cases documented by the Commission reveal even more extreme forms of torture. On at least two occasions in 2019, as a way to instill fear and extract their confessions, male detainees were beaten and forced to watch the gang-rape of a minor.<sup>92</sup>

The fate of Kurdish and Yazidi women throughout the Afrin and Ra’s al-Ayn regions continues to be precarious. When outside their homes, women are at risk of being threatened with rape or being actually raped. In another case, two women were detained at Turkish military checkpoint operated by SNA militiamen. According to one of the women, during interrogation, “she had been threatened with rape and beaten on the head by Syrian National Army members, in the presence of Turkish officials.”<sup>93</sup> These persistent and ubiquitous threats of sexual violence from various SNA militias has engendered an atmosphere of intimidation and fear, leaving women no choice but either to confine themselves to their homes or simply flee and join the ranks of millions of Syrian refugees.<sup>94</sup>

Throughout the occupied region, the property of Kurdish residents has been systematically looted and appropriated by SNA members. The examples of appropriation of property and land are numerous and ongoing. Civilians living in the Afrin region described how members of SNA’s Suleiman Shah Brigade went door to door instructing Kurdish families to vacate their houses so that those “arriving from outside of Afrin” would be accommodated. In many cases, punitive measures are contrived as a means to force people out of their homes. For example, residents recounted how they had been forced to pay a “tax” as a precondition for being allowed to remain in the homes. In another example, a senior official of a SNA brigade demanded proof of ownership from the Kurdish inhabitants of a large residential complex. One of the residents who was unable to provide such proof was berated and told by an official that “if it were up to me, I would kill every Kurd from 1 to 80 years old.”<sup>95</sup> Fearing for his and his family’s safety, the man abandoned his home and fled.

As in Afrin, the civilian properties of Kurdish owners in the Ra’s al-Ayn region who had fled battles during Operation Peace Spring were also appropriated by SNA forces. Members of the

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<sup>91</sup> *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic* (2020, August 14) United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 45th Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/45/31> [See Exhibit 57]

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> *State of the Occupation: Documenting Rights Abuses in the Turkish Occupied Regions of North and East Syria* (2021, June 29) Rojava Information Center. Retrieved from <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2021/06/state-of-the-occupation-a-new-quarterly-report-on-rights-violations-in-turkish-occupied-nes/> [See Exhibit 58]

<sup>95</sup> *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic* (2020, August 14) United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 45th Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/45/31> [See Exhibit 57]

Hamza Brigade engaged in widespread looting and property confiscation, “including by marking house walls with the names of individual brigades.”<sup>96</sup> Civilians gave consistent accounts about “their inability to return to their homes, which had been looted and occupied by the brigades or their families in the immediate aftermath of hostilities.”<sup>97</sup> Often civilians were instructed “not to return by SNA commanders and fighters.”<sup>98</sup> Looted items “were transported and sold through a coordinated process” using warehouses for storage, indicating “a premeditated policy.”<sup>99</sup> Appropriated homes have been put to use in a number of ways. In one case, the home of a Kurdish family was appropriated by members of the Hamza Brigade and was later converted into “an institute for Qur’anic studies run by a Turkish NGO.”<sup>100</sup> The residents of one village were prevented from returning to their homes because they had been appropriated “for military purposes by Turkish armed forces.”<sup>101</sup>

Of these rights violations, by far the execution of the Kurdish political activist, Hevrin Khalaf has garnered the most attention. On October 12, 2019, Khalaf was ambushed and captured by members of Ahrar al-Sharqiya.<sup>102</sup> She was dragged out of her car, beaten, and shot. Khalaf’s autopsy revealed multiple shots to the head and fractures to the legs, face, and skull.<sup>103</sup> Since her execution, several videos were circulated on social media purportedly showing the body of Khalaf and fighters from Ahrar al-Sharqiya.<sup>104</sup>

Civilians living in these areas face violence and systematically subjected to human rights abuses including detentions, killings, beatings, and abductions. Since the invasions, close to 8,500 persons have been detained or kidnapped by the occupation forces and at least 15% of all arrests involve torture. At least 1,100 of those arrested have not been heard from, of which 150 have been women. Around 70 women have reported being raped, though numbers are likely to be much higher.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> *Syria: Damning evidence of war crimes and other violations by Turkish forces and their allies* (2019, October 18) Amnesty International. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/syria-damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-and-other-violations-by-turkish-forces-and-their-allies/> [See Exhibit 59]

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Higgins, E. (2019, October 31) *Video Evidence Sheds Light on Executions Near Turkey-Syria Border*. Bellingcat. Retrieved from <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/10/31/video-evidence-sheds-light-on-executions-near-turkey-syria-border/> [See Exhibit 60]

<sup>105</sup> *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic* (2020, August 14) United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 45th Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/45/31> [See Exhibit 57]

### Serious Human Rights Abuse by SADAT in Libya:

SADAT is responsible for the training and transfer of Syrian mercenaries to numerous conflict zones, including to Libya. The use of these mercenaries is in violation of international law. A letter addressed to Turkey on June 10, 2020 from several special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council asserted that “the deployment of mercenaries to an armed conflict may threaten several human rights, including, inter alia: the right to life, freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.”<sup>106</sup>

The mercenaries in Libya are recruited through predatory and deceitful recruitment tactics. This includes the hiring of children, under the age of 18 to fight in Libya. In the June 10, 2020 letter to Turkey, the UN special procedure expressed alarm by the alleged recruitment of Syrian children to take part in the hostilities in Libya. As noted in this Letter, the Working Group on the use of mercenaries has found children recruited to take part in hostilities are exposed to a broad range of human rights abuses. The letter also summarizes a portion of a joint report prepared by the Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, that confirms that situations of armed conflict expose children to “multifaceted vulnerabilities and put them at a higher risk of, inter alia, being trafficked, sold and sexually exploited, and used in the worst forms of child labor.” As further expressed by the Working Group in this letter, “[t]he recruitment of Syrian boys who have been deprived of most of their childhood by the long and brutal conflict in Syria only to see their vulnerable social and economic situation being exploited and to be recruited and used as mercenaries is a matter of utmost concern.”<sup>107</sup>

In addition, many of the Syrian mercenaries were promised high salaries and foreign passports to lure them into signing up for deployment. Lindsey Snell, an American journalist covering conflict and crises in the Caucasus, Middle East and North Africa has received reports from SNA militants who claimed to sign up for deployment to Libya on the promise of \$2,000 a month salary. But, across all factions of the SNA, Snell confirmed that the average monthly payments of SNA militants is around \$400.<sup>108</sup> Separately and pursuant to testimony obtained by JISS from a fighter of the Jabhat al Shamiya, one of the component militias of the SNA, fighters were promised a salary of \$3,000 a month to go to Libya. However those promises were dishonest and fighters only received \$1,200.<sup>109</sup> Further, some mercenaries who were sent to Libya were recruited under the

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<sup>106</sup> *Public Communication File – Working Group –Letter Addressed to OHCHR* (2020, June 10) United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25292> [See Exhibit 18]

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Snell, L. (2020, September 30) *Turkey’s Syrian Mercenaries in Karabakh “Feel Tricked” as Bodies Pile Up*. Ishgal.com. Retrieved from <http://ishgal.com/turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-in-karabakh-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up/> [See Exhibit 61]

<sup>109</sup> Cohen Yanarocak, H.E. & Spyer, J. (2021, January 27) *Erdogan’s Private Armies*. Middle East Forum. Retrieved from <https://www.meforum.org/61963/turkish-militias-and-proxies> [See Exhibit 5]

premise that they would be employed as guards, but, found themselves fighting in the frontlines instead.<sup>110</sup>

Further, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, in a 2020 report to Congress on counter-terrorism operations in the U.S. Africa Command (“USAFRICOM”), confirmed that the Mercenaries in Libya under SADAT’s supervision were “inexperienced, uneducated, and motivated by promises of considerable salary.” The report also confirmed USAFRICOM’s findings that “there were increasing reports of theft, sexual assault and misconduct by those mercenaries” in Libya.<sup>111</sup>

Finally, many of the mercenaries “were recruited through armed factions affiliated with the SNA that have been accused of serious human rights abuses in Syria”.<sup>112</sup> Some of the SNA factions present in Libya include the Hamza Division, Sultan Murad Division, Suqur Al-Sham Brigades, Mu’tasim Division, Faylaq al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sharqiyah, and Suleyman-Shah Brigade. During the conflict in Syria, some of these factions allegedly committed war crimes and serious human rights abuses, such as recruitment of children, severe restrictions on women’s rights in areas controlled by some of the groups, and extrajudicial killings. SADAT’s deployment of mercenaries to Libya only further perpetuated a “cycle of abuse and impunity.”<sup>113</sup>

There is no body of contradictory, countervailing, or exculpatory evidence concerning the alleged human rights abuses committed by SADAT in Libya. While SADAT has routinely denied its involvement in foreign conflicts, those claims lack credibility given the extensive documentation of such acts by credible bodies, as referenced throughout this submission.

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<sup>110</sup> McKernan, B. (2020, September 28) *Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey’s Ambition*. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition> [See Exhibit 62]

<sup>111</sup> O’Donnell, S.W., Shaw, D. R., & Calveresi Barr, A. (2020, April 1 to June 30) *East Africa Counterterrorism Operation North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation*. Inspector General, Department of Defense of the United States of America, Report to the U.S. Congress. Retrieved from [https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488340/-1/-1/1/EA-NWA\\_Q3\\_JUNE2020\\_FINAL\\_508SIGNED.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488340/-1/-1/1/EA-NWA_Q3_JUNE2020_FINAL_508SIGNED.PDF) [See Exhibit 16]

<sup>112</sup> *Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated - UN experts* (2020, June 17). United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25970&LangID=E> [See Exhibit 17]

<sup>113</sup> *Public Communication File – Working Group –Letter Addressed to OHCHR* (2020, June 10) United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25292> [See Exhibit 18]



### Serious Human Rights Abuse by SADAT in Nagorno-Karabakh:

As outlined above, SADAT is involved in the training and transfer of Syrian mercenaries to Nagorno-Karabakh. The use of these mercenaries is in violation of international law and has been condemned by the international community.<sup>114</sup>

Further, the use of mercenaries violated the citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination.<sup>115</sup> The United Nations Human Rights Council, by the Resolution 42/9 resolution of 26 September 2019 strongly condemned use of mercenaries to impede the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, and considered it a complex crime in which criminal responsibility falls upon those who have recruited, employed, trained and financed the mercenaries. The Resolution considers the activities of the mercenaries as a threat to peace, security and human rights.<sup>116</sup>

Similar to Libya, and as confirmed by the Republic of Armenia in the Annex to the letter dated 10 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the mercenaries in Nagorno-Karabakh were recruited through predatory and deceitful recruitment tactics.<sup>117</sup> These predatory tactics have also been confirmed by various news organizations, including Reuters, BBC, the Guardian, and Foreign Policy.<sup>118</sup> As

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<sup>114</sup> *Joint Motion For A Resolution on the Syrian conflict – 10 years after uprising* (2021, October 3) European Parliament. Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2021-0177\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2021-0177_EN.html) [See Exhibit 31]

<sup>115</sup> Margaryan, M. (2020, December 14) Letter dated 10 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council- 75<sup>th</sup> Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/75/644> [See Exhibit 32]

<sup>116</sup> *Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 26 September 2019* (2019, October 4) United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/45/31> <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/42/9> [See Exhibit 63];

*Second Interim Report – Updated Edition on the Azerbaijani Atrocities Against The Artsakh Population in September – October 2020* (2020, October 18) The Republic of Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman. Retrieved from <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/735> [See Exhibit 64]

<sup>117</sup> Margaryan, M. (2020, December 14) Letter dated 10 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council- 75<sup>th</sup> Session. Retrieved from <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/75/644> [See Exhibit 32]

<sup>118</sup> Cookman, L. (2020, October 5) *Syrians Make Up Turkey's Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabakh*. Foreignpolicy.com. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/> [See Exhibit 41]

McKernan, B. and Safi, M. (2020, September 30) *Nagorno-Karabakh: at least three Syrian fighters killed*. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/nagorno-karabakh-at-least-three-syrian-fighters-killed> [See Exhibit 65]

McKernan, B. (2020, September 28) *Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey's ambition*. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition> [See Exhibit 62]

*Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan, two fighters say* (2020, September 28) Reuters.com.

detailed above, SADAT was responsible for the recruitment and training of the mercenaries sent to Nagorno-Karabakh. Just as in Libya, many of the Syrian mercenaries who were sent to Azerbaijan were promised high salaries to lure them into signing up for deployment. Many of these mercenaries were uniquely vulnerable to recruitment and deployment to Azerbaijan because of the poor financial and social conditions in Syria. Reuters found that some mercenaries were offered salaries of \$1,500 per month—a large wage for Syria where the economy and currency has collapsed. These fighters confirmed that they expected to be deployed to guard facilities, not to fight.<sup>119</sup> Multiple other sources have confirmed that mercenaries were recruited under the premise that they would be deployed as guards, when the reality is that these mercenaries found themselves thrown into direct clashes, oftentimes with little support from Azeri forces<sup>120</sup>. The estimates vary for the death toll of these Syrian fighters, but the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based group that monitors the conflict in Syria, put the figure at more than 500.<sup>121</sup> Some mercenaries claim that they received little protective equipment or medical support and that many of their fellow fighters bled to death from wounds that battlefield medics could easily have treated.<sup>122</sup>

Two Syrian mercenaries were ultimately captured and faced trial in Armenia.<sup>123</sup> The testimony of Muhrab Muhammad al-Shkher, one of the captured mercenaries, confirmed the poor conditions for the mercenaries fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>124</sup> Al-Shkher testified that upon arriving at a military facility, mercenaries were forbidden from discussing the conditions of the war—including discussions related to the death or injury of mercenaries—with other mercenaries. The mercenaries were threatened with being shot in the leg if they violated this rule.<sup>125</sup>

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Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J25A> [See Exhibit 66]

Butler, E. (2020, December 9) *The Syrian mercenaries used as “cannon fodder” in Nagorno-Karabakh*. BBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-55238803> [See Exhibit 42]

<sup>119</sup> *Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan, two fighters say* (2020, September 28) Reuters.com. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J25A/> [See Exhibit 66]

<sup>120</sup> Cookman, L. (2020, October 5) *Syrians Make Up Turkey’s Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabakh*. Foreignpolicy.com. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/> [See Exhibit 41]

McKernan, B. and Safi, M. (2020, September 30) *Nagorno-Karabakh: at least three Syrian fighters killed*. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/nagorno-karabakh-at-least-three-syrian-fighters-killed> [See Exhibit 65]

<sup>121</sup> Butler, E. (2020, December 9) *The Syrian mercenaries used as “cannon fodder” in Nagorno-Karabakh*. BBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-55238803> [See Exhibit 42]

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Bulghadarian, N. (2021, May 4) *‘Syrian Mercenaries’ Sentenced To Life In Prison* Free Europe/Freedom Radio. Retrieved from <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31237788.html> [See Exhibit 67]

<sup>124</sup> February 23, 2021 decision of Judge M. Martirosyan regarding Criminal Defendant Muhrab Muhammad al-Shkher’s mediation, case number 69108320 [See Exhibit 37]

<sup>125</sup> Id.

Additionally, the mercenaries were instructed to commit numerous human rights violations in Nagorno Karabakh. Al-Shkher confirmed that Syrian mercenaries sent to Artsakh were told that they would receive an additional \$100 for each dead Armenian.<sup>126</sup> Al-Shkher further confirmed that he and his group of mercenaries were ordered to kill all soldiers and civilians in a village.<sup>127</sup> The Syrian Mercenaries were instructed not to leave anyone alive and to burn down and blow up all homes.<sup>128</sup> The conviction of al-Shkher further confirms that on October 11, 2020, mercenaries intruded into the town of Hadrut, burned homes, and violently killed civilians, including a woman and her disabled son.<sup>129</sup>

Finally, many of the mercenaries deployed to Azerbaijan are affiliated with arms groups and individuals that have been affiliated with “serious human rights abuses during the conflict in Syria.”<sup>130</sup> The Republic of Armenia criminally convicted Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim (Abu Amsha) for his involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including recruiting, training, transporting, and overseeing the actions of Syrian mercenaries. Al- Jasim is the leader of the SNA faction, the Suleiman Shah Brigade. Al-Jasim and the Suleiman Shah Brigade have a known history of their human rights abuses in Syria.<sup>131</sup> In fact, on August 17, 2023, the United States Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Al-Jasim and the Suleiman Shah Brigade in connection with serious human rights abuses, and sanctioned them pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13894.<sup>132</sup> The deployment of mercenaries to Nagorno-Karabakh only further perpetuates a “cycle of impunity” and risks “further abuses of international law.”<sup>133</sup>

There is no body of contradictory, countervailing, or exculpatory evidence concerning the alleged human rights abuses committed by SADAT in Nagorno-Karabakh. While SADAT has routinely denied its involvement in foreign conflicts, those claims lack credibility given the extensive documentation of such acts by credible bodies, as referenced throughout this submission.

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<sup>126</sup> Bulghadarian, N. (2021, May 4) ‘*Syrian Mercenaries’ Sentenced To Life In Prison* Free Europe/Freedom Radio. Retrieved from <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31237788.html> [See Exhibit 67]

<sup>127</sup> February 23, 2021 decision of Judge M. Martirosyan regarding Criminal Defendant Muhrab Muhammad al-Shkher’s mediation, case number 69108320 [See Exhibit 37]

<sup>128</sup> Id.

<sup>129</sup> Id.

<sup>130</sup> *Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone must be withdrawn- UN experts* (2020, November 11) United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494> [See Exhibit 68]

<sup>131</sup> [Treasury Sanctions Two Syria-Based Militias Responsible for Serious Human Rights Abuses in Northern Syria | U.S. Department of the Treasury](https://www.treasury.gov/press-releases/jy1699) (2023, August 17) Retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1699> [See Exhibit 36]

<sup>132</sup> [Treasury Sanctions Two Syria-Based Militias Responsible for Serious Human Rights Abuses in Northern Syria | U.S. Department of the Treasury](https://www.treasury.gov/press-releases/jy1699) (2023, August 17) Retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1699> [See Exhibit 36]

<sup>133</sup> *Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone must be withdrawn- UN experts* (2020, November 11) United Nations, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494> [See Exhibit 68].

## **Section 6. Application of Legal Standards to the Facts of the Case**

Executive Order 13818 allows foreign persons to be sanctioned for being “responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in” serious human rights abuse. While the EO does not define this term, it clearly contemplates “gross violations of human rights.” As described above, the current case clearly meets this threshold.

Each of the perpetrators named in this submission held an officer level or otherwise leadership position within SADAT, specifically during the period in which the severe human rights abuses detailed above and in the accompanying evidence were perpetrated. Moreover, the evidence discussed in this submission confirms that there is a pattern and practice of human rights abuse by SADAT that could exist only if condoned by officials at all levels of authority. Due to the widespread and regular nature of these abuses, and the fact that these incidents of gross violations of human rights pertaining to the recruitment and deployment of mercenaries in Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabagh have been well known and documented and have occurred repeatedly for a period of more than several years, the Armenian Bar Association submits that each of the individuals recommended for sanction were knowingly complicit in, and knows or should know that the organization they have led, or their subordinates within those entities, have been engaged in ongoing human rights abuses. Furthermore, the named individuals failed to take necessary measures to halt the abuses.

Furthermore, with crimes in this case beginning in at least 2017 and extending into the present, the case meets Global Magnitsky’s recency requirement.

As such, these cases meet the threshold of a “serious human rights abuse” and the Armenian Bar Association hereby submits these individuals to be considered for sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act for their membership in SADAT, an entity that has perpetrated gross violations of human rights.

## **Section 7. Discussion of Contrary Evidence/Arguments**

The Armenian Bar Association is not aware of any contradictory, countervailing, or exculpatory evidence concerning the alleged responsibility of **Melih Tanriverdi** for acts of serious human rights abuses committed by SADAT members under his command. While the SADAT has routinely denied that members of its organization commit serious human rights abuses, the Armenian Bar Association finds that these claims lack credibility given the extensive documentation of such acts by credible bodies, as referenced throughout this submission.

**Table of Sources**

<b>[Exhibit No.]</b>	<b>Title/ URL Webpage</b>	<b>Periodical</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	SADAT Inc. International Defense Consulting <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/?Itemid=">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/?Itemid=</a>	Company's webpage	N/A	
2	SADAT'S Organization Chart <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/organization-chart.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/organization-chart.html</a>	Company's webpage	N/A	
3	SADAT: Turkey's Paramilitary Wing Take Flight in Africa <a href="https://www.greynamics.com/sadat-turkeys-paramilitary-wings-take-flight-in-africa/">https://www.greynamics.com/sadat-turkeys-paramilitary-wings-take-flight-in-africa/</a>	Grey Dynamics	Eren Ersozoglu	04/16/2021 (first published 02/07/20)
4	Turkish Paramilitary Firm SADAT's CEO Admits Working With Turkish Intelligence Agency MIT <a href="https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/">https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/</a>	Nordic Monitor	Abdullah Bozkurt	05/02/2021
5	Erdogan's Private Armies <a href="https://www.meforum.org/61963/turkish-militias-and-proxies">https://www.meforum.org/61963/turkish-militias-and-proxies</a>	Middle East Forum	Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak & Jonathan Spyer	01/27/2021
6	Turkish Militias and Proxies <a href="https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/">https://jiss.org.il/en/yanarocak-spyer-turkish-militias-and-proxies/</a>	The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security	Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarock & Jonathan Spyer	01/27/2021

9.18.2024

7	Aim of ASSAM <a href="https://assam.org.tr/index.php/en/about-us/aim-of-assam-en.html">https://assam.org.tr/index.php/en/about-us/aim-of-assam-en.html</a>	Group's webpage	Assam Yonetim	09/21/2020
8	SADAT's Mission <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-mission.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-mission.html</a>	Company's Webpage	N/A	
9	Turkey's Erdogan selects controversial security contractor as his new advisor <a href="https://ahvalnews.com/recep-tayyip-erdogan/turkeys-erdogan-selects-controversial-security-contractor-his-new-advisor">https://ahvalnews.com/recep-tayyip-erdogan/turkeys-erdogan-selects-controversial-security-contractor-his-new-advisor</a>	Ahval News	[Unknown]	10/10/2018
10	Turkish Gov't detains 16 military officers over alleged links to Gülen movement <a href="https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-govt-detains-16-military-officers-over-alleged-links-to-gulen-movement/">https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-govt-detains-16-military-officers-over-alleged-links-to-gulen-movement/</a>	Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF)	[Unknown or Staff writer]	11/26/2017
11	Turkey's paramilitary contractor to SADAT to hold Islamic Union Congress for common defense system <a href="https://nordicmonitor.com/2020/07/assam-led-by-paramilitary-contractor-sadats-chief-to-organize-conference-on-joint-defense-system-for-its-islamic-union/">https://nordicmonitor.com/2020/07/assam-led-by-paramilitary-contractor-sadats-chief-to-organize-conference-on-joint-defense-system-for-its-islamic-union/</a>	Nordic Monitor	[Unknown or Staff writer]	07/23/2020
12	SADAT's Training (for Military)	Company's webpage	N/A	

	<a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/our-services/training/training-military.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/our-services/training/training-military.html</a>			
13	SADAT's Training Modules <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/our-training-modules/general-training-modules.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/our-training-modules/general-training-modules.html</a>	Company's webpage	N/A	
14	SADAT's Vision <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-vision.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/our-vision.html</a>	Company's Webpage	N/A	
15	SADAT's News - Defense Reform <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/news/653-savunma-reformu-en.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/about-us/news/653-savunma-reformu-en.html</a>	Company's webpage	N/A	08/23/2014
16	East Africa Counterterrorism Operation North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation <a href="https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488340/-1/-1/1/EA-NWA_Q3_JUNE2020_FINAL_508SIGNED.PDF">https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488340/-1/-1/1/EA-NWA_Q3_JUNE2020_FINAL_508SIGNED.PDF</a>	Inspector General, Department of Defense (USA) – Report to the U.S. Congress	Sean W. O'Donnell, Diana R. Shaw, & Ann Calveresi Barr	04/01/2020 to 06/30/2020
17	Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN experts <a href="https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25970&amp;LangID=E">https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25970&amp;LangID=E</a>	UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	N/A	06/17/2020

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18	Public Communication File - Working Group - Letter Addressed to OHCHR <a href="https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25292">https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25292</a>	UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	N/A	06/10/2020
19	SADAT: Erdogan's Private Army, Sound of Silence Group. <a href="https://purgednato.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/sadat-erdogans-private-army-2017.pdf">https://purgednato.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/sadat-erdogans-private-army-2017.pdf</a>			08/2017
20	Turkey prevents UN visit to hide its use of mercenaries in armed conflicts - <a href="https://nordicmonitor.com/2024/01/turkey-prevents-the-un-visit-to-hide-its-use-of-mercenaries-in-armed-conflicts/">https://nordicmonitor.com/2024/01/turkey-prevents-the-un-visit-to-hide-its-use-of-mercenaries-in-armed-conflicts/</a>	Nordic Monitor	Bozkurt, Abdullah	01/03/2024
21	Turkish paramilitary firm Sadat's CEO admits working with Turkish intelligence agency MIT <a href="https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/">https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/03/turkish-paramilitary-firm-sadats-ceo-admits-it-works-with-the-turkish-intelligence-agency-mit/</a>	Nordic Monitor	Bozkurt, Abdullah	05/02/2021
22	Meet Erdogan's Private Army - SADAT - That Looks To Rival Russia's Wagner & Wage Proxy War In Kashmir <a href="https://www.eurasianti">https://www.eurasianti</a>	Euroasian Times	Guest Author	03/04/2023



	<a href="https://mes.com/meet-erdogans-private-army-sadat-that-looks-to-rival-russias/">mes.com/meet-erdogans-private-army-sadat-that-looks-to-rival-russias/</a>			
23	Fawzi Bookft...a new arm for Turkey in Libya <a href="https://www.eg24.news/2020/06/fawzi-bookft-a-new-arm-for-turkey-in-libya.html">https://www.eg24.news/2020/06/fawzi-bookft-a-new-arm-for-turkey-in-libya.html</a>	EG 24 News	Monia Ghanmi	06/28/2020
24	Militia Leaders in Benghazi (2013, December 28) <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/29/world/middleeast/militia-leaders-in-benghazi.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/29/world/middleeast/militia-leaders-in-benghazi.html</a>			12/28/2013
25	Turkey Sends Mercenaries Militants of different nationalities to Libya: Reports <a href="https://english.alarabiya.net/News/north-africa/2020/07/13/Turkey-sends-mercenaries-militants-of-different-nationalities-to-Libya-Reports">https://english.alarabiya.net/News/north-africa/2020/07/13/Turkey-sends-mercenaries-militants-of-different-nationalities-to-Libya-Reports</a>	Al Arabiya News	Tamara Abueish	07/13/2020
26	SADAT: the horsemen of apocalypse? <a href="https://www.duvarenglish.com/columns/2020/02/22/sadat-the-horsemen-of-the-apocalypse">https://www.duvarenglish.com/columns/2020/02/22/sadat-the-horsemen-of-the-apocalypse</a>	duvaR.english – Turkey's own independent gazette	Zafer Yorük	02/22/2020
27	The Role of Turkish Security Companies in Africa; Incentives and Risks of Expansion <a href="https://epc.ae/details/brief/the-role-of-turkish-security-companies-in-">https://epc.ae/details/brief/the-role-of-turkish-security-companies-in-</a>	Emirates Policy Center (EPC)	Hamdi Bashir	08/23/2020

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	<a href="#">africa-incentives-and-risks-of-expansion</a>			
28	<p>Commentary – Libyan Jihadist cells in Turkey protected by Erdogan regime</p> <p><a href="https://stockholmcf.org/commentary-libyan-jihadist-cells-in-turkey-protected-by-erdogan-regime">https://stockholmcf.org/commentary-libyan-jihadist-cells-in-turkey-protected-by-erdogan-regime</a></p>	Stockholm Center for Freedom	Abdullah Bozkurt	05/26/2017
29	<p>Turkey’s Islamic defense consultancy take on West</p> <p><a href="https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211022-turkey-s-islamic-defence-consultancy-takes-on-west">https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211022-turkey-s-islamic-defence-consultancy-takes-on-west</a></p>	France 24 (Live News)	Unknown	10/22/2021
30	<p>Nagorno-Karabakh’s Syrian Mercenaries  Turkish government continues recruitment in complete secrecy, number of fighters in Azerbaijan jumps to 1,650 with over 125 killed so far</p> <p><a href="https://www.syriaahr.com/en/188272/">https://www.syriaahr.com/en/188272/</a></p>	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights	Unknown	10/15/2020
31	<p>Joint Motion for Resolution on the Syrian Conflict – 10 years after uprising</p> <p><a href="https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088_EN.html">https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088_EN.html</a></p>	European Parliament	Unknown	03/11/2021
32	<p>Margaryan, M. (2020, December 14) Letter dated 10 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United</p>		Margaryan, M.	12/14/2020

	Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council- 75 <sup>th</sup> Session			
33	Police of Armenia Interpol Report		N/A	12/24/2020
34	Republic of Armenia's Investigative Committee's November 8, 2020 charges against Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim			
35	Involvement of armed terrorists and mercenaries is proved by sufficient evidence – Prosecution <a href="https://armenpress.am/en/article/1036107">https://armenpress.am/en/article/1036107</a>	ArmenPress		11/27/2020
36	Treasury Sanctions Two Syria-Based Militias Responsible for Serious Human Rights Abuses in Northern Syria (2023, August 17) <a href="https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1699">https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1699</a>	Press Release	U.S. Department of The Treasury	08/17/2023
37	February 23, 2021 decision of Judge M. Martirosyan regarding Criminal Defendant Muhrab Muhammad al-Shker's mediation, case number 69108320			
38	Syrian militant detained in Armenia says Suleyman-Shah chief Abu Hamsha brought them via Turkey	ArmenPress		11/1/2020

	<a href="https://armenpress.am/en/article/1033493">https://armenpress.am/en/article/1033493</a>			
39	Death of Syrian mercenaries show how Turkey, Russia could get sucked into Nagorno-Karabakh conflict <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794_story.html</a>	The Washington Post	Kareem Fahim, Isabelle Khurshudyan & Zakaria Zakaria	10/14/2020
40	SNA mercenaries in Azerbaijan: the Visual Evidence <a href="https://akmckeeper.com/2020/10/26/sna-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-the-visual-evidence/">https://akmckeeper.com/2020/10/26/sna-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-the-visual-evidence/</a>	Akmckeeper.com	Alexander Mckeeper	10/26/2020
41	Syrians Make Up Turkey's Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabakh <a href="https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/">https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/</a>	Foreignpolicy.com	Liz Cookman	10/05/2020
42	The Syrian mercenaries used as 'cannon fodder' in Nagorno Karabakh <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-55238803">https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-55238803</a>	BBC News	Ed Butler	12/9/2020
43	Important information about SADAT emerged <a href="https://www.ulusal.com.tr/gundem/sadat-ile-ilgili-onemli-bilgiler-ortaya-cikti-h5201.html">https://www.ulusal.com.tr/gundem/sadat-ile-ilgili-onemli-bilgiler-ortaya-cikti-h5201.html</a>	ULUSAL.com	Unknown	11/28/2021

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44	Light's Dark Slander; Aydinlik's DARK Slander <a href="https://www.sadat.com.tr/tr/hakkimizda/haberler/213-aydinlik-in-karanlik-iftirasi.html">https://www.sadat.com.tr/tr/hakkimizda/haberler/213-aydinlik-in-karanlik-iftirasi.html</a>	Company website	Unknown	09/06/2012
45	Has SADAT become Erdogan's Revolutionary Guards? <a href="https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/middle-east/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/">https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/middle-east/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/</a>	American Enterprise Institute (AEI)	Michael Rubin	05/30/2017
46	Turkey's Post-Coup Purge and Erdogan's Private Army <a href="https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/13/turkeys-post-coup-purge-and-erdogans-private-army-sadat-perincek-gulen/">https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/07/13/turkeys-post-coup-purge-and-erdogans-private-army-sadat-perincek-gulen/</a>	Foreignpolicy.com	Leela Jacinto	07/13/2017
47	Erdogan nurtures elite mercenary force to rival Russia's Wagner Group <a href="https://www.syriahr.com/en/185997/">https://www.syriahr.com/en/185997/</a>	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights	Unknown	09/28/2020
48	Making Sense of SADAT, Turkey's Private Military Company <a href="https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/making-sense-of-sadat-turkeys-private-military-company/">https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/making-sense-of-sadat-turkeys-private-military-company/</a>	War on the rocks	Matt Powers	10/08/2021
49	Erdogan's Shadow Army: The Influence of "Sadat," Turkey's Private Defense Group <a href="https://jiss.org.il/en/spyer-erdogans-shadow-army-influence-sadat-">https://jiss.org.il/en/spyer-erdogans-shadow-army-influence-sadat-</a>	The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security	Jonathan Spyer	04/24/2018

	<a href="#">turkeys-private-defense-group/</a>			
50	Erdogan is setting up a guard regiment for himself <a href="https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/586244/Erdogan_kendine_muhafiz_alayi_kuruyor.html">https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/586244/Erdogan_kendine_muhafiz_alayi_kuruyor.html</a>	Cumhuriyet	Cigdem Toker	08/17/2016
51	Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization (2023, January 26). <a href="https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1220">https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1220</a>	Press Release	U.S. Department of The Treasury	
52	CRU Report – Strategies of Turkish proxy warfare in northern Syria <a href="https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2019/strategies-of-turkish-proxy-warfare-in-northern-syria/">https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2019/strategies-of-turkish-proxy-warfare-in-northern-syria/</a>	Clingendael	Engin Yüksel	11/2019
53	Turkey’s Operation in Syria’s Afrin: The key players <a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/1/22/turkeys-operation-in-syrias-afrin-the-key-players">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/1/22/turkeys-operation-in-syrias-afrin-the-key-players</a>	Al Jazeera	Unknown/ Al Jazeera Staff	01/22/2018
54	The Militarization and Exploitation of Northern Syria, . <a href="http://www.hscentre.org/uncategorized/militarization-exploitation-northern-syria/">http://www.hscentre.org/uncategorized/militarization-exploitation-northern-syria/</a>	Human Security Center	Sam Biden	05/06/2024
55	Syria Opposition Receives Military Training from Turkey	AL Monitor.com	Khaled al-Khateb	04/25/2019

	Ahead of Potential Battle Against SDF <a href="https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/04/syria-fsa-turkey-army-training-battle-kurds-sdf.html">https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/04/syria-fsa-turkey-army-training-battle-kurds-sdf.html</a>			
56	Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic – 43 <sup>rd</sup> Session <a href="https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/57">https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/57</a>	UN, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 43 <sup>rd</sup> Session	N/A	01/28/2020
57	Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic – 45 <sup>th</sup> Session <a href="https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/45/31">https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/45/31</a>	UN, General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 45 <sup>th</sup> Session	N/A	08/14/2020
58	The State of the Occupation: Documenting Rights Abuses in the Turkish Occupied Regions of North and East Syria <a href="https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2021/06/state-of-the-occupation-a-new-quarterly-report-on-rights-violations-in-turkish-occupied-nes/">https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2021/06/state-of-the-occupation-a-new-quarterly-report-on-rights-violations-in-turkish-occupied-nes/</a>	Rojava Information Center	Unknown	06/2021
59	Syria: Damning evidence of war crimes and other violations by Turkish forces and their allies <a href="https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/syria-damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-and-other-">https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/syria-damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-and-other-</a>	Amnesty International	N/A	10/18/2019

	<a href="#">violations-by-turkish-forces-and-their-allies/</a>			
60	Video Evidence Sheds Light on Executions Near Turkey-Syria Border <a href="https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/10/31/video-evidence-sheds-light-on-executions-near-turkey-syria-border/">https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/10/31/video-evidence-sheds-light-on-executions-near-turkey-syria-border/</a>	Bellingcat	Eliot Higgins	10/31/2019
61	<a href="http://ishgal.com/turkey-s-syrian-mercenaries-in-karabakh-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up">http://ishgal.com/turkey-s-syrian-mercenaries-in-karabakh-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up</a>	ISHGAL	Lindsey Snell	09/30/2020
62	Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey's ambition <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition</a>	The Guardian	Bethan McKernan	09/28/2020
63	Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 26 September 2019 <a href="https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/42/9">https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/42/9</a>	United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council – 42 <sup>nd</sup> Session	N/A	10/04/2019
64	Second Interim Report – Updated Edition on the Azerbaijani Atrocities Against The Artsakh Population in September- October 2020 <a href="https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/735">https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/735</a>	The Republic of Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman	N/A	10/18/2020



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65	Nagorno-Karabakh: at least three Syrian fighters killed <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/nagorno-karabakh-at-least-three-syrian-fighters-killed">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/nagorno-karabakh-at-least-three-syrian-fighters-killed</a>	The Guardian	Bethan McKernan and Michael Safi	09/30/2020
66	Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan, two fighters say <a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J25A">https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J25A</a>	Reuters.com	Reuters Staff	09/28/2020
67	'Syrian Mercenaries' Sentenced To Life In Prison Free Europe/Freedom Radio. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31237788.html">https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31237788.html</a>	Azatutyum	Bulghadarian, N.	05/04/2021
68	Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone must be withdrawn- UN experts <a href="https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494">https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494</a>	UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner	N/A	11/11/2020
69	Treasury Sanctions Wagner Group-linked Companies in the Central African Republic (2024, May 30). <a href="https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2384">https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2384</a>	Press Release	U.S. Department of The Treasury	

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# Exhibit 1

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## SADAT International Defense Consultancy

SADAT Defense is the first and the only company in Turkey, that internationally provides consultancy and military training services at the international defense and interior security sector.

SADAT Defense was founded, under the presidency of Brigadier General (Retired) Adnan TANRIVERDI, by 23 Officers and NCOs retired from various units of Turkish Armed Forces and began its activities after the official declaration of "articles of incorporation" by the 28th of February, 2012 dated and 8015 numbered issue of "Turkish Trade Registry Gazette".

SADAT International Defense Consultancy Construction Industry and Trade Inc. offers services in three main areas: Consultancy, Training and Supply.

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SADAT International Defense Consultancy Inc.  
about a week ago

صادات الدفاعية - برامج تدريب وحدات الشرطة

تتمتع صادات الدفاعية بالإمكانية والقدرة على تقديم تدريبات أساسية وتخصصية وكثيفة في كل مجال تحتاجه قوات الشرطة للدول الصديقة، وحسن أوضاعها، بواسطة الفرق التي تشكلها عن طريق الاختيار من بين طاقمها التدريبي الواسع.

أعدت صادات الدفاع وناقى تدريبية شاملة، بما في ذلك خطة التدريب والبرنامج ومذكرات محاضرات المعلم والمتدرب، والتي ستكون ضرورية لإنتاج وتنفيذ الدورات المتعلقة فرع وشعبة من تشكيلات الشرطة، وجعلها جاهزة للاستخدام في الدورات التي من ... See more

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SADAT Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Melih Tanrıverdi ÜlkeTV'de Merak Edilen Soruları Yanıtladı

SADAT Aleyhinde Kasıtlı Karalama Yapılıyor

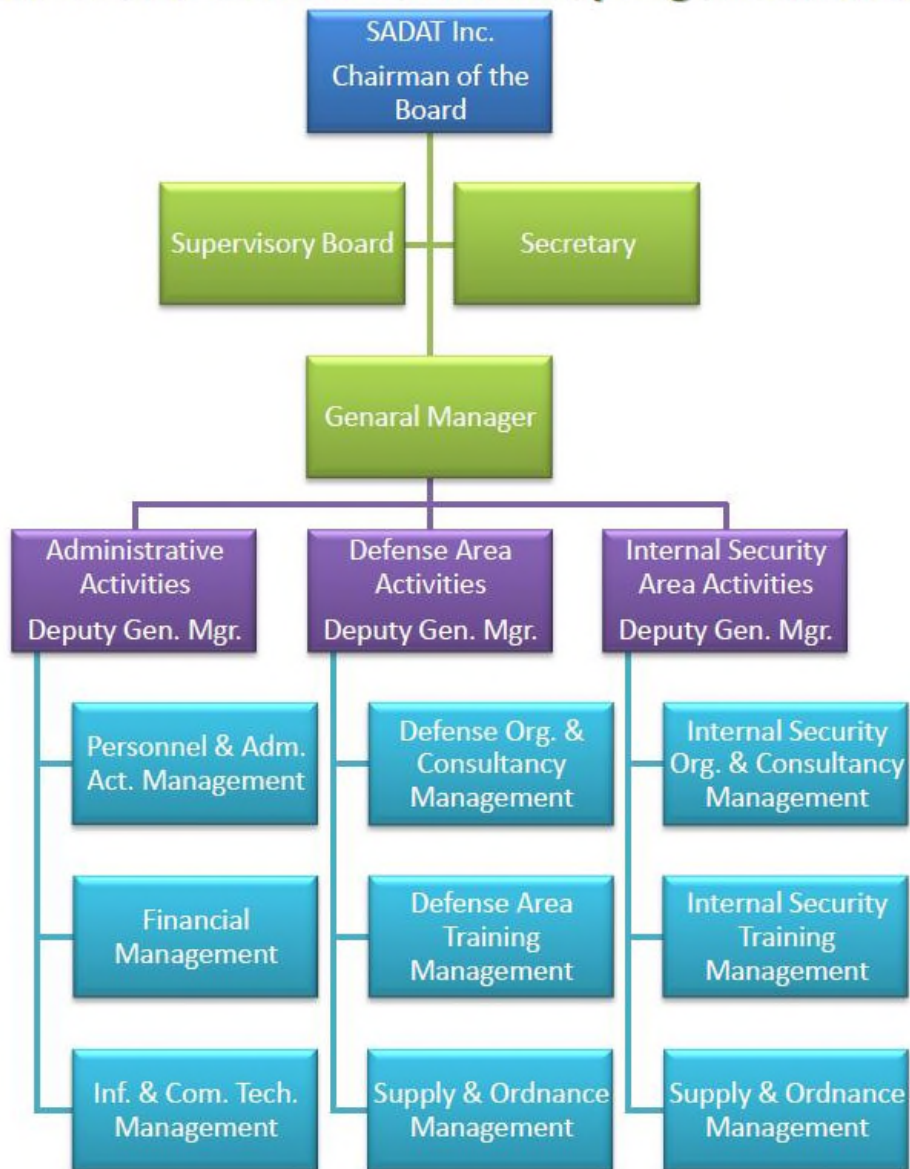
<https://www.sadat.com.tr/en/?Itemid=>

# Exhibit 2



# Organization Chart

# SADAT International Defense Consultancy Organization Chart



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## Services

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### Consultancy

- For Military
- For Interior Security

### Training

- For Military
- For Interior Security

### Ordnance

- For Military
- For Interior Security
- Maintenance Repair

## Sample Training Programmes

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### Main Programmes

- General Training Programmes
- Training Programmes for Land Forces
- Training Programmes for Naval Forces
- Training Programmes for Air Forces
- Training Programmes for Police Forces

## Products

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### Military Logistic System Solutions

- Armory Systems
- Training Simulation Concepts
- Shooting Range Systems

## Turn-key Solutions

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### Special Forces Training Center

### Military Standardisation and Metrology Centers

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### Our Mission

### Our Vision

### Why "SADAT Defense"?

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# Exhibit 3



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## DEFENCE

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# SADAT: Turkey's Paramilitary Wings Take Flight In Africa

April 16, 2021  
Eren Ersozoglu

This Grey Dynamics African Intelligence Article analyses the [SADAT](#) paramilitary group, and the political de facto implications placed on [Turkish-African](#) relations and security amid an increase in cooperation between Turkey and African states.

- Turkey's private military contractor, [SADAT](#), has been conducting military training programs in Africa since 2013.
- With an increase in military deals with African nations and the growth of Turkey's economic, political, and social footprint on the continent, SADAT can operate without the constraints of hampering government entities.
- [Retired Gen. Adnan Tanrverdi](#), the founder of SADAT, has expressed that Turkey should support Islamist groups against state terrorism in countries such as Nigeria, Mali, and the Central African



## Sadat Inc

SADAT Inc. International Defense Consultancy is a Turkish private security contractor, founded by former Gen. Adnan Tanrıverdi in 2012. Tanrıverdi had been forced into retirement in 1996, due to Islamist affiliations. Reports allege that SADAT is present in Syria and Iraq, in the form of paramilitary troops, training, and military ordnance procurement. There is a close relationship between SADAT and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

Many voices that are against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) have raised concerns regarding the relationship. They believe that SADAT is a potential [proxy force being utilized by Erdogan to extend the Turkish sphere of influence and interests globally](#). A lot of SADAT personnel are Turkish military experts, who have been forced to leave the army because of extremist views.

It is important to note that Tanrıverdi was appointed as Erdogan's official chief advisor, following the 15th July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey. He held the post up until January 2020. Tanrıverdi had also stated that his company

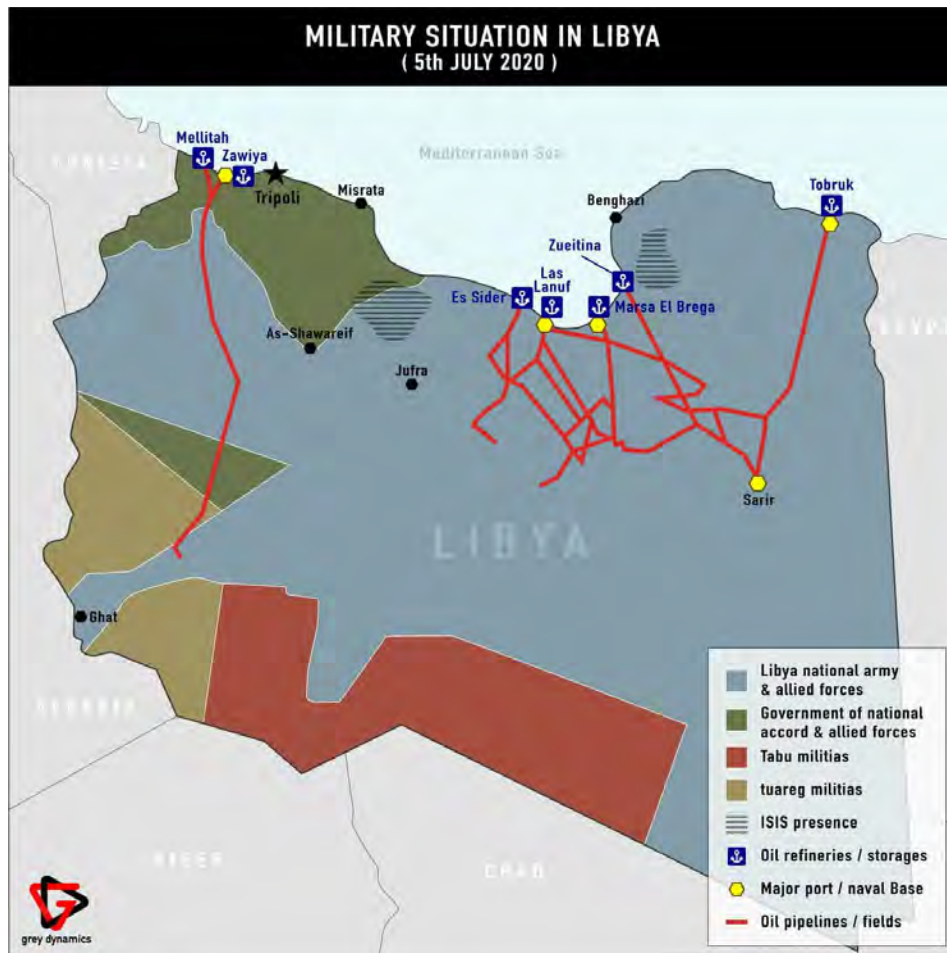
was paving the way for the messianic figure of Imam Mahdi: it is believed by some Muslims that Mahdi will arrive to redeem mankind.

There are concerning allegations that SADAT has been aiding and is involved in the training of Salafists in the Middle East and Africa. This would be in line with Tanriverdi's views, which were expressed in *Yeni Akit*, a pro-Erdogan newspaper, sympathetic to Islamic extremist groups. An alleged 3,000 foreign fighters operating in Syria and Libya have received training from SADAT. [Michael Rubin](#), from the American Enterprise Institute, argues that ISIS and al-Nusra members were part of the SADAT training operations. This creates an asymmetrical warfare tool, noticeable in Libya, and a growing Turkish presence in the rest of Africa.

## Libya

On November 27, 2019, Turkey signed a military cooperation agreement with Libya which includes the provision of "guest personnel." SADAT is implicated in the reports of alleged Syrian fighters in Libya, supporting the [UN-recognised Government of National Accord \(GNA\)](#). This places Turkey's backed SADAT forces against the Russian [Wagner](#) Group, which is allegedly backing Field-Marshal Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) with mercenaries on the battlefield.

A significant force, trained by SADAT, was sent to Libya which some claim consisted of former Daesh and Muslim Brotherhood members. The [GNA](#) consists of a mainly Muslim Brotherhood ideology of members. Stimulated by a flow of fighters and Turkey's drone army, the GNA has turned the tide in Libya.



## Sadat Expanding Network

Turkey has an expanding [network in Africa](#) involving more than 35 countries and a growing number of military training agreements. SADAT's presence has been reported in the Suakin port in Sudan, a potential strategic outpost for Turkey, signalling a revival of Turkey's influence and intentions in Africa. (The port was once a historic Ottoman port.) More recently in 2020, Turkey secured closer military cooperation deals with Uganda and Guinea.

Tanriverdi has declared an intent to work closer with African countries for military training but has also previously argued that Turkey should support Islamic groups against state terrorism: "In addition, I think that discriminatory and foreign-backed state terrorism targeting Islamic groups in some critical regions of Africa such as the Central African



Republic, Mali, and Nigeria, and preventive measures [to protect those groups] should be studied carefully,” Tanrıverdi said.

Yet, it is also facing obstacles: Turkey is currently being [investigated](#) by the Nigerian Armed Forces over allegations that it supplied military equipment to Boko Haram. It is almost certain that SADAT is loyal to Erdogan’s regime. What these indicators suggest is that Turkey’s paramilitary wings in Africa have well and truly taken off, for better or worse.

*This article was first published on 02-07-2020*

Author

**Eren Ersozoglu**



Eren Ersozoglu is an analyst at Grey

Dynamics. A former history graduate from Coventry University with a focus on links between terrorism and organised crime and intelligence and security studies graduate at Brunel University.

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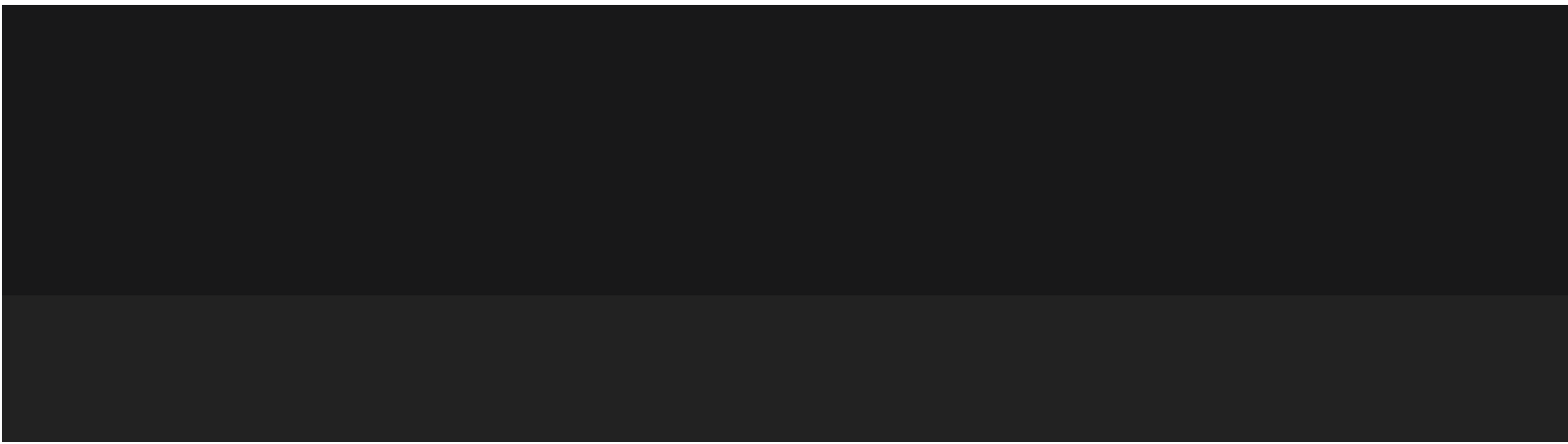
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# Exhibit 4

# Turkish paramilitary firm Sadat's CEO admits working with Turkish intelligence agency MIT

by [Abdullah Bozkurt](#) — May 2, 2021



Sadat's headquarters in Istanbul.

**Abdullah Bozkurt/Stockholm**

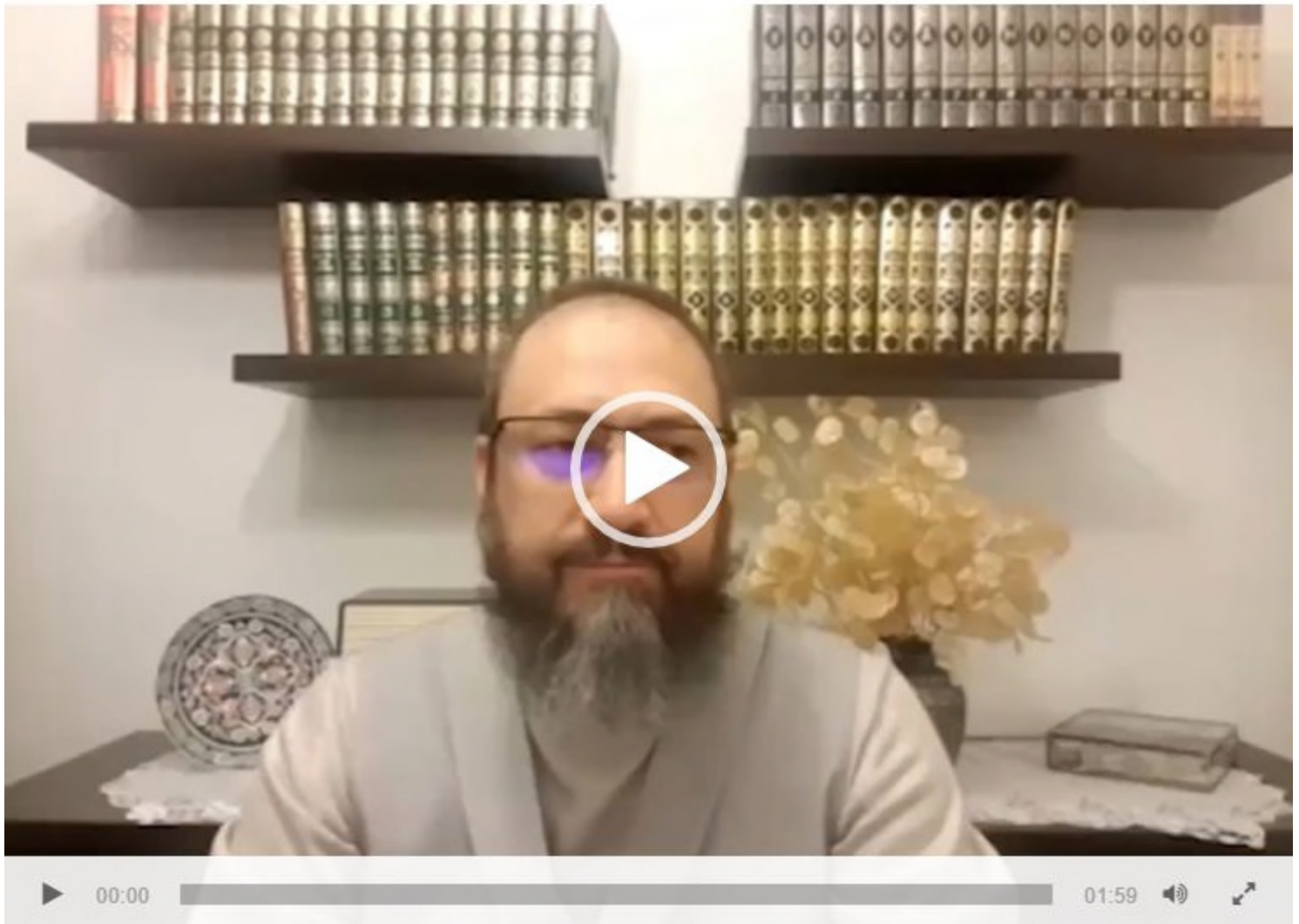
The CEO of Turkish private military contractor Sadat, a paramilitary unit loyal to the Islamist president of Turkey, admitted publicly that the firm works with Turkish intelligence agency MIT and

coordinates actions with Turkish diplomats and defense officials.

In a video obtained by Nordic Monitor from a radio interview, Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi was recorded as saying that the firm communicates with the spy agency when it considers requests from a foreign entity to provide military, defense and technical assistance.

“We do the following when we receive an offer that meets our own service provision criteria. We communicate the offer from a country to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. We also provide information to the National Intelligence Organization [MIT] and the Ministry of Defense about the request and ask for their views. This is the way we work,” said Tanrıverdi in an interview with a local radio station on January 22, 2021.

Tanrıverdi is chairman of the board of Sadat Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi, a for-profit company that was set up by his father Adnan Tanrıverdi and his associates on February 22, 2012. His father is a former military officer who served as a chief advisor to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for years.



The company's establishment coincided with the start of the Arab revolutions during which Turkey's Islamist ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) invested in political, diplomatic and financial as well as military capital to prop up political Islamist groups in the Middle East and North Africa. Sadat came in handy in providing defense counseling, tactical advice and military procurement in parallel with Erdoğan's ambition to bring Islamists to power in the MENA region.

Melih Tanrıverdi claimed Sadat was not established to make money, although trade registry data shows it was a commercial firm with capital and shareholders. "The efforts we have expended were for a mission. I mean, the goal is not to make money," Tanrıverdi said, adding that "Turkey is moving towards becoming a global power." He praised Erdoğan's leadership in this mission and described the president as the biggest factor in Turkey's military engagements on several continents.

Tanrıverdi confirmed allegations raised by the Turkey's opposition lawmakers who were asking about Sadat's links to the intelligence agency. The opposition also submitted parliamentary questions to the government about the alleged role of Sadat in training Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Syrian al-Qaeda group Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Nusra Front) fighters. Moreover, Sadat was accused of training jihadists sent by Turkey to fight for the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya.

*Sadat's trade registry filings when it was first established in 2012:*

Loading... See Page 7 Below
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His father Adnan Tanrıverdi is an important figure in Erdoğan's inner circle. Although he left his official position as chief military advisor to Erdoğan in January 2020, he still plays a crucial role in the government's defense and military strategy. He announced during the 2019 Islamic Union Congress that his organization had been working to pave the way for the long-awaited mahdi (prophesied redeemer of Islam), for whom the entire Muslim world is waiting. The implication was that President Erdoğan is the expected leader and mahdi.





Tanrıverdi, founder of Sadat, visited Libya in May 2013 and met with Libyan military officials.

Sadat has been involved in a number of Arab and African nations, providing military training and offering counseling in military and defense strategies. It helps promote the Turkish defense industry, which by and large is controlled by Erdoğan's family and associates. It has played a critical role in the massive purge of pro-Western officers from the Turkish military since 2016 during which 80 percent of all flag officers were dismissed and/or jailed on fabricated charges.

When it was first established in Istanbul in 2012 with 23 shareholders and led by Adnan Tanrıverdi, the scope of its business activities was listed in extensive detail, including the purchase of all kinds of military and defense equipment including planes and ships. The company said it would seek to protect the interests of Turkey when offering technical, military and defense counseling services or purchasing arms and ammunition. It had an initial paid-in capital of 643,000 Turkish lira (\$367,000), which appears to be a modest figure for a company involved in the multi-billion dollar military and defense industry market.

*Sadat's shareholders as of 2020:*

Loading... See Last Page

Two months later, Sadat amended its articles of incorporation to have a free hand in its activities. On June 28, 2016 Sadat increased its operating capital to 880,000 Turkish lira. The capital was further increased to 1,584,000 Turkish lira in November 2020. The company moved its office to its current location in Istanbul's Beylikdüzü district in May 2019.

The board of directors comprises Adnan Tanrıverdi, his son Ali Kamil Melih, Mehmet Zelka, Mehmet Naci Efe and Haluk Yıldırım. Tanrıverdi and his son hold the majority stake in the company.

Forty-seven other shareholders were listed as follows as of November 2020:

Ali Özden, Mehmet Demirtaş, Mustafa Nejat Güvenç, Mustafa Bozgeyik, Mehmet Emin Koçak, Kemal Şahin, Mehmet Zelka, Reşat Fidan, Mustafa Başaran, Ersan Ergür, Hulusi Gülen, Hayati Atalay, Ali Coşar, Ahmet Cengiz Tangören, Ahmet Taylan, Cengiz Uzun, Yakup Evirgen, Yahya Öztürk, Nurettin Yavuz, Mehmet İlhan, Mustafa Hacımustafaoğulları, Eyyup İsmail Kılınç, Mehmet Abdullah Kaplan, Osman Kaçmaz, Zafer Şahin, Çetin Çanak, Orhan Adıyaman, Mustafa Erol, Sabri Balaman, Coşkun Yüksel, Mehmet Çakiroğlu, Mehmet Yüksel Güneş, Ömer Yenici, Selahattin Arslan, Yavuz Sulumeşe, Ahmet Türkan, Fethi Kiran, Gürcan Onat, İrfan Çalışkan, Mehmet İnkaya, Sadı Paksoy, Yavuz Zülükaroğlu, Hayrettin Kocaoğlu, Said Ceyhan, Sefa Göze, İsmail Kaplan and Tansel Cavit Kulak.



Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi, the CEO of Sadat.

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## Abdullah Bozkurt

abdullah.bozkurt@yahoo.com

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**ŞİRKETLER****İSTANBUL**

**İstanbul Ticaret Sicili**  
**Memurluğundan**  
**Sicil Numarası:809202**

**Ticaret Ünvanı:**  
**EURO İNVEST CAPITAL**  
**DIŞ TİCARET LİMİTED**  
**ŞİRKETİ**

**Ticari İkametgahı:** İstanbul  
Bakırköy Yeşilköy Şevketiye  
Mh.Havaalanı Kav. Business P.B-2  
Blk.12 N.371

Ticari Merkezi ile sicil numarası ve ünvanı yukarıda yazılı ve 22.02.2012 tarihinden beri kurulmuş olan limited şirketin İstanbul 10.Noterliğince 21.02.2012 tarih 4481 sayılı ile düzenlenen esas mukavelesinin tescil ve ilanı istenmiş, aynı noterliğin 21.02.2012 tarih 4482 sayılı ile onaylı imza beyannamesi memuriyetimize verilmiş olmakla, 6762 sayılı Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine uygun olarak ve memurluğumuzdaki vesikalara dayanılarak 22.02.2012 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

**Euro Invest Capital Dış**  
**Ticaret Limited Şirketi**  
**Ana Sözleşmesi**

**Kurucular**  
**Madde 1**

Aşağıda adları, soyadları, ikametgahları ve uyrukları yazılı kurucular arasında TTK hükümlerine göre bir Limited Şirket kurulmuştur.

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6583 Vergi Sicil Numarası, Bakü  
Şehir Bulvarı, No:6 Ml.2.3  
Baku/Azerbaycan,  
2-Hasan Gültekin, T.C Uyrukları,  
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Cad. Erzurum Sit A1 Blk.  
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**Şirketin Ünvanı**  
**Madde:2**

Şirketin ünvanı EURO Invest  
Capital Dış Ticaret Limited  
Şirketi'dir.

**Amaç Ve Konu**  
**Madde:3**

Şirketin amaç ve konusu başlıca  
şunlardır

1-Her nevi tekstil ve tekstil  
ürünleri ile deri ürünleri, her nevi  
kumaş örme iplik elyaf her türlü iç  
ve dış giyim mamul ve ham  
maddelerinin alımı, satımı, ithalat  
ve ihracatını yapmak,

2-Her türlü endüstriyel dikiş ve  
sanayi iplikleri alımı, satımı, ithalat  
ve ihracatını yapmak,

3-Her türlü petrol, petrol  
türevleri alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak.

4-Her türlü demir-çelik ürünleri  
alımı, satımı, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

5-Her türlü elektrikli ve  
elektronik kontrol aletleri,  
elektronik devre elemanları,  
iletken, yarı iletken ve entegre  
devre elemanları, mikroçipler ve  
bunların birleştirme elemanlarının  
alım, satımı ile ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

6-Her türlü gıda maddelerini  
almak, satmak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

7-Her türlü İnşaat malzemeleri  
almak, satmak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

8-Bilimum kimyasal maddeler  
ve her türlü yardımcı kimyevi  
maddeler ve bunların üretiminde  
kullanılan mamul, yarı mamul,  
ham maddeleri almak, satmak,  
ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak,

9-Her türlü sanayi ve iş  
makineleri,cihazları ile bunlara ait  
yedek parçaları, teçhizat ve  
ekipmanlarının alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak,

10-Mobilya ve dekorasyon  
malzemeleri alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak.

11-Her türlü orman ürünlerini  
almak, satmak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak.

12-Her türlü motorlu taşıt  
ticareti, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

13-Her türlü elektrik ve  
elektronik ev aletleri alımı, satımı,  
ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak,

14-Lastik, kauçuk ve plastik ile  
ilgili her türlü mamul ve  
malzemenin alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak.

15-Her türlü bakliyat, hububat  
ve her türlü tarım ürünlerinin  
alımını, satımını, pazarlamasını,  
ithalatını, ihracatını ve dahili  
ticaretini yapmak. Her çeşit tahıl  
ürünlerinin toptan ve perakende  
alım satımını, ithalatını ve  
ihracatını yapmak

16-Şirket mevzuunun icap  
ettireceği makine ve tesisler ile  
bilimleli sanai ve ticari işlerin  
tahakkuku için yerli ve yabancı  
hakiki ve hükmi şahıslar ile  
mevzuatlar çerçevesinde süreli ve  
süresiz her neviden ortaklık tesis  
edebilir, bunların Türkiye  
dahilinde distribütörlüğünü yahut  
mümessillliğini yapabilir, yurt  
içinde ve yurt dışında kurulmuş  
veya kurulacak ortaklıklara iştirak  
edebilir, her neviden ortaklıklara,  
aracılık yapmama kaydı ile hisse  
senetlerini, intifa senetlerini  
tahvillerini satın alabilir, devir ve  
ferah edebilir. Şirket gereğinde her  
türlü kefalet altına girebilir.

17-Şirket mevzuunun  
gerektirdiği patent, ihtira berati,  
marka, ustalık (know-how),  
ruhsatname ve diğer fikri ve sanai  
mülkiyet satın alabilir satabilir  
devir ve ferah edebilir, bunlar  
üzerinde lisans anlaşmaları  
yapabilir.

18-Şirket iç ve dış piyasalardan  
uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli istikrazlar  
akdetmek, emval ve kefalet  
kredileri temin etmek, yatırım ve  
teşvik kredileri almak ve bilimum  
banka kredileri, akreditif kredileri,  
esham ve tahvil üzerine krediler,

esnet üzerinde avans kredileri ve  
açık krediler temin edebilir.

19-Şirket konusu ile ilgili resmi,  
özel kuruluşlara veya şahıslara  
karşı ihalelere katılır taahhütlerde  
bulunabilir.

20-Şirket ticaret siciline tescil ve  
Türkiye Ticaret Sicil gazetesinde  
ilan ettirmek, şartıyla yurt içinde ve  
yurt dışında şubeler, temsilcilikler,  
show-roomlar, çeşitli iş yerleri ve  
bunlara mümessillikler açabilir.

21-Şirket amacını  
gerçekleştirmek için her türlü  
gayrimenkul alabilir, satabilir,  
kiralar, kiraya verir, bunlar  
üzerinde aynı ve şahsi her türlü  
hakları tesis edebilir, ipotek  
alabilir, ipotek verebilir ve  
ipotekleri fek edebilir. Şirket  
gayrimenkulleri üzerinde irtifak,  
intifa, sükna, gayrimenkul  
mükellefiyeti, kat irtifakı, kat  
mülkiyeti tesis edebilir. Her türlü  
gayrimenkullere ilgili olarak tapu  
daireleri nezdinde cins tashihi,  
ifraz, tevhit, taksim, parselasyon  
ile ilgili her nevi muamele ve  
tasarrufları gerçekleştirebilir.

**Şirketin Merkezi**  
**Madde:4**

Şirketin'in merkezi İstanbul İli,  
Bakırköy İlçesi'ndedir. Adresi;  
Şevketiye Mahallesi, Havaalanı  
Kavşağı, Business Park, B-2 Blok,  
Kat:12 No:371 Yeşilköy-  
Bakırköy/İstanbul'dur.

Adres değişikliğinde yeni adres,  
Ticaret Siciline tescil ve Türkiye  
Ticaret Sicil Gazetesinde ilan  
ettirilir. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş  
adrese yapılan tebliğat şirkete  
yapılmış sayılır. Tescil ve ilan  
edilmiş adresten ayrılması  
rağmen, yeni adresini süresi içinde  
tescil ettirmemiş şirket için bu  
durum fesih sebebi sayılır.

**Süre**  
**Madde:5**

-Şirketin süresi tescil ve ilan  
tarihinden başlamak üzere 99  
(Doksan dokuz) yıldır.

**Sermaye**  
**Madde:6**

-Şirketin sermayesi 100.000,00  
(Yüzbin) TL'dir bu sermayenin;  
50.000,00 (Ellibin)TL. si  
GASAN MAMEDOV,  
50.000,00 (Ellibin)TL. si Hasan  
Gültekin  
tarafından muazadan ari olarak  
ve tamamen taahhüt  
edilmiştir.Sermayenin 1/4'ü şirket  
kuruluşunun tescil tarihinden  
itibaren en geç üç ay içinde, kalanı  
ise 20.02.2015 tarihinde  
ödeneyecektir.

**İlan**  
**Madde:7**

Şirkete ait ilanlar, T.T.K. 37.  
Mad. Hükümleri saklı kalmak  
şartıyla, şirket merkezinin  
bulunduğu yerde en az bir gazete  
ile asgari yedi gün evvel yapılır.

**Şirketin İdaresi**  
**Madde:8**

Şirketin işleri ve muameleleri  
ortaklar kurulu tarafından seçilecek

bir veya birkaç müdür tarafından  
yürütülür.

İlk 1(Bir) yıl için Şirket  
Ortaklarından Hasan Gültekin  
şirket müdürü seçilmiştir.

**Temsil**  
**Madde:9**

-Şirketi müdürler temsil ve ilzam  
ederler. Şirketi temsil ve ilzam  
edecek imzalar ortaklar kurulu  
tarafından tesbit, tescil ve ilan  
ettirilir. İlk 1 yıl için müdür seçilen  
Hasan Gültekin müferit imzası ile  
temsil ve ilzama yetkili kılınmıştır.

**Hesap Dönemi**  
**Madde:10**

Şirketin hesap yılı 1 Ocak-31  
aralık tarihleri arasındadır. İlk hesap  
yılı tescil tarihinden itibaren 31  
aralık gününe kadardır.

**Yedek Akçe**  
**Madde:11**

Safı kârdan her yıl öncelikle %5  
ihtiyat akçesi ayrılır. İhtiyat akçesi  
şirket ödenmiş sermayesinin  
%20'sine çıkıncaya kadar ayrılır.  
Kanuni ve ihtiyari yedek akçeler,  
kanun ve bu ana sözleşme  
hükümlerine göre ayrılması  
gerek miktarda safı kârdan  
ayrılmadıkça hissedarlara kâr  
dağıtılamaz.

**Karın Dağıtımı**  
**Madde:12**

Şirketin safı kârı, şirket adına  
yapılmış her türlü masrafların  
çıkarılmasından sonra kalan  
miktarıdır. Kanuni yedek akçe  
ayrıldıktan sonra kalan miktar  
ortaklar kurulunca alınacak karara  
göre hissedarlara hisseleri oranında  
dağıtılır.Ödenmiş sermayenin %5'i  
nisbetinde ilk temettü ayrılır.

**Kanuni Hükümler**  
**Madde:13**

Bu anasözleşmede bulunmayan  
hususlar hakkında T.T.K.  
Hükümleri uygulanır.

Hasan Gültekin imza  
Gasan Mamedov imza

(5/A)24/110459)

**İstanbul Ticaret Sicili**  
**Memurluğundan**

**Sicil Numarası:809300**

**Ticaret Ünvanı:**  
**SADAT ULUSLAR ARASI**  
**SAVUNMA DANIŞMANLIK**  
**İNŞAAT SANAYİ VE**  
**TİCARET ANONİM ŞİRKETİ**

**Ticari İkametgahı:**İstanbul  
Beylikdüzü Adnan Kahveci  
Mah.Caner Sok. No.3

Ticari Merkezi ile sicil numarası  
ve ünvanı yukarıda yazılı ve  
22.02.2011 tarihinden beri  
kurulmuş olan anonim şirketin  
Bakırköy 17.Noterliğince  
24.11.2011 tarih 23658 sayılı ile  
düzenlenen esas mukavelesinin,  
aynı noterliğince 22.02.2012 tarih

3732 sayılı ile düzenlenen düzeltme  
beyannamesinin tescil ve ilanı  
istenmiş, Bakırköy 17.Noterliğin  
24.11.2011 tarih 23657 sayılı ile  
onaylı imza beyannamesi  
memuriyetimize verilmiş olmakla,  
6762 sayılı Türk Ticaret Kanunu  
hükümlerine uygun olarak ve  
memurluğumuzdaki vesikalara  
dayanılarak 22.02.2012 tarihinde  
tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

**Sadat Uluslar Arası Savunma**  
**Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi Ve**  
**Ticaret Anonim Şirketi**  
**Ana Sözleşmesi**  
**Kuruluş**  
**Madde 1**

Aşağıda adları, soyadları,  
uyrukları, T.C.kimlik numaraları  
ve ikametgahları yazılı kurucular  
arasında anonim şirket  
kurulmuştur.

1.1. Adnan Tanrıverdi T.C.  
Uyrukları 37234816206  
Marmara Mahallesi, Önder  
Caddesi, No:4H/3  
Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

1.2. Mehmet Naci Efe T.C.  
Uyrukları 43738688232  
Atakent Mahallesi, Akdeniz  
Caddesi, Altan Erbulak Sokak  
No:16 Ümraniye/İstanbul

1.3. Mehmet Tek T.C. Uyrukları  
36589792616  
Atatürk Mahallesi, Ahmet Mert  
Sokak, No:5/17 Ümraniye/İstanbul

1.4. Nurettin Yavuz  
T.C.Uyrukları 23860602276  
Yakuplu Mahallesi, Gazi Emir  
Caddesi, Yeni Uluklar Sitesi, B  
Blok No:3/5 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

1.5. Yusuf Çağlayan  
T.C.Uyrukları 72889057208  
Şevket Mahallesi, Demet Sokak,  
Yücel Apartmanı, No:9/4  
Keçiören/İstanbul

1.6. Reşat Fidan T.C.Uyrukları  
11464782890  
Manyasızade Caddesi, No:49/6  
Fatih/İstanbul

1.7. Bülent Demir T.C.Uyrukları  
28736238740  
Başak Mahallesi, 1. Etap D:15  
Blok Kat:9 D:39  
Başakşehir/İstanbul

1.8. Seyda Ünlükül T.C.Uyrukları  
28598302658  
Yazıcızade Mahallesi, Miralay  
Şefik Aker Caddesi, Duygu  
Apartmanı, No:9  
Gelibolu/Çanakkale

1.9. Cengiz Uzun T.C.Uyrukları  
47245806332  
Başak Mahallesi, 4. Etap, 1.  
Kısım, K8 Blok D:7  
Başakşehir/İstanbul

1.10. Ersan Ergür T.C. Uyrukları  
17425939808  
Mehmet Akif Ersoy Caddesi,  
No:21 Yeşilyayla Durakkent Sitesi,  
C Blok, No:13 Başakşehir/İstanbul

1.11. Ünal İsgören T.C.Uyrukları  
34100397906  
Bağlarbaşı Mahallesi, Fevzullah  
Caddesi, No:109/2.  
Maltepe/İstanbul

1.12. Osman Kaçmaz  
T.C. Uyrukları  
26942205280  
İstiklal Mahallesi, Marmara  
Caddesi, No:7/15  
Ümraniye/İstanbul

1.13. Gürol Özşemeli T.C.  
Uyrukları 22984498130  
(Devamı 426. Sayfada)

(Baştarafı 425 - Sayfada)  
 Ulus Mahallesi, Orhanveli Caddesi, Balıoğlu Apartmanı, No:328/10 Kepez/Anafaya  
 1.14. Mustafa Hacımustafoğulları T.C. Uyruklu 41665714420  
 Çamlık Mahallesi, Akasya Sokak, No:4/3 Kurtköy/Pendik/İstanbul  
 1.15. Ahmet Türkân T.C. Uyruklu 11908851014  
 Başak Konutları, D.106 Blok D.16 Kağıthane/İstanbul  
 1.16. Fethi Kıran T.C. Uyruklu 68884071530  
 Esenkent Mahallesi, Elit Kent Sitesi, No:10 B-25/8 Esenyurt/İstanbul  
 1.17. Gürcan Onat T.C. Uyruklu 21176465080  
 Sangızel Caddesi, No:4/8 Fatih/İstanbul  
 1.18. Mustafa Erol T.C. Uyruklu 28264819718  
 Elmalıkent Mahallesi, Mandıra Caddesi, Demiral Sitesi, A-1 Blok D:18 Ümraniye/Çankırı  
 1.19. Mehmet Çakroğlu T.C. Uyruklu 10678750442  
 Dumlupınar Mahallesi, Altındağ Sokak, No:4/7 Pendik/İstanbul  
 1.20. Haluk Yıldırım T.C. Uyruklu 42442451972  
 Güzeluyurt, Hasan Kerim Caddesi, Mavi Işık Sitesi, B 1 Blok, D.23 Esenyurt/İstanbul  
 1.21. Mehmet Demirtaş T.C. Uyruklu 12718019212  
 Yakuplu Mahallesi, 194. Sokak, No:28/4 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul  
 1.22. Mehmet Zelka T.C. Uyruklu " 26536832038  
 Büyükeşhir Mahallesi, B:13 Blok, D:21 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul  
 1.23. Mehmet İlhan T.C. Uyruklu 24842259792  
 Başak Mahallesi, Ertuğrul Gazi Caddesi, No:18/A D:8 Başakşehir/İstanbul

**Sirketin Ünvanı**  
**Madde 2**  
 Sirketin ünvanı, "Sadat Uluslar Arası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi Ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi"dır.

**Amaç Ve Konu**  
**Madde 3**  
 3.1. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devletinin çıkarlarını gözeterek, ihtiyaç duyan dost ülkelere;savunma danışmanlığı, Güvenlik Güçlerinin organizasyonu, (Teşkilat, malzeme ve kadro), Güvenlik Güçlerinin eğitimi, (İlgili ülke, Türkiye veya üçüncü ülkelerde), Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyacağı silah, mühimmat, araç-gereç, kıyafet ve yiyeceklerin ilgili ülke, Türkiye ve üçüncü ülkelerden üretimi, alınsatış, tedarik ve temini için ihaleler açmak, ihalelere girmek, teklifler vermek, teklifler almak, ihalat ve ihracat yapmak, Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyduğu her türlü elektrik, elektronik, yazılım, donanım, bakım ve servis hizmetlerini vermek, Güvenlik Güçlerinin mevcut silah ve malzemelerinin yenileştirilmesi ve Silahlar kuvvetlerinin iskan ve eğitim için ihtiyaç duyulan tesislerin inşaatının yapılması.  
 3.2. Dost Ülkeler arasında savunma ve savunma sanayi işbirliği ortamını oluşturmak, bu

konularda danışmanlık yapmak;Türkiye savunma sanayi ürünlerine Pazar ortamı oluşturmak, ilgili konularda devletler arası organizasyonları sağlamak;  
 3.3. Amaca uygun her türlü hizmet ve malzemenin üretimini, toptan ve perakende alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını, pazarlama ve dağılımını yapmak, eğitimini vermek;  
 3.4. İlgili Ülkede, Türkiye'de ve üçüncü Ülkelerde amaca uygun diğer şirketlerden taşeronluk hizmeti almak ve vermek.  
 3.5. Bir Güvenlik Gücünün ihtiyacı olan personel, araç, gemi, uçak helikopter, malzeme ve silahlar için;spor, eğitim, atış ve simülasyon sistem ve tesisleri yapmak, yaptırmak, çalıştırmak ve bu tesislerde eğitimlerin filili uygulamalarını yapmak, yaptırmak, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek, gerektiğinde eğitim danışmanlığı hizmeti vermek.  
 3.6. Her türlü yapı malzemelerinin üretimini, alım ve satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;Yurtiçi veya yurtdışında her türlü maden, doğal taş yarı ve yerüstü kaynaklarının çıkartılması, işlenmesi ihalat ve ihracatının yapılması.  
 3.7. Her türlü seramik, kalebodur, fayans, granit, mermer, taş, bordur, tezgah, lavabo, tuvalet taşı ve benzeri taşların, demir, çimento, kireç, tel, tuğla, kiremit ve her türlü inşaat malzemeleri ve yardımcı malzemelerinin üretimini, alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;  
 3.8. Her türlü ıslak ve kuru zeminlere yönelik uygulamalar yapmak, musluk, armatör, vana, boru, vitrifiye, mutfak ve banyo dolapları, çatı malzemeleri, ve inşaatlarda kullanılan her türlü malzeme ve aksesuarlarının üretimini, alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;  
 3.9. Balkon, cam önü, merdiven, teras, bahçe, işyeri ve benzeri yerlere yönelik duvar, küpeşte, korkuluk gibi dekoratif uygulamalar yapmak, bunları üretmek, alım satımını yapmak, hazırlamak, mamul veya yarı mamul olarak yurt dışından ihalat ve ihracat yapmak.  
 3.10. Bina, ev, villa ve iş merkezlerine yönelik alüminyum cepte giydirmeleri yapmak, şekil vermek, bu tip yerlere yönelik çalışmalar yapmak.  
 3.11. Her türlü demir çelik ürünleri;saç, çinko, pirinç, bakır, san, zamak, galvaniz saç, külçe, platina, U demiri, L demiri, flanş, boru eklenti parçalarının alımını satımını yapmak, imalatını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak.  
 3.12. Her türlü demir, profil, ahşap ve ferforjeden korkuluk, kepenk, kapı, kilit ve yardımcı malzemelerini yapmak, üretmek pazarlamak, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak.  
 3.13. Her türlü inşaat taahhüt işleri, konut, işyeri, ticarethane inşaatlarını yapmak, satmak, kendi hesabına arazi ve arsalar almak bunlar üzerinde veya başkalarına ait arsa ve araziler üzerinde kat karşılığı binalar yapmak;  
 3.14. Yurt içinde ve yurt dışında her türlü resmi ve özel sektöre ait inşaat taahhüt ve montaj işleri

yapmak ve müstakil konut, işhanları, fabrikalar, yollar, baraj ve göletler, park ve bahçe düzenlemeleri ve turistik tesisler, tatil köyleri inşa etmek, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek;  
 3.15. Türkiye sınırları içinde veya yabancı ülkelerde, resmi ve özel kurum ve kuruluşları tarafından kapalı zarf, açık artırma, eksiltme, teklif alma ve pazarlık usulü ile ihaleye çıkarılacak her türlü küçük ve büyük yapıların her türlü inşaat işlerini anahtar teslimi taahhüt etmek ve yapmak ve yaptırmak;  
 3.16. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devleti bakanlıklarının ve bakanlığa bağlı resmi kuruluşların, kamu iktisadi teşebbüsleri, iktisadi devlet teşekkülleri, kamu iktisadi kuruluşları tarafından yurt içinde ve yurt dışında ihaleye çıkarılan inşaat, elektrik, tesisat, yol, su, kanalizasyon, doğalgaz, altyapı, üstyapı, dekorasyon, restorasyon işlerinin yeniden veya onarımı ihalelerine katılmak, teklif vermek, ihale şirkete kalırsa ihale sözleşmesi gereği işi yapmak ve teslim etmek;  
 3.17. Prefabrikte inşaat ve meskenler yapmak, yaptırmak ve bunları satmak kiraya vermek;  
 3.18. Her türlü havuz inşaatı ve arıtma işleri, dekorasyon işleri, tamirat ve boya işleri yapmak;  
 3.19. Her türlü mimarlık ve mühendislik hizmetleri yapmak, proje ve uygulamalar yapmak, şehir ve imar planları hazırlamak ve uygulamalarını yapmak;  
 3.20. Dekorasyonla ilgili spor salonlarının saha çizimi, boya, park ve çam cila, duvar kağıdı, halıfleks, asma tavan, kartonpiyer, fayans, kalebodur, su ve elektrik tesisatı, çatı ve tadilat işlerini yapmak;  
 3.21. Her türlü bina, büro, tesis ve yapılar ile peyzaj mimarisi ve çevre düzenlemesi alanında mimarlık, mühendislik, teknik müşavirlik hizmetleri olarak plan, proje, teknik hesaplar, danışmanlık, etüd, araştırma, tasarım, fizibiliteleme yapmak, bununla ilgili hizmet grupları oluşturmak ve işletmek;  
 3.22. Durum halihazır, kadastro, yer altı maden ocakları, deniz gibi, tünel ve baraj, yol, su, kanalizasyon, boru hattı gibi şerit haritalarının yapımı, parselasyon planlarının yapımı, ıslah imar planlarının yapımı ve uygulama işlemlerini yapmak;  
 3.23. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü dengeleme, hesaplama, yazım ve çizim işlerini yapmak;  
 3.24. Şirket konusuyla alakalı her türlü ihalelere katılabilir ve ihale açabilir.  
 3.25. İşi ile ilgili yurt içi ve yurt dışı fuar ve sergilere katılmak, hitira berati, patent, lisans, marka ve know-how gibi hakları satın almak, satmak kiralamak ve kiraya vermek.  
 3.26. Şirket konusu ile ilgili olarak yerli ve yabancı, firma ve müesseselerin bayilik, acentalık ve mümessilliklerini alabilir, ayrıca kendisi yurt içinde ve yurt dışında başkalarına bayilik, acentelik ve mümessillik verebilir.  
 3.27. Şirket konusuyla ilgili olarak yeni kurulan şirketlere katılabilir, mevcut şirketlere ortak olup sermaye artırımına iştirak

edip, diğer şirket ve şahıslarla ticari ilişkilerde bulunabilir.  
 3.28. İşletme amaç ve konusunun gerçekleştirilmesi için menkul ve gayrimenkul iktisap etmek, iktisap ettiği menkul ve gayrimenkulleri ihtiyaç fazlasını başkalarına devir etmek, bunların üzerinde, aynı hakları tesis etmek, kiraya vermek, başkalarının tesis ve gayrimenkullerinin üzerine hak ve alacakların temini için aynı şahsi her türlü rehın ve teminat alabilmek.  
 3.29. Borçları karşılığında, kendi mameleki üzerinde, başkaları lehine teminat olmak üzere, ipotek tesis edeceği gibi, alacakları karşılığında başkalarının mallarını üzerinde kendi lehine ipotek vaaz edebilir. Bunların fekkini isteyebilir. Başkalarının mallarını rehın ve teminat olarak alabilir. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü taahhüt ve ihale işlerine girer.  
 3.30. Konusu ile ilgili tüm mevzuada ihalat, ihracat ve transit ticaret, Rexport know-how anlaşmaları Yapabilir, serbest bölgelerde şube ve temsilcilikler açabilir.  
 3.31. Amaç ve konusunu gerçekleştirilebilmek için gayrimenkuller alıp satabilir, bunları başkasına devir ve ferag edebilir, kısmen veya tamamen başkasına kiralayabilir, komisyonculuk yapabilir.  
 3.32. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü menkul ve gayrimenkulleri iktisap eder, arsa ve işyerleri kiralar, yap işlet-devret modeli kamu, özel kişi veya müesseselerden arsa ve arazi kiralar, inşaatlarını yapar, müesseseleri kurar, işletir, devreder.  
 3.33. Konusu ile ilgili yürürlükteki ihracat, ihalat ve kanunların müsaade ettiği malların iç ve dış ticaretini yapar.  
 3.34. Şirket ihalat ve ihracata ilişkin biletleme işleri gümrük komisyonculuğu hariç gerçekleştirebilir.  
 3.35. Şirket konusuyla ilgili olarak ihtiyaç duyduğunda kredi kaynaklarına başvurabilir, teşvik alabilir, uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli borçlanma akdi yapabilir ve kefalet kredileri temin edebilir.  
 3.36. Konusu ile ilgili olarak yurt içinden, yurt dışından proje karşılıklı kredi almak, leasing'le konusu ile ilgili her türlü edinimde bulunabilir ve Devletin sunmuş olduğu tüm teşvik olanaklarından yararlanabilir.  
 3.37. Amaç ve konusu ile ilgili tüm eğitim ve danışmanlık hizmetlerini vermek.  
 3.38. Şirket faaliyetlerini gerçekleştirmek için nakit vasıtaları satın alır, kiralar, gerektiğinde bunları satar veya kiraya verir.  
 3.39. Şirket amaç ve konusu ile ilgili olarak her türlü dergi, broşür, kitap, katalog ve diğer yayınların bastırılmasını, dağıtılmasını, alımını, satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapar.

**Merkez Ve Şubeler**  
**Madde 4**  
 Şirketin merkezi İstanbul ili Beylikdüzü ilçesindedir. Adresi:Adnan Kahveci Mahallesi, Caner Sokak, No:3, Beylikdüzü/İstanbul'dur. Şirket,

yurt içinde ve yurt dışında şubeler açabilir. Adres değişikliğinde yeni adres Ticaret Siciline Tescil ve Türkiye Ticaret Gazetesine ilan edilir. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş adrese yapılan tebliğat şirkete yapılmış sayılır. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş adresinden ayrılmış olmasına rağmen yeni adresini süresi içerisinde tescil ettirmemiş şirket için bu durum fesih sebebi sayılır.

**Sirketin Süresi**  
**Madde 5**  
 Şirketin süresi tescil ve ilan edildiği tarihten itibaren "süresiz"dır. Aneak bu süre Genel Kurulunun kararı doğrultusunda kısıtlılabılır.

**Sermaye**  
**Madde 6**  
 Şirketin sermayesi-643.000.00 (Altu Yüz Kırk Üç Bin)TL olup, Bu sermayenin her biri 500.00TL itibarı kıymette 1286 hisseye ayrılmıştır. Bu hisselerinin;  
 500 hisseye tekabül eden 250.000,00 (İki Yüz Elli Bin)TL'si-Adnan Tanrıverdi  
 466 hisseye tekabül eden 233.000,00(İki Yüz Otuz Üç Bin)TL'si Mehmet Naci Efe  
 40 hisseye tekabül eden 20.000,00(Yirmi Bin)TL'si Nurettin Yavuz  
 40 hisseye tekabül eden:20.000,00 (Yirmi Bin)TL'si Haluk Yıldırım  
 40 hisseye tekabül eden 20.000,00(Yirmi Bin)TL'si Mehmet Demirtaş  
 30 hisseye tekabül ederi 15.000,00 (On Beş Bin)TL'si Ünal İşğören  
 20 hisseye tekabül eden 10.000,00 (On Bin) TL'si Mehmet Tek  
 20 hisseye tekabül eden 10.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Mehmet Zelka  
 20 hisseye tekabül ederi 10.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Yusuf Çağlayan  
 20 hisseye tekabül eden 10.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Reşat Fidan  
 20 hisseye tekabül eden 40.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Bülent Demir  
 10 hisseye tekabül eden 5.000,00(Beş Bin)TL'si Şeyda Ünlükel  
 10 hisseye tekabül eden 5.000,00 (Beş Bin)TL'si Cengiz Uzun  
 10 hisseye tekabül eden 5.000,00 (Beş Bin) TL'si Ersan Ergür  
 8 hisseye tekabül eden 4.000,00 (Dört Bin)TL'si Osman Kaçmaz  
 8 hisseye tekabül eden 4.000,00(Dört Bin)TL'si Güröl Özşemeli  
 6 hisseye tekabül eden 3.000,00 (Çiç Bin) TL'si Mustafa Hacımustafoğulları  
 4 hisseye tekabül eden 2.000,00 (İki Bin)TL'si Mustafa Erol  
 4 hisseye tekabül eden 2.000,00 (İki Bin)TL'si Mehmet Çakroğlu  
 4 hisseye tekabül eden 2.000,00 (İki Bin) TL'si Mehmet İlhan,  
 2 hisseye tekabül eden 1.000,00(bin)TL'si Ahmet Türkân  
 2 hisseye tekabül eden 1.000,00(Bin)TL'si Fethi Kıran  
 2 hisseye tekabül eden 1.000,00 (Bin) TL'si Gürcan Onat

(Baştarafı 426. Sayfada)  
Taraflardan muvazaadan arfi olarak tamamen taahhüt edilmiştir. Şirket nakdi sermayesinin ¼'ü tescil tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içerisinde, Aralık 2011 tarihinden başlayarak 3 eşit taksitte, kalanı ise Mart 2012 tarihinden başlayarak 9 eşit taksitte ödenecektir. Sermaye, taahhütleri şirketin açılmış banka hesabına yatmadıkça hüküm ifade etmez. Bu husustaki ilanlar ana sözleşmenin ilan maddesi uyarınca yapılır.

#### Hisse Değişimi Madde 7

Ortak dışı hisse devri yapılabilmesi için, ortakların ¼'ünün kabulü ile geçerlidir. Ortak dışı hisse devri, şirket ortaklarının ¼'ünün onayı ile gerçekleşmez ise, ayrılmak isteyen ve hissesinin bir kısmını devretmek isteyen ortağa şirketin bilançosuna göre tespit edilecek ortaklık payı verilir.

#### İlanlar Madde 8

Şirkete ait ilanlar Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 37. Maddesinin 4. Fıkrası hükümleri saklı kalmak şartı ile şirket merkezinin bulunduğu yerde çıkan bir gazete ile en az 15 gün evvel yayınlanır. Mahallinde gazete yayınlanmadığı takdirde ilan en yakın yerdeki gazete ile yapılır. Ancak Genel Kurulun toplantıya çağırılması ile ilgili ilanlar Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 368. maddesi hükümleri gereğince ilan ve toplantı günleri hariç olmak üzere en az iki hafta evvel yapılması zorunludur. Sermayenin azaltılması veya tasfiyesine ait ilanlar için kanunun 397. ve 438. maddelerindeki hükümler uygulanır.

#### Yönetim Kurulu Ve Süresi Madde 9

Şirketin işleri ve idaresi Genel Kurul tarafından Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine uygun olarak hissedarlar arasından seçilecek en az 3 üyeden oluşan bir Yönetim Kurulu tarafından yürütülür. Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri en çok 3 (üç) yıl için seçilirler. Seçim süresi sona eren Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri yeniden seçilebilirler. Genel Kurul, lüzum görürse Yönetim Kurulu Üyelerini her zaman değiştirebilir. Yönetim kurulu lüzum gördüğü hallerde veya görev verdiği yönetim kurulu üyelerine belli zamanlarda ücret verebilir.

#### Şirketin Temsili Madde 10

Şirketin yönetimi ve dışarıya karşı temsili Yönetim Kurulu'na aittir. Şirket tarafından verilecek bütün belgelerin ve yapılacak sözleşmelerin geçerli olabilmesi için, bunların şirket ünvanı altına konmuş ve şirketi temsil ve ilzama yetkili kişi veya kişilerin imzasını taşıması gereklidir.

Yönetim Kurulu, Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 319'ncü Maddesi'ne göre Şirketi temsil ve idare yetkisinin hepsini veya bazılarını Yönetim Kurulu Üyesi olan bir veya birkaç maraflıh üye veya pay sahibi olmaları zorunlu bulunmayan Müdürlere bırakabilir.

Şirketi işlerinin ve faaliyetinin gelişmesi ile Yönetim Kurulu lüzum ve ihtiyaç gördüğü takdirde idare işlerinin ve görevlerinin kendisi üyeleri arasında ne şekilde ve hangi esaslar dairesinde taksim edileceğini tespit eder.

#### Denetçiler Madde 11

Genel Kurul, gerek hissedarlar arasından, gerekse dışarıdan en çok 3 (üç) yıl için 1 (bir) veya birden fazla denetçi seçer. Bunların sayısı 5'i geçemez. Genel Kurul seçilen Denetçiyi her zaman azil ve yerine diğer bir kimseyi tayin edebilir. Denetçilere ücret ödenip ödenmeyeceğine yönetim kurulu karar verir. Görev süresi biten denetçilerin tekrar denetçiliğe seçilmesi caizdir.

Denetçiler Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 353-357 maddelerinde sayılan görevleri yapmakla yükümlüdür.

#### Genel Kurul Madde 12

Genel Kurul toplantılarında aşağıdaki esaslar uygulanır:  
Davet Şekli: Genel Kurullar olağan veya olağanüstü olarak toplanır. Bu toplantılara davette Türk Ticaret Kanununun 355, 365, 366 ve 368 hükümleri uygulanır.  
a- Toplantı Vakti: Olağan genel kurul toplantıları şirketin hesap devresi sonundan itibaren 3 ay içerisinde ve senede en az bir defa, olağanüstü genel kurul toplantıları ise şirketin işleri icap ettiği hallerde ve zamanda yapılır.

b- Rey Verme ve Vekil Tayini: Olağan ve olağanüstü genel kurul toplantılarında hazır bulunan hissedarlar veya vekillerinin her hisse için bir oyu vardır. Genel Kurul toplantılarında hissedarlar kendilerini diğer hissedarlar veya hariçten tayin edebilecekleri vekil vasıtası ile temsil ettirebilirler. Şirket hissedarları olan vekiller kendi oylarından başka temsil ettikleri hissedarların sahip olduğu oyları kullanmaya yetkilidir.

c- Müzakerelerin Yapılması ve Karar Nisabı: Şirket genel kurul toplantılarında Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 369 maddesinde yazılı hususlar müzakere edilerek gerekli kararlar alınır. Genel Kurul toplantıları ve bu toplantılardaki karar nisabı Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine tabidir.

d- Toplantı Yeri: Genel kurul şirketin müseccel adresinde toplanır.

#### Toplantılarda Komiser Bulunması Madde 13

Gerek olağan ve gerekse olağanüstü genel kurul toplantılarında Sanayi ve Ticaret Bakanlığı komiserinin bulunması ve toplantı tutanaklarının ilgililerle birlikte imza edilmesi şarttır. Komiserin gayabında yapılacak genel kurul toplantılarında alınacak kararlar ve komiserin imzasını taşımayan toplantı tutanakları geçerli değildir.

#### Hesap Dönemi Madde 14

Şirketin hesap dönemi ocak ayının birinci günü başlar, aralık ayının sonuncu günü biter. Ancak ilk hesap dönemi şirketin Ticaret Siciline tescil sureti ile tüzel kişilik kazandığı tarihten başlar ve o yılın aralık ayının sonuncu günü sona erer.

#### Kar'ın Tespiti Ve Dağıtılması Madde 15

Şirketin genel masrafları ile muhtelif amortisman bedelleri gibi şirkete ödenmesi ve ayrılması zaruri olan miktarlar hesap senesi sonunda tespit olunan gelirden indirildikten sonra geriye kalan miktar safi karı teşkil eder. Safi karın tespiti hususunda Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun, Vergi Usul Kanunu'nun vesair Mali Kanunların hükümlerine uyulur. Yukarıdaki madde gereğince tespit olunacak safi karın ödenmesi gereken vergiler düşüldükten sonra kalan miktardır:

- a- %5 nispetinde Kanuni yasal yedek akçe ile,
- b- Ödenmiş sermayenin %5'i nispetinde birinci temettü payı ayrılır.
- c- Yasal Yedek Akçe ile birinci temettü hissesinin ayrılmasından sonra kalan karın Genel Kurul kararı ile en az %10'u Yönetim Kurulu Başkan ve üyelerine en fazla %10'u da Şirket'in Müdür, Memur ve müstahdemlerine tahsis olunabilir.
- d- Kalan kar, Genel Kurul kararına göre kısmen veya tamamen ikinci temettü payı olarak, dağıtılabileceği gibi, dağıtılmayarak, herhangi bir yedek akçe olarak da muhafaza edilebilir.
- e- Ortaklara dağıtılmasına karar verilen birinci ve ikinci temettü payının hangi tarihte ödeneceği genel Kurul tarafından tespit olunur.
- f- Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 466/3 maddesi hükmü saklıdır.

#### İhtiyat Akçesi Madde 16

İhtiyat akçesi şirket sermayesinin %20'sine çıkıncaya kadar ayrılır.

Bu miktarın azaltılması halinde yeniden ihtiyat akçesinin ayrılmasına devam edilir.

Kanuni ve ihtiyari ihtiyat akçeleri ile kanun ve bu ana sözleşme hükümlerine göre ayrılması gereken miktar safi karın ayrılmadıkça hissedarlara kar dağıtılmaz.

#### Kanuni Hükümler Madde 17

Bu ana sözleşmede bulunmayan hususlar hakkında Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümleri uygulanır.

#### Geçici Hükümler Kuruluş Giderleri Geçici Madde 1

Şirketin kuruluşuna ilişkin, kurucular tarafından yapılan ve kuruluş için gerekli addolunan bütümlü harcamalar şirketin masraflarına intikal ettirilir.

#### İlk Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri Geçici Madde 2

İlk Yönetim Kurulu Üyelğine, Adnan Tanrıverdi, Nurettin Yavuz, Fethi Kiran, Reşat Fidan, Bülent Demir seçilmişlerdir.

#### Temsil Ve İlzam Geçici Madde 3

Şirket ünvanı altında atacakları isimleri yazılı üç yönetim kurulu üyesinden herhangi iki tanesinin müşterek imzasıyla 3 yılına şirketi abzu kabz yetkisi ile temsil ve ilzam etmeye Adnan Tanrıverdi, Fethi Kiran ve Nurettin Yavuz seçilmişlerdir.

#### İlk Denetçi Geçici Madde 4

İlk 1 (Bir) yıl için şirket ortaklarından aşağıda isimleri yazılı 4 üye seçilmiştir.

4. 1. Mehmet Tek 4.2. Seyda Ünlükül 4.3. Ünal İsgören 4.4. Mustafa Haçmüstafaoğulları

Kurucular:

1. Adnan Tanrıverdi imza
2. Mehmet Naci efe imza
3. Mehmet Tek imza
4. Nurettin Yavuz imza
5. Yusuf Çağlayan imza
6. Reşat Fidan imza
7. Bülent Demir imza
8. Seyda Ünlükül imza
9. Cengiz Uzun imza
10. Ersan Ergür imza
11. Ünal İsgören imza
12. Osman Kaçmaz imza
13. Gürol Özeşmeli imza
14. Mustafa Haçmüstafaoğulları imza
15. Ahmet Türkan imza
16. Fethi Kiran imza
17. Gürcan Onat imza
18. Mustafa Erol imza
19. Mehmet Çakıroğlu imza
20. Haluk Yıldırım imza
21. Mehmet Demirtaş imza
22. Mehmet Zelka imza
23. Mehmet İlhan imza

22 Şubat 2012

#### Ana Sözleşme Düzeltilme Beyannamesi

Bakırköy 17. Notalığından 24 Kasım 2011 tarih ve 23658 yevmiye No'su ile onaylı Sadat Uluslar Arası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi Ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi'nin Ana Sözleşmesinin bazı maddeleri aşağıdaki şekilde değiştirilmiş olup bu şekilde tescil ve ilanını talep ederiz.

#### Yapılan Düzeltilmeler:

Şirket Ana Sözleşmesinin Amaç Ve Konu Madde 3:  
"3.1. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devletin çıkarlarını gözeterek, ihtiyaç duyan dost ülkelere: savunma danışmanlığı, Güvenlik Güçlerinin organizasyonu, (Teşkilat, malzeme ve kadro), Güvenlik Güçlerinin eğitimi, (İlgili ülke, Türkiye veya üçüncü ülkelerde), Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyacağı silah, mühimmat, araç-gereç, kıyafet ve yiyeceklerin ilgili ülke, Türkiye ve

üçüncü ülkelerden üretimi, alış-satış, tedarik ve temini için ihaleler yapmak, ihalelere girmek, teklifler vermek, teklifler almak, ihalat ve ihracat yapmak, Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyduğu her türlü elektrik, elektronik, yazılım, donanım, bakım ve servis hizmetlerini vermek, Güvenlik Güçlerinin mevcut silah ve malzemelerinin yenileştirilmesi ve Silahlı kuvvetlerinin iskan ve eğitim için ihtiyaç duyulan tesislerin inşaatını yapılması.

3.2. Devlet Ülkeler arasında savanma ve savunma sanayi işbirliği ortamını oluşturmak, bu konularda danışmanlık yapmak; Türkiye savanma sanayi ürünlerine Pazar ortamı oluşturmak, ilgili konularda devletler arası organizasyonları sağlamak;

3.3. Amaca uygun her türlü hizmet ve malzemenin üretimini, toptan ve perakende alım satımı, ihalat ve ihracatını, pazarlama ve dağıtımını yapmak, eğitimini vermek;

3.4. İlgili Ülkede, Türkiye'de ve üçüncü Ülkelerde amaca uygun diğer şirketlerden tasarrüflük hizmetli almak ve vermek;

3.5. Bir Güvenlik Gücünün ihtiyaç olan personel, araç, gemi, uçak helikopter, malzeme ve silahlar için: spor, eğitim, atış ve simülasyon sistem ve tesisleri yapmak, yaptırmak, çalıştırmak ve bu tesislerde eğitimlerin fiili uygulamalarını yapmak, yaptırmak, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek, gerektiğinde eğitim danışmanlığı hizmeti vermek.

3.6. Her türlü yapı malzemelerinin üretimini, alım ve satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak; Yurtiçi veya yurtdışında her türlü maden, doğal taş yeraltı ve yerüstü kaynaklarının çıkarılması, işlenmesi ihalat ve ihracatını yapmaları.

3.7. Her türlü seramik, kalebodur, fayans, granit, mermer, taş, bordur, tezgah, lavabo, tuvalet taşı ve benzeri taşların, demir, çimento, kireç, tel, tuğla, kiremit ve her türlü inşaat malzemeleri ve yardımcı malzemelerinin üretimini, alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;

3.8. Her türlü ıslak ve kuru zeminlere yönelik uygulamalar yapmak, musluk, armatör, vana, boru, vitriyeni, mutfak ve banyo dolapları, çatı malzemeleri, ve inşaatlarda kullanılan her türlü malzeme ve aksesuarlarının üretimini, alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;

3.9. Balkon, cam önü, merdiven, teras, bahçe, işyeri ve benzeri yerlere yönelik duvar, küpeşte, korkuluk gibi dekoratif uygulamalar yapmak, bunları üretmek, alım satımını yapmak, hazır olarak, mamul veya yarı mamul olarak yurt dışından ihalat ve ihracat yapmak.

3.10. Bina, ev, villa ve iş merkezlerine yönelik alüminyum cephe giydirmeleri yapmak, şekil vermek, bu tip yerlere yönelik çalışmalar yapmak.

3.11. Her türlü demir çelik ürünleri; sac, çinko, piring, bakır, sarı, zamak, galvaniz sac, külçe, platina, U demiri, L demiri, flanş, boru eklenti parçalarının alımını

(Baştarafı 427. Sayfada)  
satımını yapmak, imalatını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak.

3.12. Her türlü demir, profil, ahşap ve ferforjeden korkuluk, kepenk, kapı, kilit ve yardımcı malzemelerini yapmak, üretmek pazarlamak, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak.

3.13. Her türlü inşaat taahhüt işleri, konut, işyeri, ticarethane inşaatlarını yapmak, satmak, kendi hesabına arazi arsalar almak bunlar üzerinde veya başkalarına ait arsa ve araziler üzerinde kat karşılığı binalar yapmak;

3.14. Yurt içinde ve yurt dışında her türlü resmi ve özel sektöre ait inşaat taahhüt ve montaj işleri yapmak ve müst konut, işanları, fabrikalar, yollar, baraj ve göletler, park ve bahçe düzenlemeleri ve turistik tesisler, tatil köyleri inşaa etmek, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek;

3.15. Türkiye sınıfları içinde veya yabancı ülkelere, resmi ve özel kurum ve kuruluşları tarafından kapalı zarf, artırma, eksiltme, teklif alma ve pazarlık usulü ile ihaleye çıkarılacak her türlü küçük ve büyük yapıların her t inşaat işlerini anahtar teslimi taahhüt etmek ve yapmak ve yaptırmak;

3.16. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devleti bakanlıklarının ve bakanlığa bağlı resmi kuruluşların, kamu iktisadi teşebbüs iktisadi devlet teşekkülleri, kamu iktisadi kuruluşları tarafından yurt içinde ve yurt dışında ihaleye çıkarılan inşaat, elektrik, tesisat, yol, su, kanalizasyon, doğalgaz, altıyapı, üstyapı, dekorasyon, restorasyon işlerini yeniden veya onarımı ihalelerine katılmak, teklif vermek, ihale şirkete kalırsa ihale sözleşmesi gereği işi yapmak ve teslim etmek;

3.17. Prefabrikte inşaat ve meskenler yapmak, yaptırmak ve bunları satmak kiraya vermek;

3.18. Her türlü havuz inşaatı ve arıtma işleri, dekorasyon işleri, tamirat ve boya işleri yapmak;

3.19. Her türlü mimarlık ve mühendislik hizmetleri vermek, proje ve uygulamalar yapmak, şehir ve imar pla hazırlamak ve uygulamalarını yapmak;

3.20. Dekorasyonla ilgili spor salonlarının saha çizimi, boya, parke ve cam çila, duvar kağıdı, halifleks, asma tavan, kartonpiyer, fayans, kalebodur, su ve elektrik tesisatı, çatı ve tadilat işlerini yapmak;

3.21. Her türlü bina, büro, tesis ve yapılar ile peyzaj mimarisini ve çevre düzenlenmesi alanında mimarlık, mühendislik, teknik müşavirlik hizmetleri olarak plan, proje, teknik hesaplar, danışmanlık, etüd, araştırma, tasarımı, fizibiliteleer yapmak, bununla ilgili hizmet grupları oluşturmak ve işletmek;

3.22. Durum halihazır, kadastro, yer altı maden ocakları, deniz gibi, tünel ve baraj, yol, su, kanalizasyon, boru hattı şerit hatlarının yapımı, perselasyon planlarının yapımı, İslah imar planlarının yapımı ve uygulama işlemleri yapmak;

3.23. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü dengeleme, hesaplama, yazım ve çizim işlerini yapmak;

3.24. Şirket konusıyla alakalı

her türlü ihalelere katılabilir ve ihale açabilir.

3.25. işi ile ilgili yurt içi ve yurt dışı fuar ve sergilere katılmak, ihтира beratı, patent, lisans, marka ve know-how gibi hakları satın almak, satmak kiralamak ve kiraya vermek.

3.26. Şirket konusu ile ilgili olarak yerli ve yabancı, firma ve müesseselerin bayilik, acentalık ve mümessilliklerini alabilir, ayrıca kendisi yurt içinde ve yurt dışında başkalarına bayilik, acentelik ve mümessillik verebilir.

3.27. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak yeni kurulan şirketlere katılabilir, mevcut şirketlere ortak olup sermaye artırımına iştirak edip, diğer şirket ve şahıslarla ticari ilişkilerde bulunabilir.

3.28. İşletme amaç ve konusunun gerçekleştirilmesi için menkul ve gayrimenkul iktisap etmek, iktisap ettiği menkul gayrimenkulleri ihtiyaç fazlasını başkalarına devir etmek, bunların üzerinde, aynı hakları tesis etmek, kiraya vermek, başkalarının tesis ve gayrimenkullerini üzerine hak ve alacaklarını temini için aynı şahsi her türlü rehin ve teminat alabilecektir.

3.29. Borçları karşılığında, kendi mameleki üzerinde, başkaları lehine teminat olmak üzere, ipotek tesis edeceği gibi, alacakları karşılığında başkalarının malları üzerinde kendi lehine ipotek vaaz edebilir. Bunların fekkini isteyebilir. Başkalarının mallarını rehin ve teminat olarak alabilir. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü taahhüt ve ihale işlerine girer.

3.30. Konusu ile ilgili tüm mevzuada ithalat, ihracat ve transit ticaret, Rexport know-how anlaşmaları yapabilir, serbest bölgelerde şube ve temsilcilikler açabilir.

3.31. Amaç ve konusunu gerçekleştirilebilmek için gayrimenkuller alıp satabilir, bunları başkasına devir ve ferag edebilir, kısmen veya tamamen başkasına kiralayabilir, komisyonculuk yapabilir.

3.32. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü menkul ve gayrimenkulleri iktisap eder, arsa, işyerleri kiralar, yap işlet-devret modeli kamu, özel kişi veya müesseselerden arsa ve arazi kiralar, inşaatlarını yapar, müesseseleri kurar, işletir, devreder.

3.33. Konusu ile ilgili yürürlükteki ihracat, ithalat ve kanunların müsaade ettiği malların iç ve dış ticaretini yapar.

3.34. Şirket ithalat ve ihracata ilişkin bilcümle işleri gümrük komisyonculuğu hariç gerçekleştirir.

3.35. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak ihtiyaç duyduğunda kredi kaynaklarına başvurabilir, teşvik alabilir, uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli borçlanma akdi yapabilir ve kefalet kredileri temin edebilir.

3.36. Konusu ile ilgili olarak yurt içinden, yurt dışından proje karşılığı kredi almak, leasing'le konusu ile ilgili her türlü edinimde bulunabilir ve Devletin sunmuş olduğu tüm teşvik olanaklarından yararlanabilir.

3.37. Amaç ve konusu ile ilgili tüm eğitim ve danışmanlık hizmetlerini vermek.

3.38. Şirket faaliyetlerini

gerçekleştirmek için nakil vasıtaları satın alır, kiralar, gerektiğinde bunları satar veya kiraya verir.

3.39. Şirket amaç ve konusu ile ilgili olarak her türlü dergi, broşür, kitap, katalog ve diğer yayınların bastırılmasını, dağıtılmasını, alınımı, satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapar. Şeklinde iken bu kerre;

"3.1.Uluslararası alanda; savunma danışmanlığı, Güvenlik Güçlerinin organizasyonu, (Teşkilat, malzeme ve kadro), Güvenlik Güçlerinin eğitimi, Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyacağı kıyafet ve yiyeceklerin ilgili ülke, Türkiye ve üçüncü ülkelerden üretimi, alış-satış, tedarik ve temini için ihaleler açmak, ihalelere girmek, teklifler vermek, teklifler almak, ithalat ve ihracat yapmak. Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyduğu her türlü bakım ve servis hizmetlerini vermek, Güvenlik Güçlerinin iskan ve eğitim için ihtiyaç duyulan tesislerin inşaatını yapmak.

3.2. Amaç uyuşun her türlü hizmet ve malzemenin temini, toplan ve perakende alım satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını pazarlama ve dağıtımını yapmak, eğitimi vermek.

3.3.Uluslararası alanda konusu dahilinde taşeronluk hizmeti almak ve vermek.

3.4.Bir Güvenlik Gücünün ihtiyacı olan personel, araç gereç, malzeme için;spor, eğitim, alış ve simülasyon sistem ve tesisleri yapmak, yaptırmak, çalıştırmak ve bu tesislerde eğitimlerini fiili uygulamalarını yapmak, yaptırmak, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek, gerektiğinde eğitim danışmanlığı hizmeti vermek.

3.5. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü dengeleme, hesaplama, yazım ve çizim işlerini yapmak;

3.6. Şirket konusıyla alakalı her türlü ihalelere katılabilir ve ihale açabilir.

3.7. işi ile ilgili yurt içi ve yurt dışı fuar ve sergilere katılmak, ihтира beratı, patent, lisans, marka ve know-how gibi hakları satın almak, satmak kiralamak ve kiraya vermek.

3.8. Şirket konusu ile ilgili olarak yerli ve yabancı, firma ve müesseselerin bayilik, acentalık ve mümessilliklerini alabilir, ayrıca kendisi yurt içinde ve yurt dışında başkalarına bayilik, acentelik ve mümessillik verebilir.

3.9. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak yeni kurulan şirketlere katılabilir, mevcut şirketlere ortak olup sermaye artırımına iştirak edip, diğer şirket ve şahıslarla ticari ilişkilerde bulunabilir.

3.10. İşletme amaç ve konusunun gerçekleştirilmesi için menkul ve gayrimenkul iktisap etmek, iktisap ettiği menkul ve gayrimenkulleri ihtiyaç fazlasını başkalarına devir etmek, bunların üzerinde, aynı hakları tesis etmek, kiraya vermek, başkalarının tesis ve gayrimenkullerini üzerine hak ve alacaklarını temini için aynı şahsi her türlü rehin ve teminat alabilecektir.

3.11. Borçları karşılığında, kendi mameleki üzerinde, başkaları lehine teminat olmak üzere, ipotek tesis edeceği gibi, alacakları karşılığında başkalarının malları

üzerinde kendi lehine ipotek vaaz edebilir. Bunların fekkini isteyebilir. Başkalarının mallarını rehin ve teminat olarak alabilir. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü taahhüt ve ihale işlerine girer.

3.12. Konusu ile ilgili tüm mevzuada ithalat, ihracat ve transit ticaret, Rexport know-how anlaşmaları yapabilir, serbest bölgelerde şube ve temsilcilikler açabilir.

3.13. Amaç ve konusunu gerçekleştirilebilmek için gayrimenkuller alıp satabilir, bunları başkasına devir ve ferag edebilir, kısmen veya tamamen başkasına kiralayabilir, komisyonculuk yapabilir.

3.14. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü menkul ve gayrimenkulleri iktisap eder, arsa ve işyerleri kiralar, yap işlet-devret modeli kamu, özel kişi veya müesseselerden arsa ve arazi kiralar, inşaatlarını yapar, müesseseleri kurar, işletir, devreder.

3.15. Konusu ile ilgili yürürlükteki ihracat, ithalat ve kanunların müsaade ettiği malların iç ve dış ticaretini yapar.

3.16. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak ihtiyaç duyduğunda kredi kaynaklarına başvurabilir, teşvik alabilir, uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli borçlanma akdi yapabilir ve kefalet kredileri temin edebilir.

3.17. Konusu ile ilgili olarak yurt içinden, yurt dışından proje karşılığı kredi almak, leasing'le konusu ile ilgili her türlü edinimde bulunabilir ve Devletin sunmuş olduğu tüm teşvik olanaklarından yararlanabilir.

3.18. Amaç ve konusu ile ilgili tüm eğitim ve danışmanlık hizmetlerini vermek.

3.19. Şirket faaliyetlerini gerçekleştirmek için nakil vasıtaları satın alır, kiralar, gerektiğinde bunları satar veya kiraya verir.

3.20. Şirket amaç ve konusu ile ilgili olarak her türlü dergi, broşür, kitap, katalog ve diğer yayınların bastırılmasını, dağıtılmasını, alınımı, satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapar." şeklinde düzenlenmiş olup, ve yine;Şirket ana sözleşmesinin Sermaye Madde 6'nın ikinci paragrafında:

"Tarafardan muvazaadan ari olarak tamamen taahhüt edilmiştir. Şirket nakdi sermayesinin ¼'ü tescil tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içerisinde, Aralık 2011 tarihinden başlayarak 3 eşit taksitte, kalan ise Mart 2012 tarihinden başlayarak 9 eşit taksitte ödenecektir. Sermaye taahhütleri şirketin açılmış banka hesabına yatmadıkça hüküm ifade etmez. Bu husustaki ilanlar ana sözleşmenin ilan maddesi uyarınca yapılır." iken bu kerre

"Tarafından muvazaadan ari olarak tamamen taahhüt edilmiştir. Şirket nakdi sermayesinin ¼'ü tescil tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içerisinde, geri kalanını en geç 3 (üç) yıl içerisinde ödenecektir. Bu husustaki ilanlar ana sözleşmenin ilan maddesi uyarınca yapılır. "şeklinde düzenlenmiştir.

Beyanda Bulunan: 37234816206 T.C Nolu Adnan Tanrıverdi, 43738688232 T.C nolu Mehmet Naci Efe,

3658972616 T.C Nolu Mehmet Tek, 23860602276 T.C Nolu Nurettin Yavuz, 72889057208 T.C Nolu Yusuf Çağlayan, 11664782890 T.C Nolu Reşat Fidan, 28736238740 T.C Nolu Bülent Demir, 28598302658 T.C Nolu Şeyda Ünlökül, 47245806332 T.C Nolu Cengiz Uzun, 17425939808 T.C Nolu Ersan Ergör, 34100397906 T.C Nolu Ünal Işğören, 26942205280 T.C Nolu Osman Kaçmaz, 22984498130 T.C Nolu Gürol Özeşmeli, 41665714420 T.C Nolu Mustafa Hacımustafaoğulları, 11908851014 T.C Nolu Ahmet Türkan, 68884071530 T.C Nolu Fethi Kiran, 21176465080 T.C Nolu Gürcan Onat, 28264819718 T.C Nolu Mustafa Erol, 10678750442 T.C Nolu Mehmet Çakıroğlu, 12718019212 T.C Nolu Haluk Yıldırım, 42442451972 T.C Nolu Mehmet Demirtaş, 26536832038 T.C Nolu Mehmet Zelka, 24842259792 T.C Nolu Mehmet İlhan adlına vekaleten Ahmet Ardic T.C. No:1337751910 Adnan Kahveci Mah. Caner Sok. No.3 Beylikdüzü İstanbul

(10/A)/24/110482  
**İstanbul Ticaret Sicili Memurlugundan**

**Sicil Numarası: 809266**

**Ticaret Ünvanı  
HÜRSA TAŞIMACILIK  
PAZARLAMA TEKSTİL  
İNŞAAT GIDA SANAYİ VE  
DIŞ TİCARET LİMİTED  
ŞİRKETİ**

**Ticari İkametgahı:** İstanbul Fatih İlaleli Gençtürk Cad.Ataean İşhanı No:61 K.1 (Asma Kat Üstü) Ticari Merkezi ile sicil numarası ve ünvanı yukarıda yazılı ve 22.02.2012 tarihinden beri kurulmuş olan limited şirketin İstanbul 10.Noterliğince 21.02.2012 tarih 4509 sayılı ile düzenlenen esas mukavelesinin tescil ve ilan istenmiş, aynı noterliğin 21.02.2012 tarih 4510 sayılı ile onaylı imza beyanamesi memuriyetimize verilmiş olmakla, 6762 sayılı Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine uygun olarak ve memurlüğümüzdeki vesikalara dayanılarak 22.02.2012 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

**Hürsa Taşımacılık Pazarlama  
Tekstil İnşaat Gıda Sanayi Ve  
Dış Ticaret Limited Şirketi Ana  
Sözleşmesi**

**Kurucular Madde: 1-**

Aşağıda adları, soyadları, ikametgahları ve uyrukları yazılı

(Devamı 429 . Sayfada)

(Başarfaı 76.Sayfaıa)

bu gibi yerlerin rezervasyon ve organizasyon işlerini yapar.c. Turizme yönelik otel, motel, bar, pansiyon, kamping, tatil köyleri, apart oteller, yeme içme tesisleri, eğlence yerleri kurmak, işletmek, işletmeye vermek, bu yerleri satın almak, satmak, kiralamak, kiraya vermek.d. Şirket her türlü bilardo salonu, kahvehane, kafe, çay bahçeleri açar, kiralar, kiraya verir ve işletmesini yapar.Şirket amacını gerçekleştirmek için her türlü gayrimenkul alabilir, satabilir, kiralar, kiraya verir, bunlar üzerinde aynı ve şahsi her türlü hakları tesis edebilir, ipotek alabilir, ipotek verebilir ve ipotekleri fesh edebilir. Şirket gayrimenkuller üzerinde irtfak, intifa, süknaya gayrimenkul mükellefiyeti, kat irtfakı, kat mülkiyeti tesis edebilir.Her türlü gayrimenkuller ile ilgili olarak tapu daireleri nezdinde cins tahşih, ifraz, tevhit, taksim, parselasyon ile ilgili her nevi muamele ve tasarrufları gerçekleştirebilir.MARKET-Her türlü ambalaj ve paketleme işleri yapabilir, - Nohut, mercimek, fasulye, diğer bakliyat ve her türlü hububat, ve tarımsal ürünler, un, nişasta, pastacılık ürünleri, taze ve kuru olarak her türlü tarım ürünleri, yağlı tohumlar, taneler, meyveler, çay, kahve, ihlamur, tarçın, çikolata, kakao müstehzalar, bisküvi, ekmeç, tatlılar ve buna benzer unlu ürünlerin imalı, alımı, satımı, ithali, ihracı ve pazarlamasını yapmak, - Her türlü gıda maddelerinin üretimi, toptan ve perakende alımı, satımı, dağıtımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak.-İnsanların beslenmesinde önemli bir etkinliği olan ve gıda sektörüne konu teşkil eden her nevi sıcak, soğuk, dondurulmuş, kurutulmuş, ve konsantresi yapılmış besin maddelerinin pazarlanmasında toptan ve perakende satış yapmak amacı ile gerekli olan satış mağazalarını açmak ve işletmek.-Her türlü bebek mamalarının üretimi, toptan ve perakende alım satımı, dağıtımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmakRENT A CAR-Ticari amaçlı her türlü motorlu araç alışı, satışı ve kiralama hizmetleri verebilir.İNŞAATa. Her türlü inşaat taahhüt işleri; konut, işyeri, ticarethane inşaatlarını yapmak, satmak, kendi hesabına arazi ve arsalar almak bunlar üzerinde veya başkalarına ait arazi ve arsalar üzerinde kat karşılığı binalar yapmak.b. Yurt içinde ve yurt dışında her türlü resmi ve özel sektöre ait inşaat taahhüt ve montaj işleri yapmak ve müstakil konut, iş hanları, fabrikalar, yollar, baraj ve göletler, park ve bahçe düzenlemeleri ve turistik tesisler, tatil köyleri inşa etmek ve kiraya vermek.c. Türkiye sınırları içinde veya yabancı ülkelere, resmi ve özel kurum ve kuruluşları tarafından kapalı zarf, açık arttırma, eksiltme, teklif alma ve pazarlık usulü ile ihaleye çıkarılacak her türlü küçük ve büyük yapıları her türlü inşaat işlerini anahtar teslimi taahhüt etmek e. Prefabrikte inşaat ve meskenler yapmak, yaptırmak ve bunları satmak, kiraya vermek.d. Her türlü havuz inşaatı ve artıma işlemleri yapmak.e. Her türlü dekorasyon işleri, tımarat ve boyama işleri yapmak.f. Her türlü mimarlık hizmetleri vermek. şehir ve inar planları hazırlamak, uygulamalarını yapmak.g. Her türlü mühendislik hizmetleri vermek, proje ve uygulamalarını yapmak.TELEKOMÜNİKASYONa. Haberleşme hizmetlerini sağlamak için gerekli olabilecek her türlü donanımı alımı, satımı, ithalatı, ihracatı, dağıtımını yapmak b. Her çeşit cep ve mobil telefonları, telefon santralleri, telsiz haberleşme cihazları ve bunların yedek parça ve aksesuarlarını alımı, satımı, mamul, bakım ve onarımını, ithalatını, ihracatını ve iç ticaretini, pazarlamasını, bayılığını, dağıtımını ve mümessilliğini yapmak.

(2/A)(12/58815)

## T.C. BURSA TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NDEN

İlan Sıra No: 15393  
MERSİS No: 0455083671900001  
Ticaret Sicil/Dosya No: 109702

Ticaret Unvanı:  
HAKO ELEKTRONİK SANAYİ VE TİCARET LİMİTED ŞİRKETİ

Adres : Kükürtlü Mahallesi Çekirge Cad. Batıca Apt Sit. No: 70/4 Osmangazi/Bursa  
Eski Ticaret Sicil Müdürlüğü: İSTANBUL TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ  
Eski Sicil No: 198639-5  
Eski Adres: Tathisu Mahallesi Arif Ay Sk. Ata Apartmanı Apt. No: 34/2 Ümraniye/İstanbul  
Yukarıda bilgileri verilen şirket ile ilgili olarak aşağıda belirtilen hususlar müdürlüğümüze ibraz edilen belgelere istinaden ve Türk Ticaret Kanunu'na uygun olarak 12.11.2020 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.  
Tescil Edilen Hususlar:Merkez Nakli  
Tescile Delil Olan Belgeler:Kadıköy 1.noterliği Nin 10.11.2020 Tarih 12571 Sayı İle Tasdikli, (Genel Kurul), 3.11.2020 Tarihli Sayılı Genel Kurul Kararı

**MERKEZ NAKLİ**  
Eski merkezi TATLISU MAHALLESİ ARIF AY SK. ATA APARTMANI Apt. No: 34/2 ÜMRANIYE/İSTANBUL adresinden bulunan şirketin merkezi KÜKÜRTLÜ MAHALLESİ ÇEKİRGE CAD. BATICA APT Sit. No: 70/4 OSMANGAZI/BURSA olarak değiştirilmiştir.

İÇERİĞİ DEĞİŞEN MADDELERİN YENİ HALİ  
ŞİRKETİN MERKEZİ

Madde 4- Şirketin merkezi BURSA ili OSMANGAZI ilçesi'dir. Adresi KÜKÜRTLÜ MAHALLESİ ÇEKİRGE CAD. BATICA APT Sit. No: 70/4 OSMANGAZI/BURSA'dır.Adres değişikliğinde yeni adres, ticaret siciline tescil ve Türkiye Ticaret Sicili Gazetesinde ilan ettirilir. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş adrese yapılan tebligat şirkete yapılmış sayılır. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş adresinden ayrılmış olmasına rağmen, yeni adresini süresi içinde tescil ettirmemiş şirket için bu durum fesh sebebi sayılır.

(3/A)(12/58816)

## T.C. İSTANBUL TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NDEN

İlan Sıra No: 188403  
MERSİS No: 0736057798100014  
Ticaret Sicil/Dosya No: 809300-0

Ticaret Unvanı:  
SADAT ULUSLAR ARASI SAVUNMA DANIŞMANLIK İNŞAAT SANAYİ VE TİCARET ANONİM ŞİRKETİ

Adres : Marmara Mahallesi Hürriyet Blv. Reşitpaşa Konakları Sit. V2 Apt. No: 110 H/1 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

Yukarıda bilgileri verilen şirket ile ilgili olarak aşağıda belirtilen hususlar müdürlüğümüze ibraz edilen belgelere istinaden ve Türk Ticaret Kanunu'na uygun olarak 12.11.2020 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

Tescil Edilen Hususlar:Sermaye Artırımı  
Tescile Delil Olan Belgeler:Kadıköy 28. Noterliği Nin 5.11.2020 Tarih 24374 Sayı İle Tasdikli, 4.11.2020 Tarihli Genel Kurul Kararı

İÇERİĞİ DEĞİŞEN MADDELERİN YENİ HALİ  
SERMAYE ARTIRIMI

Madde 6-  
Şirketin sermayesi, beheri 450.00 Türk Lirası değerinde 3520 adet paya ayrılmış, toplam 1.584.000.00 Türk Lirası değerindedir. Bu hisselerin, 1-1.207 hisseye tekabül eden 543.150.00 TL'si (Beş Yüz Kırk Üç Bin Yüz Elli ) TL'si Adnan TANRIVERDİ, 2-200 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Bin ) TL'si Ahmet Cengiz TANGÖREN, 3-20 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Bin ) TL'si Ahmet TAYLAN, 4-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Ahmet TÜRKAN, 5-20 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Bin ) TL'si ALI COŞAR, 6-231 hisseye tekabül eden 103.950.00 TL'si ( Yüz Üç Bin Dokuz Yüz Elli ) TL'si Ali Kamil Melih TANRIVERDİ, 7-200 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Doksan Bin ) TL'si Ali ÖZDEN, 8-20 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Bin ) TL'si Cengiz UZUN, 9-8 hisseye tekabül eden 3.600.00 TL'si ( Üç Bin Altı Yüz ) TL'si Coşkun YÜKSEL, 10-10 hisseye tekabül eden 4.500.00 TL'si ( Dört Bin Beş Yüz ) TL'si Çetin ÇANAK, 11-30 hisseye tekabül eden 13.500.00 TL'si ( On Üç Bin Beş Yüz ) TL'si Ersan ERGÜR, 12-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Fethi KIRAN, 13-14 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Gürcan ONAT, 14-204 hisseye tekabül eden 91.800.00 TL'si ( Doksan Bir Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Haluk YILDIRIM,

15-30 hisseye tekabül eden 13.500.00 TL'si ( On Üç Bin Beş Yüz ) TL'si Hayati ATALAY, 16-3 hisseye tekabül eden 1.350.00 TL'si ( Bir Üç Yüz Elli ) TL'si Hayrettin KOCAOĞLU,

17-30 hisseye tekabül eden 13.500.00 TL'si ( On Üç Bin Beş Yüz ) TL'si Hulusi GÜLEN, 18-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si İrfan ÇALIŞKAN, 19-2 hisseye tekabül eden 900.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Yüz ) TL'si İsmail KAPLAN,

20-40 hisseye tekabül eden 18.000.00 TL'si ( On Sekiz Bin ) TL'si Kemal ŞAHİN, 21-3 hisseye tekabül eden 1.350.00 TL'si ( Bin Üç Yüz Elli ) TL'si M.Said CEYHAN,

22-12 hisseye tekabül eden 5.400.00 TL'si ( Beş Bin Dört Yüz ) TL'si Mehmet Abdullah KAPLAN, 23-8 hisseye tekabül eden 3.600.00 TL'si ( Üç Bin Altı Yüz ) TL'si Mehmet ÇAKIROĞLU, 24-30 hisseye tekabül eden 36.000.00 TL'si ( Otuz Altı Bin ) TL'si Mehmet DEMİRTAŞ, 25-44 hisseye tekabül eden 19.800.00 TL'si ( On Dokuz Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Mehmet Emin KOÇAK, 26-15 hisseye tekabül eden 6.750.00 TL'si ( Altı Bin Yedi Yüz Elli ) TL'si Mehmet İLHAN, 27-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Mehmet İNKAYA,

28-896 hisseye tekabül eden 403.200.00 TL'si ( Dört Yüz Üç Bin İki Yüz ) TL'si Mehmet Naci EFE, 29-8 hisseye tekabül eden 3.600.00 TL'si ( Üç Bin Altı Yüz ) TL'si Mehmet Yüksel GÜNEŞ, 30-40 hisseye tekabül eden 18.000.00 TL'si ( On Sekiz Bin ) TL'si Mehmet ZELKA, 31-32 hisseye tekabül eden 14.400.00 TL'si ( On Dört Bin Dört Yüz ) TL'si Mustafa BAŞARAN, 32-44 hisseye tekabül eden 19.800.00 TL'si ( On Dokuz Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Mustafa BOZGEYİK 33-9 hisseye tekabül eden 4.050.00 TL'si ( Dört Bin Elli ) TL'si Mustafa EROL, 34-14 hisseye tekabül eden 6.300.00 TL'si ( Altı Bin Üç Yüz ) TL'si Mustafa HACIMUSTAĞULLARI, 35-50 hisseye tekabül eden 22.500.00 TL'si ( Yirmi İki Bin Beş Yüz ) TL'si Mustafa Nejat GÜVENÇ, 36-16 hisseye tekabül eden 7.200.00 TL'si ( Yedi Bin İki Yüz ) TL'si Nurettin YAVUZ, 37-10 hisseye tekabül eden 4.500.00 TL'si ( Dört Bin Beş Yüz ) TL'si Orhan ADIYAMAN,

38-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Osman KAÇMAZ, 39-6 hisseye tekabül eden 2.700.00 TL'si ( İki Bin Yedi Yüz ) TL'si Ömer YENİCE, 40-36 hisseye tekabül eden 16.200.00 TL'si ( On Altı Bin İki Yüz ) TL'si Reşat FİDAN,

41-9 hisseye tekabül eden 4.050.00 TL'si ( Dört Bin Elli ) TL'si Sabri BAĞ AMAN, 42-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Sadık PAKSOY, 43-3 hisseye tekabül eden 1.350.00 TL'si ( Bin Üç Yüz Elli ) TL'si Safa GOZE,

44-6 hisseye tekabül eden 2.700.00 TL'si ( İki Bin Yedi Yüz ) TL'si Selahattin ARSLAN, 45-12 hisseye tekabül eden 5.400.00 TL'si ( Beş Bin Dört Yüz ) TL'si Sileyman KILINÇ, 46-2 hisseye tekabül eden 900.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Yüz ) TL'si Tansel Cavit KULAK,

47-20 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Bin ) TL'si Yahya ÖZTÜRK, 48-20 hisseye tekabül eden 9.000.00 TL'si ( Dokuz Bin ) TL'si Yakup EVRİGEN, 49-6 hisseye tekabül eden 2.700.00 TL'si ( İki Bin Yedi Yüz ) TL'si Yavuz SULUMEŞE,

50-4 hisseye tekabül eden 1.800.00 TL'si ( Bin Sekiz Yüz ) TL'si Yavuz ZULFİKAROĞLU,

51-12 hisseye tekabül eden 5.400.00 TL'si ( Beş Bin Dört Yüz ) TL'si Zafer ŞAHİN'dir. Önceki sermayeyi teşkil eden 830.000.00 TL'nin tamamı nakden ödenmiştir. 03/11/2020 tarih ve 2020/02 rapor sayılı 20741 Sicil numaralı Serbest Muhasebeci Mali Müşavir Ahmet ARDIÇ tarafından tespit edilmiştir.

Hisse senetleri nama yazılıdır.  
Hisse senetleri muhtelif kâğıtlar halinde bastırılabilir.  
Sermayenin tamamı ödenmeden hamiline yazılı hisse senedi çıkarılamaz.

(2/A)(12/58815)

## T.C. BURSA TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NDEN

İlan Sıra No: 15354  
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Ticaret Unvanı:  
BURSA İPEK DENTA AĞIZ VE DIŞ SAĞLIĞI LİMİTED ŞİRKETİ

Adres : Selçukbey Mahallesi Prof.Tezok Cad. No: 207 B Yıldırım/Bursa  
Yukarıda bilgileri verilen şirket ile ilgili olarak aşağıda belirtilen hususlar müdürlüğümüze ibraz edilen belgelere istinaden ve Türk Ticaret Kanunu'na uygun olarak 12.11.2020 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

(Devamı 78.Sayfaıa)



# Exhibit 5

# Erdoğan's Private Armies

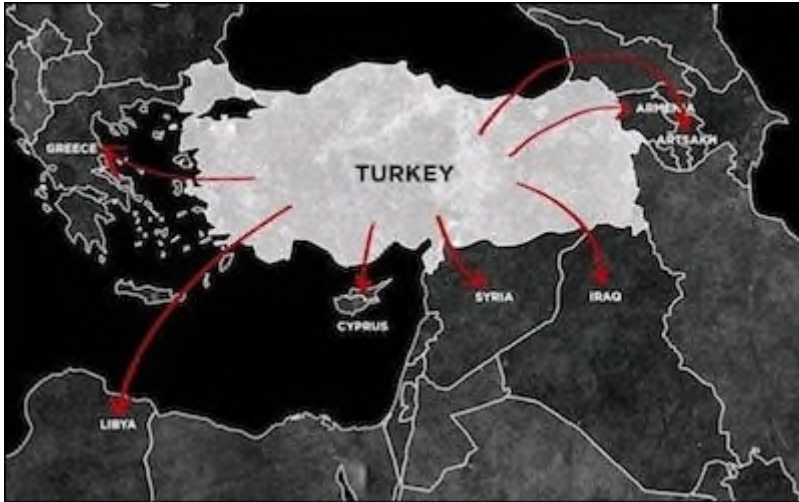
by Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak and Jonathan Spyer

[The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security](#)

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## Executive Summary



**Turkey seeks to be the dominant regional force, projecting power over neighboring countries and across seas.**

Since 2010, centralized authority has collapsed in many Middle East states, including Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. States able to support, mobilize, and make use of irregular and proxy military formations to project power enjoy competitive advantages in this environment.

Under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the AKP, Turkey seeks to be the dominant regional force, projecting power over neighboring countries and across seas. In cooperation with a variety of bodies, most significantly the SADAT military contracting company and the Syrian National Army, Turkey has developed over the last decade a large pool of well-trained, easily deployed, and effortlessly disposable proxy forces as a tool of power projection, with a convenient degree of plausible deniability.

When combined with Turkish non-official, but governmentally directed and well-established groups such as the Gray Wolves, it becomes clear that Erdoğan now has a private military and paramilitary system at his disposal.

The use of proxies is rooted in methods developed by the Turkish "deep state" well before the AKP came to power. Ironically, the tools forged to serve the deep state's Kemalist, anti-Islamist (and anti-Kurdish) purposes now serve an Islamist, neo-Ottoman (and, once again, anti-Kurdish) agenda.

Erdoğan deploys this apparatus for domestic and foreign operations without official oversight. Syria was the first place where he put this into action. Proxies subsequently have been employed in Libya and in Nagorno Karabakh to further Turkish foreign policy goals. There are now reports of Turkish-controlled Syrian fighters being deployed to Qatar.

Thus far, the proxies have delivered modest achievements for Turkey in Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan. As such, all Middle Eastern countries should pay close attention to the nature of this system, the advantages it conveys, and its potential vulnerabilities.

This study is the first attempt to systematically trace the roots, development, structure, and deployment of Erdogan's "unofficial" military frameworks. It also is the first foreign policy/national security study to be published jointly by an Israeli and an Emirati think tank. The authors hope it will be the first of many such joint research initiatives.

### 1. The Turkish Deep State

Turkey's irregular warfare capabilities have become a key instrument of national policy. To understand the foundations of this practice, it is necessary to trace the roots of this system back to the days when the Turkish military ran the state.

Given their role in the foundation of the modern Turkish nation-state, the Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri or TSK) always have regarded themselves as the true guardians of the Republic. This perception was shaped mainly due to their role as saviors

of the nation in the decade of conventional wars<sup>[1]</sup> waged until 1922 (the end of the Turkish war of independence). The founder of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, acted as the commander in chief of the TSK, but his resignation from the army and becoming a civilian president did not result in role-reduction for the TSK. A symbiotic relationship was formed between the TSK and the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), which was initially the sole party in Turkey. The CHP was perceived as the political organ of the army.

Harmony between the army and the civilian state ended in 1945 when Turkey's transition from a single party authoritarian state to a multi-party democracy took place. Turkey wanted to be accepted as a member in good standing in the Western camp that attained victory in WWII. In the 1950 multi-party elections, the CHP lost power for the first time to the opposition Democrat Party (DP) of Adnan Menderes.

The generals, who considered themselves the core of the state, witnessed the transition of power to DP, which had no formal relations with the TSK. This event led to some estrangement of the TSK from the political sphere, pushing the military into the "deep state" structure. The senior brass of the TSK developed a culture of covert networking, remaining loyal to "the state" rather than to the "elected government."



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**Following the 1950 victory of Adnan Menderes' Democrat Party (DP), the Turkish military became more loyal to the "deep state" (*derin devlet*) than to elected officials.**

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Driven by the imperative of loyalty to the state's interests as defined by the "deep state," the TSK engaged in military coups to redress policies that were perceived by them to be threatening the state. In the eyes of the TSK, these military takeovers were just "fine tunings" aimed at protecting the state against elected civilian governments. Due to the many such interventions, the concept of a "deep state" (*derin devlet*) grew into a recognized political term in the lexicon of Turkish politics.

In 2007, then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was asked in an interview whether he was aware of the existence of the Turkish "deep state." Erdoğan replied that the "deep state" was a dangerous phenomenon that democratically elected public servants should obliterate; and he traced its origins back to the Ottoman Empire. Erdoğan referred to members of the deep state as a "gang" that acts in accordance with its own "holy values" in ways that may even lead to violation of the country's laws. He decried the fact that deep statist tag their opponents as "internal enemies."

The term 'internal enemies' was frequently mentioned after it had been used in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's farewell letter to the Turkish army. (It also is engraved on the wall of his mausoleum in Ankara). He warned the army about "internal enemies." For Atatürk and his followers these were Islamists and separatist Kurds. The emerging democracy allowed Islamists and Kurds to acquire public positions in the state.

Deep state elements established assassination squads against Leftists and Kurds who were viewed as dangerous. The police investigated such political murders, but nobody ever was brought to justice. The police investigations were conducted half-heartedly, and the judiciary tended to shield state officials. The lack of law enforcement and punishment encouraged deep state elements to continue their activities.

Such behavior legitimized covert operations for "the sake of the state" and deeply affected Turkey's political culture. The Islamist AKP, a former adversary of the deep state, took control of the Turkish state structure in the 21st century and inherited the modus operandi of the deep state in dealing its own adversaries. Moreover, the AKP has further upgraded elements and functions of the Turkish deep state and employed them against external adversaries.

## 2. The Special Operations Unit of the Turkish Armed Forces

After the Second World War, Turkey decided to join the Western camp to defend itself from its historical nemesis Russia. Turkey decided on June 30, 1950 to participate in the Korean War (1950-1953) and was subsequently admitted into the NATO alliance in 1952.

NATO asked the member states to establish special operations units that could organize armed resistance in case of Soviet invasion – modeled on the anti-Nazi resistance and the role of the British SOE and the American OSS in supporting it. All NATO countries including Turkey formed special units. Immediately after the 1971 coup d'état, Turkey established a special unit under the name "Department of Special Warfare" (Özel Harp Dairesi, ÖHD). This entity, also known by the nickname "Gladio,"<sup>[2]</sup> was tasked to carry out covert operations for the state and make necessary preparations to cope with the Russian invasion threat. Many Turkish historians believe that Gladio became Turkey's main instrument for carrying out "dirty business" such as assassination, kidnapping, sabotage, etc. Turkish leftists and Kurdish political activists were targeted. Thus, the use of non-formal units became a feature of Turkish political and military culture.

### **The use of non-formal units became a feature of Turkish political and military culture.**

While the ÖHD was formally part of the TSK's structure, few knew about its existence. For instance, former Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit heard about the ÖHD for the first time in 1978. Then-Turkish Chief of Staff Semih Sancar

asked for funding after the Americans cut the budget of the special unit. Later in a TV interview Ecevit admitted that he was astonished when he heard about the existence of such a unit. As leader of the Turkish left, Ecevit's amazement grew when he found out that members of the rival rightist "Gray Wolves" also were recruited to the unit.

## 3. The Gray Wolves

The Gray Wolves (Bozkurtlar, also known as the "Idealist Hearths" – Ülkü Ocakları) were founded in 1965 by the Turkish nationalist Alparslan Türkeş. The group is considered the youth branch of the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP). The ideology of the organization is Pan-Turkic, seeking to unify all Turkic peoples into a single nation stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China.

The main task of the Gray Wolves was fighting against perceived threats of Communist subversion, as well as the threat of PKK, left-oriented Kurdish separatism. This organization differed from other youth movements associated with political parties by its paramilitary training. According to the official webpage of the Gray Wolves, its training camps offered military training and provided a "Turkish-Islam Synthesis," a worldview based on ethno-nationalist religious education, supported by "sports like" and cultural activities. Accordingly, Gray Wolves were raised as "nationalist conscious" citizens. They are indoctrinated to perceive the state as a holy entity and to dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of the state. Their hall of fame figures includes Mehmet Ali Ağca, who attempted to murder the pope.

The involvement of Gray Wolves in Turkey's Special Operations Unit increased significantly after the 1980 military coup. Apart from preparing for a possible Soviet invasion, Turkey also experienced assassinations of its diplomats in Europe by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). As the number of assassinations began to climb, coup leader and army Chief of Staff Kenan Evren decided to launch a campaign against the ASALA. In this framework many members of the Gray Wolves, including those who were in exile in Europe or in prison, were recruited for covert missions against ASALA, with a promise that their criminal records would be erased.

According to former Gray Wolves member Kartal Demirön, retired Turkish army generals trained most of the Gray Wolves. The Gray Wolves did not limit their scope of activity only to Armenians, but also targeted the Turkish left and the Kurdish supporters of the PKK. During the late 1980s and the 1990s, the Gray Wolves also were recruited into the ranks of Turkey's Gendarmerie's Intelligence Unit (JİTEM) which was accused of political assassinations against Kurdish political activists and businessmen.

Turkish use of Gray Wolves against the Kurdish PKK became known through an infamous car accident in Susurluk in 1996. The then-former vice police chief Hüseyin Kocadağ, Member of Parliament Sedat Bucak, and one of the most famous Gray Wolves, Abdullah Çatlı – were killed. An inquiry revealed that the three worked for the "Special Forces Command Post" (also known as "Special Bureau"). Moreover, it turned out that the Turkish minister of interior, Mehmet Ağar, knew about their activities.

Given these accusations and due to public pressure, Mehmet Ağar resigned and was sentenced in 2002 to five years in jail. However, he was pardoned and released one year later. In an interview before entering prison Ağar said that "the state told us come and then we came. The state told us go and we went. I never caused any harm to the state. I see this imprisonment sentence as national service."

Further investigations revealed the structure of the Special Warfare Unit. At that time, the unit was said to have approximately 700 personnel, including elements of the Gray Wolves. According to a former agent of the Turkish Intelligence Agency (MIT), Mahir Kaynak, these members were on active duty within the ranks of the army, police, and the MIT. Besides the abovementioned "state officials," Kaynak emphasized that the state enjoyed the services of nationalist right-wing mafia leaders. Kaynak added that the state ignored the crimes of the mafia due to their contribution to national security. Nationalist mafia bosses such as Alaattin Çakıcı and Sedat Peker appear to be the most prominent examples of this phenomenon.

Following the revelations, Turkey adopted an ambivalent stance towards the Gray Wolves and the mafia bosses. A 1997 National Security Council meeting tagged the Gray Wolves and mafia bosses as a potential threat to state security. Yet, Turkey did not outlaw the Gray Wolves. The group lived on as a youth organization of the MHP. Moreover, Turkey continued using the Gray Wolves. For instance, upon the declaration of an alliance between MHP and AKP in 2015, ultra-nationalist mafia bosses, especially Sedat Peker, became more active in domestic politics and acted to deter and intimidate leftist opposition voices such as the "Academics for Peace" group.

Gray Wolves also were employed for Turkish purposes abroad. For instance, many members of the movement took part in the first (1994-1996) and the second (1999-2000) Chechen Wars, fighting together with the Chechens against the Russian army. According to many (but unconfirmed) reports, they also provided weapons and ammunition to the Chechens.



**A 2017 photo posted to social media shows Gray Wolves members in Istanbul with automatic weapons in front of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) flag.**

At the beginning of the 21st century, the movement entered a period of inaction. However, this trend came to an end in 2015 when Thailand decided to extradite a group of Uyghur refugees to China. Pictures of the handcuffed Uyghurs infuriated the Turkish public, and the Gray Wolves activists organized demonstrations. They even stormed the Thai consulate in Istanbul. On August 17, 2015, a Hindu shrine in Bangkok was bombed, killing 20 innocent civilians. The Thai police arrested Gray Wolves member Adem Karadağ (alias Bilal Mohammed) and charged him with responsibility for the attack.

With Turkey's decision to intervene militarily in Syria in 2011, the Gray Wolves joined the fighting alongside Syrian Turkmen, who are considered part of the Pan-Turkic family. Again, as in Chechnya, Gray Wolves focused on fighting the Russians in "Bayır Bucak," the Turkmen dominated area. With Turkey's open support, Gray Wolves began to enroll in new Turkmen armed brigades that were named after the Ottoman sultans such as Sultan Murat, Abdulhamid Han, Mehmet the Conqueror, and Yavuz Sultan Selim.

Unsurprisingly, recruitment was public via the Turkish propaganda machine at home, especially via by pro-government newspapers such as *Yeni Şafak* and *Star*. The papers asserted that these groups were in fact defending the Turkmen homeland which is inherited from the Ottomans. Indeed, Gray Wolves and their sister organization, Alperen Hearths, left their mark in the Syrian Civil War when their member, Alparslan Çelik, killed Oleg Peshkov, the Russian pilot who ejected from a jet that was shot down by the Turkish F-16 in November 2015.

The involvement of Gray Wolves in Syria under state sponsorship illustrated the bond between Erdoğan's Neo-Ottomanism and MHP's head Devlet Bahçeli's Pan-Turkism. This became even clearer in 2018 when Erdoğan began to use the Gray Wolves hand sign during his election campaign, while calling for "One nation, one motherland, one flag, and one state."

Thanks to social media, this nationalist aspect of Turkish political discourse has penetrated the Turkish Diaspora in Europe. On November 2, 2020, during the last armed confrontation between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the highly politicized and radicalized branch of the Gray Wolves in France vandalized the Armenian genocide monument. Given the ongoing tension between Turkey and France, Paris decided to ban the Gray Wolves, accusing the group of being "extremely violent and inciting hatred against Armenians and French authorities."



**A mob of Turkish ultra-nationalists flashing the Gray Wolves hand sign in Vienna on June 26, 2020.**

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Erdoğan slammed the French decision. German lawmakers then demanded to enact a similar ban on the group in Germany, where it was running under an umbrella organization called "Federation of Democratic Idealist Turkish Associations of Germany (Almanya Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu, ADÜTF). It is estimated that in Germany alone there are 11 thousand Gray Wolves members. In fact, in Germany and Austria there are 270 registered Gray Wolves "hearths" (centers). Thus, a ban in Germany could also trigger Austrian action against the Gray Wolves.

Given its strict hierarchical organizational infrastructure, the Gray Wolves is controlled by the MHP in Turkey. Apart from new recruits, it seems that the younger members of this organization are sons or grandsons of older Gray Wolves. Membership passes from generation to generation. And the political alliance between AKP and MHP provides government shelter and support to the Gray Wolves, as well as certain legitimacy. While senior members of the group are on the MHP payroll, most members are volunteers.

Ankara's open support for the Gray Wolves means that the organization is evolving from a marginal, radical, rightist group into one embraced by the Turkish state. It is an organization that is attracting right wing and conservative Islamist circles in the Turkish Diaspora.

#### **4. SADAT (International Defense Consulting Company)**

The SADAT International Defense Consulting Company (Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık Şirketi) was established in 2012 as the only privately owned defense consulting firm in Turkey. The company was founded by Brigadier General (res.) Adnan Tanrıverdi and 22 comrades in arms who all were expelled from the TSK due to their political Islamic tendencies.



**The SADAT military company was founded by Brigadier General (res.) Adnan Tanrıverdi (second from left) and others expelled from the TSK due to their Islamist tendencies.**

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The name SADAT is the plural form of the word السيد (Al-Seyid) meaning "notable" in Arabic, a choice indicating an Islamist orientation. The company's offices are in Istanbul. Its legal establishment was declared in the Turkish Registry Gazette on February 28, 2012 under the number 8015. Its logo indicates that the company's area of operation is the whole Muslim world, including European countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. As the sole and leading provider of military training in Turkey, SADAT can be considered the continuation of the pre-Erdoğan period's "deep state" informal units.

The company's website summarizes its activities as the sole Turkish private enterprise that is providing defense consultancy and military training and equipment. To achieve this goal, SADAT provides clients with warfare packages and special operations training. This includes conventional training (land-naval-air, internal security) and unconventional training (ambush, raid, roadblock, sabotage, terrorizing, assassination, rescue, kidnapping, and operational techniques that can be used against street protests).

SADAT's website includes detailed information and criteria for candidates seeking to participate in a 16-week-long training program. According to the Turkish press, SADAT's clients include the Turkish Police forces special unit (Polis Özel Harekat – PÖH, also known as "Esedullah" – The Lions of God); the newly armed neighborhood watchmen (Bekçi) that act as Erdoğan's revolutionary guards against any potential threats in the streets; and Erdoğan's special presidential guards, also known as the "Reinforcements" (Takviye).

Company founder General Tanrıverdi was a member of Turkey's Special Warfare Unit and of Northern Cyprus' Civil Defense Organization. During his military service General Tanrıverdi also served as a lecturer at the Turkish Armed Forces military academy, where the current minister of defense Hulusi Akar was his student. However, after the military intervention in 1997 (the post-modern coup) Tanrıverdi was forced to retire due to his political Islamic tendencies.

After expelled from the army, he joined an association called Defenders of Justice (Adaleti Savunanlar Derneği, ASDER). This organization was formed by 632 military personnel who were all ousted from the TSK, most of them due to their Islamist tendencies. Between 2004-2009 he became the chairman of ASDER. To function as a think tank and not only as an ex-army union, he founded the Justice Defenders Strategic Research Center (Adaleti Savunanlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Derneği, ASSAM). ASSAM began to submit proposals to the Erdoğan administration about the need for comprehensive restructuring in the TSK.

Tanrıverdi and Erdoğan have known each other since 1994 when both served in Istanbul, Erdoğan as mayor and Tanrıverdi as commander of Maltepe military base in the city. The two leaders forged a strong relationship.

Tanrıverdi was deeply influenced by US defense consulting firms such as Blackwater, and decided to establish SADAT. Within four years (immediately after the failed coup attempt in July 2016), he was nominated to be President Erdoğan's top military advisor. He then led a comprehensive overhaul of the army. Tanrıverdi sought to end the secularist educational tradition of the TSK. He shut down the military academies, which were strongholds of Turkish secularism, and replaced them with a National Defense University. This latter institution recruited students from the religious Imam Hatip schools.

Nevertheless, on January 8, 2020 Tanrıverdi had to resign because of a controversial speech at the third International Islamic Union Congress in December 2019, where he said:

Will Islam ever unite? Yes. How will it happen? When the Mahdi<sup>[3]</sup> arrives. When does the Mahdi arrive? Only God knows. So, do we not have a duty? Should we not prepare the conditions for the Mahdi's arrival? This is precisely what we are doing.

Tanrıverdi's statement was not a slip of the tongue. On SADAT's website, the organization, and Tanrıverdi personally, advocate the Pan-Islamic unity of Ummah ideal, while portraying the company as the platform for cooperation among Muslim states. SADAT envisions ways in which the Muslim states can become self-sufficient military powers.

Tanrıverdi's articles reveal that the Turkish general was deeply influenced by the Serbian-Bosnian conflict. He deeply believed in the need for a Pan-Islamic NATO style of military alliance against the "enemies of Islam." Tanrıverdi also called for an Islamic alliance against Israel to force Jerusalem to adopt a "just peace." He asked every Muslim nation state to donate tanks and other military equipment for an Islamic army to defend the Palestinians. Tanrıverdi even designed a plan for defeating Israel within eleven days.



Tanrıverdi's apocalyptic Pan-Islamic military alliance vision was presented and advocated by the *Yeni Şafak* newspaper (a pro-government voice) for the first time on December 11, 2020, a day before the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Istanbul that gathered to protest US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

*Yeni Şafak* also provided its readers an interactive map (at right) indicating the military bases that can be used against Israel during the so-called "feasible military operation." The details were taken from Tanrıverdi's articles.

The organization caught the attention of the Israeli security establishment. In 2018, Israel's General Security Service (the Shin Bet) accused SADAT of transferring funds to Hamas. A Turkish academic, Cemil Tekeli, was arrested by Israeli security officers and accused of money laundering. Later, Tekeli's picture with Tanrıverdi also surfaced in the Israeli *Makor Rishon* newspaper.

## 5. Turkish Proxies in Syria: The NLF and Jaish al-Watani

Turkey was a crucial backer of the armed effort to topple the Assad regime from the beginning of the rebellion, in mid-2011. Prior to the uprising, Ankara had enjoyed normal relations with Damascus. But the uprising took place in a context of a generalized advance of Sunni Islamist forces in the region, notably in Egypt and Tunisia. At that point, Turkey envisaged the potential emergence of a bloc of Sunni Islamist states that would form natural allies for Ankara. The Syrian uprising made Damascus a potential member of such an alliance, in the event of rebel victory. This tempting prospect caused the Turkish government to throw its weight behind the rebellion.



From early 2012 onwards, the armed rebels made use of Turkish soil to transfer weapons to their strongholds in northern Syria. Today, the remaining areas of northern Syria outside the control of either the Assad regime or the US-aligned Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), are all under Turkish supervision or security guarantee to one degree or another. There are three such areas:

1. The area between Tal Tamr and Ain Issa, conquered from the SDF by the Turkish military and Syrian Islamist militias associated with it, in October/November 2019. This area is today under Turkish control.
2. The area from Jarabulus in the east to Jandarjis to its south west. This area constitutes the former Afrin canton of the SDF and was conquered by Turkey and associated Islamist militias in January-March 2018. This area is today under Turkish control and undergoing demographic changes in a manner reminiscent of Northern Cyprus. Ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish population has taken place. 137,000 people were displaced from their homes because of the 2018 operation, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A process of 'Turkification' appears to be under way in this area, including the changing of street names, elimination of all Kurdish symbols, use of Turkish currency and opening of Turkish language educational institutes at both school and higher education levels.
3. The area of Idlib Province from Jandarjis southwards to Jisr al-Shughur, which is controlled by the so-called 'Salvation Government,' a structure of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a Salafi jihadi militia. This area is not under direct Turkish control, but Ankara maintains around 80 military and observation points around this area. These points act as a de facto security guarantee for the HTS controlled area, since the Syrian regime, if it wished to move against HTS, would need to directly engage the Turkish Armed Forces. There are between 12-20,000 Turkish troops currently deployed in this area. Thus, the remaining insurgency in Syria today consists of forces partially or entirely under Turkish control.

Except for HTS, which remains outside direct Turkish supervision, and Haras al-Din, a more radical splinter group which rejected HTS's abandonment of open ties to al-Qaeda, all other rebel forces in northern Syria have been absorbed into two Turkish-supported structures: The National Liberation Front (NLF), Al-Jabhat al-Wataniya il-Tahrir, and the Syrian National Army (SNA), al-Jaysh al-Watani. The first of these is a Turkish-sponsored amalgam of 22 rebel militias. The group's formation was announced in May 2018.



The dominant militias within it are Ahrar al-Sham, a powerful Salafi grouping, and Faylaq al-Sham, a militia ideologically affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The group numbers approximately 70,000 militiamen.



**The Syrian National Army (SNA) consists of 22,000-35,000 fighters.**

As to the SNA, also sometimes referred to as the 'Turkish Free Syrian Army' (TFSA), it is the product of a Turkish attempt to transform several Syrian rebel militias into a semi-regular military force. It consists of 22,000-35,000 fighters. Organized into seven 'Legions,' and further sub-divided into divisions and brigades, the force answers nominally to the 'Syrian Interim Government' of 'President' Anas al-Abdah and his 'Minister of Defense' General Salim Idris. In practice, this force is universally acknowledged to be answerable to Turkey. The fighters are trained, equipped, and paid by Ankara, and when deployed in such operations as Operation Olive Branch and Operation Peace Spring, (and of course in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh) they constitute an infantry element of a Turkish-directed operation under Turkish command, without an independent command structure of their own or the ability to take decisions independent of the Turkish leadership.

This dependence on Turkey was graphically demonstrated on October 4, 2019, when the heads of the Syrian Interim Government announced the merger of the NLF into the SNA, and their support for an upcoming Turkish offensive into SDF-controlled eastern Syria (Operation "Peace Spring"). Neither the military commanders of the SNA, nor the leaders of the NLF were aware of the merger, which appears to have come at the direct order of the Turkish authorities. Hence, today the NLF officially constitutes a part of the SNA. The combined force now numbers around 100,000 fighters. The merger completes the process of the absorption of all significant Syrian Sunni militias under direct Turkish command, except for HTS, Haras al-Din (which has in fact attacked Turkish forces) and ISIS.

#### **6. Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) and Turkey**

HTS is the only insurgent organization today that maintains relations with Turkey, but which remains outside of the control of the Turkish military chain of command in Syria. Turkey's relations with HTS are complex and ambiguous. Officially, Ankara designated HTS as a terrorist organization on August 31, 2018, following similar designations by the US and EU. HTS emerged in 2017 from the fusion of Jabhat al-Nusra, the former Syrian franchise of al-Qaeda (until it split from the latter in 2016), with a number of other Islamist militias, namely Ansar al-Din, [Jaysh al-Sunna](#), [Liwa al-Haqq](#), and the [Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement](#).



**Hayat Tahrir al Sham operates under Turkish protection in Syria, but outside the Turkish military chain of command.**

In practice, Ankara has avoided confronting the organization, which remains the de facto governing authority in southern Idlib, under Turkish protection. This is despite Turkey's clear commitment in the framework of the 2018 Sochi agreement with Russia to rid Idlib province of terrorist groups. Partly, this may be attributed to Turkey's awareness of the undoubtedly heavy cost in lives among its own soldiers, should any such attempt be made (an attempt by the SNA to confront HTS, without major Turkish support, would almost certainly result in the SNA's defeat). But Turkey's relations with HTS have long gone beyond merely an uneasy tolerance.

Strong evidence [suggests](#) that HTS maintains relations with MIT (the Turkish intelligence agency), with the defense company SADAT, and with IHH, the quasi-governmental Islamic relief agency which has been active in northern Syria and the border area throughout the Syrian civil war.

Regarding MIT, [leaked](#) documents from a 2015 court case show that the organization was shipping weapons across the border to a Jabhat al-Nusra controlled part of Syria south of Adana. Trucks controlled by the MIT containing the weaponry were stopped by the Turkish Jandarma at the Ceyhan toll gate on January 9, 2014. The Turkish authorities later covered up the affair, banning Turkish media from reporting on it. Jandarma personnel involved in the search were arrested and charged with espionage.

Regarding IHH, it has worked closely and without concealment on relief issues with HTS and with other Islamist rebel groups in its various iterations since the beginning of the war. HTS personnel have freely crossed the border back and forth since the beginnings of the conflict. HTS members escort Turkish personnel through south Idlib at the present time.

Regarding SADAT, the agency was engaged from the start of the war in the Turkish government's support for and training of rebel fighters from a variety of organizations, including the forerunners of HTS. According to a 2012 report in the oppositionist *Aydınlık* newspaper, SADAT established several bases in the Istanbul and Marmara region for the purpose of carrying out this training. This report was one of the first in the Turkish media to identify the existence of SADAT, and its role as a trainer of proxy forces for Turkey.

The report names the Ulaşlı camp on the Marmara region in the Gölcük district of Kocaeli as one of the facilities used by SADAT for the training of Syrian fighters. This facility, formerly maintained by the Turkish Navy, is officially named the "Naval Forces Command Ulaşlı Special Education Center Command" and has a capacity for 600 personnel. According to *Aydınlık*, SADAT personnel working in these facilities transport Syrian fighters from Syria in groups of 300-400 people for training. Activities on this scale cannot possibly be undertaken without the knowledge, and hence the tacit support, of MIT and the government.

The role to be played by the SADAT-trained fighters in Turkish national strategy first became apparent in Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016. This operation marks a watershed in Turkey's utilization of Syrian fighters. Prior to it, Turkish support was afforded to the Syrian insurgents because of the shared political goal of toppling the Assad regime. In Euphrates Shield, for the first time, the Syrians were used as a direct instrument of Turkish policy in pursuit of the Turkish goal of denying the Syrian Kurds contiguous territorial autonomy along the Syrian-Turkish border.

SADAT founder Tanrıverdi called in an interview on Akit TV (December 14, 2015), for the establishment of autonomous Turkmen and Sunni Arab areas along the border. Tanrıverdi said: "We need to put forward our minimum requirements, which are a sine qua non. There should be an autonomous Turkmen region, if there are to be autonomous and separate federative structures. The Kurdish region should not be unified and must be kept separate. Between [Kurdish-controlled points] there should be a corridor that will connect us to Aleppo. It [the corridor] should be a Sunni region, an Arab-Sunni region."

With significant adjustments, this resembles what was subsequently established, utilizing the Syrian fighters of the NLF and SNA as the core infantry force in Turkey's operations "Euphrates Shield" and "Olive Branch". The adjustments, as compared with SADAT's vision are several. First, the areas conquered by Turkey in these operations are not, except for HTS controlled southern Idlib, autonomous. Rather, they are Turkish controlled. Second, Turkey failed in maintaining a foothold to rebel controlled Aleppo city. Indeed, the entire city returned to regime control in late 2016, because of Russian and Iranian efforts that Turkey was not strong enough to oppose.

Evidence has emerged to suggest that the General Command of the Turkish armed forces was opposed to Erdoğan's plans to carve out autonomous zones in Syria, preferring that Turkey act, if at all, as part of a US led coalition against ISIS. Following the coup attempt in July 2016, Erdoğan purged many officers opposed to a large-scale incursion into Syria.

The recruitment, training and establishment of a large, Turkish-controlled Syrian force enabled Ankara to carry out three extensive operations into Syria: "Euphrates Shield" in 2016, "Olive Branch" in 2018, and "Peace Spring" in 2019. This, at minimal cost in Turkish lives, and with the built-in 'alibi' that what was being created by the incursions were zones administered by Syrian clients of Turkey, rather than by Turkey itself.

Thus, Syria was the first and prime example of a new method of proxy warfare, using local mercenary forces recruited with the involvement of a quasi-governmental agency (SADAT). These forces, and these methods, were then employed in Libya to further Turkish foreign policy goals – a project vastly more complex from both a logistical and a geo-political point of view than the relatively straightforward deployment of forces in neighboring Syria.

## 7. Turkish Intervention in Libya (via SADAT and Syrian Proxies)

Turkey is closely aligned with the Tripoli-based "Government of National Accord" led by Fa'iz Sarraj in Libya. In December 2019, reports began to appear on Syrian opposition websites of Syrian fighters being deployed by Turkey in Libya to defend the GNA areas against the advancing forces of General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Turkey denied the reports. Subsequently a large volume of evidence confirming the deployment and revealing its details has emerged. In 2013 SADAT itself signed an agreement with the Government of National Accord (GNA). In the framework of the agreement SADAT committed to construct a military sports facility and a vehicle maintenance structure.



**US Africa Command (AFRICOM) estimates that Turkey has sent 5,000 Syrian mercenaries to fight for Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA).**

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The recruitment of the fighters for Libya was conducted on the ground by SNA personnel, and took place in the three Turkish controlled areas in northern Syria, and among refugees in southern Turkey. A relative lull in the fighting with the regime made it possible to divert fighters elsewhere. Senior Turkish officials later explicitly confirmed the presence of SNA fighters in Libya. On February 21, 2020, in a statement to reporters, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that "Syrian teams" from the SNA were carrying out missions in Libya. In a speech in the Turkish city of Izmir on February 22, 2020, Erdoğan once again confirmed the presence of SNA personnel in Libya.

According to Syrian opposition sources, Turkey's Ministry of Defense directly contracted SADAT and an additional company called Abna'a al-Umma to manage the recruitment of fighters in the framework of the SNA, and in coordination with the Syrian Interim Government. The companies recruited the fighters and were responsible also for the preparation of the official documents that authorized them to enter and leave Turkey legally to Libya, in addition to fixing employment contracts of three to six months for the fighters.

A fighter of the Jabhat al Shamiya, one of the component militias of the SNA, told a Syrian opposition website that "the fighters were put in a hotel in Turkey until they were issued Turkish IDs. They checked out of Turkey as Turks, not Syrians. Some were transferred by plane and others by ship... Also, promises of getting a salary of \$3,000 a month were fake, and they only got \$1,200."

According to Syrian opposition sources, the militias responsible for the recruitment and handling of the fighters were the First Corps of the National Army, the Sultan Murad Division, the Mu'tasim Division, and the Suleiman Shah Brigade (also known as al-Amshat). These groups registered individuals wishing to fight in Libya. They then coordinated the process of transporting fighters from Syria to Turkey through communication with SADAT and under the supervision of the Turkish army. Members of the Levant Front, the Glory Corps/Faylaq al-Majd, and the Army of Islam/Jaysh al-Islam also travelled to Libya under the supervision of Mu'tasim.

According to a Syrian opposition report, "Fighters are transported from Syria to Libya through two routes. Some fighters present in Libya revealed they are gathered at the Hawar Kilis military crossing and from there transported by buses to Turkish territory. In Turkey, they are dropped in camps in the Kilis region until their documents are completed, and then airlifted from Gaziantep International Airport to one of Istanbul's airports."

"The second route consists in taking the road from Syria to Antakya, the air from Antakya to Ankara and finally to Libya on Afriqiyah Airways." The Libyan Wings airline is mentioned by other sources as one of the commercial companies used to transport fighters from Turkey to Libya. Regarding transport within Turkey, the fighters are taken by road from the Kilis crossing to Gaziantep airport and there flown by A400 Turkish military aircraft to Istanbul.



**Fawzi Boukatif**

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In Libya itself, SADAT works closely with Fawzi Boukatif, a Palestinian Islamist and former commander of the Martyrs of 17 February Brigade, a militia which fought Gaddafi. SADAT, together with Boukatif, is responsible for the deployment of the Syrian fighters in coordination with Tripoli's army.

Regarding the number of Syrian fighters present in Libya, according to a report by the US military's Africa Command (AFRICOM), presented to the US Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on August 28, 2020, there are approximately 5000 Syrians fighting with the GNA in Libya. The report, according to Jane's Information group notes that "Syrians fighting for the GNA are paid and supervised by 'several dozen' military trainers from a Turkish company called Sadat, which also trains GNA-aligned militias." The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, meanwhile, puts the number higher (at 17,000) and claims that 471 Syrians have been killed in Libya.

Syrian fighters played a significant role in the GNA's Operation Peace Storm launched on March 25, 2019, which saw GNA and allied forces ousting the LNA from the entirety of the Tripoli area, and then pushing east to recapture a string of coastal towns. The role of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 UAVs was also vital in this campaign. These systems reportedly played a role in the destruction of three Russian Pantsir-S1 systems deployed with the LNA.

#### **8. Turkish Intervention in Nagorno-Karabakh (via Syrian fighters)**

Turkey strongly supported the decision by Azerbaijan to begin in September 2020 a military campaign intended to wrest back the disputed territory of Nagorno Karabakh from Armenia. Evidence rapidly began to accumulate that Ankara was maintaining a similar pipeline of Syrian client fighters to the battleground, as had been the case in vis Libya. The components and tools of this strategy were familiar. Again, official denials from Ankara and Baku were rapidly belied by reports from the battle zone.

Once again, the Syrian fighters were recruited by the SNA, in cooperation with SADAT. The fighters were offered monthly fees of \$1,500-2,000 for agreeing to serve in the southern Caucasus. The contracts, again, were for three to six months. The main recruitment centers were in the cities of Afrin, Al-Bab, Ras al-Ain, and Tel Abyad. The route taken out of Syria, according to fighters' testimony, was also similar. Fighters crossed the border at Kilis and were then transported to the Gaziantep Airport. From there, SADAT-chartered A-400 transport aircraft flew them to Istanbul Airport, and from there they boarded flights to Baku, Azerbaijan.

The specific SNA-associated militias used for this deployment differed from those who provided the manpower for Libya. The main pools of manpower for this deployment were the Sultan Murad, Suleyman al-Shah, Hamza and Failaq al-Sham brigades. The first two of these brigades draw their support from ethnic Turkmen populations in northern Syria, and hence may have been assumed to have had a greater natural affinity for the Turkic Azeris than would Syrian Sunni Muslims of Arab ethnicity.

But in its general contours, the deployment in Nagorno-Karabakh resembled the blueprint established in Libya. In both cases, the role of SADAT was paramount in the recruitment, organization, and transport of the fighters; the SNA was the chief pool of manpower; and the deployment took place alongside the use of specialists from the official Turkish armed forces.

#### **9. Turkey and Qatar**

Turkey and Qatar are engaged in a strategic partnership based on a common orientation in support of Sunni political Islamism and shared adversaries. The first Turkish troops arrived in Qatar in late 2015, under the terms of an agreement for military cooperation signed in 2014. Cooperation has sharply increased, however, since the dispute between Qatar on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other in 2017. Several high-level visits have taken place, alongside war games and joint training. Today, Turkey maintains a force of around 3000 military personnel in Qatar. In December 2015, a plan was announced for the construction of a Turkish base in Qatar, the first permanent Turkish military facility in the Gulf area. In March 2018, an agreement was signed for the building of an additional permanent Turkish naval base in the north of Qatar, to include a training facility.

Cooperation in the defense sector between the two is also flourishing. Qatar has signed an agreement to purchase TB-2 armed drones, which have performed well in Iraq, Libya, Azerbaijan, and Syria. BMC, a Turkish combat vehicle producer, Aselsan, and the Anadolu shipyard have also signed major deals with Qatari firms over the last two years.

The Turkish presence in Qatar makes Ankara a significant player in the Gulf for the first time. Given the assertive pattern of Turkish behavior elsewhere, this is causing concern in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. However, at present, the deployment appears to be conventional in nature, with no irregular and proxy element of the kind which characterized the Turkish interventions in Libya, Syria and Azerbaijan.

## Conclusion

Even though President Erdoğan could crush the dominance of the TSK, the "deep state" political culture is still evident in Erdoğan's empire. However, it has been turned from a tool of Kemalist and secularist repression into an ambitious vehicle for the neo-Ottoman agenda, and as tool meant primarily for internal matters to a tool for achieving external ambitions.

Today, President Erdoğan's AKP and its MHP ally rule the Turkish state without any significant opposition. The two parties dominate all state organs and mechanisms, including the deep state and its covert tools. To strengthen his position at home, Erdoğan continues to pursue a hardline Islamist, nationalist, and increasingly blunt neo-Ottoman stance in Turkey's foreign policy.

Apart from relying on the TSK for Turkey's extra-territorial military campaigns, Erdoğan uses the Gray Wolves, SADAT, and other elements in the implementation of his agenda. These organizations are tasked with securing and guaranteeing Erdoğan's rule in Turkey against any coup attempts. But they also serve Erdoğan's ambitions abroad.

Turkey's activities in Europe, Syria, and Libya serve as concrete examples of this. The cooperation between SADAT and the Syrian National Army has created a new situation in which for the first time Turkey possesses a large pool of available, easily deployed, and easily disposable foreign manpower as an important tool of power projection; a tool that provides a degree of plausible deniability.

**Turkey possesses a large pool of available, easily deployed, disposable foreign manpower.**

When combined with Turkish non-official but governmentally directed groups that are well-established such as the Gray Wolves, it becomes clear that Erdoğan now has a private military and paramilitary system at his disposal. He deploys this apparatus for domestic and foreign operations without official oversight.

The implications of this are manifold. Rigorous further study of this worrying development is called for.

***Editorial note:** This study, which reveals the extent to which Turkey aggressively deploys proxies and militias to project power across the Middle East, is the first fruit of a cooperation agreement between the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and TRENDS Research & Advisory of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. The two institutes will continue to research together regional military and security issues. They also intend to conduct symposia and maintain academic exchange programs.*

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[1] Respectively, the First and the Second Balkan Wars (1912-1913), World War I (1914-1918), and the Turkish war of independence (1919-1922).

[2] Gladio means sword in Latin. It was the nickname of the Italian special operations unit. Later this term was used to describe all special units in NATO.

[3] Mahdi is the Islamic counterpart of the Messiah in Judeo-Christian theology.

# Exhibit 6



## **Turkish Militias and Proxies**

*Erdoğan has created a private military and paramilitary system. He deploys this apparatus for domestic and foreign operations without official oversight.*

Dr. Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak and Dr. Jonathan Spyer

*Drs. Yanarocak and Spyer are senior fellows at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS).*

### **Executive Summary**

Since 2010, centralized authority has collapsed in many Middle East states, including Libya, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. States able to support, mobilize, and make use of irregular and proxy military formations to project power enjoy competitive advantages in this environment.

Under President Recep Tayypp Erdoğan and the AKP, Turkey seeks to be the dominant regional force, projecting power over neighboring countries and across seas. In cooperation with a variety of bodies, most significantly the SADAT military contracting company and the Syrian National Army, Turkey has developed over the last decade a large pool of well-trained, easily deployed, and effortlessly disposable proxy forces as a tool of power projection, with a convenient degree of plausible deniability.

When combined with Turkish non-official, but governmentally directed and well-established groups such as the Gray Wolves, it becomes clear that Erdoğan now has a private military and paramilitary system at his disposal.

The use of proxies is rooted in methods developed by the Turkish "deep state" well before the AKP came to power. Ironically, the tools forged to serve the deep state's Kemalist, anti-Islamist (and anti-Kurdish) purposes now serve an Islamist, neo-Ottoman (and, once again, anti-Kurdish) agenda.

Erdoğan deploys this apparatus for domestic and foreign operations without official oversight. Syria was the first place where he put this into action. Proxies subsequently have been employed in Libya and in Nagorno Karabakh to further Turkish foreign

policy goals. There are now reports of Turkish-controlled Syrian fighters being deployed to Qatar.

Thus far, the proxies have delivered modest achievements for Turkey in Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan. As such, all Middle Eastern countries should pay close attention to the nature of this system, the advantages it conveys, and its potential vulnerabilities.

This study is the first attempt to systematically trace the roots, development, structure, and deployment of Erdogan's "unofficial" military frameworks. It also is the first foreign policy/national security study to be published jointly by an Israeli and an Emirati think tank. The authors hope it will be the first of many such joint research initiatives.

## **1. The Turkish Deep State**

Turkey's irregular warfare capabilities have become a key instrument of national policy. To understand the foundations of this practice, it is necessary to trace the roots of this system back to the days when the Turkish military ran the state.

Given their role in the foundation of the modern Turkish nation-state, the Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri or TSK) always have regarded themselves as the true guardians of the Republic. This perception was shaped mainly due to their role as saviors of the nation in the decade of conventional wars<sup>1</sup> waged until 1922 (the end of the Turkish war of independence). The founder of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, acted as the commander in chief of the TSK, but his resignation from the army and becoming a civilian president did not result in role-reduction for the TSK. A symbiotic relationship was formed between the TSK and the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), which was initially the sole party in Turkey. The CHP was perceived as the political organ of the army.

Harmony between the army and the civilian state ended in 1945 when Turkey's transition from a single party authoritarian state to a multi-party democracy took place. Turkey wanted to be accepted as a member in good standing in the Western camp that attained victory in WWII. In the 1950 multi-party elections, the CHP lost power for the first time to the opposition Democrat Party (DP) of Adnan Menderes.

The generals, who considered themselves the core of the state, witnessed the transition of power to DP, which had no formal relations with the TSK. This event led to some estrangement of the TSK from the political sphere, pushing the military into the "deep state" structure. The senior brass of the TSK developed a culture of covert networking, remaining loyal to "the state" rather than to the "elected government."

Driven by the imperative of loyalty to the state's interests as defined by the "deep state," the TSK engaged in military coups to redress policies that were perceived by them to be threatening the state. In the eyes of the TSK, these military takeovers were just "fine tunings" aimed at protecting the state against elected civilian governments. Due to the many such interventions, the concept of a "deep state" (Derin Devlet) grew into a recognized political term in the lexicon of Turkish politics.

In 2007, then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was asked in an interview whether he was aware of the existence of the Turkish "deep state." Erdoğan replied that the "deep state" was a dangerous phenomenon that democratically elected public servants should obliterate; and he traced its origins back to the Ottoman Empire. Erdoğan referred to members of the deep state as a "gang" who act in accordance with



its own "holy values" in ways that may even lead to violation of the country's laws. He decried the fact that deep states tag their opponents as "internal enemies."

The term 'Internal enemies' was frequently mentioned after it had been used in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's farewell letter to the Turkish army. (It also is engraved on the wall of his mausoleum in Ankara). He warned the army about "internal enemies." For Atatürk and his followers these were Islamists and separatist Kurds. The emerging democracy allowed Islamists and Kurds to acquire public positions in the state.

Deep state elements established assassination squads against Leftists and Kurds who were viewed as dangerous. The police investigated such political murders, but nobody ever was brought to justice. The police investigations were conducted half-heartedly, and the judiciary tended to shield state officials. The lack of law enforcement and punishment encouraged deep state elements to continue their activities.

Such behavior legitimized covert operations for "the sake of the state" and deeply affected Turkey's political culture. The Islamist AKP, a former adversary of the deep state, took control of the Turkish state structure in the 21st century and inherited the modus operandi of the deep state in dealing its own adversaries. Moreover, the AKP has further upgraded elements and functions of the Turkish deep state and employed them against external adversaries.

## **2. The Special Operations Unit of the Turkish Armed Forces**

After the Second World War, Turkey decided to join the Western camp to defend itself from its historical nemesis Russia. Turkey decided on June 30, 1950 to participate in the Korean War (1950-1953) and was subsequently admitted into the NATO alliance in 1952.

NATO asked the member states to establish special operations units that could organize armed resistance in case of Soviet invasion – modeled on the anti-Nazi resistance and the role of the British SOE and the American OSS in supporting it. All NATO countries including Turkey formed special units. Immediately after the 1971 coup d'état, Turkey established a special unit under the name "Department of Special Warfare" (Özel Harp Dairesi, ÖHD). This entity, also known by the nickname "Gladio,"<sup>2</sup> was tasked to carry out covert operations for the state and make necessary preparations to cope with the Russian invasion threat. Many Turkish historians believe that Gladio became Turkey's main instrument for carrying out "dirty business" such as assassination, kidnapping, sabotage, etc. Turkish leftists and Kurdish political activists were targeted. Thus, the use of non-formal units became a feature of Turkish political and military culture.

While the ÖHD was formally part of the TSK's structure, few knew about its existence. For instance, former Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit heard about the ÖHD for the first time in 1978. Then-Turkish Chief of Staff Semih Sancar asked for funding after the Americans cut the budget of the special unit. Later in a TV interview Ecevit admitted that he was astonished when he heard about the existence of such a unit. As leader of the Turkish left, Ecevit's amazement grew when he found out that members of the rival rightist "Gray Wolves" also were recruited to the unit.

## **3. The Gray Wolves**

The Gray Wolves (Bozkurtlar, also known as the "Idealist Hearths" – Ülkü Ocakları) were founded in 1965 by the Turkish nationalist Alparslan Türkeş. The group is

considered the youth branch of the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP). The ideology of the organization is Pan-Turkic, seeking to unify all Turkic peoples into a single nation stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China.

The main task of the Gray Wolves was fighting against perceived threats of Communist subversion, as well as the threat of PKK, left-oriented Kurdish separatism. This organization differed from other youth movements associated with political parties by its paramilitary training. According to the official webpage of the Gray Wolves, its training camps offered military training and provided a "Turkish-Islam Synthesis," a worldview based on ethno-nationalist religious education, supported by "sports like" and cultural activities. Accordingly, Gray Wolves were raised as "nationalist conscious" citizens. They are indoctrinated to perceive the state as a holy entity and to dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of the state. Their hall of fame figures includes Mehmet Ali Ağca, who attempted to murder the pope.

The involvement of Gray Wolves in Turkey's Special Operations Unit increased significantly after the 1980 military coup. Apart from preparing for a possible Soviet invasion, Turkey also experienced assassinations of its diplomats in Europe by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). As the number of assassinations began to climb, coup leader and army Chief of Staff Kenan Evren decided to launch a campaign against the ASALA. In this framework many members of the Gray Wolves, including those who were in exile in Europe or in prison, were recruited for covert missions against ASALA, with a promise that their criminal records would be erased.

According to former Gray Wolves member Kartal Demirön, retired Turkish army generals trained most of the Gray Wolves. The Gray Wolves did not limit their scope of activity only to Armenians, but also targeted the Turkish left and the Kurdish supporters of the PKK. During the late 1980s and the 1990s, the Gray Wolves also were recruited into the ranks of Turkey's Gendarmerie's Intelligence Unit (JITEM) which was accused of political assassinations against Kurdish political activists and businessmen.

Turkish use of Gray Wolves against the Kurdish PKK became known through an infamous car accident in Susurluk in 1996. The then-former vice police chief Hüseyin Kocadağ, Member of Parliament Sedat Bucak, and one of the most famous Gray Wolves, Abdullah Çatlı – were killed. An inquiry revealed that the three worked for the "Special Forces Command Post" (also known as "Special Bureau"). Moreover, it turned out that the Turkish minister of interior, Mehmet Ağar, knew about their activities.

Given these accusations and due to public pressure, Mehmet Ağar resigned and was sentenced in 2002 to five years in jail. However, he was pardoned and released one year later. In an interview before entering prison Ağar said that "the state told us come and then we came. The state told us go and we went. I never caused any harm to the state. I see this imprisonment sentence as national service."

Further investigations revealed the structure of the Special Warfare Unit. At that time, the unit was said to have approximately 700 personnel, including elements of the

Gray Wolves. According to a former agent of the Turkish Intelligence Agency (MIT), Mahir Kaynak, these members were on active duty within the ranks of the army, police, and the MIT. Besides the abovementioned "state officials," Kaynak emphasized that the state enjoyed the services of nationalist right-wing mafia leaders. Kaynak added that the state ignored the crimes of the mafia due to their contribution to national security. Nationalist mafia bosses such as Alaattin Çakıcı and Sedat Peker appear to be the most prominent examples of this phenomenon.

Following the revelations, Turkey adopted an ambivalent stance towards the Gray Wolves and the mafia bosses. A 1997 National Security Council meeting tagged the Gray Wolves and mafia bosses as a potential threat to state security. Yet, Turkey did not outlaw the Gray Wolves. The group lived on as a youth organization of the MHP. Moreover, Turkey continued using the Gray Wolves. For instance, upon the declaration of an alliance between MHP and AKP in 2015, ultra-nationalist mafia bosses, especially Sedat Peker, became more active in domestic politics and acted to deter and intimidate leftist opposition voices such as the "Academics for Peace" group.

Gray Wolves also were employed for Turkish purposes abroad. For instance, many members of the movement took part in the first (1994-1996) and the second (1999-2000) Chechen Wars, fighting together with the Chechens against the Russian army. According to many (but unconfirmed) reports, they also provided weapons and ammunition to the Chechens.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the movement entered a period of inaction. However, this trend came to an end in 2015 when Thailand decided to extradite a group of Uyghur refugees to China. Pictures of the handcuffed Uyghurs infuriated the Turkish public, and the Gray Wolves activists organized demonstrations. They even stormed the Thai consulate in Istanbul. On August 17, 2015, a Hindu shrine in Bangkok was bombed, killing 20 innocent civilians. The Thai police arrested Gray Wolves member Adem Karadağ (alias Bilal Mohammed) and charged him with responsibility for the attack.

With Turkey's decision to intervene militarily in Syria in 2011, the Gray Wolves joined the fighting alongside Syrian Turkmen, who are considered part of the Pan-Turkic family. Again, as in Chechnya, Gray Wolves focused on fighting the Russians in "Bayır Bucak," the Turkmen dominated area. With Turkey's open support, Gray Wolves began to enroll in new Turkmen armed brigades that were named after the Ottoman sultans such as Sultan Murat, Abdulhamid Han, Mehmet the Conqueror, and Yavuz Sultan Selim.

Unsurprisingly, recruitment was public via the Turkish propaganda machine at home, especially via by pro-government newspapers such as *Yeni Şafak* and *Star*. The papers asserted that these groups were in fact defending the Turkmen homeland which is inherited from the Ottomans. Indeed, Gray Wolves and their sister organization, Alperen Hearths, left their mark in the Syrian Civil War when their member, Alparslan Çelik, killed Oleg Peshkov, the Russian pilot who ejected from a jet that was shot down by the Turkish F-16 in November 2015.

The involvement of Gray Wolves in Syria under state sponsorship illustrated the bond between Erdoğan's Neo-Ottomanism and MHP's head Devlet Bahçeli's Pan-Turkism. This became even clearer in 2018 when Erdoğan began to use the Gray Wolves hand sign during his election campaign, while calling for "One nation, one motherland, one flag, and one state."

Thanks to social media, this nationalist aspect of Turkish political discourse has penetrated the Turkish Diaspora in Europe. On November 2, 2020, during the last armed confrontation between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the highly politicized and radicalized branch of the Gray Wolves in France vandalized the Armenian genocide monument. Given the ongoing tension between Turkey and France, Paris decided to ban the Gray Wolves, accusing the group of being "extremely violent and inciting hatred against Armenians and French authorities."

Erdoğan slammed the French decision. German lawmakers then demanded to enact a similar ban on the group in Germany, where it was running under an umbrella organization called "Federation of Democratic Idealist Turkish Associations of Germany (Almanya Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu, ADÜTF). It is estimated that in Germany alone there are 11 thousand Gray Wolves members. In fact, in Germany and Austria there are 270 registered Gray Wolves "hearths" (centers). Thus, a ban in Germany could also trigger Austrian action against the Gray Wolves.

Given its strict hierarchical organizational infrastructure, the Gray Wolves is controlled by the MHP in Turkey. Apart from new recruits, it seems that the younger members of this organization are sons or grandsons of older Gray Wolves. Membership passes from generation to generation. And the political alliance between AKP and MHP provides government shelter and support to the Gray Wolves, as well as certain legitimacy. While senior members of the group are on the MHP payroll, most members are volunteers.

Ankara's open support for the Gray Wolves means that the organization is evolving from a marginal, radical, rightist group into one embraced by the Turkish state. It is an organization that is attracting right wing and conservative Islamist circles in the Turkish Diaspora.

#### **4. SADAT (International Defense Consulting Company)**

The SADAT International Defense Consulting Company (Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık Şirketi) was established in 2012 as the only privately owned defense consulting firm in Turkey. The company was founded by Brigadier General (res.) Adnan Tanrıverdi and 22 comrades in arms who all were expelled from the TSK due to their political Islamic tendencies.

The name SADAT is the plural form of the word السيد (Al-Seyid) meaning "notable" in Arabic, a choice indicating an Islamist orientation. The company's offices are in Istanbul. Its legal establishment was declared in the Turkish Registry Gazette on February 28, 2012 under the number 8015. Its logo indicates that the company's area of operation is the whole Muslim world, including European countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. As the sole and leading provider of military training in Turkey, SADAT can be considered the continuation of the pre-Erdoğan period's "deep state" informal units.

The company's website summarizes its activities as the sole Turkish private enterprise that is providing defense consultancy and military training and equipment. To achieve this goal, SADAT provides clients with warfare packages and special operations training. This includes conventional training (land-naval-air, internal security) and unconventional training (ambush, raid, roadblock, sabotage, terrorizing, assassination, rescue, kidnapping, and operational techniques that can be used against street protests).

SADAT's website includes detailed information and criteria for candidates seeking to participate in a 16-week-long training program. According to the Turkish press, SADAT's clients include the Turkish Police forces special unit (Polis Özel Harekat - PÖH, also known as "Esedullah" - The Lions of God); the newly armed neighborhood watchmen (Bekçi) that act as Erdoğan's revolutionary guards against any potential threats in the streets; and Erdoğan's special presidential guards, also known as the "Reinforcements" (Takviye).

Company founder General Tanrıverdi was a member of Turkey's Special Warfare Unit and of Northern Cyprus' Civil Defense Organization. During his military service General Tanrıverdi also served as a lecturer at the Turkish Armed Forces military academy, where the current minister of defense Hulusi Akar was his student. However, after the military intervention in 1997 (the post-modern coup) Tanrıverdi was forced to retire due to his political Islamic tendencies.

After expelled from the army, he joined an association called Defenders of Justice (Adaleti Savunanlar Derneği, ASDER). This organization was formed by 632 military personnel who were all ousted from the TSK, most of them due to their Islamist tendencies. Between 2004-2009 he became the chairman of ASDER. To function as a think tank and not only as an ex-army union, he founded the Justice Defenders Strategic Research Center (Adaleti Savunanlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Derneği, ASSAM). ASSAM began to submit proposals to the Erdoğan administration about the need for comprehensive restructuring in the TSK.

Tanrıverdi and Erdoğan have known each other since 1994 when both served in Istanbul, Erdoğan as mayor and Tanrıverdi as commander of Maltepe military base in the city. The two leaders forged a strong relationship.

Tanrıverdi was deeply influenced by US defense consulting firms such as Blackwater, and decided to establish SADAT. Within four years (immediately after the failed coup attempt in July 2016), he was nominated to be President Erdoğan's top military advisor. He then led a comprehensive overhaul of the army. Tanrıverdi sought to end the secularist educational tradition of the TSK. He shut down the military academies, which were strongholds of Turkish secularism, and replaced them with a National Defense University. This latter institution recruited students from the religious Imam Hatip schools.

Nevertheless, on January 8, 2020 Tanrıverdi had to resign because of a controversial speech at the third International Islamic Union Congress in December 2019, where he said:

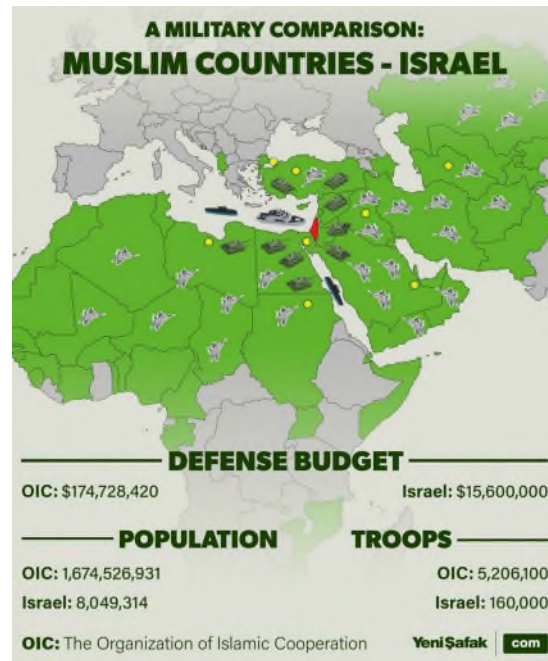
*"Will Islam ever unite? Yes. How will it happen? When the Mahdi<sup>3</sup> arrives. When does the Mahdi arrive? Only God knows. So, do we not have a duty? Should we not prepare the conditions for the Mahdi's arrival? This is precisely what we are doing."*

Tanrıverdi's statement was not a slip of the tongue. On SADAT's website, the organization, and Tanrıverdi personally, advocate the Pan-Islamic unity of Ummah ideal, while portraying the company as the platform for cooperation among Muslim states. SADAT envisions ways in which the Muslim states can become self-sufficient military powers.

Tanrıverdi's articles reveal that the Turkish general was deeply influenced by the Serbian-Bosnian conflict. He deeply believed in the need for a Pan-Islamic NATO style of military alliance against the "enemies of Islam." Tanrıverdi also called for an Islamic alliance against Israel to force Jerusalem to adopt a "just peace." He asked every Muslim nation state to donate tanks and other military equipment for an Islamic army to defend the Palestinians. Tanrıverdi even designed a plan for defeating Israel within eleven days.

Tanrıverdi's apocalyptic Pan-Islamic military alliance vision was presented and advocated by the *Yeni Şafak* newspaper (a pro-government voice) for the first time on December 11, 2020, a day before the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Istanbul that gathered to protest US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

*Yeni Şafak* also provided its readers an interactive map indicating the military bases that can be used against Israel during the so-called "feasible military operation." The details were taken from Tanrıverdi's articles.



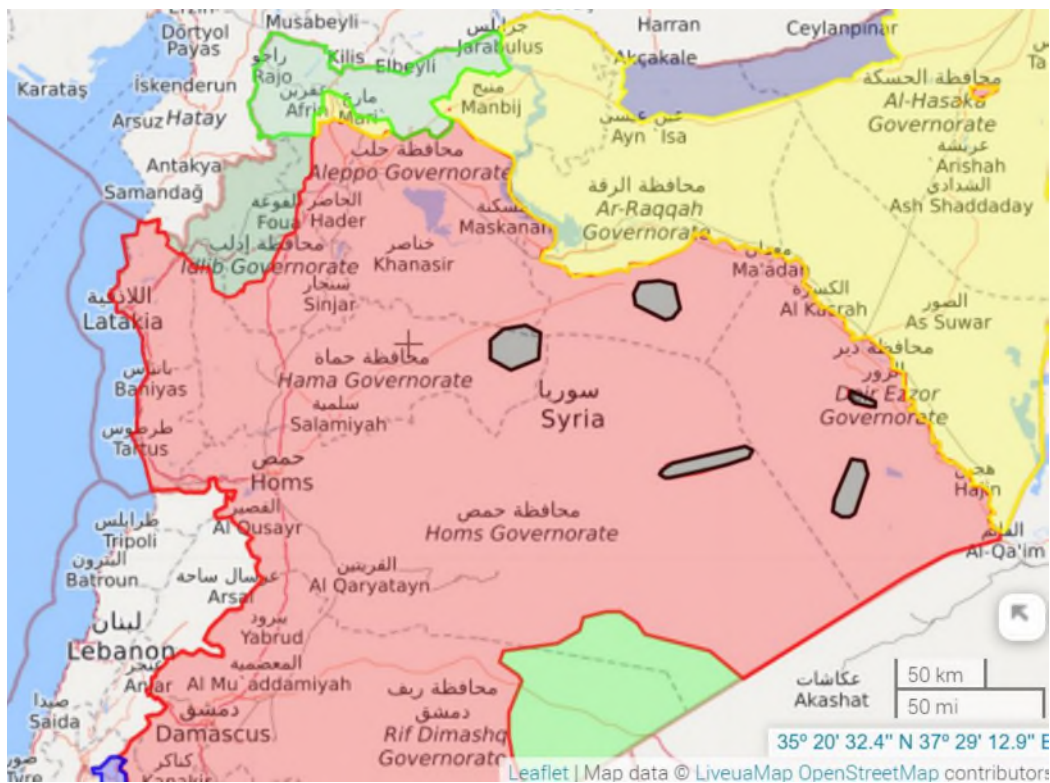
The organization caught the attention of the Israeli security establishment. In 2018, Israel's General Security Service (the Shin Bet) accused SADAT of transferring funds to Hamas. A Turkish academic, Cemil Tekeli, was arrested by Israeli security officers and accused of money laundering. Later, Tekeli's picture with Tanrıverdi also surfaced in the Israeli *Makor Rishon* newspaper.

##### **5. Turkish Proxies in Syria: The NLF and Jaish al-Watani**

Turkey was a crucial backer of the armed effort to topple the Assad regime from the beginning of the rebellion, in mid-2011. Prior to the uprising, Ankara had enjoyed

normal relations with Damascus. But the uprising took place in a context of a generalized advance of Sunni Islamist forces in the region, notably in Egypt and Tunisia. At that point, Turkey envisaged the potential emergence of a bloc of Sunni Islamist states that would form natural allies for Ankara. The Syrian uprising made Damascus a potential member of such an alliance, in the event of rebel victory. This tempting prospect caused the Turkish government to throw its weight behind the rebellion.

From early 2012 onwards, the armed rebels made use of Turkish soil to transfer weapons to their strongholds in northern Syria. Today, the remaining areas of northern Syria outside the control of either the Assad regime or the US-aligned Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), are all under Turkish supervision or security guarantee to one degree or another. There are three such areas:



1. The area between Tal Tamr and Ain Issa, conquered from the SDF by the Turkish military and Syrian Islamist militias associated with it, in October/November 2019. This area is today under Turkish control.

2. The area from Jarabulus in the east to Jandarisi to its south west. This area constitutes the former Afrin canton of the SDF and was conquered by Turkey and associated Islamist militias in January-March 2018. This area is today under Turkish control and undergoing demographic changes in a manner reminiscent of Northern Cyprus. Ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish population has taken place. 137,000 people were displaced from their homes because of the 2018 operation, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A process of ‘Turkification’ appears to be under way in this area, including the changing of street names, elimination of all Kurdish symbols, use of Turkish currency and opening of Turkish language educational institutes at both school and higher education levels.

3. The area of Idlib Province from Jandarisi southwards to Jisr al-Shughur, which is controlled by the so-called ‘Salvation Government,’ a structure of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a Salafi jihadi militia. This area is not under direct Turkish control, but Ankara maintains around 80 military and observation points around this area. These points act as a de facto security guarantee for the HTS controlled area, since the Syrian regime, if it wished to move against HTS, would need to directly engage the Turkish Armed Forces. There are between 12-20,000 Turkish troops currently deployed in this area. Thus, the remaining insurgency in Syria today consists of forces partially or entirely under Turkish control.

Except for HTS, which remains outside direct Turkish supervision, and Haras al-Din, a more radical splinter group which rejected HTS’s abandonment of open ties to al-Qaeda, all other rebel forces in northern Syria have been absorbed into two Turkish-supported structures: The National Liberation Front (NLF), Al-Jabhat al-Wataniya al-Tahrir, and the Syrian National Army (SNA), al-Jaysh al-Watani. The first of these is a Turkish-sponsored amalgam of 22 rebel militias. The group’s formation was announced in May 2018. The dominant militias within it are Ahrar al-Sham, a powerful Salafi grouping, and Faylaq al-Sham, a militia ideologically affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The group numbers approximately 70,000 militiamen.

As to the SNA, also sometimes referred to as the ‘Turkish Free Syrian Army’ (TFSA), it is the product of a Turkish attempt to transform several Syrian rebel militias into a semi-regular military force. It consists of 22,000-35,000 fighters. Organized into seven ‘Legions,’ and further sub-divided into divisions and brigades, the force answers nominally to the ‘Syrian Interim Government’ of ‘President’ Anas al-Abdah and his ‘Minister of Defense’ General Salim Idris. In practice, this force is universally acknowledged to be answerable to Turkey. The fighters are trained, equipped, and paid by Ankara, and when deployed in such operations as Operation Olive Branch and Operation Peace Spring, (and of course in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh) they constitute an infantry element of a Turkish-directed operation under Turkish command, without an independent command structure of their own or the ability to take decisions independent of the Turkish leadership.

This dependence on Turkey was graphically demonstrated on October 4, 2019, when the heads of the Syrian Interim Government announced the merger of the NLF into the SNA, and their support for an upcoming Turkish offensive into SDF-controlled eastern Syria (Operation "Peace Spring"). Neither the military commanders of the SNA, nor the leaders of the NLF were aware of the merger, which appears to have come at the direct order of the Turkish authorities. Hence, today the NLF officially constitutes a part of the SNA. The combined force now numbers around 100,000 fighters. The merger completes the process of the absorption of all significant Syrian Sunni militias under direct Turkish command, except for HTS, Haras al-Din (which has in fact attacked Turkish forces) and ISIS.

## **6. Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) and Turkey**

HTS is the only insurgent organization today that maintains relations with Turkey, but which remains outside of the control of the Turkish military chain of command in Syria. Turkey’s relations with HTS are complex and ambiguous. Officially, Ankara designated HTS as a terrorist organization on August 31, 2018, following similar designations by the US and EU. HTS emerged in 2017 from the fusion of Jabhat al-Nusra, the former Syrian franchise of al-Qaeda (until it split from the latter in 2016),



with a number of other Islamist militias, namely Ansar al-Din, [Jaysh al-Sunna](#), [Liwa al-Haqq](#), and the [Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement](#).

In practice, Ankara has avoided confronting the organization, which remains the de facto governing authority in southern Idlib, under Turkish protection. This is despite Turkey's clear commitment in the framework of the 2018 Sochi agreement with Russia to rid Idlib province of terrorist groups. Partly, this may be attributed to Turkey's awareness of the undoubtedly heavy cost in lives among its own soldiers, should any such attempt be made (an attempt by the SNA to confront HTS, without major Turkish support, would almost certainly result in the SNA's defeat). But Turkey's relations with HTS have long gone beyond merely an uneasy tolerance.

Strong evidence [suggests](#) that HTS maintains relations with MIT (the Turkish intelligence agency), with the defense company SADAT, and with IHH, the quasi-governmental Islamic relief agency which has been active in northern Syria and the border area throughout the Syrian civil war.

Regarding MIT, [leaked](#) documents from a 2015 court case show that the organization was shipping weapons across the border to a Jabhat al-Nusra controlled part of Syria south of Adana. Trucks controlled by the MIT containing the weaponry were stopped by the Turkish Jandarma at the Ceyhan toll gate on January 9, 2014. The Turkish authorities later covered up the affair, banning Turkish media from reporting on it. Jandarma personnel involved in the search were arrested and charged with espionage.

Regarding IHH, it has worked closely and without concealment on relief issues with HTS and with other Islamist rebel groups in its various iterations since the beginning of the war. HTS personnel have freely crossed the border back and forth since the beginnings of the conflict. HTS members escort Turkish personnel through south Idlib at the present time.

Regarding SADAT, the agency was engaged from the start of the war in the Turkish government's support for and training of rebel fighters from a variety of organizations, including the forerunners of HTS. According to a 2012 report in the oppositionist *Aydınlık* newspaper, SADAT established several bases in the Istanbul and Marmara region for the purpose of carrying out this training. This report was one of the first in the Turkish media to identify the existence of SADAT, and its role as a trainer of proxy forces for Turkey.

The report names the Ulaşlı camp on the Marmara region in the Gölcük district of Kocaeli as one of the facilities used by SADAT for the training of Syrian fighters. This facility, formerly maintained by the Turkish Navy, is officially named the "Naval Forces Command Ulaşlı Special Education Center Command" and has a capacity for 600 personnel. According to *Aydınlık*, SADAT personnel working in these facilities transport Syrian fighters from Syria in groups of 300-400 people for training. Activities on this scale cannot possibly be undertaken without the knowledge, and hence the tacit support, of MIT and the government.

The role to be played by the SADAT-trained fighters in Turkish national strategy first became apparent in Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016. This operation marks a watershed in Turkey's utilization of Syrian fighters. Prior to it, Turkish support was afforded to the Syrian insurgents because of the shared political goal of toppling the Assad regime. In Euphrates Shield, for the first time, the Syrians were used as a direct instrument of Turkish policy in pursuit of the Turkish goal of denying the Syrian Kurds contiguous territorial autonomy along the Syrian-Turkish border.

SADAT founder Tanrıverdi called in an interview on Akit TV (December 14, 2015), for the establishment of autonomous Turkmen and Sunni Arab areas along the border. Tanrıverdi said: "We need to put forward our minimum requirements, which are a sine qua non. There should be an autonomous Turkmen region, if there are to be autonomous and separate federative structures. The Kurdish region should not be unified and must be kept separate. Between [Kurdish-controlled points] there should be a corridor that will connect us to Aleppo. It [the corridor] should be a Sunni region, an Arab-Sunni region."

With significant adjustments, this resembles what was subsequently established, utilizing the Syrian fighters of the NLF and SNA as the core infantry force in Turkey's operations "Euphrates Shield" and "Olive Branch". The adjustments, as compared with SADAT's vision are several. First, the areas conquered by Turkey in these operations are not, except for HTS controlled southern Idlib, autonomous. Rather, they are Turkish controlled. Second, Turkey failed in maintaining a foothold to rebel controlled Aleppo city. Indeed, the entire city returned to regime control in late 2016, because of Russian and Iranian efforts that Turkey was not strong enough to oppose.

Evidence has emerged to suggest that the General Command of the Turkish armed forces was opposed to Erdoğan's plans to carve out autonomous zones in Syria, preferring that Turkey act, if at all, as part of a US led coalition against ISIS. Following the coup attempt in July 2016, Erdoğan purged many officers opposed to a large-scale incursion into Syria.

The recruitment, training and establishment of a large, Turkish-controlled Syrian force enabled Ankara to carry out three extensive operations into Syria: "Euphrates Shield" in 2016, "Olive Branch" in 2018, and "Peace Spring" in 2019. This, at minimal cost in Turkish lives, and with the built-in 'alibi' that what was being created by the incursions were zones administered by Syrian clients of Turkey, rather than by Turkey itself.

Thus, Syria was the first and prime example of a new method of proxy warfare, using local mercenary forces recruited with the involvement of a quasi-governmental agency (SADAT). These forces, and these methods, were then employed in Libya to further Turkish foreign policy goals – a project vastly more complex from both a logistical and a geo-political point of view than the relatively straightforward deployment of forces in neighboring Syria.

## **7. Turkish Intervention in Libya (via SADAT and Syrian Proxies)**

Turkey is closely aligned with the Tripoli-based "Government of National Accord" led by Fa'iz Sarraj in Libya. In December 2019, reports began to appear on Syrian opposition websites of Syrian fighters being deployed by Turkey in Libya to defend the GNA areas against the advancing forces of General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Turkey denied the reports. Subsequently a large volume of evidence confirming the deployment and revealing its details has emerged. In 2013 SADAT itself signed an agreement with the Government of National Accord (GNA). In the framework of the agreement SADAT committed to construct a military sports facility and a vehicle maintenance structure.

The recruitment of the fighters for Libya was conducted on the ground by SNA personnel, and took place in the three Turkish controlled areas in northern Syria, and among refugees in southern Turkey. A relative lull in the fighting with the regime

made it possible to divert fighters elsewhere. Senior Turkish officials later explicitly confirmed the presence of SNA fighters in Libya. On February 21, 2020, in a statement to reporters, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that “Syrian teams” from the SNA were carrying out missions in Libya. In a speech in the Turkish city of Izmir on February 22, 2020, Erdoğan once again confirmed the presence of SNA personnel in Libya.

According to Syrian opposition sources, Turkey’s Ministry of Defense directly contracted SADAT and an additional company called Abna’ a al-Umma to manage the recruitment of fighters in the framework of the SNA, and in coordination with the Syrian Interim Government. The companies recruited the fighters and were responsible also for the preparation of the official documents that authorized them to enter and leave Turkey legally to Libya, in addition to fixing employment contracts of three to six months for the fighters.

A fighter of the Jabhat al Shamiya, one of the component militias of the SNA, told a Syrian opposition website that “the fighters were put in a hotel in Turkey until they were issued Turkish IDs. They checked out of Turkey as Turks, not Syrians. Some were transferred by plane and others by ship... Also, promises of getting a salary of \$3,000 a month were fake, and they only got \$1,200.”

According to Syrian opposition sources, the militias responsible for the recruitment and handling of the fighters were the First Corps of the National Army, the Sultan Murad Division, the Mu’tasim Division, and the Suleiman Shah Brigade (also known as al-Amshat). These groups registered individuals wishing to fight in Libya. They then coordinated the process of transporting fighters from Syria to Turkey through communication with SADAT and under the supervision of the Turkish army. Members of the Levant Front, the Glory Corps/Faylaq al-Majd, and the Army of Islam/Jaysh al-Islam also travelled to Libya under the supervision of Mu’tasim.

According to a Syrian opposition report, “Fighters are transported from Syria to Libya through two routes. Some fighters present in Libya revealed they are gathered at the Hawar Kilis military crossing and from there transported by buses to Turkish territory. In Turkey, they are dropped in camps in the Kilis region until their documents are completed, and then airlifted from Gaziantep International Airport to one of Istanbul’s airports.”

“The second route consists in taking the road from Syria to Antakya, the air from Antakya to Ankara and finally to Libya on Afriqiyah Airways.” The Libyan Wings airline is mentioned by other sources as one of the commercial companies used to transport fighters from Turkey to Libya. Regarding transport within Turkey, the fighters are taken by road from the Kilis crossing to Gaziantep airport and there flown by A400 Turkish military aircraft to Istanbul.

In Libya itself, SADAT works closely with Fawzi Boukatif, a Palestinian Islamist and former commander of the Martyrs of 17 February Brigade, a militia which fought Gaddafi. SADAT, together with Boukatif, is responsible for the deployment of the Syrian fighters in coordination with Tripoli’s army.

Regarding the number of Syrian fighters present in Libya, according to a report by the US military’s Africa Command (AFRICOM), presented to the US Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on August 28, 2020, there are approximately 5000 Syrians fighting with the GNA in Libya. The report, according to Jane’s Information group notes that “Syrians fighting for the GNA are paid and supervised by ‘several dozen’

military trainers from a Turkish company called Sadat, which also trains GNA-aligned militias.” The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, meanwhile, puts the number higher (at 17,000) and claims that 471 Syrians have been killed in Libya.

Syrian fighters played a significant role in the GNA’s Operation Peace Storm launched on March 25, 2019, which saw GNA and allied forces ousting the LNA from the entirety of the Tripoli area, and then pushing east to recapture a string of coastal towns. The role of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 UAVs was also vital in this campaign. These systems reportedly played a role in the destruction of three Russian Pantsir-S1 systems deployed with the LNA.

### **8. Turkish Intervention in Nagorno-Karabakh (via Syrian fighters)**

Turkey strongly supported the decision by Azerbaijan to begin in September 2020 a military campaign intended to wrest back the disputed territory of Nagorno Karabakh from Armenia. Evidence rapidly began to accumulate that Ankara was maintaining a similar pipeline of Syrian client fighters to the battleground, as had been the case in vis Libya. The components and tools of this strategy were familiar. Again, official denials from Ankara and Baku were rapidly belied by reports from the battle zone.

Once again, the Syrian fighters were recruited by the SNA, in cooperation with SADAT. The fighters were offered monthly fees of \$1,500-2,000 for agreeing to serve in the southern Caucasus. The contracts, again, were for three to six months. The main recruitment centers were in the cities of Afrin, Al-Bab, Ras al-Ain, and Tel Abyad. The route taken out of Syria, according to fighters’ testimony, was also similar. Fighters crossed the border at Kilis and were then transported to the Gaziantep Airport. From there, SADAT-chartered A-400 transport aircraft flew them to Istanbul Airport, and from there they boarded flights to Baku, Azerbaijan.

The specific SNA-associated militias used for this deployment differed from those who provided the manpower for Libya. The main pools of manpower for this deployment were the Sultan Murad, Suleyman al-Shah, Hamza and Failaq al-Sham brigades. The first two of these brigades draw their support from ethnic Turkmen populations in northern Syria, and hence may have been assumed to have had a greater natural affinity for the Turkic Azeris than would Syrian Sunni Muslims of Arab ethnicity.

But in its general contours, the deployment in Nagorno-Karabakh resembled the blueprint established in Libya. In both cases, the role of SADAT was paramount in the recruitment, organization, and transport of the fighters; the SNA was the chief pool of manpower; and the deployment took place alongside the use of specialists from the official Turkish armed forces.

### **9. Turkey and Qatar**

Turkey and Qatar are engaged in a strategic partnership based on a common orientation in support of Sunni political Islamism and shared adversaries. The first Turkish troops arrived in Qatar in late 2015, under the terms of an agreement for military cooperation signed in 2014. Cooperation has sharply increased, however, since the dispute between Qatar on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other in 2017. Several high-level visits have taken place, alongside war games and joint training. Today, Turkey maintains a force of around 3000 military personnel in Qatar. In December 2015, a plan was announced for the construction of a Turkish base in Qatar, the first permanent Turkish military facility in the Gulf area. In March

2018, an agreement was signed for the building of an additional permanent Turkish naval base in the north of Qatar, to include a training facility.

Cooperation in the defense sector between the two is also flourishing. Qatar has signed an agreement to purchase TB-2 armed drones, which have performed well in Iraq, Libya, Azerbaijan, and Syria. BMC, a Turkish combat vehicle producer, Aselsan, and the Anadolu shipyard have also signed major deals with Qatari firms over the last two years.

The Turkish presence in Qatar makes Ankara a significant player in the Gulf for the first time. Given the assertive pattern of Turkish behavior elsewhere, this is causing concern in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. However at present, the deployment appears to be conventional in nature, with no irregular and proxy element of the kind which characterized the Turkish interventions in Libya, Syria and Azerbaijan.

### **Conclusion**

Even though President Erdoğan could crush the dominance of the TSK, the "deep state" political culture is still evident in Erdoğan's empire. However, it has been turned from a tool of Kemalist and secularist repression into an ambitious vehicle for the neo-Ottoman agenda, and as tool meant primarily for internal matters to a tool for achieving external ambitions.

Today, President Erdoğan's AKP and its MHP ally rule the Turkish state without any significant opposition. The two parties dominate all state organs and mechanisms, including the deep state and its covert tools. To strengthen his position at home, Erdoğan continues to pursue a hardline Islamist, nationalist, and increasingly blunt neo-Ottoman stance in Turkey's foreign policy.

Apart from relying on the TSK for Turkey's extra-territorial military campaigns, Erdoğan uses the Gray Wolves, SADAT and other elements in the implementation of his agenda. These organizations are tasked with securing and guaranteeing Erdoğan's rule in Turkey against any coup attempts. But they also serve Erdoğan's ambitions abroad.

Turkey's activities in Europe, Syria, and Libya serve as concrete examples of this. The cooperation between SADAT and the Syrian National Army has created a new situation in which for the first time Turkey possesses a large pool of available, easily deployed, and easily disposable foreign manpower as an important tool of power projection; a tool that provides a degree of plausible deniability.

When combined with Turkish non-official but governmentally directed groups that are well-established such as the Gray Wolves, it becomes clear that Erdoğan now has a private military and paramilitary system at his disposal. He deploys this apparatus for domestic and foreign operations without official oversight.

The implications of this are manifold. Rigorous further study of this worrying development is called for.

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<sup>1</sup> Respectively, the First and the Second Balkan Wars (1912-1913), World War I (1914-1918), and the Turkish war of independence (1919-1922).

<sup>2</sup> Gladio means sword in Latin. It was the nickname of the Italian special operations unit. Later this term was used to describe all special units in NATO.

<sup>3</sup> Mahdi is the Islamic counterpart of the Messiah in Judeo-Christian theology.

# Exhibit 7

Monday, 21 September 2020 14:14

## Aim of ASSAM

Written by ASSAM Yonetim (/index.php/en/regions/islam-ulkeleri/middle-east/lübnan/author/166-assam-yonetim.html)



### Aim of The Association of Justice Defenders Strategic Studies Center

With the idea of the welfare of the Muslim nations, the survival of the established states, peace and domination of justice in the world would be possible if Islamic countries emergence as a superpower to the world political stage;

To make the idea work; Muslim states, for each to the formation of strategic intelligence etudes, to make assessment individual and collective of internal and external threats, to identify the principles of internal and external security plan, institutions needed to be gathered under the common will and occuring and development of basis and principles of these institutions.

Read **1358** times

Last modified on Monday, 26 October 2020 14:38



**ASSAM Yonetim (/index.php/en/regions/islam-ulkeleri/middle-east/lübnan/author/166-assam-yonetim.html)**

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# Exhibit 8



## Our Mission



is to establish a Defense Collaboration and Defense Industry Cooperation among Islamic Countries to help Islamic World take the place where it merits among Superpowers by providing Strategic Consultancy, Defense and Security Training and Supply Services to Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces of Islamic Countries.

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- For Interior Security

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- For Interior Security

#### Ordnance

- For Military
- For Interior Security
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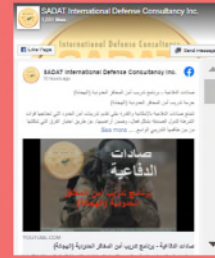
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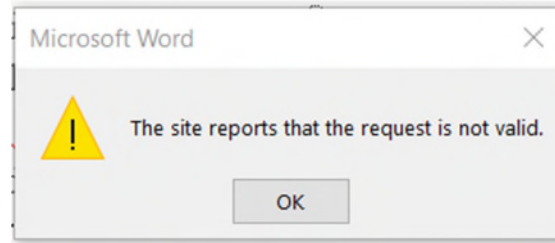
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- [IDEF21 Fuzuna Katlan SADAT Servusumuz Defense Here Raporaj](#)
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- [SADAT Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Malik Tenzovedi CikaTV'de Mevak Edilen Sorulara Yanıtladı.](#)
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### S A D A T Defense

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# Exhibit 9



## Turkey's Erdoğan selects controversial security contractor as his new advisor

Oct 10 2018 07:10 Gmt+3

Last Updated On: Oct 10 2018 07:42 Gmt+3

The founder of a security company, which according to some [analysts](#) is an important pillar of what they say is a paramilitary force loyal to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was among the 76 people appointed to the president's new policy advisory boards on Tuesday, Artı Gerçek [reported](#).

Adnan Tanriverdi, a former Brig-Gen and the founder of the SADAT Defence Consultancy, was appointed as a member of Erdoğan's new security and foreign policy advisory board. Tanriverdi is reported to have been dismissed from the Turkish Armed Forces due to his Islamist leanings.

The aim of the contractor is "to establish a defensive collaboration and defensive industrial cooperation among Islamic Countries to help Islamic World," according to its English [website](#).

SADAT's activities "are testimony both to the changing nature of the Turkish state, and to the process by which power and influence are currently built and held in the Middle East," analyst Jonathan Spyer [said](#) in April.

Erdoğan's new security and foreign policy advisory board also includes Turkey's Presidential Spokesman İbrahim Kalın and Erdoğan's advisor İlnur Çevik.

Turkish businessman Mehmet Ali Yalçındağ was appointed to the advisory board on science, technology, and innovation. Yalçındağ worked as the director general of Turkey's Doğan Media Group, until he had to step down in 2016 when leaked emails showed he had been reporting daily developments at the private media conglomerate to a staunchly, rival pro-Erdoğan media group.

Yalçındağ is also the son-in-law of Aydın Doğan, the former owner of the media group, which was purchased in April by a conglomerate close to Erdoğan. Yalçındağ was selected as the new head of Turkish-American Business Council in March.

Erdoğan's new economic policy board includes former advisors Cemil Ertem and Yiğit Bulut, who are known to be supporters of Turkish president's unorthodox economic views.

Alev Alatlı, a former columnist of the Zaman newspaper, a media outlet used to be owned by the Gülen movement, which the Turkish government accuses of orchestrating a coup attempt in 2016, will serve in the new board for culture and arts. Alatlı, who is known for her criticism against the West, [said](#) Turkish intellectuals opposing Erdoğan were behaving like "adolescents" during a television programme in August.

Historian and columnist Murat Bardakçı is also in the same board, which includes Turkey's veteran actress Hülya Koçyiğit, calligraphist Mehmed Özçay, and musician Orhan Gencebay, Orhan Gencebay, known to be the inventor of Turkish arabesque music.

The new members of the advisory board will each receive a monthly salary of 11,974 lira (\$ 1,950), columnist Çiğdem Toker [said](#) on Wednesday in opposition Sözcü newspaper.

Toker said that the existence of these boards may create confusions in the administrative system. "If those boards are to develop policy recommendations, what will the ministries do," she said.

Dilek Güngör, a columnist of pro-government Sabah Daily, on the other hand, [said](#) that the members of the economic policy board should be careful in their comments in order to sustain the harmony in Turkey's economic management.

"If the members of this board make excessive commentaries every day, the harmony established in the economic management can be harmed. The most important issue at the moment is not to confuse the markets," Güngör [said](#).

<https://www.artigercek.com/haberler/cumhurbaskanligi-politika-kurullari-uyeliklerine-atama?t=1539072350>

# Exhibit 10

# Turkish gov't detains 16 military officers over alleged links to Gülen movement

By **SCF** - November 26, 2017



The Bayburt Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on Sunday issued detention warrants for 16 soldiers of various ranks as part of a witch-hunt targeting people claimed to have links to the Gülen movement, which is accused by Turkish authorities of orchestrating a failed coup in Turkey last year, CNN Türk reported.

According to the report, police detained 15 active duty and one retired officer in operations across 11 provinces.

Thousands of military members have been purged and detained in the witch-hunt against the faith-based Gülen movement since the coup attempt.

The Amasya and Muğla chief public prosecutor's offices on Nov. 7 issued detention warrants for 88 soldiers accused of alleged links to the Gülen movement.

Twenty-three soldiers including 21 active-duty members of the military were detained on Nov. 2 over suspected links to the faith-based Gülen movement.

The Konya and Trabzon chief public prosecutor's offices on Oct. 26 issued detention warrants for 84 soldiers of various ranks over alleged links to the Gülen movement.

The Mardin Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on Oct. 12 issued detention warrants for 25 members of the military due to alleged ties to the movement.

On Oct. 10 detention warrants were issued for 70 military members in Konya as part of an investigation into suspected Gülen movement members.

Nineteen military personnel were detained on Oct. 5 across Turkey as part of a Trabzon-based operation targeting the movement.



Detention warrants were issued for 152 former and active duty officers in September over alleged links to the Gülen movement.

The Gülen movement is accused by the Turkish government of mounting the coup attempt, but the movement strongly denies any involvement.

One hundred thirty generals and admirals in the Turkish military were either dismissed or suspended as part of the widespread purge following the failed coup attempt in July of last year.

The government has been at the center of criticism for turning the Turkish forces into a political Islamist military in line with the wishes of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

In February Defense Minister İşık said 30,000 new recruits would be enlisted in the Turkish military.

A month later İşık declared that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government had dismissed a total of 22,920 military personnel (6,511 officers and 16,409 cadets) after the coup attempt although the Turkish military stated on July 27 that only 8,651 military members including cadets and conscripts took part in the failed coup.

The Cumhuriyet daily reported in March that the government planned to investigate 90,000 more military personnel over links to the Gülen movement.

"If it was a coup perpetrated by the Gülen movement and 22,920 military personnel were dismissed for their connections to the movement as Erdoğan and the government assert, why did only 8,651 military members participate in the coup?" is a question being asked by critics.

Regulations that task retired officers and noncommissioned officers with recruiting cadets and military personnel went into effect in January amid debates that it was a gift to SADAT A.S. International Defense Consulting, which has also been called President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's "secret army."

SADAT was directed by retired Brig. Gen. Adnan Tanrıverdi, who was appointed as an adviser to President Erdoğan. Tanrıverdi is known for his Islamist ideology and has counseled Erdoğan for years although in an unofficial capacity, columnist Abdullah Bozkurt wrote for Turkish Minute on Nov. 25.

In June, an imam-hatip, or religious high school, in İzmir province promised its graduates preference in enrollment at military and police academies.

Some find the Turkish government's efforts to Islamicize the Turkish army alarming and warn that NATO risks having a member army filled with extremists.

In February, Henri Barkey, director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center, said that many generals purged by the Turkish government are pro-NATO and pro-American, saying this could create a shift in Turkey-NATO relations. (turkishminute.com)

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# Exhibit 11



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# Turkey's paramilitary contractor SADAT to hold Islamic Union Congress for common defense system

by Nordic Monitor — July 23, 2020





Head of SADAT and ASSAM Adnan Tanrıverdi

## Nordic Monitor

The Association of Justice Defenders Strategic Studies Center (Adaleti Savunanlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, ASSAM) will hold its annual [Islamic Union Congress](#) December 12-13, 2020 under the theme of “Determination of Principles And Procedures of Common Defense System for the Islamic Union.”

ASSAM is led by retired Gen. [Adnan Tanrıverdi](#), the former chief military aide to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Tanrıverdi, head of the ASSAM steering committee, owns private military contractor SADAT, which many believe is a de facto paramilitary force loyal to the Islamist president of Turkey. He continues to advise the Erdoğan government on military matters, although he left his official position as advisor in January 2020.

The Islamic Union Congress is a series of gatherings that started in 2017 and will continue until 2023. The fourth ASSAM congress will be held in Istanbul and focus on “the principles and procedures of the Common Defense System of the Islamic Union” and “the ideal defense organization model for confederation of ASRICA (Asia-Africa) Islamic Countries.”

According to the congress website, “Islamic countries have fallen into enormous chaos and disorders through the interference of the imperialist Western states,” and the third world war continues as an undeclared war against those countries.

“After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslims who were left without authority, tried to maintain their existence by establishing small states but they lost their unity and togetherness, so they became easy prey for the global powers. The United States, the European Union, France, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States aim to establish their authority in Islamic countries in order to take over the Islamic geography through carrying out proxy wars (Asymmetrical wars) by terrorist organizations under their control,” ASSAM said.



Mesut Hakkı Çaşın (L), Çağrı Erhan (C) and Hakkı İlnur Çevik (R).

The Science Committee of the Islamic Union Congress for 2020 is composed of interesting figures including President Erdoğan's chief aides Mesut Hakkı Çaşın and Hakkı İlnur Çevik, Presidential Security and Foreign Policies Council member Çağrı Erhan, retired generals and several Islamist academics.

Çaşın threatened Russia with war and fomenting discontent among the Russian Muslim community after an attack by the Syrian army killed Turkish troops in February. "Russia will be dismembered from within. There are 25 million Muslims in Russia. We fought Russia 16 times in the past, and we will do it again. Our vengeance will be quite terrible," he said.

"Turks conquered Egypt after ruling the Mediterranean. This is a mission of historical/geopolitical importance. The Turkish Air Force will join the Libya campaign if needed," he also said in an interview last month.



The First Islamic Union Congress was held in Istanbul in 2017.

It is no secret that ASSAM is promoting the idea of an Islamic union to be spearheaded by the Turkish president. Undermining the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), under the influence of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which both have uneasy relations with Turkey due to Ankara's unprecedented support for Muslim Brotherhood organizations, Erdoğan is engaged in efforts to substitute his own organization to pursue his caliphate-like leadership among the Muslim world.

Last year the ASSAM congress was held in December with the participation of 44 Muslim countries and focused on defense industry cooperation of the "Islamic Union." Speaking to the Turkish government's anti-Semitic, anti-Christian mouthpiece, Akit TV, following a session at the event, Tanrıverdi said Islamic countries should produce their own defense materiel and weapons among themselves, claiming one cannot defy others with the weapons of others.



Tanrıverdi, the founder of SADAT, visited Libya in May 2013 and met with Libyan military officials.

Tanrıverdi announced during the 2019 Islamic Union Congress that his organization, which is fully funded and supported by the Turkish government, had been working to pave the way for the long-awaited mahdi (prophesied redeemer of Islam), for whom the entire Muslim world is waiting.

Turkey's opposition lawmakers had asked the government about the alleged role of SADAT in training Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Syrian al-Qaeda group Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Nusra Front) fighters and the

alleged close relations between Turkish intelligence agency MİT and SADAT. Moreover, SADAT was accused of training jihadists sent by Turkey to fight for the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya.

Nordic Monitor previously [reported](#) that SADAT has been conducting military training programs in Africa since 2013 with the help of bilateral security cooperation deals.

#### Previous Post

**Turkish intelligence agent who runs secret ops in Libya executed false flag coup bid in 2016**

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# Exhibit 12

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## Training (for Military)

ENGLISH (EN) CATEGORY [OUR SERVICES \(/EN/OUR-SERVICES.HTML\)](#) HITS: 13380

**Conventional Warfare Training:**

**SADAT Defense** provides conventional warfare trainings and end-user trainings for militaries and their trainers and others from individual through highest units of Land Forces, Navys and airforces of Countries.



[./images/about/training/tek-er-2.jpg](#)

### **Unconventional Warfare Training:**

**SADAT Defense** provides trainings of ambush, raid, road cutting / closing, destruction, sabotage and Rescue / Abduction Operations and “Counter Tactics and Techniques” to above for Unconventional Warfare Organizations and related components for the Need of National Defense Preparations of Countries.

### **Special Forces Training:**

**SADAT Defense** has Special Training Programmes which include special trainings for the personnel for special operations in conventional and unconventional wars to gain special qualifications and skills for The Field of “Land, Sea or Air” Operations.

### **QUALIFICATION OF OUR TRAINERS**

In addition to their successfully regular services in Army, Navy and Air Forces of Turkish Armed Forces with extreme skills gained after the completion of Battle Drill Trainings, Commando Course, Airborne/Parachutte Courses, Unconventional Warfare Course, Scuba Diving / Frogman Courses and Demolition courses for Land and Underwater missions, the trainers of SADAT Defense have extreme experiences from their long time services in

1. Special Forces Unit
2. SAT (Underwater Demolition Teams) / SAS (Underwater Defense Teams)
3. Interior Security Troops for Counter Terrorism Operations Field
4. Special Forces Training Centers

^

5. National and international trainings and combined exercises of special forces

as operational persons, trainers or leaders.

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## Sample Training Programmes

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## Products

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- [Shooting Range Systems \(/en/products/shooting-range-systems.html\)](/en/products/shooting-range-systems.html)

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## Turn-key Solutions

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# Exhibit 13

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- Consultancy (For Military)
- Consultancy (For Interior Security)

## TRAINING

- Training (For Military)
- Training (For Interior Security)

## SUPPLY

- Supply (For Military)
- Supply (For Interior Security)
- Maintenance & Repair

## TURNKEY SOLUTIONS


- Special Forces Training Center
- Military Standardisation And Metrology Centers


## Our Sample Training Programmes

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- Training Programmes For Naval Forces >
- Training Programmes For Air Forces >
- Training Programmes For Police Forces >



# Exhibit 14

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## Our Vision



is to reorganize or modernize the Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces of Islamic Countries in a modern and effective sense to ensure national defense and internal security set with the consideration of threat assessments up on their geopolitical situation.

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### Consultancy

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# Exhibit 15



## News

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### Defense Reform

NEWS 23 AUGUST 2014 HITS: 133

On the website of the Center for Strategic Research of ASSAM Justice website, an article was published on the Defense Reform shared by the President on August 22, 2014, also included the legislative gap, and need for our company's area of activity. Because of the importance of the article, we quote from it the following...

### Defense Reform Report

Great nations have also great responsibilities. Carrying great responsibilities requires great power, no doubt. Without military power, there is no greater power.

Abdullah GÜL

President of the Republic

On Friday, August 22, 2014, T.C. It has been reported on the Presidential Institutional Website that the Defense Reform Working Group has completed its report. <sup>[1]</sup>

Defense Reform is critical to Turkey's 2023 goals and efforts to become a regional and global power. In this context, it is important to carry out technological reforms in weapons and command control systems, as well as structural reforms in the Ministry of National Defense and the TAF. Integration of defense systems into NATO defense systems should not mean NATO dependency. The principle of full independence requires that original defense systems be built, and command control systems are designed to be integrated into different pacts when required. Therefore, the need for reform of the Turkish Armed

Forces and the defense systems of the Turkish Armed Forces should not be confused with each other. Otherwise, we will continue to watch the events happening on our borders in the Middle East for a longer period and not only send humanitarian aid, but we will continue to stay tied to creating permanent solutions that will prevent bloodshed.

President Abdullah Gul expressed his views on Defense Reform in his speech at the War Academies Command on April 5, 2012, stressing that the current geostrategic system requires reconfiguring our security needs and our answers to them, increasing the ability of the three forces to conduct joint operations, and focusing on integration in Command structure, removal of duplicate levels at each level, reinforcement of personnel numbers, etc. is a requirement for a comprehensive reform as well as the steps to be taken...  
[2]

President Gül said that with the impact of globalization, every issue in the world has become connected, that the effects of political, security, and economic developments are felt directly or indirectly in different parts of the world beyond the point of

origin, and pointed out that the definition of "a far corner of the world" is being deleted from thoughts and dictionaries today, "it has become necessary to consider a wide range of different issues, from asymmetric threats to organized crime and border less ethnic tensions, capital movements to competition on energy resources and the increasing injustice in the global revenue distribution, climate change to poverty, food security and epidemic diseases in the global plan"

All these developments also require the reconsideration and formulation of the concepts of security, diplomacy, and power, Gül said, "it is no longer possible to provide security in a world with traditional power elements in such a fast and transitional way," Gül said, adding that Prussian General Clausewitz's "continuing war politics with other means" today, he pointed out that maybe it should be reinterpreted.

With this understanding, President Gül instructed in April 2013 to establish a "Working Group" to prepare a comprehensive report on Defense Reform.

Prof. Dr. Ali Karaosmanoglu took it upon himself to head the working group that carries out its activities in

connection with the Presidency of the Republic. Other members are the former Secretary-General of the NSC, Ambassador Tahsin Burcuoğlu, Deputy Undersecretary for Defense Industries Dr. Faruk Özlü, Dean of the Military Academy, Brigadier General. Murat Yetgin, Head of the Air Force Command Training Department, Air Pilot Brigadier General Recep Ünal, and Retired Admiral Doğan Bozkurt.

The main headings of the Defense Reform Report <sup>[3]</sup> prepared by the Working Group are as follows;

1. Post-Cold War Political Military Transformation
2. The duties and required capabilities of the TAF.
3. Defense Management
4. Defense System Supply and Logistics
5. Mandatory and Professional Military Service
6. Education and Training in Military Schools
7. Resource Allocation to Defense Spending.
8. Control of Defense Spending.

The implementation plan was created as follows:

In the report, within the scope of Defense Reform; suggestions about “what” should be done were put forward. It is suggested that a "high-level executive

board" and the following "working groups" be formed to take political decisions on "how" the reform will be carried out and to make legal arrangements:

1. Military Capabilities and Force Structure Working Group,
2. Defense Management Working Group,
3. Defense System supply and Logistics Working Group,
4. Recruiting System Working Group,
5. Training-Education Working Group in Military Schools,
6. Resource Allocation and Control Working Group.

The report suggests that the work of technological reform, which includes more structural areas of reform, was attempted to be matured by the work carried out within the Under secretariat of Defense Industry. For example, in 2008, the “Workshop of the Points reached by the Turkish Land Defense Industry Sector and the Targets of the Industry Day and the Power Systems of Land Military vehicles” was carried out by the Defense Industries Consultancy. [4]

In the introduction to the report, the President of the



Republic, Mr. Gül said; “The success of this comprehensive reform depends on the ownership of the process by the political authority, the armed forces, and the society.”

Again, the report states, "It will take time to address issues such as the lack of civilian capacity for the conditions for successful reform to mature" but it is not evaluated how open the MSB and TAF are to the contribution of civilian capacity.

One of the biggest shortcomings in our country is that the Defense Industry is regarded as only weapons systems, ammunition, support systems, and logistics services, R&D, and engineering services. However, Training and Consultancy services must be included in the service sector of the defense industry. SADAT International Defense Consulting Inc., the first and only defense consultancy company in Turkey, in this regard. It was established at the beginning of 2012 and has produced dozens of projects for the training and consultancy needs of the armed forces and security agencies of friendly and allied countries over two years.

SADAT's mission is that; Organization of the Armed

Forces and Internal Security Forces internationally, Strategic consultancy in the field of internal security and defense, providing services in the fields of internal security and military training and supply, creating a defense and defense industry cooperation environment between Islamic Countries and help the Islamic world take its rightful place among the World Superpowers as a self-sufficient military force.

The company has applied for a Facility Private Security Certificate to the Ministry of National Defense since its establishment, the application was returned after months of evaluation because the service sector was not within the scope of the laws of the National Ministry of Defense. In November 2012, SADAT Defense prepared a study to amend Laws 5201 and 5202 to include training and counseling services within the scope of the legislation and was prepared to be added to the legislation of the Ministry of National Defense and sent to the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Prime Ministry, but the answer is that training and counseling activities are not covered the relevant legislation. The response to the application submitted to be covered by

legislation is surprising.

It cannot be claimed that the Ministry of National Defense and the Turkish Armed Forces are complete unless the structural reform involved in the defense sector includes all areas of activity. In addition to companies large and small operating in the defense industry, the legal gap that will occur unless companies producing services are included in the legislation will have the potential to cause serious problems in the international field. Policies leading the defense area must be proactive, not reactive. More than 70 defense consulting companies based in Europe and the United States operate in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and there is still no legislation regulating the defense service sector in the EU. Turkey should not wait for the EU to establish the relevant legislation and should immediately establish the necessary legislation for the activities of companies providing Defense and Homeland Security Education and Consulting Service, such as auditing permission requests.

For example, in the report;

The number of guest military personnel who wish to

receive military training in Turkey is increasing annually. Compared to 2011-2012, the quotas allocated to guest military personnel in TAF institutions have increased almost three times, according to their plans for 2015-2016.

However, it is ignored that although the quota has increased three times, it remains well below the demand. The necessity of paving the way for education institutions other than the Turkish Armed Forces to provide defense and internal security training should not be overlooked by creating legal legislation. SADAT's request to supervise the permits and application of training made to provide education has not been accepted by legislation on the grounds that military training in Turkey can only be given by TAF, and the relevant authorities recommended SADAT Defense to give the training in demanding countries.

While the necessity and importance of defense reform are accepted by all sides, the concern remains that it is limited in scope and remains inadequate in meeting the needs in the international conjuncture that is constantly developing and changing concepts.

1. Defense Reform has completed the Working Group Report,  
<http://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/170/90779/savunma-reformu-calisma-grubu-raporunu-tamamladi.html>(Access Date 22.08.2014)
2. President of the Republic Gül had a conference at the War Academies,  
<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/2028196>
3. Defense Reform Report,  
<http://www.tccb.gov.tr/dosyalar/2014-08-22-SavunmaReformu.pdf>(22.08.2014)
4. The Turkish Land Defense Sector's Point and Objectives Industry Day and Military Land Tools Power Systems Workshop, (16-17 June 2008), <http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/hizli/duyurular/>
5. Our Mission,  
<http://www.sadat.com.tr/tr/hakkimizda/misyonumuz.htm>

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- 2013-03-04 - Our Company Officials Visited the Undersecretary of Defense Industry
- 2018-01-08 - Our denial notice to the Sözcü newspaper

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# Exhibit 16



# EAST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION

# NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



APRIL 1, 2020–JUNE 30, 2020

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

A 2013 amendment to the Inspector General Act established the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations. This legislation requires the Inspectors General of the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DoS), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide quarterly reports to Congress on active overseas contingency operations.

The Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the DoD Inspector General (IG) as the Lead IG for the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The DoS IG is the Associate IG. The USAID IG participates in oversight of the operations.

The Offices of Inspector General of the DoD, DoS, and USAID are referred to in this report as the Lead IG agencies. Other partner agencies also contribute to oversight of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation.

The Lead IG agencies collectively carry out their statutory missions to:

- Develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight of the operation.
- Ensure independent and effective oversight of programs and operations of the Federal Government in support of the operation through either joint or individual audits, inspections, and evaluations.
- Report quarterly to Congress and the public on the operation and activities of the Lead IG agencies.

### METHODOLOGY

To produce this quarterly report, the Lead IG agencies submit requests for information to the DoD, DoS, and USAID about the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation and related programs. The Lead IG agencies also gather data and information from open sources, including congressional testimony, policy research organizations, press conferences, think tanks, and media reports.

The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, or evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the data and information provided by the agencies. For further details on the methodology for this report, see Appendix B.

### CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

This report normally includes an appendix containing classified information about the U.S. mission to degrade or contain al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates in specific regions of Africa. Due to the coronavirus disease–2019 pandemic, the Lead IG agencies did not prepare a classified appendix this quarter.

## FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report to the U.S. Congress on the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. This report discharges our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978.

The purpose of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation is to degrade al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other violent extremist organizations, in specified regions of East and North Africa and contain those groups in specified regions of West Africa.

The Secretary of Defense designated the two operations as overseas contingency operations in February 2018. At the time of designation, both operations were pre-existing counterterrorism operations. The Secretary of Defense removed the overseas contingency operation designation for both operations in May 2019, but the two operations continue to receive overseas contingency operation funding.

This quarterly report describes the activities of the U.S. Government in support of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, as well as the work of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development to promote the U.S. Government's policy goals in Africa during the period April 1 through June 30, 2020.

This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG agencies and our partner oversight agencies during the quarter. This quarter, the Lead IG agencies issued 16 oversight reports related to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations.

This report usually includes an appendix containing classified information about these operations. This quarter, due to the coronavirus disease-2019 pandemic and related staffing challenges, the Lead IG did not produce the classified appendix.

Working in close collaboration, we remain committed to providing comprehensive oversight and timely reporting on these operations.



Handwritten signature of Sean W. O'Donnell in black ink.

**Sean W. O'Donnell**  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense



Handwritten signature of Diana R. Shaw in black ink.

**Diana R. Shaw**  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of State



Handwritten signature of Ann Calvaresi Barr in black ink.

**Ann Calvaresi Barr**  
Inspector General  
U.S. Agency for International  
Development



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**On the Cover**

U.S. Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland and Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj meet in Zuwara, Libya (USAFRICOM photo); a U.S. Army soldier places a medical sticker on boxes of healthcare equipment, bandages, narcotics, and PPE that will be distributed to medical providers in East Africa (U.S. Air Force photo); a U.S. Army soldier provides security for a C-130J Super Hercules in Somalia (U.S. Air Force photo).

## MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL



**Sean W. O'Donnell**

I am pleased to present this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) report on the status of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The purpose of these operations is to degrade al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other violent extremist organizations (VEO), in designated regions of East and North Africa, and contain them in designated regions of West Africa.

The United States and its international partners made limited progress this quarter toward the goals of these two operations. In East Africa, al-Shabaab moved freely and launched attacks in Somalia and Kenya. United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) reported no change in the amount of territory controlled by al-Shabaab or the Somali government.

In North Africa, ISIS-Libya resumed small-scale attacks in the southern desert region of Libya. The ongoing civil war, which is concentrated in the northern parts of the country, intensified as more foreign fighters and mercenaries deployed to Libya to fight on both sides of the conflict. USAFRICOM withdrew its small number of counterterrorism forces from

Libya in 2019 due to instability caused by the civil war.

In West Africa, where al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates operate in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, violence continued at high levels and expanded to new territories. In June, a French-led, U.S.-supported operation in Mali killed the highest-ranking al-Qaeda leader in North and West Africa, Abdelmalek Droukdal. In August, the United States suspended military cooperation with Mali following a mutiny in the country's armed forces and the subsequent resignation of its president; we are monitoring the situation and will report on these developments in our next quarterly report.

The spread of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) across the African continent did not appear to slow VEO activity during the quarter. At the same time, the pandemic exacerbated many of the underlying conditions that foster VEO growth, including economic and food insecurity. The United Nations head of Peace Operations reported that in the Sahel, COVID-19 added "a layer of complexity" to the security environment as VEOs capitalized on the virus to undermine state government authority and continue their attacks.

The U.S. Government adjusted some of its activities in Africa in response to the pandemic. USAFRICOM reduced advising of partner forces, conducting only remote advising in some locations. Meanwhile, U.S. airstrikes in Somalia continued, as did several partner-led counterterrorism operations. The Department of State continued diplomatic activities in Africa, despite having reduced staffing at some of its embassies due to COVID-19.

I look forward to working with my Lead IG colleagues to continue to report on and provide oversight of these operations and related U.S. Government activity in Africa, as required by the IG Act.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean W O'Donnell".

**Sean W. O'Donnell**  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense







U.S. Army soldiers board a C-130J Super Hercules at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

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**U.S. Air Force airmen load a C-130J Super Hercules with medical supplies used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. (U.S. Air Force photo)**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### OVERVIEW

The coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) pandemic spread across the African continent during the quarter.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations reported that in the Sahel, COVID-19 added “a layer of complexity” to the security environment.<sup>2</sup> In that region, violent extremist organizations (VEO) capitalized on the virus to undermine state government authority through “unrelenting” attacks on national and international forces.<sup>3</sup> United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) reported that it did not observe any changes in extremist violence or VEO tactics as a result of the pandemic.<sup>4</sup>



USAFRICOM adjusted its advising of partner forces in Africa to prevent the spread of the virus. In East Africa, USAFRICOM provided only remote advise-and-assist support to partner forces for most of the quarter.<sup>5</sup> In North and West Africa, COVID-19 also led to reduced advisory activities, including advising by the U.S. Army's 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), elements of which began their deployment to West Africa earlier in the year.<sup>6</sup>

USAID reported that several administrative hurdles, including additional layers of approval at the White House, restrictions on the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for overseas projects, and inconsistent guidance on the branding and marking of assistance, slowed USAID's COVID-19 programming in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

A U.S. Army soldier places a medical sticker on boxes of healthcare equipment, bandages, and PPE that will be distributed to medical providers in East Africa. (U.S. Air Force photo)



## EAST AFRICA

During the quarter, al-Shabaab used varied and complex tactics in its attacks, including insurgent-style tactics, ambushes, harassing and hit-and-run attacks, and improvised explosive devices (IED). USAFRICOM reported that al-Shabaab remained active in Mogadishu, carrying out multiple targeted killings in the capital and several mortar attacks at the Mogadishu International Airport complex. Al-Shabaab also targeted Somali and international security forces in the country's southern provinces, where al-Shabaab holds territory and seeks to expand.<sup>8</sup>

Al-Shabaab's attacks continued across Somalia despite the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>9</sup> The group initially sought to blame the Somali government and international actors for the pandemic and to present itself as a more legitimate, credible governing actor than the Somali government.<sup>10</sup> However, these efforts were largely unsuccessful and the group later shifted away from this aggressive messaging.<sup>11</sup> In June, al-Shabaab opened a COVID-19 clinic in Jilib.<sup>12</sup>

While USAFRICOM reduced its in-person advising in East Africa, U.S. airstrikes in Somalia continued. USAFRICOM reported that it conducted 7 airstrikes against VEO targets in Somalia during the quarter, a decrease from 33 in the previous quarter.<sup>13</sup> An April 2 airstrike killed Yusuf Jilis, whom USAFRICOM described as "a long-standing, high-ranking leader" of al-Shabaab.<sup>14</sup>

The Somali National Army (SNA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) continued operations to reduce attacks in Mogadishu, held recently liberated territory in the Lower Shabelle region, and conducted successful convoy operations along dangerous supply routes, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>15</sup> However, the SNA did not liberate any new territory from al-Shabaab.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the SNA continued to face organizational challenges.<sup>17</sup>

In June, Somalia’s National Independent Electoral Commission announced to international media that it planned to delay the country’s parliamentary and presidential elections—originally scheduled for November 2020—due to “significant technical and security challenges.”<sup>18</sup>

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, implementers for USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance adapted existing programming and implemented new programming in East Africa, including awareness campaigns, training for health facility staff, installation of isolation points, and logistics and air transport support.<sup>19</sup>

## NORTH AFRICA

U.S. counterterrorism operations in North Africa remained limited during the quarter. USAFRICOM has not had a physical presence in Libya since April 2019 due to the unpredictable security environment caused by the civil war between the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA).<sup>20</sup>

In May and June, ISIS-Libya conducted its first attacks in Libya in more than a year, according to the Department of State and media reporting. ISIS-Libya claimed several small-scale attacks that targeted LNA personnel and its civilian supporters in southern Libya.<sup>21</sup>

During the quarter, the U.S. Government expressed concern about Russia’s continued involvement in the civil war, supporting the LNA.<sup>22</sup> USAFRICOM estimated that during the quarter, Russia supported thousands of mercenaries in Libya, including approximately 3,000 from the Wagner Group, a Russian private military company, and approximately 2,000 Syrians.<sup>23</sup> During the quarter, USAFRICOM published what it called photographic evidence of Russian attack aircraft, landmines and IEDs, and advanced military equipment capable of offensive lethal operations, all operated by Wagner Group forces in Libya.<sup>24</sup>



**U.S. Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland and Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj meet in Zuwara, Libya. (USAFRICOM photo)**



Nigeriens wait in line to receive food donations in Agadez, Niger. (DoD photo)

In addition to Russian-supported mercenaries supporting the LNA, Turkey sent more than 5,000 Syrian mercenaries to support the GNA, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>25</sup>

USAFRICOM said that some extremists with previous ties to VEOs have been fighting in the Libyan civil war, but it is possible they were fighting for financial and personal reasons rather than for ideological motivations.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, USAFRICOM reported that there were increasing reports of theft, sexual assault, and misconduct by Syrian fighters, which is likely to compound an already dangerous security environment in Libya and result in backlash from the Libyan public.<sup>27</sup>

During the quarter, the United States continued diplomatic efforts to promote a return to a UN-facilitated ceasefire and participated in talks about the security, political, and economic situation in Libya. The DoS reported that U.S. mediation between the Libyan parties to the ongoing civil war and their external backers focused on resolving the ongoing LNA shutdown of Libya's oil sector, promoting increased fiscal transparency, demobilizing militias, and preventing further military escalation.<sup>28</sup>

## WEST AFRICA

Extremist violence in West Africa remained elevated during the quarter, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Database tracking of extremist violence.<sup>29</sup> USAFRICOM reported that VEOs are expanding the region, conducting operations in the Western Sahel and some northern parts of West African coastal states.<sup>30</sup>

In June, French counterterrorism forces, supported by U.S. intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets, killed al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) leader Abdelmalek Droukdal and several close associates in northern Mali.<sup>31</sup> USAFRICOM said that Droukdal's death was significant because AQIM had recently prioritized expanding al-Qaeda's jihadist coalition in West Africa to include Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM).<sup>32</sup>

In late April, according to USAFRICOM, intense fighting between JNIM and ISIS in the Greater Sahara near the Mali-Burkina Faso border resulted in "dozens" of deaths on each side. The two groups' previously cooperative relationship subsided as they targeted each other due to JNIM defections and ISIS in the Greater Sahara's territorial expansion in Mali.<sup>33</sup>

Human rights organizations documented instances of alleged human rights violations by security forces in West Africa, including members of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.<sup>34</sup> The United States continued to provide security assistance to G-5 Sahel countries during the quarter, but increasing allegations of human rights abuses led to strong statements from embassies in the region, DoS leaders in Washington, and members of Congress.<sup>35</sup>

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance reported that as of June 30, nearly \$67 million was planned for the COVID-19 response in Lake Chad Basin and Central Sahel countries.<sup>36</sup> USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives used its ongoing Nigeria Lake Chad Basin program to rapidly provide COVID-19-related activities in the Nigerian states of Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno.<sup>37</sup>

## Lead IG Oversight Activities

This quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed 16 reports related to the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations. These reports examined various activities that support these operations, including: DoD oversight of training to mobile medical teams prior to deploying to the U.S. Africa Command area of operations; the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism's and Bureau of African Affairs' oversight and management of their foreign assistance programs; the DoS Global Engagement Center's management and monitoring of its Federal assistance awards; and financial accountability in humanitarian assistance programs. The Air Force Audit Agency also reported on whether the Air Force provided equipment and training to security force personnel needed to perform mission requirements while deployed in Niger. As of June 30, 22 projects were ongoing, and 5 projects were planned.

Lead IG investigative agencies coordinated on 17 open investigations related to the East Africa counterterrorism operation and 3 open investigations related to the North and West Africa counterterrorism operation. The open investigations involve procurement and grant fraud, corruption, computer intrusion, theft, and human trafficking.







Pallets of food are loaded onto a C-17 in England for distribution in Ghana as part of the COVID-19 response. (NATO photo)

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## THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

### OVERVIEW

#### VEO Activity Steady Despite COVID-19 Pandemic

The global coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic contributed to the already volatile security situations in parts of Africa.<sup>1</sup> According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 303,986 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Africa as of the end of the quarter, a figure that likely undercounts the actual spread of the virus across the continent.<sup>2</sup>

United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) said that the pandemic did not appear to have any impact on violent extremist organization (VEO) tactics or levels of violence during the quarter.<sup>3</sup> The UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations said that the virus's spread in the Sahel added “a layer of complexity” to the security environment as VEOs capitalized on the virus to undermine state government authority through “unrelenting” attacks on national and international forces.<sup>4</sup>

**General Stephen J. Townsend, Commander of USAFRICOM, meets with Djibouti Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahmoud Ali Youssouf at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. (USAFRICOM photo)**

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to alter U.S. military operations in Africa this quarter. In May, the DoD transitioned from a global “stop movement” order, issued in March, to a “conditions-based” approach that governed travel of its components during the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

In East Africa, USAFRICOM provided only remote advise-and-assist support to partner forces during the quarter.<sup>6</sup> In North Africa, COVID-19 also led to reduced advisory activities.<sup>7</sup> In addition, USAFRICOM reported that personnel from the U.S. Army’s 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), who began their deployment to West Africa during the previous quarter, altered their activities due to COVID-19.<sup>8</sup>

VEOs in Africa are a persistent and growing threat to U.S. and allied interests on the continent. In January, General Stephen Townsend, Commander of USAFRICOM, stated in congressional testimony that VEOs “are expanding in Africa at a rapid pace, due in large part to weak governance and disenfranchised populations, while employing violence to exacerbate despair and hopelessness.”<sup>9</sup> Most VEOs in Africa, General Townsend continued, “seek to strike at the [United States] in the region, and some aspire to strike the U.S. Homeland.”<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1.**

**Counterterrorism and the USAFRICOM Mission**

USAFRICOM structures its mission in Africa according to six lines of effort (LOE), three of which relate directly to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations.

Line of Effort		USAFRICOM Activities
<b>LOE 1</b>	Strengthen Partner Networks	Establish new partnerships with countries and organizations, strengthen existing relationships through enhanced communication and synchronization, and counter the activities of external actors such as China and Russia. This approach focuses on maintaining the United States as the preferred security partner in Africa.
<b>LOE 2</b>	Enhance Partner Capability	Build African partner capability focused on defense institution building, countering illicit trafficking, maritime security, counter-improvised explosive devices (IED) efforts, humanitarian assistance, infectious disease control, and counter-VEO efforts.
<b>LOE 3</b>	Develop Security in Somalia	The approach centers on partnered operations to degrade VEOs and security cooperation to develop the Somali Security Forces to a point where they are capable of their own counter-VEO operations and of Securing the Somali Government and its people.
<b>LOE 4</b>	Contain Instability in Libya	Use military tools to advance diplomacy, conduct operations to degrade VEOs, improve the security architecture of the Libyan Government of National Accord, and, once a political reconciliation is achieved, strengthen the national security forces of a recognized Libyan government.
<b>LOE 5</b>	Support Partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad region	Conduct engagements, exercises, and limited operations, and provide appropriate security assistance to increase partners’ willingness and capabilities in counter-VEO efforts.
<b>LOE 6</b>	Set the Theater	Ensure that USAFRICOM has the authorities, capabilities, footprint, agreements, and understandings in place to maintain access and accomplish USAFRICOM’s missions.

Source: USAFRICOM, Posture Statement, 2/17/2019; USAFRICOM, vetting comments, 5/1/2020 and 5/4/2020.

## DoD Africa Posture Review Still Pending

USAFRICOM briefed the Secretary of Defense in April regarding its “Blank Slate Review,” the DoD-wide review of all combatant commands, begun in fall 2019, to align DoD resources with the objectives of the 2018 National Defense Strategy. As of the end of the quarter, the Secretary of Defense was still deliberating decisions about the future of U.S. forces in Africa, according to USAFRICOM and the DoD.<sup>11</sup> General Townsend stated earlier this year that approximately 5,000 U.S. forces and 1,000 DoD civilians and contractors were stationed in Africa.<sup>12</sup>

USAFRICOM was the first combatant command to submit recommendations as part of the Blank Slate Review.<sup>13</sup> During congressional testimony in March, General Townsend said USAFRICOM’s Blank Slate Review prioritizes “objectives and actions to protect the homeland and secure U.S. strategic interests in Africa while focusing on the taxpayers’ investments in the right area.”<sup>14</sup>

The first decision based on the Blank Slate Review was to deploy elements of the 1st SFAB to Africa.<sup>15</sup> SFAB personnel specialize in train, advise, and assist missions.<sup>16</sup> USAFRICOM said that the SFAB’s objective in Africa is to develop African defense institutions so that they “can support themselves with limited outside assistance” and “become security exporters for the region.”<sup>17</sup> When its advising activities resume, the SFAB will be used to conduct security cooperation training focused on defense institutions “at all levels.”<sup>18</sup> USAFRICOM plans to deploy the SFAB elements to the USAFRICOM area of responsibility as conditions permit.<sup>19</sup>

USAFRICOM said that it is developing metrics to track the success of the SFAB deployment. The metrics will include the quantity and quality of African troops trained and assessments of how African defense institutions improve. USAFRICOM said that it will review the metrics on a quarterly and annual basis to assess training over time.<sup>20</sup>

**General Townsend stated earlier this year that approximately 5,000 U.S. forces and 1,000 DoD civilians and contractors were stationed in Africa.**



**A U.S. Army soldier provides security for a C-130J Super Hercules during unloading operations in Somalia. (U.S. Air Force photo)**

## EAST AFRICA

The East Africa Counterterrorism Operation seeks to degrade and deny victory to al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia in Somalia and neighboring countries in the region. U.S. military activities conducted in support of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation focus on Somalia.<sup>1</sup> Al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda-aligned terrorist group that has been active in Somalia and neighboring countries since 2006, maintains influence in many areas of Somalia.<sup>2</sup> ISIS-Somalia, a local affiliate of the international terrorist group, is active mainly in Somalia's northeastern Puntland region.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. counterterrorism operations in Somalia fall under Line of Effort 3 (Develop Security in Somalia) of USAFRICOM's Campaign Plan. USAFRICOM conducts airstrikes and missions to advise, assist, and accompany the Somali National Army (SNA). The DoD and the DoS provide support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the SNA, including the SNA's advanced infantry unit, the Danab Brigade.

DoS and USAID activities in Somalia seek to promote good governance, prevent the growth of violent extremism, and alleviate the humanitarian crisis caused by years of conflict, drought, flooding, and poor governance. The United States has provided more than

\$3 billion in humanitarian assistance to Somalia since 2006, and more than \$250 million to support the development of Somalia's political, economic, and social sectors. The U.S. diplomatic and development communities reestablished their presence in the country when the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu reopened at the Mogadishu International Airport in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

## STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

### Al-Shabaab Attacks Steady Despite the Pandemic

USAFRICOM reported that during the quarter, al-Shabaab continued to target Somali and international security forces, especially in the country's southern provinces, where al-Shabaab holds territory and seeks to expand. Al-Shabaab continued to shift fighters to target ongoing SNA efforts to clear al-Shabaab from a series of towns south of Mogadishu to Marka, along Somalia's east coast.<sup>5</sup>

Across Somalia, al-Shabaab attacks continued at historically high levels and remained steady during the quarter despite the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup> The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project, an independent research organization funded in part by the U.S. Government, reported that there were 608 violent incidents in Somalia during the quarter, including battles, explosions, and violence against civilians. By comparison, ACLED recorded 568 incidents during the previous quarter. Most of the violent events this quarter involved al-Shabaab and were concentrated in the Banadir and Lower Shabelle regions.<sup>7</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that al-Shabaab used varied and complex tactics in its attacks, including insurgent-style tactics, such as ambushes, harassing and hit-and-run attacks, and IEDs.<sup>8</sup> Al-Shabaab remained active in Mogadishu and carried out multiple targeted killings in the city. In May, al-Shabaab unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate the Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency director.<sup>9</sup> The Mogadishu International Airport, the site of the U.S. Embassy and a common target of al-Shabaab attacks, suffered five mortar attacks, compared to one in the previous quarter.<sup>10</sup> During the quarter, al-Shabaab also assassinated military and mid-level government officials in the Galmudug and Puntland regions.<sup>11</sup>

Al-Shabaab continued to use IEDs in many of its attacks. In April, al-Shabaab used vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIED) in attempts to breach AMISOM bases in Barawe.<sup>12</sup> On June 23, an al-Shabaab suicide bomber targeted the Turkish military training facility in Mogadishu, killing a Somali military recruit and a bystander.<sup>13</sup> Also in June, al-Shabaab conducted a VBIED attack against a Somali military checkpoint in Somalia's Mudug region, killing three Somali soldiers.<sup>14</sup> Local media reported dozens of additional attempted and successful IED attacks by al-Shabaab during the quarter.<sup>15</sup>

Over the past year, al-Shabaab IED attacks have decreased slightly, according to United States Special Operations Command–Africa (SOCAFRICA).<sup>16</sup> In particular, USAFRICOM reported that there were no al-Shabaab VBIED attacks in Mogadishu during the quarter, compared to one in the previous quarter. USAFRICOM said that the reduction in VBIED attacks is likely due to AMISOM and Somali force presence along main supply routes in Mogadishu.<sup>17</sup>

**The United States has provided more than \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance to Somalia since 2006.**

While the number of al-Shabaab's IED attacks decreased slightly, there has been no significant change in how the group constructs and deploys these weapons.<sup>18</sup> According to USAFRICOM, al-Shabaab makes IEDs from commercial and homemade materials.<sup>19</sup> Al-Shabaab's use of homemade explosives has increased since 2018, as ongoing efforts to clear mines and unexploded ordnance in Somalia have probably reduced al-Shabaab's access to military grade explosives.<sup>20</sup> In November 2019, the United Nations expanded its arms embargo on Somalia to include components that can be used in explosives. This quarter, the head of the United Nations Somalia Sanctions Committee warned that al-Shabaab may turn to illicit smuggling to acquire chemicals for explosives.<sup>21</sup>

Despite al-Shabaab's attacks and Somali and international efforts to counter them, the conflict remained at a stalemate. USAFRICOM reported no change in territory controlled by al-Shabaab or the Somali government.<sup>22</sup> The DoS reported that al-Shabaab is currently unable to mass large forces but maintains economic influence at the village level. The DoS assessed that the group will continue to attempt to destabilize the region through targeted assassinations and IED attacks.<sup>23</sup>

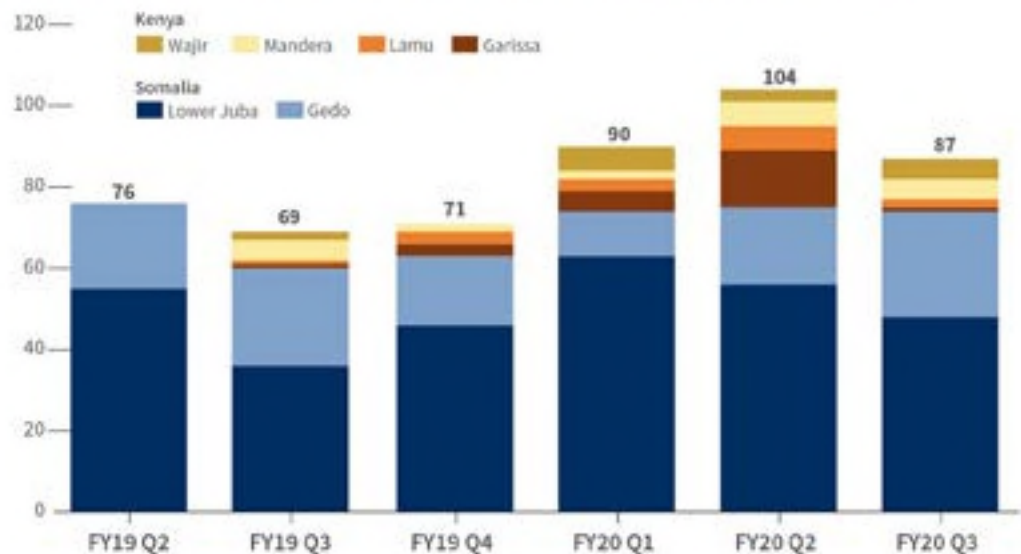
Al-Shabaab had between 5,000 and 10,000 fighters during the quarter, according to estimates from USAFRICOM and the DIA.<sup>24</sup>

### Violence in Somalia-Kenya Border Region Declines Slightly

Al-Shabaab conducted weekly cross-border raids and attacks on security camps in the Somalia-Kenya border region.<sup>25</sup> USAFRICOM assessed that al-Shabaab remained intent on and capable of conducting attacks inside Kenya and along the Somalia-Kenya border, consistent with its stated intent to compel Kenyan forces to withdraw from Somalia.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 1.

#### Violent Events in the Somalia-Kenya Border Region, January 2019–June 2020



Source: ACLED (data for battles, explosions, and violence against civilians)



Violence in the Somalia-Kenya border region has increased over the past year, though the overall level of violence in the border region decreased slightly during the quarter.<sup>27</sup> (See Figure 1.) Most of the decrease in border region attacks during the quarter was due to a reduction in attacks on the Kenyan side of the border. There were 13 violent events in the 4 Kenyan counties that border Somalia (Waju, Lamu, Mandera, and Garissa), according to ACLED data. Most of these attacks involved al-Shabaab.<sup>28</sup>

### U.S. Airstrikes Decrease

USAFRICOM reported that it conducted seven airstrikes against VEO targets in Somalia during the quarter.<sup>29</sup> (See Table 2.) This represents a decrease from 33 strikes in the previous quarter and 9 strikes during the first quarter of FY 2020.<sup>30</sup> USAFRICOM explained that this decrease in strikes was due to adverse weather patterns throughout the region and resource allocation.<sup>31</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that the April 2 airstrike killed Yusuf Jilis, whom the command described as “a long-standing, high-ranking leader” of al-Shabaab.<sup>32</sup>

U.S. airstrikes in Somalia continued during the quarter despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Speaking to a reporter after the April 2 airstrike, General Townsend said, “While we might like to pause our operations in Somalia because of the coronavirus, the leaders of al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, and ISIS have announced that they see the crisis as an opportunity to further their terrorist agenda.”<sup>33</sup>

Table 2.

#### USAFRICOM Airstrikes in Somalia, April–June 2020

Date of Strike	Location of Strike	Results
April 2	Bush Madina, Somalia	3 enemies killed 1 compound destroyed
April 3	Bush Madina, Somalia	5 enemies killed 1 vehicle destroyed
April 5	Mubaraak, Somalia	9 enemies killed 1 IED destroyed 1 vehicle disabled
April 6	Jilib, Somalia	5 enemies killed
April 9	Kobon, Somalia	10 enemies killed
April 10	Jamaame, Somalia	1 enemy killed
May 17	Qunyo Barrow, Somalia	2 enemies killed 1 compound destroyed

Source: USAFRICOM

USAFRICOM reported that during the quarter, it received 12 new allegations of civilian casualties related to 4 incidents, including its airstrikes on April 6 and April 10. USAFRICOM said that the allegations of casualties related to these two airstrikes in April were unsubstantiated and that it “assessed with a high degree of confidence” that no civilian casualties resulted from the strikes. A third allegation, related to an alleged incident on May 11, was also unsubstantiated because there was no U.S. military strike on the alleged date or at the alleged location. The fourth allegation, related to the May 17 strike, remained under review as of the end of the quarter.<sup>34</sup>

USAFRICOM reported this quarter that one civilian was killed and three were injured during a U.S. airstrike on February 2. These civilians, USAFRICOM said, “were not visible when we delivered the strike against the targeted individual.”<sup>35</sup> USAFRICOM receives many allegations of civilian casualties—from NGOs, media, and other sources—that it ultimately determines to be unsubstantiated. These allegations, USAFRICOM said, are often based on different sources of information and definitions of who is a “civilian” or “combatant;” USAFRICOM uses the DoD Law of War manual to categorize these individuals. USAFRICOM said that it assesses allegations using “all available information,” including “layered intelligence sources that are not available to the public.”<sup>36</sup>

## Al-Shabaab and COVID-19

COVID-19 cases continued to increase in Somalia during the quarter. By the end of June, there were more than 2,900 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Somalia and 90 deaths.<sup>37</sup> The United Nations noted that the actual number of COVID-19 cases in Somalia is likely greater than this official figure because there is not enough testing and many areas are inaccessible.<sup>38</sup>

### VIOLENCE

The COVID-19 pandemic did not appear to have a significant impact on the conflict in Somalia. USAFRICOM reported that there was no significant change in al-Shabaab’s violence or tactics that it can directly attribute to the pandemic.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, USAFRICOM reported that there were no significant instances of al-Shabaab impeding aid efforts connected with the pandemic outside the group’s typical destabilizing terrorist activities.<sup>40</sup>

U.S. and international forces reduced some of their operations in the country, though many continued, including U.S. airstrikes.<sup>41</sup> SOCAFRICA described COVID-19 as an “environmental factor,” adding that “planned and future operations, activities, and initiatives will continue with necessary adjustments and considerations” for COVID-19.<sup>42</sup>

*(continued on next page)*

## **Al-Shabaab and COVID-19** *(continued from previous page)*

### **MESSAGING**

As the pandemic first reached Somalia, al-Shabaab took advantage of COVID-19 in its local propaganda.<sup>43</sup> According to a media analysis funded by the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism, al-Shabaab sought to blame the Somali government and international partners for alleged responsibility or complicity in the pandemic, while denying rumors of the pandemic's impact on senior militant leaders. Al-Shabaab attempted to present itself as a more legitimate, credible governing actor than the Somali government, uniquely capable of protecting Somalis from the disease.<sup>44</sup> USAFRICOM reported that al-Shabaab issued media statements blaming the West and the weak Somali government for the disease spread.<sup>45</sup>

Through its COVID-19 messaging, al-Shabaab may have been trying to capitalize on rising anti-government sentiment, USAFRICOM said.<sup>46</sup> However, al-Shabaab's target audience generally disregards statements and claims made by al-Shabaab, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>47</sup> The DoS said that al-Shabaab's inability to effectively capitalize on COVID-19 presents an opportunity for the Somali government and the SNA, which have increased their strategic communications capabilities in recent months with U.S. and international support.<sup>48</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that as part of its pandemic response in Somalia, it disseminated information about COVID-19 spread, symptoms, testing, and treatment on various social media platforms. The command also highlighted how Somali government actions were in line with and often ahead of World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations.<sup>49</sup> USAFRICOM said that civil affairs units enabled partner forces through humanitarian assistance and NGO resources to promote COVID-19 prevention through the provision of personal protective equipment, hand soap, and information in local languages.<sup>50</sup>

### **HEALTHCARE**

By the end of the quarter, al-Shabaab appeared to acknowledge the severity of the pandemic. On May 14, al-Shabaab released a statement announcing that it had established a committee to provide "guidance" on the virus, directing Muslims in Somalia to cooperate with the committee. The group shifted away from aggressive messaging on COVID-19 in late May due to the spread of the virus to al-Shabaab members.<sup>51</sup>

In June, al-Shabaab opened a COVID-19 isolation and care facility in Jilib, a city it controls in southern Somalia.<sup>52</sup> USAFRICOM also reported that the clinic claims to have a 24-hour hotline and is equipped with emergency vehicles and isolation facilities.<sup>53</sup> Al-Shabaab sermons urged vendors not to raise prices of goods.<sup>54</sup>

Al-Shabaab has historically used the provision of services—such as education, justice, taxation, and now, healthcare—to extend its influence in Somalia. While these services are often rudimentary, al-Shabaab often provides them more efficiently than the Somali government, according to the DIA.<sup>55</sup> However, it is unclear how effective al-Shabaab's COVID-19 healthcare services have been in curbing the spread of the virus.

## ISIS-Somalia Targets Police and Government

ISIS-Somalia launched limited attacks in Somalia during the quarter, according to ACLED data. Most of the attacks occurred in the northeastern Bari province, where the group is based.<sup>56</sup> ISIS-Somalia also claimed responsibility for an IED attack in Mogadishu, although its role in the attack has not been verified.<sup>57</sup> The number of ISIS-Somalia attacks during the quarter was similar to previous quarters.<sup>58</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that in May, security forces from the Somali state of Puntland, which includes Bari province, launched several operations targeting VEOs in the region, resulting in the arrest of more than a dozen suspected ISIS members.<sup>59</sup>

## ISIS in Mozambique: An Emerging Threat

A violent ISIS-linked insurgency in northern Mozambique, known locally as Ahlu Sunna Wa-Jamma, has grown rapidly since its first attack in northern Cabo Delgado province in October 2017.<sup>60</sup> ACLED recorded 120 violent events in Cabo Delgado during the quarter, an increase from 78 in the previous quarter. The majority of these events involved the emerging ISIS affiliate and appeared to target civilians.<sup>61</sup> (See Figure 2.)

USAFRICOM assessed that ISIS in Mozambique represents “an emerging threat to U.S. interests in East Africa.” The extremists’ attacks against Mozambican security forces, civilians, and infrastructure demonstrate the group’s growing capabilities and effectiveness. So far, USAFRICOM said, the Mozambican government’s response has not succeeded in combating the group’s growing reach and influence.<sup>62</sup>

The DoS said that while the extremists lack a leader or manifesto, the group has been supported by foreign fighters from countries such as Tanzania, with possible financial support from elsewhere in East Africa.<sup>63</sup> Mozambique’s porous border with Tanzania facilitates access by foreign extremists. The DoS reported that Mozambique has sought U.S. assistance to suppress the violent extremist threat, but the Mozambican government has also turned to long-time security partner Russia for assistance.<sup>64</sup> In 2019, the Mozambican government hired the Wagner Group, the Russian private military contractor that is active in Libya, to suppress the ISIS-linked insurgency in Cabo Delgado. After the Wagner Group suffered several defeats and left the country, the Mozambican government turned to the South African Dyck Advisory Group, which remained in Cabo Delgado during the quarter.<sup>65</sup>

Figure 2.  
Cabo Delgado Locator Map



One of the world's largest offshore natural gas reserves was recently discovered in northern Cabo Delgado, which could make Mozambique a top natural gas supplier for the next century. ExxonMobil, the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and other U.S. entities seek to have a stake in developing these assets to provide energy security and direct economic benefits to the United States. A Chinese energy company currently holds a 20 percent stake in one of the two major natural gas projects in Cabo Delgado.<sup>66</sup> The DoS reported that unrealistic expectations about the timing and scope of the natural gas windfall may leave some residents susceptible to joining criminal or extremist groups.<sup>67</sup>

## PARTNER FORCE DEVELOPMENT

In 2017, members of the international community committed to a Security Pact for Somalia under which the United States and other countries agreed to provide political and material support to the Somali security forces according to a 10-year timeline.<sup>68</sup> The Pact lists several objectives for the 2018-2021 period, including containing the al-Shabaab threat and building an SNA that is able to control major population centers and supply routes.<sup>69</sup> Today, several nations and multinational organizations support the development of the Somali security forces and Somalia's ability to counter VEOs.

The focus of USAFRICOM's advisory efforts in Somalia is building the Danab ("Lightning") Brigade, an advanced infantry component of the SNA designed to liberate Somali territory held by al-Shabaab forces.<sup>70</sup> The DoS, through its security assistance programs, supports the development of the SNA (including the Danab Brigade), AMISOM, and the Somali Ministry of Defense.<sup>71</sup> AMISOM provides training to Somali forces and conducts sustained offensive operations against al-Shabaab. The European Union Training Mission in Somalia also supports the development of Somali forces and defense institutions, as do several other countries on a bilateral basis.

USAFRICOM reported that it engages directly with Somali institutions through the Military Coordination Cell (MCC) at the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu as well as through the embassy's Senior Defense Officer/Defense Attaché and the Office of Security Cooperation.<sup>72</sup> The MCC, on behalf of the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, oversees coordination of international efforts to accelerate the development of Somali national security institutions and forces under the 2017 Security Pact.<sup>73</sup> The MCC also supports quarterly engagements between the U.S. Ambassador and Somali government representatives to develop strategic policies related to the development of SNA institutions.<sup>74</sup>

## USAFRICOM Adjusts Advising Due to COVID-19

USAFRICOM reported that COVID-19 restricted the international community's ability to effectively engage with the SNA.<sup>75</sup> USAFRICOM provided advise-and-assist support to partner forces in Somalia remotely for most of the quarter.<sup>76</sup>

Despite adjustments to its advisory support, USAFRICOM supported ongoing SNA operations. For example, in June, U.S. forces conducted remote advise-and-assist operations with the SNA as they worked to clear and secure al-Shabaab strongholds in Janaale.<sup>77</sup> The rainy season and the month of Ramadan also posed constraints on Somali forces during the quarter and USAFRICOM's efforts to support them.<sup>78</sup>

## Danab Brigade Training Continues

The DoD and DoS continued efforts to develop the Danab Advanced Infantry Brigade during the quarter. The DoS, through a contractor called Bancroft Global Development, funds individual training of Danab Brigade soldiers. Upon completion of individual training, Danab Brigade soldiers proceed to DoD-led collective training. SOCAFRICA reported that 86 soldiers began and completed collective training during the quarter.<sup>79</sup>

Once fully established, the Danab Brigade is expected to number 3,000 soldiers positioned across the country, though it may not reach this full force strength in the near term.<sup>80</sup> USAFRICOM reported that when the Danab reaches its planned full force strength, the Danab Brigade will be “roughly equivalent to a U.S. general purpose infantry brigade.”<sup>81</sup> The Danab Brigade is designed to consist of five 500-man maneuver battalions and seven support companies. The support companies will include a dedicated training company, an advanced training company, a port authority company, a transportation company, a support company, a headquarters company, and a garrison with life-support capabilities.<sup>82</sup>

The Danab Brigade is Somalia’s primary force for domestic counterterrorism operations. USAFRICOM reported that the Danab Brigade conducts approximately 25 percent of SNA operations in Somalia but almost all counterterrorism operations against al-Shabaab.<sup>83</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that its civil affairs units worked with the Danab Brigade (as well as the Puntland Security Forces) to enhance their communication with local leaders. This took place via face-to-face interactions, social media, and other media.<sup>84</sup> USAFRICOM reported that the Danab Brigade shared those techniques with other forces throughout the region to promote better information sharing.<sup>85</sup>

## SNA Demonstrates Improvements Amid Ongoing Weaknesses

USAFRICOM supports the development of SNA institutions and conventional forces through support to Operation Badbaado.<sup>86</sup> Operation Badbaado is a phased, SNA-led ground offensive to clear, seize, and hold al-Shabaab strongholds along the Shabelle River, limit al-Shabaab’s freedom of movement, and disrupt al-Shabaab’s attack networks in Mogadishu.<sup>87</sup> The goals of Operation Badbaado are to 1) create a security cocoon around Mogadishu; 2) degrade al-Shabaab; and 3) develop the SNA’s long-term institutional capacity.<sup>88</sup>

Regarding the first two goals, USAFRICOM reported that the SNA “continues to successfully form a safety buffer around Mogadishu,” despite the continuation of al-Shabaab attacks in the capital.<sup>89</sup> During the quarter, the Somali Police Force increased security patrols and established new checkpoints in districts of southwest Mogadishu during the month of Ramadan.<sup>90</sup> USAFRICOM said that the Somali Police Force planned to maintain the increased security posture after Ramadan.<sup>91</sup>

Most details about the development of the SNA’s institutional capacity, particularly the SNA’s institutional weaknesses, are classified or not publicly releasable. However, one indicator of the SNA’s long-term institutional capacity is its ability to hold territory after liberating it from al-Shabaab. USAFRICOM reported that SNA continued operations to hold territory in the Lower Shabelle region. This region is a focus of Operation Badbaado, USAFRICOM said, because it is key to al-Shabaab’s ability to carry out attacks in

Mogadishu.<sup>92</sup> In particular, the SNA held territory around Janaale, a former al-Shabaab stronghold that SNA and AMISOM successfully cleared in March 2020.<sup>93</sup> Janaale occupies a strategic position along the Shabelle River and a key route to Mogadishu. (See Figure 3.)

During the quarter, the SNA and AMISOM units increased patrols in the Lower Shabelle region to disrupt al-Shabaab activities and clear supply routes of IEDs.<sup>94</sup> In addition, local and international forces completed repairs on the main supply route from Buufow to Janaale, cleared brush along the route, and delivered solar street lights to Janaale.<sup>95</sup> USAFRICOM reported that the European Union has committed to pay for the repair of culverts along the route to mitigate flooding.<sup>96</sup>

Despite its success in holding territory, the SNA did not liberate any new territory from al-Shabaab during the quarter.<sup>97</sup> Following the Janaale seizure, the SNA paused some operations in the Lower Shabelle region due to the rainy season.<sup>98</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that the SNA did show an improvement in its planning capability. Specifically, the Somali Chief of Defense Forces developed the concept of operations for an upcoming SNA convoy with his staff without assistance from European Union Training Mission in Somalia advisors, who could not assist during the quarter because of COVID-19 restrictions.<sup>99</sup>



USAFRICOM said that Operation Badbaado will continue to require partner support. In particular, its operational success will depend heavily on an effective Somali military, political reform, and the creation of much higher force protection capabilities by the SNA, including the Danab Brigade. In addition, long-term success against al-Shabaab will depend on the Somali government's ability to provide security, stabilization, and good governance in the liberated areas.<sup>100</sup>

### **Weak SNA Relationships with Federal State Forces and Clans Undermine Security**

In addition to the SNA and other Somali federal security forces, several federal member states have active security forces, as do many powerful clans. Forces under the authority of the federal member states, such as the Puntland Security Forces and the Jubaland Security Forces, conduct operations against al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia, and often serve as the primary provider of security in their area. However, analysts have reported that these forces and clan-based militias often do not coordinate with each other.<sup>101</sup> In some cases, these state and local forces clash with federal forces and contribute to instability. Some SNA units are more loyal to specific clans than the federal government, providing opportunity for clans to exploit the SNA for their own gain.<sup>102</sup>



**AMISOM and SNA officers attend a training course on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in Mogadishu. (AMISOM photo)**





USAFRICOM said that the Somali government’s relationship with the federal member states is strained, and clan-based relationships “continue to present roadblocks for the long-term security situation in Somalia,” and that tensions within some of these relationships “[complicate] the fight against al-Shabaab.”<sup>103</sup>

In June, according to the DoS, Somali President Mohamed Abedlahi—known commonly as “Farmaajo”—held a virtual meeting with federal member state presidents in an effort to normalize relations and resume discussions on national issues, including elections, economic development, and security.<sup>104</sup>



**Somalia President  
Mohamed Abedlahi  
“Farmaajo”**

### **AMISOM Continues Mission Despite COVID-19 Restrictions**

USAFRICOM reported that AMISOM, a UN-funded mission, demonstrated improvements in its capability to undertake missions in Somalia, despite COVID-19 restrictions on movement. The United Nations placed a moratorium on the movement of forces conducting UN missions that extended through the quarter.<sup>105</sup>

AMISOM troops conducted successful convoy operations during the quarter. For example, Ethiopian forces executed a logistical convoy from their base in Ethiopia to Baidoa to supply Ethiopian forces participating in the AMISOM mission. USAFRICOM reported that the move was difficult because al-Shabaab placed IEDs throughout the route.<sup>106</sup> In addition, the AMISOM Mobility Unit conducted a convoy in Mogadishu. USAFRICOM reported that the AMISOM team uses medical personal protective equipment and social distancing whenever possible within the convoy.<sup>107</sup>

AMISOM troops also completed successful joint operations during the quarter, USAFRICOM reported. For example, Ugandan forces conducted a joint operation with the SNA in the Lower Shabelle region. The Ugandan forces provided all of the enabler support for joint Somali-Ugandan operations to clear and hold Janaale and provided additional fire support to the SNA. Ugandan forces also provided a mobile infantry unit, a reconnaissance unit, and engineering support for the operations.<sup>108</sup>

USAFRICOM reported it anticipated a significant surge in AMISOM troop movement as member forces resume troop rotations that were halted as part of COVID-19 response measures.<sup>109</sup>

### **New UN Mandate Includes Changes for AMISOM**

In May, the UN Security Council voted to renew AMISOM's mandate through February 2021.<sup>110</sup> The resolution included new requirements that will present challenges for the AMISOM mission, USAFRICOM reported.<sup>111</sup> Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda contribute troops to the AMISOM mission. Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe contribute personnel to AMISOM's police mission.<sup>112</sup>

The resolution did not change AMISOM troop or police levels. The resolution authorized African Union member states to maintain a deployment of 19,626 AMISOM personnel and 1,040 police personnel.<sup>113</sup> However, rather than its typical 1-year review of the AMISOM mission, the UN Security Council extended the mandate for only 8 months.<sup>114</sup> According to USAFRICOM, AMISOM viewed the shorter extension as “a major loss.”<sup>115</sup>

The resolution called on the Somali government and its federal member states to lead the revision of the Somali Transition Plan, the 2018 agreement that outlines a gradual plan to transition AMISOM security functions to Somali forces by the end of 2021.<sup>116</sup> According to the United Nations, AMISOM and the Somali government have made progress under the plan, including the recent transfer of the national stadium and a military academy—both in Mogadishu—from AMISOM to the SNA. However, the United Nations noted this quarter that integrated planning and operations among AMISOM, the SNA, and international partners has “slowed,” and unplanned withdrawals of AMISOM forces from operating locations has left SNA forces vulnerable to attack.<sup>117</sup> According to USAFRICOM, it is the international community's assessment that this slow progress toward the Somali Transition Plan's goals “is a result of the Somali government's inability to cope with the complexity of dealing with al-Shabaab in a clan-based region.”<sup>118</sup>

The proposed re-write of the Somali Transition Plan seeks to reconfigure AMISOM to address these challenges.<sup>119</sup> USAFRICOM said that the current plan is seen as biased and Mogadishu-centric.<sup>120</sup> The resolution reaffirms the goal to transition security to Somali forces by the end of 2021.<sup>121</sup> The Somali government has agreed to complete the re-write by September 2020.<sup>122</sup>

The resolution also calls upon the African Union to strengthen the coordination of AMISOM and SNA planning and operations.<sup>123</sup> USAFRICOM said that this is an effort to strengthen AMISOM's role as a “combat mentor” to the SNA.<sup>124</sup>

Apart from the AMISOM mission, the resolution increased the allocation of UN-supported SNA personnel from 10,900 to 13,900, with the intent for the increase to include the personnel for a specialized police force called the Federal Darwish Police.<sup>125</sup> USAFRICOM said that deployment of, and logistics support to, the Darwish is seen as a key component of future stability operations in Somalia.<sup>126</sup>

### **DoD Assistance to Kenya Limited During the Quarter**

USAFRICOM reported that its capacity-building activities in Kenya during the quarter were limited but included key leader engagements and surveys of a Kenyan airport and forward operating base.<sup>127</sup>

In addition, SOCAFRICA reported that U.S. special operations forces provided intelligence support to Kenyan forces in support of counterterrorism missions. U.S. special operations forces have also provided Kenyan forces with equipment to penetrate dense foliage and supported their development of command and control and planning for future operations.<sup>128</sup>

## **DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Somali Elections Delayed**

In June, Somalia's National Independent Electoral Commission announced to international media that it planned to delay the country's parliamentary and presidential elections, which were originally scheduled to take place in November, due to "significant security and technical challenges."<sup>129</sup> For months, international observers had noted that insecurity, slow progress in building an electoral system, and the COVID-19 pandemic would challenge the Somali government's ability to hold the elections.<sup>130</sup>

The head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia previously described the elections as a "historical milestone" for Somalia.<sup>131</sup> In February, Somalia's president signed a new election law, which introduced one-person, one-vote direct voting for the elections. In Somalia's 2016-2017 elections, Somalia's clans elected delegates who voted for leaders.<sup>132</sup>

The DoS reported that Somalia's federal government and member state governments are negotiating election timing and modalities.<sup>133</sup> The United States has emphasized that elections need to be free and fair, credible, timely, secure, practical, implementable, and built on broad-based consensus in a Somali-owned and Somali-led process.<sup>134</sup>

## **STABILIZATION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

### **COVID-19 in Somalia: Poor Health Services, Food Insecurity, and Economic Decline**

COVID-19 continued to spread in Somalia during the quarter. As of the end of the quarter, 43 percent of tests in Somalia were positive for COVID-19, according to the United Nations.<sup>135</sup> According to the WHO, Somalia's health system is one of the least prepared to detect, report, and respond to epidemics. (See Figure 4.) Somalia ranks 194 of 195 countries on the Global Health Security Index.<sup>136</sup>

The pandemic indirectly impacted food security in Somalia, according to the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET). Annual external remittances are projected to decline by 30 to 50 percent in the future. Annual livestock exports in 2020 are expected to be 25 to 35 percent below normal, due to reduced exports to the Hajj pilgrimage. At the same time, costs of imported staple foods rose by between 7 and 13 percent from March to May and are expected to remain above average. Humanitarian actors provided assistance to 2.2 million people in May, though 20 percent of the 2.7 million people in need could not be reached by humanitarian actors due to access constraints. High malnutrition rates, weak health services, and poor water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure leave Somalis particularly vulnerable to the direct health impacts of COVID-19.<sup>137</sup>

Figure 4.  
**COVID-19 Cases in East Africa, as of June 30, 2020**

	SOMALIA	KENYA	ETHIOPIA	DJIBOUTI
 Total cases	<b>2,924</b>	<b>6,366</b>	<b>5,846</b>	<b>4,682</b>
Total deaths	<b>90</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>54</b>



**Somalia's Healthcare System**

 PER **100,000**  
 People  
 2 Healthcare Workers

 FOR MORE THAN **15**  
 MILLION People  
 15 ICU beds

Source: World Health Organization, "COVID-19 Situation Update for the WHO Africa Region," 7/1/2020; "COVID-19, Locusts, Flooding: WHO and Triple Threat in Somalia," 6/23/2020.

## USAID Provides Additional Humanitarian Assistance and Adapts Current Activities to Respond to COVID-19

The USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)—formerly the Office of Food for Peace and Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance—reported that it planned to provide a total of \$17.6 million in new emergency assistance in Somalia from the COVID-19 International Development Assistance supplemental appropriations.<sup>138</sup>

One focus of the BHA’s response is on frontline health facilities. According to USAID, during the quarter, BHA implementers provided safe water and sanitation services at health facilities and installed temporary isolation points. The implementers also trained health facility staff and community health workers on infection prevention and control strategies and triage methods for people who were potentially infected with COVID-19. BHA implementers provided logistical support and air transportation for the humanitarian community, including delivering life-saving supplies and equipment to more than 27 locations across Somalia.<sup>139</sup>

In addition, USAID reported that BHA implementers provided services within communities. A BHA implementer conducted a mass awareness campaign through social media, radio, and television.<sup>140</sup> More than half of the migrants passing through Somalia were unaware of COVID-19, according to the International Organization for Migration.<sup>141</sup> BHA reported that an implementer promoted safe hygiene practices and expanded water and sanitation services in communities impacted by the pandemic. BHA implementers also strengthened monitoring and response to emergency protection challenges for children and vulnerable groups, to address situations when the main caretakers of children would need to be isolated or cases of abuse, violence, and neglect of children associated with COVID-19.<sup>142</sup>

USAID reported that it adapted existing assistance programs in Somalia to ensure implementer staff and beneficiary safety during the pandemic. For example, BHA emergency programs now incorporate COVID-19 public health and hygiene messaging for beneficiaries. BHA implementers have also been provided double rations of emergency food assistance, which should last up to 2 months, to reduce the frequency with which beneficiaries need to gather to receive assistance. In addition, USAID reported that implementers procured additional medical supplies and hygiene resources (e.g., handwashing stations, soap, and hand sanitizer) for implementer staff and beneficiaries at project sites with the cost savings from reduced travel and other expenses.<sup>143</sup>

## USAID Adapts Monitoring to Address COVID-19 Restrictions

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Somalia implemented a nighttime curfew, flight suspensions, and quarantines for people with symptoms, among other restrictions.<sup>144</sup> USAID reported that to adjust to these restrictions and for health safety concerns, USAID approved its third-party monitor to transition to remote monitoring, including revised questionnaires, procedures, and timelines. USAID third-party monitors also leveraged similar remote monitoring approaches for USAID programs in Yemen and Iraq.<sup>145</sup>

USAID said that it verifies remote monitoring data by comparing it against information from other sources. Specifically, the third-party monitor reports on interviews with



**AMISOM soldiers offload medical supplies that will be used to combat COVID-19 in Somalia. (AMISOM photo)**

implementers, key informants in the community, and beneficiaries, and verifies implementer documents. USAID compares the third-party reports with implementer information received directly from the implementer. Furthermore, the annual data quality assessment of select program activities will, according to USAID, include the standard level of scrutiny despite the intention to conduct it remotely.<sup>146</sup>

### **USAID Monitors Locust Infestation, Supports Control Efforts**

East African countries are experiencing the worst locust infestation in more than 25 years. The desert locust is a highly destructive pest, able to travel by wind up to 150 kilometers per day and eat large amounts of vegetation, including crops and pasture.<sup>147</sup> USAID reported that ongoing flooding and wet conditions in Somalia led to growth of vegetation for desert locusts to eat and moist soil for the locusts to lay eggs and continue breeding.<sup>148</sup> Without control measures, the World Bank estimated there will be \$8.5 billion in losses related to the current locust crisis, including loss of staple crops, livestock production, and other asset damages.<sup>149</sup>

USAID's response to the desert locust infestation continued during the quarter despite COVID-19-related delays and ongoing insecurity. USAID reported that COVID-19-related travel restrictions, border closures, and supply chain disruptions caused delays in staffing and procurement. Implementers planned to spray areas controlled by the Somali government in the future. However, implementers will likely not be able to mitigate the infestation in areas controlled by armed groups.<sup>150</sup>

USAID reported that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations collaborated with governments to accelerate the provision of assistance despite COVID-19 restrictions. For example, affected governments adjusted COVID-19 quarantine requirements and movement restrictions to allow essential personnel to travel to, and within, the locust-infested countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization and affected governments also revised procurement plans for key commodities, such as sourcing materials locally. Control teams treated 902,000 acres—an area the size of Rhode Island—in 10 countries, as of June.<sup>151</sup>

USAID reported that it monitored the trajectory of the swarms, needs and gaps in locust control operations, and the impact of the infestation on livelihoods and food security. USAID reported that it expected that the need for food assistance will continue in Somalia and will extend across the entire Horn of Africa region, given increased food insecurity associated with the crop damage already caused by the desert locust as well as recent heavy flooding and other climatic shocks. USAID stated it will consider further funding for food assistance and surveillance and control operations, depending on the evolving infestations and the contributions of other donors.<sup>152</sup>

### USAID OTI Closes Somalia Office with Review of Accomplishments

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) ended its program in Somalia on May 31.<sup>153</sup> An OTI assessment determined that, given stalled progress in recovering territory from al-Shabaab and because OTI programs are designed to be short-term, it would be best to consolidate all stabilization efforts into one program managed by the USAID Somalia Mission.<sup>154</sup> OTI reported that over the 4 years of the program, it assisted the Somali government and local communities in creating a credible alternative to al-Shabaab. For example, the Somali government created a 50-kilometer security and governance bubble around Kismayo, allowing more than 1,000 families to return, depriving al-Shabaab of a revenue base, and establishing a stable perimeter around a key port.<sup>155</sup>

Additionally, OTI reported that the program enabled those in recovered and al-Shabaab-controlled territories to connect with the government and access critical information. Through support to state government institutions, the OTI program built the capacity of public and community radio stations, with a radio network that now reaches more than 4 million people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the radio network was also able to provide vulnerable communities with public health messages.<sup>156</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu responded to flood-related needs by providing more than 255,000 people with food, nutrition support, medical supplies, safe drinking water, and emergency shelter. (U.S. Embassy Mogadishu photo)







## NORTH AFRICA

Under the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, USAFRICOM seeks to counter ISIS-Libya and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in North Africa, particularly in Libya.

Counterterrorism operations in North Africa fall under Line of Effort 4 (Contain Instability in Libya) in the USAFRICOM campaign plan, under which the command seeks to degrade VEOs in Libya and the Maghreb.<sup>1</sup> USAFRICOM provides equipment, intelligence, logistical assistance, and security training to partner forces in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. USAFRICOM also retains the ability to conduct airstrikes in Libya.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Tripoli suspended operations inside Libya in 2014 due to increasing conflict and moved its operations to Malta and, ultimately, Tunisia. The current mission to Libya, called the Libya External Office (LEO), is co-located with the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and conducts very limited diplomatic travel and engagements inside Libya. LEO diplomats are accredited to both Tunisia and Libya. Despite its current location in Tunis, the LEO often refers to itself as the “U.S. Embassy Libya” or the “U.S. Embassy in Tripoli.”<sup>3</sup>

### STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

#### ISIS-Libya Resumes Attacks

AQIM activity has historically been very limited. ISIS-Libya activity has been limited since 2019, though ISIS-Libya resumed attacks this quarter after several months of inactivity.<sup>4</sup> USAFRICOM reported that it observed no changes to VEO tactics in North Africa this quarter that could be attributed to COVID-19.<sup>5</sup> However, the deployment of thousands of foreign mercenaries to Libya who are not monitored for COVID-19 increased the likelihood of spreading the virus between conflict zones in Libya.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, U.S. counterterrorism activities in the region have been limited, especially in the past year. USAFRICOM withdrew its small number of forces from Libya in April 2019 due to the unpredictable security environment on the ground and the ongoing civil war.<sup>7</sup> USAFRICOM reported that it continued to monitor VEOs in Libya during the quarter even though it did not employ any aerial or ground ISR this quarter.<sup>8</sup>



**IEDs (left) and an anti-personnel mine (right) were discovered in Tripoli, Libya. These devices were connected to the Russian-backed Wagner Group. (USAFRICOM photos)**



### ISIS-LIBYA

During the quarter, ISIS-Libya claimed responsibility for a VBIED attack against a security checkpoint in Taraghin, which is located 600 miles south of Tripoli. There were no reported casualties. According to media reporting, it was the first attack by ISIS-Libya in more than a year.<sup>9</sup>

The bombing was one of several small-scale attacks in May and June claimed by ISIS-Libya that used rockets or small arms and targeted the Libyan National Army (LNA) and civilians supporting the LNA in the southern Fezzan region.<sup>10</sup> The LNA had occupied key locations in the region before reallocating military resources to the north to battle resurgent Government of National Accord (GNA) militias, according to a media report.<sup>11</sup>

USAFRICOM assessed that ISIS-Libya has remained significantly degraded since the September 2019 drone strikes in southwest Libya against ISIS-Libya that targeted several of the group's senior leaders, who were living in desert camps.<sup>12</sup>

## AQIM

USAFRICOM assessed that AQIM remained capable of conducting IED and small arms fire attacks against local security forces in North Africa.<sup>13</sup> The group began prioritizing support efforts last year as a facilitator of fighters, money, and weapons to its main affiliate in West Africa, Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), according to the DIA.<sup>14</sup>

AQIM suffered a significant loss during the quarter when French forces killed its leader in northern Mali near the Algerian border on June 3. (See p. 46.) USAFRICOM said it provided ISR support to that operation.<sup>15</sup>

## LNA Leaves Mass Graves Following Tripoli Defeat

The Libyan civil war between the UN-supported GNA and the LNA continued during the quarter. A U.S. Embassy in Libya press release in May said that the United States “is proud to partner with the legitimate, UN-recognized government of Libya, the GNA, and all those who are prepared to protect freedom and peace.”<sup>16</sup>

During the quarter, the LNA lost key terrain around Tripoli, in northwest Libya. USAFRICOM reported that LNA losses included major airbases used to support unmanned aircraft and deliver forces to areas around Tripoli. The territorial defeats prompted LNA forces to retreat to the east toward the coastal city of Sirte.<sup>17</sup>

The conflict continued to result in widespread death and displacement among civilians and local and international combatants fighting in the conflict. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) documented 356 casualties during the quarter, including 102 civilian deaths, a 172 percent increase from the previous quarter.<sup>18</sup>

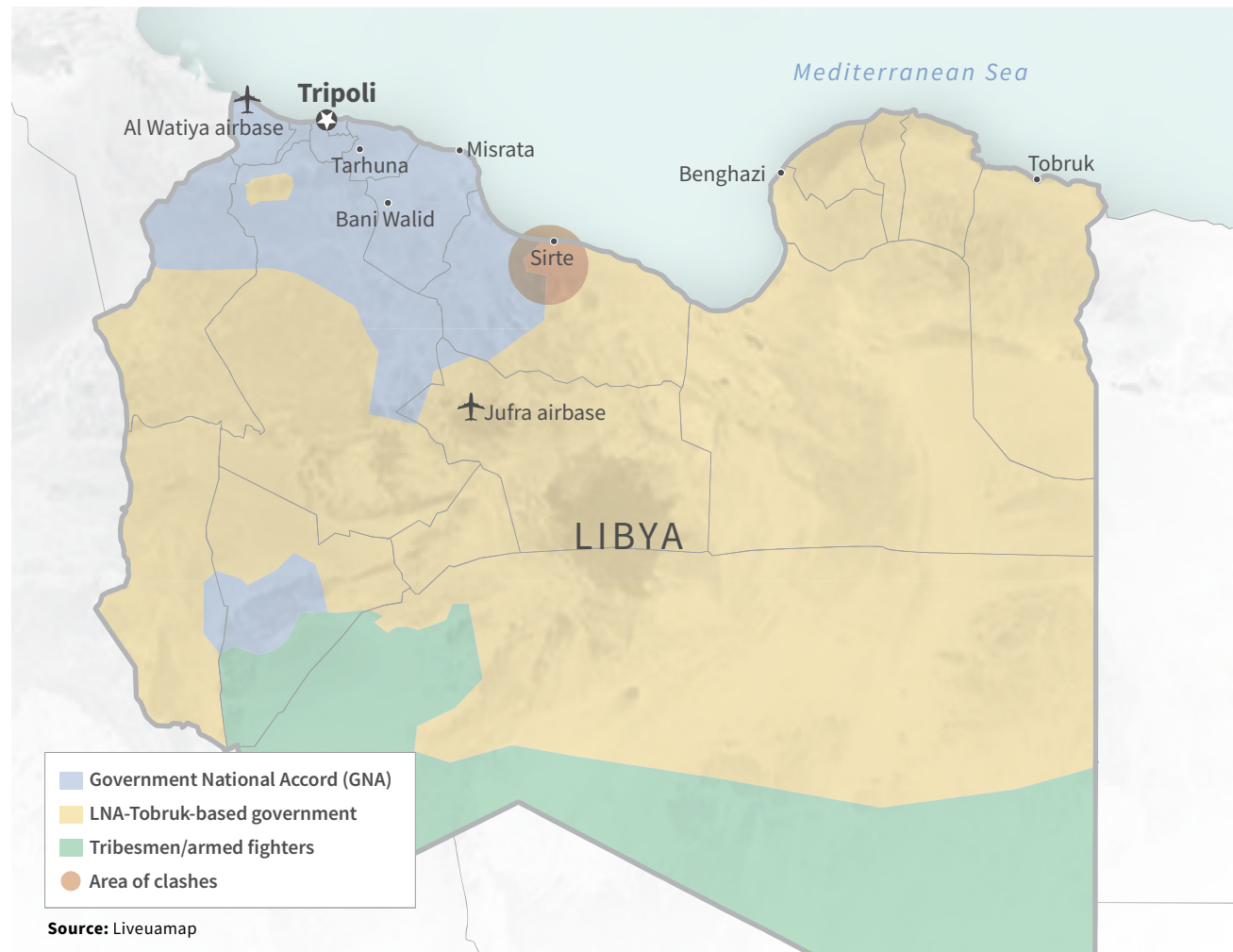
In June, UNSMIL announced the discovery of at least eight mass grave sites in Tarhouna, a former LNA stronghold approximately 60 miles southeast of Tripoli.<sup>19</sup> According to media reporting, the GNA exhumed 208 bodies and remains of “another unknown number of victims” in June. GNA forces also told reporters that at least 158 corpses were found in a Tarhouna hospital hours after LNA troops fled the city.<sup>20</sup>

The LNA battlefield losses during the quarter did not end the conflict. The LNA retained influence over a majority of territory in Libya—especially in the east where most of Libya’s oil reserves are located—while the GNA retained control over territory comprising the majority of Libya’s population.<sup>21</sup> (See Figure 5.) The LNA received support in varying forms from Russia, Egypt, France, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates, according to the DoS and media reporting.<sup>22</sup> The GNA received support primarily from Turkey, with additional assistance from Italy and Qatar.<sup>23</sup>

## Turkey Expands Paramilitary Operations to Aid the GNA

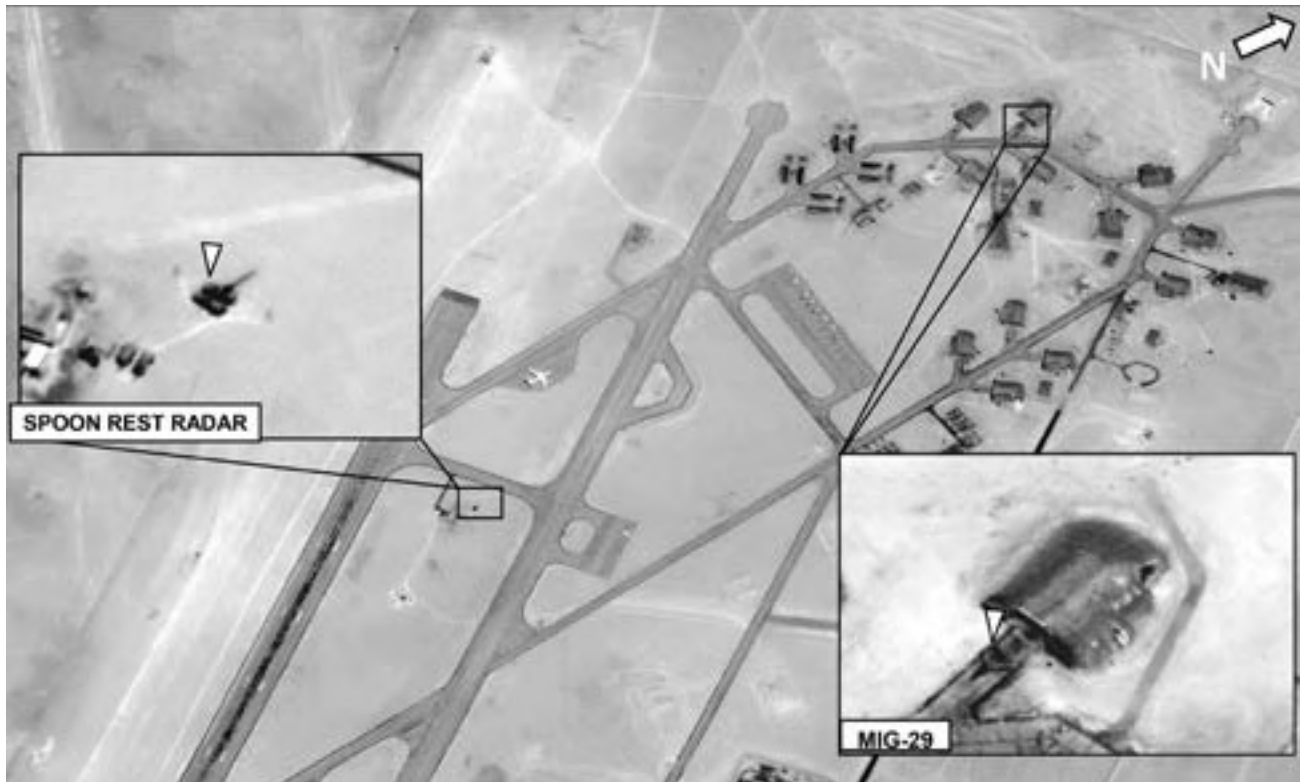
Turkey’s support of the GNA, including its deployment of Syrian mercenaries and Turkish regular troops, contributed to the GNA military gains in northwest Libya during the quarter. According to USAFRICOM, Turkey’s introduction of Turkey-Supported Syrian Opposition mercenaries to Libya provided GNA-aligned militias the ability to reorganize their areas of control and hold terrain. The militias’ support to Syrian mercenaries fighting on the front lines also contributed to the GNA’s territorial gains.<sup>24</sup> The DoS said that the United States opposes the introduction of all foreign forces in Libya.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 5.

**Conflict Areas in Libya, June 2020**

USAFRICOM assessed that the Syrian mercenaries, who worked closely with Turkey in Syria, likely arrived by Turkish military aircraft. Turkey maintains regular flights between Istanbul and Tripoli to conduct materiel resupply.<sup>26</sup> USAFRICOM estimated that several dozen military trainers from a Turkish private military company, Sadat, were deployed to Tripoli to train both GNA-aligned militias and Syrian fighters. Sadat maintains supervision and payment of the estimated 5,000 pro-GNA Syrian fighters in Libya, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to Turkish-Supported Syrian Opposition mercenaries, Turkey has also deployed several hundred regular military forces to Libya. These individuals included trainers, advisors, ordnance disposal personnel—a large number of IEDs have been found in southern Tripoli—and operators and maintainers of Turkish air defense systems.<sup>28</sup>



While the Syrian mercenaries have bolstered GNA operations, their continued presence will continue to negatively affect the overall security situation in Libya. USAFRICOM described the Syrian mercenaries fighting in Libya as “inexperienced, uneducated, and motivated by promises of considerable salary.”<sup>29</sup> USAFRICOM added that there were increasing reports of theft, sexual assault, and misconduct by those mercenaries, which is likely to further degrade the security situation and generate backlash from the Libyan public.<sup>30</sup> USAFRICOM said that extremists with previous terrorist links were involved in the Tripoli fighting, although it is possible they were fighting for financial and personal reasons rather than ideological reasons.<sup>31</sup>

**Photographic evidence of a Russian MiG-29 and a Russian-made mobile early warning radar system called a Spoon Rest at a facility near the city of Sirte. (USAFRICOM photo)**

### Russia Increases Paramilitary Forces in Libya

Russia’s presence in Libya remained a concern for the U.S. Government during the quarter.<sup>32</sup> The Russian government supports private military companies in Libya, principally the Wagner Group. Russia has also committed numerous violations of international law, according to USAFRICOM, including a direct violation of the longstanding UN arms embargo to Libya.<sup>33</sup> Analysts have noted that the conflict in Libya has devolved into a proxy war, or “the new Syria,” with Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt competing for access and influence.<sup>34</sup>

The DIA assessed that the growing Wagner Group presence gives Russia increased influence over the outcome of the Libyan civil war. Since its initial deployment in 2019,

**USAFRICOM estimated that Russian support to the LNA this quarter included approximately 3,000 Wagner Group mercenaries and approximately 2,000 Syrian mercenaries sponsored by Russia.**

the Wagner Group has provided advanced equipment, such as unmanned aircraft systems, and advanced capabilities, such as trained snipers, to the conflict, resulting in significant casualties to forces aligned with the GNA.<sup>35</sup> The DoS described the Wagner Group as a surrogate of the Russian Ministry of Defense.<sup>36</sup>

LNA commander Khalifa Haftar receives substantial support from the Wagner Group. USAFRICOM estimated that Russian support to the LNA this quarter included approximately 3,000 Wagner Group mercenaries and approximately 2,000 Syrian mercenaries sponsored by Russia.<sup>37</sup> This reflects an increase from previous quarters, when media reports estimated that the Wagner Group's presence in Libya ranged from 800 to 2,500 personnel supported by 300 to 400 Russian-sponsored Syrian mercenaries.<sup>38</sup>

In June, Wagner Group forces took control of Libya's largest oil field and export terminal, according to media reporting.<sup>39</sup> The seizure of the facilities extended the LNA's shutdown of oil supply and revenue—began in January 2020—and reduced revenues to the National Oil Corporation based in Tripoli, which sends oil revenues to the Central Bank of Libya for disbursement throughout the country.<sup>40</sup>

Russia also provides illicit financial support to the LNA. A DoS press release in May stated that the Maltese government seized \$1.1 billion of counterfeit Libyan currency that was printed by a state-owned Russian company. The press release indicated that Russia has been printing counterfeit Libyan currency for several years, with destabilizing effects on Libya's economy.<sup>41</sup>

The United States continued to publicly and privately call for an end to foreign interference in Libya, highlighting in particular the destructive role played by the Wagner Group. In June, DoS Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker noted his concern about “the continued influx of Russian military equipment, weapons, and Wagner Group mercenaries, whose presence led to the significant Turkish intervention.”<sup>42</sup>

### **USAFRICOM Releases Photos of Russian Attack Jets in Libya**

In a June press release, USAFRICOM published a series of photos exposing what USAFRICOM called Russia's malign involvement in escalating the Libyan civil war.<sup>43</sup> The introduction of advanced manned, armed Russian aircraft into Libya “changes the nature of the current conflict and intensifies the potential risk to all Libyans, especially innocent civilians,” USAFRICOM said.<sup>44</sup> The press release included a series of 15 images showing Russian aircraft en route to and on the ground at various air bases in Libya.<sup>45</sup>

In total, USAFRICOM said, at least 14 MiG-29s and several Su-24s were flown from Russia to Syria to be repainted for the purpose of disguising their country of origin before the combat aircraft were delivered to Libya.<sup>46</sup> USAFRICOM said that the Russian fighter aircraft have the ability to support air-to-ground strike and air interdiction missions.<sup>47</sup>

USAFRICOM stated in the press release that “there is concern that these Russian aircraft are being flown by inexperienced, non-state [Wagner Group] mercenaries who will not adhere to international law; namely, they are not bound by the traditional laws of armed conflict.”<sup>48</sup>

In remarks to the media, the commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa assessed that the Wagner Group contracted retired pilots or others with some experience in the aircraft but lacked proficiency, raising concerns about the pilots' ability to accurately strike targets.<sup>49</sup>

## France Suspends Participation in NATO Operation Following Dispute with Turkey

Tensions between two NATO member states heightened this quarter following a maritime incident in the eastern Mediterranean involving French and Turkish vessels. On June 10, according to media reporting, a French frigate under NATO command was denied access when it attempted to inspect a Tanzania-flagged cargo ship suspected of smuggling weapons to Libya in violation of the UN arms embargo. The French government accused three Turkish Navy vessels that were escorting the cargo ship of impeding the inspection through their use of aggressive naval tactics. Further, France claimed that its ship was illuminated three times by the targeting radar of a Turkish warship.<sup>50</sup> Turkey denied France's allegations, accused the French frigate of acting aggressively, and claimed the cargo ship was carrying humanitarian aid to Libya.<sup>51</sup>

Dissatisfied with NATO's investigation of the incident, France announced on June 30 that it was temporarily suspending its participation in NATO's "Operation Sea Guardian," a maritime security effort that aims to maintain maritime situational awareness in the Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup>

France, the United States' lead partner for counterterrorism operations in West Africa, publicly stated that it supports a political resolution to the conflict in Libya. However, France has also provided military and diplomatic support to the Russian-backed LNA, according to media reporting.<sup>53</sup> French President Emmanuel Macron accused Turkey of "massively importing" jihadist fighters from Syria to Libya.<sup>54</sup> According to media reporting, Turkey refuted the French president's assertion and said that Turkey continues to support the GNA.<sup>55</sup>

**"The world heard Mr. Haftar declare he was about to unleash a new air campaign. That will be Russian mercenary pilots flying Russian-supplied aircraft to bomb Libyans."**

–General Stephen Townsend, Commander, USAFRICOM



**A Russian fighter aircraft arrived in Libya from an airbase in Russia. DoD assessed that it was repainted to camouflage its Russian origin. (DoD photo)**

The U.S. Government has not publicly responded to France's temporary withdrawal from Operation Sea Guardian, or French allegations of Turkey deploying terrorist fighters from Syria to Libya. USAFRICOM said it does not provide any assets to enforce the UN arms embargo in Libya.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from the French frigate, Operation Sea Guardian is supported by an Italian submarine, a Turkish submarine, and several NATO-owned surveillance aircraft under NATO command. These assets maintain maritime situational awareness, support maritime counterterrorism, and enhance capacity building.<sup>57</sup>

Operation Irini, a European Union naval mission with authority under the UN arms embargo to carry out maritime interdictions, is tasked with monitoring and reporting on arms shipments to Libya that violate the UN arms embargo using aerial, maritime and satellite assets. Turkey claimed Operation Irini's focus was unbalanced, prioritizing maritime transfers over land and air transfers, which would directly affect Russian material shipments to the LNA. The European Union disputes this characterization, noting that the operation's interdiction mandate is limited to the maritime domain.<sup>58</sup>

A Congressional Research Service report on Libya, released during the quarter, concluded that international powers "appeared to differ on whether or how to defuse the situation or hold specific actors accountable," referring to continued violence and the proliferation of weapons in Libya.<sup>59</sup> "Some actors explicitly or implicitly support the continuation of LNA military operations, in spite of consensus ostensibly reached in Berlin in January 2020 and endorsed by the UN Security Council," the report said.<sup>60</sup>

### **Egypt Proposes Ceasefire and Political Solution in Libya**

On June 6, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi announced a political initiative that called for a ceasefire in Libya, renewed political negotiations between the GNA and LNA, the removal of all foreign mercenaries from Libya, and the resumption of LNA counterterrorism activities against VEOs in Libya.<sup>61</sup> Egypt, along with the United Arab Emirates, Russia, and others, supports the LNA, according to media reporting.<sup>62</sup>

However, the Turkish government and GNA rejected the Egyptian proposal, claiming it was "insincere" and would effectively require the GNA to "surrender" all security responsibility to the LNA, according to press reporting. Turkish government officials and GNA leadership stated that retaking the LNA-controlled city of Sirte and the nearby al-Jufra air base were preconditions for future political dialogue.<sup>63</sup> The al-Jufra airfield is located south of Sirte, which is considered the gateway to Libya's oil crescent, and houses Russian MiG-29 and Su-24 fighter aircraft, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>64</sup>

President al-Sisi stated that an advance by pro-GNA forces on Sirte and al-Jufra would result in direct military intervention by Egyptian forces, risking a further escalation of the Libyan civil war. As of the end of the quarter, Sirte and al-Jufra remained under LNA control, USAFRICOM reported.<sup>65</sup>

The acting UN Envoy to Libya told a media reporter that UN-brokered discussions had reached consensus on key issues for a ceasefire but that confrontation in Sirte represented a serious risk to peace efforts.<sup>66</sup>



## PARTNER FORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Reduced Advising Due to COVID-19

In North Africa, COVID-19 restrictions impacted engagement activities related to enhancing partner capacity.<sup>67</sup> As a result, USAFRICOM said, there was no noteworthy progress to report regarding advisory efforts in the region during the quarter.<sup>68</sup>

During the quarter, General Townsend discussed a deployment of SFAB elements to Tunisia.<sup>69</sup> The SFAB deployment to Tunisia and elsewhere on the continent, the DoD said, aligns with the DoD's ongoing shift to focus on threats posed by China and Russia.<sup>70</sup> USAFRICOM told a media reporter that the SFAB's positioning in Tunisia and other African locations "in no way implies combat military forces" are being considered as part of the deployment.<sup>71</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that U.S. embassy country teams continued to engage with their host-nation counterparts to develop plans to restart partner force engagements. Additionally, equipment provided under Title 10 U.S.C. Section 333, had been delayed due to the pandemic, which will impact the ability to execute training exercises once activities resume, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>72</sup>

## DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### United States Continues to Promote UN-Facilitated Ceasefire in Libya

During the quarter, the United States engaged in diplomatic efforts to promote a UN-facilitated ceasefire and participated in talks about the security, political, and economic situation in Libya. The DoS reported that U.S. mediation between the Libyan parties to the ongoing civil war and their external backers focused on resolving the ongoing LNA shutdown of Libya's oil sector, promoting increased fiscal transparency, and preventing further military escalation.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the DoS reported that the United States co-chaired the Economic Working Group of the International Follow-up Committee, the body established to coordinate implementation of the conclusions of the January 2020 Berlin Conference on Libya.<sup>74</sup>

On June 10, following increased violence in Sirte, the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli joined the UNSMIL in calling on all parties to the conflict in Libya to de-escalate, respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and refrain from acts of retribution and vandalism that unlawfully target civilians and civilian infrastructure.<sup>75</sup>

On June 22, U.S. Ambassador to Libya Richard Norland traveled to the GNA-held city of Zuwara, in western Libya, for the first time. Ambassador Norland, together with General Townsend, met with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj to discuss "opportunities for a strategic pause in military operations by all parties to the conflict." The ambassador previously visited eastern Libya in February 2020 to meet with LNA officials.<sup>76</sup>



**Ambassador Norland and General Townsend in Zuwara, Libya. (USAFRICOM photo)**

According to the DoS, Ambassador Norland emphasized U.S. support for UN diplomatic efforts to promote a ceasefire and political dialogue. General Townsend provided his perspective on the risks of escalation in the conflict, the dangers posed by Russia’s support for Wagner Group operations, and the strategic importance of ensuring freedom of navigation in the Mediterranean Sea. General Townsend said that USAFRICOM provided the security that enabled the ambassador’s meeting with Prime Minister al-Sarraj.<sup>77</sup>

On June 24, representatives of the U.S. Government and the Libyan Ministry of the Interior met virtually to resume discussions on the demobilization of nongovernmental forces. According to the DoS, the two parties “affirmed that all Libyan citizens should enjoy the protection of capable and accountable security forces, free from the dangers posed by militias, armed groups, and foreign fighters.”<sup>78</sup>

During the meeting, the Libyan Ministry of the Interior delegation described its program for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of militia forces. The U.S. delegation reaffirmed the U.S. opposition to all foreign intervention in Libya and discussed “the imperative of an immediate ceasefire and return to UN-facilitated security and political negotiations.” In addition to Ambassador Norland, the United States was represented by a senior director from the National Security Council; a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State; and the USAFRICOM Deputy Director for Strategy, Engagement, and Programs.<sup>79</sup>



## WEST AFRICA

Through the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, USAFRICOM seeks to disrupt and contain Boko Haram, ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their affiliates in designated countries in West Africa.<sup>1</sup> Counterterrorism operations and related partner nation support in West Africa fall under Line of Effort 5 (Support Partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad region) in the USAFRICOM campaign plan.<sup>2</sup>

USAFRICOM said that its approach in West Africa is a combination of operational support to the French counterterrorism mission and bilateral security force assistance to host nations. Protection of U.S. interests, according to USAFRICOM, is achieved by working by, with, and through African partners to respond to crises and security challenges while supporting U.S. allies in their direct counterterrorism assistance to African-led security operations.<sup>3</sup>



**U.S. Ambassador to Mali Dennis Hankins and Malian Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs Major General Ibrahim Dahirou Dembélé signed a memorandum of understanding for an in-kind fuel donation to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. (USAFRICOM photo)**

Several national and multinational security forces conduct counterterrorism operations in West Africa. Security forces from France and the G5 Sahel Joint Force—a coalition of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—as well as partner nation militaries conduct those operations with varying degrees of coordination.<sup>4</sup> The United States does not have authority to conduct direct strikes in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, according to USAFRICOM, except in cases of self-defense.<sup>5</sup>

USAFRICOM supports French counterterrorism efforts with airlift, aerial refueling, intelligence sharing, and ISR. G5 Sahel nations receive additional security assistance from USAFRICOM, including a staff liaison officer embedded at G5 Sahel headquarters in Mauritania. The liaison officer's mission is to maintain visibility of planning efforts, current operations, and coordination for senior leader engagements. In April, the U.S. Ambassador to Mali and the Malian Minister of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding for an in-kind fuel donation to the G5 Sahel Joint Force.<sup>6</sup>

## STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

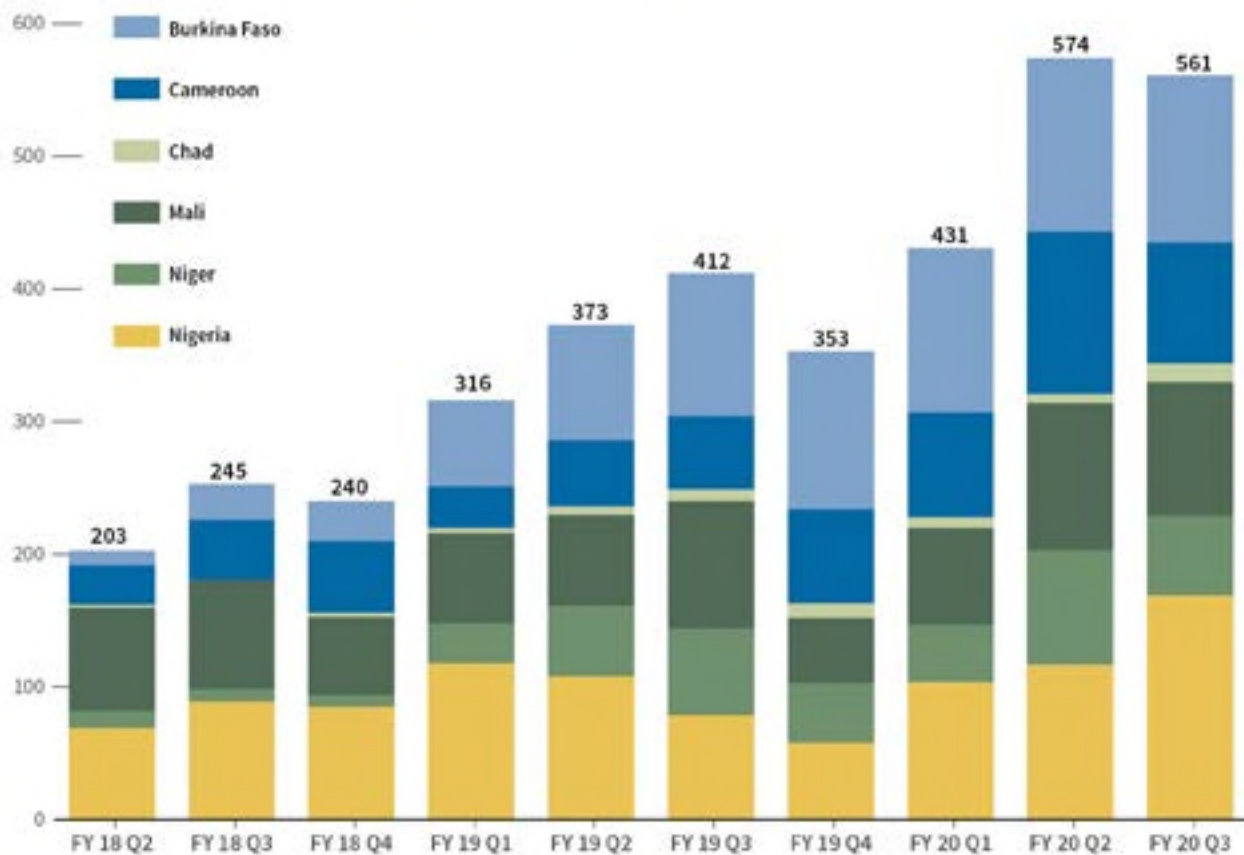
### VEO Violence Expands in West Africa

VEOs in West Africa were not contained during the quarter. The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, ethnic violence, persistent terrorist attacks, and the effects of climate change on farmer-herder conflict and food insecurity have created an “extremely volatile” environment in the Sahel, according to a UN Security Council briefing.<sup>7</sup> Violence in West African countries continued at elevated levels during the quarter, according to ACLED data. (See Figure 6.) The violence during the quarter reflected a long-term trend of expanding violence in the region.<sup>8</sup>

USAFRICOM said that VEOs expanded their operations to the western Sahel and some northern parts of the West African coastal states.<sup>9</sup> For example, on June 11, JNIM attacked a Côte d’Ivoire army post near the Burkina Faso border, killing 12 Ivorian security

Figure 6.

Violent Events by Quarter and Country, January 2018–June 2020



Source: ACLED (data for battles, explosions, and violence against civilians)

personnel.<sup>10</sup> According to media reporting, it was the first jihadist attack in Côte d'Ivoire since March 2016. Al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates continued to move south from Mali and Burkina Faso as other West African nations such as Benin and Togo reported a recent increase in jihadist presence.<sup>11</sup>

### **ISIS AFFILIATES**

ISIS-West Africa was responsible for some of the deadliest attacks during the quarter. According to USAFRICOM, ISIS-West Africa claimed responsibility for an attack on June 10 in Nigeria's Borno state that killed 81 civilians.<sup>12</sup>

ISIS-West Africa claimed 67 attacks during the quarter against partner military installations or their forces, although some of the attacks may have been conducted by ISIS in the Greater Sahara, which does not have an official media outlet that publicly claims responsibility for attacks. SOCAFRICA assessed that, based on the location of the attacks, at least 10 of the attacks claimed by ISIS-West Africa were perpetrated by ISIS in the Greater Sahara.<sup>13</sup>

SOCAFRICA reported that, while ISIS-West Africa mostly keeps to its base in the Lake Chad region, there was limited reporting to indicate that the group has the intent and capability to expand operations beyond the region. In addition to the June 10 attack in Nigeria's Borno state, ISIS-West Africa was also likely responsible for a series of attacks a few days later in Monguno and Nganzai that resulted in the deaths of 20 Nigerian security personnel and 40 civilians, according to SOCAFRICA.<sup>14</sup>

### **JNIM**

JNIM, an al-Qaeda affiliate, claimed 18 attacks during the quarter that targeted partner military installations or their forces, according to USAFRICOM. Most of the attacks occurred during the holy month of Ramadan.<sup>15</sup> The attacks targeted military positions and convoys in Mali and Burkina Faso. USAFRICOM reported that in JNIM's deadliest attack during the quarter, the group targeted a Malian military position in April with mortars and heavy machine guns, killing 30 Malian forces. According to SOCAFRICA, JNIM stated the attack was bolstered by the COVID-19 virus, which the group called a "Soldier of God" that is exhausting Western nations, particularly France and Spain.<sup>16</sup>

### **BOKO HARAM**

USAFRICOM estimated that Boko Haram had 1,500 fighters operating in the Lake Chad region during the quarter.<sup>17</sup> Boko Haram's indiscriminate and extreme violence, especially against Muslims, is cited as one reason for ISIS-West Africa's split from the group in 2016, according to media reporting.<sup>18</sup> Because of the shared history of the two groups, and the location of their operations in roughly the same areas of West Africa, some attacks are attributed to both groups.<sup>19</sup>

Both Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa took advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic by wreaking "havoc" on communities forced to lock down because of the virus, USAFRICOM said.<sup>20</sup> Boko Haram continued to use small arms, IEDs, and pillaging attacks, as well as kidnapping operations against government and civilian targets in the Lake Chad region.<sup>21</sup>

## Cooperation Turns to Conflict Among VEOs

USAFRICOM senior leaders stated in March 2020 that VEOs in West Africa were unique because ISIS and al-Qaeda cooperated with each other, a development not seen in other parts of the world.<sup>22</sup> This quarter, however, USAFRICOM said it observed escalating hostilities between JNIM and ISIS in the Greater Sahara due to defections of JNIM fighters to ISIS and recent territorial encroachments by ISIS in the Greater Sahara in Mali.<sup>23</sup>

According to USAFRICOM, an audio message and accompanying letter, allegedly made by ISIS in the Greater Sahara Deputy Emir Abdul Hakim al-Sahrawi, were circulated on social media on April 10. Al-Sahrawi demanded JNIM pay “blood money” for the killing of two ISIS in the Greater Sahara militants and the release of prisoners held by JNIM. Additionally, intense fighting in late April between the two groups near the Mali-Burkina Faso border resulted in dozens of deaths on each side. JNIM captured 40 motorcycles and an unspecified number of weapons.<sup>24</sup>



Deputy Emir Abdul  
Hakim al-Sahrawi  
(Amaq News Agency)

**Al-Sahrawi demanded JNIM pay “blood money” for the killing of two ISIS in the Greater Sahara militants and the release of prisoners held by JNIM.**

USAFRICOM reported that efforts to resolve the disputes “appear to be falling flat.”<sup>25</sup> In early May, ISIS leadership in Iraq and Syria condemned JNIM for negotiating with the Malian government and called JNIM an ally of the Algerian and Mauritania governments in its al-Nabba publication. ISIS claimed four attacks during the quarter against JNIM in Mali near the border with Burkina Faso and inside Burkina Faso.<sup>26</sup>

Conflict between VEOs was not limited to JNIM and ISIS in the Greater Sahara. In late April, USAFRICOM reported that ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram clashed near the Diffa region of Niger.<sup>27</sup> ISIS-West Africa separated from Boko Haram in 2016 because of Boko Haram’s indiscriminate violence, especially against Muslims.<sup>28</sup>

## French Forces Kill Key al-Qaeda Leader

France leads international counterterrorism operations in West Africa through Operation Barkhane, its largest overseas operation with an estimated 5,100 troops, according to media reports.<sup>29</sup> On June 3, French troops killed AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdal. USAFRICOM provided ISR support for the operation.<sup>30</sup> France’s Minister of the Armed Forces announced that Droukdal died in northern Mali near the Algerian border, along with several associates. A USAFRICOM press release described Droukdal as the “most senior decision-maker of AQIM and the likely architect of the Sahel-based jihadist movement.”<sup>31</sup> French forces also captured a key ISIS in the Greater Sahara commander in the same region on May 19, according to media reporting.<sup>32</sup>

SOCAFRICA reported that it provided ISR support to French counterterrorism operations during the quarter.<sup>33</sup> USAFRICOM said that it has increased efforts to share intelligence with partner forces. Specifically, USAFRICOM reported some success in getting ahead of VEO attacks on military facilities and infrastructure. In several instances, USAFRICOM stated, VEO movements have been disrupted through enhanced early warnings.<sup>34</sup>

### European Task Force to Fight in West Africa

General Townsend testified in January that African and European partners “must do more to roll back the VEO threat” in West Africa.<sup>35</sup> Last quarter, France announced additional troop deployments to the region.<sup>36</sup> This quarter, a French-led European special forces initiative known as Task Force Takuba continued preparation to begin operations by the end of summer 2020, with full mission capability by early 2021.<sup>37</sup>

Task Force Takuba is an advise-and-accompany force intended to enhance the Malian forces’ capabilities and add security capacity to the Liptako-Gourma border region of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. A French embassy press release said Task Force Takuba will fall under the control of Operation Barkhane.<sup>38</sup> Sweden’s Minister of Defense told reporters that one of the task force’s priorities is to prevent the spread of terrorism to Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Task Force Takuba will have a force strength of approximately 500 personnel when it is fully operational.<sup>40</sup> Around 100 French and Estonian troops initially deployed in July 2020 with soldiers from the Czech Republic, Sweden, and Italy expected to join the task force at later dates, the French Minister of Armed Forces told reporters.<sup>41</sup> Germany declined to join Task Force Takuba, according to media reporting.<sup>42</sup> USAFRICOM said the United States was not asked to provide personnel to Task Force Takuba, noting that it is a European initiative.<sup>43</sup>

### Chadian Operation Weakens Boko Haram

In addition to France’s successful operations during this quarter against AQIM and ISIS in the Greater Sahara, Chad announced in April it had completed “Operation Wrath of Boma,” which USAFRICOM described as the most significant security event this quarter in that country. The Chadian military said the large-scale counterterrorism operation killed a sizable number of Boko Haram militants. The operation was executed in response to a late March attack led by Boko Haram that killed 92 Chadian troops, USAFRICOM said, citing media reporting.<sup>44</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that military officials from Chad and Nigeria separately claimed the operation killed a large number of terrorists, and that a UN official stated that the Chadian operation had weakened Boko Haram. According to a USAFRICOM estimate, Boko Haram had 1,500 fighters in the Lake Chad region through the end of the quarter.<sup>45</sup> The number of Boko Haram fighters, their tactics, and capabilities, as reported by USAFRICOM, have not changed in the previous 2 quarters.



## DoS OIG and DoD OIG: Poor Planning Undermined Security Assistance in West Africa

The DoS and DoD OIGs recently released three reports that identified administrative deficiencies in the planning and execution of security assistance programs in West Africa. The reports were issued as the DoS began an annual interagency process to nominate and prioritize security assistance programs in Africa for FY 2021 Peacekeeping Operations funding, one of several DoS and DoD security assistance funding authorities implemented collaboratively by DoS, DoD, and the interagency teams at U.S. embassies in Africa.<sup>46</sup>

In April, the DoS OIG issued a preliminary audit of contracts under the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which found that deficient contract specifications—due in part to insufficient subject matter expertise of the DoS officials who oversee the contracts—resulted in \$14.6 million wasted. The report found that a DoS contract for training and equipping Cameroonian and Chadian military forces on Lake Chad did not specify the correct requirements for the boats that the DoS contracted to provide to the Cameroonian navy. As a result, the contractor purchased boats that were not appropriate for the project and were never used for their intended purpose, resulting in \$10.2 million of wasted funds.<sup>47</sup> A second contract for construction of a barrier wall at a base in Cameroon that houses a Rapid Intervention Battalion did not require the contractor to conduct a site survey prior to submitting its proposal. This contributed, in part, to a collapse of the wall after a large rainfall. The DoS had to expend an additional \$3.3 million for site modifications and wall repairs.<sup>48</sup>

A DoD OIG evaluation released on March 31, identified critical deficiencies in the construction of Air Base 201, the joint U.S.-Nigerien Air Force Base in Agadez, Niger. USAFRICOM uses Air Base 201 to support ISR missions in West Africa.<sup>49</sup> The DoD OIG evaluation found that USAFRICOM and the U.S. Air Force did not effectively plan for or construct portions of the air base built by the U.S. military, causing construction to be delayed by almost 3 years.<sup>50</sup> In its report, the DoS OIG found that a DoS contract to construct a C-130 hangar at Air Base 201 did not include necessary construction specifications. As a result, the apron—which is the area where aircraft load, unload, refuel, and park—was built too small, and the hangar’s electrical system was not compatible with U.S.-provided aircraft maintenance equipment. The DoS had to expend an additional \$1.1 million to increase the apron’s size and modify the electrical system, among other expenses.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, a DoS OIG report issued during the quarter found that the Bureau of African Affairs—the office that oversees more than \$275 million in assistance programs in Africa—needs to improve its processes for awarding these funds. For example, the use of insufficient processes to extend foreign assistance funds resulted in more than \$14 million being returned to the Department of the Treasury from FY 2017 through FY 2019, including funds that could have been used for other projects.<sup>52</sup> The report also identified some improvements at the Bureau, including that it had increased senior leadership attention on foreign assistance programs and that it had updated its risk assessments for terrorist financing risk and for federal assistance rewards. For further details on these reports, see pp. 62-66.

## DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### The DoS Denounces Human Rights Abuses by Security Forces

Human rights organizations continued to document alleged human rights violations by security forces in West Africa during the quarter. In June, Amnesty International released a report that accused security forces in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger of committing widespread abuses against civilians in their respective countries, which included the murder and disappearance of 199 people between February and April.<sup>53</sup> In addition, Human Rights Watch reported that between November 2019 and June 2020, the bodies of 180 men were discovered in common graves around the northern Burkina Faso city of Djibo. The majority of the victims had been executed by government security forces, according to witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch.<sup>54</sup> Further human rights abuses, including murder and torture, by local and national forces were documented in Cameroon and Nigeria during the quarter.<sup>55</sup> The prevalence of vigilante groups, that are backed by various government entities complicates the issue of protecting human rights throughout West Africa, where weak state governments are overwhelmed by growing violence.<sup>56</sup>

The Leahy Law prohibits the U.S. Government from providing financial and military assistance to units of foreign security forces that grossly violate human rights.<sup>57</sup> The U.S. Government continued to provide security assistance to G-5 Sahel countries during the quarter, but increasing allegations of human rights abuses led to stronger statements from embassies in the region, DoS leaders in Washington, and members of Congress. Shortly after the quarter ended, the DoS released a press statement expressing its deep concerns over “the growing number of allegations of human rights violations and abuses perpetrated by state security forces in the Sahel,” including those documented by Human Rights Watch and violations previously reported by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).<sup>58</sup>

The DoS noted in its statement that continued human rights violations and other abuses “risk undermining the state’s credibility with its citizens, serve as a recruiting tool for terrorists, exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis, and undermine efforts to bring security and stability to the region.”<sup>59</sup> Further, the DoS warned that U.S. Government assistance to the Sahel region must not be used in any way that contributes to violations or abuses of human rights and, without prompt and thorough action to address these allegations, U.S. security assistance may be at risk.<sup>60</sup>

### The DoS Continues to Engage Partners to Combat Rising Violence in the Sahel

During the quarter, the DoS focused on deepening international coordination with European and regional partners in the Sahel.<sup>61</sup> The DoS reported that its Special Envoy for the Sahel Region, Dr. Peter Pham, sought to align U.S. programs with the Sahel Coalition and its component organizations focused on development, security cooperation, and military operations. The Deputy Secretary of State, Stephen Biegun, attended the Sahel Coalition Ministerial on June 12 to demonstrate high-level U.S. support for the coalition’s goals.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, the DoS continued to encourage the Malian government and separatist groups to make tangible progress on the Algiers Accord for northern Mali.<sup>63</sup> During the quarter, the

DoS engaged in discussions regarding the renewal of the MINUSMA mandate. MINUSMA was established by the UN Security Council in April 2013 to support political processes in Mali and carry out a number of security-related tasks. This quarter, the DoS reported that it successfully secured language in the new, still-draft mandate on improved benchmarks for central Mali, as well as the publication of a future UN Secretary General’s report on the eventual drawdown of MINUSMA.<sup>64</sup>

## STABILIZATION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

### USAID Allocates Nearly \$67 Million in Emergency COVID-19 Funding to West Africa

While cases of COVID-19 continued to spread in West Africa this quarter, the reported numbers of infections and fatalities was lower than other regions in Africa, according to WHO data.<sup>65</sup> (See Figure 7.) Analysts noted that the region’s younger demographic and its recent experience combating the infectious Ebola outbreak from 2014 to 2016, which resulted in the establishment of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, could mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the region.<sup>66</sup>

Though reported cases and deaths were lower in West Africa compared to “hot spots” like South Africa and Egypt, COVID-19 continued to have destabilizing effects in the region, according to the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.<sup>67</sup> Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali have experienced some of the highest COVID-19 related case fatality rates in Africa.<sup>68</sup>

Figure 7.

COVID-19 Cases in West Africa, as of June 30, 2020



	BURKINA FASO	CAMEROON	CHAD	MALI	NIGER	NIGERIA
Total cases	962	12,592	866	2,181	1,075	25,694
Total deaths	53	313	74	116	67	590



A Malian airport worker takes the temperature of a passenger before boarding. (WFP/Benoit Lognone photo)

Source: World Health Organization, “COVID-19 Situation Update for the WHO Africa Region,” 7/1/2020.

Table 3.

**USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance COVID-19 West Africa Budget as of June 30, 2020**

Country	Planned Funding	Obligated Funding
Burkina Faso	\$9,000,000	\$7,687,852
Cameroon	\$10,000,000	\$7,803,337
Chad	\$2,000,000	\$0
Mali	\$6,700,000	\$807,300
Niger	\$5,000,000	\$699,593
Nigeria	\$34,000,000	\$17,220,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$66,700,000</b>	<b>\$34,218,082</b>

Source: USAID BHA

In March, Congress appropriated more than \$1 billion in emergency COVID-19 funding to USAID.<sup>69</sup> USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) reported that as of June 30, \$66.7 million was planned for the Lake Chad region and Central Sahel countries.<sup>70</sup> (See Table 3.) Of this amount, approximately \$34 million had been obligated. BHA reported that it expected to have all West African COVID-19 supplemental funding obligated by an internal USAID deadline of July 31.<sup>71</sup> USAID's COVID-19 Task Force reported that BHA, on average, was obligating COVID-19 supplemental funding within 37 days of proposal receipt, approximately 40 percent faster than standard obligation timelines.<sup>72</sup>

**Administrative Hurdles Slow USAID COVID-19 Response**

As USAID mobilized to respond to the growing COVID crisis, it faced several administrative hurdles, which undermined the responsiveness of USAID's COVID-19 programming.<sup>73</sup>

**FUNDING**

USAID's COVID-19 budget preparation and activity planning required additional layers of approval beyond the established approval process for typical programming. Unlike USAID's typical budget approval process, where programming is approved at the agency level, the White House COVID-19 Task Force had final approval authority over early tranches of USAID's COVID-19 programming. Later, the COVID-19 Task Force and USAID Front Office retained approval authority over COVID-19 humanitarian assistance funding. The additional layer of approvals resulted in increased uncertainty about budget priorities, a disjointed planning process, and delayed COVID-19 programming.<sup>74</sup>

From March to the beginning of May, BHA formulated and reformulated several budget tranches to meet the shifting expectations of the White House and USAID Task Forces, as well as the DoS. BHA's West Africa team reported that "the multiple tranches with delayed

approvals significantly disrupted BHA's ability to quickly plan with partners and consider applications for funding.<sup>75</sup> In contrast to standard procedures for funding announcements, USAID announced COVID-19 funding amounts before awards were fully designed, giving the appearance that activities were already ongoing.<sup>76</sup> In some cases, USAID announced the funding before it was approved by the USAID Administrator. This limited the BHA West Africa team's ability to plan needs-based programming, requiring them to request further proposal revisions.<sup>77</sup>

USAID's COVID-19 Task Force reported that the additional approval processes may have contributed to a perception that resources were slow to reach implementing organizations on the ground. The USAID COVID-19 Task Force said the additional layers were needed to ensure the effective use of COVID-related funding.<sup>78</sup>

## STAFFING

Once funding was in place, USAID implemented COVID-19 programs amid reduced staffing across the region. BHA reported that slightly over half of its U.S. citizen staff in West Africa chose to temporarily depart their posts under the DoS COVID-19 global authorized departure order.<sup>79</sup> BHA reported that implementation of COVID-19-related humanitarian assistance was not significantly delayed due to staff departures because USAID staff were able to continue to manage and coordinate using virtual platforms. Additionally, USAID reported that locally hired staff continued to work virtually and to support program implementation during the pandemic.<sup>80</sup>

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

BHA reported that it received inconsistent guidance from the White House COVID-19 Task Force on how their implementers were supposed to acquire PPE.<sup>81</sup> BHA said that nearly a full quarter passed before USAID staff and implementers received clear guidance related to the procurement of PPE, in some cases delaying COVID-19-related programming.<sup>82</sup>

In March, several USAID bureaus advised their implementers to stop procuring PPE. In April, the Federal Emergency Management Agency released a temporary regulation, restricting the export of specific PPE. Subsequently, there were several more, often contradictory, regulations and exemptions that made it difficult for both USAID staff and implementers to understand whether they could legally procure PPE under either COVID-19 supplemental awards or pre-existing awards, and if so, which types of PPE were allowed and from what sources.<sup>83</sup>

BHA struggled to plan appropriate COVID-19 response activities in the region due to restrictions related to necessary PPE. Supporting any activities without the ability to protect partner staff and beneficiaries could violate the "do no harm" principle of humanitarian assistance, BHA said. USAID and partner staff hesitated to plan activities without confirmation that PPE could be procured. It was also difficult to estimate program budgets without knowing whether USAID funds could be used to procure PPE.<sup>84</sup>

It was not until June 9 that USAID released clear guidance to agency staff and external implementers that would ultimately allow implementers to acquire most forms of PPE without additional layers of approval.<sup>85</sup> Across the Sahel and Lake Chad region, this lack of guidance delayed BHA and implementers' ability to finalize program applications as they tried to secure alternative sources of PPE or, in a few cases, adjust applications to only include activities that would not require PPE.<sup>86</sup>

### **BRANDING AND MARKING**

BHA reported that it received delayed and inconsistent guidance about how to properly apply USAID branding within COVID-19 award activities in West Africa, causing confusion for implementers and USAID staff. BHA reported that some implementers were hesitant to pursue additional COVID-19 related funding because it was unclear whether BHA's existing branding and marking waiver for programs in high-risk locations in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin could be applied to COVID-19 response programs. BHA only received partial branding and marking waivers at the end of April for COVID-19 activities for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, more than a month after internal discussions began. From March to the end of April, USAID staff and implementers waited on a decision from USAID leadership related to branding and marking; this delay impeded the planning and implementation of COVID-19 programming.<sup>87</sup>

### **USAID Provides Additional Food Assistance in Cameroon in Response to COVID-19**

BHA reported that COVID-19-related programming in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria emphasized dissemination of reliable COVID-19 preventive practices, provision of additional emergency food assistance as a result of increased food insecurity, and improvement of water, health, and sanitation conditions to enhance hygienic living conditions for residents and IDPs.<sup>88</sup>

For example, USAID reported that BHA's implementers in Cameroon provided food assistance to 76,700 people, some in conflict-affected areas, who experienced acute food insecurity due to COVID-19. BHA also continued to support Cameroonians in urban areas, where COVID-19 travel restrictions and reduced household purchasing power were most acute, and will continue providing direct assistance for the next 6 months. To prevent and control COVID-19, BHA implementers provided training to local healthcare workers and community leaders and disseminated COVID-19 related messaging using radio programming.<sup>89</sup>

### **OTI Enhances COVID-19 Response in Northeast Nigeria**

Travel restrictions imposed by Nigerian government forces and harassment of healthcare workers undermined the COVID-19 response in Nigeria during the quarter, particularly in the country's northeastern states. FEWSNET reported that travel restrictions led to greater food and physical insecurity in northeastern Nigeria.<sup>90</sup> International media reported that Nigerian military harassment and arrests have increased sharply since the onset of COVID-19, and sustained harassment of frontline healthcare workers may weaken an already fragile response.<sup>91</sup>

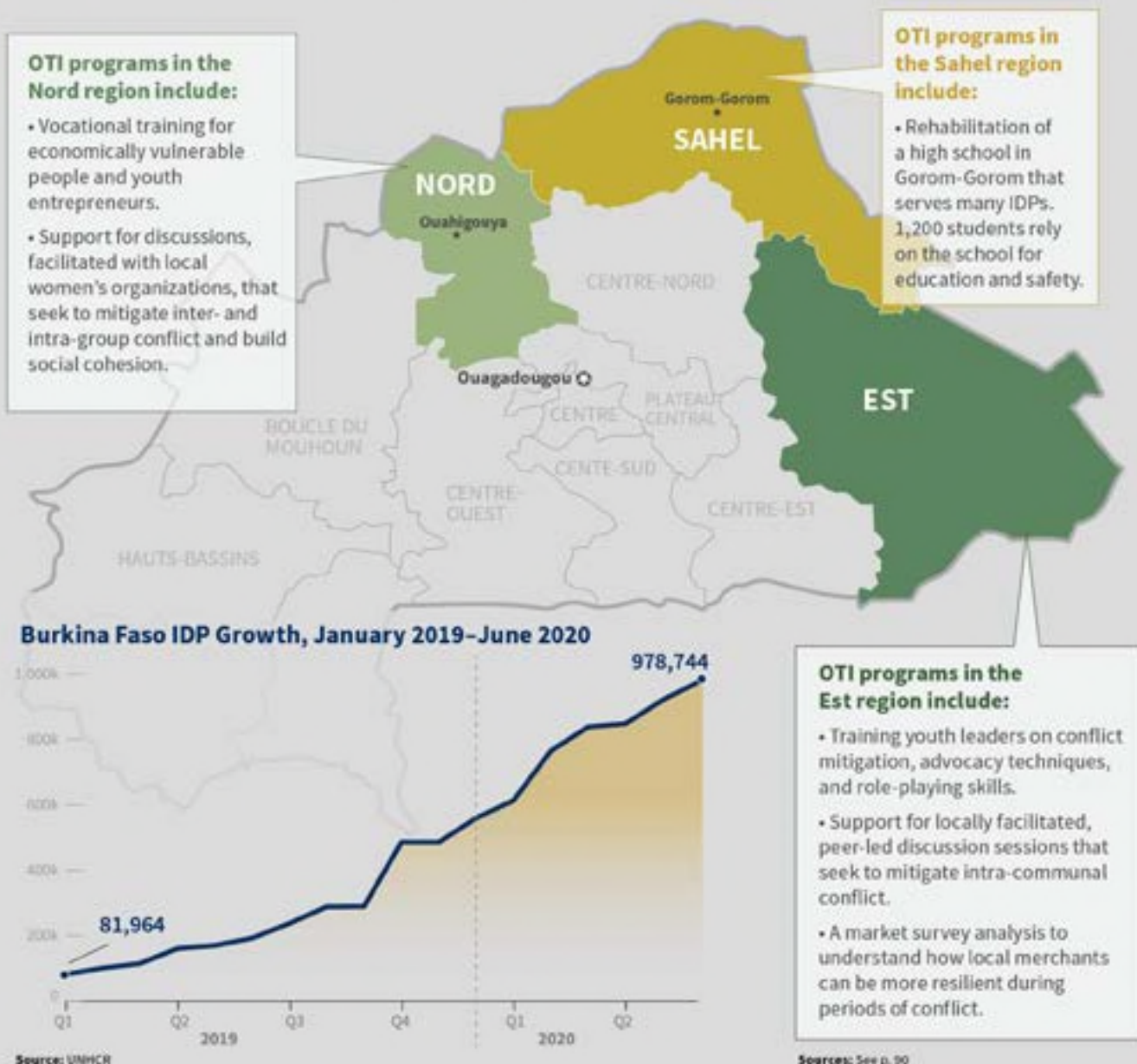
# USAID REFOCUSSES PROGRAMMING IN BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso faces multiple, interrelated crises that make the country vulnerable to destabilization, including growing food insecurity, increasing levels of internal displacement, worsening physical security, and the spread of COVID-19.

By June, 2.1 million people (10 percent of the population) were projected to be food insecure, representing a threefold increase since 2019. Additionally, since 2015,

increased violence has left more than 300,000 Burkinabe children without access to education. Reduced income and job losses as a result of COVID-19 have reduced the purchasing power of poor households.

In response, USAID OTI refocused its programming in Burkina Faso, including programs in the Nord, Est, and Sahel regions that seek to strengthen communities' resilience democratic institutions.



In response to the deepening crisis in Nigeria, USAID's OTI began using its ongoing Nigeria Lake Chad Basin program (NLCB) to rapidly provide COVID-19-related programming in the Nigerian states of Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno.<sup>92</sup> In these northeastern states, the NLCB program initiated five COVID-19 awareness campaigns in the three states, trained community leaders and volunteers in COVID-19 related prevention measures, and ultimately reached 290,767 individuals in 47,054 households.<sup>93</sup> The NLCB program also leveraged its existing network, including a war widow vocational training program, to shift its training and manufacturing to produce face masks. By June, 54,000 facemasks had been sewn and distributed by the local government, with an additional 50,000 being sewn for the Nigerian Police Force command in Borno state. The WHO, Borno state government, and Norwegian Refugee Council have since expressed interest in procuring face coverings directly from the women, according to USAID.<sup>94</sup>

### **USAID Supports Malian Elections, Including COVID-19 Precautions at Polling Stations**

Despite ongoing violence and the COVID-19 pandemic, Mali held legislative elections on March 29 and April 19. USAID supported the elections through the Empowering Malians through Election, Reform and Governance Efforts (EMERGE) project, a \$16.2 million, 6-year collaborative project with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation that seeks to advance peace, reconciliation, and more accountable governance through credible and inclusive national elections.<sup>95</sup>

The EMERGE project provided coaching sessions to female legislative candidates and tailored one-on-one advisory sessions during which candidates received targeted campaign and communications guidance. In the 2020 legislative elections, 41 women were elected to the Malian Parliament, up from just 14 in the previous 2013 election.<sup>96</sup>

In preparation for the April elections, the EMERGE project partnered with the Malian government to promote COVID-19 precautionary measures. OTI said that these measures, which were coordinated with the Malian Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Territorial Administration, included COVID-19-related messages for television and radio spots in 14 national languages. The EMERGE project established handwashing stations at polling stations and partnered with 107 volunteers across five regions of Mali to promote the importance of handwashing prior to entering polling places. The EMERGE project also deployed nearly 1,500 trained and accredited election observers and gave them election monitoring worksheets that included questions on COVID-19 compliance measures at polling stations.<sup>97</sup>





5Y-DHC

ETHIOPIAN AIR SERVICE

edimax  
SMALL  
MEDIUM  
LARGE  
SUPER  
SMALL  
MEDIUM  
LARGE



Personal protective equipment arrives in Kakuma, Kenya, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. (WFP/ George Ngari photo)

## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

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## OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This section of the report provides information on Lead IG and partner agencies' strategic planning efforts; completed, ongoing, and planned Lead IG and partner agencies' oversight work related to audits, inspections, and evaluations; Lead IG investigations; and hotline activities from April 1 through June 30, 2020.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

Pursuant to Section 8L of the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG develops and implements a joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each overseas contingency operation. This effort includes reviewing and analyzing completed oversight, management, and other relevant reports to identify systemic problems, trends, lessons learned, and best practices to inform future oversight projects. The Lead IG agencies issue an annual joint strategic plan for each operation.

#### FY 2020 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan Activities

The Inspectors General for the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DoS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are required by the Inspector General Act to conduct comprehensive independent oversight of programs and operations in support of designated overseas contingency operations. The law also requires the development of joint strategic plans to conduct comprehensive oversight and quarterly reports on the status of each overseas contingency operation.

The Lead Inspector General Fiscal Year 2020 Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations classified appendix contains oversight plans for the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations. For these operations, the Inspectors General for the DoD, the DoS, and USAID coordinate oversight activities with the U.S. Army Audit Agency, the Naval Audit Service, and the U.S. Air Force Audit Agency (AFAA).

The oversight plan, effective October 1, 2019, organizes oversight projects into three strategic oversight areas: 1) Military Operations and Security Cooperation; 2) Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development; and 3) Support to Mission.



FY 2020  
Comprehensive  
Oversight Plan  
for Overseas  
Contingency  
Operations

## Lead IG Strategic Oversight Areas

### MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

*Military Operations and Security Cooperation* focuses on determining the degree to which the contingency operation is accomplishing its security mission. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Counterterrorism operations
- Security assistance

### GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT

*Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development* focuses on some of the root causes of violent extremism. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Providing food, water, medical care, emergency relief, and shelter to people affected by crisis
- Assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and returning refugees
- Building or enhancing host-nation governance capacity
- Countering and reducing corruption, social inequality, and extremism

### SUPPORT TO MISSION

*Support to Mission* focuses on U.S. administrative, logistical, and management efforts that enable military operations and non-military programs. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Managing government grants and contracts supporting the logistical needs of U.S. Government installations, building and repairing U.S. Government facilities and infrastructure, and maintaining U.S. Government equipment and property
- Improving the cost, schedule, and performance expectations for major acquisition programs
- Ensuring applicable contracts and grant programs achieve intended objectives and policy goals
- Managing financial resources
- Managing financial agreements with host nations
- Ensuring use of OCO funding complies with laws and regulations
- Administering U.S. Government programs
- Providing for the occupational health and safety of personnel
- Countering trafficking in persons
- Ensuring the security of U.S. personnel and property
- Mobilizing staff and resources

## AUDIT, INSPECTION, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY

The COVID-19 global pandemic continued to affect the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct oversight on projects related to overseas contingency operations. Due to the evacuation of many deployed staff and country-imposed travel restrictions, some oversight projects by Lead IG agencies have been delayed or deferred. For some projects, the scope of the work has been revised or narrowed. The Lead IG agencies reported that their personnel were able to conduct some work while teleworking and practicing social distancing.

Despite these restrictions and limitations, the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies completed 16 reports related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation during the quarter. These reports examined various activities that support the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, including: DoD oversight of training to mobile medical teams prior to deploying to U.S. Africa Command area of operations; the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism's oversight and management of its foreign assistance programs, the DoS Global Engagement Center's management and monitoring of its Federal assistance awards, and financial accountability in humanitarian assistance programs. The AFAA also reported on whether the Air Force provided equipment and training to security force personnel needed to perform mission requirements while deployed in Niger.

As of June 30, 22 projects related to the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations were ongoing and 5 projects were planned.

### Final Reports by Lead IG Agencies

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

##### ***Audit of Readiness of Mobile Medical Teams Supporting Contingency Operations in the U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Areas of Responsibility***

DODIG-2020-087; June 8, 2020

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the Defense Health Agency and the Military Departments provided effective training to mobile medical teams to improve trauma care before teams deployed to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Africa Command (which includes the areas that support the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations) areas of responsibility.

The Army, Navy, and Air Force employ mobile medical teams in response to combatant commander requests for forces on military operations. Mobile medical teams typically consist of a general surgeon, an emergency physician, a critical care nurse, a surgical technician, and additional trauma care professionals. Mobile medical teams need to develop both medical skills to perform operations in unforgiving environments and tactical skills to function safely in a combat zone.

The DoD OIG determined that the mobile medical teams were provided team, environmental, and equipment training before they deployed to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility, and the team members



**U.S. Army soldiers drag a downed teammate during a simulation that was part of a combat lifesaver course at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. (U.S. Air Force)**

reported that the training was generally effective. However, the DoD OIG determined that improvements are needed regarding surgical and tactical training to better prepare mobile medical teams before deployment.

The DoD OIG recommended that the Surgeons General of the Army, Navy, and Air Force issue guidance implementing standardized training programs for all mobile medical teams, update training curriculums to include tactical training of mobile medical teams, and require all mobile medical team personnel complete standardized post-deployment after action reports and submit them to the Joint Lessons Learned Information System. The DoD OIG also recommended that a standardized post-deployment after action report template be developed to gather information on the effectiveness of training provided to mobile medical team members.

Management agreed with the recommendations.

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***Inspection of U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland***

ISP-I-20-16; June 12, 2020

The DoS OIG inspected the executive direction, program and policy implementation, resource management, and information management operations of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland (Mission Geneva). Geneva is home to more than 100 UN and international organizations. The U.S. Government engages with these multilateral institutions through Mission Geneva. Among the international organizations based in Geneva are several—including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—through which the U.S. Government directs substantial portions of its humanitarian assistance funding for migrants, refugees, and others affected by conflicts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Among other things, the DoS OIG found that the Charge d’Affaires and the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission led Mission Geneva in a professional and collegial manner; Mission Geneva and the DoS Bureau of International Organization Affairs did not have shared procedures for promoting and tracking U.S. citizen employment at Geneva-based UN and other international organizations; Mission Geneva had deficiencies in its procurement program, including unauthorized commitments and poor contract administration; and while Mission Geneva’s Information Management Office met customer needs, the Mission did not always carry out information security responsibilities, putting the DoS’s information systems at risk of compromise.

The DoS OIG made 20 recommendations—18 to Mission Geneva, 1 to the DoS Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and 1 to the DoS Bureau of Global Talent Management—to address the shortcomings identified in the report. Management agreed with the recommendations.

The DoS OIG also completed a classified annex to this report after the quarter ended, which was distributed to authorized recipients.

***Inspection of the Bureau of Counterterrorism’s Foreign Assistance Program Management***

ISP-I-20-14; June 1, 2020

This report was among three issued based on an inspection of the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT Bureau), which is discussed below (Inspection of the Bureau of Counterterrorism; ISP-I-20-13).

During the inspection of the CT Bureau, the DoS OIG inspected CT Bureau’s management of its foreign assistance program. The CT Bureau leads DoS efforts on international counterterrorism strategy, policy, and operations. The CT Bureau advances its efforts, in part, through its foreign assistance programs, which also aim to strengthen partner countries’ capabilities to help achieve U.S. counterterrorism policy goals and objectives. The CT

Bureau managed more than \$384 million in foreign assistance funds during FY 2018. Among the interagency agreements and Federal assistance awards the DoS OIG reviewed were nearly \$6.6 million for counterterrorism programs in Kenya awarded to the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Institute of Peace.

The DoS OIG determined that the CT Bureau's monitoring and evaluation framework did not fully comply with DoS standards because the CT Bureau had yet to develop performance management plans for 13 of its 15 major programs; the CT Bureau relied on third-party contractors to help with foreign assistance program oversight, and these contractors inappropriately performed inherently governmental functions in some instances; the CT Bureau's Federal assistance award files did not always include documentation to show whether a recipient performed the award in accordance with the statement of work; and the CT Bureau returned \$51.9 million in expired and canceled funds from FYs 2016 to 2019, partly as a result of weaknesses in its oversight and management of foreign assistance awards.

The DoS OIG made seven recommendations to the CT Bureau to resolve the management weaknesses and gaps identified in the report. Management agreed with the recommendations.

The third report associated with this inspection was a classified annex distributed to authorized recipients on May 4, 2020.

### ***Inspection of the Bureau of Counterterrorism***

ISP-I-20-13; May 7, 2020

The DoS OIG inspected the DoS CT Bureau's executive direction, policy and program management, administrative operations, and information management and information security activities. The CT Bureau leads the DoS's efforts on international counterterrorism strategy, policy, and operations. The CT Bureau is responsible for a complex set of policies and programs ranging from international information sharing to foreign assistance programs. The CT Bureau's policy mandate includes areas such as terrorist detention and repatriation, countering violent extremism, and management of aspects of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

This report is a companion report to the DoS OIG Inspection of the Bureau of Counterterrorism's Foreign Assistance Program Management (ISP-I20-14, discussed above). The DoS OIG determined that the CT Bureau established effective internal policy coordination and communication processes; the head of the CT Bureau spearheaded interagency efforts to increase the pace and number of terrorist designations in 2018, which resulted in more than 50 designation packages being completed; employees from other DoS bureaus and Federal agencies expressed differing opinions about the CT Bureau's effectiveness in promoting its policy goals in interagency processes; the CT Bureau did not provide sufficient policy guidance, training, and administrative support to overseas employees who are responsible for coordinating and reporting on regional counterterrorism issues; and the CT Bureau's statutorily mandated annual Country Reports on Terrorism—the CT Bureau's flagship product, on which Congress, the media, and the public rely as an authoritative statement of terrorist incidents worldwide—were submitted late in seven of eight instances reviewed during the inspection.



The DoS OIG made 11 recommendations to the CT Bureau to address the deficiencies identified in the report. Management agreed with the recommendation.

### ***Inspection of Embassy Yaoundé, Cameroon***

ISP-I-20-20, May 19, 2020

The DoS OIG inspected the executive direction, program and policy implementation, resource management, and information management operations of the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé, and an embassy branch office in Douala.

Among other things, the DoS OIG found that the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission led the embassy in a professional manner, but the Deputy Chief of Mission did not efficiently manage and prioritize items coming to her for review and approval, which created delays in the approval process; the embassy did not develop a plan to integrate the branch office in Douala with embassy operations, as called for in the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy; the embassy issued 13 visas in a particular category to applicants who were ineligible because their medical results were incomplete; the embassy's residential housing program did not fully comply with DoS safety and fire standards; and the embassy did not have a functioning radio network, leaving it unable to communicate with posts assigned to its regional network control station.

The DoS OIG made 13 recommendations, 12 to the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé, and 1 to the DoS Bureau of Global Talent Management, to address the shortcomings identified in the report. Management agreed with the recommendations.

For this inspection, the DoS OIG also produced a classified annex which was distributed to authorized recipients on May 15, 2020.

### ***Compliance Follow-Up Review: Bureau of African Affairs' Foreign Assistance Program Management***

ISP-C-20-23, May 14, 2020

The DoS OIG conducted a compliance follow-up review of the DoS's implementation of recommendations issued in a 2017 DoS OIG inspection report. That 2017 report identified deficiencies associated with the Bureau of African Affairs' (African Affairs) strategic oversight of foreign assistance program and shortcomings related to program management, risk management, funds management, and administration of Federal assistance awards. African Affairs' foreign assistance awards totaled to more than \$275 million in FY 2019.

During the follow-up review, the DoS OIG found that African Affairs took action to improve its management of foreign assistance programs, but some deficiencies identified in the 2017 inspection report had not been fully addressed. The DoS OIG noted that African Affairs had conducted biannual strategic foreign assistance reviews; increased senior leadership attention on foreign assistance programs; and updated its risk assessments for terrorist financing risk and for Federal assistance awards. However, the DoS OIG noted that African Affairs: had not documented its foreign assistance business processes; had not sufficiently improved its process for extending the availability of foreign assistance funds, resulting in more than \$14 million being returned to the Department of the Treasury during FYs 2017-2019;

and had not sufficiently addressed a shortcoming with respect to grant officer representatives completing reports evaluating the performance of recipients of African Affairs foreign assistance grants.

The 2017 inspection report contained 10 recommendations to African Affairs, and this follow-up review reviewed the implementation of 9 of the 10 recommendations. The remaining recommendation addressed a topic that is the subject of an audit that was underway at the time the follow-up review was conducted. Through the follow-up review, the DoS OIG determined that two recommendations from the 2017 report remained closed, that four recommendations would be closed, one recommendation reissued, and one recommendation revised and reissued. Additionally, the DoS OIG closed one recommendation from the 2017 report but issued a new recommendation to address related ongoing issues. Management agreed with the recommendations.

### ***Audit of Global Engagement Center Federal Assistance Award Management and Monitoring***

AUD-MERO-20-26; April 22, 2020

The DoS OIG conducted this audit to determine whether Federal assistance awards provided by the DoS Global Engagement Center (GEC) aligned with the GEC's statutory mandate and authority and whether the GEC monitored those awards in accordance with Federal requirements, DoS policies and guidance, and the terms and conditions of each award. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017 mandated that the GEC "lead, synchronize, and coordinate efforts of the U.S. Government to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining U.S. national security interests." The GEC counter-disinformation efforts relate to state actors including Russia, China, and Iran, and terrorist groups including ISIS and al-Qaeda and their affiliates in Africa and elsewhere.

The DoS OIG reviewed all 39 grants and cooperative agreements that the GEC awarded in FY 2018 and found that the stated purpose of 38 of 39 awards aligned with the GEC's statutory mandate and authority. However, the DoS OIG selected 10 of the 39 awards for detailed testing and found that the GEC did not consistently manage and monitor those awards in accordance with Federal requirements, DoS policies and guidance, and award terms and conditions. Specifically, the DoS OIG found that GEC officials did not always clearly designate roles and responsibilities for grants management personnel; 3 of 10 risk assessments for the selected awards contained errors; and 9 of 10 monitoring and evaluation plans for the selected awards did not include all required elements and did not demonstrate a direct link to the award's scope of work. Moreover, the DoS OIG found that GEC officials did not review award recipients' performance reports. The DoS OIG determined that these deficiencies occurred, in part, because the GEC did not have enough experienced personnel to issue, manage, and monitor cooperative agreements when the FY 2018 awards were issued, and the GEC had not formally adopted internal policies, processes, and procedures for managing and monitoring Federal assistance awards.

The DoS OIG made five recommendations to the GEC that were intended to improve the GEC's administration of Federal assistance awards. Management agreed with the recommendations.

***Management Assistance Report: The Bureau of African Affairs Should Improve Performance Work Statements and Increase Subject Matter Expertise for Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Projects***

AUD-MERO-20-29, April 22, 2020

During an ongoing audit of the DoS Bureau of African Affairs’ monitoring and coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, the DoS OIG identified deficiencies with the performance work statements developed for contracts for three Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership projects. DoS guidelines require that performance work statements “describe results in clear, specific, and objective terms with measurable outcomes.”

However, the DoS OIG found that the performance work statements for the three projects reviewed were neither clear nor specific. For example, one project in Cameroon called for the construction of a barrier wall but the performance work statement did not require the contractor to conduct a site survey prior to submitting a proposal which led, in part, to a section of the wall collapsing as a result of excessive rain, and which then led the Bureau of African Affairs to spend an additional \$3.3 million for modifications and repairs. For a second project in Cameroon, a contract called for training and equipping military forces at Lake Chad but because the performance work statement did not include accurate requirements, the contractor provided boats that were not appropriate for the project. As a result, the boats were never used for their intended purpose and \$10.2 million was wasted. In another example, a contract called for the construction of an aircraft hangar in Niger but the performance work statement did not clearly state the dimensions of the apron. The apron was built too small and the Bureau of African Affairs spent an additional \$1.1 million, in part, to increase the apron’s size. Because of the shortcomings identified for these three projects, the DoS OIG questioned a total of \$14.6 million expended by the DoS under the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

The DoS OIG determined that these deficiencies occurred, in part, because the contracting officer’s representatives and the contractors the Bureau of African Affairs employs in support of its programs did not have the technical knowledge needed to develop well-defined performance work statements. The DoS OIG made seven recommendations to the Bureau of African Affairs to address the shortcomings identified. Management agreed with the recommendations.

## U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Norwegian Refugee Council in Multiple Countries Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2018***

4-000-20-084-R, June 26, 2020

The Norwegian Refugee Council is a NGO humanitarian organization that works with refugees and internally displaced people in Africa and other locations.

The Norwegian Refugee Council contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$37 million in expenditures of which approximately \$25 million related to USAID funds during the audited period. The audit firm concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the awards for the period audited. The audit firm reported no questioned costs; no material weaknesses in internal control; and no instances of material noncompliance. The audit firm also issued a management letter with other areas of concern findings, included in the report.

***USAID Needs To Improve Policy and Processes to Better Protect Information Accessed on Personal Devices***

A-000-20-006-P; June 19, 2020

USAID OIG conducted this audit to determine whether USAID implemented key internal controls to protect information available in the external cloud when accessed through staff's personal devices. The internal controls under review are based on controls recommended by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Digital Services Advisory Group, and the Federal Chief Information Officers Council.

USAID staff—including those serving at embassies in countries supporting the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations—rely on both the agency's internal computing systems and external cloud computing systems to conduct their daily business. USAID OIG found that USAID had implemented some internal controls to address the risk of information security breaches. For instance, USAID required staff to take training on protecting sensitive information and having users sign an agreement of conduct. USAID also required staff to use an agency-issued electronic secure authentication device when accessing the external cloud on personal devices. However, USAID OIG concluded that there were significant gaps in USAID's policies on the use of personal devices, and that these gaps presented an increased risk of security breaches to the external cloud and the information contained within the cloud.

USAID OIG made four recommendations to USAID's Chief Information Officer to address the gaps in internal controls identified in the audit. On the basis of the responses USAID provided, USAID OIG considers three of the recommendations closed, and one of them resolved but open pending completion of planned activities.

***Financial Closeout Audit of USAID Resources Managed by African Development Solutions (ADESO) in Somalia Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2018***

4-000-20-068-R, May 8, 2020

African Development Solutions is an African-led international development and humanitarian organization established in 1991 in response to Somalia's devastating humanitarian crisis and civil war. African Development Solutions works to improve the conditions of those who are living in marginalized areas in the Horn of Africa.

African Development Solutions contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$2.8 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited. The audit firm did not identify any questioned costs; no material weaknesses in internal control; and two instances of material noncompliance. The two instances identified are repeat findings from the prior period. In addition, since this was a closeout audit for all USAID awards to the recipient, the firm did not make a recommendation but suggest that USAID determine if the recipient addressed the issues noted.

***Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by African Development Solutions (ADESO) in Somalia Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2017***

4-000-20-067-R, May 7, 2020

African Development Solutions is an African-led international development and humanitarian organization established in 1991 in response to Somalia's devastating humanitarian crisis and civil war. African Development Solutions works to improve the conditions of those who are living in marginalized areas in the Horn of Africa.

African Development Solutions contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$8.5 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited. The audit firm did not identify any questioned costs; no material weaknesses in internal control; and two instances of material noncompliance. The firm did not make any recommendations.

***Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) in Multiple Countries Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2018***

4-000-20-062-R, April 23, 2020

Cooperazione Internazionale is an independent Italian NGO that seeks to reduce poverty in Africa and other locations in Latin America and the Middle East.

Cooperazione Internazionale contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$4 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited. The audit firm did not identify any questioned costs, no material weaknesses in internal control, and no instances of material noncompliance.

***Financial Closeout Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Wajir South Development Association (WASDA) In Multiple Countries Under Multiple Awards, July 14, 2017 to September 30, 2018***

4-000-20-060-R, April 22, 2020

The Wajir South Development Association (WASDA) is a Kenyan non-profit organization that addresses development challenges in the region. WASDA's mission is to mobilize and engage communities for sustainable management of the environment, water resources, livelihoods, and education and public health services in the Horn of Africa.

Wajir South Development Association contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$1.7 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited. The audit firm identified \$6,512 in ineligible questioned costs; no material weaknesses in internal control; and one instance of material noncompliance.

***Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Northern Rangelands Trust in Kenya Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2018***

4-615-20-051-R, April 16, 2020

The Northern Rangelands Trust is a community led NGO in northern Kenya that works toward improving people's lives, securing peace, and conserving natural resources.

Northern Rangelands Trust contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$4.7 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited, except for \$47,666 in total questioned costs (\$46,676 ineligible and \$990 unsupported); no material weaknesses in internal control; and eight instances of material noncompliance. Two of the material noncompliance findings related to recommendations made in the prior year. The firm recommended that USAID/Kenya and East Africa determine if the recipient addressed the issues noted.

**USAID OIG ISSUES ADVISORY TO INFORM USAID'S COVID-19 RESPONSE**

On May 21, USAID OIG issued an advisory notice, "Key Questions to Inform USAID's COVID-19 Response." The advisory is based on past USAID OIG work, including the previous Operation United Assistance contingency operations, which was activated for the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa. The advisory highlights lessons learned from past global health and emergency programming and key considerations for USAID's COVID-19 response effort.

## FINAL REPORTS BY PARTNER AGENCIES

### AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY

#### ***Security Forces Equipment and Training 435th Air Expeditionary Wing Ramstein Air Base, Germany***

F2020-0027-REE000; April 17, 2020

The Air Force Audit Agency (AFAA) conducted this audit to determine the sufficiency of the condition and quantity of security forces' individual protective and deployable equipment and whether security force personnel have received necessary training on equipment needed to perform mission requirements.

The 435th Air Expeditionary Wing security forces personnel provide security and force protection at Air Base 101 and Air Base 201, located respectively in Niamey and Agadez, Niger. Security forces personnel receive, account for, and maintain individual protective and deployable equipment to accomplish the mission. As of November 2019, security forces personnel at Air Base 101 and Air Base 201 managed 556 equipment items valued over \$4.6 million.

The AFAA determined that security forces personnel were trained and equipped to meet mission requirements. Specifically, the quantity and condition of security forces' individual protective and deployable equipment was sufficient, and personnel received training on individual protective and deployable equipment to perform mission requirements. However, security forces personnel did not accurately account for deployable equipment items. Accurately accounting for deployable equipment provides visibility over assets essential to Air Force mission and reduces the potential for loss, theft, or misuse of assets.

The AFAA made four recommendations to improve accountability for deployable equipment. Management agreed with the recommendations.

### **Ongoing and Planned Oversight Activities**

As of June 30, 22 projects related to the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations were ongoing, and 5 were planned. Lead IG and partner agencies have suspended or modified the dates of estimated completion for some ongoing oversight projects due to the operational restrictions caused by COVID-19.

Tables 4 through 5 list the title and objective for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects.

Table 4.

**Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of June 30, 2020**

<b>DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of U.S. Special Operations Command Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center</i></b> To determine whether U.S. Special Operations Command's Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center provides U.S. combatant commanders the increased capability to conduct Internet-based information operations globally.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of Combatant Command Counter Threat Finance Activities in Support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. European Command Priorities</i></b> To determine whether U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command are planning and executing counter threat finance activities to impact adversaries' ability to use financial networks to negatively affect U.S. interests. * Suspended due to coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19). Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of the U.S. Africa Command Support to Foreign Partners for Counterterrorism Operations</i></b> Classified objective. Contact DoD OIG Evaluations for more information. * Suspended due to COVID-19. Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of Al-Dhafra Air Base United Arab Emirates Fueling Facilities</i></b> To determine whether the Air Force effectively maintains the fueling facilities located at Al-Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, to support the U.S. Central Command refueling missions, and that these refueling facilities do not pose health, safety, or environmental risks. * Suspended due to COVID-19. Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of Tactical Signals Intelligence Processing</i></b> To determine whether Theater Support Activity's tactical signals intelligence processing is sufficient to satisfy priority intelligence requirements. * Suspended due to COVID-19. Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of the Combatant Commands' Intelligence Interrogation Approaches and Techniques</i></b> To determine whether U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command oversight of intelligence interrogations adheres to applicable DoD policies and regulations, and the overall effect of these policies and regulations on the interrogation process. * Suspended due to COVID-19. Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of Kinetic Targeting Processes in the U.S. Africa Command Area of Responsibility</i></b> To evaluate U.S. Africa Command's target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities. * Suspended due to COVID-19. Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<p><b><i>Evaluation of U.S. Central Command Kinetic Targeting Processes and Reporting Procedures</i></b> To evaluate U.S. Central Command's target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities. * Suspended due to COVID-19. Project will restart when the DoD OIG resumes normal operations.</p>
<b>DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL</b>
<p><b><i>Audit of Department of State Foreign Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreements in Somalia</i></b> To determine the extent to which foreign assistance provided to Somalia is being spent in accordance with regulations and meeting U.S. goals and objectives.</p>
<p><b><i>Inspection of the Libya External Office</i></b> To evaluate the programs and operations of the Libya External Office.</p>



## DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***Audit of Remote Diplomatic Mission Operations***

To determine whether the DoS has instituted adequate protocols to inform the decision to establish a remote diplomatic mission; identify and provide resources to support mission-essential functions; guide daily operations; and evaluate and mitigate risks associated with the execution of foreign assistance programs and initiatives that are overseen remotely.

***Audit of Department of State's Risk Assessments and Monitoring of Voluntary Contributions to International Organizations***

To determine whether DoS policies, processes, and guidance for voluntary contributions ensure that risks are identified, assessed, and responded to before providing funds to public international organizations, and funds are monitored to achieve award objectives.

***Inspection of the U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou***

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

***Inspection of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security Special Program for Embassy Augmentation Response***

To evaluate the Security Special Program for Embassy Augmentation Response.

***Audit of Department of State's Post Security Program Review Process***

To determine whether the DoS Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Post Security Program Review process is sufficient to identify and resolve deficiencies in the management of selected posts' life safety, emergency preparedness, and information security programs.

***Inspection of U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland—Classified Annex***

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva.

## U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***Audit of USAID's Initiative Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse***

To determine the extent to which USAID took action to prevent and detect sexual exploitation and abuse and to assess USAID's process for responding to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

***Audit of USAID's Self-Reliance Initiative***

To determine to the extent to which USAID's self-reliance metrics have been incorporated into its development programming strategy and the challenges USAID faces in implementing development activities as envisioned under the Journey to Self-Reliance Initiative.

***Audit of USAID's Response to the Lake Chad Basin Complex Emergency***

To determine the extent to which USAID oversaw its humanitarian assistance activities in the Lake Chad Basin; adopted measures to mitigate the risks associated with implementers using waivers from competition in procurement in the Lake Chad Basin; and adopted and verified that measures to prevent the diversion of aid from its intended beneficiaries are being followed in the Lake Chad Basin.

***Audit of USAID's Reliance in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) Project***

To assess to what extent USAID designed and monitored the implementation of RISE I activities to align with its resilience policy goals; and to what extent USAID incorporated lessons learned from RISE I into RISE II.

***Audit of USAID's Contract Termination Practices***

To assess USAID's procedures guiding acquisition award terminations, and if selected acquisition awards were terminated in accordance with established requirements.

***Audit of the USAID Compliance with the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014***

To what extent has USAID designated high priority countries and allocated water access, sanitation, and hygiene funding based on the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014.

Table 5.

**Planned Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of June 30, 2020****DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*****Audit of Oversight of the Base Operations Support Services Contract for U.S. Africa Command Bases***

To determine whether Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic is overseeing the U.S. Africa Command Base Operations Support Services contract to ensure the contractor is providing proper support services.

***Audit of the African Surface Distribution Services Contract***

To determine whether the DoD managed the African Surface Distribution Services contract to ensure ground distribution and transportation performance objectives were met.

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*****Inspection of the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria, and the Consulate General in Lagos***

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Abuja and the Consulate General in Lagos.

***Audit of DoS Implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security***

To determine whether the DoS Office of Global Women's Issues has tailored applicable DoS engagements and program to help women be more prepared for, and able to participate in, decision-making processes related to conflict and crisis; established metric and targets to evaluate, measure, and report DoS performance; and created a process to modify or redirect program resources on the basis of performance that informs resource allocation and planning.

***Inspection of the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou, Benin***

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou.

## INVESTIGATIONS AND HOTLINE ACTIVITY

The Lead IG agencies and partners continue to coordinate their investigative efforts through the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group, which consists of representatives from the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS, the DoD OIG's investigative and criminal component), the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the Army Criminal Investigations Command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCIS has temporarily removed investigative personnel from Djibouti. DCIS is continually monitoring the health and safety conditions in the U.S. Africa Command area of operation in order to assess the viability of resuming deployments to the continent. DCIS investigators were able to work on cases related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation from Kuwait, Germany, and the United States. DoS OIG and USAID OIG investigators based in Frankfurt have been teleworking from their residences.

During this quarter, Lead IG investigative agencies coordinated on 17 open investigations related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and 3 open investigations related to the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The open investigations involve procurement and grant fraud, corruption, computer intrusion, theft, and human trafficking. This quarter, the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group conducted 1 fraud awareness briefings for 12 participants.

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints and contacts specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. The DoD OIG has an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. This quarter, the investigator did not receive any complaints related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation.







Somali women and children wait for COVID-19 relief items in Wadajir, Somalia. (AMISOM photo)

## APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A

### Classified Appendix to this Report

This unclassified report normally includes a classified appendix that provides additional information on the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, as noted in several sections of this report. Due to the coronavirus disease–2019 pandemic, the Lead IG agencies did not prepare a classified appendix this quarter.

## APPENDIX B

### Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Quarterly Report

This report complies with sections 2, 4, and 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, which requires that the designated Lead Inspector General (IG) provide a quarterly report, available to the public, on an overseas contingency operation. The Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency designated the Department of Defense (DoD) IG as the Lead IG for the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The Department of State (DoS) IG is the Associate Lead IG for the operation.

This report contains information from the three Lead IG agencies—DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG), DoS OIG, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) OIG—as well as from partner oversight agencies. This report covers the period from April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020.

To fulfill its congressional mandate to produce a quarterly report the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, the Lead IG agencies gather data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of audits, inspections, and evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the information collected through open-source research or requests for information to Federal agencies.

#### INFORMATION COLLECTION

Each quarter, the Lead IG agencies gather information from the DoD, DoS, USAID, and other Federal agencies about their programs and operations related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The Lead IG agencies use the information provided by their respective agencies for quarterly reporting and oversight planning.

#### OPEN-SOURCE RESEARCH

This report also draws on the most current, publicly available information from reputable sources. Sources used in this report include the following:

- Congressional testimony
- Press conferences, official U.S. Government briefings
- United Nations reports
- Reports issued by nongovernmental organizations and think tanks
- Media reports

Materials collected through open-source research provide information to describe the status of the operation and help the Lead IG agencies assess information provided in their agency information collection process.

### **REPORT PRODUCTION**

The DoD OIG, as the Lead IG, is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG draft the sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies. The Lead IG agencies then provide those offices that provided information with opportunities to verify and comment on the content of the report.

Each OIG coordinates the review process with its own agency. During the first review, the Lead IG agencies ask their agencies to correct inaccuracies and provide additional documentation. The Lead IG agencies incorporate agency comments, where appropriate, and send the report back to the agencies for a second review. Each Lead IG agency participates in reviewing and editing the entire quarterly report.



## ACRONYMS

Acronym	
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Database
ADESO	African Development Solutions
AFAA	Air Force Audit Agency
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
COVID-19	coronavirus disease–2019
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
EMERGE	Empowering Malians through Election, Reform and Governance Efforts
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GEC	Global Engagement Center
GNA	Government of National Accord
IED	improvised explosive device
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin
LEO	Libya External Office

Acronym	
LNA	Libyan National Army
LOE	line of effort
MCC	Military Coordination Cell
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NLCB	Nigeria Lake Chad Basin program
OCO	overseas contingency operation
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PPE	personal protective equipment
SFAB	Security Force Assistance Brigade
SNA	Somali National Army
SOCAFRICA	Special Operations Command-Africa
UN	United Nations
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VBIED	vehicle-borne IED
VEO	violent extremist organization
WASDA	Wajir South Development Association
WHO	World Health Organization





# ENDNOTES

## Executive Summary

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## Libya: Violations related to mercenary activities must be investigated – UN experts

GENEVA (17 June 2020) – UN experts\* today warned that reliance on foreign actors has contributed to the escalation of the conflict in Libya and undermined prospects for a peaceful resolution, “all at a tragic cost for the local population”.

The UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries expressed alarm at widespread reports about the use of mercenaries and related actors, particularly since the start of the offensive by the Libyan National Army (LNA) to seize the capital Tripoli in April 2019.

“This is a breach of the existing arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council which includes a prohibition on the provision of armed mercenary personnel, as well as a breach of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries to which Libya is party,” said Chris Kwaja, who chairs the Working Group.

The UN Working Group noted that both the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the LNA have relied on third-country nationals to support military operations, including Russian private military personnel, and Syrian, Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries.

“Parties to the conflict in Libya and the States supporting them should immediately stop recruiting, funding and deploying mercenaries and related actors to sustain hostilities,” the Working Group said. “The deployment of mercenaries to Libya only adds to the multitude and opacity of armed groups and other actors operating in a context of impunity.”

Reports have emerged that Turkey has engaged in large-scale recruitment and transfer of Syrian fighters to take part in hostilities in support of the GNA. “These fighters were recruited through armed factions affiliated with the Syrian National Army that have been accused of serious human rights abuses in Syria,” Kwaja said.

Thousands of Syrian men, including boys under 18 years, have reportedly been sent to Libya via Turkey in recent months. “We are concerned that these children come from an extremely vulnerable social and economic situation and are being exploited for the purpose of recruitment as mercenaries,” he added.

The Working Group also expressed concerns at recent reports that Syrian fighters were now being used by both the GNA and the LNA.

Further, Russian private military personnel were reportedly deployed on the Tripoli frontline to support the LNA as snipers and to direct artillery fire from at least September 2019 to May 2020 when reports about their withdrawal emerged. The name of one company, the Wagner Group, has been cited in connection

with this deployment. In September 2019, some of the personnel allegedly arbitrarily detained five civilians and summarily executed three of them in al-Sbeaa village near Tripoli.

"We urge the Governments concerned to investigate all allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed or facilitated by such actors, to hold perpetrators accountable, and to provide access to effective remedies for victims," the experts said.

"The use of these fighters is all the more concerning in the current COVID-19 pandemic. Sending them to a conflict zone shows complete disregard for the health and safety of the Libyan civilian population that has been left severely ill-prepared to face the health crisis."

The experts have also conveyed their concerns directly to the Governments of Libya, Turkey and the Russian Federation, as well as to the Libyan National Army[1].

ENDS

(\* ) The *Working Group on the use of mercenaries* is comprised of five independent experts: **Chris Kwaja** (Chair-Rapporteur), **Jelena Aparac**, **Lilian Bobea**, **Sorcha MacLeod**, and **Saeed Mokbil**.

This statement has been endorsed by **Agnès Callamard**, *Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*; **Nils Melzer**, *Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*; and the *Working Group on Arbitrary Detention*: **Ms. Leigh Toomey** (Chair-Rapporteur), **Ms. Elina Steinerte** (Vice-Chair), **Mr. José Antonio Guevara Bermúdez**, **Mr. Sètondji Roland Adjovi** and **Mr. Seong-Phil Hong**.

The **Working Groups** and **Special Rapporteurs** are part of what is known as the *Special Procedures* of the Human Rights Council. *Special Procedures*, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. *Special Procedures'* experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

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# Exhibit 18

**Mandates of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

REFERENCE:  
AL TUR 7/2020

10 June 2020

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 42/9, 35/15, 34/16 and 34/19.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **allegations that Turkey recruited, deployed and paid fighters, including children, from several Syrian armed groups to take part in military operations in the Libyan capital Tripoli in support of the Government of National Accord, thus effectively deploying mercenaries to an armed conflict.**

According to the information received:

In December 2019, Turkish authorities reportedly organised meetings with armed factions affiliated with the Syrian National Army (SNA) and operating in north and north-eastern Syria near the Turkish border. During these meetings, Turkey reportedly asked them to deploy their fighters to Tripoli in Libya in support of the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA).

A number of fighters are believed to have agreed to be transferred to Tripoli, including but not limited to members of the Hamza Division, Sultan Murad Division, Suqur Al-Sham Brigades, Mu'tasim Division, Faylaq al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sharqiyah, and Suleyman-Shah Brigade. It has been alleged that, during the conflict in Syria, some of these factions have committed war crimes and serious human rights abuses, such as recruitment of children, severe restrictions on women's rights in areas controlled by some of the groups, and extrajudicial killings.

From late December 2019, leaders of the above-mentioned Syrian armed groups are thought to have started registering their members as well as new civilian

recruits to be deployed to Libya on a voluntary basis. Allegedly, this included children under the age of 18 years, who had the approval of their families and who, subsequently, were issued with forged identification documents in order to be registered in SNA personal status records. Some of the children were reportedly internally displaced due to the conflict in Syria and received military training by the armed group that recruited them prior to being transferred to Libya.

Reportedly, fighters were transported into Turkish territory through the Hawar Kilis military crossing and the Jarabulus border crossing and were subsequently issued with a Turkish temporary protection identification document and employment contracts for the duration of three to six months. Turkish authorities allegedly contracted private military and security companies to facilitate the selection as well as the preparation of official and contractual documentation for the fighters, apparently in coordination with the Turkish security services. One of the companies cited in this context was Sadat International Defence Consultancy.

Thereafter, the fighters were transferred to Libya, some of them on Turkish military planes from Gaziantep to Istanbul followed by commercial flights to Tripoli and Misrata, areas under the control of the GNA. An estimated one to two thousand fighters are said to have been deployed to Libya in January 2020, with thousands more joining thereafter.

The fighters appear to have been motivated to deploy to Libya by comparatively high wages as well as the prospect of obtaining Turkish passports. Allegedly, monthly financial compensation offered to the Syrian fighters varied between 500 and 2,000 US dollars, a significantly higher remuneration than the one received in Syria, in addition to promised compensation to family members in case of death or serious injury. Monthly compensation varied depending on the specialisation and experience of the individual fighters, with higher wages offered to those with experience in urban warfare. Moreover, Turkish authorities reportedly offered financial compensation to the armed groups themselves depending on the number of recruits they secured.

After arriving in Libya, some of the Syrian fighters were reportedly integrated into local armed groups affiliated with the GNA, which were operating on the Tripoli conflict frontline, while others were kept in the rear. Reports suggest that some of the Syrian fighters were captured and killed. Some of their bodies were repatriated via Turkey to Syria and handed over to their families, while those without relatives in SNA-controlled areas in north and north-eastern Syria were apparently buried directly in Libya.

Further information available indicates that the alleged deployment of Syrian fighters into Libya followed the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding on Security and Military Cooperation between Turkey and the GNA on 27 November 2019. The document available online covers a broad scope of activities, including,

upon invitation of the 'receiving party', training and consultancy services concerning joint military planning, experience transfer, training and education activities, and weapon systems and equipment utilization covering the fields of activity of the land, naval and air forces. Additionally, the Memorandum provides for the exchange of 'guest personnel', advisors and units. 'Guest personnel' is defined as 'members of defence and security agencies and sent by one Party to the other Party' without specifying whether such personnel is part of the formal state security institutions or whether they can be drawn from armed groups based in a third country.

In late December 2019, the GNA reportedly requested military and security assistance from Turkey on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding and, on 2 January 2020, the Turkish parliament authorised the deployment of personnel and other assets in support of the former. In public statements cited by the media, Turkish State representatives claimed, however, that this bill was not likely to lead to a sizable deployment of regular Turkish troops on the ground in Libya but rather to the use of other security actors.

As of 31 March 2020, in the one year since the offensive on Tripoli was launched, there were at least 685 civilian casualties, around 150,000 people displaced and some 893,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance. Since the beginning of April, these figures have significantly increased due to a further escalation of the fighting and despite the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we are gravely concerned about the recruitment and transfer of mercenaries from Syria to Libya, notably the impact this may have on the protracted armed conflict in Libya and the right of the Libyan people to self-determination.

We note that the way in which the Syrian fighters have been allegedly recruited, transported and used in the armed conflict in Libya appears consistent with the definition of a mercenary, as set out by relevant international legal instruments and prohibited by the arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council with respect to Libya. Furthermore, the deployment of mercenaries to an armed conflict may threaten several human rights, including, inter alia: the right to life, freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.

The deployment of mercenaries to Libya is all the more concerning given the multitude and opacity of armed groups and other actors operating in a context of impunity. We are especially concerned that those deployed to Libya are affiliated with armed groups that, in some cases, have been accused of serious human rights abuses during the conflict in Syria, thus seemingly perpetuating a cycle of abuse and impunity. The lack of transparency concerning the command and control exercised over the fighters in question as well as the precise nature of their activities in Libya raises serious

accountability concerns as well as questions about the respect of relevant international law.

We are also alarmed by the alleged recruitment of Syrian children to take part in the hostilities in Libya, some of whom had reportedly received military training in Syria prior to being transferred to Libya. We wish to recall that children recruited to take part in hostilities are exposed to a broad range of human rights abuses, as observed by the Working Group on the use of mercenaries in its report on the recruitment of children by non-State armed groups, including mercenaries and private military and security companies (A/HRC/39/49). The recruitment of Syrian boys who have been deprived of most of their childhood by the long and brutal conflict in Syria only to see their vulnerable social and economic situation being exploited and to be recruited and used as mercenaries is a matter of utmost concern. As further noted in a joint report by the Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, situations of armed conflict expose children to multifaceted vulnerabilities and put them at a higher risk of, *inter alia*, being trafficked, sold and sexually exploited, and used in the worst forms of child labour (A/72/164).

Furthermore, the reported role of Turkish private military and security companies in facilitating the recruitment and contracting of Syrian fighters, in apparent coordination with Turkish authorities, is an additional element of concern. Not only have these companies facilitated the recruitment and deployment of mercenaries from Syria to Libya, but, according to the available information, they have also contributed to the recruitment of children under 18 years of age to take part in an armed conflict.

We also express our concern at the transfer of foreign mercenaries to and from a conflict zone in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The conflicts in Syria and Libya have left local communities severely ill-prepared to face the pandemic, and the transfer of mercenaries and the continuation of hostilities is in disregard for the health and safety of the civilian populations. In this context, we are alarmed by the continuing escalation of violence in Libya in disrespect for the repeated calls by the Secretary-General for a humanitarian pause.

For further specific references to international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or any comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.

2. Please provide detailed information on Turkey's role and the circumstances surrounding the recruitment, financing, transportation and deployment of Syrian fighters, including children under 18 years old, to participate in the hostilities in Libya.
3. Please indicate the number of Syrian fighters deployed to Libya, the names of the Syrian armed groups with which they are affiliated, the nature of their activities in Libya, and the numbers of Syrian fighters who have been killed, injured or taken into custody by enemy forces in Libya.
4. Please explain the command and control structure over the Syrian fighters deployed in Libya, including any measures in place to hold these fighters accountable for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including specific examples.
5. Please explain how the recruitment, transfer and use of Syrian fighters in Libya, including children under 18 years old, is compatible with international legal obligations of your Excellency's Government, as well as the applicability of the Memorandum of Understanding on Security and Military Cooperation between Turkey and the Government of National Accord of Libya in this regard.
6. Please provide information about the role of Turkish private military and security companies in allegedly assisting with the recruitment, financing and transfer of the Syrian fighters through Turkey to Libya, as well as information on the relationship between such companies and your Excellency's Government and the extent to which respect for human rights and accountability for related abuses are built into contracts and other agreements with such companies.
7. Please explain the measures taken by your Excellency's Government to prevent the recruitment of Syrian children under the age of 18 years to be deployed to Libya, and whether there are any measures in place to repatriate those children reportedly deployed to participate in the hostilities in Libya.
8. Please indicate whether the above-mentioned allegations have been or are the subject of an investigation and/or prosecution by the relevant Turkish authorities and provide information about their outcomes, including as regards remedies for victims.
9. Please indicate what measures your Excellency's Government has taken, or is considering to take, to prevent and protect against human rights violations and abuses in the context of the deployment of Syrian fighters to the conflict in Libya, particularly in the current context of the Covid-19 outbreak.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting website within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary measures be taken to investigate the allegations made above and to prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issues in question.

Please note that a letter expressing similar concerns was sent to the Government of National Accord of Libya.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Chris Kwaja  
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

Agnes Callamard  
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Mama Fatima Singhateh  
Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material

Nils Melzer  
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



**Annex**  
**Reference to international human rights law**

In connection with the above-mentioned allegations, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the relevant international norms and standards that are applicable to the issues brought forth by the situation described above.

The right to self-determination is one of the principles of the United Nations, as per article 1(2) of the Charter of the United Nations as well as a fundamental principle of international human rights law, found in common article 1 to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). "Its realization is an essential condition for the effective guarantee and observance of individual human rights and for the promotion and strengthening of those rights", as observed by the Human Rights Committee in its General Comment 12.

The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States reaffirmed this right and the obligation of States to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples of the enjoyment of such a right (A/RES/2625 (XXV)). The Declaration further sets out the duty of States to "refrain from organizing or encouraging the organization of irregular forces or armed bands including mercenaries, for incursion into the territory of another State".

We wish to stress that the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries impedes the right of peoples to self-determination and violates the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, as recalled by the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/RES/42/9) and by the General Assembly (A/RES/74/138) in 2019. This practice is also incompatible with the prohibition of providing armed mercenary personnel to Libya under the arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1970 (2011). In 2020, the Security Council reiterated its demand for full compliance with the arms embargo, including by ceasing all support for and withdrawing all armed mercenary personnel (Resolution 2510).

Other legal instruments proscribe the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries in general, notably the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries and the Organisation of African Unity Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa. These instruments contain a largely similar definition of a mercenary with several cumulative criteria, including, inter alia: being specially recruited to fight in an armed conflict, being motivated by private gain, not being a national of a party to the conflict, and not being a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict.

With respect to the treatment and protection of children in situations of armed conflict, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, ratified by Turkey in 2004, requires State Parties to take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age

of 18 years do not take direct part in hostilities, either as members of State armed forces (article 1) or on behalf of armed groups (article 4). To that effect, States are obliged to “take all necessary legal, administrative and other measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement [...] within its jurisdiction” (article 6(1)). Moreover, States are required to make the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol widely known (article 6(2)) and take all feasible measures to demobilise or otherwise release victims of such practices from service and, when necessary, accord them “all appropriate assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and their social reintegration” (article 6(3)). In addition, UN Security Council resolution 1261 (1999) identifies and condemns the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts by States and non-State armed groups as one of the six grave violations committed against children in times of armed conflict.

We further wish to recall that both international humanitarian law and international human rights law continue to apply in a situation of armed conflict. In its General Comments 31 (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para 11) and 36 (CCPR/C/GC/36, para 64), the Human Rights Committee has affirmed the applicability of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and international human rights law more generally to situations of armed conflict.

In particular, States have an obligation to respect and ensure respect of the Geneva Conventions as provided by their common Article 1. To this end, States are required to adopt all measures necessary to ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions not only by their organs but also by private individuals within their jurisdictions as well as other States and non-State parties. Furthermore, the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as codified in article 7 of the ICCPR and articles 2 and 16 of the Convention against Torture (CAT) is also included in article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions, which the International Court of Justice has held to reflect a general principle of law, namely “elementary considerations of humanity” (Nicaragua v. United States of America, ICJ Reports 1986, pp. 14).

Similarly, States have positive obligations to protect and fulfil human rights. In this respect, we would like to recall that it is now widely accepted that States’ obligations to protect and fulfil human rights, such as the right to life, extend beyond their own agents and also encompass protecting against human rights abuses by third parties, including private actors, and to take positive steps to fulfil human rights. This includes taking appropriate measures to prevent, punish, investigate and bring perpetrators to justice and redress harm caused by both State and private actors (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para. 8).

Furthermore, in its General Comment No. 36, the Human Rights Committee further recalled that States have a due diligence obligation to take adequate preventive measures in order to protect individuals against reasonably foreseen threats to life originating from private persons and entities whose conduct is not attributable to the State (CCPR/C/GC/36, para 21). It follows that States have the responsibility to take steps to prevent human rights abuses by those providing private military and security services,

including by adopting legislative and administrative measures to regulate their actions. This includes taking adequate measures to “prevent, investigate, punish and remedy arbitrary deprivation of life by private entities, such as [...] private security firms” (Ibid). States are further required to effectively regulate, monitor and control the conduct of private individuals or entities empowered or authorized to employ force with potentially lethal consequences (CCPR/C/GC/36, para 15).

With respect to the possible involvement of private security providers, we would like to recall that the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights urge authorities to protect against human rights abuse by business enterprises and by adopting appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress such abuse through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication (Guiding Principle 1). States may be in breach of their international human rights obligations if they fail to take such measures. Guiding Principle 6 sets out that States should promote respect for human rights by business enterprises with which they conduct commercial transactions.

# Exhibit 19

# SADAT

ERDOGAN'S PRIVATE ARMY



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# SADAT

## Erdoğan's Private Army

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Report edited by

Sound of Silence Group



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## FOREWORD

The course of the history is full of stories of the dictatorial leaders, who spent their lives in order to grip total power and build a lasting reign. The dictators, like **Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**, seem determined to keep the legacy of their predecessors even in the 21st Century. One of the main characteristics of the dictatorial leaders is that they use all the means available to them to reach their goals, disregarding ethics and legitimacy. Erdoğan stick to the rule! His tools extend from a robust media propaganda machine to multiple paramilitary organizations. His media machine, for example, functions as a fabrication mechanism, which continually attacks the opposition and spreads hatred against them. On the other hand, his paramilitary organizations are geared to confront any kind of domestic or foreign opposition via asymmetrical ways, including terrorism. Among Erdoğan's multiple paramilitary organizations, SADAT is the most prominent and the powerful one.

**SADAT (International Defense Consulting**, in Turkish **Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlığı**) officially describes itself as a '**Private Defense and Consultancy Company**'.<sup>1</sup> Its self-description and mission statement are blurry and vague:

"SADAT Inc. is the first and the only company in Turkey, that internationally provides consultancy and military training services at the international defense and interior security sector"<sup>2</sup>

"SADAT Inc. aims at establishing the cooperation among the Islamic Countries in the sense of military and defense industries, in order to assist the Islamic World to take the rank it deserves among the Super Global Powers as a self-sufficient military power, by submitting them the services regarding the organization of Armed Forces, defense consultancy, military training, and ordnance".<sup>3</sup>

Erdoğan administration prefers to keep SADAT out of any legal or administrative inquiry. This deliberately unframed mission statement allows SADAT to freely pursue Erdoğan's ambitions. Thus, SADAT is an unsupervised, uncontrolled, unaudited paramilitary company, operating under no regulation. Erdoğan employs SADAT, alongside with other paramilitary organizations, to serve his covert agenda in and out of the country. Substantial indications show that SADAT adopts a Salafist-Jihadist ideology. There are serious claims about SADAT, which range from providing weapons and guerilla training to Salafist-Jihadist Al Nusra, Al-Qaeda and ISIL militants to establishing a pro-Erdoğan Salafist-Jihadist militia in Turkey and abroad.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr/about-us/why-sadat-inc-international-defense-consulting.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr/download/SADAT-eng-full-v02.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

One major act of SADAT was its role in Erdoğan's self-coup on 15 July 2016. Substantial evidence indicates that SADAT and other pro-AKP (Justice and Development Party, in Turkish Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) paramilitary organizations, including mafia gangs, were responsible for some of the civilian killings. While calling the events of 15 July "a gift from God", Erdoğan used these killings as a pretext to carry out his historically brutal crackdown.<sup>4</sup> SADAT's employment method on 15 July 2016 was an illustration of Erdoğan's determination to use this crucial apparatus in the future to shape politics, crush political opponents and even fuel a civil unrest when he sees a necessity to protect his reign. (A substantial study on 15 July 2016 by former Turkish officials is available online.<sup>5</sup>)

Following 15 July 2016 events, **Chairman of SADAT Adnan Tanrıverdi** was appointed as the Chief Consultant to Erdoğan. This allowed Tanrıverdi to dramatically influence the politics in Turkey. His ideas are practically driving the country while consolidating Erdoğan's reign and tyranny. Tanrıverdi's vision for the Military is well reflected in the new recruitment policy and the restructuring of the Turkish Military. The Military gradually drifts toward a Salafist-Jihadist ideology. Tanrıverdi's prospect for the state structure was realized by a controversial Referendum on 16 April 2017, which was conducted in the midst of vote fraud and breach of election law by Erdoğan and his supporters. As a result of the Referendum, Turkey turned its direction from democracy to tyranny.

Erdoğan is accelerating the country towards a dangerous cliff. The Turkish nation must act immediately and resolutely to stop Erdoğan and revert the country back to rule of law and democracy. The international community should act decisively to stop the Dictator and prevent him further degrading international peace and stability. Appeasing Erdoğan would only encourage this 21<sup>st</sup> Century dictator to follow the footsteps of his predecessors. It will serve as a favor for an inevitable disaster, which naturally would not be limited to Turkey but the whole region.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#\\\_ftn68](http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#\_ftn68)

<sup>5</sup> <https://15julyfacts.com/>

# THE 'BIG BOSS' AND HIS NEED FOR SADAT

## Erdoğan's Thirst for Power and His Lasting Paranoia

Throughout his political life, Erdoğan used historical and religious rhetoric to communicate his covert political agenda. He knows how to mask his aspirations behind religious entitlements, such as the title of **'the Caliph of All Muslims Worldwide'**. He publicizes this title as a bequest from Turkey's predecessor, the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6 7 8 9</sup> Long before founding his party AKP, Erdoğan took part in the circles of the National Youth Movements, which are dedicated to the idea of political Islamism, embellished with the cravings for the reminiscences of Ottoman era.<sup>10</sup> There he developed skills for influencing religious people. Erdoğan builds his propaganda upon the experience from those times. In 2011 for example, referring to the conflict in Syria, he publicly mandated that he was going to perform his Friday prayer in the **Umayyad Mosque of Damascus**, implying that the prayer would take place after the conquest of the city by his **'Caliphate Army'**.<sup>11</sup> Another example of his propaganda is his showy palace. As an illusionary symbol of **'magnificent Ottoman times'**, he built a palace with 1,100 rooms, 30 times greater than the White House, on the outskirts of the Turkish capital.<sup>12</sup>

Erdoğan is a master manipulator of conservative sentiments entrenched in the vast segments of the Turkish society. Based on these sentiments, Erdoğan built and consolidated an egocentric political propaganda machine. One major part of this machine is the **'White Youth Movement' (AK Gençlik Hareketi)**, which constitutes AKP's operatives, who unconditionally advance the **'Reis' (the Boss which stands for Erdoğan)** figure within the public. They, in return, are remunerated by the party in many ways, including state posts and salaried journalism.<sup>13 14 15</sup> 'White Youth Movement' often serves as an incubator for Turkish public officials, making it especially powerful in the political sphere. Amongst its tasks is directing a massive trolling in the social media, which defends and advocates Erdoğan's policies publicly, sometimes to an extent, where the opponents are grimly confronted.<sup>16</sup> Another major part of this political machine is **AKP's Political Academy**, where he cultivates

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-coup-ataturk.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-coup-ataturk.html?_r=0)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/07/21/turkey-and-erdogan-here-comes-real-caliphate.html>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christos-terzides/the-caliphate-of-sultan\\_b\\_11430874.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christos-terzides/the-caliphate-of-sultan_b_11430874.html)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/12/turkey-is-erdogan-ready-reinstate-caliphate.html>

<sup>10</sup> Karaveli, H. (2016). Erdoğan's Journey: Conservatism and Authoritarianism in Turkey. Foreign Aff., 95, 121.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/basbakan-erdoganin-konusmasinin-tam-metni-21388292>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/12/24/370931835/turkeys-president-and-his-1-100-room-white-palace>

<sup>13</sup> [http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/erdogan\\_as\\_autocrat.pdf](http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/erdogan_as_autocrat.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/c47ee706-1dc3-11e7-b7d3-163f5a7f229c>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/c7fb203a-79b2-11e6-97ae-647294649b28>

<sup>16</sup> [http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/erdogan\\_as\\_autocrat.pdf](http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/erdogan_as_autocrat.pdf)

his ideology through an institutionalized process.<sup>17</sup>

Climbing up the political echelon step by step and eliminating his opponents one by one, Erdoğan came to a point where he emerged as the single most dominant figure practically single voice left in the country. Prior to July 15, 2016, he was just short of one main component: an ultimately loyal Military. Despite pruning the historical powers of military prowess over years through overt and the covert operations, he lacked the loyalty of this essential component. Especially a new generation of generals as well as a very large young officer cadre in the Military was his major concern since these were well known for their open-minded, pro-democracy and secular tones. Erdoğan strongly believed that such a stance by the generals and officers posed an existential menace for him, at least, in his paranoid mentality, haunted by the reminiscence of coups in country's history.

What made things worse for him was the recollection of **'2013 Gezi Parkı Protests'**, which came as growing waves of demonstrations. The protests originally initiated due to the concerns over Erdoğan's negligence of the environment and then turned into mass protests against his increasing authoritarianism, a substantial demand for more freedom.<sup>18</sup> His perceived the risk of a military coup d'état as well as a popular and decisive movement against his increasingly authoritarian regime as existential threats to his dynasty. Erdoğan felt fangless in the face of such threats against his reign, given the lack of a counterweighing force at his disposal. SADAT was the remedy.

## **A Private Army for Erdoğan's Fake Caliphate**

There are structural imperatives for cooperation between **'Reis'**, an alias used by Erdoğan's followers, meaning **'the Boss'** in English, and SADAT. SADAT is the plural form of the word **'Seyyid'**, which literally means **'the Big Boss, Patron, Grand, and Chief'** in Arabic.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the term SADAT is associated with **'the Army of the Boss' (Reis'in Ordusu)**. The company limits its mission to establish a defensive cooperation amongst Muslim countries with the purpose of placing Muslim World in a position it deserves among super powerful states.<sup>20</sup> Mission statement sounds more like a targeted business strategy crafted for particular clients, who might be keen on (or appear to be) restoring the reputation of Muslim World. Not surprisingly, Erdoğan is the prominent client, who is ultimately interested in advancing his own benefits under the mask of helping Muslim populations and countries.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.siyasetakademisi.org>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/world/europe/police-attack-protesters-in-istanbuls-taksim-square.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/ayrmetin.php?idno=370040&idno2=c370030>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr>

SADAT, the Defense and Consulting Company, was founded in 2012. The chairman is **Adnan Tanrıverdi**. Tanrıverdi was a former Army Brigadier General, whose further promotion was interrupted in the Army via a forced retirement in 1997 for allegedly harboring extremist religious agenda. SADAT's core staff comprises hundreds of retired military personnel from various backgrounds, ranging from special operations to intelligence. They are mostly dismissed from the Turkish Military in the 1990s for their alleged extremist leanings. The two prominent civilian advisors of SADAT **Abdurrahman Dilipak** and **Ahmet Varol** are crucial since they are at the same time pro-Erdoğan journalists, who extremely advocate Erdoğan's ideas.<sup>21</sup> They both write at the pro-Erdoğan 'Yeni Akit' newspaper.

9	(E) Tabip Kd. Albay	Hüseyin ULUDAĞ	Askeri Tababet Danışmanı
10	(E) Diş. Tabip Albay	Kemal METE	Askeri Tababet Danışmanı
11	(E) Hakim Albay	A. Cengiz TANGÖREN	Askeri Yargı Danışmanı
12	(E) Hakim Albay	Yusuf ÇAĞLAYAN	Askeri Yargı Danışmanı
13	(E) Öğretmen Kd. Albay	Mehmet İNKAYA	Askeri Eğitim Sistemi ve Rehberlik Uzmanı
14	(E) Öğretmen Bnb.	Selahattin ARSLAN	Askeri Orta Öğretim Uzmanı
15	Gazeteci Yazar	Abdurrahman DİLİPAK	Ortadoğu Danışmanı
16	Gazeteci Yazar	Ahmet VAROL	Ortadoğu Danışmanı
17	Elektronik Mühendisi	A. K. Melih TANRIVERDİ	Haberleşme Elektronik Bakım Onarım ve İş Sağlığı Güvenliği Uzmanı

Figure 1 The list from the organization's initial website shows Dilipak and Varol as advisors to SADAT. SADAT later removed staff lists from its website.

SADAT was established to give training to the staff of foreign armed forces.<sup>22</sup> Its area of interest covers all Muslim populations and can clearly be seen in the company's logo.



Figure 2 SADAT's logo depicts its area of interest.

<sup>21</sup> <http://odatv.com/cemaatin-yeni-kesfettigi-sadatin-perde-arkasi-kim-bu-Tanrıverdi-2606161200.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr>

In one of his TV speeches, Tanrıverdi stated that SADAT was established in coordination with the members of the Government from the ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi–AKP) and officials from various ministries.<sup>23</sup> He even stated in a TV interview that Erdoğan directed SADAT's foundation.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 3 Core members of SADAT Inc. visit Erdoğan in his Dolmabahçe office in İstanbul on 21st of February 2011. Tanrıverdi stands right of Erdoğan.

At the time of SADAT's foundation, the Turkish legal and executive systems lacked the proper legal framework and an effective control mechanism for such an organization. This gap has never been addressed by the AKP Government deliberately. This naturally provided ideal conditions for SADAT to avoid judicial or administrative scrutiny while freely improvising its mission statement, recruitment, and activities. Upon SADAT's foundation in 2012, the opposition parties and media raised serious concerns for its suspected mission to serve as an illegal apparatus of Erdoğan. There have been many parliamentary queries probing the Turkish Government on these claims. For example, **Ali Rıza Öztürk**, a Member of Parliament (MP) from the center–left **Republican Peoples' Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi–CHP)**, officially questioned the Turkish Government about SADAT's involvement in training and equipping extremists and terrorist groups, including ISIL in Syria.<sup>25</sup> The Government has yet to respond satisfactorily to the questions.

Below are some of the headlines from Turkish media related to SADAT's foundation

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/gundem/sadati-akp-kurun-dedi-h5240.html>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/images/haberler/sadati\\_akp\\_hukumeti\\_kurun\\_dedi\\_h5240.jpg](http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/images/haberler/sadati_akp_hukumeti_kurun_dedi_h5240.jpg)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/m/gundem/sadati-erdogan-a-sordular-h5246.html>



and activities.



Figure 4 Some examples of headlines about SADAT's foundation. Clockwise from top left: **Aydınlık**: Counter-Guerrilla Center Approved by the Ministry, **Gündem**: SADAT, Reis's Parallel Army? **Taraf**: New Turkey's Gladio Farm **Cumhuriyet**: Black Hole SADAT.

# LEGALITY OF SADAT

## Lack of Legal Basis

The Private Military Companies (PMCs) make business by providing combat, non-combat, and security services.<sup>26</sup> Whether their role might be trespassing some domestic and international law is yet controversial.<sup>27</sup> As mercenaries are prohibited by UN convention, the discussion on how to define PMC operatives' role in combative context is lasting. However, the legitimacy of PMCs is not per se the argument of this analysis. It is here mentioned just to give a general sense of what they are and how they are perceived.

On its official website, SADAT shows the regulations concerning its foundation.<sup>28</sup>

- 5202 Defense Industrial Safety Law
- 5102 Law on the Control of Industrial Facilities Producing Combat Vehicles&Equipment; and Weapon, Ammunition and Explosive Materials with War Tools and Equipment
- 6136 Law on Fire arms, Knives, and Other Instruments
- Defense Industry Security Regulation

These listed regulations do not cover the services that SADAT provides. In Turkish legislation, there is no regulation for '**Defense Service Sector**'.

In response to inquiries of legitimacy, on 27 June 2012, SADAT announced that the organization performed the following steps in order to be audited:<sup>29</sup>

SADAT prepared the Facility Security Certificate (Tesis Özel Güvenlik Belgesi-TOGEK), which will form the basis of inspection of the Defense Industry Service Sector and applied to MSB (National Defense Ministry, in Turkish Milli Savunma Bakanlığı) and requested that the defense industry service sector be included in the two laws (5201 and 5201) regulating the defense industry legislation. SADAT prepared draft legislation for this purpose. However, Technical Services Division of MSB sent a written response to the company stating that the Defense Industry Service Sector was not subject to any legislation in Turkey and they had no supervision task. In the end, all these efforts could not be concluded because of the famous Gezi Olayları in 2013.

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<sup>26</sup> McFate, S. (2017). The modern mercenary: Private armies and what they mean for world order: Oxford University Press.

<sup>27</sup> Schaller, C. (2007). Private security and military companies under the international law of armed conflict. Private military and security companies, p 345-360.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr/tr/hakimizda/mevzuatimiz.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://sendika43.org/2016/07/oldurme-dersi-satan-ve-denetlenmeyen-bir-savas-sirketi-sadat/>

Quotation below is SADAT's response to, what they call, a 'scribbling media campaign' against their legitimacy;<sup>30</sup>

“SADAT is an incorporated company, which is established in accordance with the provisions of the Turkish Commercial Code numbered 6102 and published in the Trade Registry Gazette. It was fulfilled in accordance with the establishment procedures of Incorporated Companies.”

The company stated that the Government would provide the criteria on how the consultancy, training and equipment services will be provided and how they will be audited.<sup>31</sup> It is yet not clear if these criteria have been endorsed by the Government. Milli Savunma Bakanlığı–MSB (in English National Defense Ministry) has once replied to a SADAT inquiry on auditing, saying “*We (MSB) have no auditing responsibility or task*”. SADAT states that they tried to coordinate with the Ministry of Trade and Ministry of National Defense and “*those relevant ministries did not prevent or reject the establishment of the company!*”

SADAT claims that they have not provided any training services to any country or group, on any subject or any matter, since the day of its foundation. The company further claims that it does not have any training facilities or camps in Turkey or elsewhere and it did not conduct any activities in Turkey or abroad, contrary to the Turkish law or international law. SADAT also denies connection with ISIL and with any other terrorist organization whatsoever.

There is an old proverb “**where there's smoke, there's fire**”. The Company's commercials, ads, and brochures tell completely vice versa. Apparently, SADAT is not a charity organization. SADAT's most ambitious area is irregular warfare; i.e. guerrilla and counter–guerrilla training. SADAT informs that those involved in the training will be experts in ambush, raids, kidnapping, assassination, sabotage, guerrilla action, street movements and secret actions.<sup>32</sup> The legitimacy, supervision, and audit of SADAT are very troublesome. The fundamental questions below have never been answered:

- “What authority does SADAT operate with?
- Can SADAT explain which services it offers on the site, where and for what price?
- As the proposed legislation change has not been accepted yet, are the ‘services’ that should typically be monopolized by the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement units, not only unaudited but also unauthorized?
- Would it be welcomed that such PMCs as Blackwater and Executive Outcomes were also involved in the defense industry?

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.haksozhaber.net/fethullahci-ve-sol-medyanin-lincine-karsi-sadat-a-sden-aciklama-geldi-79396h.htm>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr>

<sup>32</sup> <http://turandursun.com/forumlar/archive/index.php/t-34118.html?jdfwkey=ewglc>

- Are weapons used ‘unregistered’?
- Are those retired members of the Turkish Military directly or indirectly involved in crimes, not even committed by many international terrorists?”

In Turkey, there are certain laws, codes, regulations, and communiqué concerning the activities of the international defense industry. Legitimization of SADAT’s establishment does not exist at all. Its activities are not audited by the Ministry of National Defense or Ministry of Trade. The company functions unsupervised, uncontrolled, unaudited. Organizations as such constitute a serious crime both in international law and normally □ under Turkish law.

## The Government’s Seclusion on SADAT

Many in Turkey and abroad raised suspicions about SADAT. Severe mistrust and suspicion remain against its activities. SADAT’s activities were brought to Parliament’s agenda with several inquiries, submitted by opposition parties, but the Government declined to respond to any of them. Since 2012, CHP parliamentarians have posed many questions about the activities of this company. Below are the records:

CHP Zonguldak **MP Ali İhsan Köktürk**–6 Sep 12

CHP Mersin **MP Ali Rıza Öztürk**–5 Sep 12

CHP İstanbul **MP Osman Korutürk**–14 Sep 12, 16 Jan 13

CHP Hatay **MP Refik Eryılmaz**–3 Oct 12

For instance, one MP from the Main Opposition Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi–CHP), Ali Rıza Öztürk, directed questions to the Turkish Government regarding the claims about SADAT’s involvement in training and equipping Salafist–Jihadist extremist and terrorist groups including ISIL in Syria.<sup>33 34</sup> In his inquiry, he asked whether the refusal of MPs request to inspect a military training camp in **Hatay province of Turkey** is related to SADAT’s armed training activities there. The Government’s response to the questions was far from being explanatory and satisfactory.<sup>35</sup> Below is the official query directed by Öztürk to then the Prime Minister Erdoğan.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-10381s.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.vocaleurope.eu/erdogans-revolutionary-guard-sadat/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-10381s.pdf>

TÜRKİYE BÜYÜK MİLLET MECLİSİ BAŞKANLIĞINA

Aşağıdaki sorularının Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan tarafından yazılı olarak yanıtlandırılmasını saygılarımla dilerim.

Ali Rıza Öztürk  
Mersin Milletvekili

Suriye'de iç savaş çıkaran Suriyeli ve yabancı eylemcileri eğitmek ve silahlandırmak üzere kurulan SADAT ( Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat, Sanayi ve Ticaret AŞ ) adlı şirketin İstanbul'da Beylikdüzü İlçesi'nde merkezi bulunduğu basına yansımıştır. SADAT adlı şirketin AKP tarafından özel bir şirket olarak kurulduğu, 28 Şubat sürecinde ordudan atılan veya çıkarılan AKP çizgisindeki askerler tarafından kurulduğu ve başında da Kıdemli Özel Harpçi Emekli Tuğgeneral Adnan Tanrıverdi'nin bulunduğu basında yer alan bilgiler arasındadır.

SADAT'ın çeşitli yerlerde açtığı eğitim kamplarında bugüne kadar 2800 kişinin gayri nizami savaş eğitimi tamamladığı, SADAT kurucularının , şirketi kurmadan önce AKP Hükümeti ile geniş istişarelerde bulunduğu, şirketi kurmak için başvuru yaptıktan sonra, Milli savunma, Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlıklarından gelen önerilere göre bir takım değişiklikler yaptıkları ve istişarelerden sonra 28 Şubat 2012 tarihli Ticaret Sicili Gazetesinde 809300/0 sicil numarası ile yayımladığı bilgiler arasındadır. SADAT Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı emekli özel harpçi Adnan Tanrıverdi'nin neden böyle bir şirket kurduklarını anlatırken; İslam ülkelerinde kanlı bir değişimin başladığını, istikrarın çok uzun zaman alacağını, bu süreçte onlara yardımcı olmak amacıyla yola çıktıklarını vurguladığı belirtilmektedir.

SADAT'ın 3 önemli alanda faaliyet yürüttüğü; Körfez'den gelen dolarların Türkiye'de çeşitli kurum ve kuruluşların örtülü ödeneğinden ayrılan paraların bir kısmının Suriye muhalefetine ulaştırıldığı; Özellikle gerilla hareketi, sokak savaşı, sabotaj, suikast, keskin nişancılık gibi konularda eğitim verildiği; her türlü silah tedariki, bunların eğitimi ve mahalline sevkinin yapıldığı; ayrıca tüm bu bilgilerin SADAT'ın kendi internet sitesinde de yer aldığı basında yer almıştır.

SADAT Başkanı'nın Deniz Kuvvetleri'nin İzmir- Gölçük'teki Ulaşlı Kampı'nda Suriye'ye gönderilecek eylemcilerin eğitimi için keşif yaptığı, 600 kişilik Ulaşlı kampında her yıl Kasım ayına kadar Deniz Kuvvetleri'nin kendi personeli kaldığı, bu yıl Suriye'ye yönelik eğitim faaliyetleri için erken boşaltıldığı, SADAT'ın TSK'ya ait tesisleri ve silahları kullanmasının Ulaşlı Kampı ile sınırlı olmadığı da iddialar arasındadır.

Bu bilgiler çerçevesinde;

- 1- SADAT adlı şirketin, AKP tarafından özel bir şirket olarak kurulduğuna, Suriye Kurtuluş Örgütü askerlerini ve Suriye Hükümeti muhaliflerine çeşitli kamplarda eğitim verdiği doğru mudur? Doğru ise bu tür faaliyetler, hem Türk Yasalarına hem de Uluslararası yasalara göre açık ve ağır suç teşkil eden faaliyetler değil midir?
- 2- SADAT adlı şirketin kurulmasının yasal dayanağı nedir? Gazetede yer alan haberler dikkate alınarak herhangi bir suç duyurusunda bulunulmuş mudur? Bulunulmamışsa bulunmayı düşünüyor musunuz?
- 3- Kurulan SADAT adlı şirketin kuruluşundan sizin şahsi olarak bilginiz var mıdır?
- 4- Şirket bu zamana kadar TSK'nın Ulaşlı kampı dışında hangi kamp ve tesislerde kimlere eğitim vermiştir ve vermektedir? Vermiş olduğu eğitim nedeni ile TC Hükümetine herhangi bir diplomatik nota vermiş midir? Vermiş ise bu notanın içeriği nedir?
- 5- Hemen hemen her gün şehit verdiğimiz bu günlerde TSK'nın Ulaşlı Kampı'ndaki askerlerimizin, SADAT şirketinin Suriyeli muhalifleri eğitmesi için erken boşaltılması ne derecede vucudandır?
- 6- Bu zamana kadar SADAT adlı şirket tarafından kaç kişiye gayri nizami savaş eğitimi verilmiş ve halen kaç kişiye verilmektedir?
- 7- SADAT adlı şirket aracılığıyla, Türkiye'deki hangi kurum ve kuruluşların örtülü ödeneklerinden Suriye Hükümeti muhaliflerine kaç TL kaynak ulaştırmıştır?
- 8- CHP Milletvekillerinin Hatay'daki Apaydın Kampı'na alınmayışlarının nedeni, bu kamplarda SADAT şirketinin Suriyeli muhalif askerlere eğitim vermesinin gizlenmesi midir?
- 9- Bir taraftan her fırsatta Ortadoğu'da baş şöylemelerimize karşın, diğer taraftan SADAT adlı şirketin kuruluşuna ve TSK'ya ait tesislerde Suriyeli muhaliflere gayri nizami savaş eğitimi vermesine müsaade etmeniz dış politikada suçlandığınız ikiye bölünmüş siyaset iddialarını doğrulamaz mı?
- 10- SADAT adlı şirketin varlığı diğer ülkelere ilişkilerimize zarar vermez mi? Oluşacak bu zararları nasıl gidermeyi düşünüyorsunuz?

Figure 5 MP Öztürk's Query.

None of those inquiries were replied. The Government stays in a strange seclusion about SADAT. There is no official statement on which irregular warfare (counter-guerrilla) training has been provided to the Free Syrian Army (FSA), Al Nusra, Al Qaeda and even ISIL militants, during the Syrian civil war. Whether SADAT has received a loan or a grant from the Government is not known. Whether SADAT has been supported by a foreign government and whether their activities and financial accounts are audited is not addressed at all.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.sariyergozlem.com/bir-tehlike-olarak-ozel-ordu-ve-sadat.html>

# ERDOĞAN, SADAT, AND TERRORISM

American academician **David L. Phillips**, in an article, collected the allegations concerning Erdoğan's and AKP Government's ties with ISIL.<sup>38 39</sup> Those allegations either appeared on the Turkish/international media or voiced by the opposition parties in Turkey. The allegations comprise:

- Supporting ISIL financially through purchase of oil
- Providing military equipment to ISIL
- Providing transportation and logistical assistance to ISIL fighters
- Providing training to ISIL fighters
- Offering medical care to ISIL fighters
- Assisting ISIL recruitment
- Sending Turkish military personnel to fight alongside ISIL
- Helping ISIL in Battle for Kobani
- Sharing the same worldview with ISIL

While this report addresses most of the above bullets, this section analyzes the subject in two folds: ISIL Oil and military support to ISIL alongside with other terror groups.

## Erdoğan and ISIL Oil

There are serious accusations in the media about Erdoğan's and his family members' ties to ISIL and other terrorist groups.<sup>40 41 42 43 44</sup> **Russian Diplomat and Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin** wrote a letter, dated 01 February 2016, to the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, expressing these claims.<sup>45</sup>

The letter explained how **'illegal trading in hydrocarbons by ISIL'** was taking place. The document stated that most hydrocarbons extracted from ISIL-controlled areas are channeled through Turkey and gave details of the participants of the oil trade;

Most hydrocarbons are shipped through Turkish sea terminals on the Mediterranean coast, mainly the seaport of Ceyhan, 415 km south-east of Ankara. Transportation

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<sup>38</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-l-phillips/research-paper-isis-turke\\_b\\_6128950.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-l-phillips/research-paper-isis-turke_b_6128950.html)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.diken.com.tr/amerikali-akademisyenin-gozunden-turkiye-isis-isbirligine-dair-dokuz-iddia/>

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aydoaean-vatanda/russian-letter-to-unsc-cl\\_b\\_9502784.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aydoaean-vatanda/russian-letter-to-unsc-cl_b_9502784.html)

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.voltairenet.org/article191990.html>

<sup>42</sup> <https://tr.sputniknews.com/rusya/201604011021899203-rusya-bm-turkiye-isis/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.haberler.com/rusya-isis-in-petrolu-turkiye-ye-gitmeye-devam-7979557-haber/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-ispate-edildigi-anda-ben-bu-makamda-durmam,b14rj9eQH0SXDt9mAFexbw>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/94](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/94)

includes the use of tankers from **BMZ Group Denizcilik ve İnşaat A.Ş.** The company was founded in 2013; its registered capital totals approximately US\$ 1 million and its office is located in İstanbul at 3 Gürgen Street in the Üsküdar district. The company's fleet consists of five tankers: Mecid Aslanov, Begim Aslanova, Poet Qabil, Armada Fair and Armada Breeze.

Russia's letter to the UNSC also added;

The Turkish company **Powertrans is a part of Çalık Holding A.Ş.** Its Director-General is **Mr. B. Albayrak**, is reported to be involved in the oil trade with ISIL.

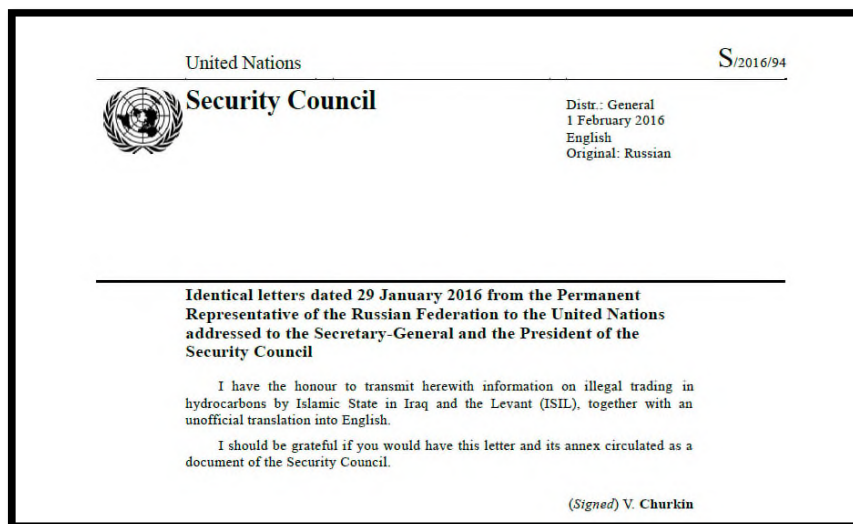


Figure 6 Cover of Russia's letter to United Nations Security Council.

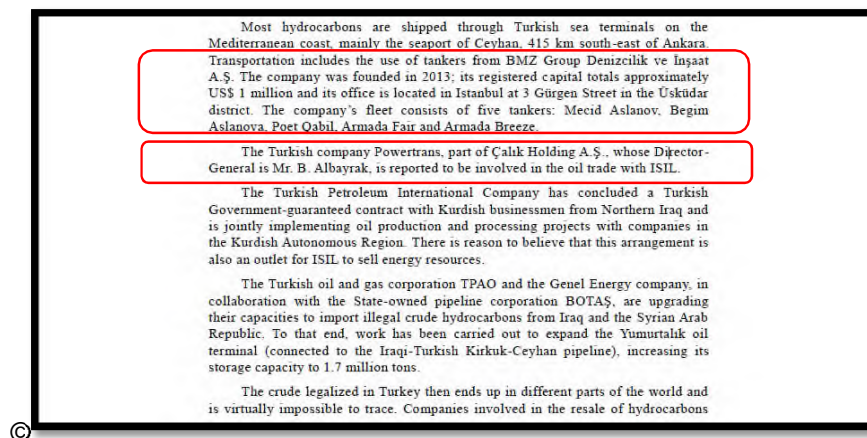


Figure 7 The roles of BMZ Group Denizcilik ve İnşaat A.Ş. and Powertrans at the Russian letter to UNSC.

**BMZ stands for Bilal–Mustafa–Ziya.**<sup>46</sup> The company has three partners; Erdoğan's son **Bilal Erdoğan**, his brother **Mustafa Erdoğan**, and his brother-in-law **Ziya İlgen**.<sup>47</sup> Chairperson of BMZ's Board of Management is Mustafa Erdoğan.<sup>48 49</sup>



Figure 8 Left, Bilal Erdoğan. Center, Mustafa Erdoğan. Right, Ziya İlgen with Erdoğan.

Bilal Erdoğan's BMZ, through the purchase of many tankers, expanded its fleet with an incredible speed, rendering him a very reach businessman in a very short time.<sup>50 51 52 53</sup> Below is the İstanbul Trade Chamber record of Bilal Erdoğan's companies, as of December 2015.

Sicil No	Ad	Soyad	Görev	Ünvan	Semt	Durum
<a href="#">400004/0</a>	NECMEDDİN BİLAL	ERDOĞAN	Y.K. ÜYESİ	ERDEM ÖZEL EĞİTİM HİZMETLERİ VE TİCARET ANONİM ŞİRKETİ	ÜMRANİYE	
<a href="#">624618/0</a>	NECMEDDİN BİLAL	ERDOĞAN	ESKİ ORTAK	MAYE DIŞ TİCARET LİMİTED ŞİRKETİ	EYÜP	
<a href="#">708200/0</a>	NECMEDDİN BİLAL	ERDOĞAN	ORTAK	DÖRÜK İZGARA GIDA TİCARET LİMİTED ŞİRKETİ	BAHÇELİEVLER	
<a href="#">715800/0</a>	NECMEDDİN BİLAL	ERDOĞAN	ORTAK	MİS HEDİYELİK EŞYA SANAYİ TİCARET LİMİTED ŞİRKETİ	BAHÇELİEVLER	
<a href="#">861211/0</a>	NECMEDDİN BİLAL	ERDOĞAN	Y.K. ÜYESİ	BMZ GROUP DENİZCİLİK VE İNŞAAT SANAYİ ANONİM ŞİRKETİ	ÜSKÜDAR	

< < Sayfa 1 / 1 > >

Figure 9 The companies, which belong to Bilal Erdoğan.

<sup>46</sup> <http://odatv.com/erdoganin-darbeyi-haber-veren-enistesinin-gecmisini-bir-de-boyle-okuyun-1508161200.html>

<sup>47</sup> Of note, after many inconsistent statements Erdoğan claimed that he first heard the coup-attempt on 15 July 2016 at 21:30 with a phone call from his claimed brother-in-law Ziya İlgen.

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.patronlardunyasi.com/haber/Bilal-Erdogan-in-40-milyon-liralik-tankeri-denizde/163971>

<sup>49</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/bilal-erdoganin-40-milyon-liralik-gemisi-torenle-denize-indirildi,279455>

<sup>50</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/bilal-erdogana-340-milyon-liralik-bogaz-manzarali-yeni-ofis-iddiasi,285681>

<sup>51</sup> <http://odatv.com/iste-bilal-erdoganin-yeni-gemisi-1004151200.html>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.denizhaber.com.tr/bilal-erdoganin-yeni-gemileri-mt-armada-fair-ile-mt-yardimci-81-sessiz-sedasiz-d-haber-63927.htm>

<sup>53</sup> <http://islamicjusticeanddevelopment.blogspot.de/2014/12/sehjade-bilalin-gemileri-sfrlanamayan-1.html>



According to the letter, **Powertrans** is the other major company, which took an important part in trading ISIL oil. The owner of the company is **Ahmet Çalık**. He is one of Erdoğan's close partners, especially with his media outlets. Then, the director of Powertrans was **Berat Albayrak**, Erdoğan's son-in-law. Albayrak's facilitation of the trade of ISIL oil through Powertrans has been reported in the media multiple times.<sup>54 55 56 57</sup> Later in November 2015, Berat Albayrak was appointed as the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources with Erdoğan's directive.

Albayrak's emails related to Powertrans have even been hacked and revealed.<sup>58 59 60</sup>

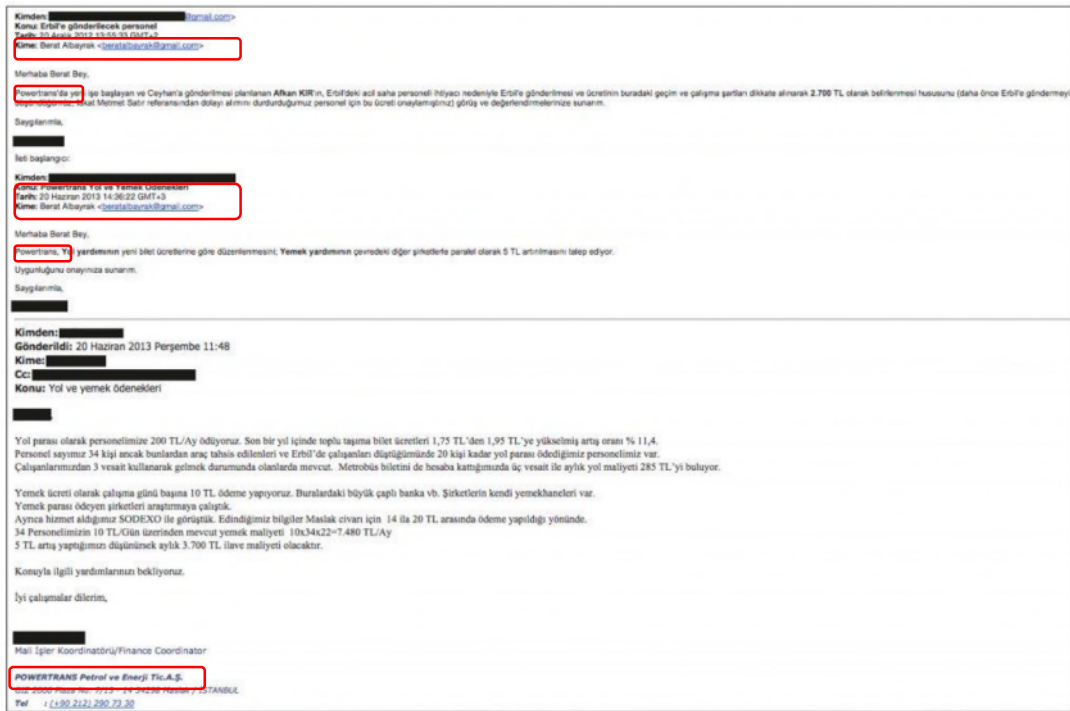


Figure 10 Berat Albayrak's emails, concerning his Powertrans affairs.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2015/yazarlar/soner-yalcin/damat-bakanin-dayi-oglu-1003754/>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.sanalgaste.com.tr/ortadogu-da-bir-petrol-kacakcisi-profil-damat-berat-ve-powertrans/1929/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://truthaholics.wordpress.com/2015/11/28/meet-the-man-who-funds-isis-bilal-erdogan-the-son-of-turkeys-president/>

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.emo.org.tr/genel/bizden\\_detay.php?kod=115214#.WWkepVGZnIV](http://www.emo.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=115214#.WWkepVGZnIV)

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.borsatek.com/redhack-albayrak-powertrans-maillerini-yayinladi-15354h.htm>

<sup>59</sup> <http://romanyahaber.com/2016/10/05/cumhuriyetten-berat-albayraka-sorular/>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.diken.com.tr/dikenin-kurt-petrolunu-tasiyan-sirkette-soz-sahibi-albayrak-haberine-de-sansur/>

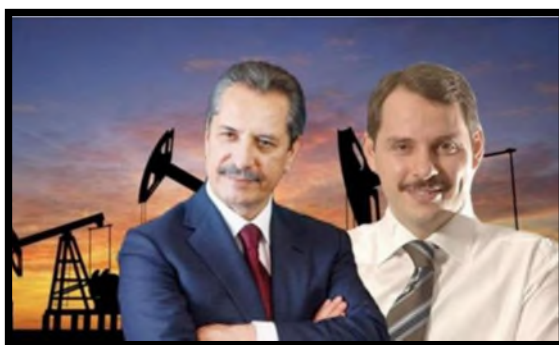


Figure 11 Left, Erdoğan's close ally Ahmet Çalık. Right, Berat Albayrak.

## SADAT Recruits and Trains Terrorists

In accordance with an agreement between Turkish and U.S. Governments, as from May 2015, Militaries from both countries provided military training to the fighters of **Free Syrian Army** (in Turkish **Özgür Suriye Ordusu**) in Kırşehir, Turkey.<sup>61 62 63</sup> This training did not suffice Erdoğan for he wanted was that the Turkish Military directly intervened in the Syrian conflict to expedite toppling down Bashar al–Assad regime. His adventurous ideas were professionally and intellectually confronted by many generals and staff officers since the political and military objectives of such an operation were not ambiguous and they were suspicious of Erdoğan's expansionist and non–transparent aspirations. Moreover, these military officials were against Erdoğan's brutal crackdown on the Kurdish population during the fight against PKK. They were also in favor of economic and social measures alongside with security measures in the South East.

SADAT's proposition came in handy as Erdoğan desperately needed a way of directly intervening in Syria at a time when he had difficulty convincing the Turkish Military. In an effort to show off his merits for the 'Caliphate' to his audience, both at home and abroad, he tasked SADAT and the **National Intelligence Agency (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı–MİT)**, led by a former non–commissioned army officer, **Hakan Fidan** to train foreign fighters, assist them to transit to the combat zones, and funnel illegal military aid to Syrian opposition groups, including **ISIL** and **Al–Nusra Front**.<sup>64 65 66 67 68</sup> The military aid packages were comprised of trucks loaded with weapons, some of which were caught in Adana province of Turkey while

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.star.com.tr/politika/suriyeli-muhafilere-3-yil-egitim-verilecek-haber-988006/>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/kirsehir-oso-ya-askeri-egitim-verilmesine-kirsehir-yerelhaber-490859/>

<sup>63</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/abd-ordusu-suriyeli-muhafileri-kirsehirde-egitmeye-basladi,298124>

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/296432/\\_Devlet\\_isi\\_yapiyoruz\\_.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/296432/_Devlet_isi_yapiyoruz_.html#)

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/sadat-isis-lileri-egitti-mi-128090.html>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2016/08/19/chp-basbakana-sordu-sadat-yanitladi/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.rt.com/news/327222-isis-fighters-turkey-training/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/01/16/turkish-military-says-mit-shipped-weapons-to-al-qaeda>

unlawfully smuggling weapons into Syria.<sup>69 70</sup> SADAT, in close cooperation with MIT, trained terrorist fighters from Al Nusra and ISIL for Syrian War, utilizing non-registered weapons, neglecting international law of armed conflict.<sup>71</sup> SADAT's training activities comprised conventional/unconventional war and counter-guerrilla training, along with supplying weapons, equipment, explosives.<sup>72 73 74</sup> ISIL terrorists have been trained at different training camps in **Hatay, Turkey**, and in **Idlib and Rakka, Syria**.<sup>75</sup>

What makes SADAT even more threatening is its role in Central Asia and in Europe. SADAT is accused of recruiting in Central Asia and in Europe for the terrorist groups in Syria. The trainees came from countries including Azerbaijan, Russia (Chechnya), Tajikistan and Kazakhstan.<sup>76 77</sup> SADAT allegedly provided them training and logistics and transferred them to Syria through Turkey to fight for ISIL and Al Nusra.<sup>78</sup> According to a left-leaning Turkish website, in 2015 Russia conducted an investigation on 889 foreign fighters, who traveled to Syria and Iraq from Russia. The investigation revealed that 25 percent of these fighters had connections with SADAT.<sup>79</sup> More shockingly, SADAT was supported by official Turkish representatives in foreign countries, which locally orchestrated the organization's illegal activities. Based on the information gathered from the returning fighters, most of whom are recruited from Central Asian countries; **Turkish Consulates in Russia** are believed to have provided Turkish passports to the Caucasian fighters through SADAT.

According to **Yordanov**, a retired soldier, from the Russian military, SADAT, in collaboration with ISIL and Al Nusra, utilized three training camps in Turkey and Syria for these fighters. Yordanov's findings were the result of the investigations into Salafist-Jihadist group members seized in Russia. He states that Russia provided a large file to the United Nations Security Council, which covered illegal international activities of Erdoğan and his private army SADAT. The file also addressed how Erdoğan utilizes SADAT as a blackmailing mechanism to put pressure on **Russia, China, and European Union (EU) countries**.<sup>80</sup>

The fighters from Caucasian countries do not only operate in Syria but also target other countries, specifically Russia and European states. After fighting for ISIL and Al Nusra, these fighters are reorganized for missions such as destabilizing Russia.<sup>81</sup> The recent terror attack in **St Petersburg Metro in Russia** was allegedly conducted by **Akbarzhon Jailov**, a

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/mit-tirlari-haberine-muhalefetten-tepki-29144868>

<sup>70</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/adanada-3-tir-durduruldu-arama-yapiliyor,248707>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.halkinbirligi.net/sadat-reisin-ordusu/>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr/>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.ulusal.com.tr/gundem/sadat-in-ilginc-is-ilani-h31842.html>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.turkishminute.com/2016/11/25/erdogans-secret-army-threat-nato/>

<sup>75</sup> <http://halkinkurtulusu.net/?p=8547>

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.aei.org/publication/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Yordanov, V. (2016, 12 Aug). AKP'nin SADAT Gizli Ordusu Uluslararası Suc Sebekesi Oldu. from

<http://halkinkurtulusu.net/?p=8547>

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

Kyrgyzstan-born Russian citizen who lives in Osh, southern Kyrgyzstan. This is a region, which is primarily populated by ethnic Uzbeks and where hundreds of people set out to join ISIL in Syria and Iraq.<sup>82</sup> Jailov was also reported to have traveled to Turkey.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the arrest of six people from the Central Asian origin by Russian investigators raised suspicion that extremists, recruited by SADAT, may have played a significant role in the terror attack in St Petersburg, Russia.<sup>84</sup>

SADAT allegedly conducts activities in Europe similar to the ones in Central Asian countries. The organization's partner in Europe is **the Union of European Turkish Democrats–UETD** (in Turkish **Avrupalı Türk Demokratlar Birliği**). UETD is a 'so-called' civil society organization, operating across Europe. In fact, the union only admits pro-Erdoğan individuals to its membership.<sup>85</sup> It allegedly helps SADAT recruit foreign fighters from European countries for terrorist groups, including ISIL and Al Nusra. UETD re-tasks SADAT recruited or trained terrorists in several European countries, including Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, and Sweden and provides them Turkish passports.<sup>86</sup> The most recent terror attacks in Europe cast doubts about the SADAT's and UETD's activities and their role in terror attacks in Europe.

Although **Aydınlık** articulated SADAT's structures, relations, and illegal activities well, Erdoğan and AKP Government took no action protected their 'Private Army'.



Figure 12 Left, Aydınlık, dated 03 September 2012, states that SADAT trains opposition groups in Syria.<sup>87</sup> Right, Aydınlık, dated 04 September 2012, reveals SADAT's 'Ulaşlı' training camp for Syrian fighters in **Gölcük/İzmit**, Turkey. 'Ulaşlı' was a former Navy camp.<sup>88 89 90</sup>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-blast-metro-investigation-idUSKBN1770ZT>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-bomb-metro-idUSKBN17A0RI>

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> <http://halkinkurtulusu.net/?p=8547>

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> <https://tr-tr.facebook.com/UYANIKTURKLERKULUBU/posts/474479482571145>

<sup>88</sup> <http://alisedarbolat.blogspot.de/2014/07/turkmenlerin-kan-tayyipin-ellerinde.html>

<sup>89</sup> <http://aydinlikgazete.com/mansetler/14979-isci-partisi-sadati-basti.html>



Figure 13 Left, *Aydınlık*, dated 03 September 2012, with a headline **“The Big Brother is Tayyip!”** gives details of SADAT’s visit to Erdoğan after its foundation. Right, *Aydınlık*, dated 7 July 2014, states **“MIT sends mercenaries to ISIL. Many retired special operations officers are fighting for ISIL with Erdoğan’s endorsement. Turkish Military is concerned about these activities”**.

SADAT has also involved in **Libyan crisis** for a long time. Infiltration by Tanrıverdi and his men into Libya probably dates back to 2011, even before SADAT’s foundation.<sup>91</sup> SADAT provided military training to the Libyan jihadists.<sup>92</sup> Head of SADAT, Tanrıverdi, visited Libya many times, met renegade former Libyan officers and enjoyed diplomatic reception by **the Turkish Embassy in Tripoli**.



Figure 14 Tanrıverdi during one of his visits to Libya.

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/arsiv/gladyo-merkezinin-baskani-askeri-kampi-kesfe-gitti>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2011/09/14/libyalı-muhafifleri-turk-ozel-harekatçılar-egitti>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/ak-ordu-ve-ak-emniyet-suphesi-124586.html>

## Is Erdoğan Using ‘Weapon of the Weak’?

*“Europeans across the world will not be able to walk the streets safely if they keep up their current attitude towards Turkey.”<sup>93</sup>*

**Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**

It is counterintuitive to assume that coincidences drive international relations since states in international relations are rational actors and they accordingly make their moves, taking all possible pros and cons into consideration. Especially for ruthlessly pragmatic politicians like Erdoğan, who are willing to take every possible step to further consolidate their power, coincidence is probably a negligible term.

A terror attack in Brussels took place on 22 March 2016. Four days before the attack, Erdoğan warned Belgium to prohibit PKK’s propaganda activities and said:

***“There is no reason why the bomb that exploded in Ankara cannot explode in Brussels or in any other European city”.*<sup>94</sup>**

Not surprisingly, Erdoğan’s Government and the Turkish newspapers controlled by Erdoğan celebrated the attack and called it ***“the punishment of Belgium”***.<sup>95</sup>

At another instance, during a meeting with the members of the Anatolian Published Association, held between 12:00–15:00 PM, on 22 March 2017, Erdoğan threatened Europeans and stated that their security will be in danger as long as their Governments will not change their attitude toward Turkey.<sup>96 97</sup> Below is his verbatim statement:

***“Europeans across the world will not be able to walk the streets safely if they keep up their current attitude towards Turkey.”*<sup>98</sup>**

Erdoğan’s threat to the Europeans at his meeting ‘coincided’ with the terror attack against civilians in front of British Parliamentary building in London. The attack took place the same date and at the same time (14:35 PM).<sup>99</sup>

One may question why Erdoğan would use SADAT and terrorism as foreign policy tools against European countries. In recent years, Erdoğan has been gradually isolated from the

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<sup>93</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-germany-netherlands-warning-europeans-not-walk-safely-a7642941.html>

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-brukseldeki-pkk-cadirina-sert-tepki-40071419>

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.theeventchronicle.com/brussels/erdogan-prime-suspect-march-22-brussels-bombing/#>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.haberler.com/gundem-22-mart-2017-9403733-haberi/>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-germany-netherlands-warning-europeans-not-walk-safely-a7642941.html>

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39352091>

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/son-dakika-haberi-ingilterede-parlamento-binasi-onunde-teror-saldirisi,jqyDIL2Y3U6cg7xtFMPk6w>

West camp as he has been heavily criticized by Europe and the US due to his ruthless authoritarian tendencies and immense pressure against people opposing his policies. Erdoğan does not want to hear any criticism from US or European countries due to his authoritarian character and wants to use state repression freely at home. Erdoğan's options against Europeans are limited. He is much aware of the fact that Turkey's neither economic nor political influence can convince European countries to keep silent against Turkey's slide into a non-democratic regime, which fundamentally contradicts fundamental humanitarian values. The Turkish economy is consistently deteriorating and becoming vulnerable to a serious economic crisis. In fact, Erdoğan needs Europe because European countries are major trading partners of Turkey and have substantial investments in the country. Given the trade imbalance between Turkey and Europe, in favor of the latter, his prominent option could be to force European countries to change their attitudes toward Turkey in exchange for the safety of their own citizens and stability in their countries. Of course, another tool he openly uses towards the same goal is the refugee deal.

Erdoğan's remarks just after the terror attack in Britain gives hints. **Terrorism is the weapon of the weak.**<sup>100</sup> The fragile international actors have an incentive to use terror to impose their demands on the target states, which otherwise could not be forced by conventional ways.<sup>101</sup> Erdoğan's incentive for using SADAT, with its terror links, to force European countries to keep silent on Turkey's slide into authoritarianism has to be deeply investigated. A substantial understanding of the role of SADAT should reveal if Erdoğan had a hand in the terror attacks in Europe.

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<sup>100</sup> Crenshaw, M. (1981). The causes of terrorism. *Comparative Politics*, 13(4), 379-399.

<sup>101</sup> Polo, S. M., & Gleditsch, K. S. (2016). Twisting arms and sending messages: Terrorist tactics in civil war. *Journal of Peace Research*, 53(6), 815-829.

# ERDOĞAN'S BULWARK AGAINST THE OPPOSITION

## Erdoğan's AKP, a Political Party or Mafia?

*"AKP is not a political party, it is the mafia"<sup>102</sup>*

*"AKP is a mafia organization, which committed crimes"<sup>103</sup>*

**Arrested Journalist Ahmet Şık**

Erdoğan and AKP utilize covert organizations and mafia. They facilitate the connection among the mafia and so-called pro-AKP Humanitarian Organizations. AKP is a part of soccer clubs-mafia relations.<sup>104</sup> Erdoğan's Government facilitates regulations to weaponize the society and prepare gangs and militia to intervene in a case an election is lost or a mass civilian protest takes place in the country.<sup>105</sup> <sup>106</sup> AKP not only supports the mafia but also employs mafia members at critical positions. For example, the AKP MP and head of AKP's Youth Organization **Abdurrahim Boynukalın** is a mafia leader, who organized a violent raid to Hürriyet newspaper on September 2015.<sup>107</sup> Boynukalın has ties with SADAT<sup>108</sup> and is a supporter of İHH, AI Nusra,<sup>109</sup> and Dar-ul İlim.<sup>110</sup>



Figure 15 AKP MP Boynukalın, the one on the left, at the Salafist-Jihadist organization İHH (İnsan Hakları ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı, in English, Human Rights and Freedoms Humanity Aid Charity) press event.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.gazete2023.com/gundem/akp-siyasi-parti-degil-mafyadir-h55070.html>

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.avrupa-postasi.com/gundem/ahmet-sik-akp-suca-bulasmis-bir-mafya-orgutudur-demisti-h100626.html>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.gazeteciler.com/haber/nedir-akpnin-bu-mafya-dknl/201418>

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.halkinbirligi.net/akp-militanlarini-silahlandiracak/>

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.korhanyilmaz.com/?p=59902>

<sup>107</sup> <http://odatv.com/akpliler-hurriyeti-basti-0609151200.html>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.uskudar.edu.tr/tr/icerik/1922/siyaset-okuluna-katilan-bakan-yardimcisi-abdurrahim-boynukalin-15-temmuz-sonrasi-genciler-kapali-butun-yapilara-ofkeli>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2015/gundem/hurriyeti-basan-vekil-ataturk-dusmani-cikti-930121/>

<sup>110</sup> <http://darulilim.com/detay.php?detay=haber&id=283>

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.yenisakarya.com/28732-sakarya-ihh-vahseti-kinadi-haberi.html>



Another Mafia Leader in AKP is **İsmail Altınok**. Altınok even run as AKP's candidate for parliamentary elections. Below is his election banner.<sup>112</sup> He and his gang members were recently arrested on charges of intimidation, kidnapping, blackmailing, torture, gambling, and armed assault.<sup>113</sup>



Figure 16 Top left, Altınok as an AKP parliamentarian candidate. Top right Altınok with Erdoğan and his wife Emine Erdoğan. Bottom left, he carries an automatic rifle with his gang members during 15 July events. Bottom right, he sits with a policeman during the same events.

Mehmet Aybek is a member of the board of managers of the AKP Youth Organization. Aybek, at his personal page stated with an automatic MP-5 rifle in his hand; **“Tell us, Erdoğan when to kill and when to die”**.<sup>114</sup> An MP and Erdoğan opponent **Sinan Oğan** claimed that Halk Özel Harekat (Public Special Operations) provides weapons training to the people like Aybek.<sup>115</sup> Below is also a Public Special Operations vehicle.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>112</sup> <http://odatv.com/tanju-colak-operasyonunda-dikkat-cek-en-isimler-1706171200.html>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.sabah.com.tr/yasam/2017/06/13/tanju-colak-sebekenin-sohret-yuzu>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.abcgazetesi.com/mp5le-tehdit-etmisti-akp-yoneticisi-gozaltina-alindi-56101h.htm>

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.politez.com/detail/politez-/7605/sinan-ogan-akp-sivillere-silah-egitimi-veriyor>

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.habermiyiz.com/page/80>



Figure 17 AKP politician Mehmet Aybek carrying an automatic rifle on the left. An example of the Public Special Operations vehicle on the right.

There are multiple mafia gangs, closely affiliated with Erdoğan and AKP politicians. Two prominent examples of these leaders are **Sedat Peker** and **Levent Çiçek**. Peker was a suspect of the Ergenekon trials. Similar to Erdoğan, Sedat Peker's alias is also **'the Big Boss' (Reis)**. Peker in one of his public speeches in 2015 intimidated Erdoğan's opponents, stating **"we will have them bleed like rivers!"**<sup>117</sup> Prior to Constitutional Referendum in April 2017, he intimidated the EU leaders to bring violence to Europe, if their anti-Erdoğan policies continue.<sup>118</sup> Here are his words;

***"The ones who look at the life fearlessly do not fear the death. Europeans will learn how our generations, who were grown up with this creed, will bring violence to Europe much more violent than the 'Gezi Events' in Turkey. They will learn this definitely when the day comes".***



Figure 18 Peker is seen at a dinner of pro-Erdoğan newspaper Yeni Akit. Next to him on the right is Abdurrahman Dilipak, a journalist at Yeni Akit and the advisor to SADAT.

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.diken.com.tr/sedat-peker-suskunlugunu-bozdu-sozlerim-carpitildi-demirtas-pkknin-sivil-uzantisi/>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/sedat-pekerden-avrupa-ulkelerine-tehdit>

Peker has ties to SADAT and the groups taking part in the Syrian War. He sent lots of military equipment to these groups.<sup>119 120</sup>



Figure 19 Mafia leader Peker promotes his contribution to the Syrian War.

Another prominent mafia leader **Levent Çiçek** collaborates with **Osman Gökçek**, the son of AKP's Ankara Mayor **Melih Gökçek**.<sup>121</sup> Çiçek once acted as the director of **AKP's Ottoman Hearths Youth Organization**.



Figure 20 Left, Çiçek as the Head of Ottoman Hearths Youth Organization. Right he is in his office and AKP's Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu's picture is on the wall.

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.halkizbiz.com/m/?id=15328>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.abcgazetesi.com/sedat-pekerden-cihatcilara-muhimmat-3447h.htm>

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.internethaber.com/osman-gokceke-cete-sozu-338530h.htm>

It is evident that not only Osman Gökçek but also the **Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım** and **head of MIT Hakan Fidan** also have relations with this mafia leader.



Figure 21 Left, Çiçek on Prime Minister Yıldırım's right. Right, Çiçek takes part in Head of MIT Fidan's abandoned election campaign for becoming an AKP MP. Fidan is the one, who smiles in the picture.

## Erdoğan's Paramilitary Organizations

Below is a large, but not all-inclusive, list of Erdoğan's paramilitary organizations.

### SADAT

SADAT is the most prominent and important paramilitary organization given its relations with other terrorist organizations, its large operational staff of former military specialists, and its support from active duty military specialists.<sup>122</sup> The cooperation between Reis, SADAT and his Salafist–Jihadist paramilitary organizations is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Erdoğan desperately felt a need for a bulwark against a noncompliant Turkish Military as well as potential public movements against his ambitions. SADAT is intentionally designed to prop up Erdoğan until the modernist Turkish military could be changed into a loyalist military. SADAT cadres did their part in the Syrian conflict, proved useful during Erdoğan's self-coup, and are doing their task in converting a once-powerful secular and pro-democracy military into devout disciples of 'Erdoğan's Fake Caliphate'. The useful and dynamic tools provided by SADAT to Erdoğan are explained on the company's official web page:

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<sup>122</sup> Of note, during 15 July 2016 events, SADAT, in concert with Turkish Intelligence Agency (Milli İstihbarat Teskilati-MİT) and Turkish Police, largely acted as a hub to plan and coordinate the activities of all organizations on the list.

*“SADAT Inc. provides ambush, raid, road closing, destruction, sabotage, and rescue and abduction trainings, in addition to trainings on the defense against such acts, which may be needed by the countries it serves, and organizes the Unconventional War organization of such countries.”<sup>123</sup>*

For operational purposes, SADAT was designed to accomplish tasks such as neutralizing military assets using unconventional tactics and confronting any popular protests masquerading as ordinary citizens. What this means is that **‘Ak Youth’** operatives, such as **‘Osmanlı Ocakları’** (Turkish for ‘Ottoman Heaths’), could be converted into paramilitary fighters, such as a **‘People’s Army’**, which could counter any opposition against Erdoğan’s aspirations to convert the Turkish political regime into a dictatorship and establish a quasi-caliphate to advance Erdoğan’s hidden agenda.



Figure 22 Erdoğan and Tanrıverdi meets at an event on 25 January 2014.

Erdoğan’s self-coup on 15 July 2016 was a comprehensive rehearsal of these tasks. Ultimately, what happened during the controversial coup attempt of July 15 are the exact same counter-measures stated in SADAT’s paramilitary tasks, which were employed against the elements of Turkish Military involved in the events of July 15, 2016.<sup>124</sup> After 15 July 2016, Adnan Tanrıverdi was appointed as **Erdoğan’s Chief Advisor**. He then resigned from his position as the head of SADAT and moved among the members of the SADAT Management Board.<sup>125</sup> His son **Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi** took over the lead of SADAT. Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi, like his father, is a radical Salafist–Jihadist. For instance, he promotes pro–ISIL sentiments in his BlogSpot, including an introduction of the ISIL book: **‘The Return of Khilafah (Caliphate)’**.<sup>126 127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> <http://www.sadat.com.tr/download/SADAT-eng-full-v02.pdf>

<sup>124</sup> Malsin, J. (July 16, 2016). This Is What Istanbul Was Like As Turkey’s Attempted Coup Played Out. Time.

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.haber3.com/guncel/erdogan039in-danismani-gorevinden-ayrildi-haberi-4407769>

<sup>126</sup> <http://akmTanrıverdi.blogspot.de/2014/07/isidin-misyonu.html>

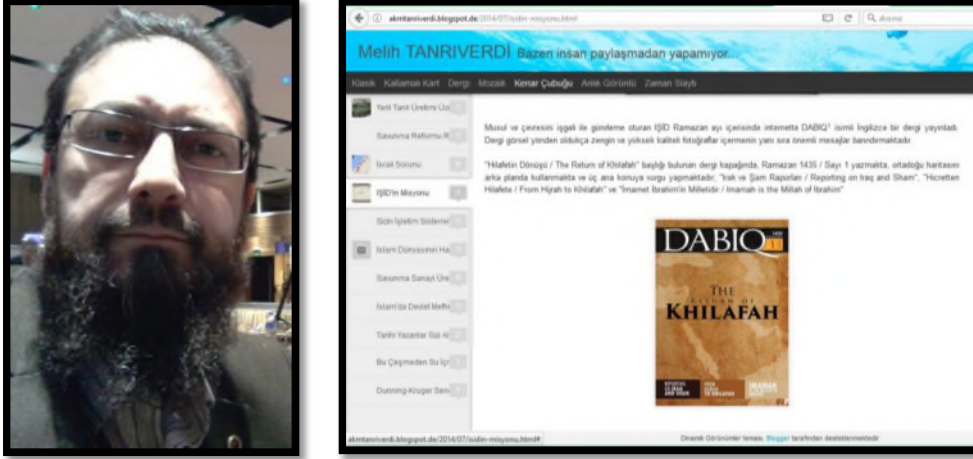


Figure 23 left, SADAT's new chief Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi. Right, he advocates ISIL's mission and its book titled 'The Return of Khilafah (Caliphate)'.

### TÜGVA Foundation

Erdoğan's son Bilal Erdoğan spreads Salafist–Jihadist sentiments among young Turkish people through his TÜGVA Foundation (**Turkey Youth Foundation**, in Turkish **Türkiye Gençlik Vakfı**).<sup>128</sup> Pro–ISIL/AI Nusra religious figure **Nurettin Yıldız** closely cooperates with Bilal Erdoğan. Yıldız indoctrinates young people at TÜGVA Foundation.<sup>129 130</sup> Yıldız describes democracy as 'the affair of infidels'.<sup>131</sup> His book was promoted in a video by **Abdullah el Muhaysini**, a commander of **Jabhat al–Nusra (the name for Al Nusra/AI–Qaida in Syria)**.<sup>132</sup>



Figure 24 Left, Bilal Erdoğan at a TÜGVA event. Right, Nurettin Yıldız at indoctrinating young TÜGVA members

<sup>127</sup> <https://plus.google.com/+MelihTanrıverdi>

<sup>128</sup> <http://sonsaniye.ca/index.php/2016/12/28/erdogan-ve-el-nusra-iliskileri-cuvala-sigmiyor/>

<sup>129</sup> Ibid

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.tugva.org/aksiyon-akademisi-ilk-mezunlarini-verdi/>

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.gazete2023.com/guncel/nurettin-yildiz-demokrasi-kafir-isidir-h57663.html>

<sup>132</sup> <http://gazetemanifesto.com/2017/05/30/el-kaide-seyhi-gerici-nurettin-yildiza-referans-oldu/>



Figure 25 Left and right, Nurettin Yıldız talks to young people from Bilal Erdoğan's TÜGVA Foundation. The two posts at Yıldız's personal page state *"we talked about 'the logic of working for the religion' and 'the meaning of today's young person' "*



Figure 26 Top left, Nurettin Yıldız. Below left, his visit to **Abdullah al Muhaysini**, a commander of Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria. Muhaysini later died in a battle. Right, he coaches TÜGVA Foundation's **'Action Academy'** youth training event. The banner states *"God selected you for Jihad!"* Erdoğan's son Bilal Erdoğan also joined the same activity.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.tugva.org/aksiyon-akademisi-ilk-mezunlarini-verdi/>

## Sosyal Doku Foundation

Sosyal Doku (in English Social Texture) is a so-called religious affairs foundation headed by Nurettin Yıldız. As stated above, Yıldız is known with his Salafist–Jihadist ideology and his contacts with Al Nusra (Syrian fraction of Al Qaida) leaders in Syria. He indoctrinates his followers with Salafist–Jihadist sentiments at his foundation.

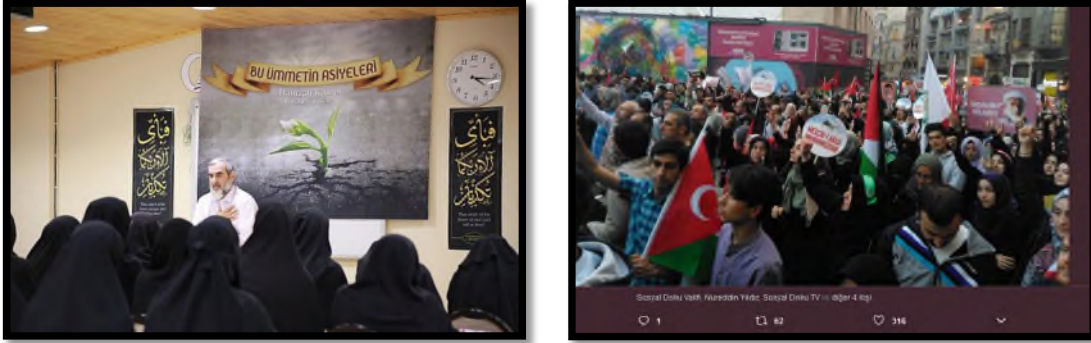


Figure 27 Left, Yıldız talks to young female followers. Right, his followers protest Israel.

Below is a picture, which frames Nurettin Yıldız with pro–Erdoğan **SADAT advisors** and journalists **Abdurrahman Dilipak** and **Ahmet Varol**. Both Dilipak and Varol write for Erdoğan’s mouthpiece **Yeni Akit** Newspaper.



Figure 28 Yıldız with pro–Erdoğan journalist and SADAT advisor Dilipak. The other pro–Erdoğan journalist and SADAT advisor Ahmet Varol is looking at them from the side of the Turkish Flag.

Below is Nurettin Yıldız with **Yeni Akit Group’s CEO Mustafa Karahasanoğlu**. Dilipak and Varol write for Karahasanoğlu’s Yeni Akit.





Figure 29 Yıldız with Karahasanoğlu.

In December 2016, a police officer named **Mevlüt Mert Altıntaş** assassinated **Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrey Karlov**.<sup>134 135 136</sup> Altıntaş is alleged to be among the followers of Nurettin Yıldız.<sup>137 138 139</sup> Altıntaş and his friends had close ties with AKP, Nurettin Yıldız, and thus ISIL and Al Nusra.<sup>140 141</sup>



Figure 30 Left, Altıntaş chanting Al Nusra creed after the assassination of Andrey Karlov. Center and right, **Serkan Özkan**, the partner of Altıntaş's roommate **Abdullah Polat**, is with **AKP's Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu** (in the center) and **Erdoğan's advisor Hamza Yerlikaya** (on the right).

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.insanhaber.com/guncel/rus-elciyi-olduren-polis-mevlut-altintas-nurettin-yildizin-h82423.html>

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/sohbetine-gidiyormus-40315960>

<sup>136</sup> <http://www.expressgazete.com/gundem/mevlut-mert-altintas-nurettin-yildizin-sohbetine-gidiyormus-h15109.html>

<sup>137</sup> <http://habercem.com/m/haber.php?id=138545>

<sup>138</sup> <http://umutgazetesi2.org/rus-buyukelciyi-olduren-polis-nureddin-yildizin-sohbetlerine-katildigi-ortaya-cikti/>

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=angZWlvibJ0>

<sup>140</sup> <http://sonsaniye.ca/index.php/2016/12/28/erdogan-ve-el-nusra-iliskileri-cuvala-sigmiyor/>

<sup>141</sup> <http://dusuncemektebi.com/d/141478/labani-ve-salehin-uzerinde-mevlut-mert-altintasin-fotografi-da-bulundu/>

## Ottoman Hearths

**Ottoman Hearths** (in Turkish **Osmanlı Ocakları**) is a pro-Erdoğan youth activist organization, which cements radical views among young Turkish people both in Turkey and in Europe.<sup>142</sup> Osmanlı Ocakları is managed by criminals and mafia leaders, including the director **Kadir Canpolat**. He was one of the six suspects in a failed plot to assassinate Papa 16th Benedictus during his visit to Turkey in November 2006.<sup>143</sup>

Osmanlı Ocakları has a strong affiliation with Erdoğan and AKP. It organizes swearing ceremonies for the new members to guarantee their full commitment to Erdoğan. Canpolat recognizes Erdoğan as **'the most sacred virtue of his organization'** and his organization as **'Erdoğan's soldiers'**.<sup>144 145</sup>



Figure 31 Left, Canpolat and Erdoğan together. Right, Prime Minister Yıldırım, together with Canpolat, at the opening ceremony of the Ottoman Heart cell in Trabzon.



Figure 32 The swearing ceremony for admission of new members to Osmanlı Ocakları. The ceremony serves ultimate loyalty to Erdoğan.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>142</sup> <http://osmanliocaklari.org.tr>

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/ergenekon-a-adim-adim-32575.html>

<sup>144</sup> <http://osmanliocaklari.org.tr>

<sup>145</sup> <http://odatv.com/kim-bu-osmanli-ocaklari-1009151200.html>

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCV5kS2Smd0>

## Ensar Foundation

Ensar Foundation (in Turkish **Ensar Vakfı**) is a so-called religious affairs foundation, which has made the headlines many times for the rape and harassment incidents against its female and young male followers. Currently, Erdoğan utilizes Ensar Vakfı to keep the pressure on the 15 July coup courts. Thus, Ensar is intensively involved in the ongoing 15 July trials. Currently, Ensar followers brutally intimidate and insult the lawyers and the families of the 15 July suspects.



Figure 33 Left and right, Erdoğan and his son Bilal at different activities of Ensar.

## İHH–Human Rights and Freedoms Humanity Aid Charity

İHH (in Turkish **İnsan Hakları ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı**) is an organization, which carries out so-called humanitarian aid activities.<sup>147</sup> İHH organized and provoked the May 2010 showcase '**Mavi Marmara Rally to Palestine**', which ended up in a fierce intervention by the Israeli Security Forces. 10 of the onboard activists lost their lives and many wounded due to fatal shots by Israeli Security forces. İHH is headed by **Fehmi Bülent Yıldırım**. He and his organization allegedly have connections with MİT and facilitate weapons transfer to ISIL and Al Nusra in Syria under the cover of humanitarian aid.<sup>148 149 150</sup> The Russian report to UNSC states that İHH and Bülent Yıldırım involved in purchasing weapons for terrorist organizations in the Syrian Arab Republic and this was proven by the discovery of military equipment in trucks 'delivering humanitarian aid to the refugees', detained near the Turkish–Syrian border.<sup>151</sup> The report indicates that a considerable number of the foreign fighters in Syria are connected to İHH, thus MİT, SADAT, and Erdoğan.

<sup>147</sup> <https://www.ihh.org.tr>

<sup>148</sup> <http://imc-tv.net/el-kaide-sanigi-iside-yardim-malzemelerini-ihh-ile-gecirebilirim/>

<sup>149</sup> <http://www.siyasetcafe.com/Medya-Haberleri/19915-ihh-hakkinda-sok-iddialar--erdogan-bunun-icin-mi-satti>

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3u648Eq638>

<sup>151</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/94](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/94)

Turkish territory is also actively being used by terrorists for illegal deliveries of weapons and ammunition. They receive assistance from Turkish Islamist non-governmental associations and foundations, in particular the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (President — Mr. B. Yıldırım). The Foundation is headquartered in Istanbul at No. 3 Taylasan Street, Büyük Karaman province in the Fatih district. Under the guise of charitable work, it provides assistance to fighters and, for that purpose, has opened accounts at the following Turkish banks: Ziraat Bankası, Al Baraka, Kuveyt Türk and VakıfBank. This organization's involvement in purchasing weapons for terrorist organizations in the Syrian Arab Republic was proven by the discovery of military equipment in trucks "delivering humanitarian aid to the refugees" detained near the Turkish-Syrian border.

Figure 34 In Russia's report, İHH's role in transferring weapons under 'humanitarian aid' activities is clearly depicted.



Figure 35 Left, İHH director F. Bülent Yıldırım rallies for a Mavi Marmara protest. Right, Yıldırım at a coordination meeting with Nurettin Yıldız at İHH Headquarters.



Figure 36 Erdoğan, Bülent Yıldırım and Mafia Leader Sedat Peker at the wedding ceremony of the secretary of Erdoğan's wife.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>152</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/sedat-peker-erdogan-risk-aldi-ben-normallestim,300046>

## İBDA–C Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front

İBDA–C (in Turkish **İslami Büyük Doğu Akıncıları Cephesi**) is a Salafist organization, which is accused of plotting the burning of a hotel in Sivas/Turkey in 1993. The event resulted in the loss of 37 lives. İBDA–C is led by **Salih İzzet Erdiş**, known with his alias '**Salih Mirzabeyoğlu**'. In December 2014 Erdoğan had a private meeting with Mirzabeyoğlu after he was released from 16–year custody.<sup>153</sup> The organization supports ISIL. İBDA–C's sister organization is '**Muslim Anatolian Youth**' (**Müslüman Anadolu Gençliği–MAG**). Armored İBDA–C/MAG militants were employed during 15 July 2016 events.<sup>154</sup> İBDA–C fights in Syria in Al Nusra and ISIL fronts.<sup>155 156</sup>



Figure 37 Left, İBDA–C Followers carry a banner promoting their leader. '**Mahdi**' means 'the savior of the world'. Right, İBDA–C followers during 15 July events. The person circled appears at the 'SADAT and paramilitary on 15 July 2016' section of this book.



Figure 38 Left, Erdoğan and his wife host an İBDA–C jihadist **Ghassan Alabed**.<sup>157</sup> Center and right Alabed in

<sup>153</sup> <http://www.haberay.com.tr/siyaset/erdogan-salih-mirzabeyoglu-ile-gorustu-h1737.html>

<sup>154</sup> <http://divrigliyiz.biz/haber/494/17/akpnin-demokrasi-savascilari-meger-ibda-cli-cihatcilarimis>

<sup>155</sup> <http://www.diken.com.tr/amerikali-akademisyenin-gozunden-turkiye-isid-isbirligine-dair-dokuz-iddia/>

<sup>156</sup> <http://divrigliyiz.biz/haber/494/17/akpnin-demokrasi-savascilari-meger-ibda-cli-cihatcilarimis>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.durushaber.com.tr/dis-haberler/erdogan-in-agirladigi-kisi-cihatci-mi-h1657.html>

Syria with his actual identity.<sup>158</sup>

### KKT–Stay Brothers Turkey

KKT (in Turkish **Kardeş Kal Türkiye**) is a so-called charity organization, led by **Orhan Uzuner**, the father-in-law of Erdoğan's son, Bilal. KKT acts as a paramilitary organization, which would mobilize AKP followers in case of a fierce opposition against Erdoğan.<sup>159</sup> <sup>160</sup> Uzuner recommended the KKT members to carry their weapons in their vehicles, in case there would be a need to use them against anti-Erdoğan people.<sup>161</sup>



Figure 39 Erdoğan with Orhan Uzuner at their children's wedding.

### HÖH–People's Special Organizations Army

HÖH (in Turkish **Halk Özel Harekat**)<sup>162</sup> is a militia organization founded to protect Erdoğan and AKP against opponents in case of an internal war in Turkey.<sup>163</sup> It is led by **Yunus Emre Polat**, who was a militia fighter in Syria.<sup>164</sup>



Figure 40 Left, one HÖH vehicle during 15 July events. Center, HÖH Logo on a vehicle. Right, Yunus Emre Polat.

<sup>158</sup> <https://tr.sputniknews.com/ortadogu/201612231026472030-sosyal-medya-suriyeli-bananin-babasi-cihatci-mi/>

<sup>159</sup> [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/679803/Erdoğan\\_in\\_milisleri\\_.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/679803/Erdoğan_in_milisleri_.html#)

<sup>160</sup> <http://odatv.com/gerektigi-zaman-kullanacagimiz-silah-var-2002171200.html>

<sup>161</sup>

[http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/680816/Erdoğan\\_in\\_dunuru\\_Uzuner\\_\\_\\_Silahimiz\\_degil\\_\\_\\_Sirenimiz\\_var\\_\\_\\_d\\_edim.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/680816/Erdoğan_in_dunuru_Uzuner___Silahimiz_degil___Sirenimiz_var___d_edim.html)

<sup>162</sup> <http://www.halkozelhareketidernegi.org>

<sup>163</sup> Ibid

<sup>164</sup> <http://www.abcgazetesi.com/sinan-ogandan-hoh-aciklamasi-44071h.htm>



Figure 41 HÖH promotes a video of an article at its web page. The article claims that Erdoğan will start the **'final times Islamic Armageddon War in Syria against all infidels'**. The video states that **Abu Cabir**, the leader of **Tahrir Sam of Syria** (Al Qaida in Syria), is in Turkey to coordinate this war with Erdoğan's Government.<sup>165</sup>

### İMKAN-DER – Humanitarian Defense and Brotherhood Organization

İMKAN-DER (in Turkish **İnsani Müdafaa ve Kardeşlik Derneği**) has a strong affiliation with SADAT. It is led by **Murat Özer**. Russia's Representative to UN Vitali Curkin reported that İMKAN-DER, İHH, and ONCU NESİL organizations carry weapons to the fighting groups in Syria.<sup>166</sup> The organization also provides medical services to Syrian fighters in Gaziantep, Turkey.<sup>167 168</sup>



Figure 42 Left, İMKAN-DER member with a jihadist, having medical support in Turkey. Right, Bülent Özer with Libyan Jihadists.

<sup>165</sup> <http://www.halkozelhareketidernegi.org/rekor-kiran-erdoganin-ve-devletin-derin-plani-son-savas-sonuna-kadar-dinleyin/>

<sup>166</sup> <http://kureselanaliz.com/2016/02/rusyanin-bm-daimi-temsilcisinden-ihh-imkander-oncu-nesil-insani-yardim-dernegine-iftira/>

<sup>167</sup> <http://odatv.com/cihatcilar-turkiyede-boyle-yardim-topluyor--1112131200.html>

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/islamci-militanlar-icin-CHAT-hastanesi-acildi-68921.html>

# SADAT AND PARAMILITARY ON 15 JULY 2016

## Erdoğan's Self-coup and Turkey's Depression

The inconsistent and odd explanations in their statements show that, Erdoğan, the Prime Minister Yıldırım, Head of MİT Fidan, some AKP politicians, and pro-Erdoğan military officials, including Major General Zekai Aksakallı, Commander of Special Operations Command, had full awareness about what would happen that day, before the events took place on 15 July 2016. Although there were previous indications of unrest in the Military, Erdoğan and the Government officials deliberately waited until the dissenters took action, instead of taking preventive measures. They even provoked and manipulated the flow of events, and kept them under control. They allowed the uprising to mature and aggravate to a predetermined level before exerting decisive intervention. This resulted in **'a limited uprising'**, controlled by Erdoğan and his collaborators in and out of the Military. This is why Head of the Main Opposition Party-CHP, **Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu** calls the events **'a controlled coup'**<sup>169</sup> while many former senior Turkish Military officials prefer to call them **'Erdoğan's self-coup'**. A substantial study on the subject by former state officials is available online.<sup>170</sup>

According to an official declaration by the Turkish Military following 15 July 2016, only 8,651 military personnel involved in the alleged coup attempt (5,761 professional military personnel, 1,676 conscripts, and 1,214 cadets).<sup>171</sup> The Military announced that the number of alleged dissenters formed only 1.5 % of the total manpower of the Turkish Military (a total of 570,111 personnel with 247,196 professionals, 270,970 conscripts, and others).<sup>172</sup> The announcement also stated that a small number of equipment and weapons from the total inventory were employed during the attempt. Namely, 35 military aircraft (including fighter jets and transport aircraft), 37 military helicopters (including 8 attack helicopters), 246 armored vehicles (including 74 tanks), three military ships, and 3992 light weapons were used. In total, the Turkish Military has around 300 fighter jets, 2500 tanks, and hundreds of military helicopters.

Turkey has a Police force of 250,000 policemen and a Gendarmerie force of 270,000 gendarmes. Considering the limited number of 8,651 dissenters versus the total number of these security forces, it is unreasonable to claim that the civilian resistance was needed to suppress the attempt of the dissenters. However, Erdoğan provoked the AKP followers to rally on the streets and confront dissenters, most probably with an intention to increase the death toll. Deliberate delay of intervention by the Government coupled with Erdoğan's

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<sup>169</sup> <http://theglobepost.com/2017/04/03/opposition-leader-july-15-was-a-controlled-coup/>

<sup>170</sup> <https://15julyfacts.com/>

<sup>171</sup> <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/tsk-darbe-girisimine-katilan-personel-sayisini-acikladi,ns92udU75k2vw-1OIEK4gQ>

<sup>172</sup> <http://www.emekliasubaylar.org/haberler/item/1475-turk-silahli-kuvvetleri-personel-mevcutlari>



invitation to the people to resist the dissenters mainly caused bloody confrontations. Some casualties occurred while the civilians were trying to stop the military armored vehicles. The chaos during the clashes obscured who was shooting whom. The majority of the civilian losses were due to fires from unidentified directions, mostly in forms of **sniper shots**. The civilians on the streets were sometimes even used by the Police as a shield against the dissenters. Around 250 people lost their lives and more than 1,500 were wounded. Most of the killings took place in Ankara and İstanbul.

Erdoğan's media has intensively used '**15 July Martyrs**' and '**Nation's great resistance to defend democracy**' rhetoric as well as overt violence and lynch images of alleged dissenters to incite and mold the public opinion against Erdoğan's opponents, and rationalize the regime's follow-on brutal crackdown and massive purge. Such rhetoric provided grounds for the declaration of State of Emergency and successive Decree Laws. Furthermore, Erdoğan and his supporters used the self-coup as a pretext for the constitutional referendum on 16 April 2017. Turkish people voted in the referendum to abandon the parliamentary system for an **Executive Presidency**, minimally curbed by the Parliament. At the end, Erdoğan had the victory through a controversial referendum, tarnished with allegations of fraud.<sup>173</sup> The victory granted Erdoğan the chance to change the country's regime from a democracy to a dictatorship and establish his **21st-Century Sultanate**.<sup>174</sup> He finally managed to turn the century-long democracy march of the Turkish nation into an accelerating dictatorship swirl.

## **SADAT's involvement in the 15 July Events**

A thorough analysis of the paramilitary organizations, which took part in '15 July 2016 events', clearly indicates that Erdoğan and his team were the orchestrators of the public movements, which resulted in the loss of many civilian lives and lynching and killing of many surrendered soldiers and cadets. Erdoğan utilized proxies like SADAT and other paramilitary organizations to aggravate the chaos and increase the violence. SADAT's role inside and outside the Military was central and extensive.

A couple of days after 15 July 2016, **Nevzat Tarhan**, a retired colonel and SADAT's advisor, stated at HABERTÜRK TV channel that over a thousand pro-Erdoğan ex-military personnel from ASDER were '**voluntarily on the scene**' that night to render the tanks and the armored vehicles ineffective.<sup>175</sup> Those former military officials were the members of SADAT's twin organization **ASDER (Justice Supporters Union, in Turkish Adaleti**

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<sup>173</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-04-18/the-fraud-claims-tainting-turkey-s-referendum-win-quicktake-q-a>

<sup>174</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21720590-recep-tayyip-erdogan-carrying-out-harsh-crackdown-decades-west-must-not-abandon>

<sup>175</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL9sV-rXTSw>

**Savunanlar Derneği**).<sup>176</sup> ASDER was founded in 2000 by former military personnel, who were dismissed from the Military in the 1990s for their alleged extremist religious agenda. The founders of SADAT and ASDER are the same people.



Figure 43 Nevzat TARHAN, a retired Colonel and SADAT advisor, states “ASDER was ‘on the stage’ on 15 July 2016”.

The head of SADAT, Tanrıverdi, was awarded Chief Advisor position to Erdoğan in August 2016. In other words, the head of so-called **Islamist Army SADAT** was assigned as the Chief Advisor to Erdoğan.<sup>177</sup> One of the focuses of this study is the relationship between SADAT’s role on 15 July 2016 and Tanrıverdi’s critical assignment at Erdoğan’s palace.



Figure 44 SADAT announces Tanrıverdi’s new position as Erdoğan’s Chief Advisor, following his organization’s accomplishments on 15 July 2016.

One of the founders of SADAT and ASDER, Tanrıverdi’s close friend and once AKP’s candidate for the Parliament,<sup>178</sup> **Mustafa Hacimustafaoğlu**, explained in a TV program that

<sup>176</sup> Tanrıverdi is the honorary president of ASDER and chairman of the board of ASSAM and SADAT

<sup>177</sup> [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/585597/SADAT\\_Saray\\_da.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/585597/SADAT_Saray_da.html#)

<sup>178</sup> <https://www.haberler.com/kidemli-albay-ak-parti-den-aday-adayi-ordu-2594338-haberi/>

ASDER has executed ‘ASDER’s Coup Prevention Plan’ on 15 July 2016. He stated ‘ASDER’s Offensive Intervention Plan’ is also ready if there would be a need in the future. Hacimustafaoğlu’s son **Ömer Sefa Hacimustafaoğlu** emphasized at the same program that without 15 July Coup purges of tens of thousands of people from the Government departments would never be possible.<sup>179</sup>

At an interview with pro-Erdoğan newspaper, ‘Milat’ Mustafa Hacimustafaoğlu claimed that **“The coup was planned and executed by NATO. The Gulenists were just a tool NATO used for the coup”**. He further stated **“NATO’s goal with the coup was to smash the idea by Turkey and other 34 Muslim countries for founding ‘the Army of Islam’ because NATO knows that this Army will stop terrorism, spread by imperialists in the region, and bring peace and security to the region... Turkey must exit NATO to eliminate the chances of a future coup... Thanks to the coup we now have the full freedom to cleanse Turkish Military and state departments from the Gulenists... Yet the co-existing threat is the ultra-nationalists, who are trying to fill the gap in the Military after the cleansing.”**<sup>180</sup> Furthermore head of SADAT Tanrıverdi, on his personal website, states that **“NATO, like UN, has become a tool for the U.S. imperialism under Jewish control”**.<sup>181</sup>



Figure 45 Hacimustafaoğlu and his son on a tank on the Bosphorus Bridge, where surrendered cadets and conscripts were lynched. His son wears a t-shirt with a sign of Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt.

A recording of Hacimustafaoğlu’s confrontation with the dissenting soldiers in İstanbul was also aired on the same program. During the recording, he tries to stop the dissenting soldiers with a shocking statement **“The commander who gave you these orders has already been killed in Ankara!”**<sup>182</sup> The recording took place at around 23:15 on 15 July

<sup>179</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN9XO2pVbKE>

<sup>180</sup> <http://m.milatgazetesi.com/darbenin-gobeginde-nato-var-haber-95893>

<sup>181</sup> <http://www.adnanTanriverdi.com/index.php/siyaset-konulari/dis-siyaset/nato/77-neden-natodayiz-25-haziran-2004.html>

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN9XO2pVbKE> (time in video 13:50)

2016. The commander, he mentioned, was **Brigadier General Semih Terzi** from Special Operations Command, who was killed by a directive from pro-SADAT **Major General Zekai Aksakalli**. But the killing took place around three hours after Hacimustafaoğlu's statement! Terzi was a person, who knew too much about Erdoğan's, MIT's, SADAT's and Aksakalli's ties with ISIL and Al Nusra and confronted illegal activities of this alliance in Syria.

Hacimustafaoğlu, in his speech, further stated that active duty military officers, like **Major Barış Dedeoğlu**, served ASDER's plan on 15 July. Major Dedeoğlu became famous for his torture to the surrendering officers. After 15 July he resigned and assigned as **The Advisor to Chief Public Safety Department** by AKP Government. These manifestations clearly indicate that on 15 July 2016, pro-SADAT active military personnel were in full coordination with SADAT, ASDER, and paramilitary forces.



Figure 46 Barış Dedeoğlu insults and intimidates surrendered officers and soldiers with his pistol.

## Mobilization of Erdoğan's Paramilitary on 15 July 2016

Mobilization of pro-AKP militias on 15 July 2015 proved successful during Erdoğan's Self-coup. Pro-AKP militias have conducted additional drills prior to 16 April 2017 Constitutional Referendum to see if they were ready to mobilize when needed.<sup>183</sup> In other words, Erdoğan is able to use his militia much more efficiently in the future to crush political opponents or to fuel a civil unrest.<sup>184</sup>

On 15 July 2016, multiple pro-AKP militia organizations and mafia gangs were on the streets and armed. There are indications that lots of weapons, namely machine guns, and

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<sup>183</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/erdogan-in-dunuru-gerektigi-zaman-kullanacagimiz-silahlarimiz-var-147489.html>

<sup>184</sup> <https://www.turkishminute.com/2016/11/25/erdogans-secret-army-threat-nato/>

pistols, were delivered to civilian groups and mafia gangs the Police Headquarters in Ankara.<sup>185 186 187</sup> The suspicion remains in the public opinion that those groups and gangs played an important role during Erdoğan's Self-coup.<sup>188 189 190</sup> Their actions have not been investigated or accounted for yet. Recently a farmer, **Mustafa Maraş**, who killed a person with an MP-5 machine gun, testified that *"the Ankara Police gave him the weapon on 15 July 2016 and weapons of such kind were delivered to the civilians during the 15 July events"*.<sup>191</sup> Following the reflection on the media, **Ankara District Governor** confessed that weapons were arbitrarily delivered to the policemen that night without taking any records and some weapons are still missing from the inventory.<sup>192</sup>

That night Erdoğan's paramilitary force was all over the country.<sup>193</sup> For instance, pro-Erdoğan journalist **Fatih Tezcan** stated at a TV broadcast that armored İHH militia was employed during 15 July 2016 events.<sup>194 195</sup> There are serious allegations that pro-AKP militia and mafia groups were responsible for many civilian killings. According to the former Pentagon official **Michael Rubin**, most of the civilians were shot by pro-AKP militias, who played an important role that night.<sup>196 197</sup> There are multiple records of pro-AKP militia and mafia groups, who were armed and on the streets in Ankara and İstanbul that night.<sup>198 199 200</sup> As mentioned earlier, these groups comprised of SADAT, Osmanlı Ocakları, İHH, and other organizations,<sup>201</sup> which have a standing mandate to intervene in a case of any civic or military opposition against Erdoğan's regime.<sup>202</sup>

Many organized criminals and mafia groups were armed on the streets.<sup>203 204 205</sup> They provoked civilians and soldiers. For instance, **Levent Çiçek**, a well-known mafia leader from Ankara is shown below in a photo taken during the events. Çiçek is a very close friend of AKP politicians, including the Prime Minister **Binali Yıldırım** and the Ankara Major **Melih Gökçek**'s son **Osman Gökçek**. He once acted as the director of AKP's Ottoman Hearths Youth Organization.

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<sup>185</sup><https://www.habersert.com/gundem/eli-silahli-bir-sivil-fethullahci-ve-laikci-kopekler--1276.html>

<sup>186</sup><https://www.evrensel.net/haber/291606/siviller-silahlandirildi-mi>

<sup>187</sup><http://www.haberdar.com/siyaset/fatih-tezcan-vatan-emniyeti-silahli-ihh-cilar-kurtardi-h49789.html>

<sup>188</sup><http://romanyahaber.com/2016/11/02/darbeyi-bilen-adam-15-temmuzda-sivillerin-cogunu-saraya-bagli-sadat-milisleri-oldurdu/>

<sup>189</sup><http://15temmuzhareketi.org/2016/08/12/o-gece-sivil-kiyafetliler-olum-sacti/>

<sup>190</sup><http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/iste-akpnin-silahli-sivilleri-170610>

<sup>191</sup><http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/tartistigi-18-yasindaki-genci-mp-5le-oldurdu-silahi-15-temmuzda-polis-verdi-dedi-199152>

<sup>192</sup><http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/valilikten-itiraf-15-temmuzda-zimmet-kaydi-tutmadan-silah-dagitik-199404>

<sup>193</sup><https://www.turkishminute.com/2016/11/25/erdogans-secret-army-threat-nato/>

<sup>194</sup><http://www.haberatlantis.com/fatih-tezcandan-silahli-ihhcilar-itirafi-9601.html>

<sup>195</sup><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqQTY7uNDyY>

<sup>196</sup><http://www.turkishnews.com/tr/content/2016/11/04/15-temmuzda-sivillerin-cogunu-saraya-bagli-sadat-milisleri-oldurdu/>

<sup>197</sup>[http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#\\_ftn68](http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#_ftn68)

<sup>198</sup><https://www.habersert.com/gundem/eli-silahli-bir-sivil-fethullahci-ve-laikci-kopekler--1276.html>

<sup>199</sup><https://www.evrensel.net/haber/291606/siviller-silahlandirildi-mi>

<sup>200</sup>[http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/585597/SADAT\\_Saray\\_da.html\#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/585597/SADAT_Saray_da.html\#)

<sup>201</sup><https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/blackwater-sadat-ve-ihh> or can be retrieved from

<https://friendsofkosovo.wordpress.com/2013/12/16/blackwater-sadat-and-the-ihh/>

<sup>202</sup><http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/durumdan-vazife-cikaran-orgutlenmeler-157783h.htm> ,or can be retrieved from <http://linkis.com/www.ilk-kursun.com/h/U51si>

<sup>203</sup><http://15temmuzhareketi.org/2016/08/12/o-gece-sivil-kiyafetliler-olum-sacti/>

<sup>204</sup><http://www.turkishnews.com/tr/content/2016/11/04/15-temmuzda-sivillerin-cogunu-saraya-bagli-sadat-milisleri-oldurdu/>

<sup>205</sup><http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/iste-akpnin-silahli-sivilleri-170610>



Figure 47 A mafia gang, led by Levent Çiçek (fourth from the left), is armed and on the street on 15 July 2016.

The pro-Erdoğan Twitter troll 'BASKENTCI' confessed in a tweet that the followers of pro-ISIL, pro-AI Nusra Nurettin Yıldız took part in the events.<sup>206</sup>



Figure 48 Pro-Erdoğan Twitter troll 'BASKENCİ' states that Yıldız's followers recovered the TV channel CNN Turk on the night of 15 July.

Even pro-Erdoğan newspaper 'Yeni Şafak' reported armed militia's intervention to the events. An eyewitness **Tuncay Doğan** from Aksaray, İstanbul reported; ***"A civilian vehicle arrived at a square (in Aksaray, İstanbul). Civilians with long hair and dirty beards came out of the vehicle, carrying long barreled guns. They told to the public 'The curfew is in effect. Go to your homes. We will not let you come to the squares'. These people spread into the streets and told to each other that 'the streets and the squares must be blocked'. They shot at civilians during the events"***.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>206</sup> <http://www.habermiyiz.com/page/88>

<sup>207</sup> <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/o-gece-sivil-kiyafetliler-olum-sacti-2509790>



Figure 49 Tuncay Doğan reports his observations to pro-Erdogan newspaper 'Yeni Şafak'.

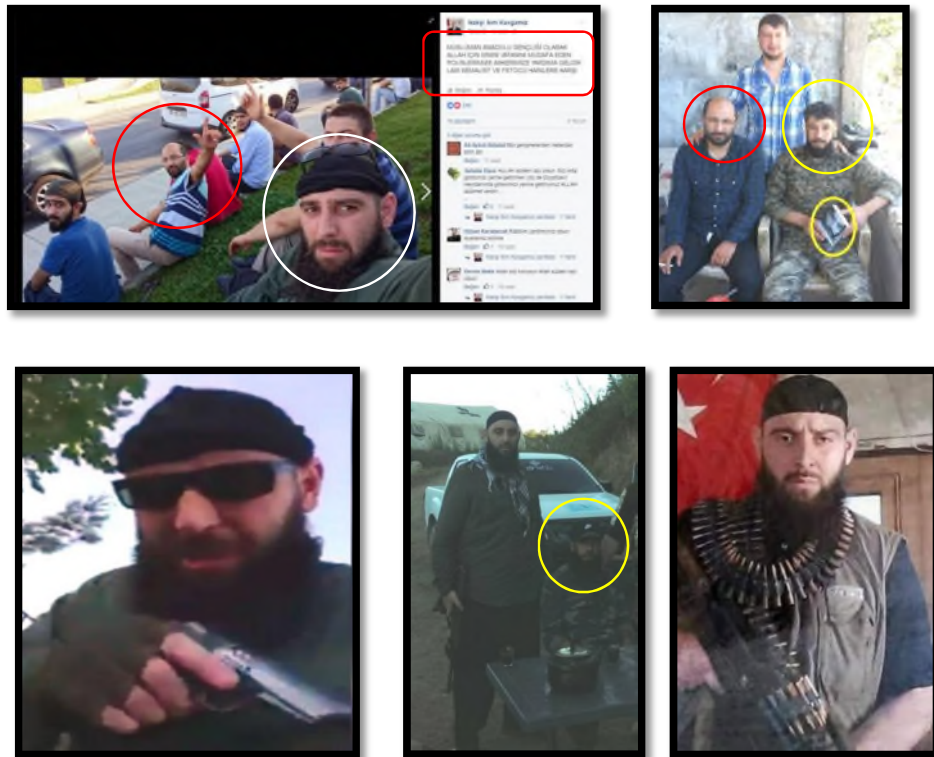


Figure 50 Top left, Pro-Erdogan Salafist paramilitary IBDA-C's Muslim Anatolian Youth leader **Mehmet Ali Bayram** is seen on 15 July 2016. The text in the red rectangle says: *"We the Anatolian Muslim Youth came to help soldiers and police, who defend God's religion and our country against Secularists, Kemalists, and **Gulenists**"*. Top right, IBDA-C leader Bayram with the so-called Jihadist Commander, but in fact a morally corrupt figure<sup>208</sup> **Ömer Halid** in Syria. Halid is supported by AKP and MİT. He holds the book of Mirzabeyoğlu, IBDA-C's leader.<sup>209</sup> Bottom left, same IBDA-C militia hunting dissenters upon a call from police! Bottom center, he is in Syria with Ömer Halid. Bottom right, he seems well trained and armed.

<sup>208</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/ehatcilar-birbirine-dustu-116619.html>

<sup>209</sup> <http://haber.sol.org.tr/turkiye/ibda-c-lazkiyede-kamp-kurdu-iddiasi-119591>

## Who Killed Civilians?

No official ballistics or criminal reports on how, when and where the civilian casualties took place have been shared with the public. There are serious claims, backed by substantial evidence, that some civilian casualties were caused by the orchestrated actions, supervised by the masterminds of the Self-coup. The shotguns used in civilian killings could easily be identified by ballistics investigations, autopsies or criminal investigations. There seems to be no appetite for an inquiry by the Government and pro-Erdoğan prosecutors and courts deliberately lack the diligence to do it.

For a long time after the events, Pro-Erdoğan media has deliberately broadcasted a story about a dissenting **sniper**, who, on 15 July 2016, allegedly positioned himself on top of a column of the Bosphorus Bridge, targeted pro-Erdoğan civilians and killed many people till morning.<sup>210 211</sup> The sniper's identity is yet unknown. According to the court indictment, 32 civilians, 7 military personnel, and 2 policemen lost their lives during the events. Right after the events, vast media reported eyewitness accounts, who stated that most of the killings were due to **sniper shots**. For months, Erdoğan's media reported the identities of all critical dissenters, but they did not publish any report about this **mysterious sniper**. After a long period of speculation and propaganda by pro-Erdoğan media, İstanbul Police Chief **Mustafa Çalışkan** stated at the Parliamentary Commission for Coup Investigation that **“there were no snipers on the tower of the Bosphorus Bridge. It was only a myth”**.<sup>212</sup> Consequently, pro-Erdoğan media let the speculation vanish by the time. Recently released court indictment stated that a crank on top of the bridge was confused to be a sniper during the events.<sup>213 214</sup>



Figure 51 Pro-Erdoğan media used this photo for months to report about a dissenting sniper on top of the tower of the Bosphorus Bridge.

<sup>210</sup> <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/koprude-sniper-la-catisma-gundem-2281278/>

<sup>211</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/koprude-keskin-nisanci-varmis-40156647>

<sup>212</sup> <http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/15-temmuz-gecesi-o-noktada-keskin-nisanci-var-miydi-229788.html>

<sup>213</sup> <http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/keskin-nisanci-sanilmisti-gercek-ortaya-cikti-360328.html>

<sup>214</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/koprudeki-keskin-nisanci-gercegi-iddianamede-ortaya-cikti-40531655>



## Were snipers only a myth?

There are multiple eyewitness records about ‘snipers in black vans/midi buses or on top of buildings/hills’, who opened fire on the civilian people and killed many. The records prove that there were multiple snipers at several locations in İstanbul, who killed many civilians. For instance, pro-ERDOĞAN eyewitnesses of the Bosphorus Bridge events stated on a TV that the soldiers did not shoot at them, but the one, who was taking the fatal shots, was a **sniper**. They said they could not see the sniper’s location and where the shots are fired from! When one watches the video of the events he or she could easily discern sniper shots amidst intensive automatic rifle shots.<sup>215</sup> Another young eyewitness spoke to a pro-Erdoğan TV channel and swore that fatal shootings on the civilian people on the Bosphorus Bridge were not from the soldiers, who were blocking the bridge, but from two people dressed in police uniforms, who were with a mini cooper type van at another direction.<sup>216</sup>



Figure 52 Top left, a pro-Erdoğan young person swears that not the soldiers on the Bridge but two people in police uniforms fatally shot at the civilians from another direction.<sup>216</sup> Top right, another eyewitness at the Bridge says the snipers fatally shot at the people, who were trying to help the wounded and the ambulances at the scene.<sup>217</sup> Bottom, the eyewitness at the Bosphorus Bridge tells the fatal shots were from a sniper they cannot spot.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>215</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz0kziyTIZo> (video time 0:40)

<sup>216</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiOJoaR-I4Y> (video time 06:50)

<sup>217</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2NWTvGrls0> (video time 00:47)

<sup>218</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz0kziyTIZo> (video time 06:50)

Once Erdoğan's election and publicity coordinator **Erol Olçok** and his son **Abdullah Tayyip Olçok** were among the civilians, who were killed by **sniper** shots at the Bosphorus Bridge. Olçok and his son came to the Bridge early and participated in the protests, when the events started. Olçok's wife **Nihal Olçok**, at a TV program, explained in detail how his husband and son were targeted and killed by the sniper. She told the sniper definitely knew their identities in advance.



Figure 53 Nihal Olçok explains how her husband and son were killed deliberately by the **sniper** on the Bridge.<sup>219</sup>

Snipers were not reported only at the Bosphorus Bridge but at several locations in İstanbul. Pro-Erdoğan eyewitnesses, who went to **İstanbul Stock Exchange (Borsa İstanbul)** building at İstinye, İstanbul, stated that there were **two snipers** on top of the building. For instance, **Müslim Ergin**, who was wounded near İstanbul Stock Exchange, stated in an interview that there were two snipers on top of the building. **Ali Usta** and his wife **Jale Usta** stated that they were wounded by sniper shots from the top of the building.<sup>220</sup> **The head of the Stock Exchange Himmet Karadağ** confirmed the sniper reports at an interview.<sup>221</sup> At another instance in Acıbadem, İstanbul, **Hasan Girgin** was wounded and his friend was **Fazıl Demir** killed by a sniper according to Girgin's testimony at the court.<sup>222</sup>

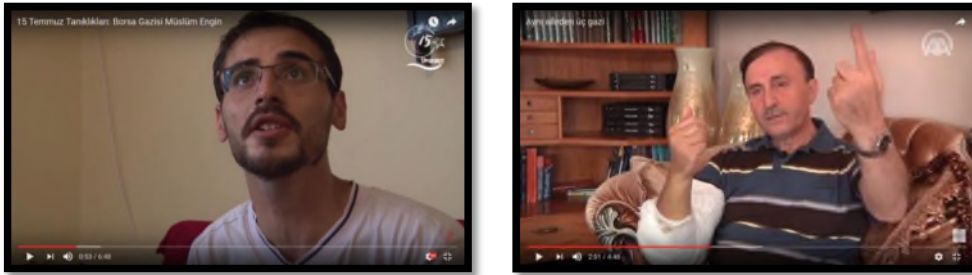


Figure 54 Left Müslüm Ergin states there were two snipers on top of the İstanbul Stock Exchange building, shooting and killing the people.<sup>223</sup> Bottom left wounded Ali Usta states that he and his wife were wounded by shots from the sniper on top of the İstanbul Stock Exchange.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>219</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh1Zz-lLmMk> (video time 43:11)

<sup>220</sup> <http://www.sabah.com.tr/yasam/2016/07/31/ayni-aileden-3-gazi>

<sup>221</sup> <http://www.haberturk.com/ekonomi/is-yasam/haber/1275024-bomba-ihbari-var-deyip-borsa-istanbula-girmisler>

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.haberler.com/acibadem-deki-turk-telekom-binasini-iskal-girisimi-9683975-haberi/>

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnEvLRRfk4E> (video time 01:00)

<sup>224</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHR9GT4LeYA> (video time 01:50)

Snipers were also spotted at Atatürk Airport in Istanbul. One pro–AKP woman explained at a pro–Erdoğan TV interview that his son was shot by **snipers in a black van at Ataturk Airport** shortly before the arrival of Erdoğan’s plane.<sup>225</sup> She stated the snipers were in a Ford Transit type van.



Figure 55 Left, **Muteber Ayabak** explains at a pro–Erdoğan TV channel that his pro–Erdoğan son **Mahir Ayabak** (in the center) was shot dead by snipers in a black van on 15 July 2016. Right, a midi van (transporter), which was used to kidnap a person in Ankara on 21 December 2016.

In fact, the suspicious events with blacks vans have continued after 15 July 2016. Until now, thirteen people have been reported to be kidnapped in Ankara with mysterious black vans within the last several months. All kidnapped persons were purged government officials.<sup>226 227 228</sup> Although the black vans and their plates were identified, the Government and the Police did not act upon these grave incidents.<sup>229</sup> Likewise, Erdoğan, AKP and their collaborators in the Judiciary and the Police deliberately cover numerous civilian killings due to sniper shots and do not allow any investigation on the issue. The reason is simple. Any serious investigation will reveal Erdoğan’s and SADAT’s relations with the snipers and their actual role during the events.

## Who Lynched Cadets and Soldiers?

On the night of 15 July 2016, many conscript soldiers and cadets were tasked against, what they were told as, wide–scale terror activities in **İstanbul** and **Ankara**. The ones on the Bosphorus Bridge, like the others throughout the country, all surrendered early the next morning. After the soldiers surrendered to the police, the militia groups attacked them. They were beaten, smashed with sharp objects and bats. Two cadets, **Murat Tekin** and **Ragıp Enes Katran** from Turkish Air Force Academy–İstanbul and four military personnel were among the surrendered. They were unfortunately stabbed to death, strangled and their

<sup>225</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaBTZnyurJ8> (video time 16:13)

<sup>226</sup> <http://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2017/04/25/ankarada-kacirilan-7-kisiye-ne-oldu/>

<sup>227</sup> <http://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2017/06/29/ankarada-yakinlari-kacirilanlar-arayarak-esinizin-tehlikeye-atiyorsunuz-dediler/>

<sup>228</sup> <http://odatv.com/7-kisi-kacirildi-2504171200.html>

<sup>229</sup> <http://magduriyetler.com/2017/04/20/ankarada-kacirilan-7-kisiyle-ilgili-sok-goruntuler/>

throats were slit. Some of them were even beheaded by knives, resembling ISIL's brutal executions.<sup>230 231</sup> The attackers even tried to lynch a journalist, who tried to take photos of the lynching.<sup>232</sup> Murderers yet remain unknown. The lynching took place in front of Police officers. Some police officers tried to stop the lynching and called extra support from the Istanbul Police Administration. The support, which was essential for a decisive intervention, was deliberately never sent. As of today, no criminal investigation concerning these lynchings has been initiated.<sup>233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243</sup> **(Caution: extremely disturbing video content!).**

Yet there is no judiciary investigation because Erdoğan and the AKP Government deliberately prevent any official inquiry over the lynching and these murders. The reason is simple. If an inquiry starts it will most probably end up linked with Erdoğan, AKP, and SADAT. The people, who lynched cadets and soldiers on the Bosphorus Bridge, most probably have ties with Nurettin Yıldız, SADAT, extremely racist organizations or mafia gangs.<sup>244 245</sup>



Figure 56 Lynched cadets Murat Tekin and Ragıp Enes Katran

<sup>230</sup> <http://www.turksolu.com.tr/15-temmuzda-bogaz-koprusunde-linc-edilen-harp-okulu-ogrencisi-ragip-enes-katranin-ailesiyle-soylesi/>

<sup>231</sup> <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/family-of-the-soldier-lynched-at-bosporus-bridge-he-was-smashed-with-bats-131662.html>

<sup>232</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/koprudeki-gazeteci-bu-fotograf-yuzunden-linc-ediliyordu-askerden-sonra-sira-size-gelecek-dediler,350587>

<sup>233</sup> [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/568583/Silah\\_tasiyanlar\\_\\_askeri\\_linc\\_edenler\\_yargilanacak\\_mi\\_.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/568583/Silah_tasiyanlar__askeri_linc_edenler_yargilanacak_mi_.html)

<sup>234</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQnDQUVaTwY>

<sup>235</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_10rJRq18s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_10rJRq18s)

<sup>236</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSdHTXiyvDQ>

<sup>237</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9UTxCOV21Q>

<sup>238</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRnHLGgaNAQ>

<sup>239</sup> <http://www.yaziyor.tv/erleri-linc-edenler-de-nurettin-yildiz-tarikatindan-iddiasi/>

<sup>240</sup> <http://www.haberdar.com/gundem/askerleri-linc-edip-oldurenlerin-de-nurettin-yildiz-in-tarikatindan-oldugu-iddia-edildi-h37910.html>

<sup>241</sup> <http://www.turkeytoday.net/kim-bu-nurettin-yildizin-adamlari-turk-askerini-bogazlar-gazeteci-dover-elci-katlederler/>

<sup>242</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-0GGCPpXGs>

<sup>243</sup> [http://odatv.com/vid\\_video.php?id=8E603](http://odatv.com/vid_video.php?id=8E603)

<sup>244</sup> <http://www.turkeytoday.net/kim-bu-nurettin-yildizin-adamlari-turk-askerini-bogazlar-gazeteci-dover-elci-katlederler/>

<sup>245</sup> <http://www.haberdar.com/gundem/askerleri-linc-edip-oldurenlerin-de-nurettin-yildiz-in-tarikatindan-oldugu-iddia-edildi-h37910.html>

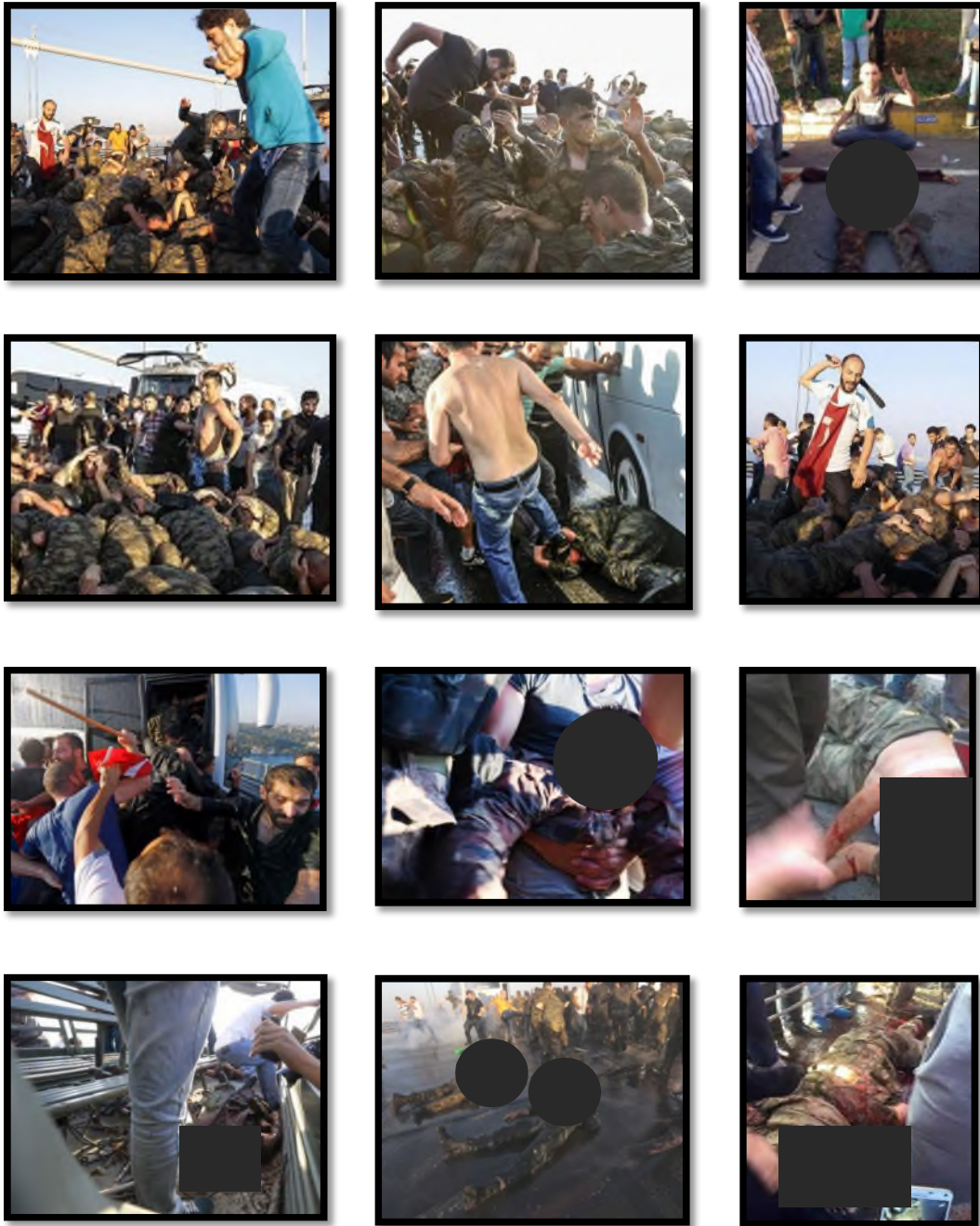


Figure 57 Pro-Erdoğan paramilitary Lynches cadets and soldiers on the Bosphorus Bridge on 16 July 2016. The faces of the victims are deliberately obscured.

Pro-Erdoğan media and people shared felonious comments about the lynching.

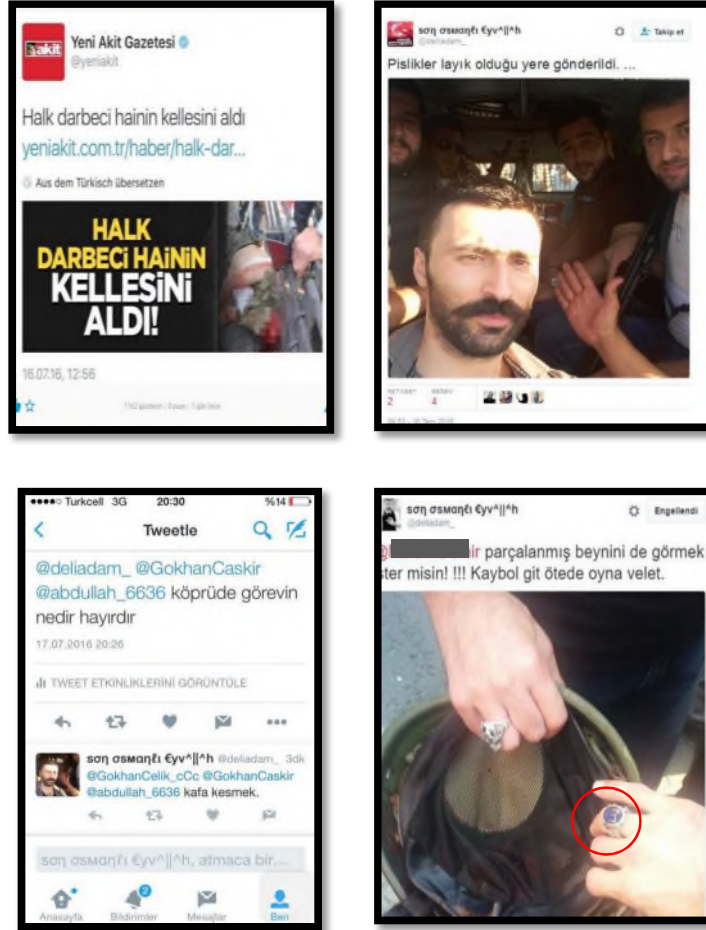


Figure 58 Top left, pro-Erdoğan ‘Yeni Akit’ states: **“The people beheaded the coupists!”** Top right, User **son osmanlı Eyvâli'îh @deliadam\_**, who was at the Bridge during the events, writes on Twitter: **“The dirt has been sent to its deserved place”** Bottom left, his friend at the moment asks: **“What’s your job there?”** he replies: **“My task is beheading!”** Bottom right, same person as a response to a person, who opposes his statements, writes: **“Would you like to see the soldier’s torn apart brain?”** He has a ring with an old Turkish symbol, used by some extremely racist people in Turkey. This person’s active address: [https://twitter.com/sonosmanli34\\_/media](https://twitter.com/sonosmanli34_/media)

At another instance, **Mehmet Fatih Demirci**, who took part at the lynching, was later identified in an activity of **AKP’s ‘Anatolian Student Union’**, lecturing young AKP followers. Demirci was also identified as a speaker at **‘Strategic Thought Group of Mustafa Kemal University (MKU)’**, Hatay, with a theme of **‘A look at global politics’** on 07 December 2016.<sup>246 247</sup> He is the Chairman of MFD Energy Industry and Trade Limited Company (MFD

<sup>246</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/events/926353474132885/>

<sup>247</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/mkusdt/posts/652302968284983>

Energy Sanayi ve Ticaret Limited Şirketi). His pro-Erdoğan twitter addresses are @MFatihDemirci and @MFD\_44 (alias). Demirci is affiliated with İHH.<sup>248</sup>

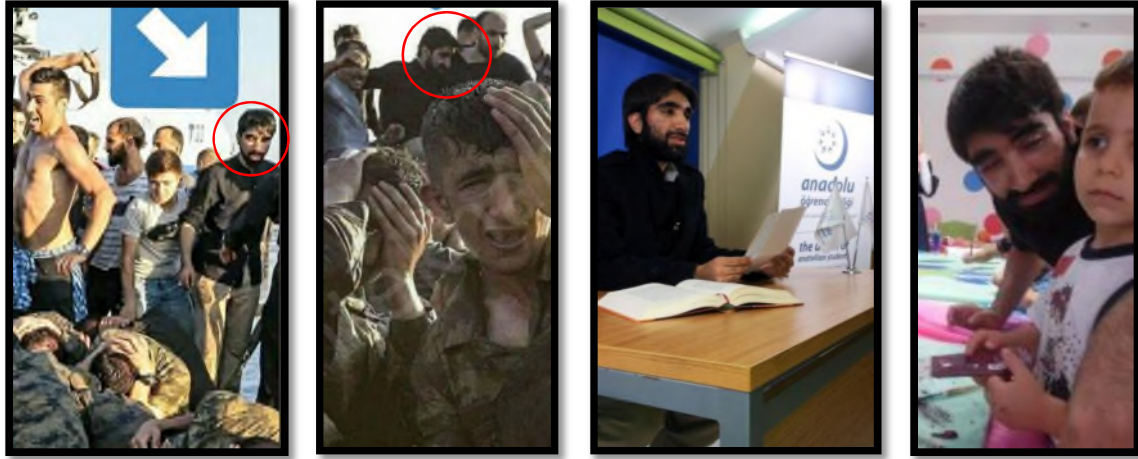


Figure 59 Top left 1 and 2 Demirci participates at the Lynch. Top right 1, he speaks at AKP's '**Anatolian Student Union**'. Top right 2, he participates at an İHH event for Syrian children.<sup>249</sup> Bottom left and center, he speaks at **MKU University** in Hatay province of Turkey on 07 December 2016. Bottom right; although he is a businessman, representing '**Muslims at the University**' organization, he makes a media announcement in front of Iranian Consulate in İstanbul on 14 December 2016 to protest Aleppo events.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>248</sup> <https://www.ihh.org.tr/haber/suriyeli-yetimlere-psikososyal-destek-calismasi-2927>

<sup>249</sup> <http://beyazgazete.com/haber/2015/8/18/suriyeli-yetimlere-psiko-sosyal-destek-2833218.html>

<sup>250</sup> [http://www.ozgurder.org/news\\_detail.php?id=4768](http://www.ozgurder.org/news_detail.php?id=4768)

AKP's 'Anatolian Student Union' frequently hosts leading AKP politicians as lecturers.



Figure 60 Leading AKP figures with the Anatolian Student Union. Left to right: **Yalçın Akdoğan**, Minister of Justice **Bekir Bozdağ**, and **Erdoğan** with the Union's representatives during their visit.

Some attackers were individuals from outside Turkey. They are alleged to work for Al Nusra, and thus for SADAT.<sup>251</sup> Head of İHH Bülent Yıldırım confessed at a speech that foreign militia was employed during the events.

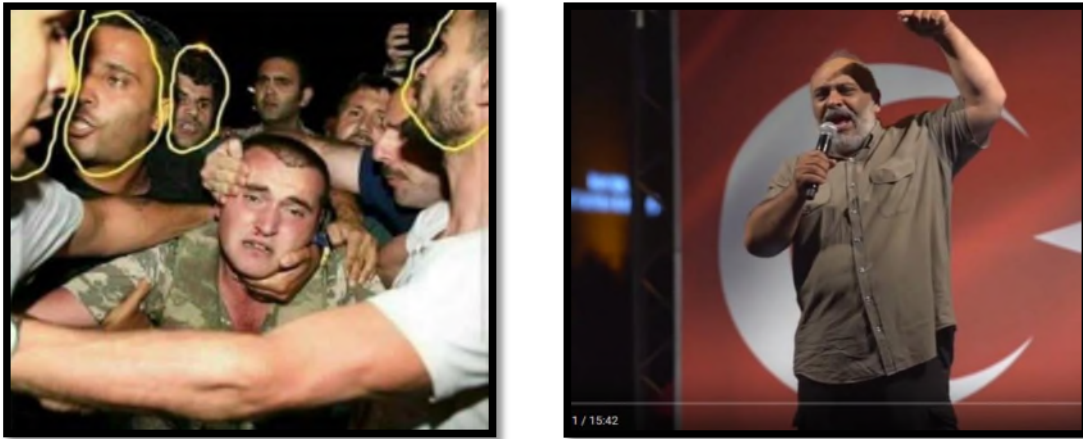


Figure 61 Left, foreign militia, most probably affiliated with Al Nusra attack a Turkish soldier! Right, Yıldırım explains how foreign fighters were employed on 15 July 2016.

<sup>251</sup> <http://www.ikincibolge.net/suriyeli-multeci-kilikli-teroristler-darbeye-katilan-turk-askerlerini-katletmis/20026/>



## IMPACT OF SADAT ON TURKISH MILITARY

After his self-coup in July 2016, Erdoğan initiated a massive purge in state institutions and in the Military. He purged more than 150,000 state officials at various levels and directed arrests of 50,000 people. The purges and arrests were only possible with the extraordinary authorities provided by the declaration of **State of Emergency**, which was later extended multiple times, and a strand of constitutionally illegal **Emergency Decrees**. In fact, Emergency Decree Laws bypassed the Turkish Parliament's scrutiny. Erdoğan took advantage of the circumstances and steered the Military into shallow waters by purging almost two-thirds of the generals, 90% of staff officers, thousands of officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and other personnel without due process or investigation. Up to now, around 10,000 military officials, around 200 generals/admirals, and 16,500 military cadets were purged.<sup>252</sup> With the help of SADAT's devotees in the Military, Erdoğan targeted the elite cadre of the Turkish Military. He eliminated almost all mid-level generals, nearly all career officers, and huge numbers of other officers, NCOs, and even privates. Even the very young cadets, still at their early ages, were sacked from the military schools. Although the number of the purged personnel may seem a relatively small fraction of an almost 600,000 man-powered Military, in fact, the Military has lost its most skilled and trained leaders and staff. Decades of experience and knowledge have been lost. Now, the once mighty war machine is suffocating under unprecedented purges, arrests and incessant smear campaigns run by Erdoğan's propaganda machine.<sup>253</sup>

Tanrıverdi, in a statement in 2010, said: ***"The Turkish Military should, must and will be changed"***.<sup>254</sup> Tanrıverdi then proposed that AKP's Deputy Prime Ministers, Foreign, Interior and Justice Ministers should be members of the **Supreme Military Council**, which decides for the top cadre of the Military. He also advocated that Turkish General Staff should be downgraded to advisory level, the Land, Air, and Maritime services should directly be subordinated to the Minister of Defense, and the Gendarmerie should be detached from the Military. All of his recommendations came into effect with Emergency Decree Laws since 15 July 2016. Erdoğan changed the composition of the Supreme Military Council and the chain of command of the Military by assigning service branches under the Defense Ministry and allocating Gendarmerie under the Minister of Interior. Erdoğan also targeted the core of military by shutting down all military high schools and by changing the structure of the military education institutions, academies, and war colleges.<sup>255</sup> He drastically changed the structure of the Military, rendering the organization practically ineffective.<sup>256 257 258</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> <https://turkeypurge.com/purge-in-numbers> (as of 17 July 2017)

<sup>253</sup> <https://www.turkishminute.com/2016/11/25/erdogans-secret-army-threat-nato/>

<sup>254</sup> <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/askerler-sivil-anayasa-istedi-361968>

<sup>255</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/c7fb203a-79b2-11e6-97ae-647294649b28>

<sup>256</sup> [http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#\\_ftn68](http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#_ftn68)

<sup>257</sup> <https://www.haberler.com/tsk-da-ve-milli-savunma-bakanligi-nda-yapilan-8664459-haberi/>

It seems easy for Erdoğan to fill up the gap of the purged personnel while all scavengers are hovering on top. The process is underway to build a **new Military of Erdoğan loyalists** at the expense of undermining the second largest Military in NATO. Those with radical tendencies, who did not have a chance to promote before 15 July 2016, are now able to come to the critical positions and ranks within the Turkish Military. Thus SADAT loyalists are filling the personnel vacuum caused by the ongoing massive purge.<sup>259</sup> Tanrıverdi claims that with the new '**competent officers**', the Military would be even stronger.<sup>260</sup>

Tanrıverdi's position as Erdoğan's Chief Advisor renders him the ability to influence the recruitment policy of NATO's second largest Military.<sup>261</sup> Targeting the Military's DNA, Erdoğan crafted executive orders to vest SADAT operatives with the task of recruiting for his new Military. In accordance with the Decree Law dated 31 October 2016, pro-SADAT retired officers and NCOs are tasked in the recruitment of military personnel and cadets to the Turkish Military.<sup>262</sup> This critical change effectively defers the entire personnel policy of the Military to SADAT. Tanrıverdi now has the opportunity to use his ex-military workforce to help 'SADAT qualified candidates' join the Military. For instance, AKP and SADAT, after 15 July 2016, rushed the recruitment of officers for Special Operations Command, which is commanded by **Lieutenant General Zekai Aksakalli**.<sup>263</sup> <sup>264</sup> Aksakalli was Erdoğan's infiltrator and provocateur in the Military during the self-coup.<sup>265</sup>



Figure 62 Aksakalli shakes hands with a Free Syrian Army fighter in Syria.

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<sup>258</sup>Of note, in contemporary law, emergency decree law in principle should be related to the emergency situation and long-term structural changes normally are not to be expected. In practice, when the state of emergency ends decree laws should become ineffective. However, Erdoğan and AKP are manipulating them for substantial structural change in the state system and in the re-organization of the Military.

<sup>259</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/12/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-purge.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/12/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-purge.html?_r=0)

<sup>260</sup> [http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#\\_ftn68](http://www.turkishpedia.com/2017/04/17/erdogans-relations-and-ties-with-radical-terrorist-organizations/\#_ftn68)

<sup>261</sup> <https://www.turkishminute.com/2016/11/25/erdogans-secret-army-threat-nato/>

<sup>262</sup> Ibid

<sup>263</sup> <http://odatv.com/degil-askeri-egitim-gormek-harbiye-marsini-bile-ezberleyemediler-0607171200.html>

<sup>264</sup> <http://odatv.com/erdogan-sadat-ile-turk-ordusuna-bunu-yapmaya-calisiyor-2906171200.html>

<sup>265</sup> <https://www.aei.org/publication/turkish-officers-speak-erdogan-may-have-staged-coup/>

The Turkish Military is going through one of the most difficult times in its history. NATO's second largest Military is now facing a significant change in its structure and culture. The impact is disastrous. Command and control effectiveness is only a mirage. Organizational planning and coordination capabilities are undermined. High-tech equipment, including fighter aircraft, is well short on operators, especially competent, skilled and experienced ones. Mass dismissals after 15 July 2016 induced widespread anxiety inside the Turkish Military. Talking about morale is a futile attempt. One of the biggest dangers for the Turkish Military is that it becomes highly politicized and interest groups inside are now trying to occupy cornerstones as much as they can.

# ERDOĞAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS

## SADAT: Guardian of the Second Turkish Revolution

SADAT can be appropriately compared with the Iran's **Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**, also known as the '**Pasdaran**' (**Persian for 'Guards'**). Such a comparison may provide the potential trajectories for SADAT's involvement in Turkish politics, as well as its own institutional evolution. It's worth to note that the IRGC is a full-fledged organization that has evolved for almost four decades since the Iranian Revolution, whereas SADAT is just a fledgling institution, which seems to be following the footsteps of its Iranian counterpart in many respects. This time gap between the two should be taken into account throughout the following analysis.



Figure 63 The IRGC commanders in a meeting with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei (from Islamic Republic News Agency).

To begin with, the Iranian Revolution (aka the Islamic Revolution or the 1979 Revolution) was the overthrow of Western-backed Shah dynasty and its replacement with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini. During the Revolution, the IRGC was established as an umbrella organization, uniting a number of pro-Khomeini groups and

militias.<sup>266</sup> Putting these various groups together under Khomeini's banner, the IRGC stood out as the central body with a task of stamping out dissident currents within the revolutionary movement. It was mainly structured as a counterweight to the regular military in order to bulwark the revolution against a possible coup. Enshrined in the Iranian law, the IRGC is defined as ***“an institution commanded by the Supreme Leader whose purpose is to protect the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its accomplishments, while striving continuously...to spread the sovereignty of God's law.”*** Today, the IRGC has become a deeply entrenched and multidimensional institution, functioning as a vast socio-political-economic conglomerate, whose influence prevails in every part of Iranian political life and society.<sup>267</sup> Members within the Iranian political system at all ranks from the president to local administrators come from the IRGC. The Guards run a huge apparatus of resources in media, education, economy, and security.

In the security domain, in particular, the IRGC consists of two main operative bodies: **'The Quds Force'** and **'The Basij Militia'**. The Quds Force specializes in foreign missions, providing training, funding, and weapons to extremist groups, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Iraqi insurgents. The Basij, which literally means 'Mobilization', is a paramilitary group tasked with providing popular support for the Iranian regime through mobilizing ordinary volunteers against domestic anti-regime movements by means of street violence and intimidation.<sup>268</sup>

## The Comparison

Erdoğan, notably after the very evidential 2013 corruption scandal, which involved him, his son, and several key people around him, developed paranoia about the possibility of an obligation to step down from his reign. He gradually took many steps to hammer the democratic developments in the recent Turkish political life and turn the direction of the country into a revolutionary wrap by drawing a line between the legacies of the Old and the New Turkey. Following the 15 July 2016 events, Erdoğan's paranoia grew even bigger and he started to openly criticize the Western leaders, especially the United States and the European Union, for not backing him after his self-coup. Capped by the “coup” on 15 July 2016, he intensified his efforts to portray his vision of the “New Turkey”, rising out of the ashes of the Old Turkey, mainly structured around the Western-backed secular establishment.<sup>269</sup>

Prior to the April 2016 constitutional referendum in Turkey, Erdoğan used the diplomatic

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<sup>266</sup> Ostovar, A. (September 7, 2016). Soldiers of the Revolution. Foreign Affairs.

<sup>267</sup> Wehrey, F. M. (2009). The rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the domestic roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Vol. 821): Rand Corporation.

<sup>268</sup> Naji, K. (January 29, 2015). Iran's Revolutionary Guards take lead on foreign affairs. BBC. from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31037425>

<sup>269</sup> Kocamaner, H. (2015). How New Is Erdoğan's "New Turkey"? from <https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB91.pdf>

rows with Netherlands as well as in different European countries, as pretexts to fuel more hostility toward the West while rallying support amongst his own constituency.<sup>270</sup> Such anti-Western sentiments are very similar to the atmosphere during and after the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Nevertheless, whether Erdoğan's New Turkey and Iran's 1979 Revolution are analogous to one another is still open to further discussion, which is not the focus in this analysis. What is more central to this piece is the inquiry whether SADAT's role and mentality during and after the self-coup bears a resemblance to those of the IRGC during and after the revolution in Iran. From an organizational standpoint, SADAT has some marked similarities to the IRGC.

On 15 July 2016, SADAT immediately mobilized pro-Erdoğan paramilitary groups as soon as the tanks started to roll in the streets at the beginning of the self-coup. These groups comprised paramilitary forces like Osmanlı Ocakları, whose members received unconventional warfare tactics from SADAT against formal troops.<sup>271</sup> These militias disguised as ordinary citizens in the crowds, neutralized 60-ton battle tanks, and led people to act against the troops<sup>272</sup>. For countervailing against the revolting factions of the regular army, SADAT played a crucial role in favor of Erdoğan's rule through its own operatives as well as the Ak Youth militias. In this sense, such an organizational and operational structure is very much reminiscent of Basij militias within the IRGC. Basij militias played a similar role in Iran crushing the massive demonstrations to contest the re-election of then-President Ahmadinejad in 2009.<sup>273</sup>

SADAT, with the support of Turkish Intelligence (aka MİT), serves as an agent for foreign missions, which is similar to the Quds Force in the IRGC. In parallel to what the Iranian counterpart has been doing for decades by creating own proxies such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, SADAT has been working with the radical groups within the Syrian insurgents, including al-Nusra Front, Ahrar ash-Sham & Jaysh al-Islam and also the extremist groups in Libya, linked to al-Qaeda and ISIL.<sup>274</sup> SADAT's operations are supported by some Turkish NGOs, including **İmkan-Der** and the **Humanitarian Relief Foundation (İHH)**. Both organizations are the staunch supporters of Erdoğan.

Historically, much of Pasdaran's prominence came with the Iran-Iraq War that took place right after the Revolution. It has become a process in which the IRGC consolidated its domestic stance, and, more importantly, marginalized the regular forces.<sup>275</sup> The cadres hailing from Shah Period were considerably eliminated during the war. In a similar way, Erdoğan, without declaring an ultimate goal, decided to intervene in Syria right after the self-coup despite the unfavorable circumstances for the Turkish involvement in the conflict. Interestingly, a group of soldiers who seemed to actively participate in the coup events was

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<sup>270</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/13/turkey-summons-dutch-envoy-over-riot-police-tactics-in-rotterdam>

<sup>271</sup> <http://www.aei.org/publication/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/>

<sup>272</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL9sV-rXTSw>

<sup>273</sup> Bruno, G. (2009). Background: Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Council on Foreign Relations. June, 22.

<sup>274</sup> <http://www.aei.org/publication/has-sadat-become-erdogans-revolutionary-guards/>

<sup>275</sup> Wehrey, F. M. (2009). The rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the domestic roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Vol. 821): Rand Corporation.

sent to the battlefield, which was noticed during the 15 July trials in their absence.<sup>276</sup>

All of these suggest that SADAT, in the case of Turkey, has many similarities to the IRGC in Iran, especially in functioning as a guardian for the regime. After all, this analysis underscores that the main motivation behind the leaders of Iranian Revolution and Erdoğan is common: to protect their regimes from the opposition in the form of dissident people and non-loyal armies. In Iran, the panacea was devised and developed as an organization named IRGC. There are strong signs that Erdoğan and AKP are following the same footsteps by putting flesh on the bones of SADAT.

What the future holds for SADAT remains to be seen. For comparison with the IRGC down the road, the alarming juncture for SADAT's prospective trajectory would be whether its influence in Turkey will be expanding to the other realms, particularly economic and social life. If so, a Turkish version of IRGC is more likely to arrive at the domestic and international theater. The United States already designated the IRGC as a 'human rights abuser' in 2011 and debates are still underway in the US whether to designate the Guards as a terrorist organization. SADAT, on the same track with IRGC, may be a candidate for such designations on the international stage as the organization breaches international law by supporting radical terrorist groups abroad and violating human rights within the country.

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<sup>276</sup> <http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/15-temmuz-darbe-girisimi-sebebiyle-yargilanan-askerler-el-baba-gonderilmis-183241>

## CONCLUSION

SADAT is a very profitable apparatus for Erdoğan to pursue his hidden agenda and fight his enemies in his quest for total power. Serious evidence indicates that SADAT, as an unsupervised, uncontrolled, unaudited special war entity,<sup>277</sup> provided weapons and counter-guerrilla training to ISIL, Al Nusra and some other extremist groups in the region. Russia's letter to United Nations Security Council, dated 01 February 2016, further shows Erdoğan's ties with ISIL.<sup>278 279 280</sup> The coincidence of Erdoğan's threatening calls to European countries with the explosions in Europe increases the suspicion for the links between Erdoğan and ISIL and other extremist groups in Syria, Libya and Europe.<sup>281</sup>

SADAT played a major role during and after Erdoğan's self-coup on 15 July 2016. SADAT and pro-AKP militia are accused of slaying civilians and brutally slaughtering surrendered conscript soldiers and military cadets to aggravate the situation and increase the chaos. Deliberate prevention of due judicial processes by Erdoğan and his Government implies that many casualties resulted from SADAT's orchestrated actions supervised by the masterminds of the self-coup. Similar to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, SADAT evolves to become Erdoğan's revolutionary guard for establishing a new regime in the country. Tanrıverdi's appointment as Erdoğan's Chief Advisor after 15 July 2016 paved the way for a swift reorganization of the state and the Military. Tanrıverdi's ideas for restructuring the Military and the state institutions were realized by the emergency decree laws and the amendments to the constitution in April 2017. SADAT operatives are now authorized for the recruitment in the Turkish military.

Erdoğan seems much determined to do whatever it takes to hold on to his power at the expense of sliding Turkey into an authoritarian state. His rhetoric, behaviors, and fraud in April 2017 constitutional referendum indicate that the chance for a peaceful transition of power from his rule is very slim. Erdoğan gradually turned his paramilitary organizations into the tools for suppressing the dissidents inside and outside the country.<sup>282</sup> As SADAT's effectiveness was specifically proven tested on 15 July 2016, Erdoğan would not hesitate to use this tool in the future when he deems necessary, to shape the domestic politics, crush the opposition, and fuel a civilian unrest.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> <http://sendika43.org/2016/07/oldurme-dersi-satan-ve-denetlenmeyen-bir-savas-sirketi-sadat/>

<sup>278</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/94](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/94)

<sup>279</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aydoe-an-vatanda/russian-letter-to-unsc-cl\\_b\\_9502784.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/aydoe-an-vatanda/russian-letter-to-unsc-cl_b_9502784.html)

<sup>280</sup> <http://www.voltairenet.org/article191990.html>

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<sup>283</sup> <http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/durumdan-vazife-cikaran-orgutlenmeler-157783h.htm>, or can be retrieved from <http://linkis.com/www.ilc-kursun.com/h/U51si>



Erdođan's path is not only dangerous for Turkey but also for the region, the Middle East, and Europe. For the democracy to prevail in Turkey again, Erdođan must be stopped. Erdođan is pulling the nation, the country, and the region towards a cliff, where the chance of a hard fall is immense. The Turkish people should not close their eyes to the harsh reality. They must act immediately and resolutely to stop Erdođan and revert the country back to democracy. The international community, including UN, NATO and EU should do their part to prevent this 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictator drastically degrading international peace and stability.

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- <https://www.rt.com/news/327222-isis-fighters-turkey-training/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/13/turkey-summons-dutch-envoy-over-riot-police-tactics-in-rotterdam>
- <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/01/16/turkish-military-says-mit-shipped-weapons-to-al-qaeda>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9UTxCOV21Q>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=angZWlvibJ0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQnDQUVaTwY>
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# Turkey prevents UN visit to hide its use of mercenaries in armed conflicts

January 3, 2024 AA



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## **Abdullah Bozkurt/Stockholm**

Turkey has refused to permit the visit of the UN watchdog group on the use of mercenaries since November 2015, when the international body initially submitted a request to visit the country on a fact-finding mission.

Behind Turkey's prolonged lack of response to the UN request lies the concern of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government over revealing Turkey's involvement in using proxy fighter groups to intervene in conflicts beyond its borders.

According to information available on the website of the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination, Turkey was initially informed of the UN's request to visit the country on November 12, 2015.

Nevertheless, Turkey disregarded the UN group's initial letter, leading to a second communication on February 24, 2016 as a reminder to Turkish authorities of the international body's interest in visiting Turkey for information gathering. Unfortunately, the second letter also received no response from the Turkish side. The UN watchdog group persisted in renewing the request on March 31, 2022, indicating its intention to visit Turkey in 2023. Once again, Turkey ignored the UN communication.

The UN working group, established in July 2015 by the Human Rights Council, comprises independent experts, and its resolutions are routinely adopted by the UN General Assembly. Conducting fact-finding missions necessitates the host country's permission. Turkey has thus far impeded such visits by failing to respond to UN requests.

*UN letter to Turkey addressing the deployment of mercenaries to support Azerbaijan's offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh:*





The working group's interest in visiting Turkey arose in response to credible reports of the increased use of mercenaries, military contractors and foreign fighters by the Islamist Erdogan government in Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan.

In recent years the UN group has sent numerous inquiries to Turkey, seeking additional information about the Erdogan government's involvement in the recruitment, financing, transportation and deployment of foreign fighters to Libya and Azerbaijan.

The role of Turkish paramilitary contractor SADAT, led by President Erdogan's former chief military advisor Adnan Tanrıverdi, was also questioned by UN officials in their letters to the Turkish government. SADAT, an abbreviation for Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi, a for-profit company, was implicated in the training of fighters in Libya and Syria.



An Armenian soldier looks through binoculars at the checkpoint near the line of demarcation outside Askeran on November 21, 2020 (Photo by Andrey BORODULIN / AFP)

In a letter addressed to Turkey on November 6, 2020, the UN group stated that it had acquired information indicating Turkey's involvement in recruiting individuals through armed groups primarily affiliated with the Turkey-backed Syrian National Army (SNA). These people were recruited for deployment to Azerbaijan in support of military operations in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. The fighters were allegedly promised a monthly salary of up to \$2,500 along with additional compensation, including Turkish citizenship for their family members in the event of their death.

Their deployment, training and logistics were allegedly facilitated by contractors operating under the guidance of the Turkish security service. According to the letter, during the period between September 20 and 25, 2020, an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 fighters were believed to have been deployed to Azerbaijan, with thousands more in the process of recruitment. The government of Armenia submitted a detailed report, presenting evidence of such deployments to Nagorno-Karabakh supporting the Azerbaijani military offensive.



A special team from the Turkish military was deployed in March 2021 to Nagorno Karabakh to clear land mines planted by Armenian forces.

The UN group emphasized that it was “gravely concerned about the recruitment and transfer of fighters from Syria to Azerbaijan,” noting that such actions contravene international humanitarian law and international human rights law. “We remain concerned that those deployed to Azerbaijan are affiliated with armed groups and individuals that, in some cases, have been accused of war crimes and serious human rights abuses during the conflict in Syria, thus seemingly perpetuating a cycle of impunity and risking further abuses of international law,” the letter stated.

Turkey responded to the UN letter, saying that all the allegations were fake news, fabrications or black propaganda.

*Turkish response to allegations on deployment of mercenaries to Azerbaijan:*







Similarly, the UN highlighted a comparable practice by Turkey in deploying Syrian fighters to Libya in a letter sent on June 10, 2020. The letter indicated that in December 2019, Turkish authorities organized meetings with armed factions affiliated with the SNA to deploy their fighters to Tripoli in support of the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA). Fighters were promised up to \$200 as monthly compensation, and SADAT was believed to have been involved in the selection of fighters.

Some of these factions that were enlisted for deployment had allegedly committed war crimes and serious human rights abuses, including the recruitment of children, severe restrictions on women's rights in areas controlled by some of the groups and instances of extrajudicial killings.

*UN letter to Turkey addressing deployment of mercenaries to support armed factions in Libya:*



Turkey responded to the UN’s Libya letter on September 17, 2020, accusing the UN group of bias and labeling the allegations as unfounded. When the UN group sent the letter regarding Azerbaijan, it noted that Turkey “did not substantively address the allegations raised” regarding the deployment of Syrian fighters to Libya.

A report to Congress by the lead inspector general for East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations at the US Department of Defense said Turkey had dispatched between 3,500 and 3,800 paid Syrian fighters to Libya in the first three months of the year. This deployment occurred two months before a series of Turkish-backed victories by the Tripoli forces. Furthermore, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claimed that the total number of Syrian mercenaries in Libya had reached 16,500 by the end of July 2020.

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*Turkish response to allegations of deployment of mercenaries to Libya:*

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**Erdogan accelerates using Gaza war for propaganda in schools, praising Hamas**

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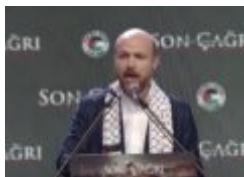
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# Exhibit 21

# Turkish paramilitary firm Sadat's CEO admits working with Turkish intelligence agency MIT

by [Abdullah Bozkurt](#) — May 2, 2021



Sadat's headquarters in Istanbul.

**Abdullah Bozkurt/Stockholm**

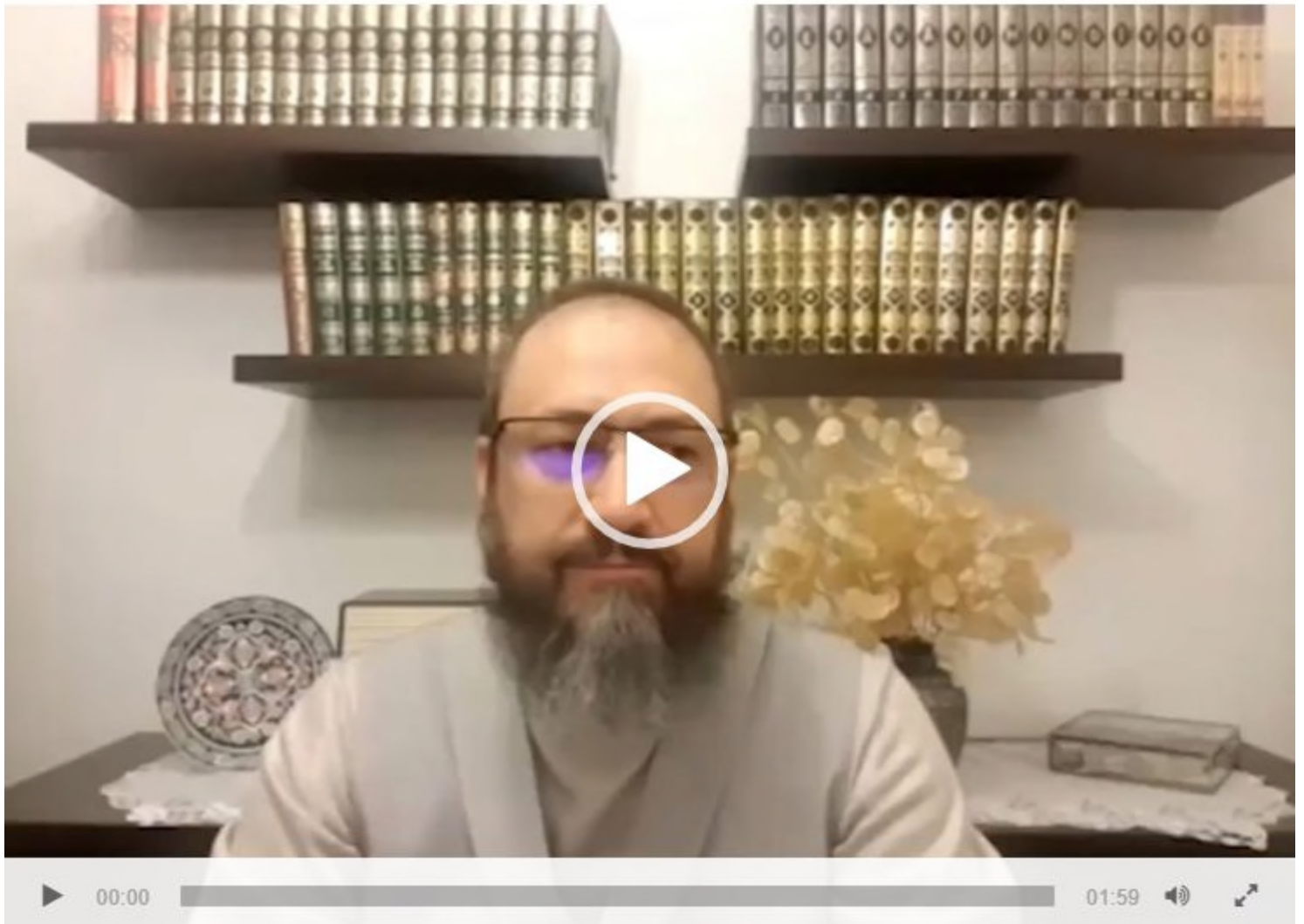
The CEO of Turkish private military contractor Sadat, a paramilitary unit loyal to the Islamist president of Turkey, admitted publicly that the firm works with Turkish intelligence agency MIT and

coordinates actions with Turkish diplomats and defense officials.

In a video obtained by Nordic Monitor from a radio interview, Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi was recorded as saying that the firm communicates with the spy agency when it considers requests from a foreign entity to provide military, defense and technical assistance.

“We do the following when we receive an offer that meets our own service provision criteria. We communicate the offer from a country to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. We also provide information to the National Intelligence Organization [MIT] and the Ministry of Defense about the request and ask for their views. This is the way we work,” said Tanrıverdi in an interview with a local radio station on January 22, 2021.

Tanrıverdi is chairman of the board of Sadat Uluslararası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi, a for-profit company that was set up by his father Adnan Tanrıverdi and his associates on February 22, 2012. His father is a former military officer who served as a chief advisor to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for years.





The company's establishment coincided with the start of the Arab revolutions during which Turkey's Islamist ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) invested in political, diplomatic and financial as well as military capital to prop up political Islamist groups in the Middle East and North Africa. Sadat came in handy in providing defense counseling, tactical advice and military procurement in parallel with Erdoğan's ambition to bring Islamists to power in the MENA region.

Melih Tanrıverdi claimed Sadat was not established to make money, although trade registry data shows it was a commercial firm with capital and shareholders. "The efforts we have expended were for a mission. I mean, the goal is not to make money," Tanrıverdi said, adding that "Turkey is moving towards becoming a global power." He praised Erdoğan's leadership in this mission and described the president as the biggest factor in Turkey's military engagements on several continents.

Tanrıverdi confirmed allegations raised by the Turkey's opposition lawmakers who were asking about Sadat's links to the intelligence agency. The opposition also submitted parliamentary questions to the government about the alleged role of Sadat in training Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Syrian al-Qaeda group Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Nusra Front) fighters. Moreover, Sadat was accused of training jihadists sent by Turkey to fight for the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya.

*Sadat's trade registry filings when it was first established in 2012:*

Loading... See Page 7 Below
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His father Adnan Tanrıverdi is an important figure in Erdoğan's inner circle. Although he left his official position as chief military advisor to Erdoğan in January 2020, he still plays a crucial role in the government's defense and military strategy. He announced during the 2019 Islamic Union Congress that his organization had been working to pave the way for the long-awaited mahdi (prophesied redeemer of Islam), for whom the entire Muslim world is waiting. The implication was that President Erdoğan is the expected leader and mahdi.



Tanrıverdi, founder of Sadat, visited Libya in May 2013 and met with Libyan military officials.

Sadat has been involved in a number of Arab and African nations, providing military training and offering counseling in military and defense strategies. It helps promote the Turkish defense industry, which by and large is controlled by Erdoğan's family and associates. It has played a critical role in the massive purge of pro-Western officers from the Turkish military since 2016 during which 80 percent of all flag officers were dismissed and/or jailed on fabricated charges.

When it was first established in Istanbul in 2012 with 23 shareholders and led by Adnan Tanrıverdi, the scope of its business activities was listed in extensive detail, including the purchase of all kinds of military and defense equipment including planes and ships. The company said it would seek to protect the interests of Turkey when offering technical, military and defense counseling services or purchasing arms and ammunition. It had an initial paid-in capital of 643,000 Turkish lira (\$367,000), which appears to be a modest figure for a company involved in the multi-billion dollar military and defense industry market.

*Sadat's shareholders as of 2020:*

Loading... See Last Page

Two months later, Sadat amended its articles of incorporation to have a free hand in its activities. On June 28, 2016 Sadat increased its operating capital to 880,000 Turkish lira. The capital was further increased to 1,584,000 Turkish lira in November 2020. The company moved its office to its current location in Istanbul's Beylikdüzü district in May 2019.

The board of directors comprises Adnan Tanrıverdi, his son Ali Kamil Melih, Mehmet Zelka, Mehmet Naci Efe and Haluk Yıldırım. Tanrıverdi and his son hold the majority stake in the company.

Forty-seven other shareholders were listed as follows as of November 2020:

Ali Özden, Mehmet Demirtaş, Mustafa Nejat Güvenç, Mustafa Bozgeyik, Mehmet Emin Koçak, Kemal Şahin, Mehmet Zelka, Reşat Fidan, Mustafa Başaran, Ersan Ergür, Hulusi Gülen, Hayati Atalay, Ali Coşar, Ahmet Cengiz Tangören, Ahmet Taylan, Cengiz Uzun, Yakup Evirgen, Yahya Öztürk, Nurettin Yavuz, Mehmet İlhan, Mustafa Hacımustafaoğulları, Eyyup İsmail Kılınç, Mehmet Abdullah Kaplan, Osman Kaçmaz, Zafer Şahin, Çetin Çanak, Orhan Adıyaman, Mustafa Erol, Sabri Balaman, Coşkun Yüksel, Mehmet Çakiroğlu, Mehmet Yüksel Güneş, Ömer Yenici, Selahattin Arslan, Yavuz Sulumeşe, Ahmet Türkan, Fethi Kiran, Gürcan Onat, İrfan Çalışkan, Mehmet İnkaya, Sadı Paksoy, Yavuz Zülükaroğlu, Hayrettin Kocaoğlu, Said Ceyhan, Sefa Göze, İsmail Kaplan and Tansel Cavit Kulak.



Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi, the CEO of Sadat.

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## Abdullah Bozkurt

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**EURO İNVEST CAPITAL  
DİŞ TİCARET LİMİTED  
ŞİRKETİ**

**Ticari İkametgahı:** İstanbul  
Bakırköy Yeşilköy Şevketiye  
Mh.Havaalanı Kav. Business P.B-2  
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Ticari Merkezi ile sicil numarası ve ünvanı yukarıda yazılı ve 22.02.2012 tarihinden beri kurulmuş olan limited şirketin İstanbul 10.Noterliğince 21.02.2012 tarih 4481 sayılı ile düzenlenen esas mukavelesinin tesvil ve ilanı istenmiş, aynı noterliğin 21.02.2012 tarih 4482 sayılı ile onaylı imza beyannamesi memuriyetimize verilmiş olmakla, 6762 sayılı Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine uygun olarak ve memurluğumuzdaki vesikalara dayanılarak 22.02.2012 tarihinde tesvil edildiği ilan olunur.

**Euro Invest Capital Dış  
Ticaret Limited Şirketi**  
**Ana Sözleşmesi**

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Aşağıda adları, soyadları, ikametgahları ve uyrukları yazılı kurucular arasında TTK hükümlerine göre bir Limited Şirket kurulmuştur.

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2-Hasan Gültekin, T.C Uyrukları,  
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Şirketin ünvanı EURO Invest  
Capital Dış Ticaret Limited  
Şirketi'dir.

**Amaç Ve Konu**  
**Madde:3**

Şirketin amaç ve konusu başlıca  
şunlardır

1-Her nevi tekstil ve tekstil  
ürünleri ile deri ürünleri, her nevi  
kumaş örme iplik elyaf her türlü iç  
ve dış giyim mamul ve ham  
maddelerinin alımı, satımı, ithalat  
ve ihracatını yapmak,

2-Her türlü endüstriyel dikiş ve  
sanayi iplikleri alımı, satımı, ithalat  
ve ihracatını yapmak,

3-Her türlü petrol, petrol  
türevleri alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak.

4-Her türlü demir-çelik ürünleri  
alımı, satımı, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

5-Her türlü elektrikli ve  
elektronik kontrol aletleri,  
elektronik devre elemanları,  
iletken, yarı iletken ve entegre  
devre elemanları, mikroçipler ve  
bunların birleştirme elemanlarının  
alım, satımı ile ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

6-Her türlü gıda maddelerini  
almak, satmak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

7-Her türlü İnşaat malzemeleri  
almak, satmak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

8-Bilimum kimyasal maddeler  
ve her türlü yardımcı kimyevi  
maddeler ve bunların üretiminde  
kullanılan mamul, yarı mamul,  
ham maddeleri almak, satmak,  
ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak,

9-Her türlü sanayi ve iş  
makineleri,cihazları ile bunlara ait  
yedek parçaları, teçhizat ve  
ekipmanlarının alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak,

10-Mobilya ve dekorasyon  
malzemeleri alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak.

11-Her türlü orman ürünlerini  
almak, satmak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak.

12-Her türlü motorlu taşıt  
ticareti, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak,

13-Her türlü elektrik ve  
elektronik ev aletleri alımı, satımı,  
ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak,

14-Lastik, kauçuk ve plastik ile  
ilgili her türlü mamul ve  
malzemenin alımını, satımını,  
pazarlamasını, ithalatını, ihracatını  
ve dahili ticaretini yapmak.

15-Her türlü bakliyat, hububat  
ve her türlü tarım ürünlerinin  
alımını, satımını, pazarlamasını,  
ithalatını, ihracatını ve dahili  
ticaretini yapmak. Her çeşit tahıl  
ürünlerinin toptan ve perakende  
alım satımını, ithalatını ve  
ihracatını yapmak

16-Şirket mevzuunun icap  
ettireceği makine ve tesisler ile  
bilimlele snai ve ticari işlerin  
tahakkuku için yerli ve yabancı  
hakiki ve hükmi şahıslar ile  
mevzuatlar çerçevesinde süreli ve  
süresiz her neviden ortaklık tesis  
edebilir, bunların Türkiye  
dihilinde distribütörlüğünü yahut  
mümessilligini yapabilir, yurt  
içinde ve yurt dışında kurulmuş  
veya kurulacak ortaklıklara iştirak  
edebilir, her neviden ortaklıklara,  
aracılık yapmama kaydı ile hisse  
senetlerini, intifa senetlerini  
tahvillerini satın alabilir, devir ve  
ferah edebilir. Şirket gereğinde her  
türlü kefalet altına girebilir.

17-Şirket mevzuunun  
gerektirdiği patent, ihtira berati,  
marka, ustalık (know-how),  
ruhsatname ve diğer fikri ve snai  
mülkiyet satın alabilir satabilir  
devir ve ferah edebilir, bunlar  
üzerinde lisans anlaşmaları  
yapabilir.

18-Şirket iç ve dış piyasalardan  
uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli istikrazlar  
akdetmek, emval ve kefalet  
kredileri temin etmek, yatırım ve  
teşvik kredileri almak ve bilimum  
banka kredileri, akreditif kredileri,  
esham ve tahvil üzerine krediler,

esnet üzerinde avans kredileri ve  
açık krediler temin edebilir.

19-Şirket konusu ile ilgili resmi,  
özel kuruluşlara veya şahıslara  
karşı ihalelere katılır taahhütlerde  
bulunabilir.

20-Şirket ticaret siciline tesvil ve  
Türkiye Ticaret Sicil gazetesinde  
ilan ettirmek, şartıyla yurt içinde ve  
yurt dışında şubeler, temsilcilikler,  
show-roomlar, çeşitli iş yerleri ve  
bunlara mümessillikler açabilir.

21-Şirket amacını  
gerçekleştirmek için her türlü  
gayrimenkul alabilir, satabilir,  
kiralar, kiraya verir, bunlar  
üzerinde aynı ve şahsi her türlü  
hakları tesis edebilir, ipotek  
alabilir, ipotek verebilir ve  
ipotekleri fek edebilir. Şirket  
gayrimenkulleri üzerinde irtifak,  
intifa, stüka, gayrimenkul  
mükellefiyeti, kat irtifakı, kat  
mülkiyeti tesis edebilir. Her türlü  
gayrimenkullere ilgili olarak tapu  
daireleri nezdinde cins tashihi,  
ifraz, tevhid, taksim, parselasyon  
ile ilgili her nevi muamele ve  
tasarrufları gerçekleştirebilir.

**Şirketin Merkezi**  
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Kat:12 No:371 Yeşilköy-  
Bakırköy/İstanbul'dur.

Adres değişikliğinde yeni adres,  
Ticaret Siciline tesvil ve Türkiye  
Ticaret Sicil Gazetesinde ilan  
ettirilir. Tesvil ve ilan edilmiş  
adrese yapılan tebliğat şirkete  
yapılmış sayılır. Tesvil ve ilan  
edilmiş adresten ayrılması  
rağmen, yeni adresini süresi içinde  
tesvil ettirmemiş şirket için bu  
durum fesih sebebi sayılır.

**Süre**  
**Madde:5**

-Şirketin süresi tesvil ve ilan  
tarihinden başlamak üzere 99  
(Doksan dokuz) yıldır.

**Sermaye**  
**Madde:6**

-Şirketin sermayesi 100.000,00  
(Yüzbin) TL'dir bu sermayenin;  
50.000,00 (Ellibin)TL. si  
GASAN MAMEDOV,  
50.000,00 (Ellibin)TL. si Hasan  
Gültekin  
tarafından muazadan ari olarak  
ve tamamen taahhüt  
edilmiştir.Sermayenin 1/4'ü şirket  
kuruluşunun tesvil tarihinden  
itibaren en geç üç ay içinde, kalanı  
ise 20.02.2015 tarihinde  
ödeneyecektir.

**İlan**  
**Madde:7**

Şirkete ait ilanlar, T.T.K. 37.  
Mad. Hükümleri saklı kalmak  
şartıyla, şirket merkezinin  
bulunduğu yerde en az bir gazete  
ile asgari yedi gün evvel yapılır.

**Şirketin İdaresi**  
**Madde:8**

Şirketin işleri ve muameleleri  
ortaklar kurulu tarafından seçilecek

bir veya birkaç müdür tarafından  
yürütülür.

İlk 1(Bir) yıl için Şirket  
Ortaklarından Hasan Gültekin  
şirket müdürü seçilmiştir.

**Temsil**  
**Madde:9**

-Şirketi müdürler temsil ve ilzam  
ederler. Şirketi temsil ve ilzam  
edecek imzalar ortaklar kurulu  
tarafından tesbit, tesvil ve ilan  
ettirilir. İlk 1 yıl için müdür seçilen  
Hasan Gültekin müferit imzası ile  
temsil ve ilzama yetkili kılınmıştır.

**Hesap Dönemi**  
**Madde:10**

Şirketin hesap yılı 1 Ocak-31  
aralık tarihleri arasındır. İlk hesap  
yılı tesvil tarihinden itibaren 31  
aralık gününe kadardır.

**Yedek Akçe**  
**Madde:11**

Safı kardan her yıl öncelikle %5  
ihtiyat akçesi ayrılır. İhtiyat akçesi  
şirket ödenmiş sermayesinin  
%20'sine çıkıncaya kadar ayrılır.  
Kanuni ve ihtiyari yedek akçeler,  
kanun ve bu ana sözleşme  
hükümlerine göre ayrılması  
gerekli miktar safı kardan  
ayrılmadıkça hissedarlara kâr  
dağılımaz.

**Karın Dağıtımı**  
**Madde:12**

Şirketin safı kârı, şirket adına  
yapılmış her türlü masrafların  
çıkarılmasından sonra kalan  
miktarıdır. Kanuni yedek akçe  
ayrıldıktan sonra kalan miktar  
ortaklar kurulunca alınacak karara  
göre hissedarlara hisseleri oranında  
dağılır.Ödenmiş sermayenin %5'i  
nisbetinde ilk temettü ayrılır.

**Kanuni Hükümler**  
**Madde:13**

Bu anasözleşmede bulunmayan  
hususlar hakkında T.T.K.  
Hükümleri uygulanır.

Hasan Gültekin imza  
Gasan Mamedov imza

(5/A)24/110459)

**İstanbul Ticaret Sicili**  
**Memurluğundan**

**Sicil Numarası:809300**

**Ticaret Ünvanı:**  
**SADAT ULUSLAR ARASI**  
**SAVUNMA DANIŞMANLIK**  
**İNŞAAT SANAYİ VE**  
**TİCARET ANONİM ŞİRKETİ**

**Ticari İkametgahı:**İstanbul  
Beylikdüzü Adnan Kahveci  
Mah.Caner Sok. No.3

Ticari Merkezi ile sicil numarası  
ve ünvanı yukarıda yazılı ve  
22.02.2011 tarihinden beri  
kurulmuş olan anonim şirketin  
Bakırköy 17.Noterliğince  
24.11.2011 tarih 23658 sayılı ile  
düzenlenen esas mukavelesinin,  
aynı noterliğince 22.02.2012 tarih

3732 sayılı ile düzenlenen düzeltme  
beyannamesinin tesvil ve ilanı  
istenmiş, Bakırköy 17.Noterliğin  
24.11.2011 tarih 23657 sayılı ile  
onaylı imza beyannamesi  
memuriyetimize verilmiş olmakla,  
6762 sayılı Türk Ticaret Kanunu  
hükümlerine uygun olarak ve  
memurluğumuzdaki vesikalara  
dayanılarak 22.02.2012 tarihinde  
tesvil edildiği ilan olunur.

**Sadat Uluslar Arası Savunma**  
**Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi Ve**  
**Ticaret Anonim Şirketi**  
**Ana Sözleşmesi**  
**Kuruluş**  
**Madde 1**

Aşağıda adları, soyadları,  
uyrukları, T.C.kimlik numaraları  
ve ikametgahları yazılı kurucular  
arasında anonim şirket  
kurulmuştur.

1.1. Adnan Tanrıverdi T.C.  
Uyrukları 37234816206  
Marmara Mahallesi, Önder  
Caddesi, No:4H/3  
Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

1.2. Mehmet Naci Efe T.C.  
Uyrukları 43738688232

Atakent Mahallesi, Akdeniz  
Caddesi, Altan Erbulak Sokak  
No:16 Ümraniye/İstanbul

1.3. Mehmet Tek T.C. Uyrukları  
36589792616

Atatürk Mahallesi, Ahmet Mert  
Sokak, No:5/17 Ümraniye/İstanbul

1.4. Nurettin Yavuz  
T.C.Uyrukları 23860602276

Yakuplu Mahallesi, Gazi Emir  
Caddesi, Yeni Uluklar Sitesi, B  
Blok No:3/5 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

1.5. Yusuf Çağlayan  
T.C.Uyrukları 72889057208

Şevket Mahallesi, Demet Sokak,  
Yücel Apartmanı, No:9/4  
Keçiören/İstanbul

1.6. Reşat Fidan T.C.Uyrukları  
11464782890

Manyasızade Caddesi, No:49/6  
Fatih/İstanbul

1.7. Bülent Demir T.C.Uyrukları  
28736238740

Başak Mahallesi, 1. Etap D:15  
Blok Kat:9 D:39  
Başakşehir/İstanbul

1.8. Seyda Ünlükul T.C.Uyrukları  
28598302658

Yazıcızade Mahallesi, Miralay  
Şefik Aker Caddesi, Duygu  
Apartmanı, No:9  
Gelibolu/Çanakkale

1.9. Cengiz Uzun T.C.Uyrukları  
47245806332

Başak Mahallesi, 4. Etap, 1.  
Kısım, K8 Blok D:7  
Başakşehir/İstanbul

1.10. Ersan Ergür T.C. Uyrukları  
17425939808

Mehmet Akif Ersoy Caddesi,  
No:21 Yeşilyayla Durakent Sitesi,  
C Blok, No:13 Başakşehir/İstanbul

1.11. Ünal İsgören T.C.Uyrukları  
34100397906

Bağlarbaşı Mahallesi, Fevzullah  
Caddesi, No:109/2.  
Maltepe/İstanbul

1.12. Osman Kaçmaz  
T.C. Uyrukları  
26942205280

İstiklal Mahallesi, Marmara  
Caddesi, No:7/15  
Ümraniye/İstanbul

1.13. Gürol Özşemeli T.C.  
Uyrukları 22984498130

(Devamı 426. Sayfada)

(Baştarafı 425 - Sayfada)  
Ulus Mahallesi, Orhanveli  
Caddesi, Balıoğlu Apartmanı,  
No:328/10 Kepez/Anafaya

1.14. Mustafa  
Hacimustafaoğulları T.C. Uyrukl  
41665714420

Çamlık Mahallesi, Akasya  
Sokak, No:4/3  
Kurtköy/Pendik/İstanbul

1.15. Ahmet Türkân T.C.  
Uyrukl  
11908851014

Başak Konutları, D.106 Blok  
D.16 Kağıthane/İstanbul

1.16. Fethi Kıran T.C. Uyrukl  
68884071530

Esenkent Mahallesi, Elit Kent  
Sitesi, No:10 B-25/8  
Esenyurt/İstanbul

1.17. Gürcan Onat T.C. Uyrukl  
21176465080

Sarıgözü Caddesi, No:4/8  
Fatih/İstanbul

1.18. Mustafa Erol T.C. Uyrukl  
28264819718

Elmalıkent Mahallesi, Mandıra  
Caddesi, Demiral Sitesi, A-1 Blok  
D:18 Ümraniye/Çankırı

1.19. Mehmet Çakroğlu T.C.  
Uyrukl  
10678750442

Dumlupınar Mahallesi, Altındağ  
Sokak, No:4/7 Pendik/İstanbul

1.20. Haluk Yıldırım T.C.  
Uyrukl  
42442451972

Güzelyurt, Hasan Kerim  
Caddesi, Mavi Işık Sitesi, B 1  
Blok, D.23 Esenyurt/İstanbul

1.21. Mehmet Demirtaş T.C.  
Uyrukl  
42442451972

Yakuplu Mahallesi, 194. Sokak,  
No:28/4 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

1.22. Mehmet Zelka T.C.  
Uyrukl  
26536832038

Büyükdşehir Mahallesi, B:13  
Blok, D:21 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

1.23. Mehmet İlhan T.C.  
Uyrukl  
24842259792

Başak Mahallesi, Ertuğrul Gazi  
Caddesi, No:18/A D:8  
Başakşehir/İstanbul

#### Sirketin Ünvanı

##### Madde 2

Sirketin ünvanı, "Sadat Uluslar  
Arası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat  
Sanayi Ve Ticaret Anonim  
Şirketi"dir.

#### Amaç Ve Konu

##### Madde 3

3.1. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti  
Devletinin çıkarlarını gözeterek,  
ihtiyaç duyan dost  
ülkelere:savunma danışmanlığı,  
Güvenlik Güçlerinin  
organizasyonu, (Teşkilat, malzeme  
ve kadro), Güvenlik Güçlerinin  
eğitimi, (İlgili ülke, Türkiye veya  
üçüncü ülkelerde), Güvenlik  
Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyacağı silah,  
mühimmat, araç-gereç, kıyafet ve  
yıyeceklerin ilgili ülke, Türkiye ve  
üçüncü ülkelerden üretimi, alı-  
satis, tedarik ve temini için ihaleler  
açmak, ihalelere girmek, teklifler  
vermek, teklifler almak, ihalat ve  
ihraat yapmak, Güvenlik  
Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyduğu her  
türlü elektrik, elektronik, yazılım,  
donanım, bakım ve servis  
hizmetlerini vermek, Güvenlik  
Güçlerinin mevcut silah ve  
malzemelerinin yenileştirilmesi ve  
Silahsız kuvvetlerinin iskan ve  
eğitim için ihtiyaç duyulan  
tesislerin inşaatının yapılması.

3.2. Dost Ülkeler arasında  
savunma ve savunma sanayi  
işbirliği ortamını oluşturmak, bu

konularda danışmanlık  
yapmak;Türkiye savunma sanayi  
ürünlerine Pazar ortamı  
oluşturmak, ilgili konularda  
devletler arası organizasyonları  
sağlamak;

3.3. Amaca uygun her türlü  
hizmet ve malzemenin üretimini,  
ihtalat ve ihracatını, pazarlama ve  
dağılımını yapmak, eğitimini  
vermek;

3.4. İlgili Ülkede, Türkiye'de ve  
üçüncü Ülkelerde amaca uygun  
diğer şirketlerden taşeronluk  
hizmeti almak ve vermek.

3.5. Bir Güvenlik Gücünün  
ihtiyacı olan personel, araç, gemi,  
uçak helikopter, malzeme ve  
silahlar için:spor, eğitim, atış ve  
simülasyon sistem ve tesisleri  
yapmak, yaptırmak, çalıştırmak ve  
bu tesislerde eğitimlerin fiili  
uygulamalarını yapmak,  
yaptırmak, kiralamak ve kiraya  
vermek, gerektiğinde eğitim  
danışmanlığı hizmeti vermek.

3.6. Her türlü yapı  
malzemelerinin üretimini, alım ve  
satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak;Yurtiçi veya yurtdışında  
her türlü maden, doğal taş yarı ve  
yerüstü kaynaklarının  
çıkartılması, işlenmesi ithalat ve  
ihracatının yapılması.

3.7. Her türlü seramik,  
kalebodur, fayans, granit, mermer,  
taş, bordur, tezgah, lavabo, tuvalet  
taşı ve benzeri taşların, demir,  
çimento, kireç, tel, tuğla, kiremit ve  
her türlü inşaat malzemeleri ve  
yardımcı malzemelerinin üretimini,  
alım satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak;

3.8. Her türlü ıslak ve kuru  
zemlinere yönelik uygulamalar  
yapmak, musluk, armatör, vana,  
boru, vitrifiye, mutfak ve banyo  
dolapları, çatı malzemeleri, ve  
inşaatlarda kullanılan her türlü  
malzeme ve aksesuarlarının  
üretimini, alım satımını, ithalat ve  
ihracatını yapmak;

3.9. Balkon, cam önü, merdiven,  
teras, bahçe, işyeri ve benzeri  
yerlere yönelik duvar, küpeşte,  
korkuluk gibi dekoratif  
uygulamalar yapmak, bunları  
üretmek, alım satımını yapmak,  
hazır olarak, mamul veya yarı  
mamul olarak yurt dışından ithalat  
ve ihracat yapmak.

3.10. Bina, ev, villa ve iş  
merkezlerine yönelik alüminyum  
cephe giydirmeleri yapmak, şekil  
vermek, bu tip yerlere yönelik  
çalışmalar yapmak.

3.11. Her türlü demir çelik  
ürünleri;saç, çinko, pirinç, bakır,  
sarı, zamak, galvaniz saç, külçe,  
platina, U demiri, L demiri, flanş,  
boru eklenti parçalarının alımını  
satımını yapmak, imalatını, ithalat  
ve ihracatını yapmak.

3.12. Her türlü demir, profil,  
ahşap ve ferforjeden korkuluk,  
kepenk, kapı, kilit ve yardımcı  
malzemelerini yapmak, üretmek  
pazarlamak, ithalat ve ihracatını  
yapmak.

3.13. Her türlü inşaat taahhüt  
işleri, konut, işyeri, ticarethane  
inşaatlarını yapmak, satmak, kendi  
hesabına arazi ve arsalar almak  
bunlar üzerinde veya başkalarına  
ait arsa ve araziler üzerinde kat  
karşılığı binalar yapmak;

3.14. Yurt içinde ve yurt dışında  
her türlü resmi ve özel sektöre ait  
inşaat taahhüt ve montaj işler

yapmak ve müstakil konut,  
işhanları, fabrikalar, yollar, baraj  
ve göletler, park ve bahçe  
düzenlemeleri ve turistik tesisler,  
tatil köyleri inşa etmek, kiralamak  
ve kiraya vermek;

3.15. Türkiye sınırları içinde  
veya yabancı ülkelerde, resmi ve  
özel kurum ve kuruluşları  
tarafından kapalı zarf, açık  
artırma, eksiltme, teklif alma ve  
pazarlık usulü ile ihaleye  
çıkartılacak her türlü küçük  
veya büyük yapıların her türlü inşaat  
işlerini anahtar teslimi taahhüt  
etmek ve yapmak ve yaptırmak;

3.16. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti  
devleti bakanlıklarının ve  
bakanlığa bağlı resmi kuruluşların,  
kamu iktisadi teşebbüsleri, iktisadi  
devlet teşekkülleri, kamu iktisadi  
kuruluşları tarafından yurt içinde  
ve yurt dışında ihaleye çıkarılan  
inşaat, elektrik, tesisat, yol, su,  
kanalizasyon, doğalgaz, altyapı,  
üstü yapı, dekorasyon, restorasyon  
işlerinin yeniden veya onarımı  
ihalelerine katılmak, teklif vermek,  
ihale şirkete kalırsa ihale  
sözleşmesi gereği işi yapmak ve  
teslim etmek;

3.17. Prefabrikte inşaat ve  
meskenler yapmak, yaptırmak ve  
bunları satmak kiraya vermek;

3.18. Her türlü havuz inşaatı ve  
arıtma işleri, dekorasyon işleri,  
tamirat ve boya işleri yapmak;

3.19. Her türlü mimarlık ve  
mühendislik hizmetleri vermek,  
proje ve uygulamalar yapmak,  
şehir ve imar planları hazırlamak  
ve uygulamalarını yapmak;

3.20. Dekorasyonla ilgili spor  
salonlarının saha çizimi, boya,  
parke ve cam cila, duvar kağıdı,  
halıfleks, asma tavan, kartonpiyer,  
fayans, kalebodur, su ve elektrik  
tesisatı, çatı ve tadilat işlerini  
yapmak;

3.21. Her türlü bina, büro, tesis  
ve yapılar ile peyzaj mimarisi ve  
çevre düzenlemesi alanında  
mimarlık, mühendislik, teknik  
müşavirlik hizmetleri olarak plan,  
proje, teknik hesaplar,  
danışmanlık, etüd, araştırma,  
tasarım, fizibiliteleme yapmak,  
bununla ilgili hizmet grupları  
oluşturmak ve işletmek;

3.22. Durum halihazır, kadastro,  
yer altı maden ocakları, deniz gibi,  
tünel ve baraj, yol, su,  
kanalizasyon, boru hattı gibi şerit  
harıtlarının yapımı, parselasyon  
planlarının yapımı, ıslah imar  
planlarının yapımı ve uygulama  
işlemlerini yapmak;

3.23. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü  
dengeleme, hesaplama, yazım ve  
çizim işlerini yapmak;

3.24. Şirket konusuyla alakalı  
her türlü ihalelere katılabilir ve  
ihale alabilir.

3.25. İşi ile ilgili yurt içi ve yurt  
dışı fuar ve sergilere katılmak,  
ihitira berati, patent, lisans, marka  
ve know-how gibi hakları satın  
almak, satmak kiralamak ve kiraya  
vermek.

3.26. Şirket konusu ile ilgili  
olarak yerli ve yabancı, firma ve  
müesseselerin bayilik, acentalık ve  
müesselliklerini alabilir, ayrıca  
kendisi yurt içinde ve yurt dışında  
başkalarına bayilik, acentelik ve  
müessellikleri verebilir.

3.27. Şirket konusuyla ilgili  
olarak yeni kurulan şirketlere  
katılabilir, mevcut şirketlere ortak  
olup mevcut artırımına iştirak

edip, diğer şirket ve şahıslarla ticari  
ilişkilerde bulunabilir.

3.28. İşletme amaç ve  
konusunun gerçekleştirilmesi için  
menkul ve gayrimenkul iktisap  
etmek, iktisap ettiği menkul ve  
gayrimenkulleri ihtiyaç fazlasını  
başkalarına devir etmek, bunların  
üzerinde, aynı hakları tesis etmek,  
kiraya vermek, başkalarının tesis  
ve gayrimenkullerinin üzerine hak ve  
alacakların temini için aynı şahsi  
her türlü rehin ve teminat  
alabilmek.

3.29. Borçları karşılığında, kendi  
mameleki üzerinde, başkaları  
lehine teminat olmak üzere, ipotek  
tesis edeceği gibi, alacakları  
karşılığında başkalarının mallarını  
üzerinde kendi lehine ipotek vaaz  
edebilir. Bunların fekkini  
isteyebilir. Başkalarının mallarını  
rehin ve teminat olarak alabilir.  
Konusu ile ilgili her türlü taahhüt  
ve ihale işlerine girer.

3.30. Konusu ile ilgili tüm  
mezvuda ihalat, ihracat ve transit  
ticaret, Rexport know-how  
anlaşmaları Yapabilir, serbest  
bölgelerde şube ve temsilcilikler  
açabilir.

3.31. Amaç ve konusunu  
gerçekleştirebilmek için  
gayrimenkuller alıp satabilir,  
bunları başkasına devir ve ferag  
edebilir, kısmen veya tamamen  
başkasına kiralayabilir,  
komisyonculuk yapabilir.

3.32. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü  
menkul ve gayrimenkulleri iktisap  
eder, arsa ve işyerleri kiralar, yap  
işlet-devret modeli kamu, özel kişi  
veya müesseselerden arsa ve arazi  
kiralar, inşaatlarını yapar,  
müesseseleri kurar, işletir,  
devreder.

3.33. Konusu ile ilgili  
yürürlükteki ihracat, ithalat ve  
kanunların müsaade ettiği malların  
iç ve dış ticaretini yapar.

3.34. Şirket ithalat ve ihracata  
ilişkin biletleme işleri gümrük  
komisyonculuğu hariç  
gerçekleştirebilir.

3.35. Şirket konusuyla ilgili  
olarak ihtiyaç duyduğunda kredi  
kaynaklarına başvurabilir, teşvik  
alabilir, uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli  
borçlanma akdi yapabilir ve kefalet  
kredileri temin edebilir.

3.36. Konusu ile ilgili olarak yurt  
içinden, yurt dışından proje  
karşılığı kredi almak, leasing'le  
konusu ile ilgili her türlü edinimle  
bulunabilir ve Devletin sunmuş  
olduğu tüm teşvik olanaklarından  
yararlanabilir.

3.37. Amaç ve konusu ile ilgili  
tüm eğitim ve danışmanlık  
hizmetlerini vermek.

3.38. Şirket faaliyetlerini  
gerçekleştirmek için nakit  
vasıtaları satın alır, kiralar,  
gerektiğinde bunları satar veya  
kiraya verir.

3.39. Şirket amaç ve konusu ile  
ilgili olarak her türlü dergi, broşür,  
kitap, katalog ve diğer yayımların  
bastırılmasını, dağıtılmasını,  
alımını, satımını, ithalat ve  
ihracatını yapar.

#### Merkez Ve Şubeler

##### Madde 4

Şirketin merkezi İstanbul ili  
Beylikdüzü ilçesindedir.  
Adresi:Adnan Kahveci Mahallesi,  
Camer Sokak, No:3,  
Beylikdüzü/İstanbul'dur. Şirket,

yurt içinde ve yurt dışında şubeler  
açabilir. Adres değişikliğinde yeni  
adres Ticaret Siciline Tescil ve  
Türkiye Ticaret Gazetesine ilan  
ettirilir. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş  
adrese yapılan tebligat şirkete  
yapılmış sayılır. Tescil ve ilan  
edilmiş adresinden ayrılmış  
olmasına rağmen yeni adresini  
süresi içerisinde tescil ettirmemiş  
şirket için bu durum fesih sebebi  
sayılır.

#### Sirketin Süresi

##### Madde 5

Şirketin süresi tescil ve ilan  
edildiği tarihten itibaren  
"süresiz"dir. Aneak bu süre Genel  
Kurulunun kararı doğrultusunda  
kısıtlılabılır.

#### Sermaye

##### Madde 6

Şirketin sermayesi-643.000,00  
(Altu Yüz Kırk Üç Bin)TL olup, Bu  
sermayenin her biri 500,00TL  
itibarı kıymette 1286 hisseye  
ayrılmıştır. Bu hisseler:

500 hisseye tekabül eden  
250.000,00 (İki Yüz Elli  
Bin)TL'si-Adnan Tanrıverdi  
466 hisseye tekabül eden  
233.000,00(İki Yüz Otuz Üç  
Bin)TL'si Mehmet Naci Efe  
40 hisseye tekabül eden  
20.000,00(Yirmi Bin)TL'si  
Nurettin Yavuz

40 hisseye tekabül  
eden:20.000,00 (Yirmi Bin)TL'si  
Haluk Yıldırım  
40 hisseye tekabül eden  
20.000,00(Yirmi Bin)TL'si  
Mehmet Demirtaş  
30 hisseye tekabül eder  
15.000,00 (On Beş Bin)TL'si Ünal  
İşğören

20 hisseye tekabül eden  
10.000,00 (On Bin) TL'si Mehmet  
Tek

20 hisseye tekabül eden  
10.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Mehmet  
Zelka

10 hisseye tekabül eder  
10.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Yusuf  
Çağlayan

20 hisseye tekabül eden  
10.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Reşat  
Fidan

20 hisseye tekabül eden  
40.000,00(On Bin) TL'si Bülent  
Demir

10 hisseye tekabül eden  
5.000,00(Beş Bin)TL'si Şeyda  
Ünlükül

10 hisseye tekabül eden 5.000,00  
(Beş Bin)TL'si Cengiz Uzun

10 hisseye tekabül eden 5.000,00  
(Beş Bin) TL'si Ersan Ergür

8 hisseye tekabül eden 4.000,00  
(Dört Bin)TL'si Osman Kaçmaz

8 hisseye tekabül eden  
4.000,00(Dört Bin)TL'si Gürol  
Özşemeli

6 hisseye tekabül eden 3.000,00  
(Çiç Bin) TL'si Mustafa  
Hacimustafaoğulları

4 hisseye tekabül eden 2.000,00  
(İki Bin)TL'si Mustafa Erol

4 hisseye tekabül eden 2.000,00  
(İki Bin)TL'si Mehmet Çakroğlu

4 hisseye tekabül eden 2.000,00  
(İki Bin) TL'si Mehmet İlhan,

2 hisseye tekabül eden  
1.000,00(bin)TL'si Ahmet Türkân  
2 hisseye tekabül eden  
1.000,00(Bin)TL'si Fethi Kıran  
2 hisseye tekabül eden 1.000,00  
(Bin) TL'si Gürcan Onat

(Devamı 427 - Sayfada)

(Baştarafı 426. Sayfada)  
Taraflardan muvazaadan arfi olarak tamamen taahhüt edilmiştir. Şirket nakdi sermayesinin ¼'ü tescil tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içerisinde, Aralık 2011 tarihinden başlayarak 3 eşit taksitte, kalanı ise Mart 2012 tarihinden başlayarak 9 eşit taksitte ödenecektir. Sermaye, taahhütleri şirketin açılmış banka hesabına yatmadıkça hüküm ifade etmez. Bu husustaki ilanlar ana sözleşmenin ilan maddesi uyarınca yapılır.

#### Hisse Değişimi Madde 7

Ortak dışı hisse devri yapılabilmesi için, ortakların ¼'ünün kabulü ile geçerlidir. Ortak dışı hisse devri, şirket ortaklarının ¼'ünün onayı ile gerçekleşmez ise, ayrılmak isteyen ve hissesinin bir kısmını devretmek isteyen ortağa şirketin bilançosuna göre tespit edilecek ortaklık payı verilir.

#### İlanlar Madde 8

Şirkete ait ilanlar Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 37. Maddesinin 4. Fıkrası hükümleri saklı kalmak şartı ile şirket merkezinin bulunduğu yerde çıkan bir gazete ile en az 15 gün evvel yayınlanır. Mahallinde gazete yayınlanmadığı takdirde ilan en yakın yerdeki gazete ile yapılır. Ancak Genel Kurulun toplantıya çağırılması ile ilgili ilanlar Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 368. maddesi hükümleri gereğince ilan ve toplantı günleri hariç olmak üzere en az iki hafta evvel yapılması zorunludur. Sermayenin azaltılması veya tasfiyesine ait ilanlar için kanunun 397. ve 438. maddelerindeki hükümler uygulanır.

#### Yönetim Kurulu Ve Süresi Madde 9

Şirketin işleri ve idaresi Genel Kurul tarafından Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine uygun olarak hissedarlar arasından seçilecek en az 3 üyeden oluşan bir Yönetim Kurulu tarafından yürütülür. Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri en çok 3 (üç) yıl için seçilirler. Seçim süresi sona eren Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri yeniden seçilebilirler. Genel Kurul, lüzum görürse Yönetim Kurulu Üyelerini her zaman değiştirebilir. Yönetim kurulu lüzum gördüğü hallerde veya görev verdiği yönetim kurulu üyelerine belli zamanlarda ücret verebilir.

#### Şirketin Temsili Madde 10

Şirketin yönetimi ve dışarıya karşı temsili Yönetim Kurulu'na aittir. Şirket tarafından verilecek bütün belgelerin ve yapılacak sözleşmelerin geçerli olabilmesi için, bunların şirket ünvanı altına konmuş ve şirketi temsil ve ilzama yetkili kişi veya kişilerin imzasını taşıması gereklidir.

Yönetim Kurulu, Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 319'ncü Maddesi'ne göre Şirketi temsil ve idare yetkisinin hepsini veya bazılarını Yönetim Kurulu Üyesi olan bir veya birkaç maraflısa üye veya pay sahibi olmaları zorunlu bulunmayan Müdürlere bırakabilir.

Şirketi işlerinin ve faaliyetinin gelişmesi ile Yönetim Kurulu lüzum ve ihtiyaç gördüğü takdirde idare işlerinin ve görevlerinin kendisi üyeleri arasında ne şekilde ve hangi esaslar dairesinde taksim edileceğini tespit eder.

#### Denetçiler Madde 11

Genel Kurul, gerek hissedarlar arasından, gerekse dışarıdan en çok 3 (üç) yıl için 1 (bir) veya birden fazla denetçi seçer. Bunların sayısı 5'i geçemez. Genel Kurul seçilen Denetçiyi her zaman azil ve yerine diğer bir kimseyi tayin edebilir. Denetçilere ücret ödenip ödenmeyeceğine yönetim kurulu karar verir. Görev süresi biten denetçilerin tekrar denetçiliğe seçilmesi caizdir.

Denetçiler Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 353-357 maddelerinde sayılan görevleri yapmakla yükümlüdür.

#### Genel Kurul Madde 12

Genel Kurul toplantılarında aşağıdaki esaslar uygulanır:  
Davet Şekli: Genel Kurullar olağan veya olağanüstü olarak toplanır. Bu toplantılara davette Türk Ticaret Kanununun 355, 365, 366 ve 368 hükümleri uygulanır.  
a- Toplantı Vakti: Olağan genel kurul toplantıları şirketin hesap devresi sonundan itibaren 3 ay içerisinde ve senede en az bir defa, olağanüstü genel kurul toplantıları ise şirketin işleri icap ettiği hallerde ve zamanda yapılır.

b- Rey Verme ve Vekil Tayini: Olağan ve olağanüstü genel kurul toplantılarında hazır bulunan hissedarlar veya vekillerinin her hisse için bir oyu vardır. Genel Kurul toplantılarında hissedarlar kendilerini diğer hissedarlar veya hariçten tayin edebilecekleri vekil vasıtası ile temsil ettirebilirler. Şirket hissedarları olan vekiller kendi oylarından başka temsil ettikleri hissedarların sahip olduğu oyları kullanmaya yetkilidir.

c- Müzakerelerin Yapılması ve Karar Nisabı: Şirket genel kurul toplantılarında Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 369 maddesinde yazılı hususlar müzakere edilerek gerekli kararlar alınır. Genel Kurul toplantıları ve bu toplantılardaki karar nisabı Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine tabidir.

d- Toplantı Yeri: Genel kurul şirketin müseccel adresinde toplanır.

#### Toplantılarda Komiser Bulunması Madde 13

Gerek olağan ve gerekse olağanüstü genel kurul toplantılarında Sanayi ve Ticaret Bakanlığı komiserinin bulunması ve toplantı tutanaklarının ilgililerle birlikte imza edilmesi şarttır. Komiserin gayabında yapılacak genel kurul toplantılarında alınacak kararlar ve komiserin imzasını taşımayan toplantı tutanakları geçerli değildir.

#### Hesap Dönemi Madde 14

Şirketin hesap dönemi ocak ayının birinci günü başlar, aralık ayının sonuncu günü biter. Ancak ilk hesap dönemi şirketin Ticaret Siciline tescil sureti ile tüzel kişilik kazandığı tarihten başlar ve o yılın aralık ayının sonuncu günü sona erer.

#### Kar'ın Tespiti Ve Dağıtılması Madde 15

Şirketin genel masrafları ile muhtelif amortisman bedelleri gibi şirkete ödenmesi ve ayrılması zaruri olan miktarlar hesap senesi sonunda tespit olunan gelirden indirildikten sonra geriye kalan miktar safi karı teşkil eder. Safi karın tespiti hususunda Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun, Vergi Usul Kanunu'nun vesair Mali Kanunların hükümlerine uyulur. Yukarıdaki madde gereğince tespit olunacak safi karın ödenmesi gereken vergiler düşüldükten sonra kalan miktardır:

a- %5 nispetinde Kanuni yasal yedek akçe ile,  
b- Ödenmiş sermayenin %5'i nispetinde birinci temettü payı ayrılır.

c- Yasal Yedek Akçe ile birinci temettü hissesinin ayrılmasından sonra kalan kardan Genel Kurul kararı ile en az %10'u Yönetim Kurulu Başkan ve üyelerine en fazla %10'u da Şirket'in Müdür, Memur ve müstahdemlerine tahsis olunabilir.

d- Kalan kar, Genel Kurul kararına göre kısmen veya tamamen ikinci temettü payı olarak, dağıtılabileceği gibi, dağıtılmayarak, herhangi bir yedek akçe olarak da muhafaza edilebilir.

e- Ortaklara dağıtılmasına karar verilen birinci ve ikinci temettü payının hangi tarihte ödeneceği genel Kurul tarafından tespit olunur.

f- Türk Ticaret Kanunu'nun 466/3 maddesi hükmü saklıdır.

#### İhtiyat Akçesi Madde 16

İhtiyat akçesi şirket sermayesinin %20'sine çıkıncaya kadar ayrılır.

Bu miktarın azaltılması halinde yeniden ihtiyat akçesinin ayınmasına devam edilir.

Kanuni ve ihtiyari ihtiyat akçeleri ile kanun ve bu ana sözleşme hükümlerine göre ayrılması gereken miktar safi kardan ayrılmadıkça hissedarlara kar dağıtılmaz.

#### Kanuni Hükümler Madde 17

Bu ana sözleşmede bulunmayan hususlar hakkında Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümleri uygulanır.

#### Geçici Hükümler Kuruluş Giderleri Geçici Madde 1

Şirketin kuruluşuna ilişkin, kurucular tarafından yapılan ve kuruluş için gerekli addolunan bütümlük harcamaları şirketin masraflarına intikal ettirilir.

#### İlk Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri Geçici Madde 2

İlk Yönetim Kurulu Üyelğine, Adnan Tanrıverdi, Nurettin Yavuz, Fethi Kiran, Reşat Fidan, Bülent Demir seçilmişlerdir.

#### Temsil Ve İlzam Geçici Madde 3

Şirket ünvanı altında atacakları isimleri yazılı üç yönetim kurulu üyesinden herhangi iki tanesinin müşterek imzasıyla 3 yılına şirketi abzu kabz yetkisi ile temsil ve ilzam etmeye Adnan Tanrıverdi, Fethi Kiran ve Nurettin Yavuz seçilmişlerdir.

#### İlk Denetçi Geçici Madde 4

İlk 1 (Bir) yıl için şirket ortaklarından aşağıda isimleri yazılı 4 üye seçilmiştir.

4. 1. Mehmet Tek 4.2. Seyda Ünlükül 4.3. Ünal İsgören 4.4. Mustafa Haçımustafaoğulları

#### Kurucular:

1. Adnan Tanrıverdi imza
2. Mehmet Naci efe imza
3. Mehmet Tek imza
4. Nurettin Yavuz imza
5. Yusuf Çağlayan imza
6. Reşat Fidan imza
7. Bülent Demir imza
8. Seyda Ünlükül imza
9. Cengiz Uzun imza
10. Ersan Ergür imza
11. Ünal İsgören imza
12. Osman Kaçmaz imza
13. Gürol Özeşmeli imza
14. Mustafa Haçımustafaoğulları imza
15. Ahmet Türkan imza
16. Fethi Kiran imza
17. Gürcan Onat imza
18. Mustafa Erol imza
19. Mehmet Çakıroğlu imza
20. Haluk Yıldırım imza
21. Mehmet Demirtaş imza
22. Mehmet Zelka imza
23. Mehmet İlhan imza

22 Şubat 2012

#### Ana Sözleşme Düzeltme Beyannamesi

Bakırköy 17. Notalığından 24 Kasım 2011 tarih ve 23658 yevmiye No'su ile onaylı Sadat Uluslar Arası Savunma Danışmanlık İnşaat Sanayi Ve Ticaret Anonim Şirketi'nin Ana Sözleşmesinin bazı maddeleri aşağıdaki şekilde değiştirilmiş olup bu şekilde tescil ve ilanını talep ederiz.

#### Yapılan Düzeltmeler:

Şirket Ana Sözleşmesinin Amaç Ve Konu Madde 3:  
"3.1. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devletin çıkarlarını gözeterek, ihtiyaç duyan dost ülkelere: savunma danışmanlığı, Güvenlik Güçlerinin organizasyonu, (Teşkilat, malzeme ve kadro), Güvenlik Güçlerinin eğitimi, (İlgili ülke, Türkiye veya üçüncü ülkelerde), Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyacağı silah, mühimmat, araç-gereç, kıyafet ve yiyeceklerin ilgili ülke, Türkiye ve

üçüncü ülkelerden üretimi, alış-satış, tedarik ve temini için ihaleler yapmak, ihalelere girmek, teklifler vermek, teklifler almak, ihalat ve ihracat yapmak, Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyduğu her türlü elektrik, elektronik, yazılım, donanım, bakım ve servis hizmetlerini vermek, Güvenlik Güçlerinin mevcut silah ve malzemelerinin yenileştirilmesi ve Silahlı kuvvetlerinin iskan ve eğitim için ihtiyaç duyulan tesislerin inşaatını yapılması.

3.2. Doast Ülkeler arasında savanma ve savunma sanayi işbirliği ortamını oluşturmak, bu konularda danışmanlık yapmak; Türkiye savanma sanayi ürünlerine Pazar ortamı oluşturmak, ilgili konularda devletler arası organizasyonları sağlamak;

3.3. Amaca uygun her türlü hizmet ve malzemenin üretimini, toptan ve perakende alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını, pazarlama ve dağıtımını yapmak, eğitimini vermek;

3.4. İlgili Ülkede, Türkiye'de ve üçüncü Ülkelerde amaca uygun diğer şirketlerden taserüflük hizmetli almak ve vermek,

3.5. Bir Güvenlik Gücünün ihtiyaç olan personel, araç, gemi, uçak helikopter, malzeme ve silahlar için: spor, eğitim, atış ve simülasyon sistem ve tesisleri yapmak, yaptırmak, çalıştırmak ve bu tesislerde eğitimlerin fiili uygulamalarını yapmak, yaptırmak, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek, gerektiğinde eğitim danışmanlığı hizmeti vermek.

3.6. Her türlü yapı malzemelerinin üretimini, alım ve satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak; Yurtiçi veya yurtdışında her türlü maden, doğal taş yeraltı ve yerüstü kaynaklarının çıkarılması, işlenmesi ihalat ve ihracatını yapılması.

3.7. Her türlü seramik, kalebodur, fayans, granit, mermer, taş, bordur, tezgah, lavabo, tuvalet taşı ve benzeri taşların, demir, çimento, kireç, tel, tuğla, kiremit ve her türlü inşaat malzemeleri ve yardımcı malzemelerinin üretimini, alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;

3.8. Her türlü ıslak ve kuru zeminlere yönelik uygulamalar yapmak, musluk, armatör, vana, boru, vitriyeni, mutfak ve banyo dolapları, çatı malzemeleri, ve inşaatlarda kullanılan her türlü malzeme ve aksesuarlarının üretimini, alım satımını, ihalat ve ihracatını yapmak;

3.9. Balkon, cam önü, merdiven, teras, bahçe, işyeri ve benzeri yerlere yönelik duvar, küpeşte, korkuluk gibi dekoratif uygulamalar yapmak, bunları üretmek, alım satımını yapmak, hazır olarak, mamul veya yarı mamul olarak yurt dışından ihalat ve ihracat yapmak.

3.10. Bina, ev, villa ve iş merkezlerine yönelik alüminyum cephe giydirmeleri yapmak, şekil vermek, bu tip yerlere yönelik çalışmalar yapmak.

3.11. Her türlü demir çelik ürünleri; sac, çinko, piring, bakır, sarı, zamak, galvaniz sac, külçe, platina, U demiri, L demiri, flanş, boru eklenti parçalarının alımını

(Devamı 428. Sayfada)

(Baştarafı 427. Sayfada)  
satımını yapmak, imalatını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak.

3.12. Her türlü demir, profil, ahşap ve ferforjeden korkuluk, kepenk, kapı, kilit ve yardımcı malzemelerini yapmak, üretmek pazarlamak, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak.

3.13. Her türlü inşaat taahhüt işleri, konut, işyeri, ticarethane inşaatlarını yapmak, satmak, kendi hesabına arazi arsalar almak bunlar üzerinde veya başkalarına ait arsa ve araziler üzerinde kat karşılığı binalar yapmak;

3.14. Yurt içinde ve yurt dışında her türlü resmi ve özel sektöre ait inşaat taahhüt ve montaj işleri yapmak ve müst konut, işanları, fabrikalar, yollar, baraj ve göletler, park ve bahçe düzenlemeleri ve turistik tesisler, tatil köyleri inşaa etmek, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek;

3.15. Türkiye sınıfları içinde veya yabancı ülkelere, resmi ve özel kurum ve kuruluşları tarafından kapalı zarf, artırma, eksiltme, teklif alma ve pazarlık usulü ile ihaleye çıkarılacak her türlü küçük ve büyük yapıların her t inşaat işlerini anahtar teslimi taahhüt etmek ve yapmak ve yaptırmak;

3.16. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devleti bakanlıklarının ve bakanlığa bağlı resmi kuruluşların, kamu iktisadi teşebbüs iktisadi devlet teşekkülleri, kamu iktisadi kuruluşları tarafından yurt içinde ve yurt dışında ihaleye çıkarılan inşaat, elektrik, tesisat, yol, su, kanalizasyon, doğalgaz, altıyapı, üstyapı, dekorasyon, restorasyon işlerini yeniden veya onarımı ihalelerine katılmak, teklif vermek, ihale şirkete kalırsa ihale sözleşmesi gereği işi yapmak ve teslim etmek;

3.17. Prefabrikte inşaat ve meskenler yapmak, yaptırmak ve bunları satmak kiraya vermek;

3.18. Her türlü havuz inşaatı ve arıtma işleri, dekorasyon işleri, tamirat ve boya işleri yapmak;

3.19. Her türlü mimarlık ve mühendislik hizmetleri vermek, proje ve uygulamalar yapmak, şehir ve imar pla hazırlamak ve uygulamalarını yapmak;

3.20. Dekorasyonla ilgili spor salonlarının saha çizimi, boya, parke ve cam çila, duvar kağıdı, halifleks, asma tavan, kartonpiyer, fayans, kalebodur, su ve elektrik tesisatı, çatı ve tadilat işlerini yapmak;

3.21. Her türlü bina, büro, tesis ve yapılar ile peyzaj mimarisini ve çevre düzenlenmesi alanında mimarlık, mühendislik, teknik müşavirlik hizmetleri olarak plan, proje, teknik hesaplar, danışmanlık, etüd, araştırma, tasarımı, fizibiliteleer yapmak, bununla ilgili hizmet grupları oluşturmak ve işletmek;

3.22. Durum halihazır, kadastro, yer altı maden ocakları, deniz gibi, tünel ve baraj, yol, su, kanalizasyon, boru hattı şerit haritalarının yapımı, perselasyon planlarının yapımı, İslah imar planlarının yapımı ve uygulama işlemleri yapmak;

3.23. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü dengeleme, hesaplama, yazım ve çizim işlerini yapmak;

3.24. Şirket konusıyla alakalı

her türlü ihalelere katılabilir ve ihale açabilir.

3.25. işi ile ilgili yurt içi ve yurt dışı fuar ve sergilere katılmak, ihtira beratı, patent, lisans, marka ve know-how gibi hakları satın almak, satmak kiralamak ve kiraya vermek.

3.26. Şirket konusu ile ilgili olarak yerli ve yabancı, firma ve müesseselerin bayilik, acentalık ve mümessilliklerini alabilir, ayrıca kendisi yurt içinde ve yurt dışında başkalarına bayilik, acentelik ve mümessillik verebilir.

3.27. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak yeni kurulan şirketlere katılabilir, mevcut şirketlere ortak olup sermaye artırımına iştirak edip, diğer şirket ve şahıslarla ticari ilişkilerde bulunabilir.

3.28. İşletme amaç ve konusunun gerçekleştirilmesi için menkul ve gayrimenkul iktisap etmek, iktisap ettiği menkul gayrimenkulleri ihtiyaç fazlasını başkalarına devir etmek, bunların üzerinde, aynı hakları tesis etmek, kiraya vermek, başkalarının tesis ve gayrimenkullerini üzerine hak ve alacaklarını temini için aynı şahsi her türlü rehin ve teminat alabilecektir.

3.29. Borçları karşılığında, kendi mameleki üzerinde, başkaları lehine teminat olmak üzere, ipotek tesis edeceği gibi, alacakları karşılığında başkalarının malları üzerinde kendi lehine ipotek vaaz edebilir. Bunların fekkini isteyebilir. Başkalarının mallarını rehin ve teminat olarak alabilir. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü taahhüt ve ihale işlerine girer.

3.30. Konusu ile ilgili tüm mevzuada ithalat, ihracat ve transit ticaret, Rexport know-how anlaşmaları yapabilir, serbest bölgelerde şube ve temsilcilikler açabilir.

3.31. Amaç ve konusunu gerçekleştirebilmek için gayrimenkuller alıp satabilir, bunları başkasına devir ve ferag edebilir, kısmen veya tamamen başkasına kiralayabilir, komisyonculuk yapabilir.

3.32. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü menkul ve gayrimenkulleri iktisap eder, arsa, işyerleri kiralar, yap işlet-devret modeli kamu, özel kişi veya müesseselerden arsa ve arazi kiralar, inşaatlarını yapar, müesseseleri kurar, işletir, devreder.

3.33. Konusu ile ilgili yürürlükteki ihracat, ithalat ve kanunların müsaade ettiği malların iç ve dış ticaretini yapar.

3.34. Şirket ithalat ve ihracata ilişkin bilcümle işleri gümrük komisyonculuğu hariç gerçekleştirebilir.

3.35. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak ihtiyaç duyduğunda kredi kaynaklarına başvurabilir, teşvik alabilir, uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli borçlanma akdi yapabilir ve kefalet kredileri temin edebilir.

3.36. Konusu ile ilgili olarak yurt içinden, yurt dışından proje karşılığı kredi almak, leasing'le konusu ile ilgili her türlü edinimde bulunabilir ve Devletin sunmuş olduğu tüm teşvik olanaklarından yararlanabilir.

3.37. Amaç ve konusu ile ilgili tüm eğitim ve danışmanlık hizmetlerini vermek.

3.38. Şirket faaliyetlerini

gerçekleştirmek için nakil vasıtaları satın alır, kiralar, gerektiğinde bunları satar veya kiraya verir.

3.39. Şirket amaç ve konusu ile ilgili olarak her türlü dergi, broşür, kitap, katalog ve diğer yayınların bastırılmasını, dağıtılmasını, alınımı, satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapar. Şeklinde iken bu kerre;

“3.1.Uluslararası alanda; savunma danışmanlığı, Güvenlik Güçlerinin organizasyonu, (Teşkilat, malzeme ve kadro), Güvenlik Güçlerinin eğitimi, Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyacağı kıyafet ve yiyeceklerin ilgili ülke, Türkiye ve üçüncü ülkelerden üretimi, alış-satış, tedarik ve temini için ihaleler açmak, ihalelere girmek, teklifler vermek, teklifler almak, ithalat ve ihracat yapmak, Güvenlik Güçlerinin ihtiyaç duyduğu her türlü bakım ve servis hizmetlerini vermek, Güvenlik Güçlerinin iskan ve eğitim için ihtiyaç duyulan tesislerin inşaatını yapmak.

3.2. Amaç uyuşun her türlü hizmet ve malzemenin temini, toplan ve perakende alım satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını pazarlama ve dağıtımını yapmak, eğitimi vermek.

3.3.Uluslararası alanda konusu dahilinde taşeronluk hizmeti almak ve vermek.

3.4.Bir Güvenlik Gücünün ihtiyacı olan personel, araç gereç, malzeme için;spor, eğitim, alış ve simülasyon sistem ve tesisleri yapmak, yaptırmak, çalıştırmak ve bu tesislerde eğitimlerini fiili uygulamalarını yapmak, yaptırmak, kiralamak ve kiraya vermek, gerektiğinde eğitim danışmanlığı hizmeti vermek.

3.5. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü dengeleme, hesaplama, yazım ve çizim işlerini yapmak;

3.6. Şirket konusıyla alakalı her türlü ihalelere katılabilir ve ihale açabilir.

3.7. işi ile ilgili yurt içi ve yurt dışı fuar ve sergilere katılmak, ihtira beratı, patent, lisans, marka ve know-how gibi hakları satın almak, satmak kiralamak ve kiraya vermek.

3.8. Şirket konusu ile ilgili olarak yerli ve yabancı, firma ve müesseselerin bayilik, acentalık ve mümessilliklerini alabilir, ayrıca kendisi yurt içinde ve yurt dışında başkalarına bayilik, acentelik ve mümessillik verebilir.

3.9. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak yeni kurulan şirketlere katılabilir, mevcut şirketlere ortak olup sermaye artırımına iştirak edip, diğer şirket ve şahıslarla ticari ilişkilerde bulunabilir.

3.10. İşletme amaç ve konusunun gerçekleştirilmesi için menkul ve gayrimenkul iktisap etmek, iktisap ettiği menkul ve gayrimenkulleri ihtiyaç fazlasını başkalarına devir etmek, bunların üzerinde, aynı hakları tesis etmek, kiraya vermek, başkalarının tesis ve gayrimenkullerini üzerine hak ve alacaklarını temini için aynı şahsi her türlü rehin ve teminat alabilecektir.

3.11. Borçları karşılığında, kendi mameleki üzerinde, başkaları lehine teminat olmak üzere, ipotek tesis edeceği gibi, alacakları karşılığında başkalarının malları

üzerinde kendi lehine ipotek vaaz edebilir. Bunların fekkini isteyebilir. Başkalarının mallarını rehin ve teminat olarak alabilir. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü taahhüt ve ihale işlerine girer.

3.12. Konusu ile ilgili tüm mevzuada ithalat, ihracat ve transit ticaret, Rexport know-how anlaşmaları yapabilir, serbest bölgelerde şube ve temsilcilikler açabilir.

3.13. Amaç ve konusunu gerçekleştirebilmek için gayrimenkuller alıp satabilir, bunları başkasına devir ve ferag edebilir, kısmen veya tamamen başkasına kiralayabilir, komisyonculuk yapabilir.

3.14. Konusu ile ilgili her türlü menkul ve gayrimenkulleri iktisap eder, arsa ve işyerleri kiralar, yap işlet-devret modeli kamu, özel kişi veya müesseselerden arsa ve arazi kiralar, inşaatlarını yapar, müesseseleri kurar, işletir, devreder.

3.15. Konusu ile ilgili yürürlükteki ihracat, ithalat ve kanunların müsaade ettiği malların iç ve dış ticaretini yapar.

3.16. Şirket konusıyla ilgili olarak ihtiyaç duyduğunda kredi kaynaklarına başvurabilir, teşvik alabilir, uzun, orta ve kısa vadeli borçlanma akdi yapabilir ve kefalet kredileri temin edebilir.

3.17. Konusu ile ilgili olarak yurt içinden, yurt dışından proje karşılığı kredi almak, leasing'le konusu ile ilgili her türlü edinimde bulunabilir ve Devletin sunmuş olduğu tüm teşvik olanaklarından yararlanabilir.

3.18. Amaç ve konusu ile ilgili tüm eğitim ve danışmanlık hizmetlerini vermek.

3.19. Şirket faaliyetlerini gerçekleştirmek için nakil vasıtaları satın alır, kiralar, gerektiğinde bunları satar veya kiraya verir.

3.20. Şirket amaç ve konusu ile ilgili olarak her türlü dergi, broşür, kitap, katalog ve diğer yayınların bastırılmasını, dağıtılmasını, alınımı, satımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapar.” şeklinde düzenlenmiş olup, ve yine;Şirket ana sözleşmesinin Sermaye Madde 6'nın ikinci paragrafında:

“Tarafardan muvazaadan arı olarak tamamen taahhüt edilmiştir. Şirket nakdi sermayesinin ¼'ü tescil tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içerisinde, Aralık 2011 tarihinden başlayarak 3 eşit taksitte, kalamı ise Mart 2012 tarihinden başlayarak 9 eşit taksitte ödenecektir. Sermaye taahhütleri şirketin açılmış banka hesabına yatmadıkça hüküm ifade etmez. Bu husustaki ilanlar ana sözleşmenin ilan maddesi uyarınca yapılır.” iken bu kerre

“Tarafından muvazaadan arı olarak tamamen taahhüt edilmiştir. Şirket nakdi sermayesinin ¼'ü tescil tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içerisinde, geri kalanını en geç 3 (üç) yıl içerisinde ödenecektir. Bu husustaki ilanlar ana sözleşmenin ilan maddesi uyarınca yapılır. “şeklinde düzenlenmiştir.

Beyonda Bulunan: 37234816206 T.C Nolu Adnan Tanrıverdi, 43738688232 T.C nolu Mehmet Naci Efe,

3658972616 T.C Nolu Mehmet Tek, 23860602276 T.C Nolu Nurettin Yavuz, 72889057208 T.C Nolu Yusuf Çağlayan, 11664782890 T.C Nolu Reşat Fidan, 28736238740 T.C Nolu Bülent Demir, 28598302658 T.C Nolu Şeyda Ünlökül, 47245806332 T.C Nolu Cengiz Uzun, 17425939808 T.C Nolu Ersan Ergör, 34100397906 T.C Nolu Ünal İşgören, 26942205280 T.C Nolu Osman Kaçmaz, 22894498130 T.C Nolu Gürol Özemişli, 41665714420 T.C Nolu Mustafa Hacımustafaoğulları, 11908851014 T.C Nolu Ahmet Türkan, 68884071530 T.C Nolu Fethi Kiran, 21176465080 T.C Nolu Gürcan Onat, 28264819718 T.C Nolu Mustafa Erol, 10678750442 T.C Nolu Mehmet Çakıroğlu, 12718019212 T.C Nolu Haluk Yıldırım, 42442451972 T.C Nolu Mehmet Demirtaş, 26536832038 T.C Nolu Mehmet Zelka, 24842259792 T.C Nolu Mehmet İlhan adlına vekaleten Ahmet Ardic T.C. No:1337751910 Adnan Kahveci Mah. Caner Sok. No.3 Beylikdüzü İstanbul (10/A)/24/110482

**İstanbul Ticaret Sicili Memurlugundan**

**Sicil Numarası: 809266**

**Ticaret Ünvanı  
HÜRSA TAŞIMACILIK  
PAZARLAMA TEKSTİL  
İNŞAAT GIDA SANAYİ VE  
DIŞ TİCARET LİMİTED  
ŞİRKETİ**

**Ticari İkametgahı:** İstanbul Fatih Laleli Gençtürk Cad.Ataeın İshamı No:61 K.1 (Asma Kat Üstü) Ticari Merkezi ile sicil numarası ve ünvanı yukarıda yazılı ve 22.02.2012 tarihinden beri kurulmuş olan limited şirketin İstanbul 10.Noterliğince 21.02.2012 tarih 4509 sayılı ile düzenlenen esas mukavelesinin tescil ve ilan istenmiş, aynı noterliğin 21.02.2012 tarih 4510 sayılı ile onaylı imza beyanamesi memuriyetimize verilmiş olmakla, 6762 sayılı Türk Ticaret Kanunu hükümlerine uygun olarak ve memurlüğümüzdeki vesikalara dayanılarak 22.02.2012 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

**Hürsa Taşımacılık Pazarlama  
Tekstil İnşaat Gıda Sanayi Ve  
Dış Ticaret Limited Şirketi Ana  
Sözleşmesi**

**Kurucular Madde: 1-**

Aşağıda adları, soyadları, ikametgahları ve uyrukları yazılı

(Devamı 429 . Sayfada)



(Başarılı 76.Sayfada)

bu gibi yerlerin rezervasyon ve organizasyon işlerini yapar.c. Turizme yönelik otel, motel, bar, pansiyon, kamping, tatil köyleri, apart oteller, yeme içme tesisleri, eğlence yerleri kurmak, işletmek, işletmeye vermek, bu yerleri satın almak, satmak, kiralamak, kiraya vermek.d. Şirket her türlü bilardo salonu, kahvehane, kafe, çay bahçeleri açar, kiralar, kiraya verir ve işletmesini yapar.Şirket amacını gerçekleştirmek için her türlü gayrimenkul alabilir, satabilir, kiralar, kiraya verir, bunlar üzerinde aynı ve şahsi her türlü hakları tesis edebilir, ipotek alabilir, ipotek verebilir ve ipotekleri fesh edebilir. Şirket gayrimenkuller üzerinde irtfak, intifa, süknaya gayrimenkul mükellefiyeti, kat irtfakı, kat mülkiyeti tesis edebilir.Her türlü gayrimenkuller ile ilgili olarak tapu daireleri nezdinde cins tahşih, ifraz, tevhit, taksim, parselasyon ile ilgili her nevi muamele ve tasarrufları gerçekleştirebilir.MARKET-Her türlü ambalaj ve paketleme işleri yapabilir, - Nohut, mercimek, fasulye, diğer bakliyat ve her türlü hububat, ve tarımsal ürünler, un, nişasta, pastacılık ürünleri, taze ve kuru olarak her türlü tarım ürünleri, yağlı tohumlar, taneler, meyveler, çay, kahve, ihlamur, tarçın, çikolata, kakao müstehzalar, bisküvi, ekmekek, tatlılar ve buna benzer unlu ürünlerin imali, alımı, satımı, ithali, ihracı ve pazarlamasını yapmak, - Her türlü gıda maddelerinin üretimi, toptan ve perakende alımı, satımı, dağıtımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmak.-İnsanların beslenmesinde önemli bir etkinliği olan ve gıda sektörüne konu teşkil eden her nevi sıcak, soğuk, dondurulmuş, kurutulmuş, ve konsantresi yapılmış besin maddelerinin pazarlanmasında toptan ve perakende satış yapmak amacı ile gerekli olan satış mağazalarını açmak ve işletmek.-Her türlü bebek mamalarının üretimi, toptan ve perakende alım satımı, dağıtımını, ithalat ve ihracatını yapmakRENT A CAR-Ticari amaçlı her türlü motorlu araç alışı, satışı ve kiralama hizmetleri verebilir.İNŞAATA. Her türlü inşaat taahhüt işleri; konut, işyeri, ticarethane inşaatlarını yapmak, satmak, kendi hesabına arazi ve arsalar almak bunlar üzerinde veya başkalarına ait arazi ve arsalar üzerinde kat karşılığı binalar yapmak.b. Yurt içinde ve yurt dışında her türlü resmi ve özel sektöre ait inşaat taahhüt ve montaj işleri yapmak ve müstakil konut, iş hanları, fabrikalar, yollar, baraj ve göletler, park ve bahçe düzenlemeleri ve turistik tesisler, tatil köyleri inşa etmek ve kiraya vermek.c. Türkiye sınırları içinde veya yabancı ülkelerde, resmi ve özel kurum ve kuruluşları tarafından kapalı zarf, açık arttırma, eksilme, teklif alma ve pazarlık usulü ile ihaleye çıkarılan her türlü küçük ve büyük yapıları her türlü inşaat işlerini anahtar teslimi taahhüt etmek e. Prefabrikte inşaat ve meskenler yapmak, yaptırmak ve bunları satmak, kiraya vermek.d. Her türlü havuz inşaatı ve artırma işlemleri yapmak.e. Her türlü dekorasyon işleri, tamirat ve boyası işleri yapmak.f. Her türlü mimarlık hizmetleri vermek, şehir ve inar planları hazırlamak, uygulamalarını yapmak.g. Her türlü mühendislik hizmetleri vermek, proje ve uygulamalarını yapmak.TELEKOMÜNİKASYONa. Haberleşme hizmetlerini sağlamak için gerekli olabilecek her türlü donanımı alımı, satımı, ithalatı, ihracatı, dağıtımını yapmak.b. Her çeşit cep ve mobil telefonları, telefon santralleri, telsiz haberleşme cihazları ve bunların yedek parça ve aksesuarlarını alımı, satımı, mamul, bakım ve onarımını, ithalatını, ihracatını ve iç ticaretini, pazarlamasını, bayılığını, dağıtımını ve müesseseliğini yapmak.

(2/A)(12/58815)

## T.C. BURSA TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NDEN

İlan Sıra No: 15393  
MERSİS No: 0455083671900001  
Ticaret Sicil/Dosya No: 109702

Ticaret Unvanı:  
HAKO ELEKTRONİK SANAYİ VE TİCARET LİMİTED ŞİRKETİ

Adres : Kükürtlü Mahallesi Çekirge Cad. Batıca Apt.Sit. No: 70/4 Osmangazi/Bursa  
Eski Ticaret Sicil Müdürlüğü: İSTANBUL TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ  
Eski Sicil No: 198639-5

Eski Adres: Tathisu Mahallesi Arif Ay Sk. Ata Apartmanı Apt. No: 34/2 Ümraniye/İstanbul

Yukarıda bilgileri verilen şirket ile ilgili olarak aşağıda belirtilen hususlar müdürlüğümüze ibraz edilen belgelere istinaden ve Türk Ticaret Kanunu'na uygun olarak 12.11.2020 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

Tescil Edilen Hususlar:Merkez Nakli  
Tescile Delil Olan Belgeler:Kadıköy 1.noterliği Nin 10.11.2020 Tarih 12571 Sayı İle Tasdikli,(Genel Kurul), 3.11.2020 Tarihli Sayılı Genel Kurul Kararı

**MERKEZ NAKLİ**  
Eski merkezi TATLISU MAHALLESİ ARIF AY SK. ATA APARTMANI Apt. No: 34/2 ÜMRANIYE/İSTANBUL adresinden bulunan şirketin merkezi KÜKÜRTLÜ MAHALLESİ ÇEKİRGE CAD. BATIACA APT Sit. No: 70/4 OSMANGAZI/BURSA olarak değiştirilmiştir.

İÇERİĞİ DEĞİŞEN MADDELERİN YENİ HALİ  
ŞİRKETİN MERKEZİ

Madde 4- Şirketin merkezi BURSA İLİ OSMANGAZI ilçesi'dir. Adresi KÜKÜRTLÜ MAHALLESİ ÇEKİRGE CAD. BATIACA APT Sit. No: 70/4 OSMANGAZI/BURSA'dır.Adres değişikliğinde yeni adres, ticaret siciline tescil ve Türkiye Ticaret Sicili Gazetesinde ilan ettirilir. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş adrese yapılan tebligat şirkete yapılmış sayılır. Tescil ve ilan edilmiş adresinden ayrılmış olmasına rağmen, yeni adresini süresi içinde tescil ettirmemiş şirket için bu durum fesh sebebi sayılır.

(3/A)(12/58816)

## T.C. İSTANBUL TİCARET SİCİLİ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NDEN

İlan Sıra No: 188403  
MERSİS No: 0736057798100014  
Ticaret Sicil/Dosya No: 809300-0

Ticaret Unvanı:  
SADAT ULUSLAR ARASI SAVUNMA DANIŞMANLIK İNŞAAT SANAYİ VE TİCARET ANONİM ŞİRKETİ

Adres : Marmara Mahallesi Hürriyet Blv. Reşitpaşa Konakları Sit. V2 Apt. No: 110 H/1 Beylikdüzü/İstanbul

Yukarıda bilgileri verilen şirket ile ilgili olarak aşağıda belirtilen hususlar müdürlüğümüze ibraz edilen belgelere istinaden ve Türk Ticaret Kanunu'na uygun olarak 12.11.2020 tarihinde tescil edildiği ilan olunur.

Tescil Edilen Hususlar:Sermaye Artırımı  
Tescile Delil Olan Belgeler:Kadıköy 28. Noterliği Nin 5.11.2020 Tarih 24374 Sayı İle Tasdikli, 4.11.2020 Tarihli Genel Kurul Kararı

İÇERİĞİ DEĞİŞEN MADDELERİN YENİ HALİ  
SERMAYE ARTIRIMI  
Madde 6-

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# Exhibit 22

# Meet Erdogan's Private Army – SADAT – That Looks To Rival Russia's Wagner & Wage Proxy War In Kashmir

By **Guest Author** - March 4, 2023

## **Analysis By Aparna Rawal**

**Post Operation Dost and India's well-acknowledged humanitarian aid to Turkey amidst the massive earthquake disaster faced by both Syria and Turkey, the question remains would President Recep Tayyip Erdogan soften his narrative against India on the Kashmir question or continue to support Pakistan's ploy to destabilize India, thereby expanding the Turkish influence in South Asia.**

In 2021, reports surfaced of Turkey preparing to send mercenaries to wage proxy wars in Kashmir. According to Pentapostagma, a Greek publication, the task to gather and organize the operation in Kashmir was entrusted to a Turkish private military company called SADAT.

In 2022, reports surfaced of foreign fighters and mercenary groups being mobilized by SADAT to be deployed in Palestine and Kashmir. These reports were confirmed when the Syrian National Army (SNA) militia commander, "Sulayman Shah Brigades," Muhammed Abu Amsa, declared the displacement of some of their units to the Kashmir region.

These units are believed to be repositioned from the city of Şiyê near the Afrin region. Afrin is one of the three original regions of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. Amsa also mentioned each recruit would be paid an initial remuneration of \$2,000.



Further reports of similar recruitment activity spreading to Azaz, Jarablus, Bab, and Idlib have made news fastidiously.

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*File Image: PM Modi meets President Erdogan*

To comprehend the gravity of SADAT's influence, it is imperative to understand the ability of such PMCs to combine "the political strategy with the military muscle" to honor the bidding of a particular political regime in a nation.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) are a notable example of PMC types. It has managed to gain control in areas in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

Unlike the Iranian armed forces – Artesh, the IRGC remains loyal to a political regime and not the nation alone.

PMCs give their nations the advantage of "informality and deniability." The countries are clandestinely able to participate in paramilitary operations, engage in terrorist activities or indirectly exert their influence in external regional conflicts outside Turkey, especially in regions of their interest.

The Wagner group connected with Yevgeny Prigozhin has also acted as auxiliaries and as an element catering to deniable actions on behalf of Russia.

With SADAT joining the league of such PMCs, it has started to work as a critical link between Ankara and the proxy foreign fighters abroad by providing the necessary logistics, weapons, funds, and training. A quid pro quo approach is established without Turkey taking the sole

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2002, when Erdogan became a prime minister, the Turkish military was inclined towards secular and Kemalist traditions (established by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk).



This had always presented as an obstacle to the Islamic ideologies which Erdogan catered to. Initially, assuming the pretext of a democratic leader in support of Ataturk's doctrines, Erdogan gained the support of both conservative and liberal groups.



Having garnered massive support within Turkey, Erdogan turned his back on his allies and established an authoritarian rule and policies. Since then, Erdogan has tried to champion Islam and export his influence by engaging his paramilitary and proxy fighters in various regions.

Erdogan's paramilitary operates in three ways; the first layer is through the utilization of private military companies and defense/security contractors, the second is through criminal/mafia networks, and lastly, through various youth brigades or associations.

Adnan Tanriverdi founded SADAT in 2012. Tanriverdi belongs to a group of military officers dismissed from the Turkish military due to their extremist Islamist leanings in the 1990s.

Tanriverdi was also a columnist for Yeni Akit, a pro-government and Islamic publication that empathizes with extremist or radical Islamic groups. In 2012, reports of several SADAT bases in Marmara and Istanbul came to light.

In 2015, Tanriverdi called for establishing autonomous Turkmen and Sunni Arab areas around the Turkish Syrian borders.

Despite Tanriverdi's disposition, he was later appointed as Erdogan's chief advisor post the July 15, 2016, coup attempt in Turkey. His appointment can be owed to SADAT's involvement in oppressing the 2016 coup. Pictures and videos taken by civilians of the SADAT personnel attacking the putschists on the Bosphorus bridge in Istanbul emerged on social media platforms in 2016.

In 2018, the Israeli Shabak or Shin Bet maintained SADAT's involvement with Hamas. By 2020, the US African command report also mentioned the participation of SADAT in training Syrian mercenaries and Libyan militia. Later the involvement of SADAT in the Nagorno-Karabakh war also surfaced.

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The website's Turkish version sounds less PMC-like, referring to the Western states as "imperialists" or the "Crusaders." According to Michael Rubin (American Enterprise Institute), SADAT has also trained members of ISIS and Al Nusrat. According to Qatari leaks, the Sudanese port city of Suakin is also a playground for SADAT activities.

The recent talks of SADAT sending mercenaries to Kashmir don't surprise either, given that Erdogan has consistently advocated supporting Pakistan's position of holding a plebiscite under the UN to determine the possibility of Kashmir joining Pakistan.



File Image: Sadat

In 2016, Turkish President Erdogan, during his visit to Pakistan, addressed the Pakistani parliament attended by Pakistan's military high command and pledged his support to Pakistan on the Kashmir question.

The diplomatic and military relations between Pakistan and Turkey have considerably expanded. Through mutual understanding, both support a mutual bidding against India.

On the one hand, Turkey has displayed solidarity with India in its fight against terrorism by condemning the Naxalite attack on the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel at Sukma in the past. On the other hand, it remained silent on cross-border terror attacks from Pakistan. Hence, SADAT is expected to make claims regarding sending its forces to Kashmir.

For years SADAT has been interacting with various jihadist groups in South Asia and has shown an affinity for many Kashmir-born terrorists. Syed Ghulam Nabi Fai, a convicted felon who served time in US federal prison, has been a close associate of SADAT.

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The meeting was also attended by Mesut Hakkı Çağın, the Turkish president's advisor on security and foreign policy, and Pakistani Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood, the federal minister for states and frontier regions.

Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief is an NGO run by İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı, or IHH, on the Pakistani side of Kashmir.

IHH has links with terror outfits such as al-Qaeda, direct ties with the Popular Front of India (PFI), and is believed to be aligned with Turkish President Erdogan. The outfit is associated with the Turkish intelligence agency MIT, led by Erdogan's close ally Hakan Fidan. Fidan also remains a close associate of SADAT.

With Turkey backing the Pakistani campaign against India, the level of threats and risks against Indian nationals and diplomats is concerning.

On December 12, 1992, three members of a terrorist outfit – Tevhid Selam, a proxy group handled by Iran's Quds Force, detonated a bomb in the car of an Indian diplomat Yash Paul Kumar in Ankara. Fortunately, Kumar escaped with no injuries.

Upon investigation, it was revealed that Ferhan Özmen, the mastermind behind the attack, wanted to convey a message to India concerning the events in Kashmir. Such a precedent makes forecasting future events more probable, given that more actors like SADAT are now engaging in campaigns against India.



*Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Twitter)*

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# Conclusion



Proxy wars will continue as the norm in the future. Due to power competition between states in arenas of security, influence, and resources, most states are expected to employ such methods to achieve their objectives without engaging in a conventional war.

Proxy wars ensure a stand for deniability, are effectively quick in attaining immediate goals, unlike a conventional war, and are cost-effective compared to a war that would directly affect the state economically, politically, and diplomatically.

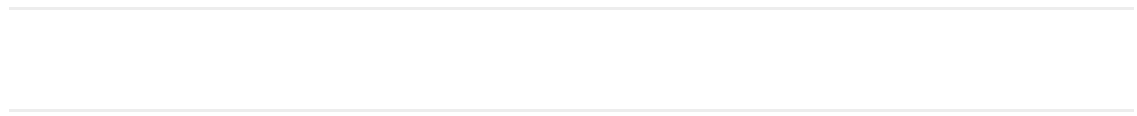
As seen in the wars in Libya and Syria, the proxy wars are no longer unilateral matters but multilateral issues due to the proxy coalitions which would rise from the understanding between regional forces and global powers.

States like Turkey, Iran, and Russia use proxy wars for their strategic interests. The US has seen to adopt a short-term transactional approach to the proxies.

While proxy forces may appear advantageous to the states employing them, it may not always be implausible to connect to whom most may be affiliated.

The laws of armed conflict are yet to completely catch up to the legal status of certain PMCs and the degree of state responsibilities in proxy wars. In such cases, there is a looming threat that nations like India cannot overlook or deny.

- ***Aparna Rawal is an Indian research analyst specializing in the Af/Pak region and counter-terrorism. VIEWS PERSONAL***
- ***The author can be reached at [aparnarawal \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:aparnarawal@gmail.com)***



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# Exhibit 23



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Breaking News

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# Fawzi Bookft .. a new arm for Turkey in Libya

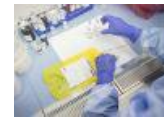
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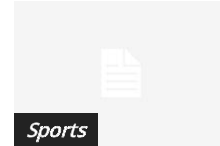
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Source: Arabic.Net – Monia Ghanmi

Fawzi Buktv, a Libyan Muslim Brotherhood listed on the terrorist list, surprised the Libyans when his name was associated with a security company that had engineered a military deal with the Turkish “Sadat” international defense consulting firm, under which it obtained contracts to train armed militias in Libya.

The website of the “Africa Intelligence” newsletter revealed that Turkey got [Contractual guarantees to train armed militias affiliated with the Libyan Government of Concord](#) And, in a partnership agreement between the private Turkish company “Sadat”, which is supervised by the former general, Adnan Tanriverdi, the security advisor to the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and between the Libyan company, “Private Side”, which is affiliated with the organization of the Brotherhood and supervised by the Libyan Brotherhood leader Fawzi Bukitv.

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FOCUS

LIBYA

Issue dated 08/06/2020

## **Turkish military company Sadat turns Erdogan-Sarraj alliance into business opportunity**

Turkish paramilitary company Sadat, headed by former Turkish general Adnan Tanriverdi, has set up a partnership with Fawzi Boukatif-led Libyan company Security Side to train the forces fighting for Fayeze Sarraj's Government of National Accord. The company has been trying for several months to win military training contracts in the wake of Turkey's intervention in the North African country.

Surprising Libyans came from the fact that this man has a black history in Libya, his name was associated with war crimes, assassinations, and suspicious relations with the outside. Today, he is responsible for the security of Libya and Libyans, and one of Ankaras allies and collaborators to intervene in Libya to legitimize and merge armed militias involved in criminal acts in regular forces.

Bouktaf, a former engineer in the "Arab Gulf Oil Company", was among the fiercest opponents of the late Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and the first to lead the revolt against him from Benghazi, where he formed the February 17 battalion that included Brotherhood and terrorist leaders, among them a member of the Libyan Fighting Group, classified as a terrorist organization Ismail Al-Salabi, who is the brother of Ali Al-Salabi, who is based in Turkey.

Boctave is one of the most prominent leaders of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood and one of the founders of the "Dawn Libya" militias that caused the killing of civilians and the burning and destruction of public facilities during a war launched to control the capital, Tripoli, in 2014.

He was imprisoned more than once during the Qaddafi era on terrorist charges and linked to banned groups related to Al Qaeda.

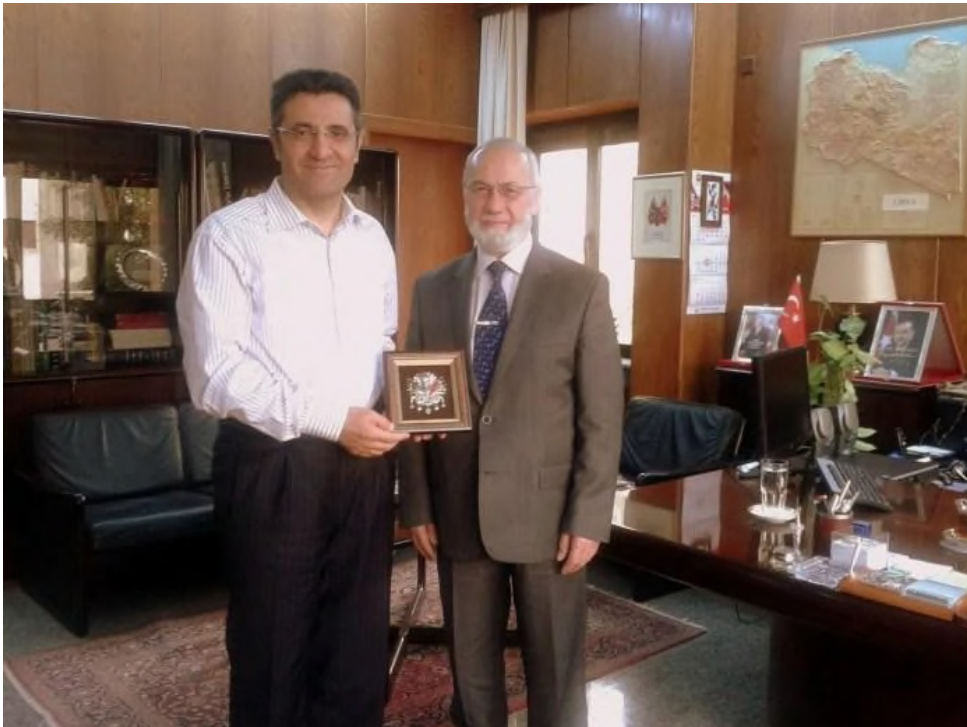


Fawzy BookTV

Fawzi Pooktv held several positions during the February events, namely, "the commander of the February 17 battalion," "the commander of the Revolutionary Brigades gathering," and the deputy minister of defense in the Executive Office of the Transitional Council, then an ambassador to Uganda, a position that he is still moving in until today as a cover for his activities. .

Boctv is listed on the lists of terrorism issued by the Libyan parliament in June 2017, on charges of military and financial coordination with Qatar, and Doha provided him with media support to promote the Brotherhood project in Libya and to whiten the activities of this group, and has close ties to the most prominent leaders of the Brotherhood in Libya, similar to Mohd Sawan The leader of the "Justice and Construction" party, Abdelhakim Belhadj, and Ali Sallabi, one of the suspects in the assassination of Major General Abdel Fattah Younis in July 2011.

According to the "Africa Intelligence" report, Fawzi Boktef is close to the Muslim Brotherhood networks in the Fayez al-Sarraj government, and managed in Turkey to make the most of his Islamic political networks, to build his contacts with the "Sadat" company, which eventually succeeded in winning military training contracts in Libya, with the conclusion Partnership agreement with Poctv.



Adnan Tanverdi, director of the Sadat company, hosted by the former Turkish ambassador in Tripoli, "Archive"

Boctv "Security Side" operates from the center of Libyan Tripoli, specifically the safe compound in Palm City, where the European Border Protection Mission staff lives, and has a branch in Istanbul.

The company regularly provides security tasks for European companies and diplomatic delegations in Libya, and it previously won a contract to secure the arrival of a European mission to the capital, Tripoli, last March, as well as protecting French diplomatic delegations, tankers of the "Total" oil company and the French Libyan Chamber of Commerce "CCFL". This was done through cooperation with the security company, "Pius", but this was canceled in 2018, following the annoyance expressed by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, due to the company's affinity with the Brotherhood, which raised concerns about diplomatic security.

The Turkish company "Sadat" has a bad reputation in Libya, due to its suspicious activities and suspicious movements, as Brigadier General Khaled Mahgoub, Director of the "Moral Guidance Department" in the "General Command" of the Libyan National Army, in an earlier interview with "Al Arabiya.net" and "Hadath". Net ", that the information available indicates that this company is located in Libya and leads the Turkish intelligence activity in the country and is affiliated with the Brotherhood.

He added that this company "invests heavily in the Libyan war, as it undertakes the operations of bringing Syrian mercenaries and foreign fighters to Libya and arming them after training them militarily, escorting the armed militias of the Al-Wefaq forces, and also plays the role of mediator to complete the sale and purchase of weapons and military equipment between the specialized companies in Turkey. And the reconciliation government in exchange for obtaining a percentage of the profits, "indicating that it also undertakes the organization and conclusion of contracts to bring in mercenaries and gets a commission for every mercenary, noting that all of these funds



are paid from the Libyan state treasury.

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# Exhibit 24

# *Militia Leaders in Benghazi*

Dec. 28, 2013

**ABDUL SALAM BARGATHI** A commander in a militia, the Preventive Security Brigade, and an old friend of Ahmed Abu Khattala. He says he told the Libyan guards at the mission to flee rather than try to hold off the attackers.

**FAWZI BUKATEF** Commander of the February 17 Brigade, former leader of the coalition of rebel militias, a frequent visitor and close contact of the Americans in Benghazi. He was in Tripoli the night of the attack but says he believes some of his men joined in.

**MOHAMED AL-GHARABI** Commander of a large Islamist militia, he says he sent “wise men” to try to stop his fighters from joining the attack on the compound.

**WISSAM BIN HAMID** Commander of Libya Shield, the most formidable militia in eastern Libya at the time. When called to help rescue Americans in the mission, he stood outside and did nothing. Has since fled Benghazi.

**AHMED ABU KHATTALA** A prime suspect in the attack on the American compound, commander of the small Obeida Ibn al Jarra militia, seen as an eccentric extremist.

**SUFIAN BIN QUMU** A former driver for a company owned by Osama bin Laden and a major target of American intelligence gathering. He is not believed to have played any role in the attack on the mission.

**MOHAMMED ALI AL-ZAHAWI** Commander of Ansar al-Shariah of Benghazi, a militia whose members, witnesses said, were involved in the attack on the American compound.

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 12 of the New York edition with the headline: Militia Leaders and the Roles They Played

# Exhibit 25



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GNA fighters seen after regaining control over the city, in Tripoli. (File photo: Reuters)

## Turkey sends mercenaries, militants of different nationalities to Libya: Reports

Libya

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Tamara Abueish, Al Arabiya English

Published: 13 July ,2020: 03:28 PM GST

Updated: 13 July ,2020: 03:35 PM GST

Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayeaz al-Sarraj, unnamed sources told Al Arabiya.

The latest Turkish plane arrived in the Libyan city of Misrata on Monday carrying 356 mercenaries from Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Sudan, according to the sources.

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It was followed by another plane arriving from Turkey carrying 126 other fighters.

Turkey had reportedly transferred about 1,400 Tunisian fighters affiliated with extremist organizations from Syria's Aleppo and Idlib to Libya in the past few days, Al Arabiya cited sources as saying. As of mid-June, some 13,000 Syrian mercenaries had been sent to Libya by Turkey.

Libyan and Turkish passenger planes had transported the Tunisian fighters in batches to the Turkey's Gaziantep and Istanbul before flying them to Misrata in northwestern Libya.

The head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights – a UK-based war monitor – confirmed the reports to Al Arabiya in an interview, adding that “Ankara sends militants to Libya, not just mercenaries.”

This comes as [Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu rejected a ceasefire in Libya](#) on Monday.

Libya has been [mired in conflict since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011](#), but since 2019, fighting between the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar and the GNA has escalated as foreign involvement has intensified.

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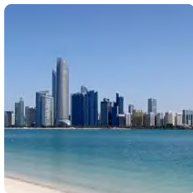
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# Exhibit 26



Zafer Yörük author@duvaenglish.com

## SADAT: the horsemen of the apocalypse?

A number of allegations have recently surfaced over Adnan Tanrıverdi, a former security aide to President Erdoğan. Tanrıverdi is said to oversee SADAT, a shadowy paramilitary group close to the President. Allegations of the company's involvement in the combat training of the jihadist paramilitary groups loyal to Turkey go further to suggest that SADAT pushed for the current escalation in Idlib. Can it be compared to Iran's Revolutionary Guards?

Saturday February 22, 2020 06:02 am



"Will Islam ever unite? Yes. How will it happen? When the Mahdi arrives. When does the Mahdi arrive? Only God knows. So, do we not have a duty? Should we not prepare the conditions for the Mahdi's arrival? This is precisely what we are doing."

Adnan Tanrıverdi, the man who disclosed the imminent arrival of the Mahdi (the Islamic counterpart of the Messiah in Judeo-Christian theology) in December last year, was none other than President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's aide on security and foreign policy. Though Tanrıverdi resigned from this post following a public outrage over his apocalyptic revelation.

Tanrıverdi, a former general who had been forced into retirement back in 1996 because of his Islamist affiliations, has become known in recent years as the director of a security firm, SADAT.

According to its own definition, SADAT provides consultancy services and military training to the international defense sector. The company's management is manned by former military officers renowned for their loyalty to President Erdoğan, who claim credit for the failure of the July 15 2016 coup attempt due to their contribution to the popular anti-coup mobilization.

However, since the formation of the company in 2012, SADAT's involvement in politics has allegedly gone far beyond this single "democratic" intervention, according to numerous questions tabled in parliament. The government and the minister of defense refused to respond to any of these questions from the parliamentary opposition and no legal investigations have been conducted into SADAT's affairs.

### Shadow army

Allegations suggest that SADAT has developed an army of paramilitaries under the command of Tanrıverdi, who reportedly remains closely connected to President Erdoğan. The opposition has said that the company has two military camps in the central Anatolian provinces of Tokat and Konya where paramilitary troops are trained.

Besides commanding a shadow army that reports to the president, Tanrıverdi's relationship with Erdoğan is alleged to be one of mutual influence, with SADAT



claimed to have some influence over the presidential policy making processes. In a statement that came after the failed coup attempt of 2016, Tanrıverdi pointed out that the transition to the presidential system was "their" recommendation along with the restructuring of the Turkish armed forces, which have been put in effect: "Our recommendations extensively reflect on the emergency rule bylaws," the former general said.

If so, then the next reform in Turkey's system can be forecasted from what SADAT's sister organization ASSAM currently recommends: "The sentence that 'the official religion of the state is Islam' should be included in the Constitution".

Tanrıverdi is alleged to have more influence over the military command structure than the current Chief of the General Staff. Until his recent resignation, Tanrıverdi participated as the presidential advisor in the national security summits, which traditionally hosts the police and army chiefs, along with the interior and defense ministers. The parliamentary opposition has demanded that the public be informed about SADAT's activities and its position in the state apparatus. İyi Party deputy Aytun Çıray told Deutsche Welle Turkish: "Scandalous allegations about SADAT await answers from the government. We are aware of the existence of unofficial armies in other countries but none of these companies operate so as to govern the state from outside".

#### **Wide reach**

Moreover, SADAT's influence is claimed to extend to foreign policy decisions, particularly on the military engagements in Syria and Libya. Allegations of the company's involvement in the combat training of the jihadist paramilitary groups loyal to Turkey go further to suggest that SADAT pushed for the current escalation in Idlib. It has also been alleged that the Turkish military command's objections to the establishment of observation posts in the region were overruled by Erdoğan because of the pressure from the company executives.

SADAT is also said to be involved in the marketing of the weaponry produced by Turkey's flourishing defense industry, particularly in the Middle East and Africa. Claims of the company's involvement in arms sales to the warring factions loyal to the Tripoli administration in Libya have been made by Russian media. Russian sources claim that during the three month period between July and September 2019, 10,000 tonnes of weaponry and ammunition, along with armored vehicles, missile launchers and drones, have been shipped to Tripoli from Turkish ports.

Parallel to these shipments was the transfer of more than 1,000 jihadists from Syria to Libya and were supervised, according to Russian media, by 88 men, all of whom are SADAT personnel, who also train the jihadists on how to operate the new arms. Erdoğan's statement on Libya in January seems to substantiate these allegations: "As an opposition force, we will have different teams in Libya."

Tanrıverdi and the company have categorically denied providing military training to any civilians or groups in Turkey or abroad: "Our services consist of programs for the armies and police forces of those countries that are Turkey's friends and allies," the firm has said in a statement.

#### **The watchmen controversy and the 'Revolutionary Guards'**

Despite this denial, SADAT's controversial activities and hold over the political process continue to generate concern. Some allege that the company is founded as part of Erdoğan's preparations for a civil war and Tanrıverdi's messianic revelations are indicative of this prospect. SADAT allegedly recruits

from among the pro-AKP youth organizations to train cadres as Erdoğan's stormtroopers.

Others read the company's surge in parallel with the recently founded watchmen organization ( Bekçi ), a 30,000 strong paramilitary group, who are supposed to assist the police in the maintenance of order in the cities.

Erdoğan made the following statement on Jan. 2 in support of the watchmen organization: "We are in a situation where we can no longer rely solely on the official security forces for the order of our cities".

Many criticize this new institution as a way of establishing an armed pro-Erdoğan youth organization similar to the Basij group in Iran. The Basij – a paramilitary group connected to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards – are known for their mission to prevent "immoral" behavior in the cities such as drinking alcohol or flirting. They were also used by former President Ahmedinejad in the suppression of protest demonstrations back in 2009.

If the watchmen organization is the Turkish version of the Basij, then some parallels between the structures and aims of the SADAT organization and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards of Iran can be drawn. The Revolutionary Guards, who played a crucial role in the consolidation of the Islamic regime in post-revolutionary Iran, are still the primary force that maintains the Islamic order. In addition to domestic security, the Revolutionary Guards are also involved in national defense. They operate as a parallel force accompanying to both the police and the military. While SADAT allegedly resembles to the Revolutionary Guards, its operations abroad could be found to be similar to the engagements of the Iranian regime's Quds Army.

#### Trumpets of 'Great Tribulation'

SADAT is still in the stage of formation and its size of personnel cannot be compared to the 250,000 strong Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Rather than developing an additional armed organization, SADAT seems to aim at exerting influence, particularly on the Turkish armed forces' structure and operations. In this sense, rather than a parallel additional army, SADAT has the features of a shadow army headquarters where "real" decisions are taken.

The identity of the Mahdi, who is on his way according to Tanrıverdi, the role of SADAT in the preparation of the conditions for his arrival and what such an arrival would imply are still questions that deeply concern Turkish society and the international community.

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# The Role of Turkish Security Companies in Africa: Incentives and Risks of Expansion

[Hamdi Bashir](#) | 23 Aug 2020

The African continent is witnessing a noticeable growth in the activity of international security companies. The Libyan crisis has revealed the growing role of the Turkish company SADAT International Defense Consultancy in Libya, especially after its involvement in the training of militias associated with the Government of National Accord (GNA) since November 2019, and the letter of the United Nations (UN) to the Turkish government in June 2020 to inquire about the role of SADAT in recruiting and transferring Syrian mercenaries and children to Libya.[1] This raises many questions about the nature of the company's security role, the motives and limits of that role, and the risks of its expansion on the African continent.

### The nature of the role and tasks

- SADAT International Defense Consulting was established in 2012 by Adnan Tanrıverdi, a retired brigadier general. It is currently headed by his son Ali Kamil Melih Tanrıverdi, who is the author of the book "The Return of the Caliphate".[2] At its inception, the company included 23 commissioned and non-commissioned officers from various military units of the Turkish army.[3] Its role in the Turkish arena grew after its participation in thwarting the attempted military coup in 2016.[4] It has also played an active role in the Syrian war,[5] as well as in many African, European and Asian countries.
- SADAT is associated with the Turkish government, and there are strong indications of this relationship, including the appointment of Adnan Tanrıverdi, the founder of the company, as a security adviser to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,[6] and the provision by the company of security protection for the Turkish President.[7]
- The company shrouds its activities abroad in secrecy. The Turkish government ignored the questions of the opposition inside the Turkish Parliament about the company's activities.[8] Reports indicated that SADAT set up training camps inside Turkey, especially

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فيلق القدس الإيراني، إسماعيل قاتني، سعى إلى  
إقناع "الفتح" بالتفاهم مع الصدر وربما القبول  
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two camps in the provinces of Tokat and Konya in central Anatolia, where mercenaries and terrorist organisations are being trained.[9]

- Since its inception, SADAT has been influenced by the Salafi-jihadist ideology. It was joined from the beginning by military operatives who were expelled from the Turkish army in 1997 because of their Salafi tendencies. In December 2019, Adnan Tanriverdi resigned from his position as an adviser to President Erdogan, after statements in which he said that “his company was paving the way for the coming of the [Awaited] Mahdi.”[10] In December 2017, SADAT submitted a proposal to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to form the “Army of Islam.”[11]
- The field of SADAT’s activity is focused on providing training on irregular warfare. Information indicates that the company is involved in recruiting and training mercenaries from Syria and Asian and African countries, where the company receives a commission of 10,000 dollars for each fighter taking part in the fighting,[12] in addition to the company's role in providing intelligence to the Turkish intelligence service, marketing the Turkish military industry, and providing its customers with weapons, explosives and other military equipment.[13]

#### **Limits of deployment and areas of concentration on the African continent**

- SADAT’s activity is concentrated in a number of African countries, especially Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Tunisia, Ethiopia, and other countries. International monitoring reports have already referred to SADAT’s presence in the port of Suakin in Sudan, and also in a Turkish military training camp in Somalia to train Somali forces.[14]
- SADAT revealed on its website its presence in Libya.[15] Within 2020, it has already sent dozens of military trainers to train militias associated with the GNA,[16] and it is estimated that nearly 88 of the company’s operatives are present in Libya.[17] In November 2019,

SADAT signed a contract with the Libyan private security company Security Side, led by the [Muslim] Brotherhood's leading figure Sameh Bukatef, to train militias associated with the GNA.[18]

### Incentives to expand on the continent

- Strengthening the Turkish military presence, especially after Turkey signed an agreement with Niger to establish a military base in July 2020. This came after France's intention to strengthen its military presence in the African Sahel region and lead European efforts after the announcement of the formation of the European multi-task force Takuba.[19]
- Protecting the security interests and working in favour of the Turkish political agenda. Information indicates that SADAT receives funding from the Turkish government and has received funding to train nearly 3,000 foreign fighters to be deployed in Syria and Libya. [20]
- SADAT is an important military tool for Turkish intervention abroad without the need to expand the army's involvement in foreign military operations, especially training mercenaries and transferring them to conflict areas.

### Opportunities and challenges of expansion on the continent

#### A) Opportunities

- Turkey's signature of military cooperation agreements with many African countries, especially Nigeria, Niger, Chad, *Côte d'Ivoire*, Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia,[21] which provide for the involvement of private security establishments in performing some tasks.[22] For example, the Turkish military cooperation agreement with Libya includes provisions regarding the possibility of sending civilians who are members of defense and security organisations to Libya.[23]
- The growing involvement of private military companies, such as the Russian Wagner Group, on the continent, which allows SADAT to

exploit this climate to expand its activities in the context of the international competition for influence.[24]

- Some African governments tend to seek the help of those companies in the context of civil wars due to the lack of confidence in the regular armies.

### **B) Challenges**

- Challenges of competition with other military companies, especially the Russian Wagner Group, which is more widespread in African countries (20 countries) and relatively more experienced than SADAT, considering that the Wagner operatives fight on the front lines, while SADAT focuses on training mercenaries and sending them to dispute areas.[25]
- The international accusations made against SADAT of sponsoring terrorism, recruiting and training mercenaries (especially children under the age of 18) and sending them to Syria.[26] This weakens the company's credibility with African governments and puts the company's activity under the control and prosecution of many security and international agencies. Information indicates that SADAT recruited and trained mercenaries from Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Sweden,[27] Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Russian investigations regarding the travel of 889 foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq from Russia revealed that 25 percent of those had been in contact with SADAT.[28]

### **Risks of expansion in Africa**

- Providing logistical support to terrorist and extremist organisations. In one of his statements, Adnan Tanriverdi stated that “Turkey should support Islamic groups against state terrorism.” He said that “foreign-backed state terrorism targeting Islamic groups in some critical regions of Africa such as the Central African Republic, Mali, and Nigeria, and preventive measures [to protect those groups] should be studied carefully.”[29]



- Military, security and ideological penetration of African armies.

There is a possibility of recruiting and directing some military men to form military insurgency movements or carry out military coups. The company may exploit its presence to gather intelligence, or seek to recruit soldiers and make them join terrorist organisations.

- The risks of escalating wars between international military companies, especially between Turkish SADAT and Russian Wagner. For example, while SADAT supports the militias loyal to the GNA, Wagner supports the forces of the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar.[30]

### Conclusion

The Sadat Company is considered a military arm of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, and a military tool in the hands of the Turkish government to support extremist organisations on the African continent. Thus, in terms of its military pattern, Sadat is closer to the revolutionary irregular armies, such as the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and their external arm the Quds Corps. Therefore, Sadat is expected to expand its activities to support unrest, religious conflicts, subversive activities and political assassinations, and to fuel radical revolutionary ideas in dispute areas on the continent. Libya, Central Africa, Nigeria and other African countries witnessing divisions between moderate and radical currents constitute a suitable environment for the expansion of SADAT's activity.

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# Exhibit 28





Abroad > COMMENTARY — Libyan Jihadist cells in Turkey protected by Erdoğan regime

# COMMENTARY — Libyan Jihadist cells in Turkey protected by Erdoğan regime

By SCF - May 26, 2017

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İmkan-Der official Sait Gökdere whose brother was killed while fighting along with Jihadists poses with rebels in Jarablus.

By Abdullah Bozkurt

*It was hardly surprising to find out Manchester suicide bomber Salman Abedi (22), a British of Libyan origin, has footprints all over in Turkey before travelling back and forth from Syria as it was revealed by the German intelligence in an exclusive story by the Financial Times. That would add to a growing list of Jihadists who were in Turkey before coming back to terrorize European populations and to kill indiscriminately from Brussels to Paris, from Stockholm to St. Petersburg.*

*I have written extensively on how the regime of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan empowered Islamists in Libya by pouring arms and funds but also the ways in which he managed to recruit Libyan Jihadists to fight his dirty war in Turkey's neighborhood by facilitating their travel. Against the background of what happened in the attack during a concert by the pop singer Ariana Grande at Manchester Arena that killed 22 and injured 64, perhaps we need to take another look on Turkish government role in Libya and movement of Libyan Jihadists through Turkish territory.*

*The confidential wiretap records maintained by the intelligence on Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) suspects in Turkey reveals that Libyan militants were intimately involved in the trafficking of jihadists with a political cover provided by Erdoğan's government. One of the key ISIL operatives in Turkey is a man named Farag H. Hamad Ali, a 36-year old Libyan national who has connections to ISIL groups in Libya's third largest city of Misrata. He was working with other Arab nationals to move fighters in and out of Syria using Turkey as a conduit, providing logistical supplies. The intel indicates he also set up an operation in Cyprus. Although Farag was detained in Turkey on July 10, 2015, named as a suspect in an ISIL indictment filed by Istanbul prosecutor, he was later released.*

*The wiretap records show Farag worked closely with another ISIL trafficker and procurement person named Mohammed Elsayed Eltokhy Salim Elshiemy (aka Abdulhakem Mısırlı), a 26-year-old Colombia-born Egyptian national. Although both men were spotted by authorities while exchanging money and arrested, they were later let*



*Repression: Abduction, Rendition and Forcible Return of Erdoğan Critics*



*Turkey's Abuse of INTERPOL: How Erdoğan Weaponized the International Criminal Police Organization for Transnational...*



*Left Behind to Die: COVID-19 in Turkish Prisons and Discrimination Against Political Prisoners*



*Turkey's Judicial Council: Guarantor or Annihilator of Judicial Independence*



*Human rights in Turkey: 2020 in review*

*go after the backroom deals. For example, in a wiretap recorded on March 7, 2015 at 12:09 p.m., Elshiemy was shopping for night vision binoculars in Istanbul's Karaköy district. He was told by Farag that a 50,000 euro transfer was made for him to purchase military-grade goggles. In another wiretap recorded on March 6, 2015 at 12:31 p.m., Elshiemy asked a man identified as Abu Davud to supply weapons for ISIL.*

*Elshiemy had also arranged for fraudulent passports and secured visas for ISIL sleeper agents who were sent to Europe to identify targets and scout the area. For example, in a wiretap dated Oct. 15, 2014 at 17:49 p.m., Elshiemy asked for a fraudulent Libyan passport to move a person illegally. They were securing official Turkish visa stamps by bribing Turkish authorities. The government in Turkey knew all about these networks but cracking down on them has never been a priority. Only after intense pressure from the NATO allies as well as Russia and China did Erdoğan's government pretend to be cracking down on Jihadist militants, only to secure their release after quick roundups. In the meantime, however, the police, intelligence and courts have been busy in hunting down Erdoğan's legitimate critics in Kurdish political movement, secular and leftist groups and the Gülen movement.*

*As a result, today's Turkey has been transformed into a safe sanctuary for all sorts of radical groups including al-Qaeda and ISIL that use Turkish territory to raise recruits, funding, logistical supplies and arms. Turkish government has not only aided and abetted these groups in what is seen as Erdoğan's personal and dirty war to oust Syrian president Bashar al-Assad from power but also threaten other neighbors, partners and even allies with these proxy groups.*

*In parallel to what Iran has done for decades, Turkish Islamists – who are greatly influenced by Iranian experiment during their youth years by the way- also turned to this clandestine policy of creating own proxies by investing in radical groups in Turkey and abroad. Just like Iran airlifted many militants of Islamic Courts Union (ICU), the godfather of the al-Shabaab militia, from Somalia to fight on its behalf*



SADAT head Adnan Tanrıverdi frequently visited Libya.

during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War in exchange for \$2,000 monthly payments to their families, Erdoğan and his henchmen offered \$2,000 monthly salary for each Libyan fighter who joined ISIL and the al-Qaeda network. Contractors especially Erdoğan's secret paramilitary force SADAT would get \$10,000 commission for each fighter who signed up for the fight.

This deal was asked by a lawmaker in January 2015 in Parliament but then foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu had not responded to it despite he was obligated to answer parliamentary questions within two weeks. In fact, then Libyan interim and internationally recognized government led by Abdullah al-Thinni filed repeated grievances with Turkish government on this issue, forwarded own intelligence reports that included names of Turkish national who had been involved in trafficking of Jihadists from Libya to Turkey. When it was unable to obtain a change of behavior in Erdoğan government, Libya decided to expel Turkish nationals on February 2015 as a protest to Turkish government's position. According to Turkey's main opposition party figures in 2015, some 50,000 Jihadists were sheltered in Turkey with most of them from Libya and Russia.



Imkan-Der head Murat Özer met with Islamist groups in Libya.

Two NGOs were used by Turkish government to run the recruitment line from Libya to Syria. One is Imkan-Der, an Istanbul-based NGO, believed to be aligned with al-Nusra front, Ahrar ash-Sham & Jaysh al-Islam. Murat Özer, the head of Imkan-Der, visited Libya and met Islamist groups there. It runs logistical support for Turkey-backed Sultan Murad Brigades that

*fighters against Assad forces in the northern Syria. It has only one branch which is located at the border province Gaziantep from where it runs logistical lines to Syria. It set up a hospital in the same city to treat wounded Jihadists in addition to a make-shift hospital on the Syrian side of the border.*

*Russia asked the UN on Sept. 2013 to list mkan-Der in UNSC 1267/1989 Sanctions Committee list as al-Qaeda supporter, but the motion was vetoed by the United States and opposed by Azerbaijan. In a letter submitted to the UN on 10 Feb.2016, Russia again named mkan-Der as supporter of terror in Syria, claiming how Turkish government used mkan-Der as a front to send weapons to Jihadists in Syria. It is amazing how mkan-Der, a staunch supporter of Erdoğan government, has been able to secure the release of many detained Jihadists from Turkish jails by lobbying the government. When Turkish troops and opposition fighters took over Jarablus during Syria incursion, it was mkan-Der that was called upon to transform the Syrian town.*

*Another NGO used by Turkish government to send arms to Libya is controversial charity group the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), which is closely backed by Erdoğan. The document, revealed from the authenticated email communications of Erdoğan's son-in-law Berat Albayrak, who is now energy minister, came to light when the owner of a bankrupt sea shipping and container company asked for compensation from the Turkish government over damage his ship sustained while transporting arms between Libyan ports on the order of authorities in Ankara in 2011.*



*UN traced weapons bound for Libya to Turkey.*

*The letter revealed all the details of a Turkish government-approved arms shipment to rebels in a ship contracted by IHH. In a letter dated March 9, 2016, a UN Security Council panel of experts concluded that arms shipments to Libya have been going on mainly*

*from Turkey. The UN experts traced weapons in Libya to Turkish companies and discovered that the Turkish government deliberately tried to mislead the investigation into a Turkish ship carrying arms destined for Libyan Islamist factions. The ship, the Haddad 1, registered in Bolivia, was seized in September 2015 by the Greek coast guard while transporting a concealed arms shipment from Turkey to Libya.*

*The Turkish President's secret paramilitary force called SADAT led by a retired Islamist general, Lt. Gen. Adnan Tanriverdi who is also the chief military aide to Erdoğan, has been involved in clandestine training of Libyan militants for some time. This man has visited Libya many times, meeting with renegade Libyan officers and receiving red carpet treatment during each visit by the Turkish Embassy in Tripoli.*

*Some of these rebels were later transported from Libya to Turkey to join Erdoğan's clandestine army to fight against his enemies. Tanriverdi played a key role in purging pro-NATO officers from Turkish military following what appears to be a false flag coup bid that helped Erdoğan set up his critics and opponents in the government for mass purges. The dismissed officers were replaced by Islamists and neo-nationalists.*

*May 26, 2017*



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**Letter dated 10 February 2016 from the Permanent Representative  
of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the  
President of the Security Council**

Deliveries of weapons to terrorist groups in Syria are reportedly still taking place, profiting from the facilities of Turkish-based foundations İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı (IHH — Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief), İmkander and Öncü Nesil İnsani Yardım Derneği.

Supplies of various forms of weapons, military equipment and ammunition are arriving from abroad via the Turkish port of İskenderun. Military equipment and supplies are transported from there through Hatay Province (Öncüpınar border crossing) to Aleppo and Idlib in Syria using vehicles belonging to IHH, İmkander and Öncü Nesil with the following Turkish registrations: 33 SU 317, 06 DY 7807, 33 SU 540, 33 SU 960, 42 GL 074 and 31 R 5487. Within Syria, the weapons and ammunition are distributed to Turkmen gangs and Jabhat al-Nusra units.

On 15 September 2014, representatives of IHH brought supplies of weapons and medicines from Bursa through the Ceylanpınar border crossing (Reyhanlı district) by vehicle into Syria for ISIL groups. This shipment was followed and escorted through Turkey by a vehicle carrying MIT personnel.

*In a letter submitted to the UN on 10 Feb.2016, Russia named IHH & İmkan-Der as supporters of terror in Syria.*

## TÜRKİYE BÜYÜK MİLLET MECLİSİ BAŞKANLIĞINA

Aşağıda ısralanmış soruların, Başbakan Sayın Ahmet DAVUTOĞLU tarafından yazılı olarak cevaplanmasını arz ederim.

Saygılarımla

Prof. Dr. İdris BAL  
Demokratik Gelişim Partisi Genel Başkanı  
Kudüs Milletvekili

8 Ocak 2015 günü Sabah Gazetesinde, Başbakan Ahmet Davutoğlu ve Türk Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nca, Libya'da yaşayan Türk vatandaşlarının bu ülkede can güvenliği olmadığı gerekçesiyle, Libya'yı terk etmelerine yönelik bir açıklama haberi yer aldı. Libya kaynaklarından edindiğimiz bilgiye göre : AKP referansı ile Libya'da iş yapan bazı Türk vatandaşlarının, para karşılığında, Türkiye üzerinden, Libya vatandaşlarını, IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerine gönderdiği öğrenilmiştir. IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerinde, safılarına katılan bu şahıslara 2000 (iki bin) dolar aylık ücret ödendiği, bu şahısların katilmesine öncelik yapan kişilere de, katılan kişi başına 10.000 (on bin) dolar komisyon ücreti ödendiği tespit edilmiştir. Libya hükümetinin bu hususlara ilişkin elinde somut deliller olduğu, bu deliller doğrultusunda, Türk Dışişleri Bakanlığı ve MIT Müsteşarlığı'na bilgi verdiği, daha sonra da tablonun ciddiyetinden dolayı, ülkede bulunan tüm Türk vatandaşlarının sınır dışı etme kararı alındığı tespit edilmiştir. Buna göre;

1. Bu bilgi doğru mudur? Türk devleti bağlı kişiler, El Kaide ve IŞİD ile destek veren terör örgütlerine aileman mı devşirmekteydiler?
2. Son üç yılda, Libya'dan ülkemize gelen Libyalılardan kaç tanesi ülkesine dönüş yaptı? Kaç tanesi Suriye ve Irak'a çıkış yaptı? Kaç tanesinin vize süresi doldu? Kaç tanesi halen Türkiye'de bulunuyor?
3. Libya hükümetinin, Libya vatandaşlarının, AKP hükümetinin referansı ile Libya'da iş yapan Türk vatandaşları tarafından, para karşılığında Türkiye üzerinden IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerine götürüldüğüne dair, Türk Dışişleri Bakanlığı ve MIT'e, sunduğu bir rapor var mıdır? Varsa, bu rapordaki hususlardan dolayı, Libya hükümeti, Libya'da bulunan Türk vatandaşlarının ülkeyi terk etmelerine ilişkin bir karar alıp, tarafınıza bildirmiş midir?
4. Başbakan Ahmet Davutoğlu ve Dışişleri Bakanlığının, Türk vatandaşlarının can güvenliği olmadığı dolayısıyla, Libya'yı terk etmeleri gerektiğine dair açıklamaları, gerçek nedeni güçlemek için mi yapılmıştır?
5. Libya'da AKP referansı ile iş yapan, MIT ile bağlantılı şahıslar kimlerdir?
6. IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütleri ile AKP hükümeti arasında iddia edilen bağlantılar doğru mudur? Bağlantılar doğru ise ne tür ilişkileri vardır?
7. Türkiye üzerinden IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerine katılan başka ülke vatandaşları da var mıdır? MIT'in bu konuda bir çalışması var mıdır? Varsa tarafınıza ilettiği bir rapor var mıdır?
8. IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerine katılan Türk vatandaşlarının sayısı nedir? Bunların geri dönmelerine ilişkin yapılan bir çalışma var mıdır?
9. IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerine Türkiye üzerinden katılanların toplam sayısı nedir?
10. IŞİD ve El Kaide Terör Örgütlerine, katılmak üzere, Suriye ve Irak'a giden bu şahıslar vizenin alınmadan Türk sınır kapısından nasıl geçmekteydiler? Hükümetimiz bu şahıslara sağladığı bir kolonyak var mıdır? MIT'in bu terör örgütü üyelerinin, sınır kapılanmadan giriş çıkışlarına dair bir raporu var mıdır?

Parliamentary motion probed Turkish government on trafficking of Libyan Jihadists.

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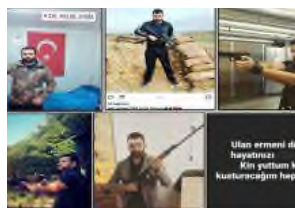
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**AKP report: Gülen-linked purge victims must face the 'monsters' they've become**



**Top court upholds prison sentences in MHT trucks probe**



**Ultrationalist issued threats, posted photos with assault weapons before attacking HDP office**



**AKP, MHP reject motion to investigate Erdoğan's 'parallel army' SADAT**



**ECTHR requests Turkey's defense in case of prosecutors jailed due to MHT trucks probe**



**Jailed Kurdish leader denounces killing of PKK hostages, blames gov't for botched rescue attempt**



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## *1 COMMENT*

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***Proposed Anti-Tank Missile Sale to Turkey, Qatar Raises Concern | Jim Campbell's***    March 1, 2018 At 21:01

[...] government has a track record of arming jihadists in Syria. Turkey and Qatar provided arms to Libyan rebels, much of which ended up in the hands of the "more [...]"

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Comments are closed.



*Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is an advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights and freedoms.*

*Contact us: [info@stockholmcf.org](mailto:info@stockholmcf.org)*



# Exhibit 29



#UKRAINE

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# Turkey's Islamic defence consultancy takes on West



Issued on: 22/10/2021 - 04:36

 3 min

*Istanbul (AFP)* – Turkish businessman Melih Tanriverdi seethes at the suggestion that his private defence consultancy has become Ankara's secret weapon in wars across

## North Africa and the Middle East.

SADAT International Defense Consultancy has gained growing scrutiny over US allegations that it trains Syrians who then get dispatched to support pro-Turkish forces in war zones such as Libya.

The company's manifesto says SADAT "aims to assist the Islamic world to take the role among the super global powers as a self-sufficient global power".

But Tanriverdi tells AFP those accusations are part of a Western disinformation campaign designed to tarnish the image of Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"Our company has nothing to do with being a mercenary organisation," he said in a written interview.

"SADAT's entry into the field of action as an unexpected actor against the global powers... explains the reason for this disinformation," he said in English.

The firm was established in 2012 by Tanriverdi's father Adnan -- a brigadier general whose service ended during a purge of Islamic influence from the traditionally secular military in 1996.

Its stealth role in promoting Turkey's interests across the Muslim world has gained renewed attention as Erdogan seeks to secure a foothold in Afghanistan following the US troop withdrawal.

Turkey proposed using private contractors to protect Kabul's airport so that it can fully reopen to international flights -- a role theoretically tailor-made for SADAT.

### 'Conspiracy theory'

Tanriverdi says only that SADAT "can provide consultancy and training services to security and military units that will ensure the security of the airport".

Its span of proposed operations -- coloured green on a company logo showing a world map --

ADVERTISING

stretches from North Africa to the Middle East and parts of central and southeast Asia.

In 2020, the US Department of Defense said SADAT sent teams to Libya to train Syrian fighters on behalf of Turkish-backed forces of the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli.

SADAT "maintains supervision and payment of the estimated 5,000 pro-GNA Syrian fighters in Libya," a Pentagon report said at the time.

Tanriverdi dismissed this and claims that SADAT funnelled fighters to Azerbaijan in last year's war with Armenia over disputed Nagorno-Karabakh as a "conspiracy theory".

"SADAT has never been in Syria, Libya or Azerbaijan," he said. "Do you really think we are professional enough to fool the global powers?"

Some analysts think they are.

## **'Facilitator'**

"There are credible sources that suggest SADAT plays a key role in training and mobilising proxies in Syria and using them as mercenaries," American University and Orion Policy Institute terrorism expert Suat Cubukcu told AFP.

The elder Tanriverdi initially became Erdogan's senior security adviser after the Turkish leader survived a coup attempt in 2016.

Some believe SADAT offers the Turkish government plausible deniability about its role abroad.

A report by US Joint Chiefs of Staff Army officer Matt Powers called SADAT a "facilitator between Ankara and Syrian proxy fighters" that Turkey then sends to other war zones.

"There is a lot of speculation that Turkish intelligence uses cut outs to pay for proxies, giving a veneer of legitimacy to the use of Syrians in operations abroad," the Foreign Policy Research Institute's Middle East program director Aaron Stein told AFP.

"However, we have no idea how this actually works."

Tanriverdi refused to name any clients. "We operate on every continent, including Africa," he said.

## Ideological drive

Cubukcu said SADAT's overtly political view of the world and lack of its own armed units distinguished it from Wagner -- a Russian firm associated closely with the Kremlin that is also pushing into resource-rich Africa -- or its US counterparts.

"SADAT has ideology-oriented and much more intertwined relations with its home government," Cubukcu said.

But Tanriverdi rejected speculation that his firm has grown into an informal part of the Turkish state.

He said SADAT needed state approval to "export services or defence industry products" but did not take instructions from ministries or Turkey's MIT intelligence agency.

Although the elder Tanriverdi no longer serves as Erdogan's security adviser -- the company's anger at the West lives on.

"Countries that come from thousands of kilometres away... spread fake news to accuse our president and his former chief adviser, Adnan Tanriverdi," the younger Tanriverdi said.

# Exhibit 30





## Nagorno-Karabakh's Syrian mercenaries | Turkish government continues recruitment in complete secrecy, number of fighters in Azerbaijan jumps to 1,650, with over 125 killed so far

On Oct 15, 2020



Reliable sources have informed the Syrian Observatory that the Turkish government and its intelligence services continue recruiting Syrian mercenaries to throw them to in the military operations in the “Nagorno-Karabakh” region alongside Azerbaijani forces in their conflict with the Armenians.

However, the recruitment operations are being conducted in complete secrecy to avoid any potential reactions by the international community regarding the “recruitment of mercenaries,” the sources have said.

In this context, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has monitored the arrival of a new batch of Syrian fighters in Azerbaijan, comprising nearly 200 fighters. This brings the number of Syrian fighters who have been transferred to Azerbaijan to at least 1,650 mercenaries so far.

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SOHR sources have documented further fatalities among Syrian mercenaries involved in the “Nagorno-Karabakh” conflict. The death toll of those factions has risen, since the Turkish government sent them to the frontlines, to at least 126 dead, including 92 fighters whose bodies were brought to Syria while the rest of bodies remained in Azerbaijan.

[SOHR](#) [Human Rights Violations](#) [News](#) [Areas](#) [SOHR Statistics](#) [International Powers In Syria](#) [Media](#)

### International Advocacy

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# Exhibit 31

Procedure : **2021/2576(RSP)**
[Document stages in plenary](#)
Document selected : **RC-B9-0177/2021**

Texts tabled :

**RC-B9-0177/2021**

Debates :

▶ **PV 09/03/2021 - 22**  
 ▶ **PV 09/03/2021 - 23**  
 ▶ **CRE 09/03/2021 - 22**  
 ▶ **CRE 09/03/2021 - 23**

Votes :

▶ **PV 11/03/2021 - 11**  
 ▶ **PV 11/03/2021 - 18**

Texts adopted :

▶ **P9\_TA(2021)0088**

10.3.2021

**B9-0177/2021** }

189k

63k

**B9-0178/2021** }**B9-0179/2021** }**B9-0181/2021** } RC1

## JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 132(2) and (4) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the following motions:

**B9-0177/2021** (S&D)**B9-0178/2021** (ECR)**B9-0179/2021** (Renew)**B9-0181/2021** (PPE)

on the Syrian conflict – 10 years after the uprising  
**(2021/2576(RSP))**

**Michael Gahler, Lukas Mandl, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Tom Vandenkendelaere, David Lega, Adam Jarubas, Janina Ochojska**  
 on behalf of the PPE Group

**Marek Belka, Isabel Santos, Tonino Picula**  
 on behalf of the S&D Group

**Nathalie Loiseau, Barry Andrews, Olivier Chastel, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Urmas Paet, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Michal Šimečka, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Ramona Strugariu, Hilde Vautmans**  
 on behalf of the Renew Group

**Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Anna Fotyga, Karol Karski, Adam Bielan, Ryszard Czarnecki, Angel Dzhambazki, Assita Kanko, Elżbieta Rafalska, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Veronika Vrecionová, Bogdan Rzońca, Ruža Tomašić, Hermann Tertsch, Elżbieta Kruk**  
 on behalf of the ECR Group

**Nikolaj Villumsen, Fabio Massimo Castaldo**

**AMENDMENTS**    001-005    006-007    008-008    009-018

European Parliament resolution on the Syrian conflict – 10 years after the uprising  
**(2021/2576(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular that of 15 March 2018 on the situation in Syria<sup>[1]</sup>, of 18 May 2017 on the EU strategy on Syria<sup>[2]</sup>, of 4 July 2017 on addressing human rights violations in the context of war crimes, and crimes against humanity, including genocide<sup>[3]</sup>, of 24 October 2019 on the Turkish military operation in north-east Syria and its consequences<sup>[4]</sup>, of 26 November 2019 on children rights on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>[5]</sup> and of 17 November 2011 on EU support for the International Criminal Court<sup>[6]</sup>,
- having regard to the statement of the EU Foreign Affairs Council of 6 March 2020, and the latest EU Council conclusions on Syria of 14 October 2019, 16 April 2018 and 3 April 2017,
- having regard to the previous statements on Syria by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, including those of February 2020 on humanitarian access in Idlib, of 13 January 2020 and 26 September 2019 on Syria, and of 9 October 2019 on developments in north-east Syria,
- having regard to Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2021/30 of 15 January 2021 implementing Decision 2013/255/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Syria<sup>[7]</sup>, which added the new Syrian Foreign Affairs Minister to the EU list of sanctions against those responsible for violent repression in Syria,
- having regard to the EU strategy on Syria adopted on 3 April 2017, and to the Council conclusions on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Daesh threat adopted on 16 March 2015,
- having regard to the joint declaration by the UN and the European Union, as co-chairs of the fourth Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, held on 30 June 2020,
- having regard to the previous statements of the UN Secretary-General on Syria, including those of his spokesperson of 1 and 18 February 2020,
- having regard to the latest statement of the UN Special Envoy to Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, addressed to the UN Security Council (UNSC) on 22 January 2021,
- having regard to the UNSC resolutions relevant to Syria since 2011, in particular UNSC Resolution 2254 (2015) endorsing a road map for a peace process in Syria, UNSC Resolution 2249 (2015) on the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and UNSC Resolution 2533 (2020) renewing the Bab al-Hawa border crossing until 10 July 2021 for humanitarian aid,
- having regard to the latest reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, submitted to the UNHRC on 1 March 2021,
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 71/248 of 21 December 2016 establishing the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in Syria since March 2011,
- having regard to the statement by Unicef of 28 February 2021 on the safe reintegration and repatriation of all children in Al-Hol camp and across the north-east of Syria and to the Unicef Whole of Syria Humanitarian Situation Report 2020 of 2 February 2021,
- having regard to the establishment in 2011 of the Secretariat of the EU Genocide Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, hosted by Eurojust,
- having regard to Council Common Position 2003/444/CFSP of 16 June 2003 on the International Criminal Court<sup>[8]</sup>, to its 2004 Action Plan for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to achieve universal ratification and implementation, and to the revised EU Action Plan of 2011,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the ICC,
- having regard to the UN Charter and UN conventions to which Syria is a state party, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
- having regard to the UN-backed Geneva Communiqués of 2012 and 2014,
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 9 December 1948,

- having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in late February 2011 Syrian children were arrested, detained and tortured in Deraa by the Syrian regime for writing graffiti critical of President Bashar Al-Assad on city walls; whereas on 15 March 2011 thousands of Syrians in Deraa and Damascus took to the streets in record numbers to demand democratic reforms, the release of political detainees, an end to torture, respect for human rights and the rule of law, the holding of free and fair elections, and an end to corruption; whereas these popular protests spread across the country for several years, from major cities such as Homs, Hama, Idlib and popular neighbourhoods of Aleppo and Damascus, to smaller towns such as Al-Hasakah in the north-east and Kafr Nabl in the north-west;
- B. whereas the Syrian uprising of 2011 was a demonstration of Syria's ethnic and religious diversity, including leaders from all ethnic and religious groups and all provinces of the country;
- C. whereas the Syrian regime responded to the legitimate democratic aspirations of its people with sheer brutality from the Syrian security forces and allied militias under its command; whereas more than 500 000 people have lost their lives and more than one million have been injured; whereas according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), since March 2011 over 230 000 civilians have been killed, 88 % of whom by the Syrian regime, 3 % by Russian forces, 2 % by Daesh and 2 % by armed opposition groups; whereas over 15 000 civilians have been tortured to death, 99 % of whom in regime prisons; whereas over 150 000 civilians have since been forcibly disappeared and remain detained, 88 % of whom by the Syrian regime, 6 % by ISIL/Daesh and 3 % by armed opposition groups; whereas over 3 400 healthcare staff have since been forcibly disappeared or detained, 98 % of whom by the Syrian regime;
- D. whereas the parties to the conflict, including government forces and their allies, anti-government armed groups and UN-listed terrorist organisations such as ISIL/Daesh, have perpetrated gross human rights violations to various degrees, including war crimes and crimes against humanity; whereas the tactics deployed by both the brutal regime and jihadists were directed at the annihilation of moderate and pro-democratic forces; whereas all those responsible for these crimes must be held accountable;
- E. whereas the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons, Scud missiles, conventional artillery and air-dropped bombs, as well as barrel bombs, cluster bombs and incendiary bombs, on densely populated civilian neighbourhoods such as Homs, Hama and East Aleppo; whereas peaceful protesters who were injured by live fire from Syrian security forces were denied treatment and tortured to death in military hospitals and detention centres across the country, as evidenced by the Caesar report presented by France to the UNSC in May 2014; whereas families have been routinely prevented from burying their dead in cemeteries; whereas entire cities have been under siege and deliberately starved; whereas collective punishments, extrajudicial killings and multiple massacres of hundreds of men, women and children in rural towns, such as in May 2012 in Houla, have taken place; whereas the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria reported on the systematic use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war by Syrian regime forces and their militias;
- F. whereas the UN has established a series of initiatives through the mandate of its UN Special Envoys in order to reach a ceasefire between all parties, release detainees, guarantee humanitarian access to all parts of the country, protect journalists and NGOs and engage in an inclusive dialogue for a political solution to the conflict that ensued after 2011; whereas this process and the UN-mandated Syrian Constitutional Committee (SCC) remain at a standstill;
- G. whereas the SCC was established in October 2019 with the mandate to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict, under the auspices of the UN Special Envoy for Syria and in line with UNSC Resolution 2254 (2015); whereas, in spite of its structural deficiencies and Assad's continuing resistance to constructive cooperation within the SCC, the SCC remains a crucial tool for achieving a peaceful political resolution to the conflict;
- H. whereas Russia, supported by China, has vetoed 16 UNSC resolutions since 2011, including on a referral of Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and on increasing humanitarian access; whereas Iran and Hezbollah have been directly involved in supporting the Syrian regime's repression of civilians; whereas Russia has been devoting logistical, diplomatic and financial resources since 2015 to a large-scale military intervention by the Russian Air Force in support of the Syrian regime;
- I. whereas Turkey has been intervening directly in Syria since 2016 with a view to occupying the northern parts of the country, predominantly consisting of Syrian Kurdish enclaves, in violation of international law, including by invading in October 2019 territories controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF); whereas, in response to these actions by Turkey, a number of EU Member States have formally suspended arms sales to Turkey;
- J. whereas according to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, Turkey has transferred Syrian mercenaries to Nagorno-Karabakh;
- K. whereas the Global Coalition is continuing its efforts in Iraq, Syria and globally to thwart ISIL/Daesh's ambitions and the activities of its branches and networks;
- L. whereas the EU and its Member States suspended diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime in 2012; whereas the EU closed its EU delegation in Damascus in December 2012, following the closure of Member State embassies in early 2012;
- M. whereas the Council adopted sanctions on individuals and entities involved in the repression of civilians, which were adopted in 2011 and have since been expanded, in order to reach a negotiated political settlement; whereas these sanctions have

humanitarian exemptions;

- N. whereas the Syrian regime's response to the uprising has led to the destruction of Syria's economic and social fabric; whereas the collapse of the Syrian pound has been amplified by the collapse of the Lebanese economy as of 2019, and the global economic repercussions related to the COVID-19 pandemic as of March 2020; whereas the cost of basic staples has increased by over 100 % since 2019;
- O. whereas Syria, under intense international pressure, signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention in October 2013 after committing its largest chemical attacks to date on a civilian neighbourhood east of Damascus in Eastern Ghouta; whereas the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Investigation and Identification Team found the Syrian regime responsible for using chemical weapons on civilians multiple times since; whereas in July 2020 the OPCW Executive Council formally requested once again that the Syrian regime declare its chemical weapons facilities;
- P. whereas the conflict has resulted in almost 7 million refugees, with over 13 million people dependent on humanitarian aid in Syria, including 6 million women and children, 6.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 3 million people living in hard-to-reach besieged areas; whereas humanitarian needs have risen by a fifth in the last year alone, with an additional 4.5 million Syrians suffering from food insecurity and 90 % of Syrians living below the poverty line; whereas humanitarian access to all populations in need remains vital and 40 % of the Syrian population reside in non-government controlled areas; whereas in addition to general healthcare for the population, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how cross-border access into north-west and north-east Syria remains crucial; whereas winter and the subsequent flooding, which affected some 121 000 people at 304 IDP sites in north-west Syria, brought an additional level of distress to a population that was already extremely vulnerable; whereas the Syrian Government continued to impose severe restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid in government-held areas of Syria and elsewhere in the country;
- Q. whereas around 12 000 foreign nationals, mostly suspected of having direct or indirect ties to ISIL/Daesh, are imprisoned in seven prisons run by the SDF in north-east Syria; whereas 9 000 of them are held in Al-Hol camp, Syria's largest, which hosts a total of 64 000 people, mostly families with ties to ISIL/Daesh, of whom 94 % are women and children, including EU citizens; whereas current conditions are highly alarming, especially after the latest killings recorded since the start of this year;
- R. whereas the conflict has had a particularly severe impact on the lives and human rights of children in Syria; whereas over 29 500 children have been killed, 78 % of whom by the Syrian regime and Iranian militias, 7 % by Russian forces and 3 % by ISIL/Daesh, according to the SNHR; whereas more than 2.6 million girls and boys have been internally displaced from their homes and whereas the mental health of many Syrian children has been and will continue to be deeply affected by the sheer brutality of the conflict; whereas the inability of children in Syria to obtain birth registration and identity documents puts them at risk of statelessness; whereas millions of children have missed years of education, with 2.8 million currently out of school in Syria;
- S. whereas continuing attacks on health facilities have decimated Syria's health system and left Syrians struggling to cope with the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 crisis; whereas less than 64 % of hospitals and 52 % of primary healthcare centres across Syria are functioning; whereas 70 % of the health workforce has fled the country, according to the World Health Organization (WHO);
- T. whereas regular attacks on healthcare facilities have been a hallmark of the Syrian conflict since its onset, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law, and persisted in 2020 during the pandemic; whereas over the past decade, international recognition of the systematic nature of attacks on healthcare in Syria has grown, but clear accountability has proven elusive despite UNSC Resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2286 (2016); whereas the UN Secretary-General established an internal UN Board of Inquiry which examined a limited number of incidents in north-west Syria between September 2019 and April 2020;
- U. whereas humanitarian advocates and practitioners continue to raise concerns about the security and protection of returnees and displaced individuals in the light of the conditions in many areas of the country and the questions about the Syrian Government's approach to political reconciliation;
- V. whereas since 2011 the EU and its Member States have mobilised EUR 20 billion for humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance to Syrians inside the country and in neighbouring countries; whereas the EU has been the driving force behind the Syria pledging conferences which took place in Brussels over four consecutive years (2017-2020), and the fifth Brussels conference, which is due to take place on 29 and 30 March 2021;
- W. whereas UNSC Resolution 2533 (2020) of 11 July 2020 on cross-border aid renewed only the Bab al-Hawa border crossing, for a one-year period until 10 July 2021, thereby closing the Bab al-Salam, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha crossings;
- X. whereas since 2011 millions of Syrians have been stripped of their property rights by new Syrian property laws against those evading military service or fleeing the country without prior authorisation;
- Y. whereas the Golan Heights are Syrian territory and have been occupied by the State of Israel since 1967;
- Z. whereas a number of attacks on cultural heritage have been carried out by different parties throughout the course of the conflict, including the destruction and pillaging of archaeological sites at the hand of ISIL/Daesh and the bulldozing, looting and destruction of archaeological sites and Yazidi shrines and graves by the Syrian National Army in Afrin;

- AA. whereas the Rome Statute of the ICC, signed and ratified by all Member States, affirms that the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole – in particular genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – must not go unpunished;
- AB. whereas all Member States have ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC as of 2009; whereas in 2011 the Council established the Secretariat of the EU Genocide Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, hosted by Eurojust; whereas the EU strategy on Syria calls for the EU to promote accountability for war crimes committed in Syria, with a view to facilitating a national reconciliation process and transitional justice;
- AC. whereas a Joint Investigative Team (JIT) led by law enforcement and judicial authorities in France and Germany was launched in 2018 for the first time to facilitate the arrest and prosecution of Syrian war criminals following the publication of the Caesar report on the systematic starvation and torture of tens of thousands of women and men in Syria's detention centres since 2011;
1. Conveys its support for the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people who, 10 years ago on 15 March 2011, peacefully demonstrated for democratic reforms in Deraa, Damascus and the rest of the country; pays tribute to the 500 000 victims of the repression and conflict in Syria since the beginning of the popular uprising; believes that the future of Syria should rest in the hands of Syrians; conveys its support to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian state and its people;
  2. Expresses its deep concern over the persistent political deadlock, and commends the efforts of the UN Special Envoy, Geir O. Pedersen, to find a political solution to the conflict; shares the Special Envoy's concerns over the lack of any progress; reaffirms that a sustainable solution to the Syrian conflict cannot be achieved militarily; is equally concerned by the economic collapse and the disastrous humanitarian crisis affecting Syria;
  3. Expresses its support to UNSC Resolution 2254 (2015) establishing a Syrian-led constitutional reform process; deeply regrets the Syrian regime's lack of engagement despite repeated engagement and readiness of Syrian opposition representatives to negotiate with the Syrian regime in the drafting of a new Syrian constitution; emphasises in this regard the need for the establishment of a UN-led ceasefire monitoring, verification and reporting mechanism;
  4. Opposes any normalisation of diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime as long as there is no fundamental progress on the ground in Syria, with clear, sustained and credible engagement in an inclusive political process; considers the upcoming 2021 Syrian Presidential elections to be lacking any form of credibility in the eyes of the international community in the current context; firmly condemns the visits of MEPs to the Syrian regime, and stresses that those MEPs do not represent the European Parliament;
  5. Regrets that some players further divided a fragmented Syrian opposition, obstructing the Geneva Process;
  6. Strongly condemns all atrocities and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular by the Assad Regime, but also by Russian, Iranian and Turkish actors and calls on Russia, Iran and Hezbollah to withdraw all forces and proxies under their command, except for those participating in an international peacekeeping or stabilisation force under mandate of the UN Security Council; deplores the role of Russia and Iran in backing the Syrian regime's all-out repression of its civilian population, and their takeover of Syria's political process and economic resources;
  7. Calls on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Northern Syria which it is illegally occupying outside of any UN mandate; condemns Turkey's illegal transfers of Kurdish Syrians from occupied Northern Syria to Turkey for detention and prosecution in violation of Turkey's international obligations under the Geneva Conventions; urges that all Syrian detainees who have been transferred to Turkey be immediately repatriated to the occupied territories in Syria; is worried that Turkey's ongoing displacements could amount to ethnic cleansing against the Syrian Kurdish population; stresses that Turkey's intervention has weakened international efforts against ISIL/Daesh; firmly condemns Turkey's use of Syrian mercenaries in conflicts in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh, in violation of international law;
  8. Firmly believes in Syria's religious and ethnic diversity; deplores the Syrian regime's long-standing discrimination against Kurdish Syrians; condemns the Syrian regime's targeted attacks against critical voices, such as European Parliament Sakharov Prize winner Ali Ferzat for his criticism of President Assad, as well as the Syrian regime's attacks against 124 Christian churches, which was documented by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR); firmly condemns the assassinations of religious minorities by ISIL/Daesh, and particularly its crimes of genocide against Yazidis and people of the Shiite Muslim and Christian faiths in 2014-2018; deeply deplores the persecution of minorities under armed opposition groups;
  9. Reminds the international community of the gravity and the magnitude of human rights violations in Syria perpetrated by different parties to the conflict; points to the Syrian regime's overwhelming responsibility for its decision to meet peaceful protests with all-out repression through unspeakable means; recalls the importance of the Caesar report and the confirmation, presented to the UNSC by France in 2014, of the credibility of the photos of the 11 000 identified prisoners who were starved and tortured to death in detention centres and military hospitals around Damascus between 2011 and 2013; urges the EU and its Member States to support the UN Commission of Inquiry's recommendation of March 2021 to facilitate the creation of an independent mechanism with an international mandate and a victim-led approach to locate the missing or their remains, including those found in mass graves;



10. Firmly condemns the killing of 550 international and Syrian journalists by the Syrian regime and dozens by ISIL/Daesh and other armed groups; calls on the Syrian regime to immediately release from prison the 400 journalists it is holding in detention, according to the SNHR;
11. Condemns in the strongest terms the use of rape as a weapon of war against women, whether by the Syrian regime and its militias as documented by the UN International Independent Committee, or by ISIL/Daesh on Yazidi and Shiite women; recalls the role played by women in the 2011 uprising and the fundamental importance of including women at all levels of Syria's political, economic, judicial power structures, including in transitional justice; reiterates the importance of including women and young people in the conflict resolution process;
12. Reiterates its strongest condemnation of Russian airstrikes which have killed a total of over 6 900 civilians including 2 000 children using cluster munitions, vacuum bombs and long range missiles, targeting independent media centres, hospitals, humanitarian infrastructure including over 207 medical facilities, according to the SNHR, and Syrian civil defence units such as members of the White Helmets humanitarian organisation; denounces Russia's attempts to tarnish the image of the White Helmets in Western media through an aggressive and sustained disinformation campaign on social media; condemns in the strongest terms the involvement of Russian warplanes in the Syrian regime's chemical attacks, such as in the chemical massacre of Khan Sheikhoun of April 2017, after which Russian warplanes immediately bombed the only hospital where the victims were being treated;
13. Urges the Syrian regime to immediately release the 130 000 political prisoners unjustly detained, including women, men and children forcibly disappeared by Syrian security forces; firmly condemns the systematic use of torture, inhuman treatments and sexual violence in the horrendous conditions in which they are being held, without any access to a civilian court, a lawyer, medical care or their families; stresses that they are being denied their basic rights to a fair trial, including the withholding of information on their arrest and torture to extract bogus confessions; urges the Syrian authorities to without exception provide immediate and unhindered access to detention facilities for recognised international humanitarian NGOs and monitoring organisations without prior notification;
14. Stresses that ISIL/Daesh is still active in the region and has not been defeated; expresses its concerns about the difficulties encountered in preserving and obtaining access to evidence of crimes perpetrated by ISIL/Daesh and uncovering the fate of those kidnapped; calls on the EU and its Member States to support efforts on the ground to document and preserve evidence of those crimes; welcomes the prosecution of EU and non-EU nationals who have joined ISIL/Daesh;
15. Expresses its concern over the resurgence of ISIL/Daesh in north-east Syria; commends the efforts of the international coalition against ISIL/Daesh; stresses the importance of continued, long-term US engagement in the coalition; reaffirms its support for the efforts of the Global Coalition against ISIL/Daesh, and underlines the significant contribution made by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as an ally in the fight against ISIL/Daesh;
16. Expresses its concern about the rising tensions in Iraqi Kurdistan, which has enjoyed more stability in recent years than Syria, and has provided a safe haven to Syrian refugees;
17. Reaffirms that the persons responsible for core international crimes must be duly prosecuted, including by EU Member States, in the absence of other international or national processes of transitional justice; emphasises the key importance of resolving the issue of those detained and disappeared by all parties to the conflict as a fundamental part of any transitional process with the aim of achieving peace;
18. Recalls that the International Criminal Court (ICC) should remain the primary jurisdiction for international justice for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression; considers that the lack of accountability provides a breeding ground for further atrocities and compounds the suffering of the victims; insists, therefore, on the need to hold all perpetrators to account, notably through the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction, and to provide reparation to victims; stresses that the introduction of restorative justice measures cannot wait until the end of the conflict and urges the EU and its Member States to step up their support for processes led by representative groups of Syrians; firmly condemns Russia's 16 UNSC vetoes, with the support of China, to referring Syria to the ICC;
19. Welcomes the first ever sentencing of a Syrian regime security officer for complicity in crimes against humanity on 24 February 2021 at the court in Koblenz in Germany;
20. Commends EU Member States' efforts since 2019 to secure broad international support for securing long-term funding within the UN general budget for the UN's International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in Syria since March 2011 (IIIM);
21. Welcomes the Franco-German Joint Investigative Team (JIT) to support the prosecution of the crimes against humanity documented by the Caesar report; welcomes the international arrest warrants issued by both countries in 2018 to arrest three high-ranking security officials; commends the role played by local Syrian NGOs in verifying, documenting, gathering and protecting evidence of crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as the complementary role played by NGOs such as the Commission for International Accountability and Justice in assisting European law enforcement and judicial authorities in effectively prosecuting war criminals present on EU Member States' territory; calls on the EU to provide more legal training to Syrians to enable them to play a role in the fight against impunity;

22. Calls on the Commission to present an EU action plan on impunity, with a specific chapter on Syria; stresses that this action plan should seek to better coordinate and harmonise Member States' resources and efforts to prosecute war criminals in the EU; is of the view that transitional justice plays a fundamental role in securing peace in the long term; calls on the EU to launch a designated European fund for victims of crimes against humanity in Syria;
23. Supports Member States' efforts to improve coordination of judicial, police and immigration resources through the development of pooled jurisdictions in order to mutualise their judicial competences and facilitate prosecution; stresses that better-equipped Member States should share their experts and interpreters in order to facilitate efficient and effective investigations, while each Member State should endeavour to appoint a designated prosecutor for these crimes in order to speed up judicial coordination efforts;
24. Calls on Member States to automatically share at EU level information on war criminal suspects under Article 1F of the Geneva Convention; is of the view that there also needs to be closer cooperation between immigration authorities and public prosecutors on suspected war criminals at national level;
25. Urges all EU Member States without exception to be fully cooperative in the fight against impunity; expresses its deep concern over certain Member States' lack of cooperation in prosecuting Syrian war criminals;
26. Fully supports European efforts led by the Netherlands since September 2020 to launch legal proceedings against Syria at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its violation of the UN Convention against Torture;
27. Calls on Member States to request the suspension of Syria's membership to the OPCW for falsifying evidence of the use of chemical weapons at the upcoming spring 2021 OPCW conference; reiterates its shock at and condemnation of the Syrian regime's 336 documented chemical attacks dropping chlorine gas, sarin and sulphur mustard gas on civilians;
28. Firmly condemns attacks on humanitarian workers by all sides, especially by the Syrian regime and ISIL/Daesh; points out that the Syrian regime bears particular responsibility for targeted killings of humanitarian workers since 2011; highlights Russia's overwhelming responsibility for attacks on humanitarian workers, particularly for its bombing of 21 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) field hospitals in October 2015;
29. Expresses its profound concern at the ongoing suffering of the Syrian people, 10 years after the conflict began; is particularly concerned that humanitarian needs in Syria have risen by a fifth in the last year alone, and that an additional 4.5 million Syrians now suffer from food insecurity, while 90 % live below the poverty line; considers that humanitarian access must remain a central priority for the EU in Syria, and that increased needs require a greater financial and political response from the EU; notes that UNSC Resolution 2533 on the border crossing at Bab al-Hawa is coming up for renewal in July 2021; regrets the fact that Russia and China abstained from the last vote instead of voting in favour of the resolution; is of the opinion that cross-line delivery of humanitarian assistance cannot be relied upon to deliver for the people currently relying on cross-border delivery; recalls that 2.4 million Syrians depend on this border crossing for survival. and that failure to extend this crossing for a minimum of 12 months would have severe and life threatening consequences; condemns the actions of those UNSC members that have sought to limit humanitarian access for political purposes; urges all UNSC members to support the renewal of the cross-border resolution in order to avoid a worsening humanitarian crisis and to ensure the expansion and support for cross-line interventions carried out in line with humanitarian principles; highlights the importance of ensuring the immediate reauthorisation of the Bab al-Salam and Yarubiyah border crossing points in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 74/169, in order to ensure that aid reaches populations in need in both the north-west and north-east by the most direct routes; underlines the importance of ensuring that humanitarian aid is exclusively directed to those most in need;
30. Calls on the international community to urgently address the record levels of humanitarian need of the Syrian people inside and outside Syria; encourages the EU as a convener of the Brussels V Syria pledging conference to rally other international donors towards increasing support for the health sector of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) through increased, flexible, multi-year funding that covers population needs in the long term; calls on international donors to specifically invest in programmes that repair, restore and strengthen damaged or destroyed health facilities, in addition to other civilian infrastructures that have suffered damage;
31. Urges the UNSC to include explicit calls for the protection of health workers in forthcoming UN resolutions and official discussions; calls on EU Member States, in this regard, to offer political backing and operational support to UN-led accountability initiatives and investigations to uphold international humanitarian law;
32. Stresses, ahead of the Brussels V Donor Conference of 29-30 March 2021, the importance of not only maintaining humanitarian assistance pledges but increasing them for Syrians, IDPs and refugees, as well as for communities affected by the crisis in the region; points to the fact the EU and its Member States have been the largest humanitarian donors to respond to Syria's humanitarian crisis, with donations since 2011 reaching EUR 20 billion; is deeply concerned about alleged UK Government plans to cut its aid contributions significantly, including reductions of 67 % for Syria and 88 % for Lebanon;
33. Commends the role played by neighbouring states that offer solidarity and assistance to Syria's refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq; urges EU Member States to continue to fund humanitarian assistance programmes in refugee host countries, as well as for IDPs in Syria; urges EU Member States to provide all necessary funding and support to ensure all Syrian refugee children in host countries have access not only to primary, but also to secondary education; urges all host countries to adopt all necessary measures to achieve this, and to remove any administrative or legislative obstacles; encourages host countries

- to focus on access to employment, health services and education, and civic documentation, which will promote the ability of refugees to work towards becoming self-reliant;
34. Notes that the EU's Madad Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis will expire by the end of 2021; calls on the Commission to secure financial means for the EU's humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, and to ensure the unhindered functioning of its projects;
  35. Calls on all Member States to support principled humanitarian assistance, without normalising relations with the Syrian regime; warns against investing EU financial assets whether directly or indirectly in Syria's general reconstruction if the Syrian regime does not implement a credible political process; calls on the VP/HR, as part of the long-term planning for the response in Syria, to develop a robust human rights due diligence policy for future rebuilding interventions in close cooperation with Syrian civil society, including a monitoring framework with dedicated indicators for human rights standards; deplores Russian, Iranian, Chinese and Turkish business plans to profit from Syria's destruction;
  36. Calls on Member States to maintain sanctions on individuals and entities involved in the repression in Syria; stresses the importance of avoiding any unintended negative consequences of sanctions through humanitarian exemptions for principled humanitarian action, and the importance of addressing banking over-compliance challenges jointly with the US;
  37. Urges the EU and its Member States to renew and expand the list of those subjected to targeted sanctions under the new EU Global Human Rights Sanction Regime, including the Syrian, Russian and Iranian civilian and military commanders who are credibly implicated in war crimes;
  38. Commits to the adoption of effective EU corporate due diligence legislation imposing human rights due diligence obligations to EU companies and companies operating in the single market;
  39. Reminds all Member States that Syria is not a safe country to return to; believes that any return should be safe, voluntary, dignified and informed, in line with the EU's stated position; calls on all EU Member States to refrain from shifting national policies towards depriving certain categories of Syrians of their protected status, and to reverse this trend if they have already applied such policies; urges Lebanon, Turkey and all countries in the region to suspend deportations of Syrians back to Syria against their will;
  40. Condemns the irreparable damage that Assad's scorched earth tactics have inflicted on cultural sites, and the looting and smuggling of artefacts by jihadists, who use them to finance their role in the conflict;
  41. Is extremely concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian, sanitary and security situation at camps in north-east Syria, notably Al-Hol and Roj camps, which remain breeding grounds for radicalisation; believes that EU nationals suspected of belonging to terrorist organisations and detained in those camps should be tried in a court of law; expresses its shock at the killing of an MSF employee working in Al-Hol camp on 24 February 2021, which further demonstrates the human toll of the violence and unsafe living conditions in the camp;
  42. Calls on Member States to protect child nationals who may be detained for security-related offences or association with armed groups;
  43. Calls on Member States to facilitate the child's return to their country of origin for rehabilitation, reintegration and/or prosecution, as appropriate, in full compliance with international law;
  44. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and the Council of Representatives of Iraq, the Regional Government of Kurdistan and the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.

[1] OJ C 162, 10.5.2019, p. 119.

[2] OJ C 307, 30.8.2018, p. 117.

[3] OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 69.

[4] Texts adopted, **P9\_TA(2019)0049**.

[5] Texts adopted, **P9\_TA(2019)0066**.

[6] OJ C 153E, 31.5.2013, p. 115.

[7] OJ L 12 I, 15.1.2021, p. 3.

[8] OJ L 150, 18.6.2003, p. 67.

# Exhibit 32

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**General Assembly**  
**Seventy-fifth session**  
Agenda items 34, 71, 114 and 135**Security Council**  
**Seventy-fifth year****Prevention of armed conflict****Right of peoples to self-determination****Measures to eliminate international terrorism****The responsibility to protect and the  
prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic  
cleansing and crimes against humanity****Letter dated 10 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative  
of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General**

Further to my letters dated 3 October ([A/75/491-S/2020/976](#)), 5 October ([A/75/496-S/2020/984](#)) and 31 October ([A/75/566-S/2020/1073](#)), I am enclosing herewith the Report on the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries by Azerbaijan in the aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 71, 114 and 135 and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mher **Margaryan**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 10 December 2020 from the Permanent  
Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General**

**REPORT**

ON THE USE OF FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS (FTFs)  
BY AZERBAIJAN IN THE AGGRESSION  
TO SUPPRESS THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF  
ARTSAKH (NAGORNO-KARABAKH)  
TO SELF-DETERMINATION

(as of October 31, 2020)

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## Chapter 1: Overview

On September 27 the Azerbaijani Armed Forces launched a large-scale airborne, missile and land attack along the entire line of contact in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), starting a new war against the people of Artsakh, who were forced to defend their right to self-determination. The Azerbaijani army used tanks, armoured combat vehicles, heavy artillery, long range air-to-surface missiles, multiple launch rocket systems, heavy flamethrower systems (TOS), and aviation, including helicopters and UAVs. Not only military settlements and units, but also towns and villages, hospitals and schools were targeted by Azerbaijan's attacks.

Azerbaijan's military capacities were shifted to a higher level with the support and direct involvement of Turkey. The perception that Turkey heavily backs Azerbaijan had been formed gradually, since the beginning of this year, as the actions of Azerbaijan and Turkey had been escalating the security situation in the region, reflected, among other things, in the bellicose rhetoric of the both sides, including of the political-military leadership of the countries. Besides the political support to Baku, Erdogan's regime provided military assistance, including heavy armament, munition and other equipment, sending military advisors, experts and operators. The recent TurAz-2020 joint military exercise took place from July 29 to August 13, as a rehearsal of the ongoing aggression. The main part of the Turkish military equipment, armament and munition, as well as personnel, operators and specialists remained stationed in Azerbaijan after the end of the drills.

Since the joint military exercises with Turkey conducted in July-August 2020 in Azerbaijan, Ankara-affiliated private contractors initiated recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters who had already gained the battle experience in Syria and other conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa to transfer them to Azerbaijan as "mercenaries", "bodyguards", "custodians" or other pretext. The recruitment has taken place mainly in the Turkish-controlled Syrian territories of Idlib Governorate, Tal Abyad and Suluq of Raqqa governorate, Shaikh al-Hadid, A'zaz, Jarabulus, Afrin, Jinderes, Manbij and al-Bab of Aleppo Governorate and Gaziantep, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa in Turkey. The recruited FTFs were from 18 to 40 years old. The tracking of the personal data of some fighters transported to Azerbaijan proved, that many of them had been engaged in previous or ongoing conflicts under the Turkish supervision in Syria, Iraq and Libya. The foreign terrorist fighters were integrated into the force structure of the Armed Forces and Border Control Forces of Azerbaijan.

Between July and September, 2020, a thousands of foreign terrorist fighters were recruited and transported to Azerbaijan. The recruitment and transfer of foreign terrorist fighters by Turkey has been acknowledged by governments of several countries, law enforcement agencies and continues to be extensively reported and documented by independent observers on the ground and the international media. There is no precise data on those who have already been killed during the aggression or have been wounded and receive treatment. As claimed by some sources, 107 FTFs have already been killed in the battles (09.10.2020).

Mostly the members of "Sultan Suleyman Shah", "Firqatu-l-Hamza", led by Fahim `Isa, "Sultan Murad", led by Sayf Abu Bakr (pseudonym: Sayf Balud) participated in hostilities against Artsakh. Sayf Abu Bakr is known as a former commander within the radical group of ISIL/Da'esh. The fighters of other divisions, such as Faylaqu-sh-Sham, Ahraru-sh-Sham, Jeish an-Nukhbah, Muttasim, Sultan Ertugrul, Nuraddine Az-Zinki, were also involved. According to credible reports, these groups are affiliated with internationally recognized terrorist entities, such as ISIL, Al-Qaida, al-Nusrah Front etc., designated by the UN SC as terrorist organizations. The group names often contain their composition: from firqa (division) to legion (Faylaq) and even brigade (Liwa'), but there is no precise data on the number of units involved in each group.

Some groups were formed exclusively from representatives of Turkic origin, like Syrian Turkomans/Turkmen<sup>1</sup> (i.e. "Sultan Murad", "Nuraddine Az-Zinki") or Uyghurs<sup>2</sup> ("Sultan Ertugrul"). The terrorist training camps on the Syrian, Iraqi and Libyan soil, which are run by Turkish-affiliated fighters and prepare new forces for the Azerbaijani Army, have been put on radars by the intelligence services of many countries. After being transferred to Azerbaijan, the FTFs were deployed by the Turkish supervisors predominantly on the frontline, in most dangerous zones, i.e. in Horadiz or close to Fizuli. Others were instructed to occupy "less dangerous" positions.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkomans/Turkmen: small minority in Turkey and Syria, who enjoy coveted privileges granted by Turkey, such as Turkish citizenship and sensitive leadership positions.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Armenian law enforcement agencies, a group of Uyghur fighters were transferred with their families to Turkey from Central Asia earlier this year that were mentored and trained in the Syrian camps and moved to Azerbaijan in mid-September.



The propaganda in the Turkish-controlled Syrian territories has taken place under jihadist slogans. The agitators have misled the communities, delivering them false information, that Armenians are fighting against Islam, and sustained the rumour that “the Armenian humanitarian mission in Aleppo is a pure manifestation of such anti-Islamic policy or behaviour”. The poor financial and social conditions in the territories of Syria under Turkish control created fertile ground for recruitment of FTFs and their deployment to Azerbaijan.

The factual evidence on presence of FTFs in Azerbaijan include their interviews to international media, recordings of telephone conversations between them and third persons, radio intercept data from the battlefields in Artsakh, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Tik-Tok posts, flight radar data etc. They also contain their own or family members’ and affiliates’ confessions, notes, glorifying and mourning posts, photos and selfies made in specific geographical area easily recognizable or identified by specialists as those located at or in vicinity to the LoC.

## ***Chapter 2: Reports on the transfer of FTFs from Syria and Libya to Azerbaijan***

The first cases of FTF recruitment for training and further transfer to Azerbaijan have been reported even before the July escalation, but the number of such cases significantly increased after the escalation on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border in the period of July 12-15, 2020.

*July 17*

The following message was circulated through private accounts in social networks.

URGENT URGENT URGENT URGENT!!!

Armenia - Azerbaijan

Syria North Syria: Turkish occupying forces in northern Syria have opened registration centres in the Afrin region of northern Aleppo province, with the aim of transferring loyalist Jihado-Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan to Turkey and Muslim brothers. To counter the Armenian army.

In exchange for signing a renewable six-month contract, mercenaries receive a monthly salary of US\$ 2500.

The Muslim Brothers Guide, Criminal Erdogan, enters his 5th war in the Middle East, after; Syria, Libya, Iraq, against its opponents, and now in Azerbaijan against Armenia... And soon against Egypt!!! Pretty much.

🔴 Aleppo Turkish occupation forces open registration centres in Afrin area in northern Aleppo countryside to transfer their loyal militants to Azerbaijan to fight against the Armenian army in exchange for signing a six-month renewable contract and a monthly salary of \$ 2500.

Since mid-September the Armenian intelligence reports warned about the recruited FTFs and their transfer to Azerbaijan through the Turkish territory. The most mentioned route was Gazientep-Istanbul flights by Turkish Airlines and from Istanbul to Baku either with Turkish, or Azerbaijani Silk Way Airlines. It became evident when Syrian-based pro-Kurds news sources (i.e. Afrin Post) started publicizing this to Armenian and other regional media.

Below is the non-exhaustive chronology of their appearance in the media in headlines and links (as of 31 October 2020).

*September 22*

Ankara sends its “hired killers” to Azerbaijan. Is it planning another massacre against Armenians?

<http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/09/ankara-sends-its-hired-killers-to-azerbaijan-is-it-planning-another-massacre-against-armenians/>

*September 23*

Turkey reportedly preparing to send members of Sultan Murad Division to Azerbaijan

<https://syriacpress.com/blog/2020/09/23/turkey-reportedly-preparing-to-send-members-of-sultan-murad-division-to-azerbaijan/>

*September 25*

Reports Turkey is transferring Syrian militants to Azerbaijan as hostilities against Armenia increases

<https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/09/25/reports-turkey-is-transferring-syrian-militants-to-azerbaijan-as-hostilities-against-armenia-increases/>

*September 28*

Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan, two fighters say

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN26J258>

Turkey sends 4,000 Syrian ISIS mercenaries to fight against the Armenians

[http://asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-\(VIDEO\)-51151.html](http://asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-(VIDEO)-51151.html)

Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey's ambition

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition>

*September 29*

Turkey sends former ISIL commander to lead Azerbaijan's fight against Armenia: report

<https://nationalpost.com/news/armenia-azerbaijan-accuse-each-other-of-cross-border-attacks-civilian-toll-climbs>

40 Muslim Brotherhood militant heading from occupied Afrin to Azerbaijan

<http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/09/40-muslim-brotherhood-militant-heading-from-occupied-afrin-to-azerbaijan/>

Turkey recruiting Syrians to guard troops and facilities in Azerbaijan

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-syrians-recruiting-guard-facilities>

*September 30*

Haut-Karabakh: Moscou dénonce la présence de combattants syriens et libyens dans la région

[https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2020/09/30/haut-karabakh-pas-de-pourparlers-en-vue-l-armenie-et-l-azerbaïdjan-determine-au-combat\\_6054225\\_3210.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2020/09/30/haut-karabakh-pas-de-pourparlers-en-vue-l-armenie-et-l-azerbaïdjan-determine-au-combat_6054225_3210.html)

أرمينيا وأذربيجان: بي بي سي عربي تحاور مقاتلا سوريا على خط النار بين البلدين (Armenia and Azerbaijan: BBC interviews a fighter under the fire line between two countries).

<https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-54346711>

Syrian mercenaries sustain Turkey's foreign policy

<https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-syrian-mercenaries-foreign-policy/a-55098604>

Nagorno-Karabakh: at least three Syrian fighters killed

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/nagorno-karabakh-at-least-three-syrian-fighters-killed>

*October 1*

Macron reprimands Turkey, accuses Erdogan of sending 'jihadists' to Azerbaijan

<https://www.france24.com/en/20201002-macron-reprimands-turkey-accusing-erdogan-of-sending-jihadists-to-azerbaijan>

France accuses Turkey of sending Syrian jihadists to Nagorno-Karabakh

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN26L3T4>

Russia Says Syria, Libya Fighters Deployed to Karabakh Conflict

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/09/30/russia-says-syria-libya-fighters-deployed-to-karabakh-conflict-a71610>

Rebels from Syria recruited to fight in conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, source says  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/01/middleeast/azerbaijan-armenia-syrian-rebels-intl/index.html>

*October 2*

What are Syrian mercenaries doing in Azerbaijan?  
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/what-are-syrian-mercenaries-doing-azerbaijan/>

*October 3*

Libye: des mercenaires syriens sur le départ en direction de l'Azerbaïdjan?  
<https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20201003-libye-mercenaires-syriens-sont-ils-d%C3%A9part-azerbaïdjan>

*October 4*

More pro-Turkish Syrian mercenaries die in Azeri-Armenian fighting  
<https://the arabweekly.com/more-pro-turkish-syrian-mercenaries-die-azeri-armenian-fighting>

*October 5*

Syrians Make Up Turkey's Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabakh  
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/>

*October 7*

Turkey deploys Syrian mercenaries to Karabakh war  
<https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/turkey-deploys-syrian-mercenaries-to-karabakh-war/>

*October 9*

Over 100 Syrian mercenaries killed fighting for Azerbaijan  
<https://geopolitics.news/euroasia/over-100-syrian-mercenaries-killed-fighting-for-azerbaijan-report/>  
'We don't even know where Azerbaijan is': The Syrian mercenaries driven by poverty to die in a distant war  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/armenia-azerbaijan-syria-war-fighting-mercenary-russia-b912446.html>

*October 10*

Why Turkey hired Syrians to fight for Azerbaijan  
<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/why-turkey-hired-syrians-to-fight-for-azerbaijan/>

*October 14*

Turkish-Backed Syrian Fighters Join Armenian-Azeri Conflict  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/turkish-backed-syrian-fighters-join-armenian-azeri-conflict-11602625885>  
Deaths of Syrian mercenaries show how Turkey, Russia could get sucked into Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794_story.html)

Putin expresses concerns to Erdogan about Middle East fighters in Karabakh clashes

<https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN26Z2OV>

*October 16*

Conflict enforcement

[https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4537733?from=main\\_1](https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4537733?from=main_1)

*October 20*

Des vidéos documentent la présence de mercenaires syriens dans le conflit du Haut-Karabakh

<https://observers.france24.com/fr/20201020-videos-document-presence-mercenaires-syriens-conflit-haut-karabakh>

*October 23*

Lindsey Snell: Rumors of Syrian mercenaries started in July

<https://mediamax.am/en/news/special-report/40439/>

*October 31*

Syrische Söldner in Bergkarabach. "Ich kann euch gleich hier erschießen"

<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/syrische-soeldner-in-bergkarabach-ich-kann-euch-gleich-hier-erschuessen-a-00000000-0002-0001-0000-000173743589>

Below is the list of FTF groups, whose participation in the aggression against Artsakh is suspected:

Firqatu-l-Hamza

Sultan Murad

Sultan Suleiman Shah

Malik Shah

Faylaq al-Majd

51<sup>st</sup> brigade

Ahrar ash-Sharqiyah

Jeish ash-Sharqiyah

Jeish an-Nukhba

Jabhatu-sh-Sham

Al-Furqan

Al-Muttasim

Al-Umshat

Suleiman Shah

Failaqu-sh-Sham

Sultan Ertugrul  
Nuraddine Az-Zinki  
Ahraru-sh-Sham  
Jund ash-Sham  
Jabhat al-Nusra  
Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement

**Groups of identified fighters:**

**Al-Hamza Division (Firqatu-l-Hamza)**

The ‘Canadian National Post’ published an article referring to the information of ‘Daily Beast’, which states that Turkey is sending ‘**Syrian Turkman Sayf Balud (aka Sayf Abu Bakr (Balud))** who has previously appeared in an ISIS propaganda video and who has been described as a former ISIS commander’ to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>3</sup> According to some other sources, in 2016 he formed the Al-Hamza special unit, which operates under the control of the Syrian National Army. As it is mentioned on the Twitter account of Jamel Al-Saleh, head of the Jeish Al-Izza Unit, Sayf Balud was injured on October 4, though the information was denied afterwards<sup>4</sup>. Some sources claim, that Balud is coordinating the process of recruitment of fighters in Syria and operates between Turkey, Libya and Syria.

On September 22, according to the “Afrinpost” a batch of militants of “**Hamza Division**”, a militia group affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, set off from their headquarters in the center of the occupied Afrin region in northern Syria, towards the collection center in the city of Marea, for further deployment to Azerbaijan. The article further claimed that on the previous day - September 21, ‘a batch of armed men (65 gunmen / hired killers) had left the headquarters of the leader in “Al-Jabha al-Shamiya” militia called “Malik al-Ustu”, located in the Ashrafiyah neighborhood, and went to the city of Azaz for departing to Azerbaijan through Turkey’<sup>5</sup>. On September 29, the same agency reported that “a new batch of 40 militants entered Turkey in order to go to Azerbaijan, to fight there against the Armenian forces.”<sup>6</sup>

A video was released by Elizabeth Tsurkov, a Research Fellow at the Forum for Regional Thinking and a doctoral student in political science at Princeton University, where a Syrian fighter in Azerbaijan was telling about the heavy shelling carried out by the Armenian forces. According to the information of Tsurkov, ‘**the fighter is Mustafa Qanti, 23-years-old**. He was recruited to go to Libya by the Hamza Division, a Turkish-backed faction. He is from the town of Hayyan, western countryside of Aleppo, which the Syrian regime occupied during its last offensive on Idlib in 2020. His family now lives in displacement in al-Atarib in abject poverty’<sup>7</sup>.

Award winning journalist Lindsey Snell, who is specialized in conflict and humanitarian crisis, informed on her Twitter account that fighters “**from the Hamza Division had arrived in the Azerbaijani** capital of Baku via Turkey”. She further elaborated that the “FTFs are mostly coming from Syria but around 70 militants had also been in Libya”. According to the ‘Greek City Times’ News Agency, the Hamza Division is made up mostly of “Arabs and Turkmen, and has become a moveable proxy force for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.”<sup>8</sup>

Lindsey Snell also published an article, where she informed that according to the reports, Syrians had been among those killed as the tensions in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated. **A militant from Hamza Division who was deployed to Azerbaijan** informed her that “... they (most probably the recruiters) told us we were coming to guard a Turkish base. Then we get here and it’s fighting, right away, it’s fighting.”<sup>9</sup>

On October 9, Lindsey Snell made another Twitter post claiming that ‘according to Hamza source, it is planned to

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<sup>3</sup> <https://nationalpost.com/news/armenia-azerbaijan-accuse-each-other-of-cross-border-attacks-civilian-toll-climbs>

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/turkey-sends-sayf-balud-isis-warlord-to-azerbaijan-to-face-off-against-putins-armenian-allies>

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/jamelalsleh0/status/1312772742249410561>

<sup>5</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/09/ankara-sends-its-hired-killers-to-azerbaijan-is-it-planning-another-massacre-against-armenians/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/09/40-muslim-brotherhood-militant-heading-from-occupied-afrin-to-azerbaijan/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1312345769555496961>

<sup>8</sup> <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/09/25/reports-turkey-is-transferring-syrian-militants-to-azerbaijan-as-hostilities-against-armenia-increases/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://investigativejournal.org/turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up/>

deploy the following number of FTFs to Azerbaijan<sup>10</sup>:

- **450 FTFs from Liwa al-Fatih from Syria (the week commencing on October 9)**
- **800 FTFs Faylaq al-Majd from Syria on/around October 22; and 650 from Libya via Turkey**

In another tweet, she referred to a Hamza member in Azerbaijan, who claimed that “**Hamza and Sultan Murad are now staying together with the Azerbaijani Army**”<sup>11</sup>.

Moreover, on October 14, Lindsay Snell informed on her Twitter account that “**300 Hamza fighters returned from Azerbaijan to Syria** last night (October 13) refused to fight after the death of a Hamza man from Kafr Halab.”<sup>12</sup> On October 16, the same information was also reported by Elizabeth Tsurkov, who claimed that according to her sources “all the men from Kafr Halab, as well as fighters from Menagh (Aleppo) refused to fight and returned to Syria.”<sup>13</sup> In a separate Twitter post she also reported that “at least 6 men of this group of Hamza Division fighters were killed fighting Armenian forces” are were replaced by a new batch of recruits from the Sultan Sliman Shah (Amshat) Brigade.<sup>14</sup>

On 18 of October, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported, that “the Turkish government transported a **new batch of [...] over 400 fighters of Al-Hamzat Division, Sultan Murad** and other factions” from Syria to Azerbaijan.<sup>15</sup>

### **Sultan Murad Division and Suleyman Shah Brigade**

A number of media outlets reported the presence of the Sultan Murad fighters in Azerbaijan and their participation in the aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh. The group was led by so called Fahim Isa, which is probably, his pseudonym.

**Mustafa Khalid (pseudonym)**, the 23-year-old from Idlib city, confirmed to ‘Guardian’ News Agency that ‘he signed up on September 18 and was now stationed at a post on the line of contact which has come under sustained artillery fire since last Sunday (September 27). The contact of Guardian informed that ‘he travelled as part of a contingent of 1,000 Syrians from the Turkish-backed Sultan Murad, Suleiman Shah and Al Hamza divisions which left the Hawar Kilis border crossing with Turkey for a military base in Gaziantep on September 23 (the location coincides with the information voiced out by French President Macron on October 1). From that point they were transferred to Istanbul by plane and then flew to Azerbaijan by Turkish military cargo. “Data from the Flight Radar website, which tracks aircraft movements, as well as geo-located pictures and coordinates sent to the Guardian, confirm his account.”<sup>16</sup>

‘Guardian’ further informed that, according to the above-mentioned contact, the group was provided with the **Azerbaijani uniforms**.

Producer Riam Dalati from ‘BBC Syria’ posted on his Twitter account photos of Syrian National Army fighters in fresh Azerbaijani uniforms.<sup>17</sup>

On October 11, another video became public, where the Arab-speaking fighters were wearing Azerbaijani border-guard uniforms and were using Azerbaijani armored vehicles and trucks.<sup>18</sup>

The information about FTFs wearing Azerbaijani uniforms was also illustrated in the article of Arabic Section of ‘BBC’ News Agency. According to the same article, ‘the fighters from **Sultan Murad and Suleyman Shah** groups sent to Azerbaijan have Turkic roots and are the age of 17 to 30.’ Moreover, the article of BBC referred to **Abdullah (pseudonym)**, who confirmed that fighters were transferred from Northern Syria to the village of Hor Kilis, and then to the airport in Antep in southern Turkey, where they took a flight of one hour and forty minutes to Istanbul airport. From Istanbul they were transferred via Azeri Airlines to Azerbaijan.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1313906508627877890?s=20>

<sup>11</sup> <https://twitter.com/LindseySnell/status/1314547244801163265>

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/LindseySnell/status/1316128044319469579?s=20>

<sup>13</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1317160267726413825?s=20>

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1317161169967337475?s=20>

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.syriaahr.com/en/188973/?fbclid=IwAR2LgKckBxGfWmbDrx\\_2lDya\\_hgo6fWcMG-bga7c9F1Dqev7-stAfP9iP0](https://www.syriaahr.com/en/188973/?fbclid=IwAR2LgKckBxGfWmbDrx_2lDya_hgo6fWcMG-bga7c9F1Dqev7-stAfP9iP0)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/02/syrian-recruit-describes-role-of-foreign-fighters-in-nagorno-karabakh>

<sup>17</sup> <https://twitter.com/DalatrM/status/1311306704760565761>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-14tyoQFYQ&>, See Annex 2, **Reference H**

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-54346711>

On October 3, the UK-based monitoring Group ‘Syrian Observatory for Human Rights’ (SOHR) claimed that more **than 300 Syrian fighters had been deployed to Azerbaijan**, who come from two ethnic Turkmen armed groups, including the **Sultan Murad Division and the Suleyman Shah Brigade**.<sup>20</sup> The two Turkish-backed Syrian rebel groups have been important actors in the Turkish-controlled areas of northern Syria.

According to the information distributed by Washington-based ‘Al-Monitor’, Muzahem al-Salem, a former Spokesperson of Jaysh Maghawir Al-Thawra, a Syrian rebel group, informed that **‘the first group of Syrian fighters was dispatched to Caucasus a week ago before the fresh clashes resumed in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 26**. Muzahem al-Salem claimed the fighters were recruited through a center set up by the Turkish-backed Sultan Murad Brigades in northern Syria. Moreover, a group of 150 fighters from Faylaq al-Sham reportedly crossed to Turkey from Afrin and were later transferred to Azerbaijan from Adana International Airport. The fighters were allegedly taken to training camps on two islands in the Caspian Sea for tactical training and were told that their job would be to defend Azeri gas facilities.<sup>21</sup> The news agency claimed that the Sultan Murat Brigade is reportedly expected to send some 2,000 fighters to Azerbaijan in the next couple of weeks, presumably between October 5-18.

‘AsiaNews’ agency provided an audio recording of the operational nucleus of the Sultan Murat Brigade, which revealed the following: "Syrian volunteers are destined to be sent to the front line on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border... and they will fight for the Azeris, that is, for the Shiites".<sup>22</sup>

The Armenian Intelligence services intercepted the voice message of a fighter from Sultan Murad Group, where the latter claims that “instead of Libya he is currently in Azerbaijan.”<sup>23</sup>

On October 12, Lindsay Snell tweeted, that according to a SNA source “approx **2300 fighters from Sultan Suleiman Shah and Sultan Murad** have amassed at Hawar Kilis today, where they’ll be crossed to Turkey and ultimately deployed to Azerbaijan”.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Malik Shah brigade**

According to the article published by ‘AsiaTimes’ news agency, **‘Khaled**, originally from Homs and living displaced with his mother and younger siblings in a camp in the northern countryside of Aleppo, is employed by ‘Malik Shah Brigade’. He left for Azerbaijan two weeks before the Nagorno-Karabakh assault started (around 13/14 September). Together with 25 other FTFs they were deployed to Azerbaijan by the following route: Kilis area (southern Turkey)-Syria-Gaziantep-Istanbul-Azerbaijan. According to the source, the age of fighters was between 18-40, who were screened for illness and injuries in Kilis<sup>25</sup>.

#### **Faylaq al-Majd**

The ‘Investigative Journal’ portal quoted **a militant from Faylaq al-Majd** who has been based in Misrata for several months: “I’ll prepare myself quickly, and then I’ll go to Azerbaijan. They just sent 450 to Misrata from Syria to replace the ones who have been here for a long time. Most of us will go on to Azerbaijan.”<sup>26</sup>

#### **Jund ash-Sham**

**An opposition fighter from Jund ash-Sham**, based in Afrin, confirmed to ‘AsiaNews’ that he had spoken with an Azerbaijani FTF, who was fighting in Syria, and asked him about the purpose of fighting in Azerbaijan, alongside the Shiites, against Karabakh. The latter elaborated that ‘it is part of the Jihad; it is a holy war of Muslims against Christians’. The same agency reports, that ‘the news of the dispatch of **4 thousand Syrian mercenaries** by Turkey was also confirmed yesterday (September 27) by the Human Rights Observatory in Syria’.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Ahrar al-Sham (Ahraru-sh-Sham)**

**A fighter, who declined to be named**, informed ‘Reuters’ that the deployment of fighters to Azerbaijan was coordinated with Ankara. “I didn’t want to go, but I don’t have any money. Life is very hard and poor”, said the

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.syriaahr.com/en/186916/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/10/turkey-russia-syria-fighter-transfers-azerbaijan-armenia.html>

<sup>22</sup> [http://asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-\(VIDEO\)-51151.html](http://asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-(VIDEO)-51151.html)

<sup>23</sup> <https://youtu.be/qJpKs1-9xtQ>

<sup>24</sup> <https://twitter.com/LindsaySnell/status/1315613219034214400>

<sup>25</sup> <https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/turkey-deploys-syrian-mercenaries-to-karabakh-war/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://investigativejournal.org/turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up/>

<sup>27</sup> [http://asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-\(VIDEO\)-51151.html](http://asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-(VIDEO)-51151.html)



fighter who had fought in Syria for Ahrar al-Sham, a group that Turkey has supported. The fighter said he had arranged his assignment with an official from the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) in Afrin.<sup>28</sup>

### Jeish an-Nukhba

A fighter from the **SNA-affiliated Jeish al-Nukhba militia**, said to ‘Reuters’ “that according to his sources, nearly 1,000 Syrians were set to be deployed to Azerbaijan”. Other rebels gave figures of between 700 and 1,000.<sup>29</sup>

### FTFs Transported from Libya

Several sources confirmed that Syrian fighters were transferred from Libya’s capital Tripoli to Azerbaijan in order to take part in the fighting there. On October 2, SOHR sources confirmed that a new batch of some 800 fighters have returned from Libya to Syria, after completing their mission.<sup>30</sup>

According to another source, the Turkish special services informed the mercenaries fighting in Libya that after the termination of their contracts they would be redeployed to Azerbaijan, via Turkey instead of returning to Syria.<sup>31</sup>

‘The Jerusalem Post’ referred to ‘Al-Ain’ in the UAE, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and other sources, claiming that up to 1,400 Syrians would be sent from Libya to Azerbaijan. These would be the first of 3,500 members of Ankara’s foreign legion.<sup>32</sup>

Data collected from online plane tracking radars indicate that Turkish Air Force C130 223 (Mode-S ICAO code 4B821F) departed Al-Watiya Air Base of Libya and landed in Baku on September 30. Another data report indicates that an unknown jet departed from Tripoli to Azerbaijan, with the call sign of BRQ218.<sup>33</sup>

### Records on Fighters, whose affiliation to any FTF Group is not yet certified

‘France 24’ News agency informed about 26-year-old **Abu Ahmad (pseudonym)** from a camp for the displaced in the north of Aleppo, a province controlled by Turkey-backed rebels, declared that “he was heading to Karabakh hoping to better provide for his wife and children. **Another fighter from the town of Atareb in Aleppo** province informed ‘AFP’ that “he was on the frontline, in Azerbaijan” by sending a text message. In Syria’s northwestern province of Idlib, 38-years-old opposition fighter **Abu Adnan (pseudonym)** revealed that he had been approached about signing up as a combatant in the Caucasus.<sup>34</sup>

On September 30, ‘BBC Syria’ Producer Riam Dalati, referring to the Syrian electronic source ‘JesrPress’, posted on its Twitter account an image of an **injured soldier of the Syrian National Army (SNA)** fighter from Homs. The photo was taken in Azerbaijan. ‘Jesr Press’ further informed that he died shortly after being taken to hospital.<sup>35</sup>

In another tweet, Riam Dalati posted a video where the SNA fighters were performing drills in the same uniform that was assigned to them on their arrival in Azerbaijan on September 25.<sup>36</sup>

On October 30, the Defence Army of Artsakh released a video of the interrogation of the captured terrorist fighter, whose name is Mhreb Muhammad Alshkheri. He was born in Hama, Syria. He is married with 3 children. According to the information, received during interrogation, on October 19 along with 250 terrorists he was transferred to the Artsakh-Azerbaijan front line by Turkey. The fighter claims that the promised payment of \$2000 has not been paid.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria-int/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J258>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria-int/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J258>

<sup>30</sup> <https://libyareview.com/7002/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://stepagency-sy.net/2020/09/30/%D9%87%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AA%D8%B2%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D8%B0/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/evidence-mounts-that-turkey-recruited-syrians-to-fight-armenia-644078>

<sup>33</sup> <https://caucasus.liveuamap.com/en/2020/29-september-flight-from-tripoli-coming-to-baku-azerbaijan>, See Annex 1, **Reference B1**

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/20201003-syria-rebels-sign-up-to-fight-for-azeris-to-feed-families>

<sup>35</sup> <https://twitter.com/Dalatr/status/1311269228738207745?s=20>

<sup>36</sup> <https://twitter.com/Dalatr/status/1311382439076429825?s=20>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVnZL05Ex20>

### Records of materials released by FTFs from Azerbaijan

On Telegram account of Jarablus News-al Kabus, which is run by activists of Syrian National Army from the Northern Part of Syria, the terrorist fighters released videos, where they talk about the Armenian armaments<sup>38</sup>, casualties<sup>39</sup> and a helicopter<sup>40</sup>

On September 28 and 30, the “Stepagency” released audio recordings of fighters (overall 5 audio recordings), where the fighters called on ‘Abu Walid’ not to allow other fighters to come to Azerbaijan, because of the heavy fighting and bad conditions.<sup>41</sup> There is another video recording of two fighters, who claim that they are in Azerbaijan and advice others not to come because of severe fighting.<sup>42</sup>

On October 3, Elizabeth Tsurkov released a video on her Twitter account, “where FTFs were calling others to join them”. They were also talking about an issue of “opening corridor between Armenia and Libya”.<sup>43</sup> According to the photo, released by journalist Julian Röpcke, the geolocation of the area, recorded in the video, is the Azerbaijani military base in Horadiz, at 6km depth from the frontline.<sup>44</sup>

The Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense released a video on October 3 which showed a storage/shelter of armaments (presumably left by the Armenian forces).<sup>45</sup> The small construction has the same external signs as the shelter recorded in the video of fighter **Mustafa Qanti (aka Mustafa Ghanti)**.<sup>46</sup>

There are two other recordings, intercepted by the Armenian Intelligence Service: in the first recording<sup>47</sup>, the fighter referred to his location as Mataghis. In the second one<sup>48</sup>, the location is Horadiz. Both areas are close to the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

On October 11, a video, released in open sources, reveals the Arab-speaking fighters in Azerbaijani border guard uniforms, standing on the border-crossing to Iran while demonstrating the hand-gesture of the ‘Grey Wolves’, a Turkish far-right movement, and chanting ‘Liberation’<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E\\_eFA5718Oc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_eFA5718Oc), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvixBzeIctM>, See Annex 2, **Reference A**

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9az9xcxd7Wg>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t8moyQRW1Q>, See Annex 2, **Reference B**

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EFHUpVeSsM>, See Annex 2, **Reference C**

<sup>41</sup> <https://bit.ly/3iBRqni>, <https://bit.ly/3npdXr6>, See Annex 2, **Reference E**

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab\\_h2\\_vUFNQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab_h2_vUFNQ), See Annex 2, **Reference J**

<sup>43</sup> <https://twitter.com/i/status/1312409487404404736>

<sup>44</sup> <https://twitter.com/JulianRoepcke/status/1312347751359959040>,

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvoExPh88js&feature=youtu.be&t=90>

<sup>46</sup> <https://twitter.com/i/status/1312345769555496961>

<sup>47</sup> <https://youtu.be/5nP4iDySshw>, See Annex 2, **Reference F**

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHHrn68yOe4>, See Annex 2, **Reference G**

<sup>49</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1315356086719963139>

### ***Chapter 3: Testimonies by heads of states, high-ranking officials, government bodies***

#### **President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron**

On October 2, the President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron, while delivering his speech before the EU leaders at the Special European Council, has announced:

“... according to our data 300 Syrian fighters left Syria to reach Baku via Gaziantep. The fighters are known, traced, identified, they come from jihadist groups operating in the Aleppo region... other contingencies are preparing ... I wouldn't want to tell you that it is a red line because it is crossed. It is crossed!... I am thinking of #Syria, I am providing an answer... I invite all of the #NATO partners to just face the behavior of a NATO member, and I do not think so. It is also a point on which we absolutely must have a dialogue of truth with #Turkey.”<sup>50</sup>

<https://www.france24.com/en/20201002-macron-reprimands-turkey-accusing-erdogan-of-sending-jihadists-to-azerbaijan>

On October 1, during the press briefing before entering the Summit hall at the European Parliament, French President stated:

“We have information today that indicates with certainty that Syrian fighters have left the theatre of operations, fighters from jihadist groups have transited through Gaziantep to reach the theatre of operations in Nagorno Karabakh. This is a very serious new fact, which changes the situation”.<sup>51</sup>

#### **President of the Syrian Arab Republic Bashar al-Assad**

President of the Syrian Arab Republic Bashar al-Assad gave an interview to the Russian Sputnik N/A on October 6 and told:

“Turkey used those terrorists coming from different countries in Syria. They used the same method in Libya; they used Syrian terrorists in Libya, maybe (also) of other nationalities. So, it's self-evident and very much probable that they are using that in Nagorno-Karabakh, because, as I said earlier, they are the one who started this problem, this conflict, they encouraged this conflict, so they wanted to achieve something and they're going to use the same method. We can say for sure that they've been using Syrians and other nationalities of terrorists in Nagorno Karabakh.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkgB0kIeHyc>

#### **Director of the Russian External Intelligence Service Sergey Naryshkin**

On October 6 the Russian External Intelligence Service (SVR) press service published a statement by Director Sergey Naryshkin:

“We [...] cannot stay unconcerned over the fact that southern Caucasus may become a new foothold for the international terror groups, which would allow the militants to infiltrate other states bordering Azerbaijan and Armenia, including Russia... According to the SVR information, mercenaries from international terror group, such as the Nusra Front, the Firqat al-Hamza, the Sultan Murad Division, fighting in the Middle East, as well as Kurdish extremist groups actively converge in [Nagorno-Karabakh] conflict area,” the SVR head said. The information

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<sup>50</sup> Original French: “Nous avons établi à partir de nos propres renseignements que 300 combattants ont quitté la Syrie pour rejoindre Bakou en passant par Gaziantep. Ces combattants sont connus, tracés, identifiés, et ils viennent des groupes jihadistes qui opèrent dans la région d'Alep... d'autres contingences se préparent ... Je ne voudrais pas vous dire que c'est une ligne rouge parce qu'elle est franchie. Elle est franchie! Et quand je donnai une ligne rouge, j'ai pu la montrer à d'autres égards, je pense à la #Syrie, j'apporte une réponse. J'invite l'ensemble des partenaires de l'#OTAN à regarder simplement en face ce qui est un comportement de membre de l'OTAN, et je ne pense pas que ça en relève. C'est aussi un point sur lequel nous devons absolument avoir un dialogue de vérité avec la #Turquie.”

<sup>51</sup> Original French: “Nous disposons d'informations aujourd'hui de manière certaine qui indiquent que des combattants syriens ont quitté le théâtre d'opérations, des combattants de groupes jihadistes en transitant par Gaziantep pour rejoindre le théâtre d'opérations du Haut Karabakh. C'est un fait très grave, nouveau, qui change aussi la donne.”

refers to hundreds and even thousands radicals who wish to earn money on the new Karabakh conflict.”<sup>52</sup>  
<https://tass.com/world/1209115>

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<sup>52</sup> Original Russian: “Нас не может не беспокоить, что Закавказье способно стать новым плацдармом для международных террористических организаций, откуда боевики в последующем могут просачиваться в сопредельные с Азербайджаном и Арменией государства, в том числе в Россию. По имеющейся в СВР информации, в зону конфликта активно подтягиваются наемники из воюющих на Ближнем Востоке международных террористических организаций, в частности [таких как] "Джебхат ан-Нусра" (запрещена в РФ), "Фиркат аль-Хамза", "Султан Мурад", а также экстремистских курдских группировок", - заявил глава СВР. Он подчеркнул, что речь идет о сотнях и уже даже тысячах радикалов, рассчитывающих заработать на новой карабахской войне.”

## Chapter 4: Various aspects of recruitment and information about demised FTFs

Almost all sources, covering the issue of the enrollment of FTFs in Azerbaijan, mentioned that the fighters were recruited for money. There are also other arguments, which refer to the religious issues, as a motivating factor for the terrorist fighters to participate in this aggression.

Ziad Hajj Obeid, a commander at the Syrian National Army, told Rudaw TV, a Kurdish TV channel in Iraqi Kurdistan, that there are two reasons Syrian rebels are driven to join the fight for Azerbaijan: **“the first one - financial incentives, the second one - sense of duty towards Turkish allies, who supported them in Syria.”**<sup>53</sup>

Many sources point that FTFs agreed to be deployed to Azerbaijan because of their poor financial and social conditions. Meantime, some sources unveiled that the FTFs were not informed about the real purpose of their deployment to Azerbaijan (i.e. to participate in military operations), but were recruited for guarding some checkpoints.

‘Reuters’ referred to a fighter, who informed that he agreed to be recruited because of “hard and poor life”. Together with another fighter, he further confirmed that ‘Syrian brigade commanders told they would earn **around \$1,500 a month**’<sup>54</sup>

‘BBC’ referred to a **\$2000 monthly salary, which fighters will receive for guarding border check points.**<sup>55</sup>

Elizabeth Tsurkov claimed that according to rumors FTFs “will get a **\$2,500** monthly salary”.<sup>56</sup> This amount also appears in the first alert on July 19, 2020, but is not confirmed.

‘Al-Arabiya’ agency claimed that more than 300 fighters mainly from Al-Hamza and Al-Umshat groups from Afrin region were redeployed by Turkey and were informed that the final destination would be Azerbaijan, where they should guard border check points for **\$1500-\$2000** a month’.<sup>57</sup> In the meantime, ‘Guardian’ referred to a salary of \$1000-\$1200, which will be paid to FTFs for the same purpose.<sup>58</sup>

‘AsiaTimes’ agency in its article claimed that it had reached a fighter, Louai, who was rejected to be deployed to Azerbaijan, because of his injury. Louai confirmed that his friend, Mahmoud, was transferred to Azerbaijan on September 25 for a monthly salary of \$1500.<sup>59</sup>

An Armenian Intelligence contact confirmed that the Turkish side has established offices in the provinces of Idlib, Aleppo and the Turkish Havar-Killis military base on the Turkish-Syrian border. They enrol militants and send them to Azerbaijan through Gaziantep and Istanbul. The regular fighters are promised to receive \$1500 per month. They are usually offered six-month-long contracts with possible prolongation. The leaders and field commanders are promised bigger salaries and appraisals.

The issue of the recruitment centers was touched upon in the article of ‘AfrinPost’ Agency, published on October 3. According to the agency, “two offices, **Amir Ghobari School and Azhar Afrin School, were being used for registering** the names of those, who wish to join the fighting in Azerbaijan”. The article further claimed that “600 militants of the Sultan Murad militia 5 days ago (around September 27-28) left from Afrin to Azerbaijan”, while indicating that the “Turkmen are the ones who go the most, considering that the fight against Armenians is jihad against the infidels”.<sup>60</sup> The ‘Human Rights Organization-Afrin’ revealed the name of another recruitment center on October 11. According to its Facebook post, “the center is located behind the school in the village of Marateh, 5 km. to the west of Afrin. The center is a confiscated building, formerly belonging to one of the forcibly displaced

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/monitor-turkey-sending-syrian-fighters-azerbaijan>

<sup>54</sup> <https://in.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria-int-idUSKBN26J258>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-54346711>

<sup>56</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1310902661949120520?s=20>

<sup>57</sup> <https://beta.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/2020/09/27/%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%91%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%B0%D8%B1%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%84>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition>

<sup>59</sup> <https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/turkey-deploys-syrian-mercenaries-to-karabakh-war/>

<sup>60</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/10/600-mercenaries-of-al-hamzat-militia-left-from-afrin-to-azerbaijan/>

local Kurds called Salah Othman, who is currently living in Germany.” The Organization further elaborates that “during the past week (probably October 4/5-10/11) Hamzat Division recruited 300 mercenaries from the ranks of Arab and Turkmen settlers in Afrin and Idlib camps for Syrian IDP's to deploy to Azerbaijan.”<sup>61</sup>

Elizabeth Tsurkov in her article “The Syrian Mercenaries Fighting Foreign Wars for Russia and Turkey” published on October 16, claims that “in addition to the main recruiters—the **commanders of three Turkish-backed factions, Fahim Issa (who leads the Sultan Murad Brigade), Sayf Abu Bakr (of the Hamza Division), and Muhammad Jassem, also known as Abu Amsha (of the Sultan Sliman Shah Brigade)**—a broad network of profiteers has grown up among the associates of these commanders.” They have created groups on the popular messaging service WhatsApp and use brick-and-mortar offices in Afrin since August for recruiting terrorist fighters and deploying them to Azerbaijan.”<sup>62</sup>

According to ‘Kommersant’ news agency, the recruitment of FTFs is being conducted in Ankara-controlled territories in the north and northwest of Syria “by employees of the **private military company SADAT** with the assistance of field commanders of the Syrian National Army (SNA). The main recruiting points allegedly operate **in the cities of Afrin, Al-Bab, Ras al-Ain and Tel Abyad**. The FTFs, with the help of Turkish transport companies, are transported to the city of Sanliurfa (Turkey), 40 km from the border with Syria. Further, the mercenaries are transferred to the conflict zone by **SADAT charter flights**.”<sup>63</sup>

It is noteworthy that **the head of SADAT company is Adnan Tanriverdi, the former chief military aide to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**. According to some sources, this company is fully funded and supported by the Turkish government.<sup>64</sup>

According to some official Syrian sources, the special services of Turkey have been enrolling mainly Uyghurs for deploying them to Azerbaijan. They are not considered as well-trained fighters, and therefore they are entitled for the lowest payments -\$500-700 per month.

On October 5, Liz Cookman, an Istanbul-based journalist writing for ‘Foreign Policy’, in her article quoted a family member of a terrorist fighter, killed in Azerbaijan: “We blame the Turkish government for taking advantage of our poor and the young’s hunger for money”. The source further informed that “they lost the promised 60,000 Turkish lira (about \$7,800) in compensation for the fallen fighters.”<sup>65</sup>

‘The Idlib Post’ released a video on its twitter account, which was recorded in Afrin, Syria.<sup>66</sup> In the video, supposedly ‘a leader’ was calling the fighters to go for the battle in Azerbaijan, as the Islamic World is facing with deprivation from the East to the West’.<sup>67</sup> **This footage explicitly demonstrates how an influential religious figure calls upon the members of a community to go for fighting to Azerbaijan, as it is a divine war for greater Levant (i.e. for ideological or ethnical purposes).**

In one of the video recordings (See footnote 43 of the current report), the fighter is using hate speech, while demonstrating the corpses of the Armenian soldiers and clearly indicates that “the God helped them to kill the pigs and infidels.”

On September 30, The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) revealed that its staff had documented the shooting of a Syrian pro-Turkish mercenary in the battles, adding that the number of the Syrian mercenaries fighting in Azerbaijan until the moment reached 320 armed men, and they were transferred by Turkish security companies.<sup>68</sup>

On September 30, ‘The Guardian’ referred to **the death of Muhammad Abdul Razzaq (aka Muhammad Shaalan)** from town Atarib, stating that the cousin of the latter, Omar Abdo, was contacted by the men from **Hamza division**, who informed about the demise of the fighter. The fighter was transferred to Azerbaijan on 20 of September. ‘The Guardian’ also referred to the families of **2 other demised FTFs – Hussein Talha, from Ain Jara village, and Sadam Aziz Azkor (alias- Daroubi) of al Kareem** – who also informed that they have been contacted

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Human-Rights-Organisation-Afrin-Syria-114977619885802>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/10/16/the-syrian-mercenaries-fighting-foreign-wars-for-russia-and-turkey/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4537733?query=Принуждение%20к%20конфликту>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.nordicmonitor.com/2020/05/turkeys-paramilitary-contractor-sadat-aims-at-training-african-troops-with-the-help-of-defense-cooperation-agreements/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/author/liz-cookman/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://twitter.com/idliben/status/1313934979366367236?s=21>

<sup>67</sup> <https://youtu.be/vI4IVz-0Kpc>

<sup>68</sup> <https://see.news/first-syrian-mercenary-loyal-to-turkey-falls-in-azerbai/>

by commanders about the death of their relatives’<sup>69</sup> ‘The Washington Post’ also published article referring to the killing of Muhammed Shaalan.<sup>70</sup> Some details of his death was revealed by ‘Syria Direct’ independent agency in an article from October 12. According to Rami Akkoush, a friend of Muhammed Shaalan, the latter informed him, that his role would be “limited to guarding Turkish installations” in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, after the deployment in Azerbaijan and unveiling that the mission was changed, Shaalan objected to be involved in fighting, complaining that they “are not fighting alongside the Shia, who are the ones killing our families in Syria and committing massacres against us.” According to Akkoush, this led to the dispute between Shaalan and the other Syrians, on one side, and the faction commanders on the other and after that they were returned to the rear military posts. A while ago, Akkoush was informed, that the position of Shaalan was shelled and he died.<sup>71</sup>

On October 1, the ‘Idlib Post’ posted a tweet, where it informed about the ‘killing of **Qassem Mustafa Aljzamour (also al-Jzamour)** a member of DeirEzzor unit (Sultan Murad Division) in Azerbaijan.’<sup>72</sup>

On October 2, Human Rights Organization, based in Afrin, released an information on its Facebook page, stating that eighty-one Syrian mercenaries have reportedly been killed. The dead mercenaries belonged to the following pro-Turkey rebel groups:<sup>73</sup>

1. Al-Sharqiya Army, lost 19 militants.
2. Al-Hamza Division, lost 4.
3. Division 51, lost 9 militants.
4. Jaish al-Nukhba, lost 11 militants.
5. The Levant Front, lost 22 militants.
6. Al-Furqan Brigade, lost 32 militants.
7. Al-Mu'tasim Division, lost 6 militants.

On October 2, some sources informed about the demise of “**4 FTFs – Major Kinan Farzat (aka Kan’an Frzat/Fzrat), Yasser Farzt (aka Yasser Frzat/Fzrat), Bilal Al-Taybani (aka Bilal At-Taybani) and Walid Al-Ashtar from Homs**, who were killed while participating in the battles in Nagorno-Karabakh.”<sup>74</sup>

On October 3, ‘L’Orient le Jour’ informed that according to ‘SOHR’, “850 combatants were sent to Azerbaijan over the last week (September 23–October 3) in addition to the previous deployment of 1200 Syrians and at least 36 of Syrian rebels have perished in the past 48 hours, bringing the death toll to 64”.<sup>75</sup>

On October 4, the American ‘Fox News’ Agency released an article with the testimonies of a Syrian Fighter without unveiling the latter’s details, who informed that ‘**four men** from his hometown of Rastan – a small, ancient city and anti-Assad bulwark in the Homs governate – **were slain** on the battlefield this week. One was a relative, **Kinan Ferzat (aka Kan’an Frzat/Fzrat)**, a 35-year-old major in the Turkey-backed Free Syria Army (FSA) unit known as the Syrian National Army. “Kinan defected from the Syrian regime army in 2012 and joined the Free Syrian Army (FSA) within the First Corps faction as an Artillery Brigade leader, the military,” his family member said. “In 2018, he refused the reconciliation with the regime and was deported to northern Syria, like the other defected military officers. Kinan had two options, either he would go to Idlib and join the Islamic and terrorist organizations, or he would go to Afrin and join the Turkish National Army.” He chose to go to Afrin and joined the **Sultan Murad faction**, which operates under the Turkish Army, the relative continued, claiming that he was approached to go to Azerbaijan and feared refusing – traveling from Gaziantep airport and on to Istanbul, and then into Azerbaijan.’<sup>76</sup>

The first reports of the transportation of the corpses of fighters came on October 3-4. ‘Foreign Policy’ reported that “more than 50 Syrians killed in a conflict raging far from their own borders—in a land many had barely heard of a

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/30/nagorno-karabakh-at-least-three-syrian-fighters-killed>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/09/30/armenians-azerbaijan-turkey-russia-clashes/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://syriadirect.org/news/destitution-deception-thrust-syrians-into-the-azerbaijani-armenian-war-in-nagorno-karabakh-region/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://twitter.com/IdlibEn/status/1311562155347640320?s=20>

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=365235251526703&id=114977619885802](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=365235251526703&id=114977619885802)

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/420304>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1235044/au-moins-64-combattants-syriens-proturcs-morts-au-nagorny-karabakh.html>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/world/are-syrian-rebels-dying-azerbaijan-armenian-conflict>

few months ago—were returned home for funeral preparations”<sup>77</sup>. The same information was shared by Elizabeth Tsurkov on her twitter account, where she referred to the **death of Muhammad Khaled a-Shahna (aka as-Shahna/al-Shahna)**<sup>78</sup> **from Ahrar al-Sham** stating that “he is one of 55 corpses of Syrians killed in Azerbaijan that were handed over last night according to a witness of the handover. The body of Muhammad Khaled a-Shahna arrived from Azerbaijan to the Hiwar Kilis (Hawar Kilis) crossing connecting Turkey to zones under its control in northern Syria.”<sup>79</sup> Some details of his death was revealed by ‘Syria Direct’ independent agency in its article published on October 12. Particularly, the agency noted that “the commander of al-Shahna’s unit, a young Syrian from Jabal a-Zawiya in the countryside of Idlib, was wounded” and al-Shahna decided to rescue him (according to what the family of al-Shahna was later told by the mother of a young man from the city of Homs who was there at the time) but “a sniper bullet struck al-Shahna in the head, and he fell into a valley where he died due to blood loss”, just 3 days after his arrival to Azerbaijan.’<sup>80</sup>

‘Syria Direct’ covered a story of another fighter, **Adham from Kafr Jannah village in the north Aleppo** (presumably killed) in the same article. According to Shakeeb (both are pseudonyms), cousin of Adham, the latter decided to go to Azerbaijan in the hopes that he would return with “\$4000-\$5000 to rent or maybe buy a house”. While in Azerbaijan, Adham contacted his cousin and informed that “they were prohibited from taking pictures or telling anyone, even me. One guy had been threatened with prison after he posted a video from Azerbaijan.”

Tsurkov shared the video, released by ‘Jesspress.com’, which recorded the handover of the dead FTFs<sup>81</sup>. The same agency reported that as of October 5, “80 Syrian fighters have been killed”.<sup>82</sup>

It is noteworthy that according to the data of ‘FlightRadar24’, the Turkish Health Ministry’s Embraer ERJ-135 Air ambulance TC-CJB departed Baku on October 3-4.<sup>83</sup> According to reports the remains of the killed FTFs were transported to Turkey by this flight.

According to the information of ‘The Washington Post’, released on October 14, another group of 52 killed Syrian corpses were handed to the families of the fighters in “a refrigerated truck at a Syrian-Turkish border post”. The media outlet further interviewed the cousin of **Mahmoud Najjar (aka Mahmud Najjar)**<sup>84</sup>, **a 38-year-old Syrian fighter, who was killed in Nagorno-Karabakh**. The cousin confirmed that Mahmoud Najjar was among those, who “went to break the borders” and his body was marked with number 12 in the truck. According to the source, Najjar was promised \$2000 per month. On their first day in Azerbaijan, they were given uniforms with light green shades of camouflage and they were located in mountains. Najjar was killed by the sniper after being sent to clear a building”.

On October 21, ‘Syrian Observatory for Human Rights’ published an article, according to which the SOHR’s activists have documented the **death of 9 Syrian fighters** in Azerbaijan **during the last 24 hours**. Furthermore, on October 20, SOHR’s activists documented the **death of 27 Syrian fighters** in the last 48 hours (18-20 October). SOHR claimed, that **the death toll of the Turkish-backed FTFs since their deployment in Azerbaijan has risen to at least 170 killed fighters, including 118 fighters whose corpses were transferred to Syria**, while the killed bodies of others continue to remain in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict-zone.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>77</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1312702349169876992?s=20>

<sup>79</sup> <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1312701459469946884?s=20>

<sup>80</sup> <https://syriadirect.org/news/destitution-deception-thrust-syrians-into-the-azerbaijani-armenian-war-in-nagorno-karabakh-region?fbclid=IwAR3uFYEHveogwYWG7c1wt8kvurT4lOkqIDcD-BHekqrXfuaXvclPqkS6MQ>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GecIUOQ8mg>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.jespress.com/2020/10/05/%d9%85%d9%82%d8%a7%d8%aa%d9%84%d9%88%d9%86-%d8%b3%d9%88%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%88%d9%86-%d9%82%d8%aa%d9%84%d9%88%d8%a7-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d8%a7%d8%b0%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%a8%d8%ac%d8%a7%d9%86/>

<sup>83</sup> <https://twitter.com/GDarkconrad/status/1312837290696245249>, Annex 1 **Reference B2**

<sup>84</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/azerbaijan-armenia-turkey-nagorno-karabakh/2020/10/13/2cdca1e6-08bf-11eb-8719-0df159d14794_story.html)

<sup>85</sup> [https://www.syriaahr.com/en/188973/?fbclid=IwAR2LgKckBxGfWmbDrx\\_2lDya\\_hgo6fWcMG-bga7c9F1Dqev7-stAfP9iP0](https://www.syriaahr.com/en/188973/?fbclid=IwAR2LgKckBxGfWmbDrx_2lDya_hgo6fWcMG-bga7c9F1Dqev7-stAfP9iP0)



## Chapter 5: Legal Aspects

The deliberate targeting of the civilian population of Artsakh by Azerbaijan with the direct involvement of Turkey and with the use of Foreign Terrorist Fighters constitutes a crime against humanity and is a gross violation of international law, including humanitarian law,<sup>86</sup> the Geneva Conventions.

By providing foreign terrorists with the Azerbaijani national military uniforms and using them against the people of Artsakh, who fight a vital struggle for self-determination, Baku converts the Azerbaijani Armed Forces into a terrorist organization.

The basic “principle of distinction”, (i.e. during an armed conflict civilians and combatants, as well as civilian objects and military objectives must be distinguished always and without any exception) is severely breached by Azerbaijan.

In accordance with the *International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism* (Article 2) “Any person commits an offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and willfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out: (a) An act which constitutes an offence within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the annex; or (b) Any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act”.

In line with paragraph 2 of the Article 5 of the *UN Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries* the “State Parties shall not recruit, use, finance or train mercenaries for the purpose of opposing the legitimate exercise of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, as recognized by international law, and shall take in conformity with international law, the appropriate measures to prevent the recruitment, use, financing or training of mercenaries for that purpose”. Paragraph b of the Article 4 of the same convention states that the accomplice of a person who commits or attempts to commit an offence is also a subject of the offence.

In conformity with the *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Annex, Chapter I. Measures to address conditions conducive to terrorism*, the States Members of the United Nations resolve “to continue to strengthen and make best possible use of the capacities of the United Nations in areas such as conflict prevention, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement, rule of law, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, in order to contribute to the successful prevention and peaceful resolution of prolonged unresolved conflicts. We recognize that the peaceful resolution of such conflicts would contribute to strengthening the global fight against terrorism”; “to arrange under the auspices of the United Nations initiatives and programmes to promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions, and to promote mutual respect for and prevent the defamation of religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures”; “to promote a culture of peace, justice and human development, ethnic, national and religious tolerance and respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs or cultures by establishing and encouraging, as appropriate, education and public awareness programmes involving all sectors of society”, “to continue to work to adopt such measures as may be necessary and appropriate and in accordance with our respective obligations under international law to prohibit by law incitement to commit a terrorist act or acts and prevent such conduct”.

In compliance with the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Annex, Chapter II. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism**, the States Members of the United Nations resolve to undertake the following measures, such as: “to refrain from organizing, instigating, facilitating, participating in, financing, encouraging or tolerating terrorist activities and to take appropriate practical measures to ensure that our respective territories are not used for terrorist installations or training camps, or for the preparation or organization of terrorist acts intended to be committed against other States or their citizens”, “to cooperate fully in the fight against terrorism, in accordance with our obligations under international law, in order to find, deny safe haven and bring to justice, on the basis of the principle of extradite or prosecute, any person who supports, facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or provides safe havens”, “to ensure the apprehension and prosecution or extradition of perpetrators of terrorist acts, in accordance with the

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<sup>86</sup> International humanitarian law does not provide a definition of terrorism, but prohibits most acts committed in armed conflict that would commonly be considered “terrorist”, if they were committed in peacetime.

relevant provisions of national and international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law”, “to step up national efforts and bilateral, subregional, regional and international cooperation, as appropriate, to improve border and customs controls in order to prevent and detect the movement of terrorists and prevent and detect the illicit traffic in, inter alia, small arms and light weapons, conventional ammunition and explosives, and nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons and materials”.

The **UN Security Council Resolution 2170** “recalls that widespread or systematic attacks directed against any civilian populations because of their ethnic or political background, religion or belief may constitute a crime against humanity, emphasizes the need to ensure that ISIL, ANF and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida are held accountable for abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, urges all parties to prevent such violations and abuses”; “condemns the recruitment by ISIL, ANF and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida of foreign terrorist fighters, whose presence is exacerbating conflict and contributing to violent radicalization, demands that all foreign terrorist fighters associated with ISIL and other terrorist groups withdraw immediately, and expresses its readiness to consider listing those recruiting for or participating in the activities of ISIL, ANF and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida under the Al-Qaida sanctions regime, including through financing or facilitating, for ISIL or ANF, of travel of foreign terrorist fighters”; “calls upon all Member States to take national measures to suppress the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to, and bring to justice, in accordance with applicable international law, foreign terrorist fighters of, ISIL, ANF and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida, reiterates further the obligation of Member States to prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups, in accordance with applicable international law, by, inter alia, effective border controls, and, in this context, to exchange information expeditiously, improve cooperation among competent authorities to prevent the movement of terrorists and terrorist groups to and from their territories, the supply of weapons for terrorists and financing that would support terrorists”.

The UN Security Council resolution 2178 declares, that “Member States shall, consistent with international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law, prevent and suppress the recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, and the financing of their travel and of their activities”. Furthermore, “any person or individual who participates in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or supporting terrorist acts is brought to justice and all States shall ensure that their domestic laws and regulations establish serious criminal offences sufficient to provide the ability to prosecute and penalize in a manner duly reflecting the seriousness of the offence”.

In line with the UN Security Council resolution 2396, “Foreign terrorist fighters and those who finance or otherwise facilitate their travel and subsequent activities may be eligible for inclusion on the ISIL (Da’esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List maintained by the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), and 2253 (2015) where they participate in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of, supplying, selling or transferring arms and related materiel to, or recruiting for, or otherwise supporting acts or activities of Al-Qaida, ISIL, or any cell, affiliate, splinter group or derivative thereof, and calls upon States to propose such foreign terrorist fighters and those who facilitate or finance their travel and subsequent activities for possible designation”.

In accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 2253:, “Member states shall prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale, or transfer to these individuals, groups, undertakings and entities from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materiel of all types including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, and technical advice, assistance or training related to military activities”.

Pursuant to the UN Security Council resolution 2462, The Security Council “calls upon Member States to conduct financial investigations in terrorism related cases and to seek ways to address the challenges in obtaining evidence to secure terrorist financing convictions”. The Security Council “further calls upon Member States to more effectively investigate and prosecute cases of terrorist financing and to apply, as appropriate, effective, proportionate, and dissuasive criminal sanctions to individuals and entities convicted of terrorist financing activity”.

## ***Chapter 6: Conclusion***

The well-established and documented presence of Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters in Azerbaijan and their involvement in the hostilities against the people of Artsakh is destabilizing the regional peace and security.

Turkey and Azerbaijan have gravely violated their obligations under international law, including International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, UN Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, Geneva conventions, as well as relevant UNSC resolutions.

Turkey and Azerbaijan undermine the object and purpose of the international legal instruments. Moreover, most of these gross and systematic breaches relate to their obligations under peremptory norms of general international law, which are essential for the protection of fundamental interests of the international community.

*Annexes*

**Annex 1: Flight tracking data**

<b>Reference B1</b>	Unknown jet with call sign BRQ218 (travelling from Tripoli to Azerbaijan) <a href="https://caucasus.liveuamap.com/en/2020/29-september-flight-from-tripoli-coming-to-baku-azerbaijan">https://caucasus.liveuamap.com/en/2020/29-september-flight-from-tripoli-coming-to-baku-azerbaijan</a>
<b>Reference B2</b>	Turkish Health Ministry's Embraer ERJ-135 <a href="https://twitter.com/GDarkconrad/status/1312837290696245249">https://twitter.com/GDarkconrad/status/1312837290696245249</a>

## Annex 2: Recordings released by FTFs from Azerbaijan

<i>Reference N</i>	<i>Audio/video recordings</i>	<i>Transcript/Description</i>
<b>Reference A</b>	Armenian armaments <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_eFA5718Oc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_eFA5718Oc</a>	Here are the armaments. Our goods are in Syria. The boxes are closed. No one will take anything, as we will not be able to sell it.
	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvixBzeIctM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvixBzeIctM</a>	The trophy obtained from Armenia (Mustafa)
<b>Reference B</b>	Armenian casualties <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9az9xcxd7Wg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9az9xcxd7Wg</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t8moyQRW1Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t8moyQRW1Q</a>	The victims of the Armenian Army. I will come back with victory.
<b>Reference C</b>	Armenian helicopter <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EFHUpVeSsM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EFHUpVeSsM</a>	The voices discuss whether the air strike is delivered by helicopter or the helicopter itself is hit down by air strike.
<b>Reference D</b>	Azerbaijani military base in Horadiz <a href="https://twitter.com/JulianRoepcke/status/1312347751359959040">https://twitter.com/JulianRoepcke/status/1312347751359959040</a>	The Geolocation of Military Base
<b>Reference E</b>	Audio Recordings of fighters Recording No. 1 <a href="https://bit.ly/3iBRqni">https://bit.ly/3iBRqni</a>	Hello, let the peace, grace and mercy of the Lord be upon you. How are you Abu Walid. Master, as about Azerbaijan, don't allow anyone to come here. The situation is not good. The fighting is quite heavy. I swear with the name of Almighty God, 30-40 people die every day, for the sake of God, the condition of those who are wounded, is awfully unutterable. Sheikh, I swear, all of them are Syrians, a single Azeri doesn't fight.
	Audio Recordings of fighters Recording No. 2 <a href="https://bit.ly/3iBRqni">https://bit.ly/3iBRqni</a>	All right, Confide in God, my dear Abu Walid. I swear with the name of God, we are disgraced, we are embarrassed, for the sake of God. By God, everyone wants to return, everyone is dissatisfied. Some are

		<p>dying, others are losing their heads, third ones- their legs, as there are mines everywhere. I swear with the Almighty God, it is already two days that people want to return, no one has come back, I swear, they threatened us with weapon, so that no one will talk they are taking us for fighting against our will and they are taking us for training, against our will and so on. Everything is obligatory here, against our will.</p>
	<p>Audio Recordings of fighters Recording No. 3 <a href="https://bit.ly/3iBRqni">https://bit.ly/3iBRqni</a></p>	<p>Haji, don't come, I swear with the name of the God, don't come. This guys don't know my name, neither I know theirs. Everything is a lie, it is fighting, Master, some are blown up, some die, others we can't take out from ruins. There are 30-50 lost people, we don't know they are dead or alive. 35 people are dead, those who are wounded are above 70. Haji, it is not a game, it is a carnage. For the sake of God, it is a carnage. Take care Abu Walid, don't allow anyone to come, I swear with the name of God. I don't know him, and he doesn't know me. There are 100 people who want to return, but they are not allowed. They don't do anything, they are sitting, they don't do absolutely anything.</p>
	<p>Audio Recordings of fighters Recording No. 4 <a href="https://bit.ly/3npdXr6">https://bit.ly/3npdXr6</a></p>	<p>Hey, the whole groups are dying, each of which are 10, 15, 7, 8, many are dying. As if Turks are with us and so on. No one is alongside us, besides Shia people. Why Shia people betray people. What are they doing with</p>

		us, they don't send us, they don't send us back. They are dying with groups.
	<p>Audio Recordings of fighters</p> <p>Recording No. 5</p> <p><a href="https://bit.ly/3npdXr6">https://bit.ly/3npdXr6</a></p>	<p>Tell Mohammad not to send people here, it is a trouble, tell Mohammad Jamil and Foulans (if they don't know anyone, they call them Foulan), right? Tell him that he is absolutely useless, 1%. Tell, that Alan is sending greetings and that he doesn't have any help from this one, 1%, ok?</p>
<b>Reference F</b>	<p>Audio Recordings of fighters</p> <p>Location – Mataghis</p> <p><a href="https://youtu.be/5nP4iDySshw">https://youtu.be/5nP4iDySshw</a></p>	<p>For the Sake of God, let someone take us from here, this is a morass. Currently, we are in Mataghis. There is no food or water. We are under fire and shelling. We are here for almost 4-5 days. The bodies of our friends are teared into pieces in front of our eyes. Please, talk to a higher officer to take us out from here. Talk to Azerbaijani militaries, let them bring us food and water. We have also talked to Azerbaijanis and they replied that either we should do our job, or they will kill us. How long shall we stay? Half of our Syrian friends has already died. If they won't take us from here, I will come to Turkey. Our friends have already started to fight with each other over the food. We have been told that there will be food, water and money. Where are they? There is no money, no food, no water.</p>

<b>Reference G</b>	Audio Recordings of fighters Location – Horadiz <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHHrn68yOe4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHHrn68yOe4</a>	Hi brother, who is hearing us. Good morning Abu Hassan. We are under shelling. We are in Horadiz.  The fighter further complains about his condition and the absence of food and water.
<b>Reference H</b>	Arab-speaking fighters wearing Azerbaijani border-guard uniforms and using Azerbaijani armored vehicles and trucks <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-14tyoQFYQ&amp;">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-14tyoQFYQ&amp;</a>	Fighters cry out without order: “Hey, be careful ahead! Allahu Akbar! Bring the munition! There is no one ahead! You attack!  Be careful around us! Gather all group! Etc”
<b>Reference I</b>	Fighters in Azerbaijani border guards uniform <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXkR8oDJmCg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXkR8oDJmCg</a>	Fighter A (pointing the plaque allegedly placed by Armenian party):  “Armenians, Liberation, Allahu Akbar”. Then demonstrating gesture of ‘Grey Wolves’, Turkish far-right organization.  Fighter B (demonstrating the Liberty gesture and pointing the area behinds him): “Iran”.



<b>Reference J</b>	Video recording of two fighters, who claim that they are in Azerbaijan <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab_h2_vUFNQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab_h2_vUFNQ</a>	<p>Fighter A: This message is addressed to our brothers who went to Azerbaijan. Because of financial problems and so on</p> <p>Fighter B: No one has a right to do like that.</p> <p>Fighter A: Do not believe that somebody dies from hunger, and do not believe that God Almighty leave you one day. Look, you went to Azerbaijan but do not consider yourself poorer than me. Maybe there is no one poorer than me and these guys. Be accountable with God and you will be given what you want. Ask the compensation/fee from God Almighty. What Azerbaijan? You are from the people of Levant. Mohamed Prophet preached in Levant. The emigrants come from outside Syria passing thousands of kilometers to put their feet on Levant. So, we are from the people of Levant. Why do we have to go to Azerbaijan, Libya or another place? I swear, I do not die from hunger, God Almighty created worms in stones.</p> <p>Fighter B: I swear, my brother, I welcome our brothers...</p> <p>Fighter A: You are from us and you are our brothers.</p> <p>Fighter B: When they say that 50 people have been killed, we, I swear of sublime God, are being sorry for you. We care about you otherwise we would not talk about that. Your patient is with us in Rabat (not audible ). There are 5 million people in camps</p>
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		<p>who want to come back to cities and villages.</p> <p>Fighter A: People who are in camps are waiting for you. They have no way but Allah and you.</p> <p>Fighter B: And you are going to Azerbaijan?</p> <p>Fighter A: Where? God Almighty said "Hold fast" (quote from Quran). God did not say go here and there. Do you think that it is jihad? This is Demand of Jihad. We are today in defensive Jihad. You are forced to defend not to demand. Demand, and I will demand with you but not now.</p> <p>Fighter B: Allah is my suffice, and the best deputy. God bless you.</p>
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**Annex 3: Lists of foreign terrorist fighters****Lists of FTFs transferred by Turkey to Azerbaijan according to the Armenian Intelligence sources****List A**

	<b>Foreign terrorist fighter</b>	<b>Date and place of birth</b>
1.	Khatab Ahmad Shikho خطاب احمد شيخو	1992, Latakia
2.	Ahmad Mohammed Shama احمد محمد شما	01/01/1988, Latakia
3.	Mohammed Zamja Ajuz محمد زمجي عجوز	01/12/1977, Al-Rauda, Hamah province
4.	Ziad Jamal Ajuz زياد جمال عجوز	18/01/1989, Latakia
5.	Usama/Osama Hasan Husein اسامة حسن حسين	12/05/1995, Latakia
6.	Tarek Mohammed Turkman طارق محمد تركمان	05/12/1987, Latakia
7.	Khaled Ali Shrshi خالد علي شرشي	09/10/1988, Latakia
8.	Haytham Hasan Hussein هيثم حسن حسين	20/08/1990, Latakia
9.	Mustafa Nadim Bariq مسطفي نديم باريق	05/01/1982, Al- Qastal, Suburb of Damascus
10.	Orhan Mohammed Jariq اورهان محمد جريق	20/02/1988, Latakia
11.	Ahmad Sabed Morjah احمد ثابت مورجة	1987, Latakia
12.	Mohammed Aref Shirtik محمد عارف شيرتيك	01/02/1994, Latakia
13.	Yaser Ramadan Sheikh Ahmad ياسر رمضان شيخ احمد	01/01/1985, Latakia

14.	Ahmad Mohammad Mahmud احمد محمد محمود	08/04/1995, Latakia
15.	Ali Mohammad Ajuz علي محمد عجوز	05/01/1992, Latakia
16.	Burhan Saleh Manlauli برهان صالح منلاولي	10/10/1992, Qastal
17.	Mohammad Shaukad/t Mahmud محمد شوكت محمود	01/11/1992, Rabia
18.	Ahmad Jamal Hamu احمد جمال حمو	01/01/1995, Rabia
19.	Adel Azzuddin Tosun عادل عز الدين طوصون	07/09/1993, Rabia
20.	Farid Mohammad Malahsin فريد محمد ملاحسن	06/01/1986, Al-Dura
21.	Mohammad Ahmad Ajuz محمد احمد عجوز	02/01/1968, Latakia

**List B**

	<b>Foreign terrorist fighter</b>	<b>Date and place of birth</b>
1.	<b>Fahim Issa,</b> One of the leaders of Sultan Murad. One of the main recruiters, alongside with Abu Amsha and Sayf Abu Bakr (Balud)	
2.	<b>Qassem Mustafa al-Jazmour,</b> Sultan Murad fighter	
3.	<b>Saif Abu Bakr (Saif Balud),</b> One of the leaders of Al Hamza	
4.	<b>Alaa Jneid,</b> One of the commanders of Al Hamza	
5.	<b>Muhammad Al-Jasim,</b> One of the commanders of Al Hamza	
6.	<b>Mustafa Ghanti,</b> Al-Hamza fighter	23 y. o. (1997)
7.	<b>Adham</b>	Kafr Jannah village, Aleppo

8.	<b>Muhammad Abdul Razzaq (nickname Muhammad Shaalan)</b> Al-Hamza fighter Killed	45 y. o., Al-Atarib, Aleppo province
9.	<b>Muhammad Jassem/ Abu Amsha,</b> Leader of Sultan Suleiman Shah brigade, known from fights in Libya. One of the main recruiters, alongside with Fahim Issa and Sayf Abu Bakr (Balud)	
10.	<b>Abuebide Aljonubi/Al-Janubi,</b> One of the commanders of “Jabhat an-Nusra”	Tall Zamyun, Idlib province
11.	<b>Mustafa Muhammad al-Kudur</b>	1999, Village Kurin, Idlib province
12.	<b>Hasan Muhammad Saghir</b>	1980
13.	<b>Najm Nimr/Namr al-Khalil/Hebron</b>	1980
14.	<b>Khalid Mustafa Abras</b>	1984, Village Kurin, Marim
15.	<b>Ahmad Feisal al-Ibrahim</b>	1992, City of Kafr Roumah, Idlib province
16.	<b>Abdullah Subhi Hamada</b>	1984
17.	<b>Musab Hasan al-Hasan</b>	1992, Village al-Tawama, Aleppo province
18.	<b>Abdullah Abdulaziz Shobak</b>	1997
19.	<b>Samir Abdulaziz Shobak</b>	1994
20.	<b>Ali Abdulkhalek Hassun</b>	1997, Village Kurin, Idlib province
21.	<b>Hussein Abdulkhalek Hassun</b>	1998, Village Kurin, Idlib province
22.	<b>Jihad Ahmad al-Hamavi/Yousef Ibrahim Jamal</b>	1991, City Sarmada, Idlib province
23.	<b>Basil Omar Mustafa</b>	1997, Village al-Tawama, Aleppo province
24.	<b>Obeida Abdu-l-Rahman Naser</b>	1999
25.	<b>Feisal Muhammad al-Ahmad</b>	1988, city Idlib, Syria
26.	<b>Muhammad Abdulrahman Kari/Kabi</b>	15.02.1983
27.	<b>Abdullah Hassan Shobak</b>	1985

28.	<b>Khaled Wahid al-Jum'a</b>	1997, City Kafr Roumah, Idlib province
29.	<b>Sami Muhammad Ghandour</b>	1998
30.	<b>Abdulaziz Muhammad Kabi</b>	01.03.1980
31.	<b>Ahmad Shehadi Shreydi</b>	1988
32.	<b>Yusef Ibrahim Jalal/Jamal</b>	1991, City of Serakib, Idlib province
33.	<b>Hasan Kamel al-Akdi</b>	1998, City Kafr Roumah, Idlib province
34.	<b>Yazan Walid Osman</b>	1997, Village Kurin, Idlib province
35.	<b>Nader Musa Faris</b>	1988, Village al-Tawama, Aleppo province
36.	<b>Mustafa Khaled al-Dik/Deek</b>	1999, City Kafr Roumah, Idlib province
37.	<b>'Adil Abdulrahman al-Omar</b>	1994, Village Killi, Idlib province
38.	<b>Yamin Walid Abdin</b>	1996, Village Kurin, Idlib province
39.	<b>Shaanan Mar'i Khalil</b>	1976
40.	<b>Muhammad Ahmad Bzamani</b>	1992, Village Kurin, Idlib province
41.	<b>Ibrahim Mustafa Hamadeh</b>	1998, City Kafr Roumah, Idlib province
42.	<b>Yaser Abdu-l-Latif Abdu-l-Qader</b>	1994
43.	<b>Hammoud Ibrahim Hammoud</b>	1998
44.	<b>Ahmad Abdunaser Maher</b>	1999
45.	<b>Ahmad Feisal al-Ibrahim</b>	1999, Village Kurin, Idlib province
46.	<b>Barakat Muhammad Muhsin Hammash</b>	1998, Village al-Tawama, Aleppo province
47.	<b>Abdullah Zahr al-Din Ajini</b>	1994, Village Kurin, Idlib province
48.	<b>Ali Muhammad Dawalibi</b>	1997, Kafr Hamra, province of Aleppo

49.	Muhammad Ibrahim Juma'a	1994
50.	Khalid Walid al-Rahmoun	1992
51.	Azouv/Izo Mahmud al-Yousef	1998, City of Kafr Roumah, Idlib province
52.	Ahmad Imad Bisarah/Bisharah Bizarah/Bzarah	1997
53.	`Az ad-Din Hadr Shakir	1997
54.	Heitham Keik	(Drvishan, North of) Kessab
55.	Isam Keik	(Drvishan, North of) Kessab
56.	Mustafa Ajuz	(Ghabara, North of) Kessab
57.	Yahya Mella	(Ghabara, North of) Kessab
58.	Tarek Sokhta, Commander of the group of fighters	(Ghabara, North of) Kessab

## List C

	Foreign terrorist fighter	Date of birth
1.	Zakaria Ahmad Qadi زكريا أحمد قاضي	1988
2.	Mumammad Nuri Abu Ali محمد نوري أبو علي	1991
3.	Mazen Kamal Qara Bujuk مازن كمال قره بجق	1977
4.	Ali Adib Raslan علي أدیب رسلان	1994
5.	Zahir Abdu-l-Wudud زهير عبد الودود خليل	1990
6.	Omar Mustafa Hoban عمار مصطفى هوبان	1996

7.	Muhammad Hashem Qadi محمود هاشم قاضي	1996
8.	Anis Nadim Shiar أنس نديم شعار	1988
9.	Munif Majid Qujak منيف مجيد كوجاك	1995
10.	Omar Muhammad Abu Ali عمار محمد أبو علي	1991
11.	Muhammad Mustafa Hajj Abu Ali محمد مصطفى حاج أبو علي	1992
12.	Muhammad Muhammad Ali Abdel Hadi محمد محمد علي عبد الهادي	1988
13.	Murad Ahmad Qara Bujuk مراد أحمد قره بجق	1991
14.	Teymur Hanfi Bostanji تيفور حنفي بوستنجي	1996

#### List D

	Foreign terrorist fighter
1.	Muhammad ash-Sheykh Ali محمد الشيخ علي
2.	Firas al-Hajj Yousef فراس الحاج يوسف
3.	Musa Janid موسى جنيد
4.	Tamam Ayyub تمام أيوب
5.	Muhammad Aliwi محمد عليوي
6.	Ali ash-Sheikh علي الشيخ



7.	Muhammad Dalla محمد دلة
8.	Haythum Dalla هيثم دلة
9.	Hasan Muhammad Sharita حسن محمد شريطة
10.	Adil al-Yousef عادل اليوسف
12.	<b>Abd al-Jabbar Qastun</b> عبد الجبار قستون Al-Hamza

**List E**

	<b>Foreign terrorist fighter</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>
1.	Younis Naasan يونس نعان	Kafr Khum
2.	Nidal Shariba نصال شريبا	
3.	Nizar Shariba نزار شريبا	
4.	Mohammad Shariba محمد شريبا	
5.	Khalil Malya Mousa خليل ماليا موسى	
6.	Mohammad Shukhti محمد شختي	

**List F. Demised FTFs according to the Armenian Intelligence sources**

	<b>Foreign terrorist fighter</b>	<b>Date and place of birth</b>
1.	Yasser Frzat ياسر فرزات "Al-Hamza"	Rastan, province of Homs, Syria

	<b>Foreign terrorist fighter</b>	<b>Date and place of birth</b>
2.	Kan`an Frzat كنان فرزات SNA, Major/Captain	35 y.o (approx. 1985), Rastan, province of Homs
3.	Abu Shadi ابو شادي "Al-Hamza"	Al-Atarib, province of Aleppo, Syria
4.	Hussein Talha حسين طلحة "Al-Hamza"	Anjara, province of Aleppo, Syria
5.	Sadam Aziz Azkour (alias- Daroubi) صدام عزيز عركور "Al-Hamza"	Village Al Karim North-West of Hama
6.	Ali al-Rahmouni علي الرحموني "Al-Hamza"	Kafr Aleppo, Aleppo province
7.	Abd al-Razak (alias- Abu Houria/Hurira) عبد الرزاق / ابو حورية	Village Tasnin, Homs province
8.	Bilal At-Taybani بلال الطيباني	Rastan, province of Homs
9.	Mahmud Najjar محمود نجار	City Marea, Aleppo province
10.	Walid al-Ashtar وليد الأشر	Rastan, province of Homs
11.	Abu Kasim al-Zaghlul ابو قاسم الزغلول	Al-Hajar al-Aswad, Suburb of Damascus
12.	Muhammad Abdul Sattar al-Khalaf محمد عبد الستار الخلف	Al-Atarib, province of Aleppo
13.	Abdul Hanan Abd al-Razak عبد الحنان عبد الرزاق	Village Marea, province of Aleppo
14.	Muhammad Abdel Mouti محمد عبد الموتي	
15.	Hussein al-Taweel حسين الطويل	

	Foreign terrorist fighter	Date and place of birth
16.	Firas Auaid فiras عويد	
17.	Abdullatif Hasani عبداللطيف حسني	
18.	Muhammad Mahdi محمد مهدي	
19.	Mazen Muhammad مازن محمد	
20.	Abdurrahman al-Khatib عبد الرحمن الخطيب	
21.	Hamza al-Shami حمزة الشامي	
22.	Abdulrahman al-Shami عبدالرحمن الشامي	
23.	Raduan Rahal رضوان رحال	
24.	Muhammad Khaled as-Shahna محمد خالد الشحنة	26-year-old , Displaced from Maarat an- Nouman, to Maarat an-Misreen, province of Idlib
25.	Ibrahim Jum`a ابراهيم جمعة	Rastan, province of Homs, Syria
26.	Ahmad Lahlah لهله/أحمد لحلاح	Rastan, province of Homs, Syria
27.	Amer Izzat Sukhta عامر عزت سوخطة	24/05/1982, Latakia
28.	Kamal Ahmed Jamal Sukhta كمال احمد جمال سوخطة	25/04/1971, Rabia, Latakia or Hama governorate
29.	Murad Nauras Sukhta مراد نورس سخطة	01/01/1986, Latakia
30.	Kinan Nauras Sukhta كينان نورس سخطة	1992, Latakia

	Foreign terrorist fighter	Date and place of birth
31.	Amer Ahmad Shikho عامر احمد شيخو	20/01/1988, Al-Samra, Hama governorate
32.	Mohammed Shaker Sukhta محمد شاكر سوخته	15/01/1988, Rabia, Latakia or Hama governorate
33.	Ali Izzat Sukhta علي عزت سوخته	09/04/1988, Rabia, Latakia or Hama governorate
34.	Adel ash-Shahir Al-Hamza	
35.	Bilal Tiawi	
36.	Adel al-Shahir عادل الشاهر One of the Commanders of Al-Hamza	
37.	Abu Maria ابو ماريا	Deir ez-Zor
38.	Abu Mazal ابو ماظل	Deir ez-Zor
39.	Yasen Ahmad	

#### List G. Fighters with social network profiles

	Foreign terrorist fighter	Social media account
1.	عامر سوخته Amir Sokhta	<a href="https://bit.ly/30I7EFm">https://bit.ly/30I7EFm</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/amer.sohta1">https://www.facebook.com/amer.sohta1</a>
2.	كمال سوخته Kamal Sokhta	<a href="https://bit.ly/3nuLDUv">https://bit.ly/3nuLDUv</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/kemal.sohta">https://www.facebook.com/kemal.sohta</a>
3.	محمد سوخته Muhammed/ Mohammad Shaker Sokhta, (killed)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/muhammed.sohta">https://www.facebook.com/muhammed.sohta</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/mehmet.sohta.7">https://www.facebook.com/mehmet.sohta.7</a>
4.	علي عزت سوخته Ali Azt Sokhta, (killed)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/aliazt.sohkta">https://www.facebook.com/aliazt.sohkta</a>
5.	كانان نورس سوخته Kanan Nors Sokhta (killed)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/mazen.nors">https://www.facebook.com/mazen.nors</a>
6.	مراد نورس سوخته Murad Sokhta, (killed)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/murat.sohta.39">https://www.facebook.com/murat.sohta.39</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/murat.sohta.10">https://www.facebook.com/murat.sohta.10</a>
7.	عامر احمد شيخو	<a href="https://bit.ly/2SygHo3">https://bit.ly/2SygHo3</a>

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	Amir Ahmad Sheikhu	
8.	ابراهيم جمعة Ibrahim Jum`a (killed)	<a href="https://pic.twitter.com/P8uS8amrvf">pic.twitter.com/P8uS8amrvf</a>
9.	احمد لاهله Ahmad Lahlah (killed)	<a href="https://pic.twitter.com/P8uS8amrvf">pic.twitter.com/P8uS8amrvf</a>

# Exhibit 33



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
ՈՍՏԻԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

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**Ի Ն Տ Ե Ր Պ Ո Ւ**

**ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆԱԿԱՆ ԲՅՈՒՐՈ**

ՀՀ ք. ԵՐԵՎԱՆ 0052, ՍԱՐԿԱՎԱԳԻ 48, ՖԱՔՍ 28 -71 -26, ՀԵՌ.՝ 28 -71 -24

№ 30/A- 3526 -ԴԵ/303/9/20

Ձեռք 14.10.2020թ. թիվ 21/21/21560-20 և 15.10.2020թ. թիվ 21/21604-20 գրություններին. «24» 12 2020 թ.

ՀՀ գլխավոր դատախազության Միջազգային-իրավական համագործակցության վարչության պետ, արդարադատության առաջին դասի խորհրդական Ե.Ավագյանին

Հարգելի՛ պարոն Ավագյան,

Հայտնում ենք, որ թիվ 69108320 քրեական գործով ՀՀ զինվորական դատախազության կողմից Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության՝ իրավասու մարմիններից մի շարք տեղեկություններ հայցելու վերաբերյալ ստացված հարցումների կապակցությամբ մեր կողմից համապատասխան հարցումներ էին կատարվել նշված երկրում Ինտերպոլի ԱԿԲ-ի մեր գործընկերներին:

Ի պատասխան, Սիրիայում Ինտերպոլի ԱԿԲ-ի մեր գործընկերները տեղեկացրել են, որ սիրիացի վարձկանների հավաքագրումները իրականացվել են Թուրքիայի նախագահի անվտանգության հարցերով խորհրդական, պաշտոնաթող գործադրամասնատար Ադնան Թանրենդեյի կողմից վերահսկվող «Սադայթ» թուրքական կազմակերպության կողմից: Հավաքագրումները իրականացվել են Սիրիայի այն տարածքներում, որոնք գտնվում են Թուրքիայի վերահսկողության ներքո, մասնավորապես՝ հյուսիսում գտնվող Աֆրինի մարզերում, Հալեպի մերձակայքում, ինչպես նաև այս հակամարտությանը ներգրավված առավել հայտնի՝ «Ահրար Ալշամ», «Ահրար Ալշարբիյա», «Ալնոլսրայի բանակ», «Սուլթան Մուրադ», «Մուլեման Շահ», «Ալշամի լեգիոն» ահաբեկչական զինված խմբավորումների շրջանում:

Թուրքիայի հատուկ ծառայությունները «Ալիամգաթի րրիգադ», «Ալմաջդի լեգիոն», «Կովկասի մարտիկներ» ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներին կուտակել են Կալափի սահմանային անցակետի մոտ, որտեղից նրանց տեղափոխել են «Ղազի Այն Թափ» օդանավակայան և Թուրքիայի այլ օդանավակայաններ, որից հետո իրականացվել է այդ վարձկանների խումբ-խումբ տեղափոխումը Ադրբեյջան: Նշված վարձկաններին վճարվել է 1000-2000 ԱՄՆ դոլար ամսական վարձատրություն 3-6 ամսվա ժամանակահատվածի համար:

Ստացվել է  
2020 թ. 12 24

Վարձկաններին Ադրբեջան տեղափոխելու վերաբերյալ Սիրիայի իրավասու մարմինների տրամադրության տակ եղած տեղեկատվության համաձայն՝

- 04.10.2020թ. Թուրքիայի հատուկ ծառայությունների անմիջական վերահսկողությամբ, «Ալիամգաթ» ահաբեկչական խմբավորման թվով 12 ահաբեկիչներ Ռաս ալ Այն բնակավայրից տեղափոխվել են սիրիա-թուրքական սահմանին մոտ գտնվող Ալ Հասակայի մերձակայք, հետո՝ Անկարա, իսկ 05.10.2020թ. ինքնաթիռով Անկարայից տեղափոխվել են Ադրբեջան,
- 13.10.2020թ. Թուրքիայի կողմից հրամաններ են տրվել ահաբեկչական գինված խմբավորումներին Հայաստանի դեմ պատերազմելու համար 1800 ԱՄՆ դոլար վարձավճարներ վճարելու վերաբերյալ,
- 16.10.2020թ. Թուրքիայի հատուկ ծառայությունները կուտակել են «Ահաբեկչական ազգային բանակ» խմբավորման ահաբեկիչներին՝ Ադրբեջան տեղափոխելու համար,
- 17.10.2020թ. Թուրքիայի հատուկ ծառայությունների կողմից որոշում էր կայացվել «Ահրար Ալ Շարքիյա» ահաբեկչական խմբավորման թվով 70 ահաբեկիչների Սուլուկ բնակավայրից Ռաս ալ Այն քաղաք, Ալ Հասակա բնակավայրի մերձակայք, դրանից հետո՝ Թուրքիա, իսկ այնուհետև՝ Ադրբեջան տեղափոխելու վերաբերյալ, և միաժամանակ Թուրքիայի հատուկ ծառայությունները հրահանգել էին մնացած ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներին Ադրբեջան ուղարկել թվով 100 գինված ահաբեկիչների՝ թուրքական ուժերի հետ Հայաստանի դեմ պատերազմելու նպատակով և չենթարկվելու դեպքում սպառնացել էին կալանավորել, կալանքի տակ պահել Ալ Ռաի բանտում և կանգնեցնել ռազմական դաշտային դատարանի առջև, ինչից հետո՝ սպանել:

Միաժամանակ, Սիրիայում Իստերադլի ԱԿԲ-ի մեր գործընկերները տեղեկացրել են, որ Մուստաֆա Քալթիի և Ամին Ամմար Էս Սաիդի վերաբերյալ որևէ տեղեկատվության չեն տիրապետում: Այլ տեղեկատվություն չի հաղորդվել:

Վերոգրյալը Ձեզ է հայտնվում՝ ի գիտություն:

*Շտրիակալություն համագործակցության համար:  
Միայն իրավասու մարմինների օգտագործման համար:*

Պետ  
ոստիկանության փոխգնդապետ

Ն.Հակոբյան





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The following is information pertaining to the mercenaries' transportation to Azerbaijan sent by trusted Syrian sources:

- 10/04/2020: Under the direct control of Turkish special forces, 12 Al-Hamza terrorist mercenaries were transported from Ras al-Ayn to the Syrian-Turkish border near Al-Hasakah. Thereafter, they were transported to Ankara, Turkey, and on October 5, 2020, were transported by air to Azerbaijan.
- 10/13/2020: Turkey announced payments of \$1,800 USD to the terrorist mercenary groups to fight against Armenia.
- 10/16/2020: Turkish special forces gathered mercenaries under the [terrorist national army] to transport to Azerbaijan.
- 10/17/2020: Turkish special forces decided to send 70 terrorist mercenaries from Ahrar al-Sharqiya who were transported from Suluk, Syria, to Ras al-Ayn, near Al-Hasakah. Thereafter, they were transported to Turkey, and from there to Azerbaijan. At the same time, special instructions were given by the Turkish special forces to the rest of the terrorist mercenary groups to send 100 more terrorist mercenaries to Azerbaijan to fight against Armenia. Refusal to participate was met with threats of imprisonment and a hearing in front of a military tribunal with sentences of death.

Our Syrian Interpol colleagues have informed the National Central Bureau that they possess no information regarding [Mustafa Kanti] and [Amin Ammar Es-Said]. No further information was provided.

Lieutenant Colonel of the Chief of Police

N. Hakoryan

# Exhibit 34

08-ը նոյեմբերի, 2020թ.

ք.Երևան

ՀՀ քննչական կոմիտեի հատուկ հանձնարարությունների, կազմակերպական-վերլուծական և քրեագիտական գլխավոր վարչության քրեագիտական վարչության պետ, արդարադատության առաջին դասի խորհրդական Ռ.Հ.Վարդանյանս, քննարկելով վարույթի թիվ 69108320 քրեական գործի նյութերը և նկատի ունենալով, որ գործով բավարար ապացույցներ են ձեռք բերվել, որոնք հիմք են տալիս որպես մեղադրյալ ներգրավել

**Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմին (մականունը՝ Աբու Համշա)**

ծնված 1985թ., ազգությամբ՝ արաբ, Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության քաղաքացի, ծնվել է Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության Հյուսիսային Խամա շրջանում, հանդիսանում է «Սուլթան Սուլեյման Շահ» միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման պարագլուխը, ըստ նախաքննական տվյալների՝ գտնվում է Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետությունում և ղեկավարում է միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման անդամների գործողությունները

հանրորեն վտանգավոր այն արարքների համար, որ նա հանդիսանալով «Սուլթան Սուլեյման Շահ» միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման պարագլուխը, չհանդիսանալով Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության քաղաքացի, մշտապես չբնակվելով դրա տարածքում, այլ հանդիսանալով Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության քաղաքացի, ընդգրկված չլինելով Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի անձնակազմում, ինչպես նաև՝ Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության կամ այլ պետության կողմից ուղարկված չլինելով զինված ուժերի կազմում պաշտոնեական պարտականություններ կատարելու համար, իր եղբոր՝ Սեյֆ Ամշայի հետ միասին, նյութական հատուցում տալու դիմաց հավաքագրել է շուրջ երկու հազարից ավելի վարձկանների, որոնց տեղափոխել է Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետություն և ներգրավել Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարության կողմից Արցախի և Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունների դեմ 2020 թվականի սեպտեմբերի 27-ից սանձազերծված և վարվող ագրեսիվ պատերազմում՝ տեղում ղեկավարելով վերջիններիս գործողությունները: Այսպես.

Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմը, հանդիսանալով «Սուլթան Սուլեյման Շահ» անվանումը կրող միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման պարագլուխը, իր եղբոր՝ Սեյֆ Ամշայի հետ միասին, 2020 թվականի հունիս ամսից Իբրահիմ Ռաբ ալ-Այալի և մի շարք այլ

անձանց միջոցով սկսել է համայրել իր ենթակայությամբ ահաբեկչական գործունեություն իրականացնող խմբավորման անդամների շարքերը՝ նյութական հատուցում տալու, մասնավորապես՝ ամսական 2000 ԱՄՆ դոլար վճարի դիմաց հավաքագրելով Յուսեֆ Ալաբեթ Ալ Հաջիի, Մուհոռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիտերի, Ահմադ ալ-Տայեբի, Աբու Սթեֆ ալ-Հինդավիի, Աբու Դիաբ Հալաբիի և Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության շուրջ երկու հազարից ավելի այլ քաղաքացիների հետ: Հավաքագրված վարձկաններին ռազմական գործողություններում ներգրավելու նպատակով՝ Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմը իր եղբոր՝ Սեյֆ Ամշայի հետ միասին, Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության հյուսիսային հատվածում տեղակայված Շեյխ Հադիդ անվամբ գյուղում գտնվող ռազմական կենտրոնում կազմակերպել է հավաքագրված վարձկանների մասնակցությամբ եռամսյա մարտական պատրաստության դասընթացներ՝ զորավարժանքներ, որոնց ընթացքում վերջիններս անցել են կրակային և ֆիզիկական պատրաստության դասընթացներ, տարբեր զինատեսակների կիրառման հմտություններ:

2020 թվականի հուլիս-օգոստոս ամիսներին Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարությունը ծրագրել է ագրեսիայի ակտ իրականացնել Արցախի Հանրապետության և Հայաստանի Հանրապետության դեմ, որի նպատակով սկսել է Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերը համայրել միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների վարձկաններով, որի կապակցությամբ նախապես Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմի հետ ձեռք է բերվել պայմանավորվածություն: Այդ նպատակով Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմը, ստանալով Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարության աջակցությունը, 500 վարձկաններից բաղկացած խմբերը սկսել է Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության տարածքով անարգել, առանց անձը հաստատող որևէ փաստաթղթերի առկայության տեղափոխել Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետություն և տեղակայել արդեն իսկ Ադրբեջանի ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարության կողմից հատկացված ռազմական օբյեկտներում:

Մինչև Արցախի և Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունների դեմ ագրեսիվ պատերազմ սանձազերծելը և վարելը՝ 2020 թվականի սեպտեմբերի 25-ի դրությամբ, Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմի և Սեյֆ Ամշայի կողմից Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետություն տեղափոխվել են շուրջ 1000 վարձկաններ, որից հետո՝ մինչև հոկտեմբերի 18-ը, Ադրբեջան են տեղափոխվել ևս շուրջ 1000 վարձկան ահաբեկիչներ: Բոլոր վարձկանները Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմի կազմակերպմամբ Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի կողմից ստացել են զինվորական համազգեստ, զենք, զինամթերք, ռադիոկապի սարքավորումներ, տրանսպորտային, ինչպես նաև՝ մարտ վարելու համար անհրաժեշտ այլ միջոցներ:

Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմը, գտնվելով Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետությունում, տեղում Ադրբեջանի և Թուրքիայի զինված ուժերի ներկայացուցիչների հետ միասին համակարգել է այնտեղ տեղափոխված վարձկան ահաբեկիչների գործողությունները՝ վերջիններիս ներգրավելով Արցախի և Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունների դեմ Ադրբեջանի ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարության կողմից սանձազերծված և վարվող

ագրեսիվ պատերազմում: Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմը հավաքագրված վարձկաններից ձևավորել է առանձին ստորաբաժանումներ, որոնց հրաման է տվել հարձակվել Արցախյան և հայկական գյուղերի վրա, ոչնչացնել տեղի քաղաքացիական բնակչությանը և զինվորականներին, քաղաքացիական բնակավայրերում իրականացնել հրկիզումներ, պայթյուններ, և այդ եղանակով նաև ապակայունացնել Արցախի և Հայաստանի Հանրապետության ներքին վիճակը: Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմի կողմից հրաման է տրվել նաև գլխատել հակառակորդի քաղաքացիական բնակչությանը և զինվորականներին՝ յուրաքանչյուր գլխի համար խոստանալով 100 ԱՄՆ դոլար վարձատրություն:

2020 թվականի սեպտեմբերի 27-ից սկսած Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմի ղեկավարած «Սուլթան Սուլեյման Շահ» միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման վարձկան անդամները Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի հետ միասին ներգրավվել և ակտիվ մասնակցություն են ունեցել նախապես ծրագրված, համակարգված և նպատակաուղղված ռազմական գործողություններում:

Այսպիսով, Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմին մեղսագրվում է ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 38-389-րդ հոդվածով, 390-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասի 1-ին, 2-րդ կետերով, 395-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին և 3-րդ մասերով նախատեսված հանցավոր արարքների կատարում:

Ելնելով վերոգրյալից և ղեկավարվելով ՀՀ քրեական դատավարության օրենսգրքի 202-րդ և 203-րդ հոդվածներով՝


#### **Ո Ր Ո Շ Ե Ց Ի՝**

1. Սույն քրեական գործով Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմին ներգրավել որպես մեղադրյալ ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 38-389-րդ հոդվածով, 390-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասի 1-ին, 2-րդ կետերով, 395-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին և 3-րդ մասերով:

2. Սույն որոշման մասին հայտնել Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմին և նրան հանձնել որոշման օրինակը:

3. Որոշման օրինակն ուղարկել ՀՀ զինվորական դատախազություն:

Վարչության պետ՝



Ռ.Հ. Վարդանյան

(Verdict?) (Decision?)

Regarding the conviction of the individual

November 8, 2020

City of Yerevan

I, R.H. Vardanyan, first-rank advisor to special committee of investigational and criminological main bureau, after investigating criminal case number 69108320, and taking into consideration the sufficient facts, declare Muhammad al-Jasimi (nickname: Abu Hamsha) guilty.

**Muhammad al-Jasimi (nickname: Abu Hamsha)**

Born 1985; Arabic ethnicity; citizen of the Syrian Arabic Republic; born in the Hama region of northern Syria; head of Shah Sultan Suleyman international terroristic group; according to pre-investigational information, is currently in Azerbaijan, and is directing the actions of an international terroristic group

He is found guilty on the following grounds: committing dangerous acts against the public; being the head of Shah Sultan Suleyman international terroristic group; not being a permanent resident of Azerbaijan but a citizen of the Syrian Arabic Republic; not being part of Azerbaijani military forces; not having been sent by Syrian Arabic Republic officials or another country to serve militarily; enlisting more than 2,000 mercenaries (who would potentially receive financial rewards) with the assistance of his brother, Seyf Amsha, and transporting them to Azerbaijan; and engaging in an aggressive military campaign against Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia starting on September 27, 2020 and under the supervision of Azerbaijani military officials.

Starting in June 2020, Muhammad al-Jasimi, his brother Seyf Amsha, Ibrahim Rab Ayali, and other individuals began amassing mercenaries for a monthly reward of \$2,000 USD. Among the 2,000 other Syrian citizens who were involved were: Yusef Alabet al Haji, Muharab Muhammad al Shkeri, Ahmad al Taibbi, Abu Stef al hindavi, Abu Diab halabi. Al-Jasimi and his brother organized three-month-long trainings in the military center of the northern Syrian town of Shaykh Hadid during which the mercenaries underwent skills and weapons training.

During the months of July and August of 2020, Azerbaijani military officials planned aggression against Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia. Related to this objective, and before the planned act of aggression, they started to enlist the international terroristic mercenaries in agreement with Muhammad al-Jasimi. Al-Jasimi, with the help of Turkish military officials, transported a group of 500 mercenaries to Azerbaijan through Turkish territory without any encumbrances pertaining to passports and placed them in special military sites.

Between August and September 25, 2020, prior to the military aggression against Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia, Muhammad al-Jasimi and Seyf Amsha transported around 1,000 mercenaries to Azerbaijan. Thereafter, by October 18, 1,000 new mercenaries were transported to Azerbaijan. Under the aegis of al-Jasimi, all of the mercenaries received military uniforms, weapons, ammunition, radio equipment, transportation, and other necessary means for war from Azerbaijani military forces.

Being in Azerbaijan, Muhammad al-Jasimi, with the assistance of Azerbaijani and Turkish military officials, coordinated the mercenary groups involved in the war against Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia launched by Azerbaijani military officials.

Muhammad al-Jasimi organized special units that were given an order to attack villages in Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia, to exterminate the civil and military population, to bomb, and to start fires, thus destabilizing the situation inside Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia. Muhammad al-Jasimi also ordered the beheading of civil individuals for a reward of \$100 USD per head.

Since September 27, 2020, the international terroristic group of Shah Sultan Suleyman under the command of Muhammad al-Jasimi and alongside the Azerbaijani military forces were involved in active war that was systematically planned beforehand.

Thus, Muhammad Al-Jasimi is guilty of Article 38-389; point 1 and 2 of Article 390, Section 3; and point 1 and 3 of Article 395 of the criminal code of the Republic of Armenia.

Based on the abovementioned Articles, and as per Article 202 and 203 of the criminal code of the Republic of Armenia, it so ordered.

1. Under this criminal case, Muhammad al-Jasimi is found guilty under Article 38-389; point 1 and 2 of Article 390, Section 3; and point 1 and 3 of Article 395 of the criminal code of the Republic of Armenia.

2. As per this verdict, Muhammad al-Jasimi will be notified and served a copy of this verdict.

3. A copy of this verdict shall be sent to the military tribunal of the Republic of Armenia.

Head of Department

[]

R.H. Vardanyan



# Exhibit 35

## Involvement of armed terrorists and mercenaries is proved by sufficient evidence – Prosecution



YEREVAN, NOVEMBER 27, ARMENPRESS. The organized and coordinated involvement of armed terrorists and mercenaries is proved by sufficient evidence obtained in time of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh and Republic of Armenia, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Armenia said in a statement.

The military and political leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan violated the requirements of numbers of international treaties on September 27, 2020, unleashed aggressive war against the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh; preliminary investigation was initiated on the case, data were obtained on use of mercenaries, members of various terrorist groups specially recruited by Azerbaijan from the first day of the war. The latter carried out international terrorism in order to destabilize the internal state of a foreign state, by means of organizing and carrying out actions such as explosions, arson and other similar actions, continued killing

people, destroying buildings, structures, roads, means of transport and communication or other property.

On that basis, according to the materials obtained on October 12, 2020, a criminal case was initiated under Article 389 of the RA Criminal Code and joined to the criminal case initiated on the case of unleashing an aggressive war against the Republic of Artsakh.

During the preliminary investigation, on suspicion of committing crimes under Article 389, Article 390, Part 1, Point 1 and Part 3, Points 1 and 2, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code, mercenaries: Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkher, a resident from the village of Atmi, near the city of Sarmad, a citizen of the Arab Republic of Syria, born in 1988 and a citizen of the Arab Republic of Syria, Yusef Alabet Al Haji, born on 03.05.1975 in Edlib region, Jser Al Shahur city, village Al Ziedie participating in the aggressive war unleashed by the Republic of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh were arrested on October 31, 2020 by the body conducting the proceedings.

In the scope of proper judicial procedure with sufficient evidence obtained Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkher was charged under Article 389, Article 34-390, Part 1, Point 1 and Part 3, Point 1, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code and Yusef Alabet Al Haji was charged under Article 389 of the RA Criminal Code, Article 34-390, Part 1, Point 1 and Part 3, Point 1, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code. Detention was chosen as a preventive measure against them.

In the course of the preliminary investigation, factual information was obtained about the participation of a number of other mercenaries in the actions unleashed by the military and political leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in particular Ahmad Al-Tayebi /35 years old, citizen of the Syrian Arab Republic, residence of Reyhany, Turkey/, Abu Stef Al-Hindavi /35 years old/, about Abu Diab Halabi / 30 years old/.

Decisions were made by the body conducting the proceedings on the involvement of the above- mentioned persons in a criminal case under Article 389, Article 390, Part 3, Point 1, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code and detention was chosen as a preventive measure against the latter and they were declared wanted.

During the further preliminary investigation and in the result of operative- investigative measures undertaken, as well as urgent investigative and other judicial actions, factual data was obtained on the leader of the international terroristic group called "Sultan Suleyman Shah", Muhammad Al-Jasimin, titled "Abu Hamsha", arab national /born in 1985/ for recruiting more than two thousands mercenaries in the

Syrian Arab Republic for material compensation and transporting them to Azerbaijan to involve in the war against the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, including for leading operations in place.

Based on the above, a decision was made on November 8, 2020 regarding Muhammad Al-Jasimi to initiate a criminal case against him under Article 38-389, Article 390, Part 3, Points 1 and 2, Article 395, Part 3, Points 1 and 3 of the RA Criminal Code. Detention was chosen as a preventive measure against the latter, he was declared wanted. The preliminary investigation is underway.

Objective evidence prove the presence of extremist terrorists and mercenaries, members of international terrorist groups during the whole time of the war in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, their active participation in the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and war crimes against the people of Artsakh. After the adoption of a joint trilateral statement on finishing the military actions by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, there is no information about their withdrawal from the conflict zone.

Moreover, according to the published information, measures are being undertaken to locate the terrorist groups and the mercenaries living in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic to the territories occupied by Azerbaijan. If this information is true, it may be assessed as a step aimed at concentrating terrorist groups in the region, thereby increasing the threats against the population of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, as well as against the security, stability and relative peace of all countries in the region.

The Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Armenia reaffirms its readiness to expand cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral forms in order to prevent new terrorist acts and establishment of new terrorist centers in the region, as well as it tries to detect such attempts and identify the persons involved in them to make them liable.

Section

Society

# Exhibit 36

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

# Treasury Sanctions Two Syria-Based Militias Responsible for Serious Human Rights Abuses in Northern Syria

August 17, 2023

WASHINGTON —Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating two Syria-based armed militias and three members of the groups’ leadership structures in connection with serious human rights abuses against those residing in the Afrin region of northern Syria. An auto sales company owned by the leader of one of the armed groups is also being designated.

The Afrin region of Syria is largely controlled by a patchwork of armed groups, many of which use violence to control the movement of goods and people in their respective territories. These armed groups have exacerbated the suffering caused by years of civil war in northern Syria and hindered the region’s recovery by engaging in serious human rights abuses against vulnerable populations.

“Today’s action demonstrates our continued dedication to promoting accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses, including in Syria,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “The United States is committed to supporting the Syrian people’s ability to live without fear of exploitation from armed groups and without fear of violent repression.”

This action is being taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13894, which authorizes sanctions on persons whose actions or policies further threaten the peace, security, stability, or territorial integrity of Syria, or who, among other things, commit serious human rights abuses.

## ARMED SYRIAN MILITIAS

The **Suleiman Shah Brigade** is a prominent element of the armed opposition to the Syrian government and a component of the Syrian National Army, a coalition of Syrian armed opposition groups. The Suleiman Shah Brigade operates in the Afrin region of northern Syria, where it exerts significant control over the civilian population. The brigade subjects the

populace of this area to abductions and extortion. The brigade has targeted Afrin's Kurdish residents, many of whom are subjected to harassment, abduction, and other abuses until they are forced to abandon their homes or pay large ransoms for return of their property or family members.

**The Hamza Division**, another armed opposition group operating in northern Syria, has been involved in abductions, theft of property, and torture. The division also operates detention facilities in which it houses those it has abducted for extended periods of time. During their imprisonment, victims are held for ransom, often suffering sexual abuse at the hands of Hamza Division fighters.

The Suleiman Shah Brigade and the Hamza Division are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13894 for being responsible for or complicit in, or for having directly or indirectly engaged in, the commission of serious human rights abuses against the Syrian people.

## MILITIA LEADERS

**Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim (Abu Amsha)** is the leader of the Suleiman Shah Brigade. Under Abu Amsha's leadership, members of the brigade have been directed to forcibly displace Kurdish residents and seize their property, providing vacated homes for Syrians from outside the region who are often related to fighters in the brigade. Abu Amsha also ordered the brigade to kidnap local residents, demanding ransom in return for their release and confiscating their property as part of an organized effort to maximize the brigade's revenue, likely generating tens of millions of dollars a year. Abu Amsha allegedly raped the wife of a member of the brigade and threatened her and her family with harm if she did not remain silent.

**Al-Safir Oto** is a car dealership owned by Abu Amsha that provides an outlet for Abu Amsha to invest his income. Al-Safir Oto is headquartered in Istanbul and operates multiple locations in southern Türkiye that are managed by commanders of the Suleiman Shah Brigade. Abu Amsha allegedly owns Al-Safir Oto in partnership with the leader of the Syrian armed group [Ahrar Alal-Sharqiya](#), [Ahmad Ihsan Fayyad al-Hayes](#), who was previously designated pursuant to E.O. 13894 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Ahrar al-Sharqiya .

Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13894 for being responsible for or complicit in, or for having directly or indirectly engaged in, the commission of serious human rights abuses in relation to Syria. Al-Safir Oto is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13894 for being owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim.

**Walid Hussein al-Jasim** is a younger brother of Abu Amsha who also holds a leadership role in the Suleiman Shah Brigade, including serving as the head of the brigade when Abu Amsha left Syria to fight in Libya. On multiple occasions, the Syrian Islamic Council leveled charges against Walid related to sexual assault against women. As part of the brigade, Walid Hussein al-Jasim coordinated abductions, muggings, and ransoms. In addition, Walid reportedly killed a prisoner who was unable to pay ransom in 2020 following a month of abuse.

Walid Hussein al-Jasim is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13894 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Suleiman Shah Brigade.

**Sayf Boulad Abu Bakr** is the leader of the Hamza Division and its public face, appearing in numerous propaganda videos produced by the Hamza Division. While Abu Bakr has been commander, the Hamza Division has been accused of brutal repression of the local population, including kidnapping Kurdish women and severely abusing prisoners, at times leading to their death.

Sayf Boulad Abu Bakr is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13894 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Hamza Division.

## **SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of these persons and entities that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. OFAC regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within the United States (including transactions transiting the United States) that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List), but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to OFAC's [Frequently Asked Question 897](#).

[Click here for identifying information on the individuals designated today.](#)



# Exhibit 37



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ԵՂ/0888/06/20

Երևան քաղաքի առաջին ատյանի ընդհանուր իրավասության դատարանը,  
/այսուհետ նաև՝ Դատարան/

Ճախագահությամբ՝ դատավոր  
քարտուղարությամբ՝

Մ. Մարտիրոսյանի,  
Ա.Յովհաննիսյանի,

մասնակցությամբ՝

Հայաստանի Հանրապետության  
/այսուհետ նաև ՀՀ/ քննչական կոմիտեի  
հատուկ հանձնարարությունների,  
կազմակերպական վերլուծական և  
քրեագիտական գլխավոր վարչության  
քրեագիտական վարչության ՀԿԳ քննիչ,  
քննչական խմբի անդամ

Կ.Ղազարյանի,

պաշտպան

Է.Աղաջանյանի,

2021թ. փետրվարի 23-ին

Երևանում,

դռնփակ դատական նիստում քննելով ՀՀ քննչական կոմիտեի հատուկ հանձնարարությունների, կազմակերպական վերլուծական և քրեագիտական գլխավոր վարչության քրեագիտական վարչության պետ, քննչական խմբի ղեկավար Ռ. Վարդանյանի /այսուհետ նաև՝ Քննիչ/ 2021թ. փետրվարի 18-ի միջնորդությունը՝ թիվ 69108320 քրեական գործով մեղադրյալ

**Մուկհռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիտերիի**

/ծնված 1975թ. մայիսի 3-ին, ազգությամբ արաբ, Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության քաղաքացի, ամուսնացած, խնամքին՝ երեք անչափահաս զավակ, ըստ իր հայտարարության՝ 1988թ. դատապարտվել է անզգուշությամբ սպանություն կատարելու համար, փաստացի բնակության վայրը՝ Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության հյուսիսային շրջանի Աթմի գյուղ, բուժվում է ՀՀ ՊՆ Երևանի կայազորի զինվորական հոսպիտալի հատուկ դեպքերի բաժնում, մեղադրվում է ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 389-րդ հոդվածով, 34-390-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասին 1-ին կետով, 3-րդ մասի 1-ին կետով, 395-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասով,

արգելանքի տակ է 2020թ. հոկտեմբերի 30-ից/



## Պ Ա Ր Զ Ե Ց

1. 2021թ. փետրվարի 18-ին Դատարան է ստացվել ՀՀ քննչական կոմիտեի հատուկ հանձնարարությունների, կազմակերպական վերլուծական և քրեագիտական գլխավոր վարչության քրեագիտական վարչության պետ, քննչական խմբի ղեկավար Ռ. Վարդանյանի նույն օրվա միջնորդությունը՝ մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերիին կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը երկարացնելու մասին, հետևյալ բովանդակությամբ.

1.1. «(...) 2020 թվականի սեպտեմբերի 27-ին ժամը 07:15-ի սահմաններում, Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարությունը, խախտելով 1994 թվականի մայիսի 12-ին ուժի մեջ մտած Լեռնային Դարաբաղի Հանրապետության, Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության և Հայաստանի Հանրապետության պաշտպանության նախարարների կողմից ստորագրված «Կրակի և ռազմական գործողությունների լիակատար դադարեցման մասին» եռակողմ համաձայնագրի պայմանները, կոպտորեն խախտելով 1945 թվականի հունիսի 26-ին ստորագրված ՄԱԿ-ի կանոնադրության 2-րդ հոդվածի 4-րդ կետի (Բոլոր անդամները միջազգային հարաբերություններում ձեռնպահ են ցանկացած պետության տարածքային ամբողջականության կամ քաղաքական անկախության նկատմամբ և կամ Միավորված ազգերի նպատակներին անհարիր որևէ այլ ձևով ուժի գործադրումից կամ դրա սպառնալիքից (Կանոնադրությունն ուժի մեջ է մտել 1945թ. հոկտեմբերի 24-ին, Հայաստանի Հանրապետության համար ուժի մեջ է մտել 1992թ. մարտի 2-ից)), 1974 թվականի դեկտեմբերի 14-ի ՄԱԿ-ի Գլխավոր վեհաժողովի XXIX նստաշրջանի թիվ 3314 բանաձևի «ա» կետի (պետության զինված ուժերի ներխուժումը կամ հարձակումը այլ պետության տարածք), «բ» կետի (պետության զինված ուժերի կողմից այլ պետության տարածքի ռմբակոծումը կամ պետության կողմից այլ պետության տարածքի դեմ ցանկացած զենքի կիրառումը), «գ» կետի (պետության զինված ուժերի կողմից այլ պետության ցամաքային, ծովային կամ օդային ուժերի կամ ծովային և օդային նավատորմերի վրա հարձակումը), 1998 թվականի հունիսի 17-ին ընդունված Միջազգային քրեական դատարանի Հռոմի ստատուտի 8-bis հոդվածի, 1989թ. ՄԱԿ-ի շրջանակներում ընդունված «Վարձկաններ հավաքագրելու, օգտագործելու, ֆինանսավորելու և ուսուցանելու արգելման մասին» կոնվենցիայի պահանջները, կիրառելով ականանետային-հրթիռահրետանային, ավիացիոն և անօթաչու թռչող սարքեր, հարձակման է անցել դարաքաղաքադրբեջանական շփման գծի ողջ երկայնքով՝ սանձագործելով ագրեսիվ պատերազմ և իրականացնելով ագրեսիայի ակտ:

Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերը, վարելով ագրեսիվ պատերազմ, նպատակադրվել են ձեռք բերել ռազմական գերակայություն՝ կոպտորեն խախտելով «Միջազգային զինված կոնֆլիկտների զոհերի պաշտպանության վերաբերյալ» ժնկի 1949 թվականի օգոստոսի 12-ի կոնվենցիաներին կից ժնկի 1977 թվականի 1-ին Լրացուցիչ արձանագրության 48-րդ, 51-րդ (2), 52-րդ (2) հոդվածների, 51-րդ (4) հոդվածի 3-րդ կետի և 85-րդ հոդվածի 5-րդ կետի դրույթները, միջազգային սովորույթային մարդասիրական իրավունքի 1-ին, 7-րդ, 11-րդ, 12-րդ, 54-րդ նորմերը (այսինքն՝ պետությունների պրակտիկան սահմանում է պատասխանատվություն՝ անկախ այն հանգամանքից, թե տվյալ պետությունն արդյոք հանդիսանում է 1-ին Լրացուցիչ արձանագրության կամ ՄԲԴ ստատուտի մասնակից):

Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության ռազմաքաղաքական ղեկավարությունը, ռազմական գործողությունների ընթացքում օգտագործելով նախապես հավաքագրված վարձկաններ, զինված ուժերի օգտագործմամբ, կիրառելով պատերազմ վարելու արգելված մեթոդներ, չտարբերակելով քաղաքացիական բնակիչներին զինժառայողներից, համակարգված, կանխամտածված և նպատակաուղղված գրոհների թիրախ են դարձրել Արցախի Հանրապետության խաղաղ բնակավայրերի քաղաքացիական բնակչությանը, մասնավորապես՝ ոչ ընտրովի հարձակման օբյեկտներ դարձնելով խորը թիկունքում գտնվող քաղաքացիական բնակչությանը և քաղաքացիական օբյեկտները, նշված զինատեսակներով հրետակոծել են Ստեփանակերտ քաղաքը, ինչպես նաև Հանրապետության մնացած բոլոր՝ Ասկերանի, Շուշիի,



Քաշաթաղի, Մարտունու, Մարտակերտի, Շահումյանի, Հադրութի շրջանները և դրանց հարակից այլ բնակավայրերը պատճառելով մարդկային և գույքային կորուստներ:

Դեպքի առթիվ 2020 թվականի սեպտեմբերի 29-ին ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 384-րդ հոդվածի 2-րդ մասի, 390-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի 1-ին կետի, 3-րդ մասի 1-ին, 2-րդ կետերի, 391-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասի, 395-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի հատկանիշներով հարուցվել է թիվ 69108320 քրեական գործը և նույն օրն ընդունվել վարույթ:

Քրեական գործի նախաքննության ընթացքում ձեռք են բերվել փաստական տվյալներ Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության կողմից ագրեսիվ պատերազմ վարելու առաջին իսկ օրվանից վարձկաններ հավաքագրելու և օգտագործելու վերաբերյալ:

Ռազմական գործողությունները դադարեցնելու միջազգային հանրության ջանքերի շրջանակներում՝ Ռուսաստանի Դաշնության քաղաքական դեկավարության միջնորդությամբ կազմակերպվել և անց է կացվել եռակողմ հանդիպում Հայաստանի Հանրապետության և Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության արտաքին գործերի նախարարների մասնակցությամբ, որի ընթացքում ձեռք է բերվել 2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 10-ի ժամը 12:00-ից մարդասիրական նպատակներով՝ գերիների և այլ պահվող անձանց ու զոհվածների մարմինների փոխանակման համար հրադադարի համաձայնություն:

Սակայն, Ադրբեջանի ռազմաքաղաքական դեկավարությունը, հաշվի չառնելով, «Ահաբեկչական ռմբահարումների դեմ պայքարի մասին» ՄԱԿ-ի Գլխավոր ասամբլեայի 1997 թվականի դեկտեմբերի 16-ի 52/164 բանաձևով ընդունված կոնվենցիայով նախատեսված միջազգային խաղաղության և անվտանգության պահպանության, պետությունների միջև բարիդրացիական, բարեկամական հարաբերությունների և համագործակցության խրախուսման, հանրության համար լուրջ մտահոգության առարկա ահաբեկչական գործողությունների բոլոր ձևերի և դրսևորումների դեմ պայքարի անհրաժեշտությունը, «Ահաբեկչության արգելման մասին» Եվրոպական կոնվենցիայով նախատեսված ահաբեկչության ակտերի դեմ արդյունավետ միջոցներ իրականացնելու և նման գործողություններ կատարողների հետապնդման և դատապարտման անխուսափելիությունը, «Ահաբեկչության արգելման մասին» Եվրոպայի խորհրդի կոնվենցիայով նախատեսված ահաբեկչության պայքարը ուժեղացնելու ու այդ նպատակով համագործակցությունն ամրապնդելու և ահաբեկչությունը կանխելու, ահաբեկչական հանցագործությունները կատարել հրահրելուն և ահաբեկչական նպատակներով հավաքագրմանը և ուսուցմանը հակազդելու անհրաժեշտությունն ու կարևորությունը, «Միջազգային ահաբեկչության վերացման մասին» 1994թ. դեկտեմբերի 9-ի ՄԱԿ-ի Գլխավոր ասամբլեայի 49/60 հռչակագրի, «Ահաբեկչության ֆինանսավորման դեմ պայքարում Անկախ Պետությունների Համագործակցության մասնակից պետությունների համագործակցության մասին» պայմանագրի նորմերը, անտեսելով միջազգային խաղաղությունը, անվտանգությունն ու համերաշխությունը վտանգող, ծայրահեղականության և անհանդուրժողականության գաղափարախոսության վրա գոյություն ունեցող երևույթի նկատմամբ միջազգային պայքարը, 2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 10-ին ժամը 12:00-ից, չկատարելով հրադադարի համաձայնությամբ ստանձնած պարտավորությունները, շարունակել են օգտագործել տարբեր ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների անդամ հանդիսացող նյութական հատուցում ստանալու նպատակով հատուկ հավաքագրված անձանց՝ վարձկանների, ովքեր իրականացրել են միջազգային ահաբեկչություն՝ օտար պետության ներքին վիճակն ապակայունացնելու նպատակով, պայթյունի, հրկիզման և այլ նմանօրինակ գործողությունների կազմակերպմամբ ու իրականացմամբ, շարունակել է մարդկանց ոչնչացնելուն, շինություններ, կառույցներ, ծանապարհներ և հաղորդակության միջոցներ, կապի միջոցներ կամ այլ գույք ոչնչացնելուն և վնասելուն ուղղված գործողությունները՝ ականանետային-հրթիռահրետանային, ավիացիոն և անօդաչու թռչող սարքերի օգտագործմամբ հարվածներ հասցնելով Արցախի Հանրապետության և Հայաստանի Հանրապետության մի շարք բնակավայրերի:

Քրեական գործի նախաքննության ընթացքում տվյալներ են ձեռք բերվել այն մասին, որ Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերը հարկադրել են վարձկաններին հրադադարի պայմաններում շարունակել Արցախի Հանրապետության դեմ իրականացվող ռազմական գործողությունները, Հորադիզի շրջանում՝ կրելով Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի համազգեստ:



Մասնավորապես՝ վարձկանները 10.10.2020թ.-ի ժամը 12:05-ին գրոհ են ձեռնարկել ,Կարախանբեյլիե կոչվող տեղամասի ուղղությամբ, որից հետո դիվերսիոն-հետախուզական մերթափանցման փորձ են ձեռնարկել Հադրուբի ուղղությամբ:

11.10.2020թ.-ին պարբերաբար ականանետային-հրթիռահրետանային հարվածներ են հասցվել ԱՀ Ստեփանակերտ, Մարտունի և Շուշի քաղաքներին, ինչպես նաև տարբեր խոշոր գյուղական համայնքներին: Նույն օրը, Հադրուբ քաղաք մերթափանցած դիվերսիոն-հետախուզական վարձկանների կողմից սպանվել են Արցախի Հանրապետության ՊԲ զինծառայողներ, հրկիզվել են տներ, դաժանաբար սպանվել են խաղաղ բնակիչներ, որոնց թվում են եղել նաև մայրն ու վերջինիս հաշմանդամություն ունեցող որդին:

12.10.2020թ. ՀՀ զինվորական կենտրոնական դատախազության զինվորական ծառայության դեմ ուղղված հատկապես կարևոր գործերով քննության նկատմամբ հսկողության բաժնում ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 389-րդ հոդվածի հատկանիշներով հարուցվել է թիվ 90100520 քրեական գործը, որի նախաքննությունը 16.10.2020թ.-ից շարունակվում է ՀՀ քննչական կոմիտեի հատուկ հանձնարարությունների, կազմակերպական-վերլուծական և քրեագիտական գլխավոր վարչության քրեագիտական վարչությունում:

16.10.2020թ. որոշում է կայացվել թիվ 69108320 և 90100520 քրեական գործերը մեկ վարույթում միացնելու և նախաքննությունը 69108320 համարի ներքո շարունակելու մասին:

Քրեական գործի նախաքննության ընթացքում պարզվել է, որ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիբերին, չհանդիսանալով Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության քաղաքացի, մշտապես չբնակվելով դրա տարածքում, այլ հանդիսանալով Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության քաղաքացի, ընդգրկված չլինելով Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի անձնակազմում, ինչպես նաև Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության կամ այլ պետության կողմից ուղարկված չլինելով զինված ուժերի կազմում պաշտոնեական պարտականություններ կատարելու համար, նյութական հատուցում ստանալու դիմաց մասնակցել է ռազմական գործողությունների: Մասնավորապես, 2020 թվականի սեպտեմբերի կեսերին «Ալ Ամշաթ» ահաբեկչական խմբավորման ղեկավար Աբու Համշա անունով անձի ներկայացուցիչ Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի միջոցով առաջարկություն է ստացել նյութական հատուցում ստանալու դիմաց մասնակցել ռազմական գործողությունների:

Այդ նպատակով Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիբերին 2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 15-ին գնացել է Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության Շեյխ Հադիդ կոչվող գյուղ, որտեղ գտնվել է Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձը և ներկայանալով վերջինիս՝ կամովին ցանկություն է հայտնել նյութական հատուցում ստանալու դիմաց, մասնավորապես՝ ամսական 2000 ԱՄՆ դոլարին համարժեք թուրքական լիրա գումարի դիմաց մասնակցել ռազմական գործողությունների: Այնուհետև, 2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 17-ին Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի կազմակերպմամբ ընդհանուր 17 անձով «ԿԻԱ» մակնիշի բեռնատարով տեղափոխվել է Ալ Դուս անցակետ, որտեղ հավաքվել են ընդհանուր շուրջ 250 վարձկաններ, որից հետո ավտոմեքենաներով տեղափոխվել են Քիլիս քաղաքի հարակից տարածք, որտեղ նաև տեղակայված են եղել «Սուկուր», «Ալ Համզաթ», «Սուլթան Սուրադ» և «Ալ Ամշաթ» ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների հրամանատարական կազմերը: «Ալ Ամշաթ» խմբավորման ղեկավար Աբու Համշայի ենթակայությամբ գործող գնդապետ Մահմուդ անունով անձի կողմից ընտրվել են իրենց պահանջներին բավարարող ընդհանուր թվով 250 վարձկաններ, այդ թվում՝ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիբերին, որոնք բաժանվել են հինգ խմբերի:

Նույն օրը՝ ժամը 23:00-ի սահմաններում, նշված հինգ խմբերում ընդգրկված ընդհանուր 250 անձինք, խմբավորման ղեկավար Աբու Համշա անունով անձի ղեկավարությամբ, իրենց մոտ չունենալով անձը հաստատող որևէ փաստաթուղթ, թուրքիայի Հանրապետության սահմանապահ ծառայողների թույլտվությամբ ոտքով անարգել հատել են թուրքիայի Հանրապետության սահմանը, որտեղից թվով հինգ ավտոբուսներով տեղափոխել են թուրքիայի Հանրապետությունում գտնվող քաղաքացիական օդանավակայան: Օդանավակայանում թուրքիայի Հանրապետության ոստիկանների թույլտվությամբ, հատել են օդանավակայանի անցակետը և անարգել նստել թուրքիայի դրոշը կրող քաղաքացիական ինքնաթիռ, որով թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի զինծառայողի ուղեկցությամբ տեղափոխվել են թուրքիայի Հանրապետությունում գտնվող մեկ այլ քաղաքացիական օդանավակայան: Տեղում



իրենց դիմավորել են Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի համազգեստով ավելի քան 50 թուրք զինվորականներ, որոնց ուղեկցությամբ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին՝ խմբավորման մյուս անդամների հետ միասին նստել են Ադրբեջանի դրոշը կրող քաղաքացիական ինքնաթիռ, որը 2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 18-ին՝ առավոտյան, վայրէջք է կատարել Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետությունում: Ադրբեջանի քաղաքացիական օդանավակայանում նրանց դիմավորել են Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի համազգեստով ավելի քան 30 զինվորականներ, ովքեր հաստատապես տեղյակ են եղել նրանց առաքելության մասին և առանց որևէ հարց ուղղելու, անձնագրերը պահանջելու կամ ստուգելու, նստեցրել են ավտոմեքենաները և տեղափոխել Ադրբեջանի ռազմական օբյեկտներից մեկը, որտեղ նրանք մնացել են յոթ օր, ստացել են Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի տարբերանշանով համազգեստ և զենք, մասնավորապես՝ 50 անձից բաղկացած յուրաքանչյուր խմբին հատկացվել է «ՌՊԳ» ձեռքի հակատանկային նռնակներ, ռուսական արտադրության «ՊԿՍ» և «Կալանշնիկով» մոդելի ավտոմատներ: Խմբավորման ղեկավար Աբու Համշային հատկացվել է նաև սպիտակ գույնի «Տոյոտա» մակնիշի պիկապ տեսակի ավտոմեքենա:

2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 25-ին Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին «Ալ Ամշաթ» խմբավորման վերոնշյալ մյուս անդամների հետ՝ Աբու Համշայի ղեկավարությամբ, տեղակայվել են վերջիններիս հատկացված առանձին ռազմական օբյեկտում, որտեղ արդեն իսկ տեղակայված են եղել նույն խմբավորման շուրջ 180 անդամներ, որոնց հետ ռազմական գործողություններին մասնակցած անդամներից շուրջ 70-ը վիրավորվել կամ սպանվել են:

2020 թվականի հոկտեմբերի 29-ին՝ ժամը 04:00-ի սահմաններում, Ալ Ամշաթ խմբավորման ղեկավար Աբու Համշայի կողմից Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին և խմբավորման մյուս ընդհանուր 250 անդամներին, հրաման է տրվել պատրաստվել ռազմական գործողության և այդ նպատակով վերջիններս Աբու Համշայի և Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի երկու զինծառայողների ուղեկցությամբ դիրքավորվել են արցախատարբեջանական շփման գծին հարող, Արցախի Հանրապետության տարածքում գտնվող գյուղերից մեկի մոտակայքում: Խմբավորման ղեկավար Աբու Համշայի կողմից Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին և խմբավորման մյուս անդամներին հրաման է տրվել հարձակվել Արցախի Հանրապետության նշված գյուղի վրա, գրավել գյուղը, իսկ գյուղում առկա բոլոր քաղաքացիական և զինվորական անձանց սպանել, այսինքն՝ հրաման է տրվել ոչ ոքի կենդանի չթողնել, այդ նպատակով իրականացնել իրկիզուսներ, պայթյուններ, և այդ եղանակով նաև ապակայունացնել Արցախի Հանրապետության մերքին վիճակը:

Նշված գործողություններն իրականացնելու դիտավորությամբ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին «Ալ Ամշաթ» խմբավորման մյուս անդամների հետ միասին սկսել են ռազմական օպերացիան, շարժվել են արցախյան նշված գյուղի ուղղությամբ՝ իրենց տրված հրամաններն իրականացնելու համար, այսինքն՝ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին և խմբավորման մյուս անդամները փաստացի մասնակցել են ռազմական գործողություններին, սակայն այդ ընթացքում հանդիպել են Արցախի Հանրապետության պաշտպանության բանակի զինծառայողների հանկարծակի դիմադրությանը:

Նշված գործողություններն իրականացնելու դիտավորությամբ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին «Ալ Ամշաթ» խմբավորման մյուս անդամների հետ միասին սկսել են ռազմական օպերացիան, շարժվել են արցախյան նշված գյուղի ուղղությամբ՝ իրենց տրված հրամաններն իրականացնելու համար, այսինքն՝ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին և խմբավորման մյուս անդամները փաստացի մասնակցել են ռազմական գործողություններին, սակայն այդ ընթացքում հանդիպել են Արցախի Հանրապետության պաշտպանության բանակի զինծառայողների հանկարծակի դիմադրությանը: 2020թ. նոյեմբերի 1-ին որոշում է կայացվել Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շխերին 37 քրեական օրենսգրքի 389-րդ հոդվածով, 34-390-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի 1-ին կետով, 3-րդ մասի 1-ին կետով և 395-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասով որպես մեղադրյալ ներգրավելու մասին: Նույն օրը վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից միջնորդություն է ներկայացվել Երևան քաղաքի առաջին ատյանի ընդհանուր իրավասության դատարան՝ վերջինիս նկատմամբ կալանավորումը որպես խափանման միջոց կիրառելու վերաբերյալ, որը դատարանի կողմից բավարարվել է:



Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերին որպես կասկածյալ մանրամասն խոստովանական ցուցմունքներ է տվել միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման կազմում իր՝ որպես վարձկան ներգրավվելու, Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետությունից Թուրքիայի տարածքով Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետություն անարգել տեղափոխվելու, ռազմական գործողություններին ներգրավվելու և իր կողմից իրականացված մյուս հանցավոր արարքների վերաբերյալ:

Մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերին մասնակի է ընդունել իրեն առաջադրված մեղադրանքը, ամբողջությամբ պնդել է որպես կասկածյալ տված ցուցմունքները, միայն նշել է, որ ինքը ռազմական գործողությունների ընթացքում որևէ անձի չի սպանել՝ իր կամքից անկախ հանգամանքներում:

Նախաքննության ընթացքում վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից քննչական պահանջ է ուղարկվել Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության իրավասու մարմիններին, որում նշվել է մի շարք քննչական և դատավարական գործողություններ իրականացնելու անհրաժեշտության մասին:

Քաջի այդ, օպերատիվ-հետախուզական գործողություններ կատարելու վերաբերյալ հանձնարարություն է տրվել ՀՀ ԱԱԾ համապատասխան ստորաբաժանմանը, որի պատասխանը մասնակի ստացվել է, պերատիվ հետախուզական աշխատանքները շարունակվում են:

Վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից ստացվել են Արցախի Հանրապետության դեմ սանձազերծած և իրականացվող ագրեսիվ պատերազմում Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետությունում գործունեություն իրականացնող թվով 12 միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների ներգրավման մասին, ինչպես նաև ստացվել են ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների անհատականացված շուրջ 150-ից ավել վարձկան անդամների ներգրավման մասին: Քննությամբ տվյալներ են ձեռք բերվել ևս շուրջ 4000 ահաբեկիչների ներգրավման վերաբերյալ:

Մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերի մասնակցությամբ իրականացվել են մի շարք քննչական և այլ դատավարական գործողություններ, ստացվել են վերջինիս արյան, մազի և մեզի նմուշները, նշանակվել են դատաբժշկական, դատաքիմիական փորձաքննություններ:

Ստացված փաստական տվյալների հիման վրա վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից որոշում է կայացվել «Սուլթան Սուլեյման Շահ» միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման Մուհամմադ ալ-Ջասիմին (մականունը՝ Աբու Համզա) ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 38-389-րդ հոդվածով, 390-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասի 1-ին, 2-րդ կետերով, 395-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին և 3-րդ մասերով որպես մեղադրյալ ներգրավելու մասին: Վերջինիս նկատմամբ հայտարարվել է հետախուզում և որպես խափանման միջոց կիրառվել է կալանավորումը:

Քաջի այդ, որոշում է կայացվել միջազգային ահաբեկչական խմբավորման թվով 3 վարձկան ահաբեկիչների որպես ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 389-րդ հոդվածով, 390-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասի 1-ին կետով և 395-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասով որպես մեղադրյալ ներգրավելու մասին: Նրանց նկատմամբ հայտարարվել է հետախուզում և որպես խափանման միջոց կիրառվել է կալանավորումը:

Քրեական գործի քննության լրիվությունն ու բազմակողմանիությունն ապահովվելու համար դեռևս անհրաժեշտ է ստանալ քննչական պահանջի կատարման վերաբերյալ պատասխանը, իրականացվող օպերատիվ-հետախուզական միջոցառումների արդյունքները, պարզել գործի համար էական նշանակություն ունեցող մի շարք հանգամանքներ, որից հետո ըստ անհրաժեշտության կատարել այլ քննչական և դատավարական գործողություններ, բացահայտված նոր դրվագներով կատարել անհրաժեշտ քննչական ու դատավարական գործողություններ, ապահովել քրեական գործով քննության բազմակողմանիությունը, լրիվությունն ու օբյեկտիվությունը, որի համար անհրաժեշտ է ևս մեկ ամիս ժամանակ, ուստի քրեական գործով անհրաժեշտություն է առաջացել երկարացնել մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերին կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը:

Նկատի ունենալով քրեական գործի մեծածավալ լինելը, առանձնակի բարդությունը, կատարվելիք քննչական ու դատավարական գործողությունների ծավալը, ինչպես նաև այն, որ ապացույցների հավաքմանը, ստուգմանն ու գնահատմանն ուղղված քննչական և դատավարական գործողությունների կատարման, Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերի հնարավոր



հանցակիցներին բացահայտելու, նրա կատարած հանցավոր արարքների ողջ շրջանակը պարզելու, գործով անցնող մի շարք անձանց գործողություններին իրավական գնահատական տալու համար անհրաժեշտ է մեկամսյա լրացուցիչ ժամկետ, մինչդեռ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիսերին կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը լրանում է 2021 թվականի փետրվարի 28-ին, հաշվի առնելով վերը շարադրված հանգամանքները, ինչպես նաև այն, որ նախաքննությամբ ձեռք բերված փաստական տվյալները բավարար հիմքեր են տալիս ենթադրելու, որ ազատության մեջ մնալու պայմաններում Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիսերին ազատության մեջ մնալու պայմաններում կարող է թաքնվել քննությունից և կատարել քրեական օրենքով չթույլատրված նոր արարք, ինչպես նաև այն, որ նրան մեղսագրվում է հանցավոր արարքներ, որոնց համար որպես պատիժ նախատեսված է 1 տարուց ավելի՝ առավելագույնը ցմահ ազատազրկում, այսինքն, առկա են ու չեն վերացել մեղադրյալի նկատմամբ խափանման միջոց կալանավորումը կիրառելու պայմաններն ու հիմքերը, (...):

1.2. Քննիչը ղեկավարվելով ՀՀ քրեական դատավարության օրենսգրքի 135-136-րդ և 285-րդ, հոդվածներով միջնորդել է մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիսերիի նկատմամբ որպես խափանման միջոց կիրառված կալանավորման ժամկետը երկարացնել մեկ ամիս ժամանակով:

1.3. Դատական միստի ժամանակ քննիչ, քննչական խմբի անդամ Կ. Ղազարյանը հրապարակեց միջնորդությունը, պնդեց այն և խնդրեց բավարարել:

1.4. Պաշտպանն առարկեց քննիչի միջնորդության դեմ՝ հայտնելով, որ հիմնավոր կասկած առկա չէ: Բացի այդ՝ նախատեսվող մեծածավալ աշխատանքներ են նշված միջնորդության մեջ, սակայն նշված չէ նախաքննության ավարտ հայտարարելու մտադրության մասին, ուստի միջնորդությունը ձևական բնույթ է կրում:

1.5. Քննիչի 2021թ. փետրվարի 23-ի արձանագրության համաձայն՝ ՀՀ ԱՆ «Երևան-Կենտրոն» քրեակատարողական հիմնարկում գտնվող, մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիսերին տեղեկանալով դատական միստի տեղի և ժամի մասին՝ հայտնել է, որ չի ցանկանում անձամբ մերկայանալ դատական միստին և խնդրել է դատական միստն անցկացնել իր բացակայության պայմաններում:

**2. Լսելով կողմերին և ուսումնասիրելով Դատարան ներկայացված նյութերը՝ Դատարանը գտնում է հետևյալը.**

2.1. ՀՀ Սահմանադրության 27-րդ հոդվածի համաձայն՝

«Յուրաքանչյուր ոք ունի անձնական ազատության իրավունք: Ոչ ոք չի կարող անձնական ազատությունից զրկվել այլ կերպ, քան հետևյալ դեպքերում և օրենքով սահմանված կարգով՝ (...)

4) անձին իրավասու մարմին ներկայացնելու նպատակով, երբ առկա է նրա կողմից հանցանք կատարած լինելու հիմնավոր կասկած, կամ երբ դա հիմնավոր կերպով անհրաժեշտ է հանցանքի կատարումը կամ դա կատարելուց հետո անձի փախուստը կանխելու նպատակով, (...):»:

ՀՀ քրեական դատավարության օրենսգրքի 135-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի համաձայն՝

«(...) խափանման միջոց կարող են կիրառել միայն այն դեպքում, երբ քրեական գործով ձեռք բերված նյութերը բավարար հիմք են տալիս ենթադրելու, որ կասկածյալը կամ մեղադրյալը կարող է՝

- 1. թաքնվել քրեական վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնից.
- 2. խոչընդոտել մինչդատական վարույթում կամ դատարանում գործի քննությանը՝ քրեական դատավարությանը մասնակցող անձանց վրա անօրինական ազդեցություն գործադրելու, գործի համար նշանակություն ունեցող նյութերը թաքցնելու կամ կեղծելու, քրեական վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնի կանչով առանց հարգելի պատճառների չներկայանալու կամ այլ ճանապարհով.
- 3. կատարել քրեական օրենքով չթույլատրված արարք.
- 4. խուսափել քրեական պատասխանատվությունից և նշանակված պատիժը կրելուց.
- 5. խոչընդոտել դատարանի դատավճռի կատարմանը»:

Նույն օրենսգրքի 136-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի համաձայն՝

«խափանման միջոցը կիրառվում է դատարանի, դատախազի, քննիչի կամ հետաքննության մարմնի որոշմամբ: խափանման միջոց կիրառելու մասին քրեական վարույթն իրականացնող





մարմնի որոշումը պետք է լինի պատճառաբանված, բովանդակի մեղադրյալին կամ կասկածյալին վերագրվող հանցագործության մասին նշումներ և համապատասխան խափանման միջոց ընտրելու անհրաժեշտության մասին հիմնավորում: (...):»:

ՀՀ քրեական դատավարության օրենսգրքի 139-րդ հոդվածի համաձայն՝

«1. Մեղադրյալին կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը երկարացնելու անհրաժեշտության դեպքում քննիչը, դատախազը, ոչ ուշ, քան կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը լրանալուց 10 օր առաջ, պետք է դատարան ներկայացնեն պատճառաբանված միջնորդություն: Դատարանը, համաձայնվելով կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը երկարացնելու անհրաժեշտությանը, ոչ ուշ, քան դատարանի կալանքի տակ պահելու որոշած ժամկետը լրանալուց 5 օր առաջ, համապատասխան որոշում է կայացնում: (...):»:

Նույն օրենսգրքի 151-րդ հոդվածի համաձայն՝

«1. Անհրաժեշտության դեպքում քրեական վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից խափանման միջոցը կարող է փոխվել:

(...):»:

Նույն օրենսգրքի 285-րդ հոդվածի համաձայն՝

«1. Կալանքը որպես խափանման միջոց ընտրելու կամ կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը երկարացնելու անհրաժեշտության դեպքում դատախազը կամ քննիչը միջնորդություն է հարուցում դատարան՝ խափանման միջոցի այդ տեսակը ընտրելու կամ կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը երկարացնելու մասին: Միջնորդություն հարուցելու որոշման մեջ պետք է շարադրվեն այն շարժառիթները և հիմքերը, որոնց հիման վրա առաջացել է մեղադրյալին կալանավորելու անհրաժեշտություն: Որոշմանը կցվում են միջնորդության հիմնավորվածությունը հաստատող նյութերը:(...):»:

ՀՀ վճռաբեկ դատարանն Ասլան Ավետիսյանի վերաբերյալ ԱՎԴ/0022/06/08 գործով 2008թ. հոկտեմբերի 31-ին կայացված որոշման 26-րդ կետում արտահայտել է հետևյալ իրավական դիրքորոշումը.

«26. Կալանքի ժամկետի երկարացման վերաբերյալ օրենսդրական և նախադեպային կանոնակարգման համադրման և մեկնաբանման հիման վրա՝ Վճռաբեկ դատարանը գտնում է, որ մեղադրյալին կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը կարող է երկարացվել հետևյալ երկու պայմանների միաժամանակյա առկայության դեպքում.

ա) շարունակվում են առկա լինել կալանավորումը որպես խափանման միջոց ընտրելու հիմքերն ու պայմանները կամ ի հայտ են եկել անձին կալանքի տակ պահելու նոր հիմքեր.

բ) գործի քննությունն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից դրսևորվել է անհրաժեշտ ջանասիրություն՝ ապահովելու գործի քննության ընթացքը.

Իսկ ինչ վերաբերում է անձին մեղսագրվող հանցանքի ծանրությանը, ապա թեև այն էական նշանակություն ունի ազատության մեջ գտնվող մեղադրյալի դրսևորվող վարքագծի հավանականությունը կանխորոշելու հարցում, սակայն այդ հանգամանքը պետք է զնահատվի գործում առկա մնացած, մասնավորապես ՀՀ քրեական դատավարության օրենսգրքի 135-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասում մատնանշված հանգամանքների համատեքստում: Այդ առումով կարող է քննության առարկա դառնալ նաև դեռևս չկատարված քննչական գործողությունների բնույթը, դրանց օբյեկտիվության վրա մեղադրյալի կողմից ազդեցություն գործելու հնարավորությունը:»:

2.2. Վերոհիշյալ իրավանորմների և ՀՀ վճռաբեկ դատարանի իրավական դիրքորոշումների համատեքստում մինչդատական վարույթի նկատմամբ վերահսկողության շրջանակներում դատական ստուգման ենթարկելով մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամադ Ալ Շիբերիի նկատմամբ որպես խափանման միջոց կիրառված կալանավորման ժամկետը մեկ ամսով երկարացնելու մասին քննիչի միջնորդությունը՝ Դատարանը գտնում է, որ մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամադ Ալ Շիբերիին վերագրվող արարքների վերաբերյալ հիմնավոր կասկածը շարունակում է առկա լինել, ինչը հիմնավորվում է Դատարանին ներկայացված նյութերով, այդ թվում.

Մուհիռաբ Մուհամադ Ալ Շիբերիի 2020թ. հոկտեմբերի 31-ի հետևյալ ցուցումներով. «Ծնվել են Սիրիայի Արաբական Հանրապետության Համա մահանգի Թոթահ գյուղում և այնտեղ բնակվել են մինչև 2016 թվականը: Մենք մեր գյուղում էինք ապրում, 2016 թվականի կարծեմ հոկտեմբեր-նոյեմբեր ամիսներին, «Իսլամական պետություն» խմբավորման անդամները սկսեցին ռմբակոծել մեր գյուղը, ես մոտոցիկլ ունեի, կնոջս՝ Նազհա խալեդ Սթեֆի և երեք



անչափահաս երեխաներիս հետ տեղափոխվեցի Սինջար շրջան, որտեղ բնակվում էր իմ հորեղբոր ընտանիքը, մոտ մեկ ամիս այնտեղ ապրեցիմք, Իսլամական պետության անդամները գնալով ընդարձակվում էին և հասան նաև այնտեղ, որտեղ ապրում էինք: Մեր իրերը հավաքեցիմք և իմ ընտանիքով տեղափոխվեցիմք Սարմադի քաղաքի հարակից Աթմի գյուղ, որը հանդիսացել է իմ վերջին բնակության հասցեն: Այնտեղ տեղակայված են վրաններ տարբեր երկրների կողմից և ընտանիքիս հետ միասին բնակվել ենք վրաններում:

1999 թվականին 2.5 տարի պարտադիր ժամկետային զինվորական ծառայություն են անցել Քուսվե շրջանում տեղակայված թիվ 141 զորամասի հրթիռահրետանային գումարտակում: Նշված պարտադիր ժամկետային զինվորական ծառայությունից բացի այլ զինվորական պատրաստություն չեն անցել: Իմ կինը՝ Նազհա Խալեդ Աթեֆը և երեք անչափահաս երեխաներս՝ 12 տարեկան Յամենը, 11 տարեկան Բիլալը և 9 տարեկան Ռաբիիր, բնակվել են ինձ հետ Աթմի գյուղում: Նախքան իմ գալը՝ սույն թվականի հոկտեմբերի 18-ից մեկ ամիս առաջ, ճամբարի երիտասարդներից լսեցիմք, որ Արցախում Հայաստանի և Ադրբեջանի միջև կռիվներ են, պատերազմ է: Նախապես խոսակցություն է եղել, մասնավորապես՝ «Սուլեյման Շահ» խմբավորման գլխավոր հրամանատար Աբու Համշա մականունով անձի կողմից ուղարկված անձի՝ Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի կողմից իմ հորեղբորը՝ Մուհամեդ Ալ Խալեդին, առաջարկություն է արվել, թե ով ամսական 1500 ԱՄՆ դոլարին համարժեք թուրքական տարադրամով գումարի դիմաց կգնա Լիբիա՝ զորավարժությունների մասնակցելու համար: Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձը իմ հորեղբոր՝ Մուհամեդ Ալ Խալեդի ընկերն է և առաջարկել է հավաքագրել երիտասարդների և ասել է, որ եթե կլինեն ցանկացողներ, թող գնան Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի մոտ և գրանցվեն: Իմ հարևան Հուսեյնին ինձ ասաց, որ ինքը որոշել է ընդունել նշված առաջարկը և գնալ: Իմ հարևան Հուսեյնին ինձ հարցրեց, թե արդյոք ես կցանկանամ մեկնել, ես նրան պատասխանեցի, որ կմտածեմ և կասեմ: Նշված խոսակցության հաջորդ օրը ես գնացի Հուսեյնի մոտ և ասացի, որ որոշել եմ գնալ իր հետ: Հուսեյնին մտոցիկլ ուներ, ես իր հետ նստեցի և գնացիմք Շեյխ Հադիդ կոչվող գյուղ՝ Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի մոտ: Ես նրան առաջին անգամ էի տեսնում: Ես և Հուսեյնին գրանցվեցիմք Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի մոտ: Այդ ժամանակ Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի մոտ կային մոտ 10 անձ, որոնց մի մասը նոր մեր պես եկել էին գրանցվելու համար, իսկ մյուս մասը պահակություն էին անում գյուղում: Ես և Հուսեյնին երկուսով երկու օր մնացել ենք Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի կողմից հատկացված բնակարանում, որտեղ մեզանից բացի բնակվում էին ևս վեց անձ: Երկու օր մնալուց հետո եկավ Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձը և ասաց, որ պետք է մեկնենք Քիլիս քաղաքի հարակից տարածք, որտեղ տեղակայված են տարբեր խմբավորումների հրամանատարական կազմը, մասնավորապես՝ «Սուկուր», «Համզաթ», «Սուլթան Մուրադ», «Ամշաթ» խմբավորումների հրամանատարական կազմը: Նշված Շեյխ Հադիդ կոչվող գյուղում ես և Հուսեյնին ոչինչ չենք արել, միայն սպասել ենք, սակայն տեղի մյուս անդամները, ովքեր գրանցվել էին Աբու Հուսեյն 23-ի մոտ, որպես մշտական պահակազորի անդամներ մարտական պատրաստության դասընթացներ, այսպես ասած՝ զորավարժություններ անցկացնում էին: Մասնավորապես՝ վազում էին, ֆիզիկական պատրաստության վարժանքներ էին կատարում, 14.5 կոչվող զենքը քանդում և հավաքում էին, անցկացնում էին մարտական պատրաստության դասընթացներ: Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձը մոտ 35 տարեկան է, աջ ոտքը ծնկից ներքև պրոթեզավորված է, ցածրահասակ է՝ հասակը մոտ 150-160սմ, այլ տվյալներ ներկայումս չեն մտաբերում, սակայն լուսանկարը տեսնելու դեպքում անպայման կճանաչեմ: Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անձը երկու օր մնալուց հետո ինձ, իմ հարևան Հուսեյնին և մեզ հետ միասին ընդհանուր 17 անձի, Կիև մականիչի բեռնատարով տեղափոխել է Ալ Դուս անցակետ: Այնտեղ հավաքված ավտոմեքենաներ կային, մասնավորապես՝ տարբեր շրջաններից եկել էր երեք թեթև մարդատար, մեկ միջին չափի բեռնատար և երկու մեծ բեռնատար ավտոմեքենաներ կային, այսինքն՝ ընդհանուր մեզ հետ միասին տեղում հավաքվել էին 250 անձ: Մեզ բոլորիս տեղափոխեցին Քիլիս քաղաքի հարակից տարածք, որտեղ ներկա էր «Սուլեյման Շահ» խմբավորման գլխավոր հրամանատար Աբու Համշա մականունով անձը, ով մուգ մաշկով, միջին հասակի, սև մորուսով, մոտ 35 տարեկան կլիներ, կամ մի փոքր քիչ: Նույն վայրում էին նաև Աբու Համշայի



ենթակայությանը գործող «Սուկուր», «Համզաթ», «Անշաթ», ինչպես նաև այլ՝ խոշոր խմբավորումների հրամանատարներ, որոնց ես չեմ ճանաչում, մասնավորապես կարող եմ նշել գնդապետ Մահմուդ անուն անձի անունը, ում պարտականությունն էր ընտրել պիտանի զինծառայողների: Գնդապետ Մահմուդ անուն անձը մոտ 55 տարեկան տղամարդ էր, միջահասակ, սպիտակամորուս, սպիտակամաշկ, գեր կազմվածքով, նրան կամ նրա լուսանկարը տեսնելու դեպքում ինչպես նշված, այնպես էլ այլ հատկանիշներից անպայման կճանաչեմ: Ընտրությունը կատարվում էր հետևյալ կերպ. 50 անձից բաղկացած խումբը կանգնում էր, հերթով կանչում էր և ասում էր, որ վազեր, հետո նայում էր, որ եթե մեծ էր տարիքով, կամ 18 տարեկանից պակաս էր, հետ էր ուղարկում: Մենք՝ եկածներով քաղաքացիական հագուստով էին, իսկ գնդապետ Մահմուդը զինվորական հագուստով էր, սակայն կոճկված չէր, Աբու Համշան սև գույնի սպորտային համազգեստով էր: Նշեմ, որ Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձը Ալ Ղուս անցակետից հետո նույնպես մեզ հետ միասին եկել է Քիլիս քաղաքի նշված հարակից տարածք: Ընդհանուր ընտրվեց 250 անձ՝ հինգ խմբերի բաժանված՝ յուրաքանչյուրում 50 անձ, իսկ 10 անձ հետ ուղարկվեց, քանի որ չէին բավարարում իրենց պահանջներին: Նշեմ, որ Քիլիս քաղաքը գտնվում է Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության և Սիրիայի Հանրապետության սահմանագծում, պատկանում է Սիրիային: Նշված վայրում թուրքեր չկային: Մեզ այդ ժամանակ ոչ ոք ոչինչ չի ասել, մեզ քաղաքացիական միանման հագուստ տվեցին, սպորտային կոշիկներ, երեկոյան ժամին սենդվիչներ բերեցին, կերանք, հետո ասացին, որ երեկոյան 22:30-23:00-ի սահմաններում պետք է շարժվենք: Ցանկանում եմ մասնավորեցնել, որ ես Ադրբեջան գնալուց մոտ մեկ ամիս առաջ եմ տեղեկացել Արցախի և Ադրբեջանի պատերազմի մասին: Աբու Հուսեյն 23 անունով անձի մոտ Շեյխ Հադիդ գյուղ իմ հարևան Հուսեյնի հետ մեկնել եմ արդեն սույն թվականի հոկտեմբերի 15-ին: Քիլիս քաղաք հասել ենք արդեն սույն թվականի հոկտեմբերի 17-ին, որտեղ մնացել ենք մինչև երեկոյան ժամը 22:30-ի 23:00-ի սահմանները, երբ մեզ ասել էին, որ այդ ժամին պատրաստվենք մեկնելու: Քիլիս քաղաքի հարակից նշված տարածքը ցանկապատված էր շատ բարձր պարիսպով և տարածքի ներսում նոր շենք էր կառուցվում: Նույն օրը՝ ժամը 23:00-ի սահմաններում, նշված վայրում 50 անձանցից բաղկացած հինգ խմբերով մեզ շարեցին՝ ըստ զինվորական կարգի, մեզ այդ ժամանակ կոնկրետ ոչինչ չասացին, թե ուր ենք գնալու, ասացին ոտքով քայլեք դեպի Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության սահման, մենք նշված խմբերով ոտքով հատեցինք սահմանը, սահմանապահները սիրիացիներ էին, սահմանի մեր հատման վայրում կոնկրետ մուտք կար դեպի Թուրքիայի Հանրապետություն, մեզ նախապես ասել էին, որ ոչ ոք իր հետ ոչինչ չվերցնի, ոչ անձնագիր, ոչ ծխախոտ, ոչ կրակայրիչ, ոչ բջջային հեռախոս կամ այլ իր: Սահմանապահները մեզ ոչինչ չասացին, որևէ հարց չտվեցին, իրենք հաստատ տեղյակ էին, որ մեզ պետք է թույլատրեին անցնենք: Մեզ սահմանն անցկացրել է Աբու Համշա անունով հրամանատարը, ով ըստ ինձ հաստատ պայմանավորվածություն ուներ սահմանապահների հետ, քանի որ մեզ անցակետում ոչինչ չեն հարցրել և թույլատրել են անցնել սահմանակետը: Երբ ներս մտանք, հատեցինք սահմանը, արդեն հանդիպեցինք Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության ոստիկանության պարեկային ծառայություն իրականացնող ոստիկանների ավտոմեքենաների, ովքեր ամբողջ ճանապարհի երկայնքով կանգնած էին, մեզ տեսնում էին, սակայն ոչինչ չեն ասել, որևէ հարց չեն տվել: Սահմանային անցակետում կայանված էին թվով հինգ ավտոբուսներ, որոնք մեզ տեղափոխեցին Թուրքիայի Հանրապետությունում գտնվող օդանավակայան:

Ճանապարհը տևել է մեկ ժամ կամ մի քիչ ավել, ճանապարհին տեղանքների անունները Թուրքերենով էր գրված, չէինք հասկանում: Առաջին անգամ էի գտնվում Թուրքիայում, տարածքին անձանոթ էի: Օդանավակայանը քաղաքացիական էր, երևում էր, որ մեծ էր, գիշեր էր, օդանավակայանը տեսնելու դեպքում կարծում եմ չեմ ճանաչի: Ավտոբուսները կայանվել են օդանավակայանի մուտքի մոտ, մտել ենք 4-5 մետրանոց փոքր շենք, շենքում անցել ենք, ստուգվել ենք սարքով, որը ձայն էր հանում, դուրս ենք եկել, նստել ենք հետևի կողմից արդեն իսկ կայանված նույն ավտոբուսները: Նշված շենքում կանգնած էին երկու թուրք ոստիկաններ, որոնցից մեկը սարքի կողքն էր կանգնած, մյուսը ստուգում էր անցնողներին, սակայն հարցեր չեն տվել, անձնագրեր չեն հարցրել, պահանջել կամ ստուգել: Ավտոբուսները կայանել են մեծ ինքնաթիռի հետևի մասում, ինքնաթիռի անունը երիտասարդներից լսեցի, որ Յոշմե էր,



ինքնաթիռի վրա թուրքական դրոշ կար: Մեզ ասացին, որ արագ վազքով գնանք և նստենք ինքնաթիռ: Ինքնաթիռում տեսել են թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի դրոշով և զինվորական համազգեստով մեկ թուրք զինվորականի, ով արագ փակեց ինքնաթիռի դուռը և ինքնաթիռը բռավ: Մոտ մեկ ժամ կամ մի փոքր ավել թռիչքից հետո ինքնաթիռը վայրէջք է կատարել թուրքիայի Հանրապետության մեկ այլ օդանավակայանում, որը հաստատապես կարող են ասել, որ թուրքիայի Հանրապետությունում էր, մեզ դիմավորել են ավելի քան 50 թուրք զինվորականներ, ովքեր կրում էին թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի համազգեստ թուրքական դրոշով, նրանք կանգնած էին երկու ինքնաթիռների միջնամասում՝ ճանապարհի երկայնքով, մենք անմիջապես անցել ենք նրանց միջով և նստել ենք Ադրբեջանի դրոշը կրող քաղաքացիական ինքնաթիռ: Երբ տեսանք Ադրբեջանի դրոշը, հաստատ իմացանք, որ գնում ենք Ադրբեջան, ինքնաթիռում արաբերեն լեզվի թարգմանիչ կար, ով թարգմանում էր, և ցուցումներ էր տալիս թռիչքի կանոնների վերաբերյալ: Սույն թվականի հոկտեմբերի 18-ին առավոտյան արևածագին, ինքնաթիռ մոտ երկու ժամ թռիչքից հետո ներքևում ծով տեսանք, ինքնաթիռը վայրէջք կատարեց Ադրբեջանում, սակայն օդանավակայանի անվանումը չգիտեմ: Օդանավակայանում քաղաքացիական օդանավեր կային, սակայն կային նաև ինքնաթիռներ, որոնք տեսքից նմանեցնում են զինվորական ինքնաթիռների: Նշված օդանավակայանում մեզ դիմավորել են Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի համազգեստով շուրջ 30-ից ավելի զինվորականներ, նրանք անմիջապես ինքնաթիռի մոտ մոտեցրել էին զինվորական ԶԻԼ մակնիշի բեռնատար ավտոմեքենաներ, յուրաքանչյուրում նստել ենք շուրջ 35 անձից պակաս, նաև կայանված էին երկու ավտոբուսներ, որոնցում տեղավորվել ենք բոլորս: Օդանավակայանում նշված զինվորականները հաստատապես տեղյակ էին, թե մենք ով ենք, որևէ հարց մեզ չեն տվել, չեն ստուգել մեր անձերը, ուղղակի նստեցրել են նշված ավտոմեքենաները և մոտ չորս ժամ գնացել են, անցել ենք մեծ քաղաքով, մենք գնացել ենք մոտ 80 կմ ժամ արագությամբ, չհաշված կարմիր լույսի տակ կանգնելը, անցել ենք նաև գյուղանման տարածքներով, նաև ամառի տարածքներ էին, բնակավայրեր չկային, տարածքների անունները չգիտեմ, սակայն որոշ ճանապարհ անցնելուց հետո ձախ կողմի վրա ծով են տեսել: Հետո անցել ենք շրջանաձև խաչմերուկով, որից հետո ինչ-որ մի ճանապարհ սկսվեց, որը ասֆալտապատ չէր, հետո մոտեցանք շենքի, որտեղ ներս մտանք և դա հանդիսանում էր Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի զինվորական ակադեմիա: Նշված և իմ կողմից նկարագրված ողջ ճանապարհը և տեղանքները գտնվում էին Ադրբեջանում: Մենք այս ողջ ընթացքում նույն հագուստով էինք:

Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի նշված զինվորական ակադեմիա մենք հասել ենք կեսօրից հետո՝ հստակ ժամը չեն հիշում, մեզ դիմավորել են Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի զինծառայողներ, ովքեր ուղղորդում էին մեզ, թե ուր գնանք, իսկ մյուս մասը տեղի պահակազորի անդամներն էին, կրկին Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի զինծառայողներ: Մենք բարձրացանք վերևի հարկեր, որտեղ յուրաքանչյուրիս մեկական մահճակալ, վերմակ և բարձ տվեցին: Մի քիչ հանգստացանք և մեզ իջացրեցին ճաշարան, որից հետո գիշերել ենք նույն վայրում: Հաջորդ օրը՝ հոկտեմբերի 19-ին՝ առավոտյան, նախաճաշել ենք, այնուհետև մեզ յուրաքանչյուրիս լուսանկարում էին բջջային հեռախոսներով և նկարների տակ մեր անուններն էին գրում: Նշված անձինք ազգությամբ արաբներ էին, Սիրիայի քաղաքացիներ, նրանք ասում էին, որ քաղաքացիական կացության ակտերի գրանցման աշխատակիցներ էին: Մենք նշված վայրում սպասել ենք յոթ օր, որպեսզի մեզ համազգեստներ և զենքեր բերեն: Նախ համազգեստ բերեցին, որը Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի համազգեստ էր, կանաչ և սև գույնի, նշված զինվորական համազգեստների մի մասի վրա առկա էր զինանշան, որի վրա ադրբեջաներենով գրություն կար, իսկ կենտրոնում աստղ էր: Ինչ վերաբերում է հատկացված զենքերին, ապա յուրաքանչյուր 50 հոգանոց խմբերից 5-ին յուրաքանչյուրին տրվել է մեկական Ռ-79 տեսակի զենք և մեկական ռուսական արտադրության կալաշնիկով մոդելի ավտոմատներ, իսկ հինգական խմբերին՝ յուրաքանչյուրին մեկական ՊԿՍ տեսակի զինատեսակ, իսկ մյուս 40-ին՝ մեկական ռուսական արտադրության կալաշնիկով մոդելի ավտոմատներ: Ինձ կոնկրետ հատկացվել էր ռուսական արտադրության կալաշնիկով մոդելի ավտոմատ: Նշեմ, որ առաջին օրը, երբ հասանք նշված Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի ռազմական ակադեմիա, այնտեղ մեզ հետ էր նաև Աբու Համձան: Վերջինիս տեսել են նաև վերջին օրը, երբ վերջնական հագուստ և զենքեր ստացանք: Աբու Համձային հատկացվել էր սպիտակ



գույնի Տոյոտա մակնիշի պիկապ տեսակի ավտոմեքենա: Յոթերորդ օրը՝ հոկտեմբերի 25-ին, երբ ստացանք նշված հազուստները և զենքերը, մեզ հանձնարարվեց նստել ՋԻԼ մակնիշի բեռնատարները և ավտոբուսները, իսկ Աբու Չամշայի հետ նշված սպիտակ գույնի Տոյոտա մակնիշի պիկապ տեսակի ավտոմեքենան նստել է վարորդը և մեկ ուղեկցող: Մենք բոլորս զինված էինք: Մեզ ադրբեջանցի զինվորականներն ասել էին, որ պետք է կռվենք հայերի դեմ: Նշեմ նաև, որ տեղում կային Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի զինծառայողներ, ովքեր կրում էին Թուրքիայի զինված ուժերի համազգեստ և նրանց համազգեստ կրծքային հատվածում փակցված էր Թուրքիայի դրոշը: Նշեմ, որ Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինվորականները հիմնականում մասնագիտացված էին և կցված էին հրետանային միջոցներին: Թուրք զինվորականների մեջ կային և դեկավար անձնակազմի զինվորականներ և շարքային զինվորականներ: Օրը սկսվելուն մոտ երկու ժամ անց էր, երբ մեզ տեղափոխեցին Ալ Չամզաթ կոչվող դասակ, որտեղ հասել ենք մոտ երեք ժամ կամ մի քիչ ավել գնալուց հետո: Նշված վայրը Ադրբեջանի ռազմական զինվորական օբյեկտ էր, որտեղ տեղակայված էր շինություն, որը նման էր այն նույն շենքին, որտեղ մենք մնացել են նշված յոթ օրը: Մեզ տարան շենքի շուրջ բոլորը, այնուհետև 5 աստիճան իջել ենք ներքև, այնուհետև շենքի ստորին հատվածում՝ գետնի տակ 20 մետր զննացել ենք առաջ, որից հետո 20 մետր զննացել ենք դեպի աջ, այնտեղ մեզ հատկացված էր մեկական մահճակալ և անկողնային պարագաներ: Այնտեղ մի փոքր հանգստանալուց հետո մեզ տեղափոխեցին ծաշարան, որից հետո այնտեղ մնացել ենք ընդհանուր երեք օր, որի մեջ ներառված է նաև մեր ժամանման և մեկնման օրերը: Նշված վայրում նույնպես առկա էին Թուրքիա Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի զինծառայողներ, այն նույն համազգեստով և կրծքային հատվածում Թուրքիայի դրոշով, ինչպես նշեցի որ առկա էին նախորդ զինվորական օբյեկտում, որտեղ մնացել ենք յոթ օր: Ինչպես նաև նշված ռազմական օբյեկտում առկա էին Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի զինծառայողներ: Աբու Չամշան այդ ընթացքում իր համար առանձին մնալու տեղ ուներ: Երրորդ օրը մենք՝ ընդհանուր 250 հոգով, նստել ենք ավտոմեքենաներ և մեկնել ենք հատկացված տարածք, զննացել ենք իմ պատկերացմամբ մոտ 50-60կմ, ճանապարհը քարքարոտ էր, լեռնային, սակայն ավտոմեքենաների համար անցանելի էր: Մենք հասել ենք ամայի տարածքում տեղակայված ռազմական շինություն, որը շրջապատված էր բլուրներով, տեղում առկա էին շուրջ 250 սիրիացի արաբ վարձու զինվորներ, ովքեր կրկին պատկանում էին Աբու Չամշային պատկանող խմբավորմանը: Նշված վարձկանների մի մասը վիրավորվել կամ սպանվել էին հայերի դեմ կռիվներում: Մենք զրուցել ենք նշված սիրիացի արաբ վարձկանների հետ, նրանցից նաև տեղեկացել ենք, որ նրանք Թուրքիայի հետ սահմանակից տարբեր շրջաններից էին, մասնավորապես՝ Իդլիբից, Մաարես Միսրին և Ազազ քաղաքներից: Տեղում առկա շուրջ 250 սիրիացի արաբ վարձկանների հետ միասին մենք ընդհանուր կազմում էինք մինչև շուրջ 430 անձ, տեղի վիրավորված և սպանված վարձկանների թիվը մոտ 70 էր, կամ մի փոքր քիչ: Աբու Չամշան իրենց արգելել էր տեղում միմյանց հետ խոսել վիրավորների կամ սպանվածների թեմաներով, նման թեմաներով միմյանց հետ խոսելու կամ քննարկելու համար Աբու Չամշան ասել էր, որ պատժելու է, որը նախատեսված էր ոտքին, ծնկին կրակելու ձևով: Ինձ պատմել են, որ եղել է դեպքեր, երբ Աբու Չամշան նման արարքի համար պատժել է, կրակել է ոտքին: Մենք Ադրբեջան գնալու առաջին իսկ օրվանից տեղյակ էինք, որ պետք է կռվենք հայերի դեմ, ամեն անգամ դա ասելու կարիք չկար: Աբու Չամշային պատկանող նշված ռազմական օբյեկտում կարծես երկու կամ երեք օր մնալուց հետո մեզ ասացին, որ պատրաստվենք, առավոտյան ժամը 4-ին պետք է գնանք, ռազմական գործողության մասնակցենք հայերի դեմ: Առավոտյան մենք 200 հոգով՝ այսինքն՝ չորս խմբերով, նստել ենք սպիտակ գույնի Տոյոտա մակնիշի պիկապ տեսակի ավտոմեքենաներ և լեռներով զննացել ենք մոտ 100 կմ կամ մի քիչ ավել ճանապարհ, այդ ընթացքում մենք անցնում էին լեռներով, ճանապարհին կային նաև գյուղեր, որտեղ Ադրբեջանի և Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերի զինծառայողներ կային, ինչպես նաև տեղակայված էին հրթիռահրետանային միջոցներ: Գյուղից դուրս գալուց հետո անցել ենք ասֆալտապատ ճանապարհով՝ մոտ մեկ ու կեսից երկու կմ, հետո աջ պահեցին, մեզ իջեցրեցին, ջուր ու հաց էին բերել: Նշեմ, որ այդ ճանապարհի ընթացքում մեզ ուղեկցում էին երկու ադրբեջանցի զինծառայողներ, իսկ մեր 200 հոգանոց խմբի ղեկավարը հանդիսանում էր սիրիացի արաբ Շեյխ Իբրահիմը, ով քաղաքացիական հազուստով էր, սակայն



գոտկատեղին մեջքի հատվածից ատրճանակ կար: Հաց ու ջրի նշված առաջարկությունը ստացել ենք Շեյխ Իբրահիմի կողմից, նա ինքն էր անձամբ բաժանում հացն ու ջուրը: Նշված վայրում երկու կողմերից հրթիռակոծում էին, Շեյխ Իբրահիմը մեզ բաժանեց 25-ական խմբերի՝ ընդհանուր 8 խմբերի, յուրաքանչյուր խմբի մասով նշանակվել է ղեկավար, կոնկրետ իմ խմբի ղեկավարի անունը Ռաուադ էր: Մեզ հանձնարարված էր, որ յուրաքանչյուրի միջև 5 մետր հեռավորություն պահպանենք և քայլելով գնանք անտառի կողմ: Մենք քայլում էին դեպի այն ուղղությամբ, որտեղից հակառակորդ հայերի կողմից արձակվում էին հրթիռները: Մենք գնացել ենք անտառով՝ դեմքով դեպի հարթավայր, որտեղից հրթիռակոծում էին հայերը: Մենք այնուհետև իջել ենք խորը ձոր, որտեղ որոշ հարթավայրով առաջ գնացինք, այնտեղով առվակի նման ջուր էր հոսում: Հետո բարձրացանք ձորով և հայտնվեցինք անտառի մեջտեղում: Մեզ չթողեցին առաջ գնանք, Շեյխ Իբրահիմն ու երկու աղրբեջանցի զինծառայողները մեզ ասացին, որ հարթավայր չգնանք, առաջ չգնանք, այնտեղ հայեր կան: Մեզ ասացին, որ իջնենք մոտակա դիմացի ձորը, մեզ իջացրեցին ձորի մեջ: Շեյխ Իբրահիմն ու երկու աղրբեջանցի զինծառայողները մեզ ասացին, որ ոտքով քայլենք ձորով, այնտեղ մեկ կիլոմետր հեռավորության վրա հայկական գյուղ կա, որը անմարդաբնակ է, մեզ հանձնարարեցին, որ գնանք և գրավենք հայկական գյուղը, սակայն իրենք մեզ հետ չառաջացան: Շեյխ Իբրահիմն ու երկու աղրբեջանցի զինծառայողները մեզ հանձնարարել էին, որ հայկական գյուղում ոչ ոքի կենդանի չթողնենք, այդ թվում քաղաքացիական անձանց և զինծառայողներին, մեզ հանձնարարեցին, որ բոլորին սպանենք: Երբ մոտեցանք նշված գյուղին՝ երկու կողմից՝ ձորի վերևի հատվածից, հայերը սկսեցին կրակ արձակել մեր ուղղությամբ: Իմ խմբի ղեկավար Ռաուադ և մեկ այլ խմբի ղեկավար Աբու Ալ Ջամաջեմը մեզ հանձնարարեցին, որպեսզի հետ քաշվենք: Մեզանից երկու հոգի վիրավորվեցին, մենք հետ քաշվեցինք հարթավայրի ուղղությամբ, այդ ընթացքում սկսեցին մեզ հրթիռակոծել, այդ ընթացքում ևս երկու հոգի վիրավորվեցին և ևս երկու հոգի սպանվեցին: Ես շուտ դուրս եկա, սակայն սպանվածները ասենայն հավանականությամբ մնացին ձորում: Ձորից երբ դուրս եկանք, արդեն մայրամուտ էր, ես ևս մեկ հոգու հետ էի, մենք բոլորս ցրվել էինք, ես մոլորվել էի, ձայներ լսեցինք, տեսանք Շեյխ Իբրահիմին և երկու աղրբեջանցիներին: Շեյխ Իբրահիմը մեզ ասաց, որ այդ ճանապարհով գնացեք, մինչև ես մյուսներին սպասեմ, եթե տեսաք, որ մոլորվում եք, մնացեք ձեր տեղերում: Մի քիչ քայլելուց հետո չիմացանք, թե ինչ ճանապարհով գնանք, նստեցինք, մի քիչ սպասեցինք: Աղրբեջանցի զինծառայողները եկան և մեզ ճիշտ ճանապարհ ցույց տվեցին: Քիչ անց մեզ միացան մյուս խմբերի անդամները, աղրբեջանցիները մեզ սկսեցին ճանապարհ ցույց տալ, մի պահ եկավ, որ իրենք էլ չիմացած, թե որ ճանապարհով գնան, աջ կողմում անտառ էր, ծախ կողմում մշակված հողեր էին: Որոշ ժամանակ գնալուց հետո սկսեցին մեր ուղղությամբ կրակել, մենք սկսեցինք մտնել անտառը և թաքնվել: Անտառում, երբ կրակում էին մեր ուղղությամբ, ես ձեռքից և ոտքից վիրավորվել եմ, իմ խմբի անդամներին խնդրեցի, որպեսզի օգնեն ինձ, սակայն նրանք հրաժարվեցին ինձ օգնել, թողեցին և հեռացան, ես մոտ մեկ ու կես ժամ սպասելուց հետո, երբ կրակը դադարեց, որոշեցի գնալ նրանց գնացած ուղղությամբ: Տեղում թողեցի իմ ավտոմատը և փամփշտատուփը և սկսեցի բարձրանալ լեռ: Երբ հայտնվեցի լեռան հակառակ կողմում՝ տեսա որ հայկական գյուղ կա, որոշեցի գնալ գյուղի ուղղությամբ: Արդեն առավոտ էր, լույսը բացվել էր: Տեսա հետիոտնային հողային ճանապարհ, քայլեցի, աջ կողմում մշակված հողեր էին, հետո իջա ոչ շատ խորը ձոր, անցա ձորով, մի քանի մետրը մեկ հանգստանում էի ու նոր շարունակում ճանապարհը: Երբ ուղղվում էի դեպի գյուղը աջ կողմից հայ զինծառայողներ տեսա, մոտեցա, ջուր խնդրեցի, նրանք ինձ պարկացրեցին, խուզարկեցին, որից հետո տարան ճանապարհով, որտեղից եկան և ավտոմեքենայով տարան: Նշված դեպքերը տեղի են ունեցել երեկ առավոտյան: Այսինքն՝ հայերին հանդիպել եմ և նրանք ինձ ավտոմեքենայով տեղափոխել են երեկ առավոտյան, այսինքն՝ հոկտեմբերի 30-ին առավոտյան: Հայերը ինձ չեն ծեծել, չեն վիրավորել: Շնորհակալություն եմ հայտնում հայերին, որ նրանք իմ վերքերը բուժեցին, ուտելիք ու հագուստ տվեցին:



Հարց. Խնդրում եմ հայտնեք՝ Դուք և Ձեր կողմից նշված Աբու Չամշայի խմբավորման մյուս վարժու գինվորները ռազմական գործողություններին մասնակցելիս թմրանյութեր կամ հոգեմետ նյութեր օգտագործել եք, թե՛ ոչ, եթե՛ այո, խնդրում եմ մանրամասնեք:

Պատասխան. Աբու Չամշան ասում էր, որ ով վախկոտ է կամ սրտից թույլ է, թող հաբեր խմեն, դրանք խմելուց հետո մարդ դառնում էր անվախ: Ես ինքս չեմ խմել, սակայն այդ հաբերից կար և մյուսները խմում էին:

Հարց. Հայերի դեմ ռազմական գործողություններին մասնակցելու համար Ձեզ գումար առաջարկել են, թե՛ ոչ, եթե՛ այո, ապա որքան գումարի մասին է խոսքը: Խնդրում եմ մանրամասնեք:

Պատասխան. Աբու Չամշան ինքն էր ինձ ասել, որ իմ ամսական աշխատավարձը 2000 ԱՄՆ դոլար է կազմում, մյուսների ամսական աշխատավարձը նույնպես կազմում էր ամսական 2000 ԱՄՆ դոլար: Ես ինքս աշխատավարձ դեռևս չեի ստացել:

Հիմնականում պետք է ստանայինք ամսվա վերջին, սակայն լինում էր, որ 5-10 կամ 15 օր ուշացնում էին:

Հարց. Ձեր ցուցմունքից հետևում է, որ Դուք մինչև սույն թվականի հոկտեմբերի 18-ը՝ դեռևս մինչև Թուրքիայի տարածքով և օգնությամբ Ադրբեջան տեղափոխվելը՝ դրանից մեկ ամիս առաջ տեղեկացել եք, որ պետք է մասնակցեք պատերազմի հայերի դեմ: Այսինքն՝ սեպտեմբերի կեսերին արդեն տեղեկացել եք այդ մասին, թե՛ ոչ:

Պատասխան. Այո, ես սույն թվականի սեպտեմբերի կեսերին ստացա այն առաջարկը, որ մասնակցեմ Ադրբեջանի և Թուրքիայի անունից հայերի դեմ իրականացվող ռազմական գործողություններին:

Հարց. Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերը աջակցում էին Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերին հայերի դեմ սույն թվականի սեպտեմբերի 27-ից ընթացող մարտական գործողություններում, թե՛ ոչ:

Պատասխան. Այո, Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության զինված ուժերը աջակցում էին Ադրբեջանին հայերի դեմ սույն թվականի սեպտեմբերի 27-ից ընթացող պատերազմում, ռազմական գործողություններում: Մասնավորապես՝ աջակցում էին հրետանիով և ղեկավարում էին ռազմական գործողությունները:

Հարց. Նշված ռազմական գործողություններում անօդաչու թռչող սարքեր Ադրբեջանի կողմից կիրառվել են, թե՛ ոչ, եթե՛ այո, ապա ում կողմից էին կառավարվում:

Պատասխան. Այո, Ադրբեջանի զինված ուժերի կողմից հայերի դեմ ռազմական գործողություններում կիրառվում էին անօդաչու թռչող սարքեր, որոնք կառավարվում էին Թուրքիայի զինված ուժերի զինծառայողների կողմից:

Հարց. «Սուլեյման Շահ», ինչպես նաև՝ «Սուկուր», «Համզաթ», «Սուլթան Մուրադ», «Ամշաթ» խմբավորումները հանդիսանում են ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներ, թե՛ ոչ, եթե՛ այո, ապա զինված են, նպատակ ունեն իրականացնել ահաբեկչական գործողություններ, թե՛ ոչ, եթե՛ այո, ապա Ադրբեջանի կողմից Աբու Չամշայի խմբավորումը, որում ներգրավված եք եղել նաև Դուք, նպատակադրվել է Արցախի Հանրապետության դեմ Ադրբեջանի կողմից մղվող պատերազմում իրականացնել ահաբեկչական գործողություններ՝ Արցախի Հանրապետության ներքին վիճակն ապակայունացնելու նպատակով, մասնավորապես՝ հրկիզումներ, պայթյուններ, մարդկանց ոչնչացնելու ուղղված այլ գործողություններ, թե՛ ոչ:

Պատասխան. Այո, Սուլեյման Շահե, ինչպես նաև՝ «Սուկուր», «Համզաթ», «Սուլթան Մուրադ», «Ամշաթ» խմբավորումները հանդիսանում են ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներ, նրանք զինված են, այո, նրանք նպատակ ունեն Ադրբեջանի կողմից Արցախի Հանրապետության դեմ իրականացնել ահաբեկչական գործողություններ, այդ թվում՝ Աբու Չամշայի խմբավորումը: Մեր ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների ներգրավումը Ադրբեջանի կողմից նպատակ ունեւր ապակայունացնել Արցախի Հանրապետության ներքին վիճակը՝ Ձեր կողմից նշված հրկիզումների, պայթյունների, մարդկանց ոչնչացնելու, այսինքն՝ ոչ մեկին կենդանի չթողնելու հրամաններ արձակելով:



Չարց. Խնդրում եմ հայտնեք Աբու Չամշայի և խմբավորումների մյուս անդամների բջջային հեռախոսահամարները:

Պատասխան. Ներկայումս ոչ մեկի հեռախոսահամարը չեմ հիշում:

Չարց. Խնդրում եմ հայտնեք Ձեզ հետ միասին Աբու Չամշայի խմբավորման մեջ կային Ձեզ ծանոթ կամ հարազատ անձինք, թե ոչ:

Պատասխան. Այո, կային, իմ հորեղբոր որդին՝ Բաշար Ահմադ Ալ Շիտերը և իմ ազգականներից Ամեր Մուհամեդ Ալ Չամադը: Նրանք ողջ են եղել:

Չարց. Լուսանկարներով տեսնելու դեպքում կճանաչեք Աբու Չամշայի խմբավորման Ձեր կողմից գտնվելու վայրերը, թե ոչ:

Պատասխան. Այո, լուսանկարով տեսնելու դեպքում կճանաչեմ:

Չարց. Խնդրում եմ հայտնեք՝ որտեղից է իրականացվել Ձեր կողմից նշված ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների ֆինանսավորումը, որից պետք է վարձատրվեիք նաև Դուք և խմբավորումների մյուս անդամները:

Պատասխան. Իմ կողմից նշված ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների ֆինանսավորումը իրականացվել է Թուրքիայի Չամրապետության կողմից: Թուրքիայից ֆինանսավորումը մեր մասով ստացվում էր Աբու Չամշայի միջոցով, նա էր բաշխում գումարները: Փիտեմ, որ նա հարուստ է: Նշեմ նաև, որ ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներին հատկացվող զենքերը նույնպես հատկացվել են Թուրքիայի կողմից:

Ցանկանում եմ իմ երկրի քաղաքացիներին կոչ ուղղել, որ չլքեն իրենց երկիրը, չմեկնեն պատերազմի գոտի, անկախ պայմաններից, եթե մարդ ստիպված լինի հող ուտի կամ այլ ծանր պայմաններում ապրի, մարդ նման միջոցի չպետք է դիմի, եթե արդար ճանապարհ կա գումար աշխատելու: Ես գղջում եմ իմ արածների համար, ես ծուղակն եմ ընկել և չեմ ցանկանում, որ որևէ մեկը իմ նման ծուղակում հայտնվի: Ցանկացած մարդ, ով ինձ տեսնում է, ինձ լսում է ու իր երկրից դուրս ինչ-որ ուրիշ երկրի համար կռիվների մասնակցում, խորհուրդ կտամ վերադառնա իր երկիր ու արդար ճանապարհով պատվաբեր աշխատանք գտնի: Ես իմ ընտանիքին ու իմ երեխաներին թողեցի եկա, չկա մարդ ով կհոգա իրենց ծախսերը և ես չեմ ցանկանում, որ որևէ մեկը հայտնի նույն իրավիճակում ինչ իրավիճակում որ հայտնվել եմ ես:»:

Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիտերիի 2020թ. նոյեմբերի 1-ի ցուցմունքով, որի համաձայն՝ Ադրբեջանի Չամրապետություն ժամանելուց հետո, յոթ օր գիշերել եմ ռազմական Ակադեմիայում, որից հետո 3 օր՝ ներառյալ ժամանելը և մեկնելը, մնացել եմ Ալ Չամզաթ կոչվող վայրում: Նշված վայրում բացի իրենց խմբի 250 անդամներից՝ առկա են եղել նաև «Սուլթան Մուրադ» խմբավորման անդամներ, որոնց ընդհանուր թիվը կազմել է 500 կամ ավելի: Աբու Չամշան ղեկավարել է «Սուլեյման շահ» խմբավորումը: «Սուլթան Մուրադը» առանձին խմբավորում է, որը կազմավորվել է 2014-2015թթ.-ից: Քիլիս քաղաքի հարակից տարածքում տեղակայված են եղել նաև «Սուլթան Մուրադ», «Սուկուր», «Ալ Ամշաթ», «Ալ Չամզաթ» ահաբեկչական խմբավորումների ղեկավար կազմերը, որոնցից յուրաքանչյուրն ունեցել է իր առանձին պարսպապատ զորամասային տարածքը: Մասնավորապես՝ «Ալ Ամշաթ»-ի զորամասի դիմաց գտնվել է «Ալ Չամզաթ» խմբավորման զորամասը, իսկ դրա դիմաց՝ «Սուլթան Մուրադ» խմբավորման զորամասը: «Սուլեյման շահ» խմբավորումը նույն «Ալ Ամշաթ» խմբավորումն է, որը ղեկավարում է Աբու Չամշան: Իրենք գնացել են Աբու Չամշային պատկանող զորամաս: Նշված զորամասերում հիմնականում գտնվել են հրամանատարները, խմբավորումների ղեկավարները, ովքեր աշխատավարձ են վճարել: Աշխատավարձը վճարել են թուրքական լիրայով:

ճամբարում, որտեղ իրենք բնակվել են, օգտագործել են շվեդական կամ ամերիկյան բջջային հեռախոսահամարներ, որոնց քարտերով կարողացել են միայն «whatsapp» հավելվածից օգտվել, միմյանց հետ կապ են հաստատել միայն այդ հավելվածով: Քարտերը շատ արագ փոփոխվել են, քանի որ Ամերիկայում կամ Շվեդիայում եթե այդ նույն համարը ակտիվացվել է, գրանցել «whatsapp» ծրագիրը՝ ապա այն իրենց մոտից ջնջվել է:

Դատարանն արձանագրում է, որ կալանավորումը որպես խափանման միջոց ընտրելու մնացած պայմանները նույնպես շարունակում են առկա լինել:

3. Անդրադառնալով կալանավորման հիմքերին և հաշվի առնելով, որ.





3.1.- Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերին մեղադրվում է ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 389-րդ հոդվածով, 34-390-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի 1-ին կետով, 3-րդ մասի 1-ին կետով, 395-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասով նախատեսված հանցավոր արարքներ կատարելու համար, որոնցից ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 389-րդ հոդվածով նախատեսված հանցագործության համար որպես պատիժ նախատեսված է տասներկուսից քսան տարի ազատազրկում, կամ ցմահ ազատազրկում, ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 34-390-րդ հոդվածի 1-ին մասի 1-ին կետով, նախատեսված հանցագործության համար որպես պատիժ նախատեսված է տասներկուսից քսան տարի ազատազրկում, կամ ցմահ ազատազրկում, նույն հոդվածի 3-րդ մասի 1-ին կետով նախատեսված հանցագործության համար՝ տասներեքից քսան տարի ժամկետով կամ ցմահ ազատազրկում, իսկ ՀՀ քրեական օրենսգրքի 395-րդ հոդվածի 3-րդ մասով նախատեսված հանցագործության համար՝ հինգից տասը տարի ժամկետով ազատազրկում,

3.2. - Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերին վերագրվող հանցագործություններն ուղղված են խաղաղության և մարդկության անվտանգության դեմ,

3.3.- գործով պարզման ենթակա հանգամանքների վերաբերյալ ծավալվում են լայնածավալ քննչական և դատավարական գործողություններ՝

Դատարանը գտնում է, որ գործի քննության տվյալ փուլում մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերիի՝ ազատության մեջ մնալու դեպքում վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնից վերջինիս թաքնվելու հավանականությունը շարունակում է բարձր մնալ, քանի որ քրեական գործով ձեռք բերված փաստական տվյալները վկայում են այն մասին, որ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերին ենթադրաբար հանդիսացել է ահաբեկչական խմբավորման անդամ, պատրաստակամություն է հայտնել նյութական հատուցման դիմաց մասնակցել ռազմական գործողությունների և իրականացրել ոչ ոքի կենդանի չթողնելու վերաբերյալ հրամանի կատարմանն ուղղված գործողություններ, ինչը ևս հաստատում է, որ նման պայմաններում, վերջինիս ազատության մեջ մնալու դեպքում քրեական վարույթն իրականացնող մարմնից թաքնվելու, ինչպես նաև վերջինիս կողմից ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներում ունեցած իր կապերն օգտագործելով՝ նոր, այդ թվում՝ խաղաղության և մարդկության դեմ ուղղված այլ հանցագործություններ կատարելու հավանականությունը շարունակում է բարձր մնալ: Հետևաբար քննիչի միջնորդությունն ամբողջությամբ հիմնավոր է և ենթակա է բավարարման:

4. Դատարանը գնահատելով գործի քննությունն իրականացնող մարմնի կողմից դրսևորած անհրաժեշտ ջանասիրությունը՝ արձանագրում է, որ մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերիի արգելանքի տակ գտնվելու ժամանակահատվածում կատարվել են գործի հետագա ընթացքը լուծելու տեսանկյունից ողջամիտ հանդիսացող մի շարք քննչական և դատավարական գործողություններ, որոնք վկայակոչված են քննիչի միջնորդության մեջ և հիմնավորվում են դրան կից ներկայացված նյութերով: Հետևաբար վարույթն իրականացնող մարմինը դրսևորել է անհրաժեշտ ջանասիրություն՝ ապահովելու գործի քննության ընթացքը:

Վերոգրյալի հիման վրա և ղեկավարվելով ՀՀ քրեական դատավարության օրենսգրքի 138-րդ, 139-րդ, 173-րդ, 285-րդ և 287-րդ հոդվածներով՝ Դատարանը

## Ո Ր Ո Շ Ե Ց

1. Քննիչի միջնորդությունը բավարարել՝ թիվ 69108320 քրեական գործով մեղադրյալ Մուհիռաբ Մուհամմադ Ալ Շիխերիին կալանքի տակ պահելու ժամկետը երկարացնել 1 /մեկ/ ամիս ժամանակով՝ մինչև 2021թ. մարտի 28-ը:

2. Որոշման կատարումը հանձնարարել համապատասխան ՔԿՀ-ի պետին:

3. Սույն որոշման օրինակները հանձնել քննիչին, դատախազին, մեղադրյալին և պաշտպանին:

4. Որոշումը վերաքննության կարգով կարող է բողոքարկվել ՀՀ վերաքննիչ քրեական դատարան հրապարակվելու պահից հինգօրյա ժամկետում:

Դատավոր՝



Մ. Մարտիրոսյան

## DECISION

Yerevan city's court of first instance of general jurisdiction (Henceforth also "the Court")

Presiding Judge: M. Martirosyan

Secretary: A. Hovhannisyan

Participating individuals:

Investigator of the General Department of Investigation of Particularly Important Cases of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia : K. Ghazaryan

Defense Counsel: E. Aghajanyan

February 23, 2021

Yerevan, Armenia

Closed-door court hearing conducted by the head of the special committee of criminal bureau R. Vardanyan [unsure of the formal title of the detective]; henceforth also "Detective," regarding the criminal defendant's mediation on February 18, 2021, case number 69108320.

### **Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri**

**Born on May 3, 1975; ethnically Arab; citizen of the Syrian Arab Republic; married with three minor children; as per his admission, he was convicted in 1988 for an unintentional murder; his place of residence being the northern Syrian village of Atme; he is currently being treated at the special ward of Yerevan's military hospital; he is being charged under the penal code of the Republic of Armenia, Article 389, Section 34-390, part 1, point 1, part 3, point 1, of Article 395, part 3.**

**He has been under arrest since October 30, 2020.**

**Decision on prolonging detainment**

On February 18, 2021, the head of the special committee of criminal bureau [unsure of the formal title of the detective], R. Vardanyan provides the following information on the prolonging of Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkeri's detention.

On September 27, 2020, at around 5:15 p.m., Azerbaijani military authorities, violating the May 12, 1994 trilateral ceasefire treaty signed by the defense ministers of the Republic of Artsakh, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Republic of Armenia, and violating Article 2 point 4 (All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations) of the UN Charter adopted on June 26, 1945 (which came into force on October 24, 1945; Armenia became a UN member on March 2, 1992), violating the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3314 adopted on December 14, 1974 (The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State; An attack by the armed forces of a State on the land, sea or air forces, or marine and air fleets of another State), violating Article 8-bis of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court adopted on June 17, 1998, violating provisions of the International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries adopted on 1989 by the UN, launched a full-scale offensive along the entire line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijani forces, using mortars, rockets, artillery, aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles, committing an act of aggression and unleashing an aggressive war .

Leading an aggressive campaign of war, the armed forces of Azerbaijan planned to achieve a military advantage, violating Articles 48, 51(2), (4) part 3, 52(2) and 85 part 5 of the Additional Protocol 1 of Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, as well as Rule 1, 7, 11, 12 and 54 of Customary international humanitarian law (State practice establishes responsibility regardless of whether the State is a party to the Additional Protocol 1 or the ICC Statute). Using mercenaries formed before their military campaign; using banned methods of warfare; treating civil and military populations indiscriminately, the Azerbaijani military authorities targeted the peaceful civilian population, particularly shelling the city of Stepanakert, as well as the following regions of Nagorno Karabakh: Askeran, Shushi, Kashatagh, Martuni, Martakert, Shahumyan, Hadrut. They also targeted nearby sites, causing loss of human life and destruction of property.

As per this, criminal case number 69108320 has been created under the penal code of the Republic of Armenia, Article 384, [unsure as to the exact penal code being referenced].

During the investigation, facts were obtained pertaining to the Republic of Azerbaijan's intent to use enlisted mercenaries from the very first day of their military campaign.

On October 10, 2020, starting at noon, a humanitarian effort to exchange prisoners of war, other detained individuals, and the bodies of dead soldiers was put into place via a trilateral agreement between the foreign ministers of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

However, the Azerbaijani authorities, ignoring principles concerning:

- the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of good neighborliness and friendly relations and cooperation among States, the necessity of combating the worldwide escalation of acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, provided by the “International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings” adopted by the General Assembly resolution 52/164 on December 16, 1997,
- the inevitability of the implementation of effective measures against acts of terrorism, prosecution and conviction of persons committing such acts under the European Convention on the Prohibition of Terrorism,
- the necessity and importance of strengthening the fight against terrorism and strengthening cooperation for this purpose, as well as preventing the commission of terrorist crimes and recruitment and training for terrorist purposes under the European Convention on the Prohibition of Terrorism,
- provisions of the resolution 49/60 on “Measures to eliminate international terrorism” adopted by the General Assembly on December 9, 1994 and of the treaty on Cooperation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Combating the Financing of Terrorism,

on October 10, 2020 at 12:00 p.m., breaching their obligations under the ceasefire agreement, continued to use mercenaries who, being members of terrorist groups specially recruited to receive monetary compensation, carried out international terrorism with the aim of destabilizing the internal situation of a foreign State by organizing and carrying out explosions, arson and other similar actions. Further, the Azerbaijani authorities continued actions aimed at destroying and damaging people, buildings, structures, roads, communication facilities, communications equipment and other property by committing strikes on a number of settlements of the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh using mortars, rockets, artillery, aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles.

During the criminal investigation, facts were obtained regarding the forcing of the mercenaries by Azerbaijani military authorities to continue the military campaign during the ceasefire in the region of Horadiz, wearing Azerbaijani military uniforms.

The mercenaries organized an offensive at Karakhambeli in particular at 12:05 p.m. on October 10, 2020, after which they engaged in subversive acts and tried to intrude the region of Hadrut.

On October 11, 2020, Azerbaijani forces systematically shelled Stepanakert, Martuni, and Shushi, as well as significant rural areas. That same day, the mercenaries intruded into the town of Hadrut, killing soldiers of the Republic of Artsakh, burned homes, and violently killed civilians, including a woman and her disabled son.

On October 12, 2020, the military tribunal of the Republic of Armenia opened criminal case number 90100520 under Section 389 of the penal code which has continued at the special bureau through October 16, 2020.

On October 16, 2020, a decision was made to combine criminal cases numbered 69108320 and 90100520 under case number 69108320.

During the investigation, it was verified that Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri, not being a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan; not being a permanent resident of the Republic of Azerbaijan; being a citizen of the Syrian Arab Republic; and not being sent by the Syrian Arab Republic or another state to officially be in the Azerbaijan military forces participated in the military campaign of the latter for monetary gain. In particular, in mid-September of 2020, he was given an offer by Abu Hussein who represented the head of the terrorist group Al Hamshat, Abu Hamsha to participate in a military campaign for a monetary prize.

For the above purpose, he traveled to the village of Sheikh Hadit of the Syrian Arabic Republic where Abu Hussein was and expressed his willingness to participate in a military campaign in exchange for \$2,000 USD or the equivalent amount in Turkish lira. Thereafter, on October 17, 2020, Abu Hussein organized a group of 17 individuals and traveled to the checkpoint of Al Ghus in a Kia truck. Here, about 250 mercenaries were gathered and moved to the suburbs of Kilis in trucks, where also present were commanders of the groups Sukur, Al Hamzat, Sultan Murad, and Al Amshat. An individual of the title Colonel Mahmud, serving under Al Amshat terroristic leader Abu Hamsha, selected 250 mercenaries, among them Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri. Five groups were formed.

The same day around 11:00 p.m., the abovementioned five groups with 250 members in each, led by their commander Abu Hamsha, without any identification with the permission of the Turkish border guard services, crossed the Turkish border on foot. Later they were transported by five buses to an airport in Turkey. They crossed the police checkpoint, got on a plane bearing a Turkish flag and were transported to another Turkish airport. The mercenaries were met by 50 Turkish military personnel who escorted Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri and the other members of the group to the plane bearing an Azerbaijani flag, which later (October 18<sup>th</sup>) landed in Azerbaijan. There they were met by more than 30 Azeri military personnel, who were definitely aware of their mission. Later, the terrorists were transported to one of the Azeri military bases. There they stayed for seven days. They were given military uniforms with Azeri badges and weapons. Particularly, each group consisting of 50 members was given anti-tank grenade launchers, Russian “PKS,” and AKs. Their commander, Abu Hamsha was also provided a white Toyota pick-up truck.

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri, with the other members of “Al Amshat,” were placed in a special military camp led by Abu Hamsha. Here, 180 members were already present. 70 members of Al Amshat were either killed or wounded in the military operation. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, around 4 a.m., Abu Hamsha ordered al Shkheri and other 250 members of the group to get ready for an attack. For that purpose, the abovementioned terrorists, accompanied by two Azeri officers positioned themselves near one of the Artsakh border villages. Abu Hamsha

ordered to capture the village and kill all soldiers and civilians. They were instructed not to leave anyone alive, to burn down and blow up all the houses. Thus, to destabilize the situation in Artsakh. Al Shkheri, with the other members of Al Amshat, launched an attack, but they were unexpectedly stopped by the armed forces of the Republic of Artsakh. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, a decision was made to recognize Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri as a suspect and place him under arrest. This decision was approved by the court.

The suspect, Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri, has given a detailed testimony of him being recruited as a mercenary in an international terrorist group, transported from Syrian Arab Republic through Turkish territory and then to Azerbaijan, and being involved in military activities and other criminal deeds. The defendant, Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri, has partially admitted the charges against him, stating that he has not killed anyone during the military operation. During the investigation, the body implementing the criminal proceedings has forwarded a request to Syrian authorities emphasizing the necessity of the investigative and judicial procedures. In addition, an assignment has been given to the special unit at the National Security Bureau of the Republic of Armenia to continue intelligent operations. The body, implementing the criminal proceedings, has obtained sufficient information regarding the 12 international terrorist groups involved in the aggression against the Republic of Artsakh as well as personal data of 150 mercenaries. Additional information has been obtained of 4000 terrorists. The accused Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri, has gone through several investigative and judicial procedures including forensic lab tests of blood, hair, and urine.

Based on facts, the investigative body has concluded to recognize the head of “Sultan Suleman Shah,” Muhammad Al-Jasimi (Nicknamed: Abu Hamsha), as a culprit under Article 38-389, 390 part 3 point 1,2, 390 part 1 and 3. The latter has been announced as wanted. A detention will be imposed as a preventive measure. In addition, the investigative body has concluded to charge three other terrorists with the criminal acts under Article 389, 390 part 3 point 1, 395 part 3 of the Criminal Code of the RA. A detention will also be imposed as a preventive measure.

In order to secure the completeness, versatility, and objectivity, of the criminal case investigation. The results of operational intelligence measures are needed. It is very important to clarify several essential circumstances to implement other necessary investigative and judicial procedures. For all this, an additional month is needed. Thus, a need arose to extend the accused Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri’s detention period. Considering the volume and the particular complexity of the investigative and judicial procedures, as well as the collection, inspection, and the evaluation of the facts pertaining Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri and his possible accomplices, the whole range of their criminal acts and to make a legal assessment, an additional month is needed. Meanwhile, Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri’s detention time ends on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Considering the above circumstances and the facts obtained during the investigation, there might be a serious concern that Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri upon release from custody can hide from justice and commit new criminal acts. He is accused of criminal acts that are punishable by minimum 1 year to life imprisonment. In other words, the conditions and grounds for applying pre-trial detention to accused, still exist.

1.2. The investigator, guided by the Articles 135,136 and 285 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Armenia made a motion to extend the pre-trial detention period of the accused by one month.

1.3. During the court session, investigator K. Ghazaryan announced the request insisted on it and asked to grant it.

1.4. The public defender objected, stating that there was no reasonable suspicion. Furthermore, large-scale works are mentioned in the petition, but the completion of the preliminary investigation was not mentioned. Therefore, the mediation has a formal nature.

1.5. According to the investigator's protocol dated February 23, 2021, the accused-Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri, who was in the Yerevan-Kentron Penitentiary Institution of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia, being informed about the place and time of the court session, said that he did not wish to personally attend the court session and asked to hold a court session in his absence.

2. After listening to the parties and studying the materials submitted to the court, the court finds the following:

2.1. According to Article 27 of the RA Constitution:

Everyone shall have the right to personal liberty. No one may be deprived of personal liberty otherwise than in the following cases and as prescribed by law (...)

(4) for the purpose of bringing a person before a competent authority where there exists a reasonable suspicion that the person has committed a criminal offence, or a justified necessity of preventing the committal of a criminal offence by the person or his or her fleeing after having done so (...)

According to Article 135 part 1 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code:

Preventive measure shall be executed by the court, prosecutor, investigator and inquiry body only when the material obtained for the criminal case provides sufficient reason to assume that the suspect or the accused may:

- 1) hide from the body which carries out the criminal proceeding;
- 2) inhibit the pre-trial process of investigation or court proceeding in any way, particularly by means of illegal influence of the persons involved in the proceeding, concealment and falsification of the materials relevant to the case, negligence of the subpoena without any reasonable explanation;
- 3) commit an action forbidden by Criminal law;
- 4) avoid the responsibility and the imposed punishment;
- 5) oppose the execution of the verdict.

According to Article 136 part 1 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code:

The preventive measure shall be executed upon the order of the prosecutor, investigator, inquiry body or the court. The decision of the body which carries out the criminal proceeding shall be substantiated; it shall indicate the crime in which the suspect or the accused is suspected and prove the necessity of execution of one of the preventive measure measures.

According to Article 139 part 1 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code:

If the investigator and the inquiry body find it necessary to extend the term of the detainment of the accused, they shall submit a reasonable, substantiated explanation for such a decision to the prosecutor no later than 10 days before the expiration of the detainment period. If the court agrees with this decision to extend the detainment period, an appropriate decision is made no later than 5 days before the expiration of the detainment period prescribed by the court.

According to Article 151 part 1 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code:

Upon necessity the preventive measure can be substituted by the body which carries out the criminal proceeding.

According to Article 285 part 1 of the RA Criminal Procedure Code:

When necessary to use arrest as a means to secure the appearance or extend the arrest, the prosecutor or the investigator appeals to the court to use this measure or to extend the arrest. The decree concerning the appeal must indicate the motives and grounds of arresting the accused. The decree is attached to materials supporting the justification of the appeal.

The Cassation court of the RA in its decision *AVD/0022/06/08* adopted on October 31, 2008 stated:

26. Based on the comparison and interpretation of Legislative and Precedent Regulations on the extension of the period of detention, the Court of Cassation considers that the period of detention of the accused may be extended if the following two conditions are simultaneously met:

- a) the grounds and conditions for the arrest as a preventive measure continue to exist or new grounds for the detention of a person have appeared;
- b) the body conducting the examination of the case has shown the necessary diligence to ensure the progress of the case;

As for the gravity of the crime that the person is accused of, although it is essential in determining the probable behavior of the accused, it should be assessed in the context of the other circumstances of the case, in particular, those specified in part 3 of Article 135 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Armenia. In this regard, the investigation may also consider the nature of possible investigative actions that have not yet been carried out, as well as the possibility of the accused's influence on the investigation and its objectivity.

According to the protocol of the investigator, the accused being held at Yerevan Central Prison, after being informed about the place and time of the court session, stated that he did not



want to appear in person at the session and asked to hold it in his absence. Subject to judicial review, the investigator's petition to extend of detention of the accused, Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri, by one month was granted. The judge considers that reasonable suspicion regarding the actions attributed to the accused continues to exist, which is substantiated by the materials presented to the court, including the following testimony of Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri made on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

"I was born in Syrian Arab Republic, Hama Region, in the village of Totah. I Lived there till 2016. In October or November of 2016, our village was shelled by ISIS. I had a motorcycle. I took my wife Nazha Haled Stephy and my three teenage children and moved to the Synjar Region where my uncle lived with his family. We stayed there for about a month. ISIS was expanding. They reached the village where we were staying. We gathered our belongings and moved to Atmi village near the town of Sarmad. This was my last residential address. We lived in a camp, in tents, provided by different countries. My wife and my three teenage children, 12-year-old Yamen, 11-year-old Bilal, and 9-year-old Rabii, lived with me in the village of Atmi. Before my arrival here, a month before October 18 of this year, we heard from the young people at the camp that there was a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Artsakh. There was a prior conversation, with a person named Abu Hussein 23 sent by Abu Hamsha, the commander and chief of Al Amshat group. There was a suggestion as to who would go to Libya to participate in military exercises in exchange for a sum equivalent of \$1,500 in Turkish currency. Abu Hussein 23 is my uncle's friend. He offered to recruit young people, saying that if there were individuals who wanted to join, they should go to him and get registered. My neighbor Hussein said that he decided to accept the offer. He asked me if I would like to join him. I told him that I would think about it and let him know. Next day, I met Hussien and told him that I was willing to go. We went together to the village of Sheikh Hadid to meet Abu Hussein 23. It was the first time I met him. My neighbor Hussien and I got registered. There were ten more people there and some of them arrived to get registered. The others were on guard duty. Hussien and I, with 6 other people, stayed at Abu Hussein 23's place for two days. Then Abu Hussein 23 came to inform that we had to move to the suburbs of Kilis in Turkey, where the command staff of different groups was located, 'Sukur,' 'Hamzat,' 'Sultan Murad Amshat,' in particular. In the village of Sheikh Hadid, my neighbor Hussein and I were involved in activities. We were just waiting. However, the rest of the registered were conducting combat training and military exercises. Abu Hussein 23 is about 25 years old. He's short, about 150-160cm tall. His right leg is prosthetic below the knee. I cannot recall any other details for now. However, if I see his photo, I will recognize him. Two days later, my neighbor and I with 17 other people were transported in a Kia truck to the checkpoint called Al Ghus. About 250 people were transported from many different regions. We were all transported to a settlement adjacent to the city of Kilis where the commander chief of 'Suleman Shah' group Abu Hamsha was present. He is dark-skinned of average height with a black beard, about 35 years old. 'Sukur,' 'Hamzat,' 'Sultan Murad Amshat,' and other significant group commanders were also there. 250 people were selected, divided into 5 groups, 50 individuals in each of them. 10 people were sent back. They did not meet the requirements. The city of Kilis is on the border between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Syria. There were no Turks in the area. We are all given civilian uniforms and sport shoes. In the evening, they brought sandwiches and told us that we were going to start 10:30-11 p.m. The five groups were lined up in military order. We were not informed about our

destination. They just told us to walk towards the Turkish border. So, we crossed the border. We were told beforehand not to carry anything, no passports, no cigarettes, no lighters, and no cellphones. The border guards did not tell us anything. No questions were asked. They were aware of our border crossing. Abu Hamsha had an arrangement with the border guards. When we crossed the border, we met the Turkish patrol police, who were standing all along the road. There were five buses parked at the border checkpoint. We got on the buses and were transported to a Turkish airport. This was my first visit to Turkey. It was a large civilian airport. There were two Turkish police officers at the entrance. No questions were asked, no documents were checked. We saw a Turkish flag on the airplane. We got on the plane, and it took off. After a one hour of flight, we landed in another Turkish airport. We were met by 50 Turkish soldiers. We immediately passed through them and boarded a civilian airplane bearing the flag of Azerbaijan. There was an interpreter on board who was giving flight instructions in Arabic. On October 18<sup>th</sup> in the morning, after a two-hour flight, we landed in Azerbaijan. There were both civilian and military aircraft at the airport. We were met by more than 30 soldiers wearing Azeri military uniforms. Those soldiers knew who we were. Again, no questions were asked, no documents were checked. From there, we were transported to the Azerbaijan Armed Forces Academy. We went upstairs where we were given a bed, a blanket, and a pillow. We rested a while. Then they took us to the downstairs canteen. We spent the night there. Next day, October 19<sup>th</sup>, we had breakfast in the morning. Later, they took our photos with cellphones and put our names on them. Those people were Arabs. We waited there for 7 days for uniforms and weapons. The uniforms were delivered first. Those were Azerbaijani Armed Forces uniforms, green and black. As for the weapons they were of Russian production. I was given an AK. During our stay at the Azeri Military Academy, Abu Hamsha was with us. He was given a white Toyota pick-up truck. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, when we received the uniforms and arms, the Azeri soldiers told us that we were going to fight against the Armenians. I also must mention that there were also soldiers wearing Turkish uniforms. Those were mostly specialized and attached to artillery means. Among them were both officers and soldiers. Two hours later, we were transported to a military facility like the one at the academy. Then we were escorted to the basement of the building where we were given beds and bedding. We stayed there for 3 days. There were both Turkish and Azeri officers and soldiers in that facility. Abu Hamsha was staying in a separate room. After three days, we were transported to another location 50-60 km away. It was a military facility in the wilderness, surrounded by hills. About 250 Arab mercenaries who were also members of Abu Hamsha's group were already there. Some of them (70) had been either wounded or killed in battles against the Armenians. We learned from the mercenaries that they were from different Syrian towns, particularly from Idlib, Maaret, Misrin, and Azaz. There were about 430 mercenaries including our group. Abu Hamsha had forbidden them to talk about the wounded and killed. Anyone who did not follow the instructions could be punished by getting shot in the leg or knee. I learned that Abu Hamsha had already punished someone that way. Needless to say, we all knew from the very first day that we were going to fight against the Armenians. Two days later, we were told to get ready to participate in a military operation. In the morning at about 4:00 a.m., we got on Toyota pick-ups and left. There were 200 of us. After covering about 100 km, we turned right and stopped. The whole way, we were accompanied by two Azeri soldiers. Our group of 200 was under the command of a Syrian Arab named Sheikh Ibrahim. He was wearing civilian clothing and carrying a gun. The locals brought

us bread and drinking water. The place was being shelled by the Armenians. Sheikh Ibrahim divided us into 8 groups, each group led by a ringleader. The group that I was in was led by a man named Rauad. We were instructed to keep 5-meter distance between each other and walked towards the nearby forest. We walked through the forest towards a meadow where the Armenians were launching their rockets. Then we went down to a deep valley where a brook was flowing. Sheik Ibrahim and the Azeri instructors told us not to advance but stay where we were. They instructed us to walk down the valley, saying that there was an abandoned Armenian village 1 km away. We were told to occupy the village. They did not come with us. We were also instructed to kill all the Armenians remaining there, not to leave anyone alive, soldiers or civilians. When we approached the village, the Armenians opened fire from both sides of the valley. Rauad and the leader of the other group, Abu Al Jamajem, ordered us to withdraw. We did so, two of us were wounded. We continued to withdraw. Two more were wounded and two others were killed. Most probably they were left there. We managed to get out of the valley at dusk. We had all scattered, we were lost. We heard voices and saw Shiekh Ibrahim and the Azeri instructors. Sheikh Ibrahim told us to walk that way. After walking a while, we got lost again. We sat down and waited a little. After walking a while, we got lost again. We sat down and waited a little. Soon the other members of the group joined us. The Azeri instructors were guiding us but they got confused too. Minutes later, we were back under fire. So, we had to hide in the woods. I got wounded in the arm and leg. I asked for help, but my friends ignored and abandoned me. After waiting for an hour and a half, I decided to follow them. I left my weapon and cartridge case there and started walking up the hill. When I reached the other side of the hill, I saw an Armenian village and decided to walk in that direction. It was already morning. When I was close to the village, I saw Armenian soldiers. I approached them and asked for water. They laid me on the ground, searched me, put me in a car and took me away. It was the morning of October 30<sup>th</sup>. The Armenians did not beat or insult me. I am grateful to them for healing my wounds, providing food and clothing.” - Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkheri

Question (Armenian Court): Please answer. Have you or other mercenaries under Abu Hamsha used any narcotics or psychoactive substances during the military operations? If yes, please give some details.

Al Shkheri: Abu Hamsha used to say if there are any cowards or weak-hearted people among you, let them take these tablets. After taking them, people were becoming fearless. I have personally not taken any tablets. The others have.

Question: For participating in military operations against the Armenians, have you been offered money? If yes, what was the sum offered? Please give some details.

Al Shkheri: Abu Hamsha told me personally that my monthly salary was \$2,000. The monthly salary of others was also \$2,000. I did not get paid yet. We were supposed to get paid by the end of the month. However, they were being 5-10 or 15 days late with the payment.

Question: It follows from your testimony that you were informed a month before that you were going to participate in the war against the Armenians, before October 18<sup>th</sup> of this year. In other words, you were informed about it in September, weren't you?

Al Shkheri: Yes, I received an offer in mid-September against the Armenians on behalf of Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Question: Were the Turkish Armed Forces supporting the Azeri Armed Forces in the war against the Armenians since September 27<sup>th</sup>?

Al Shkheri: Yes, the Turkish Armed Forces were supporting the Azeri Armed Forces in the war against the Armenians starting September 27<sup>th</sup>. In particular, they supported with artillery and led military operations.

Question: In the mentioned military operation, were any drones used by the Azeri Armed Forces? If yes, by whom were they governed?

Al Shkheri: Yes, drones were used by the Azeri Armed Forces against the Armenians. They were governed by the Turkish military personnel.

Question: Are “Suleman Shah,” “Sukur,” “Hamzat,” “Sultan Murad,” and “Amshat” terroristic groups? If yes, are they armed and do they have any intentions to carry out terrorist acts? If yes, did the Azeri authorities’ intend to use the Abu Hamsha’s group in which you were also involved to carry out terrorist activities in order to destabilize the internal situation of the Republic of Artsakh? In particular, arson, explosions, and other actions to destroy the population.

Al Shkheri: Yes, “Suleman Shah,” “Sukur,” “Hamzat,” “Sultan Murad,” and “Amshat” are terroristic groups. They are armed and have intentions to carry out terrorist acts against the Republic of Artsakh. As you mentioned, the involvement of our terrorist groups by Azerbaijan was aimed at destabilizing the internal situation of the Republic of Artsakh by arson, explosions, and destruction of people, giving orders of leaving no one alive.

Question: Please provide the Abu Hamsha group members’ cell phone numbers.

Al Shkheri: I do not remember any phone numbers.

Question: Were there any acquaintances or relatives in Abu Hamsha’s group?

Al Shkheri: Yes, there were; my cousin Bashar Ahmad Al Shkher and one of my relatives Amer Muhammed al Hamad. They were alive.

Question: If you see the photos, will you recognize the locations of Abu Hamsha group?

Al Shkheri: Yes, if I see the photos, I will.

Question: Please reveal where did the financing of the terrorist group mentioned by you come from, which you and other members of the groups should have been paid from?

Al Shkheri: The financing of the terrorist groups came from Turkey. The financing was obtained through Abu Hamsha. He distributed the money. I know he is a rich man. Let me mention that the weapons for the terrorist groups were also provided by Turkey. I would like to appeal to my compatriot not to leave their country, not to go to the warzone regardless of the conditions. I regret what I did. I was trapped. I don’t want anyone to be in my situation. Any person who sees or hears

me and participates in battles outside his country for another country, I would advise to return to his homeland and find an honorable job in a fair way.

According to Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri's testimony of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, after arriving in the Republic of Azerbaijan, they spent 7 days at the military academy, after which they stayed in a place called Hazmat for three days. In addition to their 250 members, there were also members of "Sultan Murad" in the mentioned place. The total number was 500 or more. Abu Hamsha led the group named "Suleman Shah." "Sultan Murad" is a separate group that was formed in 2014-2015. The leaders of the terrorist groups were also located in the sites adjacent to the city of Kilis, each of them having its own fenced military units. "Suleman Shah" is the same "Al Amshat" group led by Abu Hamsha. The salaries were paid in Turkish lira. In the camp where they lived, Swedish or American mobile phones were used, with cards they could only use the WhatsApp application. The court notes that the remaining conditions for choosing detention as a preventive measure continue to exist. Referring to the grounds of detention, Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri is charged with criminal acts under Article 389 (12-20 years or life imprisonment), Article 34-390, part 1, point 1, part 3, point 1 (13-20 years or life imprisonment), Article 395, part 3 (imprisonment of a period of 5-10 years) of the Criminal code of the Republic of Armenia. The crimes attributed to Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri are directed against the peace and security of mankind. Large-scale investigative and judicial research are being conducted regarding the circumstances to be clarified in the case.

The court considers that if the accused Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri remains at liberty at the given stage of the investigation of the case, the possibility of him hiding from the body conducting the proceedings remains high. The factual data obtained in the criminal case prove that Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri was allegedly a member of a terrorist group. He expressed his willingness to participate in military operations in return for material compensation and to carry out operations aimed at the execution of the order not to leave anyone alive. In such conditions, if Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri remains at liberty, the probability of hiding from the body implementing the criminal proceedings, as well as of the latter using his connections in terrorist groups to commit new crimes, including other crimes against peace and humanity, remains high. Therefore, the petition of the investigator is fully justified and subject to satisfaction.

The court, evaluating the necessary diligence shown by the body investigating the case, notes that a reasonable number of investigative and judicial actions were performed during the period of detention of the accused Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri. They are cited in the petition of the investigator and are supported by the attached materials. Consequently, the investigating body has shown the necessary diligence to ensure the course of investigation of the case. Based on the above, and guided by Articles 138, 139, 173, 285, and 287 of the penal code of the Republic of Armenia, the Court decided to:

1. Grant the petition of the investigator to extend the period of detention of the accused Muhhrab Muhammad al Shkheri in criminal case No. 69108320 by one month until March 28, 2021.
2. To entrust the execution of the decision to the head of the relevant detention center.

3. To hand over the copies of this decision to the investigator, the prosecutor, the accused, and the defense attorney.

4. The decision can be appealed in the order of re-examination in the Court of Appeal of the Republic of Armenia within five days from the moment of its publication.

Judge M. Martirosyan

# Exhibit 38

## Syrian militant detained in Armenia says Suleyman-Shah chief Abu Hamsha brought them via Turkey



YEREVAN, NOVEMBER 1, ARMENPRESS. The Armenian Committee of Investigations released the video from the questioning of Mhirab Muhammad Al Shayir, the Syrian militant who was recruited as a mercenary and sent to Azerbaijan to fight against Artsakh.

“A man named Abu Hussein 23 told me that we must go to an area near the town of Kilis, where the command of various rebel groups is located. Two days later we were taken to another location, where the chief commander of the Suleyman Shah Brigade, a man with the nom de guerre Abu Hamsha was located,” Al Shayir said.

He said that 250 rebels were chosen and divided into groups.





He said they reached Kilis, a town on the border between Syria and Turkey, on October 17, 2020. They were then ordered to cross into Turkey on foot.

“At the Turkish border checkpoint the border guards didn’t say anything, they didn’t ask us anything. They definitely knew that they had to let us through. The commander by the name of Abu Hamsha led us through the border. Then we came across a Turkish police patrol cruisers, and again they didn’t say anything. We were taken to a civilian airport on buses. Around an hour later the plane landed in another Turkish airport,” he said.

There, they were met by more than 50 Turkish soldiers, who gave them Azeri military fatigues. On October 18, their airplane bearing the Azeri flag landed in Azerbaijan and the fighters were taken to a military facility where again Turkish military officers, mostly gunners, were stationed.

“We were told that we would fight against Armenians. In the morning, with around 200 others we were driven for nearly 100 kilometers. We were divided into groups and a commander was appointed. We were ordered to capture the nearby Armenian village and kill everywhere there. I was wounded during the attack, I asked for help but my troops abandoned me,” he said, adding that commander Abu Hamsha had told them to take drugs if they were afraid. The fighters were promised a 2000-dollar monthly payment.

On October 31, the Armenian authorities placed Al Shayir under [arrest](#) on charges of international terrorism, gross violations of international humanitarian law norm during armed conflicts (murder, attacking civilians, indiscriminate attacks), and his participation in a military conflict as a mercenary.



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Editing and Translating by Stepan Kocharyan

Section

Society



# Exhibit 39

🕒 This article was published more than **3 years ago**

*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

**MIDDLE EAST**

# Deaths of Syrian mercenaries show how Turkey, Russia could get sucked into Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

↪ 📌 🗨️ 149

By [Kareem Fahim](#), [Isabelle Khurshudyan](#) and Zakaria Zakaria

October 14, 2020 at 9:44 a.m. EDT

ISTANBUL — Families gathered around a refrigerated truck at a Syrian-Turkish border post, waiting earlier this month for the drivers to dispense their awful cargo: the bodies of 52 Syrian men, killed in a war 600 miles away.

The dead were mercenaries, recruited by Turkish-backed militias in Syria to fight on behalf of Azerbaijan against Armenia, relatives said. They were deployed as shock troops, to claw back scraps of territory in the contested - Nagorno-Karabakh enclave.

“They went to break the borders,” said a cousin of Mahmoud Najjar, a 38-year-old Syrian fighter. The cousin, interviewed by telephone, said Najjar’s body in the cold truck was marked with the number 12.

The deaths of Syrian fighters have raised alarms about how this decades-old conflict could now rapidly worsen as it draws in outside powers like Turkey and its rival Russia and potentially destabilizes neighbors like Iran and Georgia.

Turkey has denied sending Syrian fighters to aid Azerbaijan, its longtime ally. But relatives of two fighters — Najjar and his nephew — said in interviews that monthly salaries were promised by the Turkish-supported militias and that the fighters flew to Azerbaijan from southern Turkey.

In recent months, Turkey has sought to project its military might across much of its neighborhood with new vigor. Turkey’s enthusiastic backing of the Azerbaijani war effort — and provision of military assistance, including armed drones — has emboldened Azerbaijan, situating Turkey at the center of the conflict and giving Ankara standing, it hopes, to weigh in on any peace settlement.

The civilian death toll has risen as cities and towns in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave in Azerbaijani territory, are pummeled with growing frequency by weapons acquired from a diverse cast of suppliers, including Turkey, Russia and Israel. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, in a statement Friday, cited reports that at least 53 civilians, including children, had been killed since fighting erupted last month.

Journalists in Azerbaijani territory on the edge of Nagorno-Karabakh have reported on rocket and artillery attacks on at least three towns. Azerbaijan's assault on Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, has included the use of cluster munitions manufactured by Israel, according to a report last week by researchers at Amnesty International, who examined footage of the munitions.

The group, responding to claims early in the fighting that Armenia had directed rocket fire at the Azerbaijani city of Ganja, said it had confirmed Armenia's use of a Russian rocket artillery system but was unable to determine what had been targeted. Azerbaijan said Sunday that a subsequent attack on Ganja had killed nine civilians. Armenia's Defense Ministry called the claim "absolutely false" and accused Azerbaijani forces of shelling Nagorno-Karabakh.

The United States, along with France and Russia, released an Oct. 5 statement saying that the "disproportionate nature of such attacks" constitutes an "unacceptable threat to the stability of the region."

On Friday, Russia's Foreign Ministry hosted cease-fire talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia, aimed at winning at least a brief respite from the fighting and allowing the warring parties to exchange prisoners and the bodies of the dead. A truce began on Saturday, but a day later, Armenia and Azerbaijan were accusing each other of violating it amid reports of fresh attacks.

Ibrahim Kalin, an adviser to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, voiced doubts that a pause in the fighting would be a prelude to an armistice. "Yes to a cease-fire, but a cease-fire must be sustainable," he said in an interview with the Al Jazeera news channel. "The only way to make it sustainable is to talk about Armenia's occupation of [Azerbaijani] lands."

The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh has smoldered since the late 1980s, when Armenia and Azerbaijan were both republics of the Soviet Union. The enclave's ethnic Armenian population sought to unite with Armenia and declared independence from Azerbaijan. War broke out after the Soviet Union collapsed, killing up to 30,000 people before a cease-fire was declared in 1994.

The conflict has erupted several times since, including in 2016 and in July. The latest fighting, which began Sept. 27, represents the worst flare-up in decades.

The deployment of Syrian mercenaries has repeated a pattern from Libya, where Turkey and Russia are fighting on opposite sides of the civil war. Most of the Syrian fighters in Libya have been hired by Turkey, which sponsors militias inside Syria opposed to the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. A Kremlin-backed security firm operating in Libya, for its part, has brought over Syrian fighters allied with Assad.

Turkish officials have portrayed their country's sprawling foreign engagements — in northern Iraq, Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan — as part of Turkey's zealous promotion of its security and energy interests. Erdogan's critics, however, say there is also an attempt to distract from his government's domestic vulnerabilities, including a plummeting economy, and shore up domestic support among his nationalist allies.

Russia has walked a fine diplomatic line between Azerbaijan and Armenia, selling arms to both for years. Armenia, which spends about a quarter as much as Azerbaijan on defense, also stands to benefit from Russia's protection under the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russian-led military alliance among six former Soviet states that does not include Azerbaijan.

President Vladimir Putin's government has given mixed signals about whether it will intervene, saying that Russia would fulfill its treaty obligations to defend Armenia proper but that its obligations did not extend to fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh territory.

Moscow's strongest words so far have been to condemn Azerbaijan's use of Syrian mercenaries. Russia's foreign intelligence chief, Sergei Naryshkin, warned last week that the region could become a launchpad for Islamist militants to enter Russia.

Erdogan, speaking to members of his political party Wednesday, again denied that Turkey was sending Syrian fighters to the war. "They have work in their own land. They won't go there," he said, adding that Turkey was "ready to give all kinds of support to our [Azerbaijani] brothers and sisters, and we will do so again."

The Syrian mercenaries, recruited from various Turkish-backed militias, have given detailed accounts from the front lines that portray a grinding battle.

Mahmoud Najjar's cousin said he and his family received updates on the fighting from Syrians traveling with Najjar's company who had international phone lines. The cousin spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid angering the mercenaries' recruiters in Syria.

Najjar, who once worked in a textile factory in Aleppo, had more recently been employed as a security guard for the local court in Marea, in northern Syria. With two children and struggling to make ends meet, he noticed when other young Syrian men, recruited by Turkey to fight in Libya, came home flush with cash. When Najjar's 18-year-old nephew offered him the opportunity to fight in Azerbaijan for \$2,000 a month, he jumped at the chance, his cousin said.

"Money is the only reason," the cousin said. "Who wants to go to Azerbaijan? Who even knows where Azerbaijan is?"

Najjar, his nephew and dozens of their comrades seemed unprepared for what was to come.

They flew out of southern Turkey, the cousin said. On their first day in Azerbaijan, they were given uniforms with light green shades of camouflage.

The next day, they were sent to the front. “The area was heavily fortified by Armenians,” the cousin said. The Syrian mercenaries were largely on their own in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by languages, history and grievances they did not understand. They were accompanied by three Azerbaijani guides.

They spent nine hours walking up a mountain, the cousin said. Najjar was sent to clear a building but was killed by a sniper’s bullet that tore off the top of his head, according to the cousin, who provided a picture of Najjar’s body to The Washington Post on the condition that it not be published. Najjar’s nephew was killed the same day.

The bodies sat overnight where they fell because it was too dangerous to retrieve them.

Khurshudyan reported from Moscow and Zakaria from Doha, Qatar.

# Exhibit 40



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# SNA mercenaries in Azerbaijan: the Visual Evidence

 akmckeeper  October 26, 2020  article



*Bu metin Dünyadan Çeviri tarafından [Türkçeye](#) çevrilmiştir.*

In late September 2020, unconfirmed reports began to circulate on social media alleging that members of the Syrian National Army (SNA), Turkey's proxy forces in northern Syria, had been sent to Azerbaijan. Initially, as there was no definitive evidence and there

appeared little reason for Turkey to send mercenaries to Azerbaijan, a country with a sizable and well-equipped military not engaged in any combat at the time, these reports seemed to be nothing more than unsubstantiated rumors. This changed the morning of September 27th, when Azerbaijan launched major military operations against the Armenian-controlled territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. In the follow days and weeks, a number of videos and images, in addition to testimonies given by fighters present, were published by local Syrian and international media outlets. While Azerbaijani and Turkish partisans have continued to vigorously deny the presence of SNA fighters in the conflict, analysis of the visual evidence clearly demonstrates the validity of these reports. Below I have compiled this information, beginning with the strongest examples, with the intentions of publishing it all in one place for others to examine.



## **Geolocations of Syrian National Army fighters in Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh**

The first fully confirmed media showing SNA fighters in Azerbaijan was geolocated to the town of Horadiz, several kilometers from both the Armenian frontlines and the Iranian border. [This video](#) shows a group of fighters listening to what was identified as a song about SNA faction Furqat al-Sultan Murad, while speaking to the camera in Arabic. Their uniforms, later seen in all media of SNA in Azerbaijan, have an aqua tint and, previously had never been worn by combatants on any side of the Syrian Civil War.

---



**Riam Dalati** @Dalatrm · Oct 3, 2020

The fighters, who are playing Sultan Murad Brigade chants on their radio, continue to joke around.

'We're at the [border] crossing with #Armenia' One says, before another one corrects 'It's Libya, Libya'.

Geolo experts

@JulianRoepcke @obretix can perhaps settle their differences

4

15

25



**Julian Röpkcke**

@JulianRoepcke

Replying to @Dalatrm and @obretix

Gotcha b\*tches! Um, sorry. Noble fighters of the Free Syrian Army - the best of the best, reis Erdogan decided to fight for a better world.

Not in Syria, but why would they care?! ... ok, sorry.

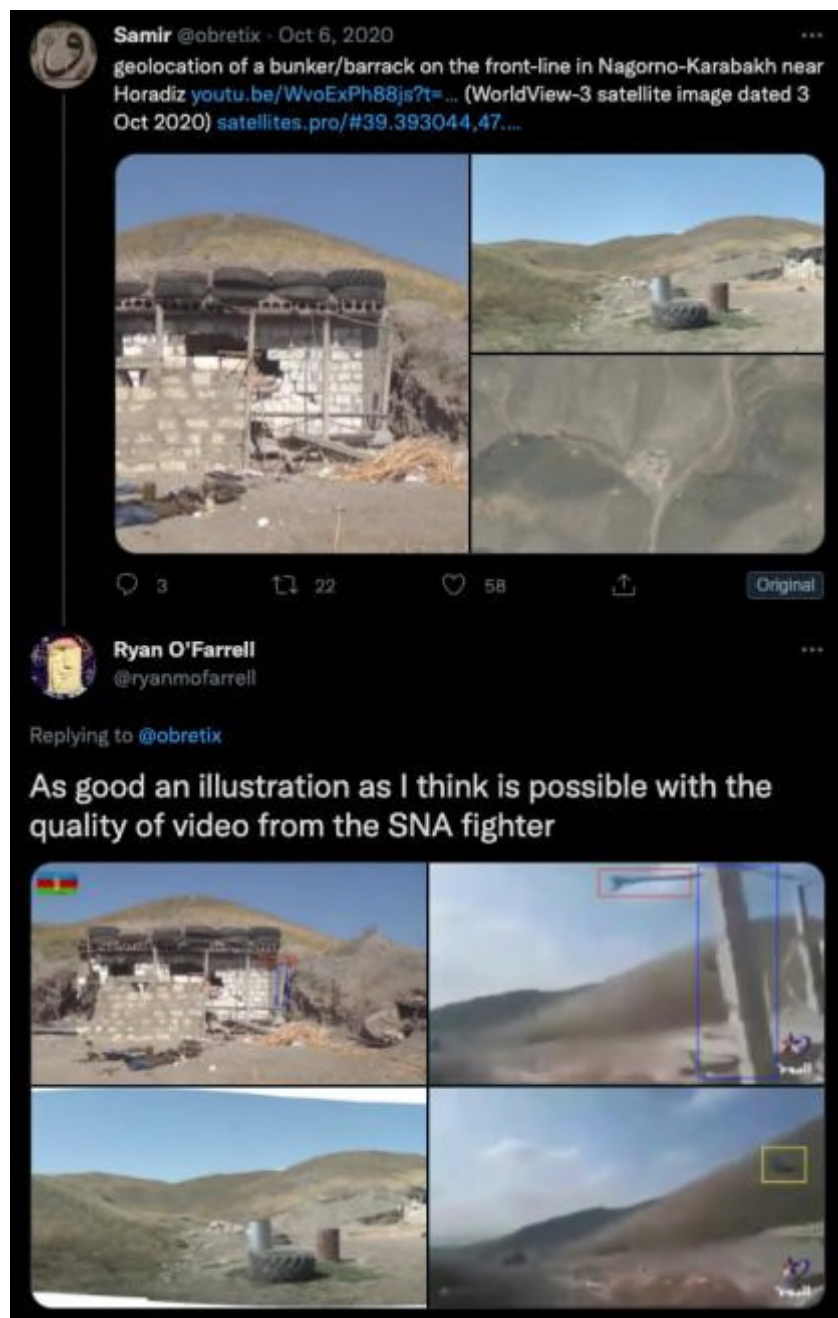
#NewsMap

SNA mercenaries at an Azeri base in Horadiz, 6 km from the #Karabakh front.



(Source)

Another video was published the same day, filmed by a Syrian fighter named Mustafa Qanti showing himself and another on several frontline locations, under fire from Armenian artillery. One of the three scenes contained in this video was shown to be shot at the same location as a video published by the official Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense several days later.

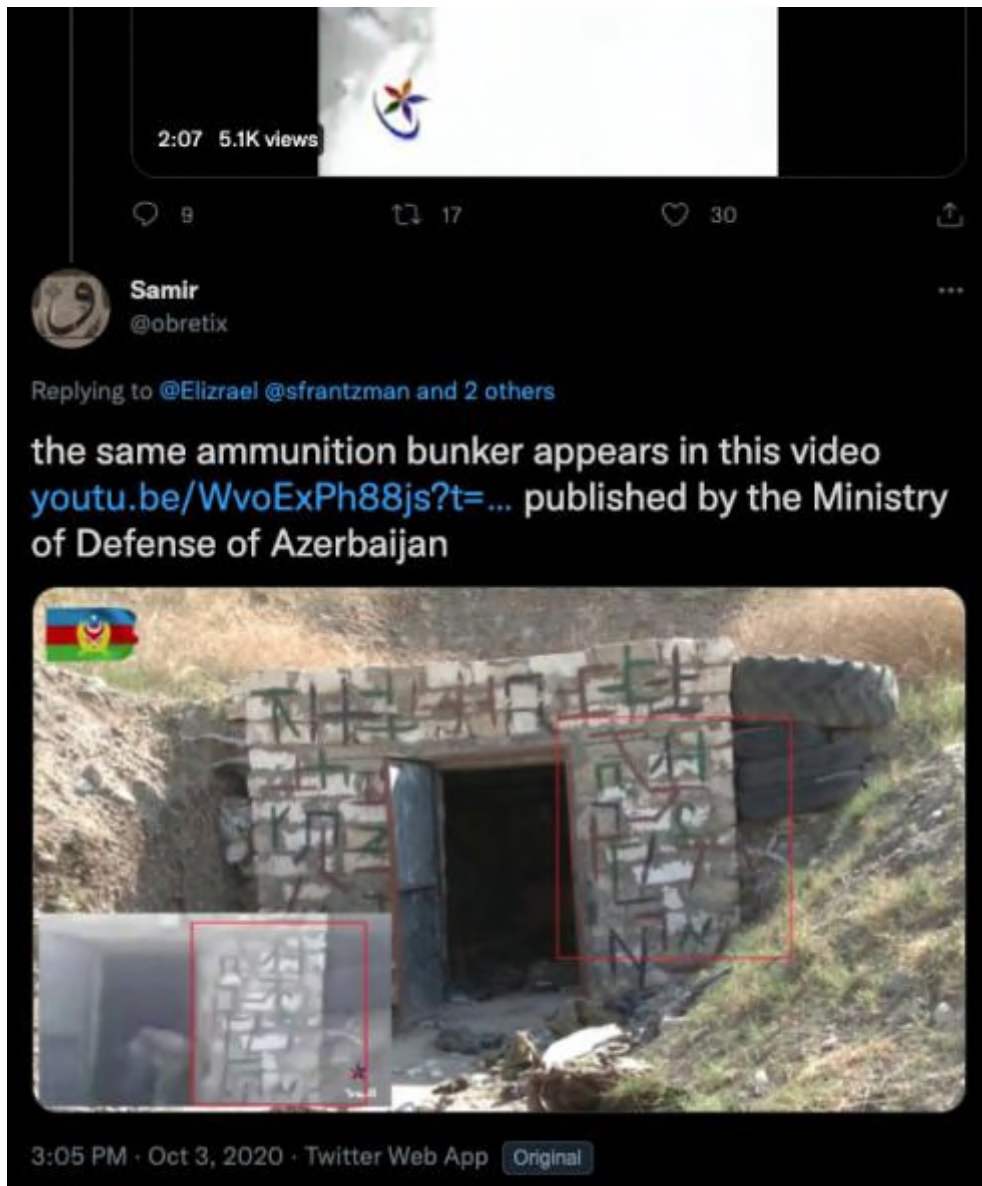




(Source)

Another scene in the video, showing the interior and exterior of a captured Armenian ammunition bunker, was similarly matched to an Azerbaijani MoD video.





(Source)

Stills from the interior of both videos show an almost identical configuration of ammunition boxes.





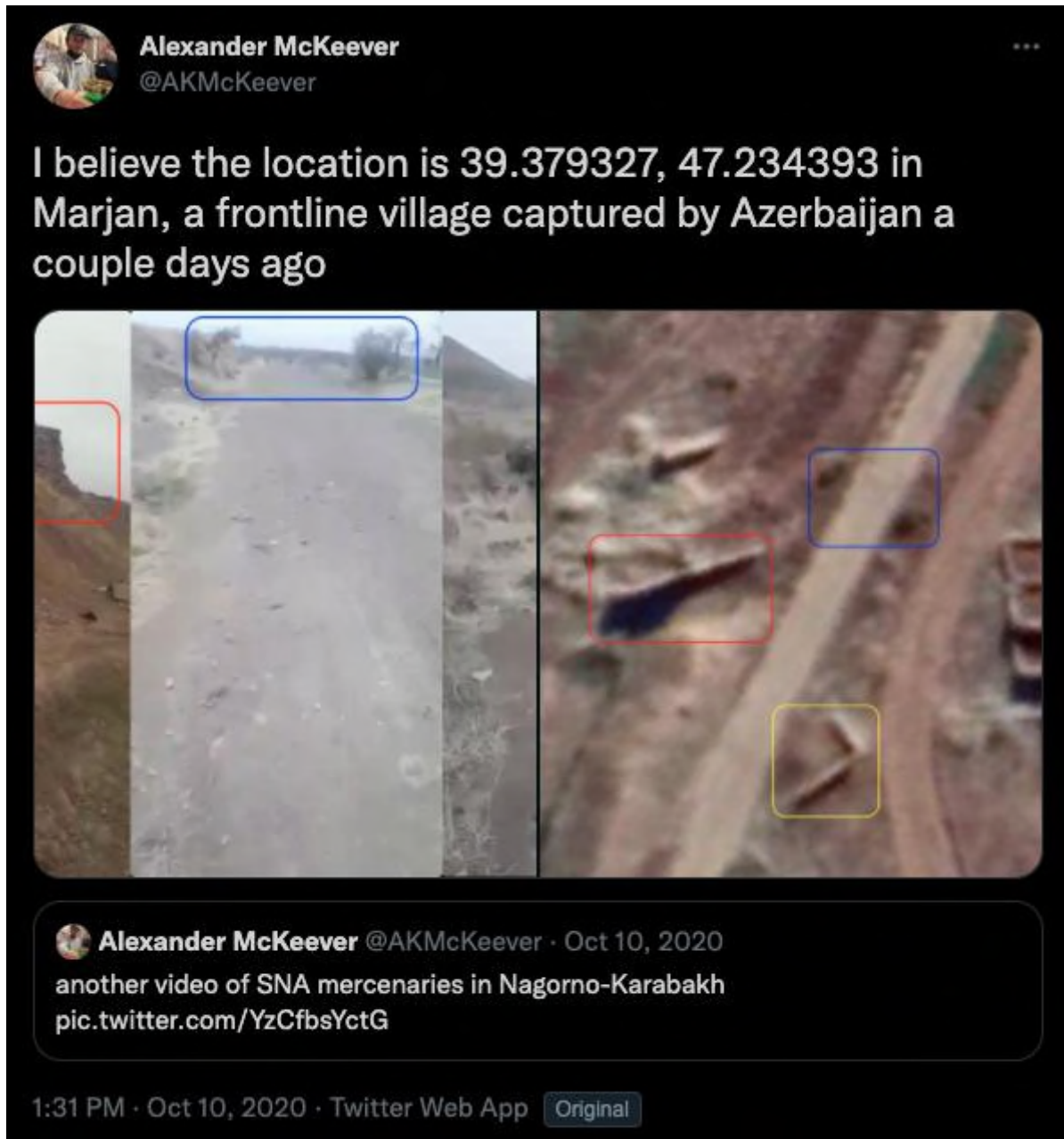
Still from the video filmed by an SNA fighter



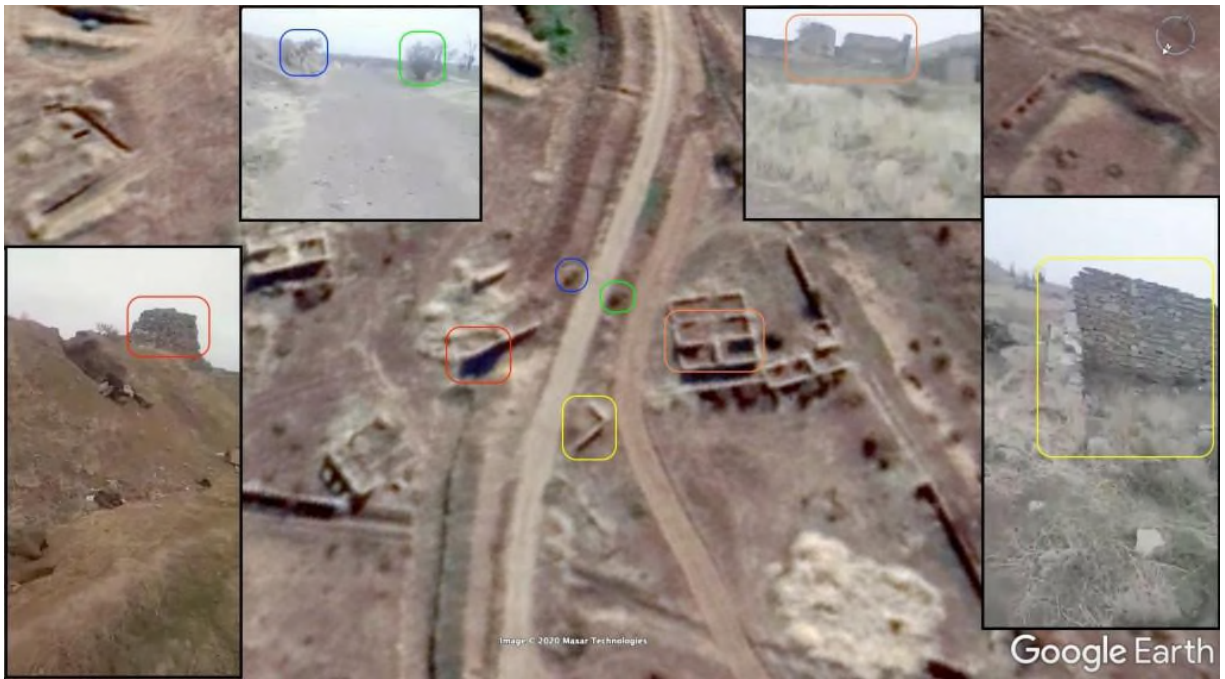
Right: Still from the Azerbaijani MOD video

Sometime within the first week of October other videos were shot and published by SNA fighters, two showing the scenes of an Armenian trench after its capture. This was geolocated to the village of Marjan/Marjanli, several kilometers west of Horadiz. In the video the man filming speaks in Arabic. He identifies himself as part of

Furqat al-Hamza subgroup Liwa' al-Farouq before bragging about the dead Armenian 'pigs' visible at the scene.



(Source)



Location: 39.379370, 47.234291

## Other Visual Evidence of SNA fighters in Azerbaijan

While none of these images or stills from video below have been geolocated, they offer further evidence of SNA members in Azerbaijan. The first image was published on September 30th by Jesr Press, a media outlet from eastern Syria, reportedly showing the dying breathes of a man named Abdul Razzaq ('Abu Hurairah') from the largely Turkmen-populated village of Tasnin (Homs Governorate). Five others wearing the same aqua-tinted fatigues with mismatched webbing are seen in the photo, as well as another dressed in a digital camouflage pattern used by both the [Turkish](#) and [Azerbaijani](#) military.



Another set of photos appear to have been [published](#) by various outlets the same day, with a timestamp indicating they were taken two days earlier. While the men in them are not identified, they are wearing the same combination of aqua-tinted fatigues and digital camouflage webbing as seen in the photo above. In the background

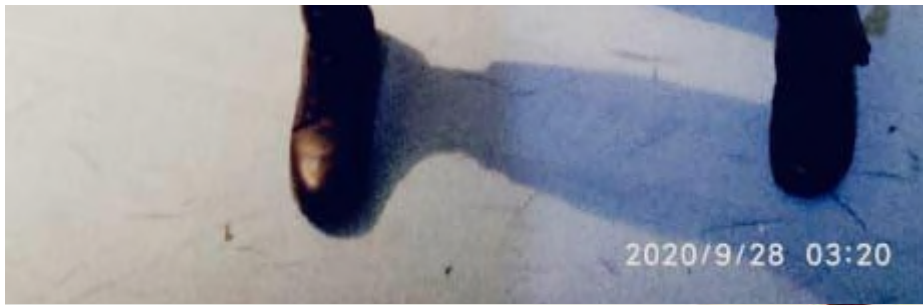
one can see posters featuring the Azerbaijani flag as well as a map of Azerbaijan.



SHOT ON MI 9T  
AI TRIPLE CAMERA

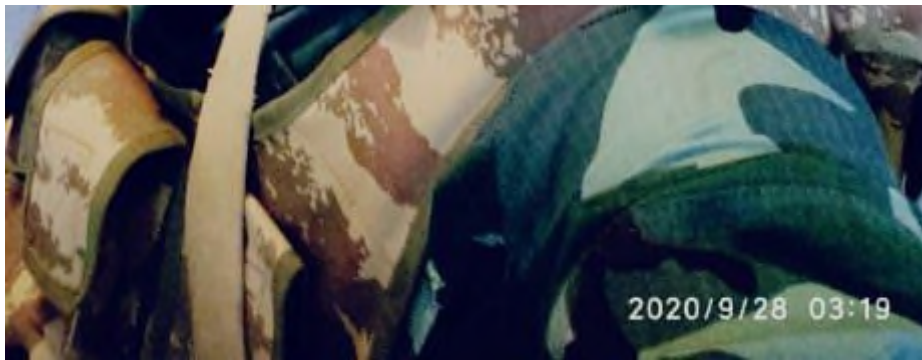
2020/9/28 03:20





2020/9/28 03:20





## ***UPDATE***

Armenian-based military news website [razm.info](http://razm.info) has pointed out the similarities in the room seen in the images above to that of the State Border Guard's military unit headquarters in Horadiz. While it is safe to say that these photos were taken in a room belonging to the State Border Guard and this Horadiz location appears to be quite likely, there is not enough evidence available to definitively say.





Razm.info @razminfo · Oct 27, 2020

2. The photos published on September 30th by Idlib Post (@IdlibEn) show armed men in new uniforms of SBGS of Azerbaijan. They are not shaved, which suggest that they are not SBGS troops.



IDLIB POST @IdlibEn · Sep 30, 2020

The uniform of the Syrian mercenaries fighting with #Azerbaijan, photos from one of the Azerbaijani military bases.



1 19 51 Original



Razm.info @razminfo

3. The room where the #Syrian #mercenaries have taken the selfies is in the military unit of the SBGS of #Azerbaijan, located in #Horadiz. The same room was previously shown in 2015 TV report about that border military unit.



youtube.com  
ESGER 36-CI VERILIS DSX HORADIZ  
Abone OL: <https://goo.gl/W99fFm> Copyright © ARB  
ŞekiSayt: <https://goo.gl/NfKDu5> Facebook: ...

11:51 AM · Oct 27, 2020 · Twitter Web App

(Source)

On October 11th, Jarabulus News al-Kabous, a Telegram channel local to northern Aleppo, [published](#) yet another video of SNA fighters purportedly in Nagorno-Karabakh. This one shows three men in the same fatigues in front of a border sign written in Armenian, Russian and English. After one says that the area's been 'liberated' and another points out the Iranian border not far away, one of the Syrians makes the 'Grey Wolves' salute, a hand gesture used by Turkish ultranationalists. The flat terrain in the video appears to be somewhere in the vicinity of the Horadiz/Fizuli frontlines to the south of Nagorno-Karabakh.



Only one video has been published so far showing SNA mercenaries engaged in combat in Nagorno-Karabakh. This came out around

approximately the same time as the video above, showing men firing a variety of weapons at unknown targets at a slightly higher elevation.



While the video was not geolocated, one of the vehicles present represents a substantial clue as to where it was shot. In the still to the bottom right an Israeli-produced AIL Storm armored vehicle is visible. This vehicle isn't present anywhere in Syria, and is not used by the Turkish military.



Both the AIL Storm, as well as the other armored vehicle – a Turkish-produced Otokar Cobra, are actively used by the Azerbaijani military. Below are images (via Wikipedia) showing both types of vehicles at a military parade in Baku.



An Azerbaijani military AIL Storm at a Baku military parade.



## **Visual evidence related to the transportation of SNA fighters to Azerbaijan**

On September 24th and 25th, [an image](#) and [a video](#) of uniformed men at a training camp were published on Telegram channels local to northern Syria. The fatigues they are seen in are the same aqua-tinted uniforms appearing in images geolocated to Azerbaijan.



This was later geolocated to the military border crossing from Syria to Turkey at Hawar Kilis, Aleppo. This facility was previously the point of departure for SNA fighters sent to Libya, in addition to reportedly being a military base and command center for Furqat al-Hamza, an SNA faction involved in Azerbaijan operations. Multiple testimonies given by SNA fighters sent to Azerbaijan mention this border crossing as where they were assembled prior to departure.



(Source)

On September 22nd, reporter Lindsey Snell shared a photo of men



within the cargo hold of a transportation aircraft. She identified them as members of Furqat al-Hamza in the process of being transported from Ankara to Baku that day. However, the only verifiable detail in this image is that the plane is an A-400M, a transportation vehicle operated by the Turkish Air Force.



Men reportedly Furqat al-Hamza fighters, in an A-400M.



Still of a video from the Airbus website, showing an empty A-400M cargo hold.

While not definitive evidence, two TuAF A-400M flights were recorded on FlightRadar24 that day. The first departed from Kayseri, where TuAF A-400M's are often stored, before landing in Gaziantep, close to the Syrian border. Several hours later, the same aircraft left Gaziantep, flying northwest. FlightRadar24, which primarily tracks commercial aircraft, lost the plane's signal meaning we can't be sure whether the plane landed in Ankara or Istanbul. This pattern, A-400Ms flying from Kayseri to Gaziantep to Istanbul or Ankara, resembles the transportation process carried out by Turkey while deploying SNA mercenaries to Libya.



## UPDATE

A source claiming to be on the same flight [told Syrians for Truth & Justice](#) that this image was not taken in September of SNA fighters en route to Azerbaijan. Rather, it was taken months earlier, in June, and shows members of the Syrian Interim Government-affiliates police being transported by Turkey to the Libyan city of Misrata.

Further information on the circulated photo reported to be of Syrians on Turkish A400 military aircraft

The source supplied this image from the cargo hold of an A-400, alleging that it was that it was taken on the same June 24th flight.



**Analysis of Uniforms worn by SNA fighters in Azerbaijan**

Soon after the first images of SNA mercenaries in Nagorno-Karabakh came out, Twitter users identified the unique camouflage pattern they were observed in as that of the Azerbaijani State Border Service (Dövlət Sərhəd Xidməti).



مجلس صحيفة الشريعة مستقلة





Interestingly, in one of the images geolocated to the Hawar Kilis military crossing, one can observe both these Azerbaijani Border Service fatigues worn by men training in the background, as well as [Turkish multicam](#) fatigues worn by several SNA factions reportedly deployed to Nagorno-Karabakh. This implies that the SNA fighters received these new uniforms in Syria, prior to transiting through Turkey to Azerbaijan.



Examples of both Furqat al-Hamza and Furqat al-Sultan Murad fighters in the same multicam pattern can be seen below:







## Geolocation of unidentified fighters in Azerbaijan, suspected to be SNA members


The first video purported to be SNA mercenaries in Azerbaijan was filmed by a civilian in the frontline town of Horadiz. In it one can see

a convoy of 22 vehicles. 21 of these are pickup trucks; all carrying fighters in the back, and at least some outfitted with machine guns. The other vehicle in the convoy is an AIL Storm, the aforementioned Israeli-produced armored off-road vehicle used by the Azerbaijani military. While it has not been verified that these were in fact SNA fighters, it appears likely as the use of pickup trucks for troop transportation is not typical behavior of the Azerbaijani military. The location is also in close proximity to the October 3rd video of SNA fighters in Horadiz highlighted above.

 **Samir**  
@obretix

geolocation of a video of pickup trucks driving down a road in Horadiz [twitter.com/LeonL62342286/...](https://twitter.com/LeonL62342286/...)  
current satellite image matches the location [satellites.pro/#39.453072,47...](https://satellites.pro/#39.453072,47...)



 **Leon L.** @LeonL62342286 · Sep 28, 2020

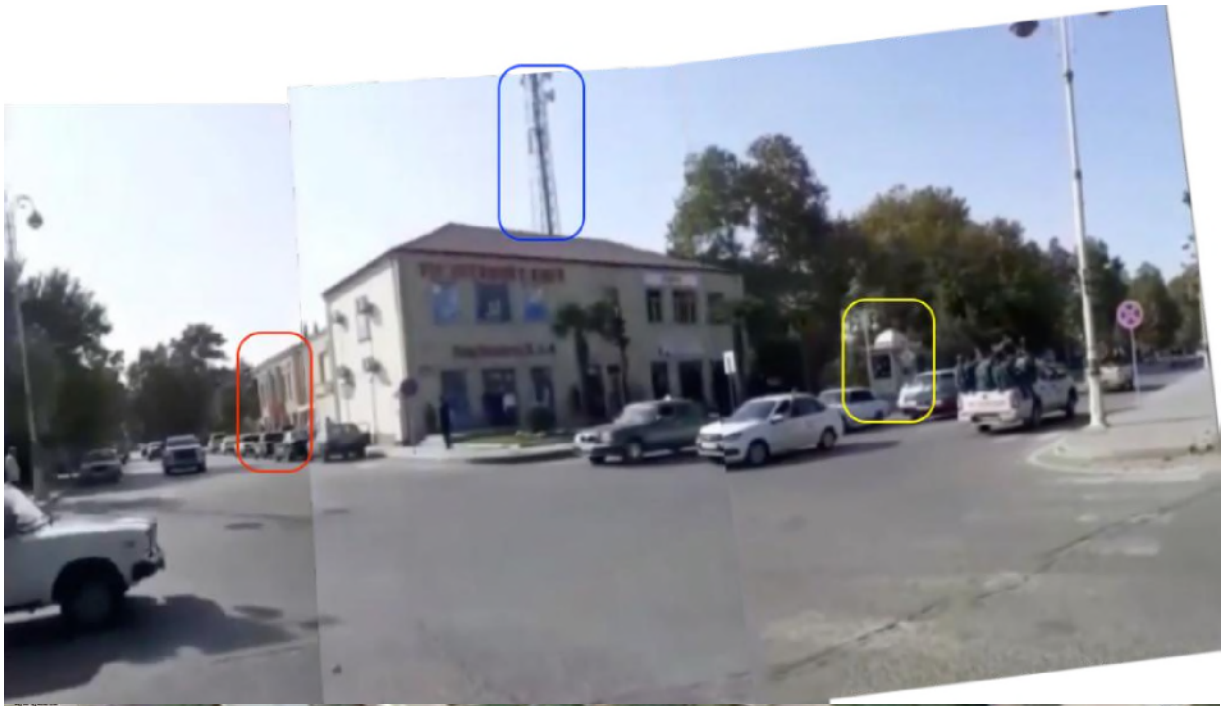
Red marks the location I assume the video was made from. The landmark through which I found the location was the tower of some sort in the background. It is marked in blue in the sat. image. Also of note is the white box on the other side of the street.

[Show this thread](#)



(Source)

Another video filmed by an Azerbaijani civilian was published around October 1st, showing pickup trucks similarly being used to transport men in fatigues. This was geolocated to the city of Barda, just east of northern Nagorno-Karabakh. As was the case with the first convoy video above, it has not been verified whether these men were SNA fighters. In addition, the location near the northern fronts of the war makes it an outlier from the actually verified SNA media, all of which that has been geolocated taking place in the far south.



Location: 40.384038, 47.124070

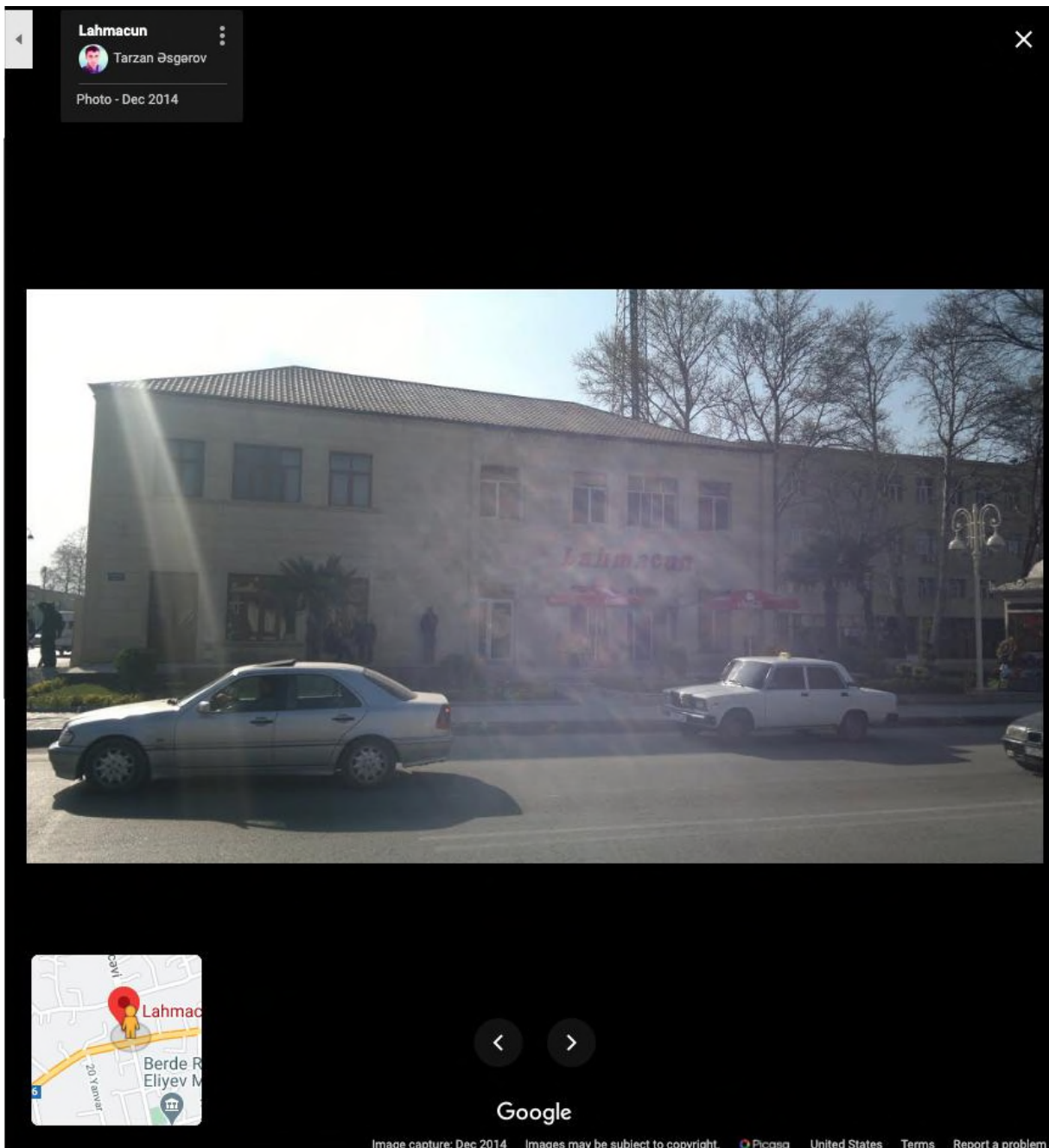


Image posted of the same building in the background of the shot, uploaded by a Google user in Dec 2014.

## Footage published by the Armenian Ministry of Defense

In mid-October, the Armenian Ministry of Defense Press Secretary shared two videos on Twitter as further evidence of the SNA deployment to Nagorno-Karabakh. In both, groups of men can be seen wearing the aqua Border Service uniforms. Further

identification of these fighters is not possible from these videos.

 **Shushan Stepanyan**  
@ShStepanyan

Mercenary terrorists in the uniforms of the Azerbaijani border guard troops... you can imagine what happened to them.



0:38 118.5K views

10:14 AM · Oct 18, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

(Source)



Still from the security camera footage published by the Armenian MOD on October 18th. Note the Border Service uniforms with the mismatched webbing.

 **Shushan Stepanyan**  
@ShStepanyan

**New video testifying to the presence of mercenary terrorists in the conflict zone**



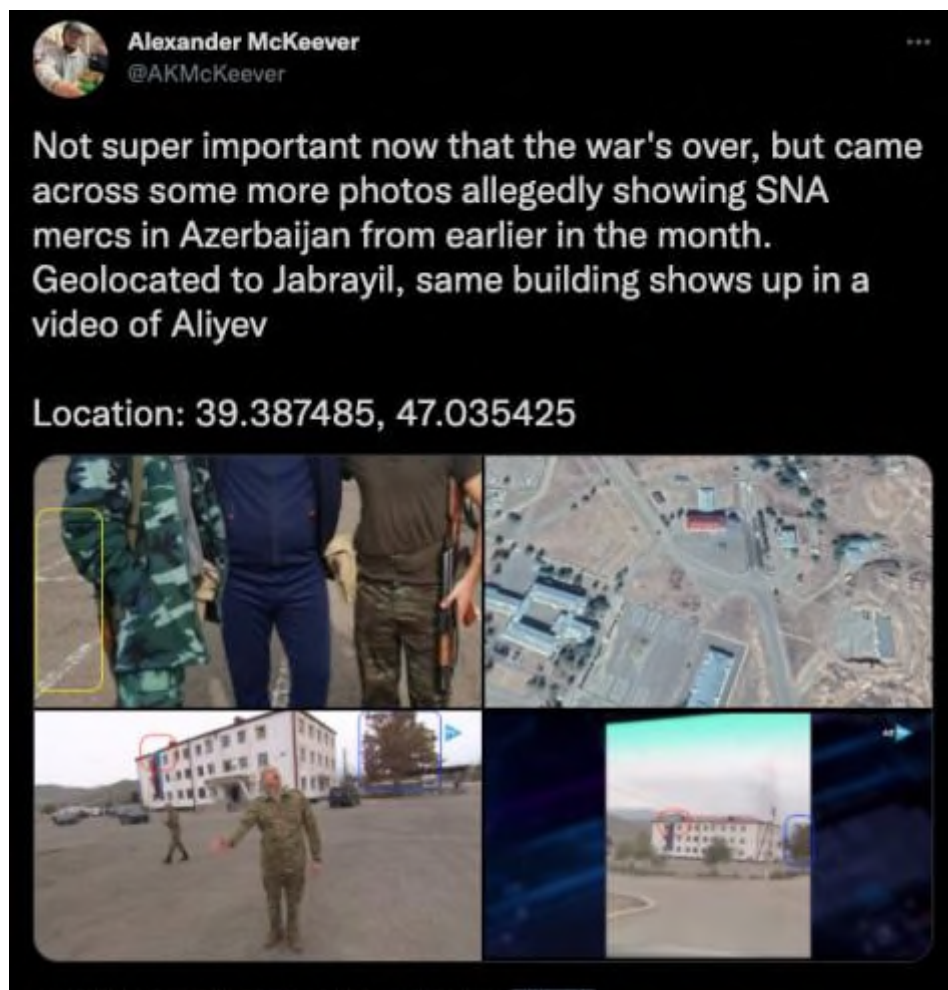
0:39 | 81.9K views

3:01 PM · Oct 22, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

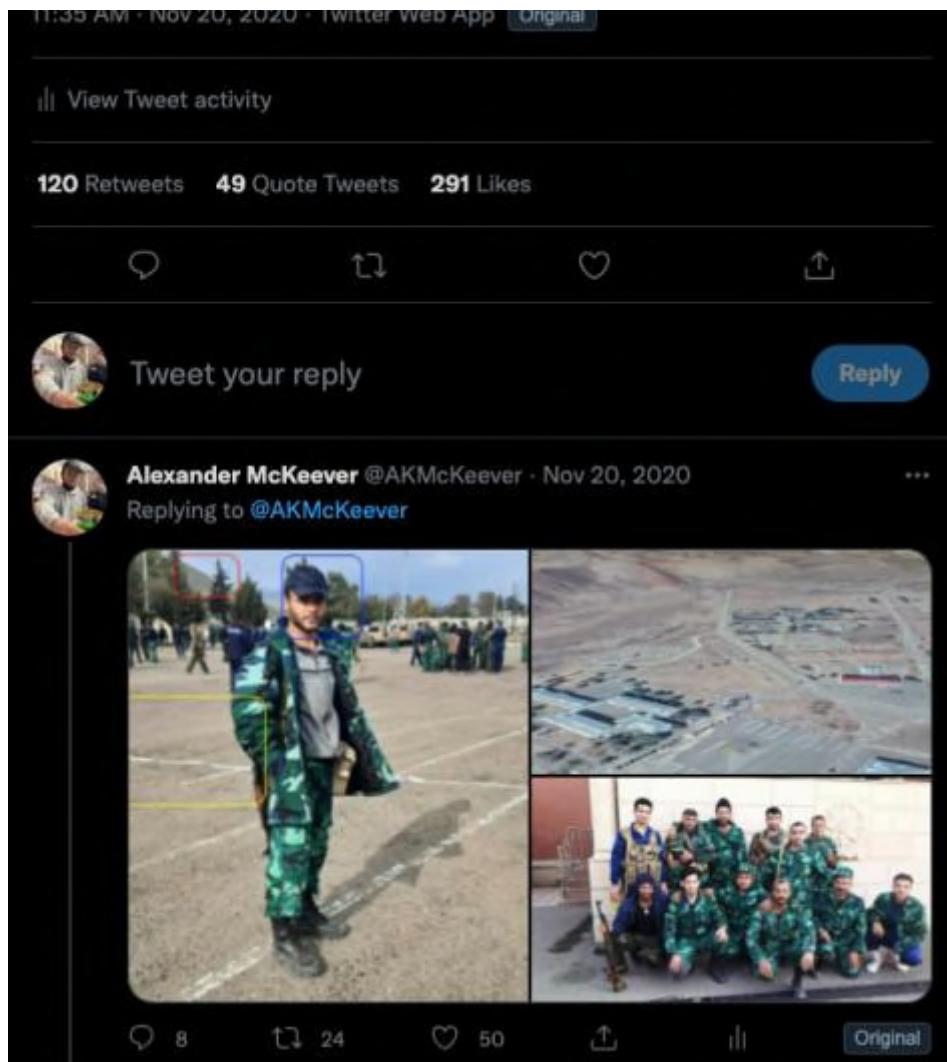
(Source)

In conclusion there is significant visual evidence verifying the presence of SNA mercenaries in the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh war. A number of videos filmed by men speaking Syrian Arabic, sometimes identifying the factions they're affiliated with, have been geolocated to southern front of the conflict. Further video and imagery shows men identified as Syrians all in the same Azerbaijani Border Service fatigues. In addition to this, numerous researchers and media outlets have collected testimony from fighters in Azerbaijan themselves, as well as from their family members, representing further evidence of this deployment directly from those involved.

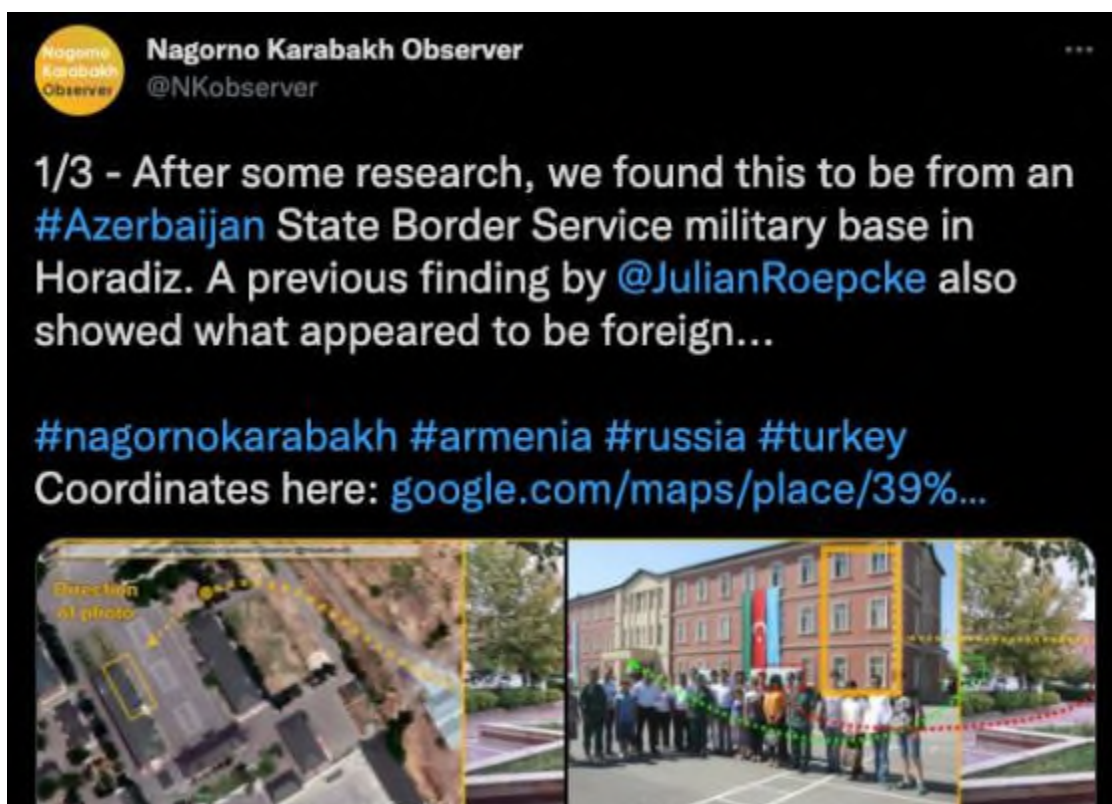
**UPDATE** (Further geolocations of suspected SNA fighters in Azerbaijan/Karabakh)

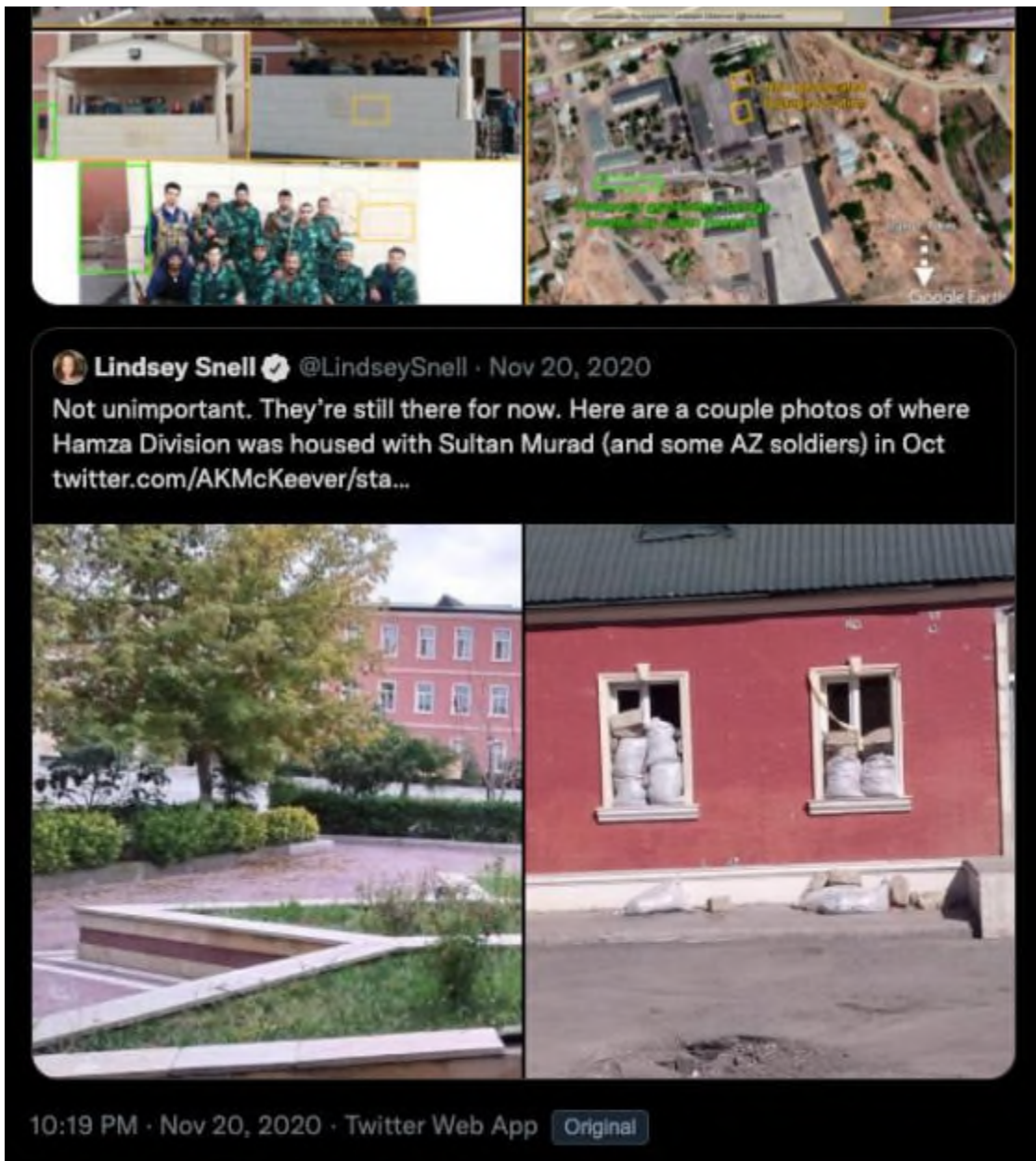






(Source)





(Source)

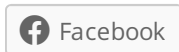
See also:

[Syrian Mercenaries in Karabakh: who they are, what they are doing there and where they are fighting](#)

[Government Policies Contributing to Growing Incidence of Using Syrians as Mercenary Fighters](#)

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# Exhibit 41

REPORT

# Syrians Make Up Turkey's Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabakh

After fighting Turkey's battles in Libya, the Syrian National Army is caught in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan—and dozens are dying.

By Liz Cookman



A fire burns in a hardware store after a rocket attack in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh, on Oct. 3. BRENDAN HOFFMAN/GETTY IMAGES

OCTOBER 5, 2020, 5:35 PM

Early Sunday morning, the bodies of more than 50 Syrians killed in a conflict raging far from their own borders—in a land many had barely heard of a few months ago—were returned home for funeral preparations.

They were members of militias that had fought previously in northern Syria, then Libya, and now in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh—but always on behalf of Turkey.

“No one wants to make money from wars” after almost a decade of civil war, said the father of one Syrian mercenary. But displacement inside Syria, and the inevitable economic troubles that accompany long-term unrest, has left some young men with little choice.

According to sources within the Syrian National Army (SNA), the umbrella term for a group of opposition militias backed by Turkey, around 1,500 Syrians have so far been deployed to the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region in the southern Caucasus. It's the latest proxy standoff between Turkey and Russia, which are already on opposing sides in Syria and Libya. Ankara has declared strong support for Azerbaijan, while Moscow is traditionally closer to Armenia.

The mountainous and landlocked region of Nagorno-Karabakh is recognized internationally as Azerbaijan's territory but has a mostly Armenian population. The two countries went to war between 1988 and 1994, eventually declaring a cease-fire, but never reached a settlement over the dispute. The border between the two is considered one of the most militarized in the world, and the current fighting, which broke out last month, is the worst seen since the cease-fire, with each of the two former Soviet republics placing the blame on the other.

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Heavy clashes continued over the weekend, and Armenian forces fired rockets at Ganja, Azerbaijan's second-largest city, killing at least one civilian and injuring four more. More than 220 people have died since violence flared just over a week ago, many of them from artillery shelling.

Shortly after conflict erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Turkey sought to mobilize the SNA, sometimes called Turkey's proxy army. Thousands of SNA fighters have been hired by Turkey over the last year to fight in Libya on behalf of the U.N.-backed Government of National Accord in Tripoli, which is fighting Russian-backed forces. Some of the SNA fighters have since reportedly returned to Syria for training ahead of dispatch to Nagorno-Karabakh; some were given only five days of training before shipping out, while others had between two weeks and a month of training, according to SNA sources.

The first fighters were transferred in late September to southern Turkey and then flown from Gaziantep to Ankara, before being transferred to Azerbaijan on Sept. 25. According to fighter

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accounts, SNA fighters arrived earlier to explore the region and coordinate with the Azerbaijani army about the distribution of troops.

For many young men, displaced by years of civil war at home and bereft of economic opportunities, the lures of a mercenary life are religious propaganda—and money. Fighters are offered four-month contracts for \$1,500 a month, paid in Turkish lira.

But many are already regretting it, especially now that a reported 55 Syrian mercenaries have been killed after being confronted with a lot more hands-on fighting than they'd been promised.

"All fighters are unhappy with the situation here in Azerbaijan," said one Syrian on the ground in Azerbaijan's Barda district, who asked to remain anonymous out of fear of reprisal. "The psychological situation is bad after the martyrdom of a number of our friends."

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ARGUMENT | ANNA OHANYAN



Told they would be mostly manning guard posts along border demarcation lines, they have instead been thrust into direct clashes, with little support from Azerbaijan's regular forces.

"There is no synergy or communication between us and the Azerbaijani fighters," he said.

Another SNA fighter in Azerbaijan said he sleeps in a tent with 20 to 30 other fighters and pulls two six-hour shifts of guard duty each day. He said a number of fighters "wish to return to Syria after regretting coming here. We are not happy, but at the same time, no one forced us to fight in Azerbaijan. Our hearts are for our friends, who are being killed here, in a country other than theirs, far from their families and their revolution."

One of those close friends was Muhammad al-Shuhneh, 25, who was displaced from his home city of Maarat al-Numan by a Syrian regime offensive to retake the rebel stronghold of Idlib this year. He arrived in Azerbaijan late last month in the second batch of fighters but was killed Oct. 1 in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The family believed that Shuhneh—unmarried, the only son among eight sisters—was working in Turkey to help make ends meet.

The arrival of the bodies of the dead mercenaries in Syria cast a dark cloud over places that have already been shrouded in mourning. One SNA fighter in Afrin, Syria, said the arrival of the dead was a "tragic day like had not been witnessed before" in rural Aleppo.

"We blame the Turkish government for taking advantage of our poor and the young's hunger for money," said one grieving family member of a slain fighter. Families don't want to reveal their identity, lest they lose the promised 60,000 Turkish lira (about \$7,800) in compensation for the fallen fighters.

The SNA fighters are hardly saints. A United Nations report last month [detailed](#) crimes including kidnappings, rape, and extortion carried out by the SNA against Kurds, Christians, and other minorities during the fighting in Syria.

The Turkish Defense Ministry has denied sending mercenaries to Azerbaijan, despite widespread media reports and footage from Syrians on the front line of the conflict. Turkey has also claimed, without providing evidence, that fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)—which has fought an insurgency against Turkey for decades—are aiding Armenia.

Turkey's aggressive foreign policy, including forays into the ongoing civil wars in Syria and Libya, has sometimes helped turn the tide of battle, especially in Libya, where Turkish support helped the Tripoli government defeat a Russian-backed effort to capture the capital. But those geopolitical wins, such as they are, leave young Syrians in the crossfire.

"The whole world abandoned the Syrian revolution and people, who suffer from the [Bashar al-]Assad regime's brutality, and our young people have become a tool for the agendas of other countries," said Riyadh Kazmouz, 57, the father of a mercenary who is currently fighting in Libya.

"We feel sadness and despair for how things turned out and that our children are forced to die for battles that do not concern us."

Correction, Oct. 12, 2020: Muhammad al-Shuhneh was killed in Nagorno-Karabakh on Oct. 1. A previous version of this story misstated where he was killed.

Liz Cookman is a journalist based in Ukraine covering the human cost of the war. X: [@Liz\\_Cookman](#)

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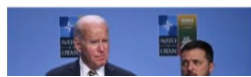
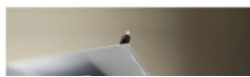
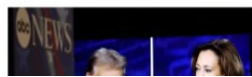
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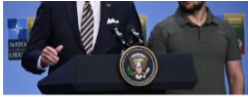
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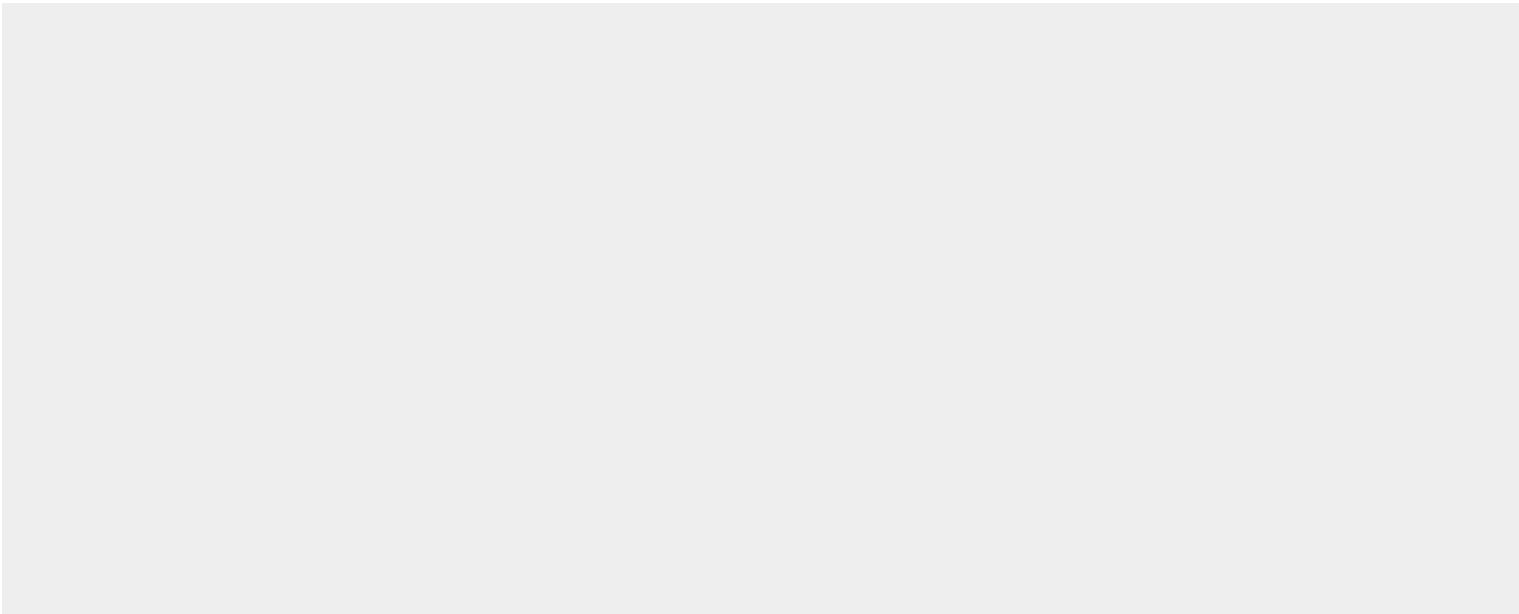
# The Syrian mercenaries used as 'cannon fodder' in Nagorno-Karabakh

By Ed Butler  
BBC News

🕒 10 December 2020



Nagorno-Karabakh conflict



Men reported to be Syrian mercenaries close to the Armenian border in Azerbaijan - from a video posted by Syrian news organisation Jarablus News

**Turkey and Azerbaijan deny that Syrian mercenaries were used in the recent offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh but four Syrians have told the BBC that after enlisting for sentry duties in Azerbaijan, they were unexpectedly thrown into battle on the front line.**

It was back in August of this year that the rumours started to circulate in rebel-held areas of northern Syria: there was well-paid work to be had overseas.

"I had a friend who told me that there is a very good job you can do, just to be at military checkpoints in Azerbaijan," one man told me.

"They told us our mission would be to serve as sentries on the border - as peacekeepers. They were offering \$2,000 a month! It felt like a fortune for us," said another, whom I will call Qutaiba.

Both applied for the job through Turkish-backed rebel factions that make up what's known as the Syrian National Army, a force in northern Syria opposed to President Bashar al-Assad.

In an area where few earn more than \$1 a day, the promised salary seemed like a godsend. It's estimated that somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 men signed up and travelled to Azerbaijan, via Turkey, on Turkish military transport aircraft.

But the work wasn't what it seemed. The men, many of them with no military experience, were being recruited for war - as they soon discovered when they were taken to the front line and ordered to fight.

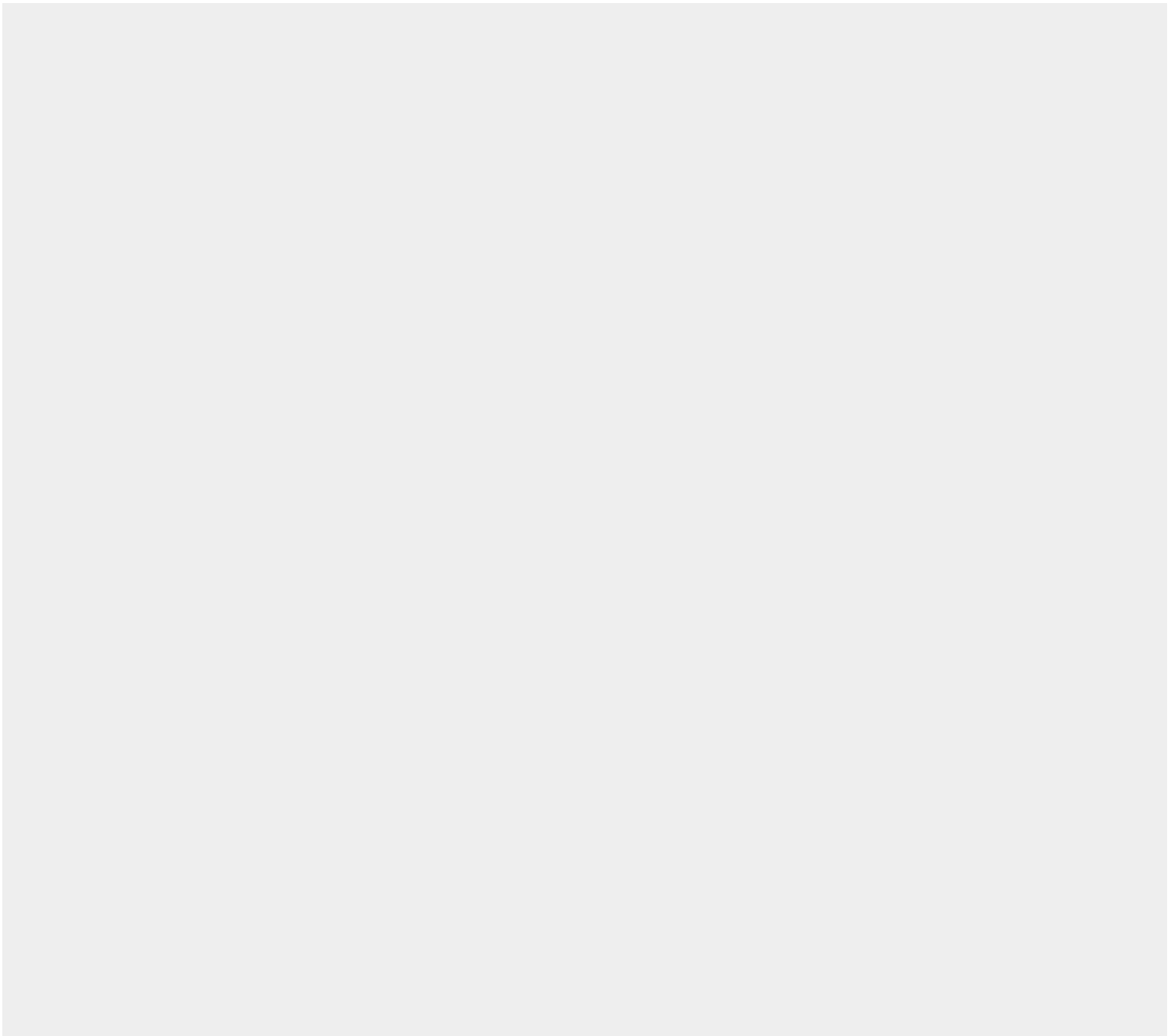
"I didn't expect to survive," Qutaiba says. "It seemed like a 1% chance. Death was all around us."

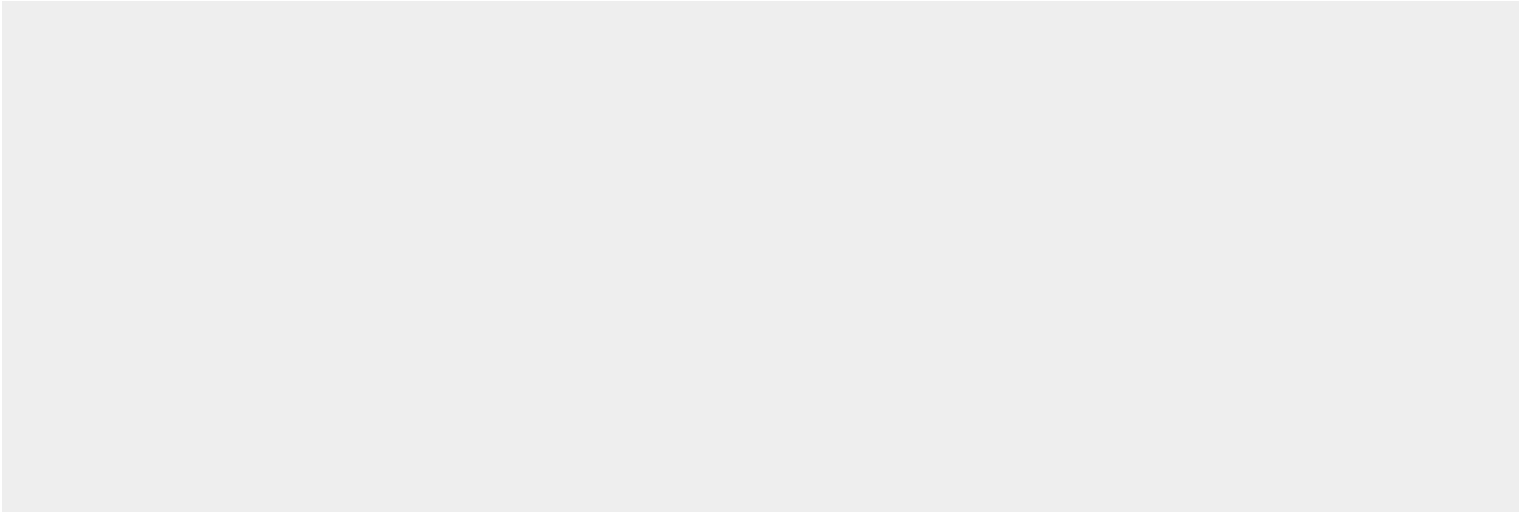
Nagorno-Karabakh is a disputed enclave that fell under Armenian control during a bloody conflict that ended in a ceasefire in 1994. Tens of thousands died and hundreds of thousands were displaced, both from the enclave itself and from surrounding territory occupied by Armenian forces. The international community has

not recognised the self-declared Republic of Artsakh (the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh) and this year, sensing its growing military superiority, Azerbaijan decided to go on the attack.

Although Azerbaijan and its ally Turkey deny the use of mercenaries, researchers have amassed a considerable amount of photographic evidence, drawn from videos and photographs the fighters have posted online, which tells a different story.

The Syrians seem to have been deployed on the southern flank of the Azeri advance, where casualties on both sides were extremely high. The fighters I spoke to came under heavy fire and seemed to have been traumatised by their experiences. They didn't want to be identified, for fear of reprisal from militia commanders, so I have given them different names.





"My first battle began the day after I arrived," says Ismael.

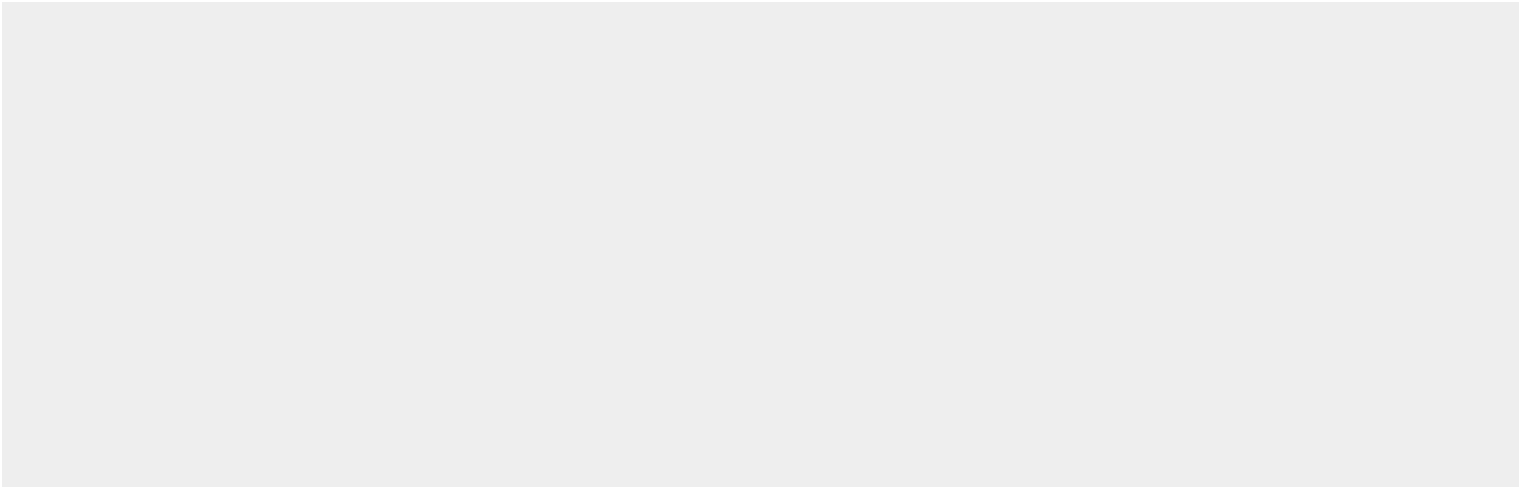
"I and about 30 guys were sent to the front line. We walked for about 50m when suddenly a rocket landed near us. I threw myself to the ground. The shelling lasted for 30 minutes non-stop. Those minutes felt like years. It was then I regretted coming to Azerbaijan."

"We didn't know what to do, how to react," says Samir, who adds that he and many of his fellow recruits had virtually no military experience or training.

"I saw men dying, and others who just went crazily running. They didn't have any sense of where they were going, because they were basically civilians."

- Listen to **Syria's Soldiers of Fortune**, on Crossing Continents, at 11:00 on Thursday 10 December, on BBC Radio 4
- Or [catch up later online](#)

All of the men say they were given little protective equipment or medical support. Many of their fellow fighters appear to have bled to death from wounds that battlefield medics could easily have treated.



A video posted online in early October and geolocated to the front line near Horadiz shows a 23-year-old Syrian praying as shells land nearby - he has been identified by researcher Elizabeth Tsurkov as Mustafa Qanti from Hayyan, near Aleppo

"The hardest moment was when one of my mates was hit," says Ismael, who was himself later hospitalised with shrapnel wounds. "He was 20m away from me when the shell landed. I saw him fall. He was calling to me, screaming. But his spot was exposed to the Armenian machine guns. I couldn't help him. In the end, he just died there."

Another Syrian says he was paralysed by fear when the shelling started.

"I remember I just sat on the ground and cried and my injured friends started to cry as well," he says. "One guy got shrapnel in his head. He died right there... Every day I see this. When it comes to me, I sit and cry, even now. I don't know how I survived this war."

Estimates vary as to the exact death toll among the Syrian fighters. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based group that monitors the conflict in Syria, **puts the figure at more than 500**. This compares to reported figures of more than 2,400 on the Armenian side, and nearly 3,000 on Azerbaijan's side, though Azerbaijan doesn't acknowledge that any Syrians were among them.

"We don't use mercenaries," the country's president, Ilham Aliyev, told the France 24 news network in October.

"This is our official statement and since the outbreak not a single country presented evidence of that. And moreover we don't need that. We have an army of more than 100,000 fighters and what we are doing now on the ground demonstrates that our army is capable of liberating its lands itself."

This is an interesting point. Why would Azerbaijan recruit Syrian fighters?



JESR PRESS

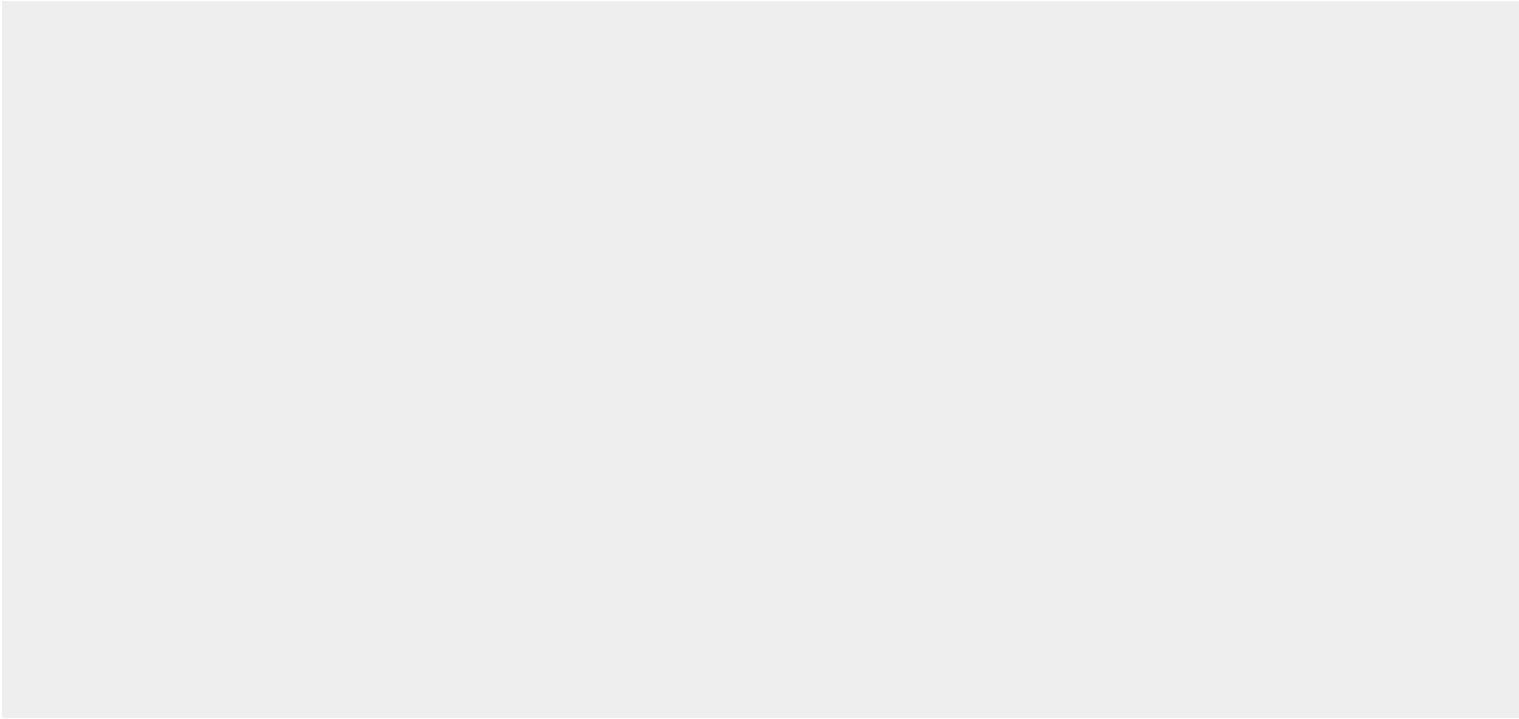
A video of four Syrians in Azerbaijan listening to a song about a Syrian National Army division was posted online by Syrian news publication Jesr Press

Military analyst Michael Kofman, head of the Russia programme at the CNA military research centre in Washington DC, says the goal seems to have been to minimise Azeri troop casualties.

"They took quite a few casualties early on, especially in the south-east, and these mercenaries were essentially used as expendable assault troops to go in the first wave," he says.

"They calculated quite cynically that if it turned out these offensives were not successful early on, then it was best these casualties would be among mercenaries not Azerbaijani forces.

'Nobody cares about mercenaries.'



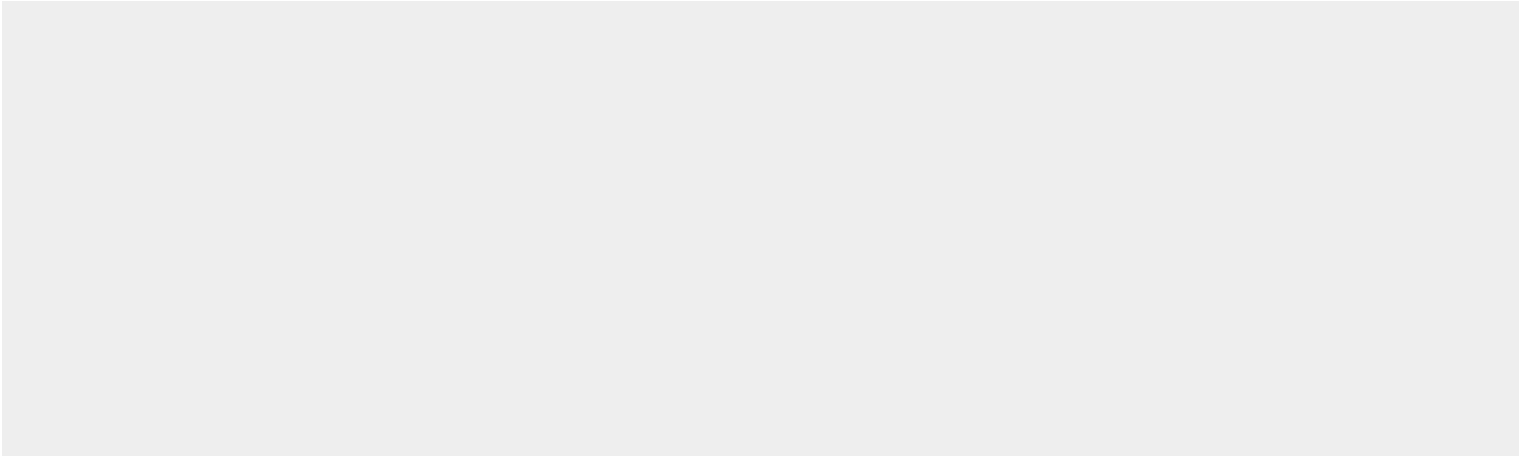
| Kinan Farzat, who is reported to have died in Nagorno-Karabakh, was a major in the Syrian National Army

Elizabeth Tsurkov, a fellow at the Centre for Global Policy, also in Washington DC, who has spoken to dozens of Syrians who took part in the conflict, agrees that they were "used as cannon fodder".

"They're cheap. They can be rushed to the front line with very little preparation, as was the case in Azerbaijan - essentially people to whom you can strap a Kalashnikov and tell, 'Go capture that hill, go capture that forest,'" she says.

And, she points out, they are desperately poor, "so they are willing to go and risk their lives".

However, within a few days of the outbreak of the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, in late September, hundreds were laying down weapons and refusing to fight. Two of those I spoke to were among them, and one sent a video of the strikers outside the barracks where they were stationed.





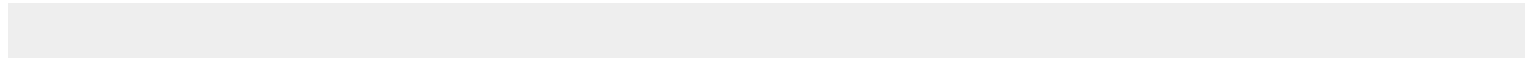
| A scene from a video sent to the BBC, said to show Syrians who refused to fight

"The commanders started to threaten us that they'd put us in jail in Azerbaijan for nine months. Then they told us that even when we got back to Syria, they'd arrest us," says Samir.

"But there were 500 of us on strike at that point and we did start to have an effect on them. They put together a list of our names. Then five or six days later they came and told us to get ourselves ready: 'You are leaving.'"

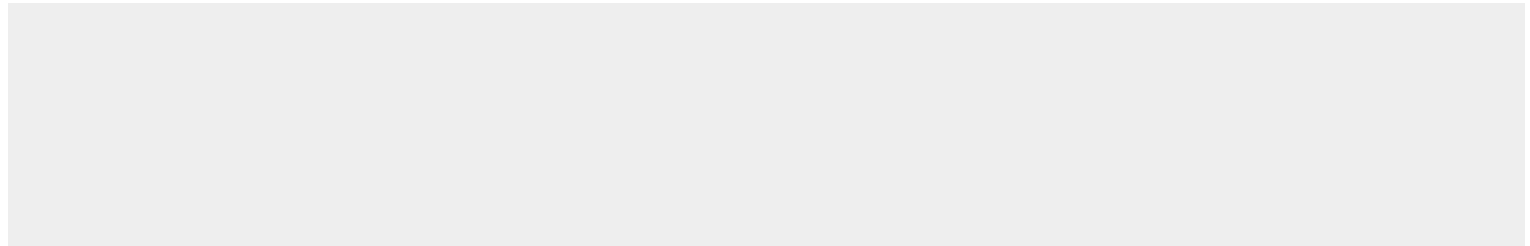
Samir says that none of these men were paid a penny of the \$2,000 they had been promised, and many did not get back the personal possessions they had arrived with in Azerbaijan.

He also claims that on their return to Syria, commanders of a rebel faction summarily killed four men accused of organising the strike. The BBC has been unable to verify this allegation.



Nagorno-Karabakh is not the first conflict in which Syrian fighters have been recruited to serve recently. Allegedly through Russian and Turkish-backed security firms, Syrians from both the rebel and government-held areas have been fighting in the civil war in Libya for the last year or more - and on different sides.

A mercenary representing the internationally recognised Libyan government forces, supported by Turkey, told me he'd personally participated in the capture of former pro-Assad Syrian soldiers when driving back Russian-backed forces loyal to Gen Khalifa Haftar.



GETTY IMAGES

| An alleged Syrian mercenary captured by forces loyal to Libyan general Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi

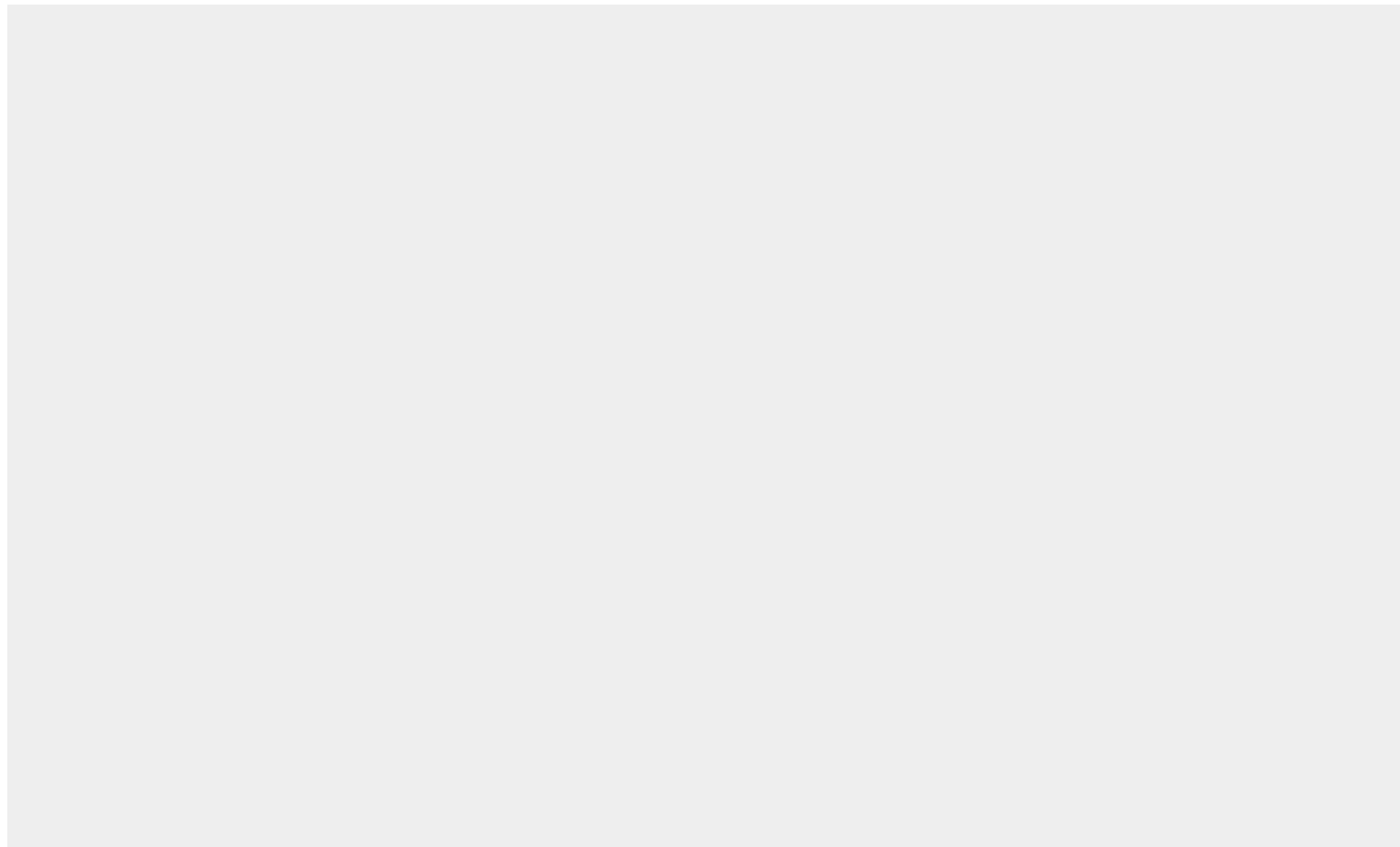
Turkey has acknowledged that Syrian fighters are present in Libya, though has not admitted recruiting them.

"We are not sending fighters to Libya. We have deep historical and close kinship ties to Libya and we want to see a political solution and in Libya now there is a chance for peace and talks," Turkey's ambassador to London, Umit Yalcin, told me.

When I mentioned what the Syrian fighters had told me about Turkey's role in recruiting them to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh, he echoed Azerbaijan's official denials. "Of course these claims are baseless and not helpful in terms of achieving justice and peace and stability," he said. "We should focus on the deal for peace and justice in the region."

He also alleged that Kurdish mercenaries had been fighting on the Armenian side - a claim **Armenia has rejected**.

Calling on 11 November for mercenaries in the conflict zone to be withdrawn, UN human rights experts said widespread reports indicated that Turkey had engaged in **large-scale recruitment and transfer of Syrian men to Azerbaijan**. At the same time, they said they were looking into reports that Armenia had been involved in the deployment of foreign nationals to fight in the conflict.



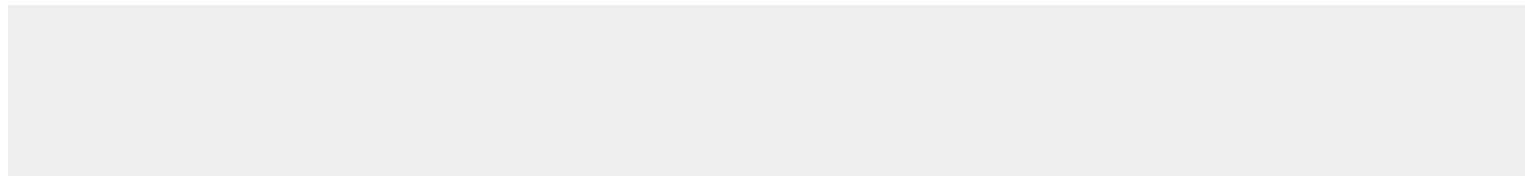
A shot apparently of Syrian fighters in a barracks in south-western Azerbaijan - they are wearing the aqua-tinted fatigues of the Azeri border guard service

Today, a Russian-brokered ceasefire is in operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Under its terms, Azerbaijan has reclaimed a significant proportion of the land it lost in the 1990s. Military analysts say that it was above all its superiority in the air, using Israeli and Turkish drone technology, that enabled Azerbaijan to achieve the victory it now claims.

Meanwhile, back in Syria, two of the mercenaries are trying to put the experience behind them.

"I feel guilty for becoming a mercenary. I feel ashamed," says Samir, even though he refused to fight after just three days on the front line.

"When people ask me, 'Did I travel?' I say no - even though they know that I went. I feel like I am very small in their eyes... When I got there I did say no to war. I objected to what was happening. But I'm ashamed because I trusted the mercenaries. That's why I feel shame."





GETTY IMAGES

Military vehicles carrying drones made by an Azeri-Israeli joint venture take part in a rehearsal for a military parade in the capital, Baku

This month there are unconfirmed reports in Syrian media of a new recruitment drive in government-controlled areas. It's suggested that former pro-Assad soldiers have been signed up, through Russian intermediaries, to guard "oil installations" in Venezuela, on the promise of generous salaries. The BBC has not been able independently to confirm these claims. But Elizabeth Tsurkov says that, if true, it would follow a familiar pattern.

"The problem is Syria is so destroyed, the economy is so destroyed, that any actor wishing to recruit fighters on the cheap can find them in Syria," she says.

"You know, this is a population that has suffered immensely - displacement, chemical weapons, starvation, sieges, extermination in prisons - and now Syrians are basically just accepting the logic of an international community that does not value their lives and sees them as pawns."

I ask Samir what he would say to fellow Syrians tempted by similar offers of work abroad.

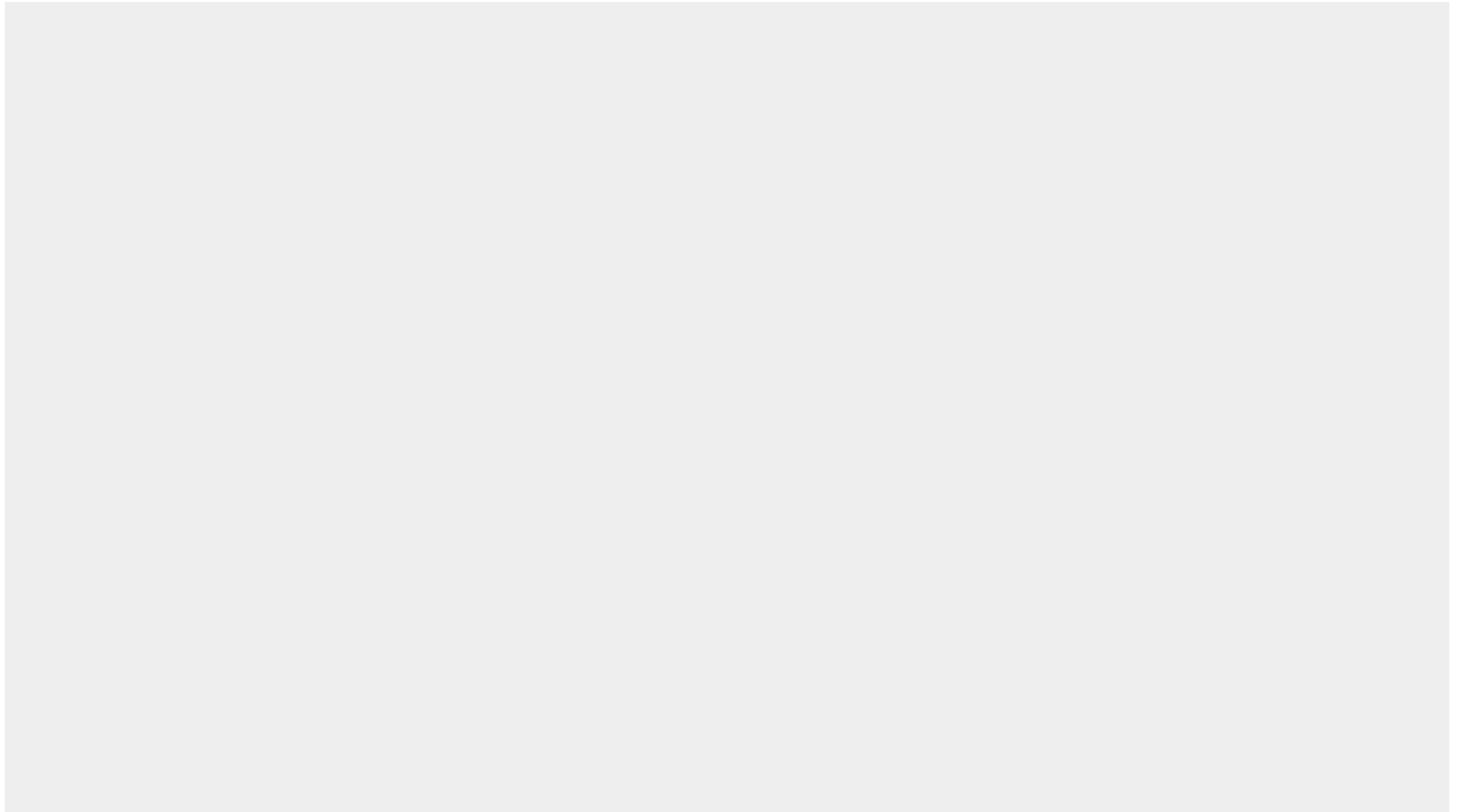
"I'd tell them you'll lose everything, even your dignity. You won't get anything and you might lose your life. Even if you are poor, being desperate here in Syria is way better than going to fight for something far away you don't know anything about."

Qutaiba, who joined the rebel Free Syrian Army as a student at the start of the

revolution, asks those who would judge the Syrians who travelled to Azerbaijan to imagine what it is like being unable to afford milk or nappies for their children.

"Those who see us as mercenaries, they don't see our poverty and our need. We would do anything to help our children. It's the worst thing to see your child needing milk and you can't provide it. In our place you too would make the same decision."

## You may also be interested in:



More than 300 people from Kosovo went to join Islamists fighting "holy war" in Syria and Iraq - per capita the highest number in Europe. But not all of them match the popular image of a jihadi, as Helen Nianias discovered when she met a hipsterish young man for coffee in the Kosovan capital, Pristina.

['How I joined the jihadis by mistake' \(2018\)](#)

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04 Sep 2012 - 13:00 - Agenda UPDATE : 28 Nov 2021 - 17:04

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# Important information about SADAT emerged

Aydınlık Newspaper has published important information about the "private army" SADAT, which it has uncovered, today. Aydınlık wrote that the "private army", which was established with the permission of the AKP government, has training bases in Istanbul and the Marmara Region. In the news, attention was drawn to the Ulaşlı Special Training Camp in Gölcük, which is affiliated to the Naval Forces Command.

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which was established by the Ahr government and was found to train terrorist groups carrying out armed actions against the Assad administration and the people in Syria .

Aydınlık Newspaper wrote the address of the camp established for the training of militants participating in the terrorist act in Syria.

Aydınlık announced that one of these centers is the Ulaşlı Camp within the borders of Gölcük District of Kocaeli, which is affiliated to the Naval Forces Command.

The official name of this camp is the Naval Forces Command Ulaşlı Special Education Center. The camp by the sea has a capacity of 600 personnel.

Retired Brigadier General Adnan Tandiverdi, the Chairman of SADAT, who was dismissed from the Turkish Army on 28 February due to reactionary reasons, made a reconnaissance in this camp. Aydınlık stated that special fighter Tanriverdi especially examined the connection of the camp with the sea.

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After this visit of the special warfare general, who was expelled from the army, activity started in the Ulaşlı Special Education Center. A civilian boat unloaded supplies to Ulaşlı with crates. These chests contained elements used in unconventional war training. The military camp, which was evacuated every November, was evacuated early this year.

Aydınlık shared another important information. SADAT's use of Turkish Armed Forces facilities and weapons is not limited to Ulaşlı.

**nationalkanal.com.tr**

# Terrorist activity in TAF camp , SADAT

04 Sep 2012 - 13:00 - [Agenda](#) [Print](#)

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**Yorumlar** (5)

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**gökhan gürsel** - üzülererek sıkılarak ifade ediyorum,balyoz, takoz,ergenekon daha ne bileyim ben davalarından tutuklanan, yıllarca sucunun ne olduğunu bilmeden cezaevinde tutulan değerli komutanlarımızdan sonra tsk.daki diğer kalan komutanlar,çok ama çok kötü sınav veriyorlar.yazık....

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**ilker coskun** - Aladinizmi deniz kuvvetkerine operasyon yapip deniz kuvvet komutani yapacak komutan bile birakilmamasinin sebeplerinden sadece ve en masumane olanlardan birini

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**FERDA SENSOY** - DENİZ KUVVETLERİNİ GUCDEN DUSURMEK İCİN ÖZEL OLARAK YAPILMIS HAREKAT KUMANDAN BIRAKMADILAR 300 CASUS HEPSİ BİR ARADA NERDE GORULMUS TAYYIP KIMLERLE KURDU BU KUMPASI BELLİ ORTAYA CIKTI HAININ BASI BU

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# Exhibit 44

## Light's Dark Slander

### **AYDINLIK'S DARK Slander**

I kept wondering, how to make fake news; After the news of SADAT in a newspaper whose name is bright but whose origin is dark, we lived close to the truth.

Is an issue warped that much or warped that much?

You know, when they asked the camel, "why is your neck crooked", the camel said "how good is it" or it's not like that. Because there is an art in the curvature of the camel, there is wisdom in each of its structures. My brother, we have passed the art and manat in these, but there is no right side even as a scrap!

You are establishing a business company in accordance with current laws. Whatever the procedure is, you complete the procedure in its circle. You're printing your brochure. You are promoting. You are setting up your website; You publish your purpose, target, working principles. You even appear on television, explain in detail and make announcements. It's not enough with that, you're authorized, you openly hold talks with anyone involved. Your place, your homeland, your address are known, you open your door to anyone who comes, you invite them. Look at this series of articles that came out despite all this, for God's sake!

Let's start with the founders of the company.

The news is as follows; "SOLDIERS RELEASED FROM TAF DUE TO REMEDIATION FOUNDED" Who are they? Those who founded ASDER. It was the first core of the centre. It was established in 2000. Coach, where have you been for 13 years. Our voices were hoarse by shouting. There is almost no television that we did not appear in, no newspaper that we did not write for. We wrote books, published newsletters, published articles. We shouted as much as we could. And while yours is full of bridle; while making governments inoperable and carrying out their post-modern coups.

Where have you been? Did you live in space? We never bowed our heads. Our foreheads are open, our chests are upright, we shouted the truth with all our voices...

Haven't you ever heard of how thousands of citizens of the country were wasted for the putschist sectarian structuring within the TAF? Haven't you heard that these people, who are equipped with all kinds of equipment, do not resort to an unlawful way even though they are subjected to all kinds of torture, how they seek their rights on completely legal and legitimate grounds, and how they struggle through democratic means?

AKP; CHP, MHP and media know ASDER very well. Already, with the support of almost all deputies

from the parliament, the rights of our aggrieved friends were restored. Moreover, we worked together with CHP Edirne Deputy Rasim Çakır, who was also a victim of the coup, and with our friends from ADAMDER, who were expelled from the army in the 1980 coup because they were in the Leftist mentality. They are now retired officers, retired NCOs. So what is this prehistoric headline still?

We established our association when the AKP did not exist yet. We are not affiliated with any party. We are a Non-Governmental Organization. All NGOs defending Human Rights and Contemporary Democracy recognize us, we have had many joint actions together.

How can such an open, transparent and democratic association and company be presented as a Counter-Guerrilla Centre? Indeed, great success...

Let's list the lies;

1. Established to train and arm the Syrian and foreign activists who started the civil war in Syria...
2. SADAT, which is called the Islamic counter-guerrilla...
3. Remittance: Dollars coming from the Gulf, some of the money allocated from the disguised appropriations of various organizations in Turkey It is delivered to the Syrian opposition by ASDER/SADAT.

According to the information obtained by 4.Aydınlık, approximately 2800 people have completed unconventional war training in the training camps opened by SADAT in various places so far..

5.Military training is still in progress. The training of a group of 300-400 people continues in the existing camps. It is claimed that the target is to increase this number to over 4500.

6. After ASDER came to power at the end of 2002, it operated behind the scenes as the center of AKP's military activities. He played an active role in leaking documents/information through his extensions within the army. ASDER members took an active role in Ergenekon and sledgehammer operations. It is claimed that these members are involved in producing fake documents in the computer environment.

7. With the Syrian crisis, ASDER decided to operate in the military field at the request of the AKP government.

8. These days, military members of ASDER decided to establish SADAT upon the request from the AKP government, with retired veteran special warfare brigadier Adnan Tanrıverdi at their head.

We determined that the head of SADAT, retired special warfare brigadier General Adnan Tanrıverdi, conducted a reconnaissance of the Naval Forces' Ulaşlı camp in İzmit/Gölcük for the training of the activists to be sent to Syria.

10. They play a key role in the Syrian civil war. According to our sources, SADAT is particularly busy training foreign militants for land warfare and street warfare.

11.SADAT has various training bases, mainly in Istanbul and Marmara region, which it uses and prepares to use for this purpose.

12. Mehmet Emin Koçak'

13. Mehmet Emin Koçak was arrested on 23 June 2009 after it was determined that he had

traveled abroad many times without permission.

14.This center was established to implement the US plan in our region.

These are all dreams produced in dark rooms by this newspaper, which is the enemy of the Light. There is nothing to answer for. Let them prove one of them, we are ready to close ASDER and SADAT. But our lawyers have made the necessary preparations. We will settle accounts in Court as soon as possible.

We'll settle accounts, but one issue keeps me busy; I wonder what is the purpose of this newspaper whose name is Aydınlık but its original is Darkness? I am trying to figure out what they are planning in the secret compartments of the brains.

It will appear soon...

Gürcan ONAT



# Exhibit 45



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Blog Post

# Has SADAT become Erdogan's Revolutionary Guards?

*AEIdeas*

FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY

MIDDLE EAST

TERRORISM

May 30, 2017



**Michael Rubin**

@mrubin1971

As the one year anniversary of last summer's coup attempt in Turkey nears, many problems remain with the narrative of events put forward by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Turkish media which he tightly controls. Among the most important questions yet unanswered, however, revolves around the activities of SADAT, a private paramilitary group which emerged from the shadows on the evening of the coup: Eyewitnesses say SADAT members fired into crowds and Turkish military officers suspect SADAT snipers to be responsible for at least some of the casualties that occurred on the trans-Bosphorus bridge.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan greets members of parliament from his ruling AK Party during a meeting at the Turkish parliament in Ankara, Turkey, May 30, 2017. REUTERS/Umit Bektas.

Adnan Tanriverdi, a former general dismissed for his Islamist leanings after the 1997 coup, founded SADAT in 2012. After the coup, Erdogan brought Tanriverdi into his office as chief military counselor. Thanks to a rule change made at Erdogan's

direction, many Islamists dismissed from the military who found refuge in SADAT subsequently re-joined the military with retroactive credit for promotions they did not receive in the military because of early termination.

That I have written about Tanriverdi and SADAT sporadically over the past year is a reflection of the degree to which they are a conversation among current, retired, and purged Turkish military officers; eyewitnesses who say SADAT was firing indiscriminately at civilians during the coup; NATO defense attaches stationed in Turkey; as well as officials stationed at the NATO headquarters in Brussels. The conclusion is the same: SADAT appears increasingly to act as Erdogan's personal militia or a Turkish equivalent of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

SADAT should raise eyebrows. Its website says it both provides conventional and unconventional military training and can supply weapons, explosives, and other equipment to its clients, but it appears to do much more than that. Even inside Turkey, suspicions about the group run deep. Ali Riza Ozturk, for example, a member of parliament from the center-left Republican Peoples' Party (CHP), officially queried the Turkish government about SADAT's involvement in training and equipping extremist and terror groups including the Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL, Daesh) in Syria. Ozturk also asked whether the government's refusal to

also asked whether the government's refusal to allow members of parliament to inspect a camp in the Hatay province was related to SADAT's presence and training in that camp. The government did not respond substantively to the question, and has even removed the transcript of Ozturk's questioning from the record.

Turkish officers and counterterror officials also raise concern about SADAT's recruitment and training in Central Asia and Europe. Prior to Russia's recent rapprochement with Turkey, the Russian government included SADAT in a report to the United Nations about Erdogan and his family's support for terror organizations in Syria. Turkish analysts also believe SADAT aids both in recruitment in Chechnya, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan for Syria's most radical Sunni Islamist groups, and the transfer through Turkey of those recruits. Indeed, when in 2015 Russia investigated nearly 900 people traveling to fight in Syria and Iraq, Russian authorities found that 25 percent had connections to SADAT. Nor is the problem one rogue group operating under the radar. According to fighters captured by Russian security forces as they sought to return to Russia, Turkish consulates in Russia evidently provided Turkish passports for the fighters from the Caucasus trained by SADAT to fight with the Islamic State and Al Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front.

Perhaps the Russian penchant for fiction

masquerading as news disqualifies Russian-sourced investigations, but in this case the Russian conclusions coincide with those of European counter-terror authorities. In Europe, many politicians assume online recruiting is the main mechanism by which young Europeans radicalize and volunteer to fight for the Islamic State but, increasingly, it appears that SADAT might be engaging in a more low-tech approach. Reportedly utilizing the assistance of the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD), a pro-Erdogan lobby group, SADAT has identified and recruited a number of European national foreign fighters for terror groups like the Islamic State and Nusra Front. Again, the Turkish government appears more deeply involved as SADAT apparently enabled nationals from Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, and Sweden to acquire current Turkish passports.

On March 22, 2017, Erdogan declared, “Europeans across the world will not be able to walk the streets safely if they keep up their current attitude towards Turkey.” Later that day, a terrorist mowed down several tourists in front of the British parliament. That was likely coincidence, but recent kidnappings of Turkish dissidents in Malaysia, Turkish spy rings in Europe, self-described Turkish civil society organizations in the United States reporting on dissidents and opponents, and the recent assault on protesters in Washington, DC, should all raise concerns about what Erdogan and

his proxy organizations and militias are up to, for they are certainly escalating.

It is clear that SADAT follows and enforces Erdogan's agenda without the constraints of being a government entity.

It is clear that SADAT follows and enforces Erdogan's agenda without the constraints of being a government entity. Such a conclusion makes sense not only because of circumstantial evidence, but rather because Erdogan has made SADAT's leader one of his top aides on par with if not more influential than the commander of the Turkish General Staff. Certainly, this raises questions about their activities in the run-up and during the coup, but it should also raise questions about Turkey's growing role as a terror sponsor. It seems that Erdogan envisions SADAT in the same way that the supreme leader of Iran views the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, as a force to ensure political loyalty at home and as a means to conduct terrorism abroad while maintaining plausible deniability in order to avoid accountability as much as possible for its actions, blaming them on rogue elements when necessary.

Despite Erdogan's bluster and bombast, Turkey is weak. Erdogan risks presiding not over a great Ottoman resurgence, but rather Turkey's collapse. Against this backdrop, he is pursuing the strategy of the weak—utilizing terrorism in pursuit of ideological

goals and to kneecap those who stand in the way of further power or wealth consolidation. It's all well and good for NATO officials to talk about Turkey's military with all the diplomatic niceties of decades past but, alas, the face of Turkish power today is increasingly SADAT rather than the Turkish army.

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May 23, 2017

*Washington Examiner*

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# Exhibit 46

## VOICE

# Turkey's Post-Coup Purge and Erdogan's Private Army

The Turkish president has brutally cleansed ranks and is building a new army with some strange bedfellows.

By Leela Jacinto

JULY 13, 2017, 4:02 PM

A year after the July 15, 2016, coup attempt, Turkey's military — the once mighty pillar of a secular, Muslim-majority state with the second-largest standing force in NATO — has lost its Kemalist oomph. The generals who survived the massive purges following that fateful night are so terrified of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's avenging wrath that they rolled their troops inside Syria — a prospect they once resisted — without a whimper. The massive purges that began shortly after the failed coup has seen hundreds of thousands of civil servants, judges, security officials, and employees of state-run institutions fired. Their positions are being rapidly filled, often by under- or unqualified replacements, via the Turkish patronage system of *kadrolasma* — literally, the building of loyalist cadres. The military is no exception. NATO's top commander, Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, raised the alarm back in December, when he warned of a “degradation” of the alliance's command operations following the firing of “talented, capable” senior Turkish military officials.

The morning after the coup attempt, which left more than 200 dead, as Turks were still processing what happened that long, harrowing night, Erdogan knew exactly who was responsible for what he called a “gift from God.” The culprits, he proclaimed before investigations even began, were the Gulenists, the followers of Pennsylvania-based cleric Fethullah Gulen — who once supported Erdogan but fell out with him when they started exposing corruption allegations within the Turkish president's inner circle.

But a year later, Western intelligence officials and top Turkey analysts aren't nearly so sure of Gulen's complicity. Earlier this year, German spy chief Bruno Kahl revealed that Ankara has failed to convince the BND foreign intelligence agency that Gulen was behind the ill-planned and executed coup plot. “Turkey has tried to convince us of that at every level, but so far it has not succeeded,” Kahl told the German weekly *Der Spiegel* in March. When asked if the movement — whose official name is Hizmet, or “service” — was an Islamist extremist or a terrorist movement, Kahl replied: “The Gulen movement is a civilian association for religious and secular education.” A leaked report by Intcen, the EU's joint intelligence service, concluded that Erdogan had planned a purge before July 2016 and an array of soldiers, fearing the upcoming mass firings, hastily launched a coup.

A 630-page draft report by Turkey's parliamentary coup investigation commission released this May repeated the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) narrative but failed to provide conclusive proof. Meanwhile the main coup trial, begun under the media spotlight earlier this year, got bogged down by mind-numbing contrary testimonies until it was finally postponed to Oct. 30.

Transcripts of WhatsApp messages among the coup plotters that fateful night reveal that the putschist group in Istanbul called itself “Yurtta Sulh” in a reference to a well-known maxim by Turkey's founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, that goes, “*Yurtta sulh, cihanda sulh*” (peace at home, peace in the world). The choice suggests that there could have been a mix of disgruntled Gulenists, Kemalists, and ultranationalist soldiers among the plotters. As for the smoking gun — an order coming from Gulen's Poconos headquarters — we haven't seen that as yet.

What we do know for sure though is that the Turkish military today is not what it used to be. Turkey has lost some of its brightest and best generals. An estimated 400 Turkish military envoys to NATO were dismissed in the months after the botched coup, according to an October 2016 Reuters report. Inside Turkey, the military bloodletting is worse. Turkish military analyst Metin Gurcan estimates that between March and September 2016, there was a 38 percent reduction in the number of generals and an 8 percent shrinkage in the officer cadres in the 350,000-strong Turkish Armed Forces.

Hundreds of sacked senior Turkish military officials posted at NATO centers across Europe and the United States before the botched coup are selling their cars and the family jewels as they try to rebuild uncertain lives after failing to follow command orders to return home — and disappear into Turkish jails.

An interview with an unnamed Turkish officer in the Brussels-based *Vocal Europe* magazine provides a profile of the type of military personnel the country has lost. “I went through officer training in Turkey and abroad.... I got my master's degree in United States. Like many other purged officers, I am a staff officer, graduated from War College,” said the military official, who currently runs the Twitter account @PurgedNATO. “Personally, I do not know why I was sacked.... I have extensive education in US, I probably did not fit well in the new Eurasianist clique, dominating the Turkish Armed Forces.”

“Eurasianist clique” is not a familiar term outside Turkish military circles, but it's not a new one. An April 2003 cable, released by WikiLeaks, from the U.S. Embassy in Ankara describes the Eurasianists as a group of officers within the Turkish military “who, without understanding the Russia-dominated nature of the ‘Eurasia’ concept, have long sought an alternative to the U.S. and are considering closer relations with Russia.” The cable went on to detail how a rival group dubbed the “Atlanticists” — who believe Turkey's strategic interests lie in its U.S. and NATO ties — was losing influence within the Turkish General Staff.

## The Russian lovefest

More than a decade after that cable was dispatched, the Eurasianists among Turkey's military-civil elites are gaining ground, and the foreign-policy implications stretch from Syria to the EU to the United States and, of course, to Russia. With the post-July 2016 purge of Erdogan opponents, including Gulenists and senior Atlanticists in the Turkish military ranks, Ankara and Moscow have managed a diplomatic rapprochement of breathtaking proportions. Through the winter of 2015-2016, Russia-Turkey relations were in a dangerous chill after a Turkish F-16 shot down a Russian Su-24 attack aircraft near the Turkey-Syria border. Then the coup attempt suddenly sparked an Ankara-Moscow summer of love. Four days after the botched putsch, the two Turkish Air Force pilots who had downed the Russian Su-24 were arrested for — get this — their Gulenist links. Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek — a sort of Turkish Donald Trump who can be unwittingly funny if he wasn't so sinister — blamed the two hapless pilots for destroying Turkey-Russia bilateral relations. "I say this, as Melih Gokcek, these rascals caused the rift between Russia and us," the Ankara mayor told CNN Turk. "Why? Because they wanted to isolate us in world politics. Yesterday, I had a guest from Russia, an advisor for Putin. He agrees with me."

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## **Eurasianists among Turkey's military-civil elites are gaining ground, and the foreign-policy implications stretch from Syria to the EU to the United States and, of course, to Russia.**

Turkey and Russia are agreeing on a number of issues, mostly notably on a military strategy inside Syria, which is quite an accomplishment since the two parties were the most formidable members of their respective camps opposing each other on the Syrian battlefield. A month after the botched coup, Turkey launched its first cross-border operation into Syria. The head of the Turkish Armed Forces, Gen. Hulusi Akar — considered an Erdogan loyalist — survived the post-coup purge; having retained his post, he was in no position to resist the Turkish president's military game plan in Syria. Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield was launched in a bid to block Kurdish territorial gains. Ankara is largely focused on the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian arm of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), with which it has long been at war. Russia, with its eye on the big geostrategic pie — namely a country on NATO's southeastern flank tilting toward Moscow — has decided that the Kurds, as always, can fry. Turkey's Syria operations were enabled by close intelligence sharing with Russia, according to a blog posted on [Purged NATO Officer](#), a website run by @PurgedNATO. That coordination, aided by the Eurasianists, proved critical in the fall of Aleppo. In the Turkish press, for instance, the swashbuckling hero of Operation Euphrates Shield, is Turkish special forces commander Zekai Aksakalli, a Eurasianist who was

promoted to the rank of lieutenant general on July 28, 2016, after playing a major role in preventing the putsch.

The new Turkey-Russia lovefest is also translating into megabucks arms deals. This year, Turkish Defense Minister Fikri Isik revealed that Ankara was in the “final stage” of a deal to buy an S-400 air defense missile shield from Russia. Before the botched coup, Moscow was not on the shortlist of bid contenders, which included the U.S. Patriot system, a French-Italian consortium bid, and a Chinese HQ-9 deal. Beijing ultimately clinched a provisional deal, which was then scrapped in favor of the Russian defense shield.

And so, while Trump was sucking the international media oxygen with his NATO is “obsolete” declarations, Turkey was quietly making a deal for a system that cannot be integrated with NATO missile defense architecture. Russia could soon have access to invaluable information about NATO’s critical capabilities — not to mention Russia’s reach into a country straddling Europe and Asia, with access to the Caucasus, Black and Mediterranean seas, and a gateway to the Middle East.

### **The deep state**

When it comes to the rise of Eurasianists and the Machiavellian nature of Turkish power shuffles, nothing beats the figure of Dogu Perincek, the leader of the far-left Patriotic Party, a tiny, ultranationalist party that punches above its weight in the Turkish security services. The term “Perincek group” comes up so frequently in Turkish policy chattering circles, accompanied with such heavy doses of political intrigue, that it’s hard to separate the myth from the man. For starters, here are the facts: Perincek is a 75-year-old lawyer by training who’s probably best known outside Turkey as the Armenian genocide denier who won a free-speech appeal at the European Court of Human Rights. One of the lawyers on the Armenian side was Amal Clooney, which helped earn the case its 15 seconds of fame in the international media.

Inside Turkey, Perincek is a familiar figure who detests the Kurds and the Gulenists in equal measure; the sentiment is roundly reciprocated. A dyed-in-the-wool communist who refers to his extreme-left cohorts as “scientific socialists” and the Islamists as “reactionaries,” Perincek views his enemies as “puppets of the Crusader West” — a theme he elaborated on in his book *Hacli Irtica*, or “Crusader Reactionaryism.” His ultranationalist, secular, hard-line followers are disproportionately represented in the security services, which was, and continues to be, an asset during Turkey’s periodic assaults on the Kurds.

During the early Erdogan years, when the reactionary puppet of the Crusader West was opening up to the Kurds and jump-starting a peace process with the PKK, the Perincek group was viewed as a spent force, a vestige of Turkey’s hard-line secular past. The Perincek goose was further cooked during the

Ergenekon trials, when Erdogan made allies with the Gulenists to purge the military of the old secularists allegedly cooking up a coup against the AKP government. But then the Gulenists made the fatal error of digging into corruption allegations against Erdogan's inner circle, including the president's family. With the launch of an intra-Islamist green-on-green war between the AKP and the Gulenists, Perincek was suddenly released from jail — where he had been serving a life sentence for an alleged coup plot against the Islamist AKP government — and was back in business.

Following the botched July 2016 coup, with the Turkish military purged of its qualified Gulenists and pro-West Atlanticists, Erdogan, the ultimate pragmatist, enveloped Perincek in a brotherly embrace. “With the religious conservatives, we have formed a common patriotic front,” Perincek told the Turkish press this year.

For now, the social scientists and the reactionaries have kissed and jumped into bed together, but it's a marriage made in hell, and Erdogan knows it.

### **Erdogan's private army**

Enter the febrile talk of Erdogan's private praetorian guard. One of the many reports that have emerged from that long, harrowing coup night was that members of a private security group were out on the streets of Istanbul fighting the putschists on the Bosphorus Bridge. Video clips of the scene shot around dawn showed burly men in T-shirts and bulletproof vests wielding semi-automatic rifles, firing into the air, and jostling aside jubilant Erdogan supporters, many of them trying to kick the putschists lying prone on the ground. The word on Turkish social media was that they were members of SADAT, which bills itself as “the first and the only company in Turkey, that internationally provides consultancy and military training services.” Founded in February 2012 by Adnan Tanriverdi, a former general who was dismissed for his Islamist leanings, SADAT's mission, rather ungrammatically detailed on its English-language website, is to establish a “Defensive Collaboration and Defensive Industrial Cooperation among Islamic Countries to help Islamic World.”

The bid to help Islamic countries build an Islamic world made sound business sense during the Arab Spring, and SADAT's operations inside Syria promptly caught the attention of Turkish opposition parliamentarians. In September 2012, a secular opposition MP submitted a list of questions to parliament about SADAT's alleged training and equipping of rebel fighters inside Syria and Turkey. The government responded with a terse denial, and the questions were subsequently expunged from the record, according to Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute. Shortly after the coup, Tanriverdi was appointed as a top advisor to Erdogan, leading opposition columnists to question if Erdogan is trying to mobilize a paramilitary army.



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## Syria promptly caught the attention of Turkish opposition parliamentarians.

If that's the case, SADAT's shock troops of Islamist fighters could well be on a collision path with Perincek's scientific socialist fighters once they lose patience with the reactionaries in their midst.

The one thing binding these disparate groups ascending in the Turkish military is a common anti-American platform. The Eurasianists and pro-Russia Perincek group have long viewed the capitalist West as the enemy. The SADAT crowd and the pro-AKP *kadrolasma beneficiaries* are eager fans of Erdogan's anti-Western rhetoric in their vision to help the Islamic world. But there could well be a falling out between the two camps within the Turkish military, which will take all of Erdogan's considerable political acumen to manage. Meanwhile, NATO's only Muslim-majority member is shunning the West to expand its influence in the East. A year after a botched coup that changed modern Turkey's history, the old postwar order is at stake.

Photo credit: OZAN KOSE/AFP/Getty Images

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**TAGS:** MILITARY, POPULISM, RUSSIA, SYRIA, TURKEY

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# Exhibit 47



# Erdogan nurtures elite mercenary force to rival Russia's Wagner Group

A close confidant of Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Adnan Tanriverdi claims expertise in all the dark arts of warfare

On Sep 28, 2020



In the eyes of some, he is the Islamic world's most powerful gun-for-hire, a well-connected ex-general with thousands of battle-hardened Syrian mercenaries at his command. A close confidant of Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Adnan Tanriverdi claims expertise in all the dark arts of warfare, from sabotage and counter-insurgency to assassinations.

But as with many prominent soldiers of fortune, it can be hard separating the man from the myth. Is he, as critics say, Mr Erdogan's private henchman, running secret Islamist armies in Libya and Syria? Or is he, as he himself claims, just a respectable patriot who has been smeared by the president's enemies?

"We haven't sent any mercenaries or other personnel to Syria or Libya," he insisted to The Telegraph last week, after he was accused by the US government of dispatching thousands of Syrian fighters to Libya. "I would like to highlight again that our firm is not a mercenary organisation. It doesn't have any connections with terrorist organisations or groups."

Read More

Generals at the Pentagon's Africa Command beg to differ. In a report to the US government earlier this month, they said Sadat was supervising around 5,000 Syrian mercenaries – including “extremists with previous terrorist links” – in Libya. The hired guns were said to fighting for the Government of National Accord, the side Ankara has backed in Libya's civil war.

The report said the mercenaries, allegedly paid and mentored by several dozen Sadat trainers, had helped the GNA retake territory from Khalifa Heftar, the Gaddafi-era strongman backed by Turkey's rivals, the UAE and Egypt. But it claimed that many of the fighters had also run amok. “There were increasing reports of theft, sexual assault and misconduct by these mercenaries, which is likely to further degrade the security situation,” it said.

The US allegations have fuelled the growing sense of intrigue around Sadat Group in Turkey, which Mr Erdogan's opponents say acts like a private presidential army. They draw comparisons with Russia's Wagner Group, which does foreign military operations for President Vladimir Putin, including fighting for General Heftar's forces in Libya.

The claims come as Mr Erdogan seeks to expand Turkey's military influence abroad, restoring its Ottoman-era glory as the Islamic world's foremost power. He is currently in a stand-off with European leaders over his decision to resume gas exploration in contested waters around Greece and Cyprus, parts of the Mediterranean that Turkey regards as its backyard.

A former special forces commander, Mr Tanriverdi was among a group of officers allegedly forced out of the military in the late 1990s because they shared Mr Erdogan's Islamist leanings. He set up Sadat Group with other ex-colleagues in 2012, although unlike other most soldiers of fortune, who simply work for the highest bidder, he has an ideology: to train Muslim nation's armies to the point where they are no longer reliant on Western help.

Or, as his website, which has flashy videos of elite forces in training, puts it: “The aim of Sadat Defense is to help the Islamic World take the place where it merits among Super Powers.”

Sadat, he claims, operates like any other modern private military firm, offering governments training in soldiering and counter-insurgency. However, like Wagner Group, its activities are swathed in secrecy, with Mr Tanriverdi declining to say publicly in which countries it has set up operations.

That has not stopped Turkey's opposition politicians, who have a tense relationship with Mr Erdogan, detecting Sadat's hand in all manner of skulduggery. As well as allegedly training Islamist fighters in Syria and Libya, the group is accused of giving the president behind-the-scenes help in defeating the attempted military coup against him in 2016. Sadat officers, it is claimed, were involved in some of the vicious street fighting that took place in Istanbul as the coup was quelled.

Those suspicions stemmed partly from the fact that shortly after the coup, Mr Erdogan made Mr Tanriverdi his chief military advisor. He resigned earlier this year, after a controversial speech in which he said Sadat was paving the way for the return of the Mahdi, a Messianic figure in Islam.

Two years ago, Meral Akşener, a former Turkish interior minister and secular opposition politician, alleged that Sadat had also been running training camps for pro-government militias near Turkey's Black Sea coast. Their job, she claimed, was to stir up trouble if elections did not favour President Erdogan's ruling AKP party.

Mr Tanriverdi denies such claims, insisting to the Telegraph that his firm had less than a dozen advisors, none of whom were ever deployed in direct combat. "Do you think a firm that has about ten staff can have a role in suppressing a coup plot?" he claimed.

He also bristled when asked if Sadat formed the president's private army, suggesting it was a notion that only a British newspaper might believe. "Turkey is a democratic republic, its head of state is chosen by popular vote," he asked. "Since we don't have kings or queens, dominance of a family or hereditary rulership, you might be having hard times to understand."

Professor Howard Eissenstat, an expert on Turkey at New York's St Lawrence University, said Turkey's opposition had perhaps over-exaggerated Sadat's importance, taking at face value the grandiose vision spelt out on its website.

But he added: "I don't think there is any question that Sadat has worked closely with the Turkish government in Syria and Libya, and they are very explicit about this idea of projecting Turkish power to the Muslim world. We just have to be wary about assuming that they are as important as they present themselves to be."

That would appear to be a view shared by Mr Tanriverdi, who claims his only mission to Libya was in 2013, when his firm negotiated for a bid to build a military pentathlon facility for the Libyan army.

"Because of the unrest in Libya, the negotiations stopped," he said.

He insisted, though, that there would soon be many other Turkish firms like his touting for military business. "Turkey needs tens of, maybe hundreds of, firms like Sadat," he added. "This is for the security, prosperity and survival of Islamic nations."

Source: The Telegraph

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# Exhibit 48

# MAKING SENSE OF SADAT, TURKEY'S PRIVATE MILITARY

MATT POWERS  
OCTOBER 8, 2021  
COMMENTARY



*Alternately described as "cannon fodder" and "terrorists," Syrian fighters working at Turkey's behest have generated headlines from the Maghreb to the mountains of*

*Nagorno-Karabakh. As Turkey continues to employ these proxies in conflicts abroad, it's important to examine the close alignment between the administration of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and an enigmatic private military company called SADAT International Defense Consultancy.*

*Despite a diverse and often provocative body of reporting, SADAT is best understood as a modern example in the evolution of the privatized military industry, serving as an indigenous Turkish alternative to both Western and Russian companies. Appropriately scoping SADAT not only identifies its strengths and vulnerabilities, but also the broader risks accompanying Turkey's employment of mercenaries.*

**BECOME A MEMBER**

*SADAT is a facilitator between Ankara and Syrian proxy fighters, complementing the efforts of the Turkish military and security services while affording it opacity and seemingly limitless protections. This dependency on the state and Erdoğan's favor, however, constrains the company's autonomy and entrepreneurialism. Moreover, SADAT's close association with Syrian proxies of varying discipline, credibility, and volatility could expose Ankara to a variety of unintended consequences. Understanding these factors is critical to evaluating the company's potential role in future security situations.*

### ***Turks, Mercs, and Networks***

*A number of Turkey watchers have been warning about SADAT and its controversial founder, [Adnan Tanriverdi](#), for years. Some have compared the company to state-sponsored [irregular revolutionary armies](#), like Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, while others believe Turkey's use of mercenaries harkens back to the*



Ottoman Empire's *Janissaries*. In 2018, a *network analysis* of presumed Erdoğan proxies stated that pseudo-military groups like SADAT "function formally as security contractors ... and informally as secretive armed forces." And, as part of a broader study early this year, the conservative Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security *stated* "SADAT can be considered the continuation of the pre-Erdoğan period's 'deep state' informal units."

There has been a recent *boom* in Turkey's private security market and a trend toward *industry indigenization*. But SADAT is distinct from traditional *Turkish private security companies* which focus on executive protection, transportation, and risk assessments. According to its *website*, the firm was founded in 2012 and boasts to be "the first and the only company in Turkey, that internationally provide consultancy and military training services at the international defense and interior security sector." SADAT promotes itself as a military enterpriser, advertising consultancy services, conventional, unconventional, and special forces training, and ordinance and maintenance expertise. However, it does not appear to publicly offer a direct action or combat arms capability, like the former *Executive Outcomes* or the existing *Wagner Group*. And, while it is assumed most private military companies are driven by economic motivations, SADAT is an outlier because of the overt political and religious aspirations of Tanrıverdi himself.

A retired brigadier general in the Turkish armed forces, Tanrıverdi's Islamist views reportedly led to his dismissal from active service in the late 1990s and are captured in a *corporate manifesto* marketing SADAT services alongside indictments of foreign hegemony and Muslim persecution. Deeming the privatized military industry as "under the control of Western Capitalism," the manifesto details SADAT's aspiration to be an alternative to the "colonist countries of crusade mentality." Its original cadre were retired commissioned and non-commissioned officers, "who will attach primary importance to the national interests of such countries and the joint interests of the World of Islam, [and] who have the profou

*experience of [the Turkish Armed Forces].” In the long term, the company will “contribute to the emergence of the World of Islam as a Super power and to promote an environment of cooperation in [the] field of Defense and Defense Industry among Islamic Countries.”*

*Under the Erdoğan administration, Tanriverdi has sought to fulfill his vision. Indeed, both men’s relationship extends back to 1994, when Tanriverdi served as a brigade commander in Istanbul during Erdoğan’s mayorship of the city. Reflecting on that time, Tanriverdi remarked, “I found that his achievements in politics and state administration have clearly the qualities of courage, foresight, consultation, and determination, which are the most important ones of leadership qualifications.” But Erdoğan is also a fellow Islamist whose control of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) platform has transitioned Turkey away from the Kemalist tradition of secularism while embracing his own version of highly militarized nationalism. Whether it’s neo-Ottomanism or not, Erdoğan has set Turkey on a foreign policy course motivated by overtly Islamist themes, a desire for increased regional influence, and a consistent antagonism to American and European interests. Thus, it is unsurprising that men like Tanriverdi would offer Erdoğan a unique base of support, thereby positioning SADAT to serve as an extension of regime security and influence.*

*Following the attempted coup in 2016, Erdoğan appointed Tanriverdi his chief military counselor, effectively granting Tanriverdi both a private and government role. Reinforcing security institutions with trusted agents is characteristic of many autocratic regimes and, by elevating his public association with Tanriverdi and his network, Erdoğan enabled SADAT to bolster the offshore viability of his own agenda.*

### ***An Expanding Presence...***

*Consider Libya. In summer 2020, the U.S. Department of Defense’s lead inspector*

general released its quarterly [report](#) to Congress on counter-terrorism operations in the U.S. Africa Command theater. Its findings included an assessment of the eroding security situation in Libya, following the Turkish military intervention to reinforce the ailing Government of National Accord (GNA). With Turkish-supported mercenaries being one of the key destabilizers, it notes, "U.S. Africa Command estimated that several dozen military trainers from a Turkish private military company, [SADAT], were deployed to Tripoli to train both GNA-aligned militias and Syrian fighters. Sadat maintains supervision and payment of the estimated 5,000 pro-GNA Syrian fighters in Libya."

Yet, the company's roots in the country actually extend back to at least 2013, as evidenced by [a photo](#) of Tanriverdi shaking hands with a Libyan military officer while holding a plaque depicting the Ottoman coat of arms. Though these connections may have shaped Erdoğan's decision to deploy forces, they also reflect baser capability: first-mover advantage. By establishing brand recognition, customer loyalty, and/or early purchase of services, SADAT has the potential to enter conflict markets and set conditions for follow-on Turkish actions. Prior to Libya, the company was routinely dogged by allegations it was training Syrian proxies on behalf of Turkey, charges [refuted](#). Regardless, the company's explicit involvement in North Africa, alongside Syrian proxies, confirmed that the company was prepared to be a regional, expeditionary private military company.

In 2020, Tanriverdi is believed to have signaled a greater role for SADAT in Africa when he noted Turkey's success in signing several [defense cooperation agreements](#) with African states to train their troops. He's also advocated for Turkey [create a private](#) military contractor — akin to Blackwater or Wagner — for dedicated foreign operations, capable of providing a force more useful than the Turkish military in select situations. Understandably, the company's actions in Libya, the increasing Turkish [military footprint in Africa](#), and Tanriverdi's aspirations justify concerns that Erdoğan is using SADAT as one means to export military force abroad.

SADAT's reputation has also led it to be implicated in other regional conflicts. In October 2020, [news outlets](#) detailed the deployment of Syrian fighters to support Ankara's interests in Azerbaijan. Ostensibly serving under generous contract terms with the promises of doing benign guard duty for [private Turkish security company](#), these proxies were quickly embroiled in fighting on the ground in the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region. Reports allege Syrian fighters suffered anywhere from [dozens to hundreds of casualties](#). In November 2020, the [U.N. Working Group on the use of mercenaries](#) affirmed these reports, including "Turkey's large-scale recruitment and transfer of Syrian men to Azerbaijan through armed factions, some of which are affiliated with the Syrian National Army." While correlation is not causation, the similarity in Turkey's deployment of Syrian mercenaries to both Libya and Azerbaijan prompted allegations of SADAT's role in the conflict. Despite the company's [denial](#) of involvement and a lack of a direct evidence to the contrary, an Armenian investigative group (using Russian [reporting](#)) [stated](#) the company used its own planes to transport fighters. Another media [asserted](#) "SADAT ... might have played a role in the recruitment operations," although the [original source](#) it quoted merely claimed "It seems likely that the recruitment is being carried out by a Turkish private security company that is also involved in shipping Syrians to fight in Libya."

Likewise, in Afghanistan, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights [reported](#) in July that Turkish intelligence and Syrian faction leaders reached a deal to transfer Syrian fighters to Afghanistan under official private security company contracts. With the Taliban's seizure of the state and NATO's withdrawal of forces, Turkey subsequently [scrapped](#) its plans to take over security for the Kabul airport. It's not a stretch, however, to assume SADAT could have played a supporting role under more favorable conditions.

### **...With Exceptions**

In sum, SADAT's actions abroad — both proven and purported — seemingly

*demonstrate sufficient private military capabilities to warrant concern. However, some of the company's underlying strengths also reveal vulnerabilities that may curb SADAT's potential.*

*The company's opaque profile is one perceived advantage, affording SADAT greater flexibility in how it pursues objectives. For example, reports of an "unnamed Turkish security company" in Nagorno-Karabakh follow a pattern of accusations that SADAT masks recruitment and training through front companies and local partners. Paradoxically, Tanriverdi denies SADAT's involvement in foreign conflicts and training Syrian proxies, while boasting of the company's early efforts in Libya and its potential to serve in new client states.*

*The company's opaque nature makes it hard to accurately assess its relationship with other elements of Turkey's security services. In Syria, the company supposedly helped recruit, quickly train and provide logistical support for proxy fighters — but the significance of SADAT's role compared to other Turkish agencies involved is unclear. In Libya, SADAT facilitated operations with Syrian mercenary recruitment, training, and potentially transportation — but only after Turkey had overtly committed military forces in support of the Government of National Accord. Moreover, beyond simply supporting Turkish military and proxy forces, there is likely a nexus between SADAT and Turkey's national intelligence organization. Despite Tanriverdi's attempts to distance the company from the intelligence service, his son — and SADAT's current CEO — publicly admitted the company coordinates with Turkish intelligence, in addition to the Ministry of Defense and Foreign Ministry, when considering requests from potential clients.*

*The company's protections within Turkey is another perceived advantage. Internationally, Turkey is not a party to agreements or codes of conduct seeking to regulate mercenaries. These include 1949's First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, specifically Article 47; 1989's International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (the U.N. Mercenary*

Convention); 2008's Montreux Document; and the growing International Code of Conduct Association. Domestically, SADAT stresses its compliance with Turkish national security laws as its activities technically fall outside the scope of acceptable defense industry production. More important, however, is Tanriverdi's personal relationship with Erdoğan, whose authority lends an air of legitimacy to the group while likely shielding it from attribution and legal scrutiny. A recent case in point: Sensational accusations of SADAT's role in equipping al-Nusra Front terrorists spurred attempts by Turkish parliamentarians to investigate SADAT. These attempts failed, though, due to rejection by the AKP and Erdoğan's political allies.

Unilateral patronage and protection create dependency, though, eroding the company's autonomy and its vision. The company seeks to assess "the threats against the countries it serves, by considering the geopolitical status of such countries, and organizes the Armed Forces of the same with the aim to ensure the national defense by meeting the most efficient and contemporary needs." Yet, by and large, SADAT's publicly known operational history in other countries has been solely in support of Ankara's objectives, not independent of, or even parallel to, it. With close ties to the military and potentially the intelligence service, can future clients trust SADAT to act as a legitimate broker in their interests if not unequivocally aligned with Turkey?

Tanriverdi's relationship to Erdoğan also creates potential political complications for the company. There are dark allegations that SADAT deployed a network of armed affiliates onto the streets in support of the administration during the attempted coup and, with Tanriverdi's subsequent ascension into Erdoğan's inner circle, these unresolved charges have provided consistent fuel for critics of both the company and its founder. Furthermore, Tanriverdi's outspoken religious beliefs have inflamed tensions with Israel and have drawn unnecessary attention to the company, ultimately forcing him to resign from his security advisor position. And this all comes at a time when Erdoğan is trying to carefully court retired senior

*military officials' support while countering their own ambitions when contrary to his agenda.*

### ***Additional Risks***

*It is also possible that the risks associated with SADAT could eventually lead Ankar to distance itself from the company. The Turkish government might rethink its use of proxy groups, or conversely take over managing them more directly.*

*What are the risks? First, introducing private military companies into conflicts with low barriers to entry may not always yield desired effects. In Libya, the injection of Syrian mercenaries reinforced the ailing Government of National Accord, but was also met with a corresponding increase in Wagner mercenaries and Russian military equipment, aiding both the Government of National Accord's opposition and prolonging the conflict. And, despite often being managed by former military personnel, private military companies and the proxies they support don't always possess effective command and control mechanisms. Coordination between headquarters and advisors can be misconstrued, ignored, or exceeded by mercenaries or proxies on the ground. This risks unintended military confrontations with competing states operating in the same area. Wagner's disastrous engagement in eastern Syria in February 2018, when Russian mercenaries miscalculated the resolve of threatened American military and partner forces, illustrates this danger.*

*Second, the recruitment of future proxies rests on the credibility of private military contractors as militarily effective and disciplined organizations. Of course, one of the attractive features of these organizations for clients is their perceived deniability. This includes select governments, particularly those wary of domestic concerns about military casualties or unpopular campaigns abroad. But company reputations defined by mismanagement and high casualties will likely not endure, undercutting the immediate utility of these groups for authoritarian regimes. State*

sponsors must also contend with the fallout from private military company-associated tragedies. Beyond temporarily stymieing Russian objectives in Syria, Wagner's 2018 defeat provoked a small, but unnecessary domestic distraction prior to another assured presidential electoral victory for Putin. For Turkey, its proxies in Syria have been accused by U.N. investigators of war crimes including hostage-taking, torture, rape, and unlawful deportation of prisoners back to Turkey.

Third, disenfranchised mercenaries can turn volatile Reports of Syrian proxies betrayed by failed Turkish promises not only strain future recruiting for expeditionary campaigns but can warp volunteers' underlying motivations and ideologies. Already facing domestic recoil to over 3.5 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, Erdoğan can ill-afford for jaded extremists to cause problems at home. This is also true, albeit to a lesser extent, for extremists returning to North American or European states of origin, undercutting Turkey's attempts to bolster its image as a credible NATO partner in counter-terrorism.

### **An Uncertain Future**

SADAT is part of a new race for private military capabilities. As seen in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, the proliferation of conflicts with negligible Western engagement may create continued opportunities for Turkey to employ mercenaries. And, if Turkey's mixed domestic appetite for military interventions abroad persists, it is easy to see the appeal in augmenting Turkish military forces or its partners with Syrian proxies. But this should not lead Turkey watchers to exaggerate SADAT's reach or ignore the constraints it faces.

Despite its Islamic orientation and private military capacity, SADAT's narrow operational history and opaque relationship with the Turkish security services may encumber outreach with wary client states. Barring a diversification of Turkey's private military industry, Western and Russian private military companies will still continue to offer competitive services to potential clients while Ankara's sole



*patronage (and de facto control) of SADAT will limit the company's ability to exercise any true "mercenary" spirit. Additionally, the performance and conduct of those mercenaries even loosely associated with SADAT could potentially result in embarrassing failures abroad, unintentional military escalation, and increased instability at home. SADAT's viability, and by extension Erdoğan's tolerance for the company, is directly linked to its success in managing these risks.*

*BECOME A MEMBER*

*Maj. Matt Powers is an active duty Army officer currently assigned to the Joint Staff. He served in various Army and interagency assignments covering Russian, European, and Eurasian portfolios. He earned master's degrees from the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University and the National Intelligence University. He would like to thank Col. Doug Jones, Maj. James Kwoun, and others for their guidance and assistance in drafting this article. The views in this article are entirely the author's and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.*

*Image: [Republic of Turkey Directorate of Communications](#)*

COMMENTARY

War On The Rocks

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# Exhibit 49



The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security

# Erdogan's Shadow Army: The Influence of "Sadat," Turkey's Private Defense Group

<https://jiss.org.il/en/spyer-erdogans-shadow-army-influence-sadat-turkeys-private-defense-group/>

Dr. Jonathan Spyer

"Sadat" is heavily involved in Ankara's training of Syrian Sunni rebels for the fight against Assad.

24.04.2018

In the collapsed and fragmented space that constitutes much of today's Middle East, the key to success increasingly lies in the ability to combine political strategy with military muscle, under a single banner and in a single structure.

Examples abound.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is today the foremost practitioner of political and revolutionary warfare in the region. Its skills in this regard are the primary reason for

the situation in which Iran today controls Lebanon and has a dominant hand in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Turkey is the latest country to enter this crucial, if shadowy, field.

The SADAT Defense Consultancy, founded in 2012 by former Brig- Gen. Adnan Tanriverdi, is Ankara's instrument in this area. Its activities are testimony both to the changing nature of the Turkish state, and to the process by which power and influence are currently built and held in the Middle East.

To understand the role that SADAT is set to play, let's first take a look at the advantages that similar structures afford the states that utilize them.

The IRGC, unlike the Iranian conventional armed forces, or "Artesh," is commanded by people absolutely loyal not to the state, but to



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the governing regime and its goals.

These are "political soldiers," notably available for mobilization both in defense of the regime at home, as well as in the furtherance of its goals abroad.

The proxy party-militia structures which the IRGC excels at creating and controlling in turn have the advantage of informality, and deniability, when compared with conventional forces. They permit Tehran to support and engage in paramilitary and terrorist activity globally – attacks on Jewish civilians in Burgas and Buenos Aires, assassination of Kurdish politicians in Vienna and Berlin, etc. – while continuing to take its place in the halls of diplomacy and trade as a supposedly conventional member of the international community.

The IRGC remains the exemplar for this type of warfare. Other countries have been slower to develop structures able to perform a similar function. But the gaps are closing.

The Russians, predictably, have entered the game over the last half-decade. Irregular "volunteers" were the Kremlin's preferred tool for sparking the ferment in Donetsk and Lugansk provinces of eastern Ukraine which led to the Russian conquest of these areas in 2014. Military contractors connected to Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner company have played a crucial role as auxiliaries and deniable ground cannon fodder for the Russians in Syria.

Many of the individuals engaged with this company are themselves veterans of the fight in Ukraine.



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SO, TO SADAT: According to its website, the company's mission is to "establish a defensive collaboration and defensive industrial cooperation among Islamic countries to help [the] Islamic world take the place where it merits among superpowers by providing consultancy and training services."

The Turkish version of the website sounds a little less like a run-of-the-mill private military contracting firm. Western states are described as "imperialist," "crusader" countries.

Tanriverdi is an artillery officer who later specialized in asymmetric warfare. A former head of the Home Front Command in Northern Cyprus, he was expelled from the army because of his Islamist convictions in 1997. His ties to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the circles of the ruling AKP are of long standing.

A recent analysis by longtime Turkey-watcher Michael Rubin for the American Enterprise Institute noted eyewitness reports of armed SADAT personnel involved in the suppression of the coup attempt of July 2016. The failed coup heralded the beginning of a comprehensive attempt by the Turkish president to remake the Turkish Armed Forces along lines more amenable to himself.

As part of this process, hundreds of officers dismissed for Islamist leanings are being reinstated, and Tanriverdi was himself appointed chief military adviser to the president in late 2016.

SADAT has been heavily involved in Turkey's training of Syrian Sunni Arab rebels for the fight against Assad. The company established a number of facilities in the Marmara region for

this purpose at the beginning of the Syrian war. According to a 2012 report in the oppositionist Aydinlik newspaper, at least one of these training facilities was located at a Turkish military base in the Golcuk district of Kocaeli, formerly maintained as a training center by the Turkish Navy.

The Syrian rebellion in northern Syria is today able to survive only because of Turkey's support. SADAT has played a key role in the development and facilitation of this relationship.

Tanriverdi does not deny SADAT's contacts with the Free Syrian Army, but in a July 2016 article in Cumhuriyet he was quoted as noting that both the Turkish state and the US supported the Syrian opposition, and that SADAT's contacts were carried out with the knowledge of the Turkish authorities.

Of course, the term "Free Syrian Army" is a wide one, and considerable evidence exists to suggest that elements of the Turkish state were directly offering assistance to the al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra at certain stages during the war in Syria.

With crucial elections approaching in 2019, there are widespread fears in opposition circles that the government is training militias for use to intimidate government opponents.

One opposition politician, Meral Aksener, founder and leader of the nationalist Good Party, told a leftist newspaper that SADAT was behind these training camps. The company denied the allegations.

Unsurprisingly, there is an Israel angle to SADAT's activities.

In an article quoted by MEMRI, Tanriverdi described Israel as "the outpost of the new crusade and a dagger in the heart of Islam." In the article, Tanriverdi envisions the equipping and training of a Palestinian conventional army which would, in partnership with a united army of Islam, defeat and destroy Israel.

Turkish academic Cemil Tekeli was arrested in January by Israeli authorities and deported from the West Bank because of suspicions that he was assisting Hamas in money-laundering.

Tekeli is a close associate of Tanriverdi, according to a report in Makor Rishon, which published a picture of the two together.

So – engagement in assisting proxies abroad, providing muscle for a repressive political strategy at home and planning war with Israel. Erdogan is engaged, according to many, in a historic project of dismantling the republic created by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk nearly 100 years ago and replacing it with a new, Islamic entity. This new entity will require new institutions.

The shadow warriors of SADAT appear to be in the process of establishing one of the most notable of these.

First Published in [The Jerusalem Post](#), 16.4.2018

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# Exhibit 50

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[Erdoğan is setting up a guard regiment for himself](#)



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## Erdoğan is setting up a guard regiment for himself

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A+ A-

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

"We have no organic ties to MIT and the state." Sadat Inc. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, retired Brigadier General Adnan Tanrıverdi, said this to Yavuz Oğhan on RS FM, three days before the bloody coup attempt on 15 July. Tanrıverdi, who explained the reasons for founding Sadat, which includes an irregular warfare course, as a mission to find solutions to the problems in the Islamic geography, is now in the Palace. In other words, Tanrıverdi became the chief advisor of President Tayyip Erdoğan, who was sitting in the number one seat of the state, after the coup attempt that took place shortly after he declared that he had no organic ties to the state.

Despite the fact that Sadat was founded four years ago, it was once again discussed intensely in the summer, when Sabahat Tuncel's claim that the villagers were burned in Lice with the words "They are talking about an organization called Sadat" led to it.

The "services" announced on the company's website at that time, its legal position in the legislation, whether a "company that trains and trains paramilitary cadres" in this structure is in compliance with the legislation, and the unanswered questions of the CHP deputies in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey since 2012, and in three separate articles we reminded

In the first week of July, we asked Mersin deputy Fikri Sağlar, who once again submitted a comprehensive question to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, whether he received a response to his motion. No he hadn't. In other words, there was no response from the Parliament and the ministries. Interestingly, however, the responses came from Sadat and on the web. When we asked Sağlar how she evaluated these answers, she said, "There is nothing in the answers. They say that they did nothing, that there would be a better way if there were laws, that they did not provide training" and made another assessment. Emphasizing that it is an important question why Sadat was appointed as the chief advisor, although he did not perform any "services" subject to the allegations, Sağlar's comments are as follows:

Evren also founded it, and Özal said, "Kenan Evren, through his son-in-law Erkan Gürvit, a MIT staff member, created a special power in the Mansion. A lot of information was revealed at that time. Then, when Özal became president, he wanted to establish another structure in his own way by looking at this structure.

There is an intelligence report of Kutlu Savaş, the content of which is unknown. After the MIT report on Necdet Üruğ, this is a report in the direction of "What kind of intelligence organization should be in the Presidential Palace".

Sağlar reported that at that time it was said in ANAP circles that "Abdullah Çatlı's abduction from prison in Switzerland is related

to the power that is being tried to be re-established within the framework of this report".

(/)

Stating that there is a similar example in the world in Congo, Sağlar states that the President there has created a new force, instead of his own military, by taking private military service from an Israeli company.

Provides; He is of the opinion that the appointment of Tanrıverdi as the chief adviser to President Tayyip Erdogan cannot be considered independently of the decision to abolish the Guard Regiment after the bloody coup attempt on July 15.

Stating that Erdogan can create a new "guard unit" for himself through Tanrıverdi, Sağlar said:

"When we say consultancy, it is remarkable that Tanrıverdi, who has made it his mission to provide unconventional war training to Islamic countries, is a consultant, while there are very, very well-trained officers in the TAF who have a wealth of world knowledge and experience. We will see better in time what it will bring and what it will take. But the possibility of a new formation within the Complex is a development that should be followed carefully."

Fikri Sağlar also stated that the FETOist structuring in the "Guard Regiment" "probably did not take place during the reign of Ahmet Necdet Sezer" and that this undesirable structure was likely to occur during the reign of Abdullah Gül, adding, "We do not know whether Gül wanted this structure or not. But if you do things according to your own wishes so that the forces holding the gun do not try to strike again, know that it will benefit others."

**Cumhuriyet**  
SALİT2 TEMMUZ 2016 92. YIL SAYI: 33351 KURUCUSU: YUNUS HADİ (924964) BAŞYAZARLARI: HADİR HADİ (945699) İLHAN SELÇUK (992000) FİYAT 15 TL (KDV İÇİNDE) KİTİDE 2 TL

Kontrgerilla eğitimi veren şirket, devlet denetimini dışında faaliyet gösteriyor  
**KARA DELİK SADAT**

21 YÜKSEK YARGI ÜYESİNDEN ORTAK AÇIKLAMA  
**İktidara bağlı yargı yaratılıyor**

28 Yargıtay ve 1 Devlet İhtisas Yargı Kurulu üyesi, Yargıtay toplantısında yaptıkları basın açıklamasında, Erdoğan'ın onay bekleyen yüksek yargı düzenleme tasarımlarını eleştirdi. Açıklamada, düzenlemenin yürürlüğe girmesiyle birlikte yargı oluşturulması ve ilişkilerin etkisizleştirilmesiyle yargıların tasfiyesini hedefledikleri belirtildi.

**SAVAŞ ŞİRKETİ**  
KARADENİZ'in "savaş şirketi" olarak tanınan SADAT'ın hizmetleri devlet denetimini dışında. Savunma Sanayi Hizmetleri için Türkiye'de bir merkez olması için şirketin, devlet denetimini dışında faaliyet göstermesi gerekiyor. Hangi ülkelerde faaliyet gösterdiği sorusu yanıtlıyor.

**HİZMETLERİ BİLİNİYOR**  
KARADENİZ'in "savaş şirketi" olarak tanınan SADAT'ın hizmetleri devlet denetimini dışında. Savunma Sanayi Hizmetleri için Türkiye'de bir merkez olması gerekiyor. Hangi ülkelerde faaliyet gösterdiği sorusu yanıtlıyor.

(Cumhuriyet announced the activities of SADAT in its headline on July 12.)

Çıray: desire for power attached to itself

Aytun Çıray, another CHP deputy who submitted a parliamentary question about Sadat last month, also evaluated Tanrıverdi's appointment as follows:

"There are several possibilities. The desire to intervene in Turkey with a force directly subordinate to a similar eventuality. The latter may be considering using it against Syria. But in such cases, states intervene with their legitimate forces. And finally; If he is going to consult this team in the restructuring of the army, it means that after a certain time we will experience a greater disaster than we are experiencing today."

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September 9, 2018





cleared the snow



A collapse occurred on the roof of the bus station, where excessive snow accumulated (/video/amasyanin-tasova-ilcesinde-asiri-kar-biriken-otogarin-catisinda-cokme-olustu-1903056?utm\_medium=Video%20Haberler%20Widget&utm\_source=Cumhuriyet&utm\_campaign=Video%20Haberler%20Widget)

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# Exhibit 51

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

# Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization

January 26, 2023

*Sanctions Target Wagner's Global Support Network, Russia's Military Complex, Putin Cronies*

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is taking additional actions to degrade the Russian Federation's capacity to wage war against Ukraine by sanctioning eight individuals and 16 entities, and four aircraft. Today's action, concurrent with additional [sanctions actions](#) by the Department of State, targets the infrastructure that supports battlefield operations in Ukraine, including producers of Russia's weapons and those administering Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine. Notably, today's actions include the designation of persons that support Russian defense-related entities.

"As sanctions and export controls on Russia from our international coalition continue to bite, the Kremlin is desperately searching for arms and support – including through the brutal Wagner Group – to continue its unjust war against Ukraine," said Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen. "Today's expanded sanctions on Wagner, as well as new sanctions on their associates and other companies enabling the Russian military complex, will further impede Putin's ability to arm and equip his war machine."

## **DESIGNATING THE WAGNER GROUP AS A SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION**

**PMC Wagner (Wagner Group)** is a Russian private military company led by Yevgeniy Prigozhin, a Putin crony and the target of multiple U.S. sanctions. Wagner Group has been involved in Kremlin-backed combat operations around the world in support of Putin's war on Ukraine. As Russia's military has struggled on the battlefield, Putin has resorted to relying on the Wagner Group to continue his war of choice. The Wagner Group has also meddled and destabilized countries in Africa, committing widespread human rights abuses and extorting natural resources from their people. Today, the Wagner Group is being redesignated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13581, as amended by E.O. 13863, for being a foreign person that

constitutes a significant transnational criminal organization. Wagner personnel have engaged in an ongoing pattern of serious criminal activity, including mass executions, rape, child abductions, and physical abuse in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali.

In light of the transcontinental threat posed by the Wagner Group, Treasury is concurrently redesignating the Wagner Group pursuant to E.O. 13667 for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence, or abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law in relation to the CAR. These actions also advance the implementation of President Biden's "Memorandum on Promoting Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)," which directs federal agencies to leverage existing sanctions authorities to hold perpetrators of CRSV accountable and combat rampant impunity for these egregious acts.

On June 20, 2017, OFAC designated the Wagner Group pursuant to E.O. 13660 for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine, and on November 15, 2022, the Department of State designated the Wagner Group pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy. The Wagner Group has also been sanctioned by Australia, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.

## **DISRUPTING THE WAGNER GROUP'S GLOBAL NETWORK**

Treasury is also designating numerous entities and individuals on multiple continents that support the Wagner Group's military operations.

**Joint Stock Company Terra Tech** (Terra Tech) is a Russia-based technology firm that supplies space imagery acquired by commercially active satellites, as well as aerial images acquired by unmanned systems. **Changsha Tianyi Space Science and Technology Research Institute Co. LTD** (Spacety China) is a People's Republic of China (PRC)-based entity that has provided Terra Tech synthetic aperture radar satellite imagery orders over locations in Ukraine. These images were gathered in order to enable Wagner combat operations in Ukraine. In addition, OFAC today took action against Spacety Luxembourg S.A. (Spacety Luxembourg), Spacety China's Luxembourg-based subsidiary. Joint Stock Company Research and Production Concern BARL



(AO BARL) is a Russian space company supporting Russia's military activities in Ukraine. AO BARL has shared foreign high-resolution satellite imagery with Russia's military.

Terra Tech and AO BARL are being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the technology sector of the Russian Federation economy. Spacety China is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of Terra Tech. Spacety Luxembourg is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being owned or controlled by, or for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Spacety China.

As a part of this action, Treasury is also designating persons in the CAR and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that are connected to the Wagner Group's operations in CAR. The Department of State is amplifying this action by concurrently designating two persons pursuant to E.O. 14024. Wagner Group personnel first deployed to CAR in January 2018 purportedly to "train" CAR military and security forces. Since then, the Wagner Group has used entities it controls – **Officer's Union for International Security** and **Sewa Security Services** – to provide a veneer of legitimacy for the presence of Wagner Group personnel in CAR, operating under the guise of "instructors." Wagner Group personnel have perpetrated numerous instances of human rights abuses against civilians in the CAR, including mass summary executions, rape, arbitrary detention, torture, and displacement of civilians. Moreover, the Wagner Group controls numerous gold and diamond mines in CAR, while raiding and plundering others. The Wagner Group has denied access to CAR government officials seeking to inspect mining operations at Wagner Group-controlled sites.

**Sewa Security Services** (Sewa) is a CAR-based security company controlled by the Wagner Group that provides protection for senior CAR government officials. Sewa has also claimed to provide "instructors" for "training exercises" in CAR. Sewa is being designated under E.O. 13667 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, PMC Wagner, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13667.

**Officer's Union for International Security** (OUIS) is a Wagner Group front company operating in CAR. Based in Russia, OUIS claims to represent Russian "instructors" in CAR. Starting in early 2021, the Wagner Group used OUIS to obscure an increase of Wagner Group personnel operating in CAR. OUIS is being designated under E.O. 13667 for being owned or controlled by,

or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, PMC Wagner, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13667.

**Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Ivanov** (Ivanov) is a Russian national and the director of OUIS. As director, Ivanov provided an official response to a United Nations report that accused Russian “instructors” of committing human rights abuses in CAR. Ivanov is being designated under E.O. 13667 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, PMC Wagner, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13667.

**Kratol Aviation** (Kratol) is a UAE-based aviation firm. The Wagner Group uses Kratol-provided aircraft to move personnel and equipment between the CAR, Libya, and Mali. Kratol is being designated under E.O. 13667 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, PMC Wagner, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13667.

**Valery Nikolayevich Zakharov** (Zakharov) is a Russian national and Wagner Group employee, who served as the National Security Advisor to CAR’s President, serving in both roles simultaneously. During his tenure as the CAR’s National Security Advisor, Zakharov influenced the strategic direction of the Wagner Group in the CAR, while advising CAR’s President on security matters. Zakharov is being designated under E.O. 13667 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, PMC Wagner, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13667.

## **SANCTIONING RUSSIA’S DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, INCLUDING THOSE SUPPORTING PREVIOUSLY SANCTIONED RUSSIAN FEDERATION DEFENSE-RELATED ENTITIES**

Treasury is also designating the following targets to further degrade Russia’s war machine.

**JSC Aviacon Zitotrans** (Aviacon Zitotrans) is a Russian cargo airline that has handled cargo shipments for sanctioned Russian Federation defense entities. Additionally, Aviacon Zitotrans has shipped military equipment such as rockets, warheads, and helicopter parts all over the world. For instance, Aviacon Zitotrans has shipped defense materiel to Venezuela, Africa, and other locations. As one example of its efforts, as of September 2022, Aviacon Zitotrans sought to use a Turkish company and Turkish diplomats to facilitate the sale of Russian defense

equipment abroad on behalf of Rosoboroneksport OAO, a U.S.-designated Russian Federation state-owned defense firm. Aviacon Zitotrans is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel and aerospace sectors of the Russian Federation economy. OFAC identified as property in which Aviacon Zitotrans has an interest four Russia-registered Ilyushin aircraft with tail numbers **RA-76842, RA-76502, RA-76846, and RA-78765.**

**AO Ural Civil Aviation Factory (UCAF)** has developed the Altius unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) for Russia's Ministry of Defense. UCAF has specifically leveraged personnel to repair UAVs used in Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. UCAF is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy.

**Joint Stock Company National Aviation Service Company (NASC)** is a Russia-based state-owned enterprise that repairs and maintains aircraft and electronic equipment. Per a Russian Federation presidential decree, NASC was designated as Russia's state intermediary for the service of Russian military aircraft supplied abroad. Despite existing restrictions against Russia's military-industrial complex, NASC has represented itself as not subject to sanctions for the purpose of facilitating Russian defense contracts. NASC is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the aerospace sector of the Russian Federation economy.

**LLC Research & Production Enterprise Prima (Prima)** is a Russia-based entity that develops and produces communication equipment for Russian-manufactured helicopters and airplanes. Prima is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the aerospace sector of the Russian Federation economy.

**Federal State Unitary Enterprise Scientific and Production Enterprise Gamma (Gamma)** is a Russia-based technology entity that carries out work in the interest of the U.S.-designated Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. Gamma is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel and technology sectors of the Russian Federation economy.

Alan Valeryevich Lushnikov (Lushnikov) is the largest shareholder and president of the U.S.-designated Kalashnikov Concern, the original manufacturer of the AK-47 assault rifle. Lushnikov indirectly owns 75 percent of Kalashnikov Concern's shares with the remaining 25 percent being owned by U.S.-designated State Corporation Rostec. Lushnikov is being

designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy.

**LLC TKKH-Invest** (TKKH-Invest) is the financial vehicle through which Lushnikov owns shares in Kalashnikov Concern. Lushnikov owns 100 percent of TKKH-Invest, and TKKH-Invest owns 75 percent of Kalashnikov Concern. TKKH-Invest was designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Lushnikov, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O.14024.

**JSC Aerospace Defense Concern Almaz-Antey** (Almaz-Antey) is a Russia-based state-owned enterprise that designs, develops and manufactures anti-aircraft, anti-missile, and non-strategic missile defense systems. OFAC first designated Almaz-Antey on July 16, 2014, pursuant to E.O. 13661. Today, OFAC redesignated Almaz-Antey pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy.

**Yan Valentinovich Novikov** (Novikov) is a Russian national and the Director General and CEO of Almaz-Antey. Novikov is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy, and for being or having been a leader, official, senior executive officer, or member of the board of directors, of the Government of the Russian Federation (GoR).

OFAC will continue to target Russia's efforts to resupply its weapons and sustain its war of aggression against Ukraine and destabilizing activities worldwide, including any foreign individuals or entities that assist the Russian Federation in those efforts. [Non-U.S. persons risk exposure to sanctions pursuant to E.O. 14024 for supporting Russia's military-industrial complex.](#)

## **TARGETING PUTIN'S CRONIES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS**

OFAC also sanctioned **Rustam Nurgaliyevich Minnikhanov** (Minnikhanov), a Russian national and the chairman of the board of U.S.-designated Tupolev Public Joint Stock Company, which produces strategic bombers for Russia's armed forces. Minnikhanov is also the longtime head of Tatarstan, a federal subject of the Russian Federation. Minnikhanov is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being or having been a leader, official, senior executive officer, or

member of the board of directors of the GoR and for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel and aerospace sectors of the Russian Federation economy.

Much of Minnikhanov's property is formally registered in the name of his wife, **Gulsina Akhatovna Minnikhanova** (Minnikhanova). Minnikhanova's main asset is **Obshchestvo s Ogranichennoi Otvetstvennostyu Luchano** (Luciano), a hotel and spa complex in Kazan, a city in the Russian Federation. In 2016, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Russia accused Minnikhanov and Minnikhanova of accepting bribes in the form of investment in Luciano and a mansion in Kazan. The same NGO estimates that the Minnikhanov family owns properties worth almost \$50 million, spread across Russia, France, and the United Arab Emirates.

Minnikhanova is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being a spouse of Minnikhanov. Luciano was designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Minnikhanova.

## **HOLDING RUSSIA ACCOUNTABLE FOR ILLEGAL ATTEMPTED ANNEXATION**

A critical aspect of Putin's war against Ukraine is Russia's effort to control – including through sham annexation referendums – Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine. As a part of promoting accountability for those involved in this aspect of Russia's war effort, Treasury is designating two Russian Federation Presidential Administration (PA) officials involved in these reprehensible efforts.

**Aleksandr Dmitrievich Kharichev** (Kharichev) and **Boris Yakovlevich Rapoport** (Rapoport) are Russian Federation PA officials associated with U.S.-designated Sergei Kiriyyenko. The PA subdivision led by Kharichev was tasked with hiring personnel to administer Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine's Donbas region.

Kharichev's subordinate Rapoport, who is also closely tied to U.S.-designated former PA official Vladislav Surkov, has been engaged in nefarious activity on behalf of the Kremlin for years, including supporting electoral campaigns of Kremlin-backed candidates and implementing Kremlin policy related to self-proclaimed breakaway republics in Ukraine and Georgia. Most recently, Rapoport prepared the sham annexation referendums staged in September 2022 in the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts of Ukraine.

Kharichev and Rapoport are being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being or having been leaders, officials, senior executive officers, or members of the board of directors of the GoR.

Kharichev and Rapoport have also been sanctioned by the European Union, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The Department of State is concurrently taking a number of actions under E.O. 14024. It is designating five entities and one individual linked to the Wagner Group and is also designating 23 individuals and entities for their status as government officials, their involvement in the extended networks of designated persons, and/or for being a part of Russia's military industrial complex. Additionally, the Department of State is identifying two yachts and one aircraft as blocked property. Information on these actions is available in this Fact Sheet [\[+link\]](#).

## **SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the individuals above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. All transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or blocked persons are prohibited unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or exempt. These prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any blocked person and the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from the ability to designate and add persons to the SDN List but also the willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to [OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897](#). For detailed information on the [process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list](#).

[For identifying information on the individuals and entities sanctioned or property identified today.](#)

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# Exhibit 52

# Strategies of Turkish proxy warfare in northern Syria

Back with a vengeance

CRU Report

Engin Yüksel



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November 2019

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Cover photo: Turkish Army units and Free Syrian Army forces conduct joint operations in northwest Syria (Afrin) in January 2018 © Sözcü (a Turkish online and print media outlet)

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### **About the author**


**Engin Yüksel** is an Associate Fellow with the Clingendael Institute. His research focuses on the strategic development, nature and impact of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, in particular in relation to Syria, Iraq, Iran and the Gulf Countries. His work is part of Clingendael's Levant research program on the role of hybrid coercive organisations in processes of state development.

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# Executive summary

After the failure of its strategy to overthrow President Assad between 2011 and 2015, Turkey has become a more significant player in the Syrian civil war from 2016 onwards. It has effectively resurrected the Syrian armed opposition as viable fighting force by gradually establishing centralised control over, and professionalizing, many Syrian National Army (SNA) as well as National Liberation Front (NLF) groups, on occasion even going as far as partnering with ‘pragmatic’ Hey’at Tahrir al-Sham elements (HTS; a former Al-Qaeda affiliate) (see Figure 1) in order to establish a Turkish sphere of influence in northern Syria.

Key variables that have influenced the effectiveness of Turkey’s engagement with different sets of armed Syrian opposition groups include: a) the possibility of obtaining influence by providing significant material support, such as training, salaries and equipment; b) the extent to which it could partner such groups with its own military (based on shared culture, perceived enemy and ideology); c) the level of centralised control it was able to achieve; d) geographic proximity; and e) clever divide-and-rule tactics, which, alongside relative neglect of ideological differences, proved useful in tipping these variables in Turkey’s favour.

The main effect of Turkey’s proxy warfare strategy is that it has effectively resurrected the ‘revolutionary’ cause (toppling Assad) of Syria’s civil war, albeit now under strong Turkish influence and with a powerful undercurrent of national Islamism. This will ensure long-term Turkish influence in northern Syria via an array of ‘secular revolutionary armed groups’ and ‘nationalist Islamist armed groups’ (see Figure 1). Such influence is currently being expanded east of the Euphrates river. While Turkey’s strategy was successful in Afrin (north-west Syria) and the Al-Bab - Jarabulus area (north Syria), it remains work in progress east of the Euphrates river, and limited in Idlib (north-west Syria) by HTS’s historical affinity with Al-Qaeda, the group’s independence and the personality of its leader.

# Introduction

In June 2019, the Turkish city of Reyhanli hosted the funeral of Absul Baset al-Sarout, a complex opposition figure in the Syrian civil war. For many, he was a popular icon of the Syrian revolution, even though he called for the extermination of Syria's Alawites in 2012. Later, he desperately pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS) for all intents and purposes,<sup>1</sup> and met his end fighting for a nationalist Islamist group that nevertheless cooperated with Hey'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a former Al-Qaeda affiliate. Turkey's official news agency and the Syrian National Coalition's General Assembly<sup>2</sup> paid tribute to Al-Sarout as a revolutionary hero, while the Turkish province of Hatay, where Reyhanli is situated, went so far as to drape its coat of arms over his green coffin. The funeral ceremony was, however, harshly criticised by one of Hatay's Turkish left-wing parliamentarians<sup>3</sup> and proved controversial among Reyhanli's mixed population of Arabs, Turks and Alawites. For the purpose of this brief, Al-Sarout's life and funeral offer a useful example of how interwoven secular/Islamist, national/transnational as well as moderate/radical armed opposition groups in Syria have become, and of how Turkey supports a broad range of such groups regardless of their ideological orientations.<sup>4</sup>

More precisely, this brief analyses Turkey's strategic relations with Syrian armed opposition groups with a focus on recent events in northern Syria, especially the areas of Idlib, Afrin and the Azaz-Jarabulus corridor. It seeks to understand why Turkey supports certain groups, what it expects in return, and what its support is likely to mean for the course of the war and the prospects for peace.

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1 Lucas, Scott, *Syria Feature: Hope and Tragedy of an Uprising – An Interview with Abdul Baset Sarout*, EAWorldview, 2019, [online](#) (accessed 14 October 2019).

2 See: <https://en.etilaf.org/all-news/news/general-assembly-concludes-46th-meeting-in-memory-of-abdul-basset-sarout.html> (accessed 7 October 2019).

3 See: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2019/gundem/baris-atay-reyhanlida-eski-isisli-icin-yapilan-cenaze-torenini-meclise-tasidi-5094176/> (accessed 7 October 2019).

4 See: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/syrian-revolution-hero-martyred-after-hama-clashes/1499280> (accessed 1 July 2019); Tastekin, Fehim, *The Syrian funeral that divided Turkey*, Al-Monitor, 2019, [online](#) (accessed 1 July 2019).

At the outset of the Syrian civil war, Turkey advocated for the peaceful inclusion of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood in the Assad regime. When that strategy fell on deaf ears in Damascus, Ankara shifted its focus to overthrowing President Assad by supporting the Syrian armed opposition.<sup>5</sup> After 2015, the poor battlefield performance of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and the rise of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), including its People's Protection Units (YPG), that Turkey views as a PKK franchise, caused a second strategic shift in Turkish foreign policy, namely a refocusing on containing and reducing the gains of the PYD-led Syrian Kurds.<sup>6</sup> This strategy has been operationalised through a hybrid warfare approach that combines regular Turkish military forces with irregular capabilities in the form of Syrian armed groups acting as Turkish proxies.<sup>7</sup> The approach has been relatively effective in carving out substantial areas of Turkish influence and/or control along the Turkish/Syrian border and in disrupting the emergence of a continuous area controlled by the PYD-led Syrian Kurds.<sup>8</sup>

### Box 1 A broad overview of armed Syrian opposition groups

Despite the linkages and regular changes of allegiance between many groups in the Syrian civil war, the armed opposition can be divided roughly into three main categories:

**(1) Secular revolutionary groups** – Starting with the Free Syrian Army that was founded in 2011 in Turkey by Sunni-Arab defectors of the Syrian Arab Army, this category contains groups that do not have an overt religious agenda (which is not to say their members are not religious) and that were formed early on during the protests and 'revolution' against the regime. This category includes Turkmen proxy groups represented by the Syrian Turkmen Assembly (STA) based in Al-Rai (northwest Syria, earlier in Istanbul). The FSA was an umbrella term for a network of mostly decentralised and irregular armed groups but in 2017 Turkey gradually turned it into a centralised organisation with clearer command and control structures. These FSA groups, which participated in Turkey's military operation Euphrates Shield, were effectively rebranded as the Syrian National Army (SNA).

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5 Van Veen, E. and E. Yüksel, *Too big for its boots, Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East from 2002 to 2018*, The Hague: Clingendael, 2018.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Hoffmann, Frank, *Conflict in the 21st century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, Arlington: Potomac Institute, 2007.

8 Van Leeuwen, J. and E. van Veen, *Turkey in north-western Syria: Rebuilding empire at the margins*, The Hague: Clingendael, 2019.

**(2) Nationalist Islamist groups** – The historical antecedent of the nationalist Islamist groups can be traced back to 2013 when seven FSA-aligned armed groups set up the (Syrian) Islamic Front (IF). While it officially sought to establish a Syrian Islamic state in which governance was supervised by religious scholars and based on sharia law, it distanced itself from Salafi-jihadi doctrine. The result was a Syrian-focused agenda with religious – but not radical extremist – overtones. This distinction resulted in the groups being labelled by some as ‘moderate Islamists’ (note a). In 2014, 19 moderate Islamist groups united in the Faylaq al-Sham (Sham Legion). Largely replacing the IF, Faylaq al-Sham consisted of Islamist groups of all shades (from conservative and Salafi-oriented to Muslim Brotherhood inspired) that viewed both the Assad regime and extremist groups as their enemies. Complicating things further, in 2018, several influential nationalist Islamist and FSA-affiliated armed groups in Idlib united to form the National Liberation Front (NLF). The NLF is a nationalist-Islamist formation in Idlib that operated under Turkish auspices. In October 2019 it merged with the Syrian National Army, which technically operates under the direct command of the Syrian Interim Government but in reality, it takes orders from Turkey.

**(3) Salafi jihadist groups** – This category is limited to Islamic State (IS) and Jabhat al-Nusra (JAN). Initially formed as the Syrian branch of IS, JAN switched its allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2013. In mid-2016, the group rebranded itself as Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and distanced itself from Al-Qaeda by limiting its area of action to Syria in the hope of avoiding US and Russian attacks and sanctions (note b). With its presence gradually reduced to Idlib, the group renamed itself Hey’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in early 2017. The creation of HTS produced a split between those who prioritised a jihadist vision of Syria (the ‘black’ faction) and those who prioritised the Syrian revolution’s vision from a conservative Islamic perspective (Nationalist Islamists, the ‘green’ faction). When HTS started to pursue policies that were not in line with the doctrine of Al-Qaeda’s leadership, jihadist elements of HTS broke off to form Tanzim Hurras al-Din (Guardians of Religion).

Note (a): It paid off in the sense that the US, UK and France blocked a Russian initiative in the UN Security Council in May 2016 to label Ahrar-al Sham – the leading ‘moderate Islamists’ member – as a terrorist organisation. See: Jonsson, Michael, *Biding Its Time: The Strategic Resilience of Ahrar al-Sham*, Stockholm: FOI Swedish DRA, 2016.

Note (b): The US continued to view the group as a terrorist organisation nonetheless and HTS as an Al-Qaeda affiliate. See: U.S. Department of State, Foreign Terror Organizations, [online](#); Amendments to the Terrorist Designation of al-Nusra Front, 2018, [online](#) (both accessed 6 July 2019).

Source: Al-Khateb, K., *Syrian Turkmen groups return from Turkey to support opposition*, Al-Monitor, 2019, [online](#) (accessed 07 August 2019); <http://www.suriyegundemi.com/2017/09/20/suriyeli-muhafiflerden-milli-ordu-catisi-altinda-birlesme-hamlesi/>; <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/osoya-bagli-yaklasik-30-alt-grup-milli-ordu-adi-altinda-birlesti/1018935> (both accessed 2 July 2019); Sen, A., *Suriye Askeri Muhalefeti*, Ankara: ORSAM, No. 202, 2015; Lund, A., *Say Hello To Islamic Front*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2013; Lund, A., *The Politics of the Islamic Front*,

*Part 1: Structure and Support*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014; Lund, A., *The Levant Front: Can Aleppo's rebels unite?*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014; Lund, A., *The End of the Levant Front*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2015; Lister, C., *Profiling Jabhat al-Nusra*, Washington: Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, No:24, 2016; *Backgrounder: Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham*, Center for Strategic Studies, 2018, [online](#); Tastekin, F., *İdlib'deki silahlı gruplar kimler? Aralarından 'ılımlıları' ayırmak mümkün mü?*, BBC, 2018, [online](#) (accessed 4 July 2019); Lefevre, R. and A. El Yassir, *The Sham Legion: Syria's Moderate Islamists*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014; Lund, A., *The Syrian Jihad: An Interview with Charles Lister*, Carnegie Middle East Center, 2015; Lister, C., *Turkey's Idlib Incursion and the HTS Question: Understanding The Long Game in Syria*, War On The Rocks, 2017, [online](#) (accessed 9 October 2019); Joscelyn, T., 'Wanted al Qaeda leader warns of Turkish influence on Jihad in Syria', *FDD's Long War Journal*, 2019; <https://en.etilaf.org/all-news/news/sig-announces-merger-between-national-army-national-liberation-front.html> (accessed 9 October 2019).

This brief is part of Clingendael's [Levant research programme](#) that analyses 'hybrid coercive organisations' (armed groups that simultaneously compete and coordinate with the state) in the context of the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars. The author is grateful to Thomas Pierret (University of Aix-Marseille) and another reviewer (who prefers to remain anonymous) for their feedback, and to several experts on Syria's myriad of armed groups for reviewing Figure 1. Responsibility for the content of the brief remains with the author.



# 1 Turkey and the armed Syrian opposition: From Free Syrian Army to Syrian National Army

Throughout the Syrian civil war, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) has been the armed opposition group mostly aligned with – and most dependent on – Turkey. Turkey hosted the FSA’s initial military headquarters, facilitated collaboration among FSA field commanders, welcomed supportive Western/Gulf representatives in the early stages of the war,<sup>9</sup> and launched a ‘train and equip programme’ in 2014 for vetted fighters to accelerate the overthrow of the Assad regime, together with the US.<sup>10</sup>

After 2015, when Turkey shifted to its strategy of containing the PYD-led Syrian Kurds by creating buffer zones in northern Syria, it used FSA groups as irregular forces in its hybrid military operations: Operation Euphrates Shield, 2016; Operation Olive Branch, 2018; and Operation Peace Spring, 2019.<sup>11</sup> These groups were renamed as the Syrian National Army (SNA).<sup>12</sup> Turkey supplies the SNA with training, salaries and weapons in exchange for its participation in Turkish military operations in and outside of its buffer zones.<sup>13</sup> On balance, it is fair to say that Turkey has come to control the SNA after a period of centralising and restructuring the force.

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9 Sen, A., *Suriye Askeri Muhalefeti*, Ankara: ORSAM, No. 202, 2015.

10 Blanchard, C. and A. Belasco, *Train and Equip Program for Syria: Authorities, Funding, and issues for Congress*, Washington: Congressional Research Service, 2015, [online](#) (accessed 7 July 2019).

11 See: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/suriye-milli-ordusu-firatin-dogusu-icin-hazir/1604677>; Tastekin, Fehim, *Who are the Turkish-backed forces in latest Syria incursion?*, Al Monitor, 2019, online (both accessed 14 October 2019).

12 Özkizilcik, Ö., *Ozgur Suriye Ordusu Nedir, Ne degildir?*, Ankara: Suriye Gundemi, 2018 [online](#) (accessed 8 July 2019).

13 See: <https://tr.euronews.com/2018/08/12/-suriye-milli-ordusu-maasimiz-ve-gerektiginde-silahimiz-turkiye-den> (accessed 8 July 2019).

The ease of collaboration between Turkey and the SNA in northern Syria, as well as Turkish-supported consolidation of the SNA, can be explained partially by the presence of considerable ethnic (Turkmen) and/or religious (Sunni Arab) elements on both sides. These elements are compatible in their socio-cultural views and have a shared perception of who constitutes the enemy (regime forces and, more recently, Syria's Kurds in the form of the PYD and YPG).<sup>14</sup> Collaboration and consolidation are, however, recent characteristics of the SNA-Turkish relationship. From the outset of the war, the FSA was fragmented and subject to geopolitical politicking, with a number of Gulf states competing for influence.<sup>15</sup> Operation Euphrates Shield (2016) boosted the FSA-Turkish partnership substantially when FSA groups performed adequately as part of the Turkish-military led operation. The 2017 centralisation of several FSA groups into three corps (the 3<sup>rd</sup> corps, 4<sup>th</sup> corps and special forces) and a new hierarchical structure for the SNA gave Turkey an even tighter grip on the organisation's composite groups, although these technically continue to report to the Ministry of Defence of the Syrian National Council and its Chief of Staff, General Salim Idris.<sup>16</sup> This new SNA structure recently became the core of the Turkish proxy architecture in Syria by integrating Idlib's National Liberation Front (NLF, see Box 1) groups into it. In addition, selected armed groups of Syrian Turkmen are said to execute special operations and covert tasks on behalf of Turkish intelligence (MIT) as part of a separate arrangement between these groups and Turkey.<sup>17</sup>

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14 Özkizilcık Ö., *Türkiye'nin Hareket ettigi Milli Ordu Bilesenleri*, Ankara: Suriye Gundemi, 2018, [online](#) (accessed 8 July 2019).

15 Lister, C., *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*, London: Hurst & Company, 2015.

16 See: <http://www.suriyegundemi.com/2018/12/12/turkiyenin-destekledigi-ve-firatin-dogusuna-yonelik-olasi-bir-operasyonda-yer-alacak-yapilanma-milli-ordu/> (accessed 9 July 2019).

17 Based on an interview with a Turkish military officer who worked in Al-Bab with FSA armed groups in the second half of 2017. The interview took place on condition of anonymity.

## 2 Turkey and the armed Syrian opposition: Nationalist Islamist groups

Ankara attempted a similar ‘control-through-centralisation’ approach towards nationalist Islamist armed groups<sup>18</sup> in northwest Syria (particularly Idlib), albeit with less success. Between 2013 and 2016, Turkey acted as a silent partner – along with Saudi Arabia and Qatar – in the provision of direct and indirect financial assistance to such Islamist armed opposition groups. Despite limited evidence of direct state involvement, donations gathered in Saudi Arabia and Qatar found their way unhindered to nationalist Islamist armed groups via Salafi support networks in Kuwait,<sup>19</sup> hawala agents, and middlemen in Turkey.<sup>20</sup> Turkish, Qatari and Saudi political and military support resulted in Ahrar al-Sham, the leading coalition of nationalist Islamists and Salafi jihadists in the Islamic Front, becoming arguably ‘the most powerful armed opposition group’ from 2015 onwards.<sup>21</sup> In addition to Ahrar al-Sham, Turkey also supported Faylaq al-Sham (the Islamic Front’s ‘successor’) presumably because of the affiliation of its

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18 ‘Nationalist’ refers to such groups limiting their Islamic principles and doctrine to Syria. Nationalist Islamist groups can also be revolutionary in nature (i.e. fight against Assad)

19 Lund, A., *The Politics of the Islamic Front, Part 1: Structure and Support*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014.

20 Dickinson, Elizabeth, *Follow the Money: How the Syrian Salafis are funded from the Gulf*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2013, online: <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54011?lang=en> (accessed 19 August 2019).

21 Between 2014 and late 2015, the label of ‘moderate’ enabled Syrian generally non-Islamist members of the moderate opposition groups to be supplied with US anti-tank weapons through the creation of operation rooms in Turkey and Jordan. See: Bender, J., *There are a lot of CIA-vetted Syrian rebel groups taking it to Assad*, *Business Insider*, 2015. online: <https://www.businessinsider.com/cia-vetted-syrian-rebels-fighting-assad-2015-10?international=true&r=US&IR=T> (accessed 21 August 2019). Furthermore, see: Lund, 2015, *op.cit.* and Pierret, T., ‘States Sponsors and the Syrian Insurgency: The Limits of Foreign Influence’, in: Narbone, L., A. Favier and V. Collombier (eds.), *Inside Wars. Local Dynamics of Conflicts in Syria and Libya*, European University Institute, 2017: 22-28. While the label ‘moderate’ qualified several non-Islamist opposition groups for receipt of US anti-tank weapons via operation rooms in Turkey and Jordan, most Islamist groups did not receive any. See: Bender, J., *There are a lot of CIA-vetted Syrian rebel groups taking it to Assad*, *Business Insider*, 2015. online: <https://www.businessinsider.com/cia-vetted-syrian-rebels-fighting-assad-2015-10?international=true&r=US&IR=T> (accessed 21 August 2019); Pierret, 2017, *op.cit.*

top leadership with the ideology of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>22</sup> After 2016, once Ahrar al-Sham and Faylaq al-Sham became involved in the Turkish military Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkey acknowledged and increased its financial and military support for these groups.<sup>23</sup> Through this support, Turkey sought to merge and consolidate those Islamist groups aligned with its own agenda and enhance its influence. As ideological and leadership differences made integration into the SNA problematic, Turkey constructed a new organisational umbrella in May 2018: The National Liberation Front (NLF). Although this organisation consisted initially of 15 armed groups – of which six were ‘moderate’ nationalist Islamists and nine FSA-affiliated – it was led by the commander of Faylaq al-Sham (see Box 1).<sup>24</sup>

The strategic, long-term plan behind the Turkey-sponsored consolidation of several ‘moderate’ nationalist Islamist and FSA-affiliated armed groups into the NLF was to expand Turkey’s influence in Idlib, to create a counterweight to more extremist Islamist groups, and to attract fighters away from them. The idea was that this would subsequently ‘force’ the armed groups operating in Idlib to align their views with the revolutionary objectives of the Syrian National Coalition and accept Turkish sponsorship.<sup>25</sup> With time, this might have paved the way for a deal with the Assad regime, enabled the NLF to undertake an auxiliary security role in the area and reassured Russia of Turkey’s ability to manage the concentration of ‘moderate’ and extremist Islamist armed groups in the province of Idlib. In the short term, creating the NLF to weaken Idlib’s Salafi-jihadi groups (like HTS<sup>26</sup>) allowed Turkey to honour its commitments under the September 2018

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22 Özdemir, Ö. Behram, *Ahrar’u Şam-Türkiye İlişkisi: Güvenlik ve Gelecek*, ORSAM, Ankara, 2015, [online](#) (accessed 8 October 2019).

23 See: <http://www.suriyegundemi.com/2016/08/30/firat-kalkani-operasyonuna-katilan-gruplar/>; see also: <https://www.stratejikortak.com/2017/02/firat-kalkanina-katilan-orgutler.html> (both accessed 21 August 2019).

24 Görücü, K., *Ulusal Özgürleştirme Cephesi’ne Katılan Gruplar*, Suriye Gundemi, 2018, [online](#); Lefevre, R. and Al El Yassir, *The Sham Legion: Syria’s Moderate Islamists*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014, online: <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/55344> (both accessed 8 July 2019).

25 See: Tastekin, F., *Turkey amasses force of Syrian rebel factions at Idlib*. Al-Monitor, 2018, [online](#) (accessed 8 July 2019).

26 The US Treasury alleges that Turkish, Qatari and Kuwaiti individuals have been financially supporting Jabhat al-Nusra since 2014. Although this does not necessarily mean that those states are involved, it is worth noting that they did not take much interest in the matter either. For example, Turkey remained indifferent to HTS’s global jihad narrative and its extremist activities in Idlib until 2018, when it finally officially designated the group a terrorist organisation. See: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/1071084/Turkiye\\_idlib\\_operasyonu\\_onesi\\_Heyet\\_Tahrir\\_Sam\\_i\\_teror\\_listesine\\_aldi.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/1071084/Turkiye_idlib_operasyonu_onesi_Heyet_Tahrir_Sam_i_teror_listesine_aldi.html); Lister, C., *Turkey’s Idlib Incursion and the HTS Question: Understanding The Long Game in Syria*, War On The Rocks, 2017, [online](#) (both accessed 9 October 2019).

Astana agreement. In parallel to the NLF undermining the Salafi jihadist groups from the inside, the construction of 12 Turkish military posts was intended to constrain them from the outside, in effect cordoning off Idlib.<sup>27</sup>

Initially, Turkey's approach worked. The NLF assembled around 55,000<sup>28</sup> to 70,000<sup>29</sup> fighters. It expressed both a commitment to resist Syrian regime expansion into Idlib and to defend the area against the PYD.<sup>30</sup> The NLF also proved willing to collaborate with the Turkish-backed SNA during Turkish military operations in northwest Syria, as well as with the Syrian National Coalition.<sup>31</sup> Despite a strong presence of nationalist Islamists in its ranks, the NLF leadership stuck to a secular-revolutionary – rather than Islamic – discourse, describing the organisation as ‘the formation of FSA elements under a single roof in Idlib’.<sup>32</sup> Accepting such rebranding enabled the Islamist factions of the NLF to benefit from closer association with Turkey, as well as from Turkish protection against Russian-backed Syrian regime attacks. In exchange, NLF groups undertook tasks aligned with shared Turkish-NLF priorities in north-western Syria.<sup>33</sup> Ahrar al-Sham worked mostly to support deradicalisation in Idlib by counter-balancing HTS and other Al-Qaeda affiliates, while Faylaq al-Sham and many other NLF groups participated in Turkey's anti-YPG operations in Afrin in 2018.<sup>34</sup>

But while Turkey has been able to temporarily ‘buy’ NLF loyalties by paying salaries and providing appreciable amounts of military equipment, the armed groups that united under the NLF umbrella were nevertheless not (yet) full Turkish proxies (as was and is the case for the SNA).<sup>35</sup> In an interview, the head of the political bureau of the NLF,

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27 Tastekin, 2018, *op.cit.*

28 See: <https://medium.com/suriye-g%C3%BCndemi/ulusal-%C3%B6zg%C3%BCrle%C5%9Ftirme-cephesine-kat%C4%B1lan-gruplar-23caac0f6ee3> (accessed 9 July 2019).

29 See: <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-45191811> (accessed 9 July 2019).

30 Osman, T., *Armed factions join forces to counter Syrian regime gains*, Al Monitor, 2018, [online](#) (accessed 10 July 2019). Turkey considers both the PYD and PKK to be terrorist groups and, for policy purposes, as interchangeable.

31 Tastekin (2018) *op. cit.*; also: Lund, A., *The End of the Levant Front*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2015.

32 See: <http://www.suriyegundemi.com/2018/05/31/ulusal-ozgurlestirme-cephesi/> (accessed 21 August 2019).

33 See: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/hts-ile-ahrar-el-sam-masada-2536133> (accessed 7 October 2019).

34 See: <http://www.suriyegundemi.com/2018/02/18/zeytin-dali-harekatina-katilan-suriyeli-muhafif-gruplar-18-subat-2018/> (accessed 7 October 2019).

35 Tastekin (2018) *op. cit.*; also: <https://the arabweekly.com/developments-shift-erdogans-priorities-syria> (accessed 7 August 2019); Özkizilcik, Ö., *Uniting the Syrian Opposition: The Components of the Syrian National Army and the Implications of the Unification*, Setav, 2019, online: <https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2019/10/A54En.pdf> (accessed 11 October 2019)

Hussam Tarsha, expressed the organisation's full support for Turkey 'as the most significant ally [*but not the only one* – author's note] of the NLF, after God'.<sup>36</sup>

On balance, Turkish-NLF collaboration is perhaps best described as a mutually beneficial, pragmatic alliance that is reinforced by compatible political and ideological outlooks. Commanded by groups close to the Muslim Brotherhood (Faylaq al-Sham), Kuwaiti Haraki/political Salafists aligned with Turkey and Qatar (Ahrar al-Sham),<sup>37</sup> and nationalists (Jaysh al-Nasr), the NLF shares Turkey's antipathy towards the Salafi jihadists and Syria's Kurds.<sup>38</sup> Domestically, the Muslim Brotherhood-oriented views and policies of the Turkish government (AKP, to be precise) have enabled key Turkish leaders to build bridges between Muslim Brotherhood-inspired NLF groups and the Turkish community.<sup>39</sup> Many NLF groups also have an historical affinity with the FSA and view the Syrian regime as their main enemy. All these elements have stimulated pragmatic forms of Turkish-NLF collaboration.<sup>40</sup>

Broadly speaking, Turkish-NLF collaboration increased Turkey's influence in Idlib by means of power projection via the NLF's irregular forces and provided Turkey with an additional ally in its fight against the PYD-led Syrian Kurds. In return, the NLF has its back covered and benefits from a sizeable package of material support. This collaboration was for example apparent when a Turkish convoy to reinforce its military post in the Khan Sheikhoun area was escorted by an armed pickup truck of Faylaq al-Sham in August 2019.<sup>41</sup>

Once NLF had been re-established in Idlib after prolonged NLF-HTS clashes in 2018 and early 2019 (discussed in the next section), Turkey persuaded the NLF to merge with the SNA in the course of 2019. The SNA technically operates under the direct command of the Syrian Interim Government's (SIG) Ministry of Defence, but is in reality controlled by

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36 See: Özkizilcik, Ö., *Ulusal Ozgurlestirme Cephesi Siyasi Buro Uyesi Hussam Tarsha ile Roportaj*, Suriye Gundemi, 2018, [online](#) (accessed 10 July 2019).

37 Pierret, Thomas, *Salafis at War in Syria. Logics of Fragmentation and Realignment*, HAL, 2018, [online](#).

38 Lister, (2017), *op.cit*.

39 This is evident in influential Turkish clerics publicly complimenting the leader of Ahrar al-Sham's, in the assistance of the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation to Ahrar al-Sham in northern Syria and in the praise of President Erdogan for one of the commanders of Faylaq al-Sham. See: <http://www.sanalbasin.com/nurettin-yildizdan-ahrarin-sehit-liderine-mektup-6416269>; <https://www.nawartpress.com/inside-the-turkish-field-hospital-where-syrian-islamist-fighters-are-patched-up-and-sent-back-to-war>; <https://www.internethaber.com/iste-erdoganin-bahsettigi-o-oso-komutani-1861871h.htm> (all accessed on 29 October).

40 Lister, (2017), *op.cit*.

41 See: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/air-strike-hit-near-turkish-military-convoy-idlib> (accessed 18 September 2019)

Turkey.<sup>42</sup> Despite ideological and leadership differences between the NLF and the SNA, the strategic priority of ‘defending the liberated territories and regaining lost ground in Northern Hama and Idlib’ against Russian and Syrian Regime attacks incentivised sceptical NLF commanders to come to terms with Turkey’s pressure to merge.<sup>43</sup> The unification has generated a more centralised force that comprises seven corps and about 80,000 fighters.<sup>44</sup> During the announcement ceremony in Sanliurfa (Turkey), SIG’s defence minister, Salim Idris, announced the intention to crack down on terrorist groups such as HTS and the PYD/PKK.<sup>45</sup> In sum, Turkey’s ‘control-through-centralisation’ strategy ultimately achieved consolidation of the major proxy elements of its hybrid warfare strategy – SNA and NLF – in Afrin, Al-Bab/Jarabulus and in parts of Idlib.

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42 See: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/suriye-milli-ordusu-kuruldu-433956.html> and (accessed 9 October 2019).

43 See: Lister, Charles, *Turkish-backed Syrian armed opposition groups to unite under one banner*, Middle East Institute, 2019, [online](https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/suriye-milli-ordusu-kuruldu-433956.html); also: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/suriye-milli-ordusu-kuruldu-433956.html> (both accessed 20 October 2019)

44 See: <https://en.etilaf.org/all-news/news/sig-announces-merger-between-national-army-national-liberation-front.html> (accessed 9 October 2019).

45 See: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/suriye-milli-ordusu-kuruldu-433956.html> and (accessed 9 October 2019).

### 3 Turkey and the armed Syrian opposition: Salafi jihadist groups

Yet, the NLF represented only about half of Idlib's varied cast of Islamist groups. The other half – united in HTS that originated from Jabhat al-Nusra and was inspired by Al-Qaeda's doctrine of global jihad – turned down the 2018 Turkish offer/push to merge into the NLF. While Turkey's NLF-based consolidation strategy was initially effective, before long HTS successfully moved against several Turkish-backed NLF groups in Idlib and defeated them in an inter-factional struggle through a mix of co-optation, intimidation and coercion. When it was over, HTS controlled about 90 per cent of Idlib.<sup>46</sup> It also established the Salvation Government as a rival of the Syrian Interim Government. Its success once more contrasted an extremist vision of the Syrian civil war with a revolutionary one.<sup>47</sup>

However, the HTS leadership does not hold a uniform view on the war in Syria. On the one hand, it features more pragmatic factions. These are led by Abu Muhammed al-Jolani, and comfortable with collaboration with Turkey, including supporting Turkish operations against the PYD east of the Euphrates river<sup>48</sup> in exchange for Turkey's support in 'fortifying and defending' north-western Syria.<sup>49</sup> Collaboration between these pragmatic HTS elements and Turkey became apparent when Turkish Army units were escorted by HTS fighters (rather than NLF groups) in the initial phase of the Turkish de-escalation deployment into Idlib in October 2017.<sup>50</sup> This 'hybrid operation' prevented a direct Turkish clash with the group but did not draw HTS into the Turkish-backed NLF alliance.

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46 See: Tastekin, Fehim, *Jihadists of Idlib splitting under Turkish pressure*, Al-Monitor, 2019, [online](#) (accessed 6 July 2019).

47 Lister, (2017). *op.cit.*

48 See: <https://aawsat.com/turkish/home/article/1547086/hts-turkiye'nin-kurt-gruplara-yonelik-operasyonunu-destekliyor> (accessed 18 September 2019).

49 This is Jolani's 'new' objective. See: [https://www.itct.org.uk/archives/itct\\_terrorist\\_net/hayat-tahrir-al-sham](https://www.itct.org.uk/archives/itct_terrorist_net/hayat-tahrir-al-sham) (accessed 26 August 2019).

50 Stein, Aron, *Turkey's presence in Afrin changes the Syria equation (again)*, Atlantic Council, 2017, online; Lister, (2017), *op.cit.*; also: Mcdowall, Angus, *First Turkish military convoy enters Syria's Idlib*, Reuters, 2017, [online](#) (accessed 20 October).



On the other hand, the HTS leadership also features more dogmatic elements, i.e. the Tanzim Hurras al-Din (Religious Guardians' Organisation), which reject cooperation with Turkey. After a bloody inter-factional fight within HTS between March 2018 and February 2019, both factions forged an agreement to cooperate against their common enemy: the Syrian Regime.<sup>51</sup> Despite this truce, Al-Qaeda veterans within Tanzim Hurras al-Din have continued to criticise HTS's disassociation from Al-Qaeda and its alignment with Turkey's strategy in Idlib.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, by rejecting Turkish-Russian agreements, Tanzim Hurras al-Din jeopardised the status quo in Idlib when it carried out several attacks on Syrian regime and Russian positions. This has been highly problematic for Turkey because it undermines Russia's confidence in Turkey's ability to establish informal control over Idlib and to defuse the Salafi-jihadi threat as per the terms of the Sochi and Astana agreements. Despite HTS arguing that its attacks were preceded by hostile acts on the part of the Syrian regime, its activities gave Russia and the Syrian regime the perfect pretext to advance against Khan Sheikhoun and conquer it.<sup>53</sup> If this offensive is continued, it will endanger Turkey's Idlib strategy because it would trigger large numbers of refugees heading towards Turkey and increase the pressure on Turkey to vacate the parts of Syria it controls.

In response to HTS influence, Turkey switched to a subversion campaign against it.<sup>54</sup> More precisely, Turkey initiated a *divide-and-rule* policy that sought to separate *dogmatic* HTS groups (Al-Qaeda affiliates) from *pragmatic* ones (i.e. those receptive to cooperation with Turkey on the basis of the revolution against the Syrian regime).<sup>55</sup> In August 2018, the Turkish foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, summarised this

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- 51 Ali, M. Hage, *Guarding the Al-Qaeda Flame*, Beirut: Carnegie Middle East Center, 2018, [online](#); Joscelyn, Thomas, *Analysis: Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and Hurras al-Din reach a new accord*, FFD's Long War Journal, 2019, [online](#); Tastekin (2019) *op.cit.*
- 52 Joscelyn, Thomas, *Al-Qaeda-linked operations room counterattacks as bombs fall in northern Syria*, FFD's Long War Journal, 2019, [online](#) (22 October 2019).
- 53 When the offensive resulted in several Turkish casualties, Turkey reinforced its military posts and helped create a joint operation room uniting HTS, NLF and SNA fighters, while also providing a generous supply of anti-tank and Grad missiles. These interventions notwithstanding, the Syrian regime offensive conquered Khan Sheikhoun in August 2019 and laid siege to a Turkish military post, in large part enabled by the ongoing rivalry between HTS and nationalist Islamists (especially Ahrar al-Sham). See: <https://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKCN1TS32A-OCATP> (accessed 9 July 2019); Tastekin, F., *Turkey's risky route in Idlib*, Al-Monitor, 2019, [online](#); Özkizilcik, Ö., *A way out for Russia and Turkey from Idlib's spiral of violence*, Washington, Middle East Institute, 2019, [online](#) (both accessed 27 July 2019); Al Nofal, W., *What happened in Khan Sheikhoun?*, *Syria Direct*, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190823-syria-army-surround-besieged-turkish-soldiers-in-idlib-observation-point/>; <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2019/4/27/hts-kills-over-20-syrian-regime-fighters-in-aleppo>; Russian Foreign Ministry Lavrov's announcement, [online](#) (all accessed 13 October 2019).
- 54 Lister (2017) *op.cit.*
- 55 See: Özkizilcik, Ö., *HTS ile mücadele nasıl olabilir?* Ankara: Suriye Gundemi, 2018, [online](#); Lister (2017) *op.cit.*

policy as ‘separating the moderate opposition from the terrorists’.<sup>56</sup> Arguably it was because of Turkish support and pressure from armed groups linked to Turkey in Idlib that the pragmatic wing of HTS re-established its dominance within the organisation after its dogmatist wing, Tanzim Hurras al-Din, had been marginalised via repression and aforementioned brokered truce.<sup>57</sup> Yet, despite the dominance of the pragmatists, the leader of the HTS, Abu Muhammed al-Jolani, continued to preserve the group’s autonomy. But he also agreed to form a [joint] operation room (Feth’ul Mubin)<sup>58</sup> with the NLF, SNA and Tanzim Hurras al-Din factions to better resist the Syrian regime offensive(s) in Idlib.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Turkey gained a pledge from Al-Jolani to help fight the PYD in exchange for Turkey’s acceptance of HTS territorial control in Idlib.<sup>60</sup> Taken together, HTS continues to operate independently of the NLF and only collaborates with Turkey pragmatically on a peer-to-peer basis.

As a result, Turkey’s ‘control-through-centralisation’ policy in Idlib, which seeks to bring three groups (HTS, NLF and SNA) under a single organisational structure, remains vulnerable. The reality is that HTS and the nationalist Islamists do not see eye to eye, while Turkey has no control over Tanzim Hurras al-Din, which from a Turkish perspective acts as a spoiler through its ability to escalate violence that can provoke Russian and Syrian regime responses. A final problem for Turkey’s proxy strategy is that the Russian-Syrian assault on Khan Sheikhoun has put Turkey in the role of facilitator-cum-operator of Idlib’s assorted array of armed Syrian opposition groups rather than that of guarantor of the demilitarised zone around Idlib or that of the ‘nemesis’ of HTS.

On the upside, recent battlefield developments provided Turkey with a good opportunity to return to Idlib the NLF groups that had been chased out by HTS earlier in the year.<sup>61</sup> It is conceivable that Turkey’s future strategy will consist of increasing its military observation posts, strengthening the recently restructured NLF forces (merged with the SNA), isolating HTS, and undertaking joint action with the US and Russia against Tanzim Hurras al-Din.<sup>62</sup>

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56 See: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/disisleri-bakani-mevlut-cavusoglu-brunsonun-durumunda-bir-degisiklik-yok-380106.html> (accessed 10 July 2019).

57 Özkizilcik (2018) *op. cit.*

58 See: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/han-seyhun-idlib-in-kale-kapisi-nin-dusmesi-suriye-de-savasin-seyrini-ve-turkiye-yi-nasil-etkileyebilir.835771> (accessed 21 October 2019).

59 Lister, Charles, *The Urgency of Idlib: the Impending Regime Offensive and Delicate Balance in Syria’s Northwest*, War on the Rocks, 2018, [online](#).

60 Tastekin (2019) *op. cit.*

61 Özkizilcik (2019) *op. cit.*

62 See for example: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/09/turkey-military-posts-syria-idlib-russia-violations.html> or <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190903-in-bombing-idlib-the-us-is-trying-to-pull-together-its-syria-policy/> (both accessed 23 September 2019).

## 4 Key characteristics of Turkish use of Syrian armed proxies

Since 2016, Turkey has put well-tailored, adaptive and effective arrangements in place with different categories of Syrian armed opposition groups. The SNA has been instrumental in the realisation of Turkey's buffer zone strategy as a core irregular force under almost full Turkish control via the provision of training and equipment, salary payments and the creation of new organisational structures. No longer a fragmented and decentralised proxy, the SNA is becoming an integrated, although irregular, element of the Turkish army. In terms of policy objectives, SNA forces greatly facilitated the realisation of two semi-autonomous Turkish protectorates in Afrin and around the Azaz-Jarabulus corridor (west of the Euphrates) and a new buffer zone between Tell Abyad en Ras al-Ayn (east of the Euphrates).<sup>63</sup>

In respect of the NLF, Turkey developed a lighter version of the same control-through-centralisation approach. Its first phase (2018) sought to merge NLF and FSA groups in Idlib, but this was only partially successful due to differences between these groups and suffered setbacks due to clashes between HTS and NLF. The second phase of Turkey's approach (2019) ended up uniting SNA and NLF forces under Turkish command. While Turkey could not establish SNA-type levels of control during the first phase, it nevertheless established an influential client-proxy relationship with the NLF by offering its groups a rear base, having them participate in Turkish operations in Afrin and in the Azaz-Jarabulus corridor, and providing them with equipment, training and salaries.

Since their unification with the SNA, the former NLF groups Faylaq al-Sham and Jaysh al-Ahrar have been involved in Turkey's recent 'Peace Springs' incursion east of the Euphrates River.<sup>64</sup> In terms of policy objectives, the NLF helped expand Turkish influence in Idlib, counterbalanced Salafi jihadist groups in the area, and strengthened Turkey's proxy forces against the YPG.

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63 See: Van Leeuwen and Van Veen (2019), *op.cit.*

64 Tastekin, F., *Who are the Turkish-backed forces in latest Syria incursion?*, Al Monitor, 2019, [online](#) (accessed 14 October 2019).

Although Turkey's approach encountered strong resistance from HTS that initially led to the defeat of Turkey-aligned NLF forces, Turkey managed to overcome this setback by switching to a *divide-and-rule* approach that saw the more pragmatic HTS factions emerge dominant from the group's internal power struggles. Figure 1 below provides a summary overview of key relations between Turkey and various sets of Syrian armed opposition groups over the course of the civil war. It does not aspire to be fully inclusive of all developments – there are simply too many – but captures key shifts and relations.

Figure 1 Overview of the relations between Turkey and Syria's armed opposition groups



Note: By 'secular revolutionary groups' we mean groups that have no intention of creating an Islamic state in Syria. 'Nationalist Islamist groups' can also be revolutionary in nature (against Assad).

On the upside, Turkey's collaboration with HTS (covert cooperation with pragmatic elements), NLF (ideological partnership) and SNA (centralised control) have strengthened the Turkish military position in Idlib, improved its negotiation position regarding the future of the province, and created a fighting coalition against the PYD. The downside of these different forms of collaboration between Turkey and Syrian opposition groups has been that they have reduced Turkey's strategic credibility with Russia, maintained HTS as a (partially) Al-Qaeda-linked international terrorist group and created strong links between Turkey and range of Syrian Islamist armed groups, in part Salafi, that may present Turkey with a domestic security challenge in the medium-term.

Key variables that have influenced the effectiveness of Turkey's engagement with different armed Syrian opposition groups include: a) the possibility of obtaining influence by providing significant material support, such as training, salaries and equipment; b) the extent to which it could partner such groups with its own military (e.g. shared culture, perceived enemy and ideology); c) the level of centralised control it was able to achieve; d) geographic proximity; and e) clever divide-and-rule tactics, which, alongside relative neglect of ideological differences, proved useful in tipping these variables in Turkey's favour.

# Conclusion

Since the failure of its strategy to overthrow Assad between 2011 and 2016, Turkey has become a more significant player in the Syrian civil war. First, bringing a fragmented FSA under its command, reorganising these forces into a centralised SNA and partnering with the NLF enabled Turkey to exercise greater control over two key sets of Syrian armed groups in Idlib, Afrin and the Azaz-Jarabulus corridor. This enabled Turkey to establish two semi-autonomous protectorates west of the Euphrates and to expand its influence in Idlib province. Secondly, these arrangements have secured the commitment of a range of Syrian armed groups to operate as irregular forces in Turkey's recent military operation against the PYD-led Syrian Kurds east of the Euphrates. Thirdly, the Turkish-supported 'alliance-of-convenience' of HTS-NLF-SNA in Idlib lost ground after the recent Syrian regime/Russian offensive that captured Khan Sheikhoun and it remains susceptible to internal (Tanzim Hurras al-Din) and external (Russian-regime offensives) disruption.<sup>65</sup>

In sum, Turkey's vision of resurrecting the 'revolutionary' cause in the Syrian civil war for its own benefit, has been effectively executed through growing institutionalised control over, and partnership with, a wide range of SNA and NLF groups.<sup>66</sup> Turkish influence in Idlib remains limited, however, by HTS's historical affinity with Al-Qaeda, the group's independence and Abu Muhammed al-Jolani's personality. Nevertheless, this brief suggests that Turkey's proxy warfare strategy has effectively merged and centralised many Syrian opposition groups under its own vision of nationalist Islamist governance that will ensure long-term Turkish influence in northern Syria, which is currently being expanded east of the Euphrates river.

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65 Note that this is in part due to the absence of Iran-affiliated militias on the battlefield. Such forces have consistently been behind, or in front of, successful Syrian regime offensives, such as the battles for Aleppo and Qusair. Iran's disengagement, which might be the result of its desire to avoid conflict with Turkey while its standoff with the US deepens, also enabled Syrian armed opposition groups in Idlib to regroup and recover from the August 2019 regime offensive that captured Khan Sheikhoun.

66 This vision can be traced back to the AKP's own ideological development over the past few years.

# Exhibit 53





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News | Turkey-Syria Border

## Turkey's operation in Syria's Afrin: The key players

*We take a look at key players as Turkey launches operation to push out Kurdish fighters from Syrian border towns.*



After Afrin, Turkey's President Erdogan said the operation will target Manbij [Al Jazeera]

**By Al Jazeera Staff**

22 Jan 2018

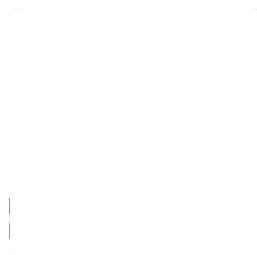


On Saturday, [Turkey launched an operation](#) in the northern Syrian enclave of Afrin aimed at rooting out armed Kurdish groups, which Ankara considers a threat to its security.

Turkish ground troops followed a day after, crossing the border into [Syria](#) alongside thousands of Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters, as part of the so-called Operation Olive Branch.

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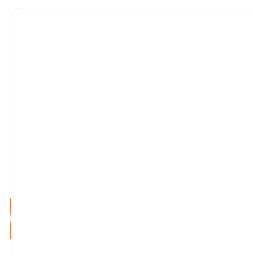
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Turkey's President [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#) had said that the operation in Afrin would be followed by a push into the northern town of Manbij, which the US-backed Kurdish forces captured from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant ([ISIL](#), also known as ISIS) in 2016.

Al Jazeera's Stefanie Dekker, reporting from the Turkey-Syria border, said different regional players are "trying to carve up different parts of Syria, expanding their spheres of influence".



Here are some of the major players in the Afrin operation:

## Turkey

Turkey has been battling armed Kurdish fighters for decades in the southeastern part of the country. Among those groups Ankara is fighting is the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which had separatist roots, and later pushed for more autonomy from the Turkish central government.

The violence has left 40,000 thousand civilians, soldiers and armed fighters dead, costing the country hundreds of billions of dollars. Turkey considers the PKK a “terrorist organisation”, and sees the armed Syrian Kurdish groups as an extension of the PKK.

Justifying the military operation, President Erdogan said the PKK and the Syrian Kurdish group [“are all the same”](#), and changing their names “does not change the fact that they are terror organisations”.



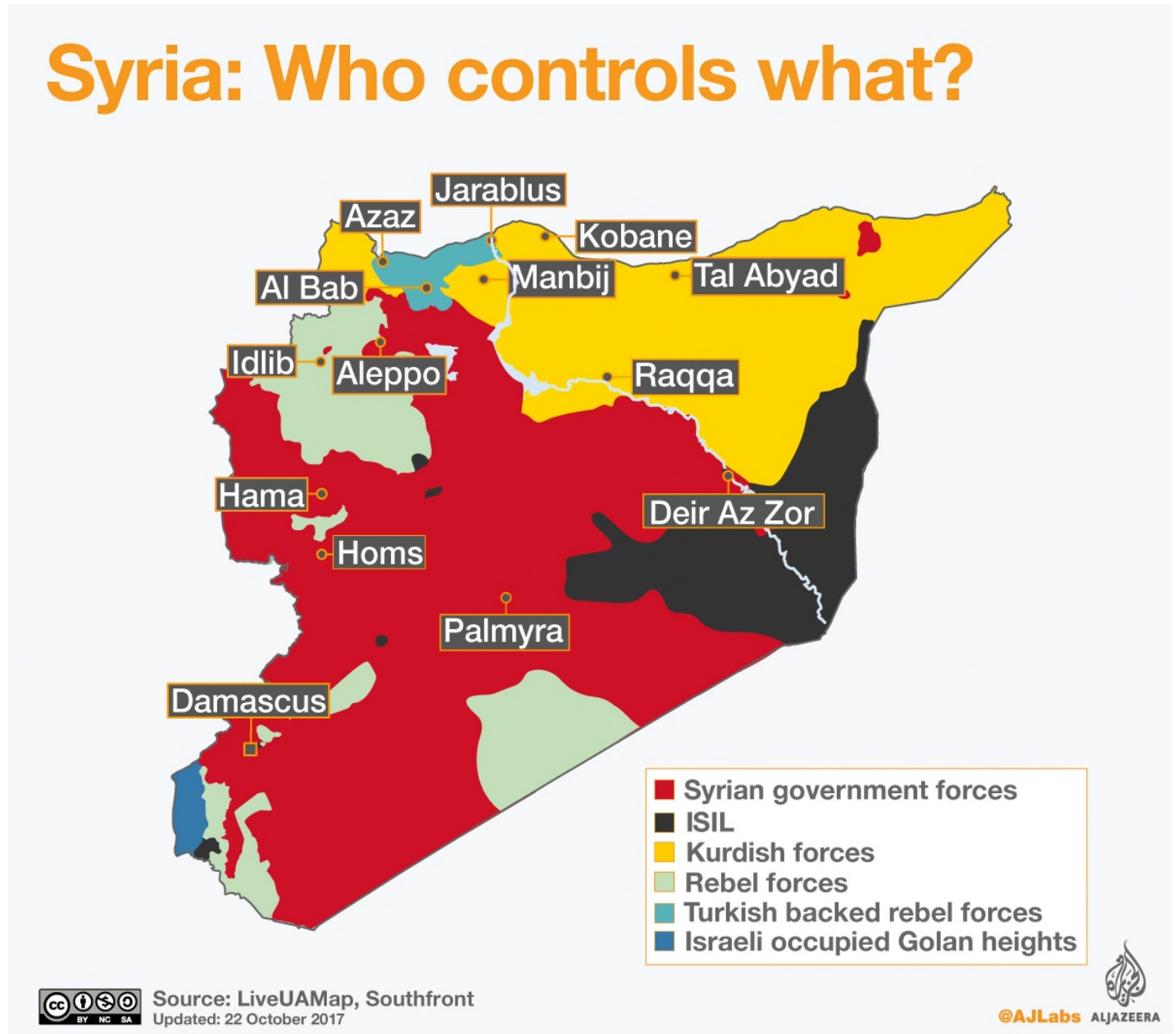
Turkey fears the establishment of a Kurdish corridor along its border. Going into Syrian territory, Turkey says it wants to establish a 30km “safe zone” in Afrin to prevent such a Kurdish corridor from being established.

## Syria

The Syrian government forces have been losing territory to the opposition and various armed groups, including ISIL, since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. But the Russian intervention in 2015 turned the tide in President Bashar

al-Assad's favour. At the end of 2016, the Syrian army took Aleppo, one of the main battlegrounds in the conflict.

The Syrian government forces fought against the opposition fighters in Idlib province in eastern Syria while its forces continued to battle ISIL in the west.





By 2018, the forces loyal to President Assad regained most of the Syrian territory, but the biggest area remaining out of its reach was under the Syrian Kurdish control in the north of the country.

For days leading to the Turkish operation in Afrin, Damascus warned that Syrian air defences stood ready to defend against an air attack. But since the operation was launched, Syrian defence has not materialised.

## Russia

25:25

Inside Story - What has Russia accomplished in Syria?

## [INSIDE STORY: What has Russia accomplished in Syria? \(25:26\)](#)

Russia officially announced intervention in the Syrian conflict in September 2015 to support President Assad. With the Russian air support, the Syrian government has regained most of the territory lost to ISIL, as well as other Syrian opposition forces.

Russia controls the airspace over Afrin entrusted to it by Damascus, but ahead of the Turkish operation, it withdrew hundreds of its soldiers deployed near the city.



Last November, Assad thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for “saving” the country. A month later, Putin claimed military victory in the war-torn country and announced that a “significant part” of the deployed force could return home. However, Moscow kept its Khmeimim airbase in Syria’s Latakia and a naval facility in the Mediterranean city of Tartus.

Russia complained earlier in January that the US was trying to split Syria by establishing a Kurdish-controlled entity in northern Syria.

## **United States**

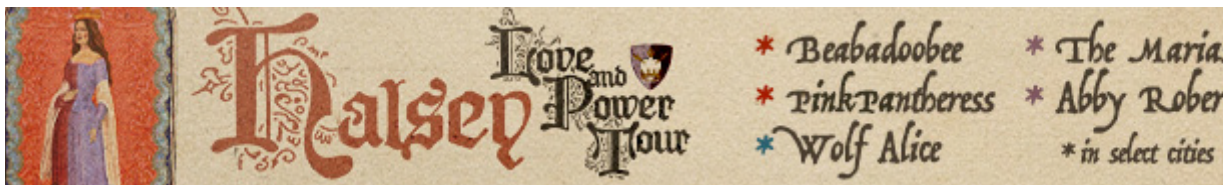
25:00

How will new front in Syria war impact US-Turkey ties?

### [INSIDE STORY: How will new front in Syria war affect US-Turkey ties? \(25:00\)](#)

The US has an estimated 2,000 troops stationed inside [Syria](#), according to the Pentagon. That does not include classified mission and special forces personnel. Recently, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Washington, DC intends to maintain an open-ended presence in Syria, not only to fight ISIL and al-Qaeda, but also to counter the influence of Iran, one of the strongest allies of the Syrian government.

Since the conflict began in 2011, the US has sought to remove the leadership in Damascus by supporting different opposition and rebel groups. That effort, however, failed. But it was more successful in leading a coalition against ISIL.



The US is allied with Turkey against Syria's [Assad](#). But it has also aligned itself with Turkey's adversaries, the Kurds. Recently, it was revealed that the US was working to create a border security force in northern Syria consisting of 30,000 mostly Kurdish armed personnel. But Tillerson walked back on that plan, after igniting outrage in Ankara.

Most of the American troops are believed to be in Manbij, where the US-allied Syrian Kurdish armed fighters have a large presence. Turkey has vowed to target Manbij after Afrin, creating a potential flashpoint between Turkey and the US.

## YPG/PYD

The People's Defense Units is more popularly known by its Kurdish acronym YPG. It is the armed wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), an opposition political party in Syria. The YPG and its other Syrian Kurdish affiliates control a swathe of land in northern Syria, and was credited for defending the Kurds from ISIL and al-Qaeda.

The YPG was also instrumental in retaking of the ISIL stronghold of Raqqa.



In Afrin alone, there are between 8,000 to 10,000 Kurdish fighters, according to estimates. Kurdish fighters in Manbij also number in the thousands.

Turkey considers both the YPG and its political wing PYD “terrorist groups” with ties to the banned PKK. The YPG also has a all-female unit known as the YPJ.

## Free Syrian Army (FSA)

First established in 2011, the opposition Syrian armed group FSA, sought to bring down the government of Syrian President Assad. Its founders were com-



posed of Syrian military officers who defected from the Syrian Armed Forces.

Since its establishment, it was considered as the best hope for Syrians against the government in Damascus. But it was also ridden with infighting, and many of its fighters were suspected of abandoning it in favour of other more extreme armed groups.



When Turkey joined the Syrian conflict in 2016, an alliance of Turkish-backed fighters under the Free Syrian Army name was established.

In the latest operation in Afrin, Turkey mobilised thousands of FSA fighters within Turkey as well as in Syria to fight the Kurdish fighters.



Free Syrian Army fighters head towards Afrin as part of the Turkish operation [AP]

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

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# The Militarization and Exploitation of Northern Syria

Posted by: Sam Biden

6 May, 2024

by Sam Biden, Junior Fellow

## Turkish Presence in Northern Syria

Throughout the Syrian civil war, one prominent actor has played a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of the conflict: Turkey. The country has positioned itself as a key ally of the Syrian National Army (SNA, formerly Free Syrian Army), hosting their initial military headquarters and providing a logistical base that facilitated collaboration among FSA members and supporters.

Turkey's strategic priorities shifted in 2015, with a focus on containing the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), serving as the official military for the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), a *de facto*, self-governing region in northeastern Syria. Turkish influence began to place a focus on targeting the People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara views as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a designated terrorist organization. As a result, these Free Syrian Army groups were rebranded as the SNA, signifying a closer alignment with Turkish interests. By providing effective training, salaries and weapons, Turkey cemented the SNA as a pivotal force within its own military operations. The success of this alliance between Turkey and the SNA is bolstered by shared ethnic (Turkmen) and religious (Sunni Arab) elements, fostering compatibility in socio-cultural views.

The SNA emerged as an anchor of Turkey's continual expansion in Syria, incorporating groups from Idlib's National Liberation Front (NLF), a former Syrian rebel coalition. However, Turkey's attempts to exert similar control over nationalist, Idlib-based Islamist armed groups in northwest Syria, such as Feilqaq al-Sham and Ahrar al-Sham, faced challenges, leading to the establishment of the NLF as an umbrella organization without significant support in Idlib. Initially, Turkish efforts proved successful as the NLF swiftly garnered significant manpower, assembling an estimated 55,000 to 70,000 fighters. Moreover, the NLF demonstrated a willingness to collaborate with the Turkish-backed SNA during military operations in northwest Syria, as well as with the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), an umbrella organization composed of revolutionary and opposition forces. Turkey continued to orchestrate the merge of various NLF groups with the SNA throughout 2019, placing strategic importance on defending liberated territories against Russian and Syrian regime offensives, compelling the remaining skeptical NLF commanders to accede to unification. The



merger created a more centralized force, comprising several corps and approximately 80,000 fighters under the command of the Syrian Interim Government's Ministry of Defence, with effective control being held by Turkey.

A new collaboration was fostered between Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a group known for promoting Salafi-Jihadism and Turkey. In response to the internal diversity of HTS, Turkey initiated a subversion campaign within the group, aiming to distinguish between dogmatic factions within HTS, such as those affiliated with al-Qaeda and those who aimed to break away from terroristic ideology. A primary figure within HTS, Abu Muhammed al-Jolani, ensured that despite the newly formed relationship with Turkey that HTS maintained its autonomy. As part of this approach, HTS agreed to establish a joint operation room, named Al-Fatah al-Mubin, with other factions such as the NLF and SNA, to enhance resistance against Syrian regime offensives in Idlib. Additionally, Turkey secured a commitment from al-Jolani to assist in combating the PYD, yet HTS maintains a degree of independence from the NLF, only operating with Turkey when necessary.

## **Key Operations**

Three key operations allowed Turkey to cement itself as a primary actor in northern Syria, known as Operation Euphrates Shield (2016), Operation Olive Branch (2018) and Operation Peace Spring (2019).

Operation Euphrates Shield marked a significant military intervention in northern Syria under the pretext of self-defense as per Article 51 of the UN Charter. The operation's primary objectives were to safeguard border security and combat terrorism perpetrated by Daesh. In the first 50 days, 1,100 square kilometers were successfully captured, later expanding to secure a total of 2,000 square kilometers, with areas of significant cultural importance to Daesh, such as Azaz-Mare and Dabiq, being focal points. Territorial gain moved south towards Al-Bab, yet retreated from the east, losing Afrin to the PKK in late 2016, resulting in heavy Turkish casualties. Despite these challenges, Operation Euphrates Shield expanded Ankara's influence in northern Syria and provided a greater degree of diplomatic leverage in the region.

Operation Olive Branch commenced in January 2018, with Turkey similarly claiming self-defense under the UN Charter, with Syria condemning this rationale. The operation cited similar aims as Euphrates Shield, leaning on the combating of terrorism and establishing a 'safe zone' along Turkey's borders, to which many Turkish supporters lay. However, underlying this justification was rhetoric promising to restore Afrin to its 'rightful owners', hinting at intentions for demographic change. The campaign began as violently as it ended, with cross-border shelling and airstrikes by Turkish fighter jets that were quickly supported by an estimated 25,000 ground troops consisting of Arab and Turkmen fighters, rallying under the SNA umbrella. President Erdogan announced the commencement of military operations in Afrin, situated in northwestern Syria and a pivotal component of the AANES. The initial phase of the military campaign honed in on rural villages surrounding Afrin with airstrikes and artillery shelling, aiming to create a clear path for ground troops to advance upon Afrin. By mid-March, Turkish and SNA forces encircled Afrin, followed by the town's evacuation and capture.

In October 2019, the Turkish Armed Forces and SRA launched Operation Spring of Peace in northern Syria, similarly targeted terrorist organizations PKK/YPG and Daesh, yet this time, over resource conflict, with both parties allegedly funneling gas and oil to the Mediterranean via Hatay. This corridor became a key focus of Turkey with the thwarting of the formation of this purported corridor being essential to Turkish control in the region. Additionally, Turkey aimed to put an end to the frequent attacks carried out by PYD/PKK terrorists, including rocket and mortar bomb assaults targeting Turkish territory. Beyond these security objectives, Turkey sought to further address the demographic changes as highlighted by Operation Olive Branch, although these changes were enforced by the PKK/PYD-YPG, leading to the expulsion of Arabs, Turkmens and Kurds opposed to their rule, aiming to restore the original demographic structure of the region. In light of these demographic changes, Turkey aimed to create a safe zone in Syria to facilitate the return of Syrian asylum seekers residing in Turkey and Europe to their homeland.

These operations, alongside the evolving political and religious landscape between armed groups in northern Syria and Turkey, resulted in years of widespread human rights violations at the hands of Turkish forces and their associates, highlighted in a groundbreaking report from Human Rights Watch (HRW).

## **Human Rights Violations in Turkish-Occupied Territory**

### **1. Detention Conditions**

Turkish military and intelligence forces, factions of the SNA and the Military Police have been implicated in detention-related abuses. Numerous accounts documented by HRW and the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) paint a distressing picture of these conditions. The involvement of Turkish officials in these abuses are currently alleged, with reports suggesting most abuses occurred within SNA faction detention centers or makeshift military police facilities.

Former detainees and their relatives have recounted instances of prolonged incommunicado detention, lasting from weeks to over two years. Many were held in small cells for solitary confinement, with infestations from insects, a lack of access to sanitary facilities as well as no mattresses to sleep on being commonplace. Many victims have been Kurds, often targeted based on suspected affiliations with Kurdish



armed groups or authorities. Families have been left in the dark about the whereabouts of their loved ones, often learning of their detention months or even years after the fact. For these families, the ordeal extends beyond the confines of detention centers. Prolonged periods of incommunicado detention in makeshift facilities have caused permanent physical and psychological damage to the victims, with families having to recount reunions with loved ones whom they 'barely recognize' anymore.

The situation remains troubling in central prisons, however improved, where detainees were transferred ahead of their trials. Living conditions marginally improved in terms of access to food and hygiene, with reports of torture and mistreatment falling as well. Detainees noted a stark contrast in treatment during their time in the facility, with no reports of beatings or torture, and limited communication with their families was maintained throughout.

## **2. Torture**

Former detainees recount nightmarish accounts of torture during interrogation, ranging from brutal beatings with cables, electric wires and metal pipes to grotesque acts such as teeth and nail pulling. HRW gathered testimony from one Kurdish man who describes being subjected to repeated beatings, hanging from the ceiling and being forced into excruciating positions to extract false confessions that could be used against him. Similarly, a Kurdish woman shares her agonizing ordeal of enduring years of torture, including beatings, choking and electrocution allegedly at the hands of Turkish intelligence operatives, aiming to gather information relating to terrorism. Tragically, deaths due to this treatment are all too common, such as the case of prominent Kurdish lawyer Luqman Hannan, whose death under suspicious circumstances following detention raises grave concerns about the role of Turkish officials, allegedly being killed through torture.

## **3. Rape and Sexual Violence**

Rape and sexual violence have been a tool of war for many decades and unfortunately, detention centers in Turkish occupied Afrin show a horrifying pattern of sexual violence against women. Former detainees explain their experiences of sexual violence, ranging from inappropriate touching to gang rape, often at the hands of officials in charge of operations at the facilities. Women describe how their interrogators would subject them to invasive questioning and inappropriate touching, while jailers would ensure they had no privacy when they had to use the showers. One distressing story comes from a woman whose six-month-old daughter was forcibly separated from her, to which she was then forced to strip as inappropriate photographs were taken off her against her will. The extremity of gang rape was a common threat often followed through on as female detainees recalling being threatened with rape if they did not confess to alleged affiliations with terrorist militant groups, further underscoring the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

## **4. Judicial Concerns**

In February 2018, the Syrian Interim Government's Ministry of Defense instituted a military justice system aimed at addressing violations within the SNA factions, in particular, the mistreatment of civilians and potential war crimes at the hands of the SNA and their affiliates. This initiative, launched during Operation Euphrates Shield, introduced military courts and the military police force in Turkish-occupied areas, later expanding jurisdiction to Afrin and Tel Abyad as Turkey's territorial control increased.

However, the system's integrity has been continually compromised as little real justice has been obtained. Many judges within the military courts are former SNA officials or have SNA ties to current officials, often being appointed in coordination with Turkish intelligence agencies, showing a major conflict of interest that intentionally affects the reliance of the new system. Moreover, detainees subjected to this system are routinely denied legal aid throughout their detention, with coerced confessions often forming the cornerstone of prosecutions. From the documented cases by HRW, detainees faced military judges between three weeks and two years after arrest, without access to legal counsel throughout the process, leaving them with no representation. Shockingly, eight detainees confessed to crimes under duress, while two were coerced into memorizing and reciting false statements on camera with both scenarios likely happening through torture during detainment. One man testified that he was coerced into signing a document stating he was a member of PKK intelligence, admitting further that he had been involved in terrorist activity. Detainees' rights are further compromised by the prevalence of bribery, allowing families to secure releases outside the judicial process. These practices have further plagued and undermined the system's credibility, eroding trust in the pursuit of justice.

## **Conclusion**

The Turkish presence in northern Syria has been marked by a series of forceful military operations and strategic alliances that have negatively shaped northern Syria's dynamic. Turkey's collaboration with various armed groups, particularly the SNA, has enabled it to exert influence and establish control over key territories along the Syrian border, however, this relationship has become corrupt and resulted in clear abuses of power with little hope for legitimate, internal initiatives to seek justice for the victims. As Turkish influence becomes more and more ingrained in Syrian politics, it succumbs to growing scrutiny over its poor, continual misconduct against innocent people and the impact of its military operations on these

civilian populations, especially regarding widespread torture, to which Turkish intelligence forces are primarily responsible.

*Image: Turkish soldiers and rebel fighters at the building in Afrin that had hosted the PYD-led government of the region (Image: VoA/Public Domain)*



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## ABOUT SAM BIDEN

Sam Biden is a double law graduate from Aberystwyth University whose degree focused primarily in the enforcement and protection of civil liberties. His research surrounded areas such as data protection, protection from unlawful interference, environmental law, freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, humanitarian law and natural law jurisprudence. Sam's areas of interest include the advocating for the protection of digital liberties, ensuring of safe passage and treatment for the victims of the migration crisis and the drafting of solutions to repair corporate exploitation resulting in human rights violations and exacerbated climate damage.

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military training under Turkish army supervision in preparation for an imminent battle against the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces.



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This is the first time FSA fighters have received this type of training.

[Director of the politburo](#) for the FSA-affiliated [Al-Moaatsem Brigade](#) Mustafa Sejari told Al-Monitor, “The trainings of the National Army are ongoing, and preparations for the upcoming battle in the Eastern Euphrates are underway. The trainings are reaching high levels to ensure the success of operations in record time. Undoubtedly, previous experience in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch operations will benefit the Eastern Euphrates battles.”

Sejari added, “The trainings are part of the cooperation between the FSA and the Turkish army in their joint war on terror. FSA fighters receive intensive training on airdrops and new military tactics. This is the first such training for FSA fighters. The FSA continues to coordinate and cooperate with the Turkish army, which is offering special trainings and sessions constantly to teach our forces more battle expertise.”

Trainings are held at Turkish military bases in the Aleppo countryside and in training camps affiliated with the factions in the area. FSA-affiliated National Army leaders said the main aim behind the trainings is to [raise fighters’ combat readiness](#) to engage in a joint battle with the Turkish army against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the Eastern Euphrates.

The SDF is a coalition of Arab and Kurdish fighters, with the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) being the largest component. Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist group and an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party, which the Turkish army is fighting inside Turkey.

The training also includes lessons in tactics for storming enemy positions. The 2nd Corps, 2nd Regiment — affiliated with the National Army — launched these [training sessions](#) in its camps near al-Bab city on April 15. Before the training began, 18 Syrian officers who defected from the Syrian regime’s army at the beginning of the war [joined the ranks](#) of the 2nd Regiment to participate in the trainings by sharing their military and training expertise.

The [Ahrar al-Sharqia](#) faction affiliated with the FSA is [holding training sessions](#) on machine guns, mortars, urban warfare and close distance martial arts, in addition to giving lessons about the geographic nature of the

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TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN HAS DECIDED ON DEC. 12, 2018, a military operation in the Eastern Euphrates against the YPG. But the [surprising announcement](#) of US President Donald Trump Dec. 19 to withdraw [US troops](#) from the northeastern Euphrates delayed the operation.

On March 30, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar opened a [joint operations room](#) near the [Syrian-Turkish border](#) in Gaziantep to plan and implement military operations in the Eastern Euphrates.

Official spokesperson for the National Army [Yusuf Hamoud](#) told Al-Monitor, “The FSA has benefited a lot from direct contact with the Turkish army and acquired wide-scale technical and military expertise during the two joint battles — Operation Olive Branch and Operation Euphrates Shield. The FSA also benefited from the training offered by officers and experts in the Turkish army to the FSA fighters, including training on several military disciplines like airdrop and landing operations.”

Hamoud added, “If our battle against the SDF in the Eastern Euphrates is launched, it will be a wide-scale one and will require various military tactics. The airdrop and landing operations supply the battlefield with fighters within enemy lines and transfer equipment and ammunition to deep frontlines that can only be accessed through helicopters.”

Ali Tamii — a member of the Kurdish Future Movement, which is active in SDF-controlled areas — undermined the importance of the FSA trainings before engaging in the upcoming battle in the Eastern Euphrates. He told Al-Monitor, “The trainings of the Turkish army for FSA factions aim to pressure the SDF, and they are not as important as a US-Turkish consensus for entry into the Eastern Euphrates. Without such consensus, there won’t be a wide-scale confrontation.”

Tamii pointed to ongoing talks between Turkey and the United States over the fate of the Eastern Euphrates area, saying Ankara will only launch a battle against the SDF if it gets the green light from Washington. In such case, the SDF would be abandoned by the United States — its main backer — and would be forced to retreat, Tamii explained.

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experience proved that defense is a lost bet because the two sides [Turkey and the SDF] do not have equal powers.”

He said Turkey got US approval to launch [Operation Olive Branch](#) in 2018 against the YPG in Afrin, and thus the United States had abandoned their ally — which is why they lost the battle.

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# Exhibit 56

**Human Rights Council****Forty-third session**

24 February–20 March 2020

Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention****Report of the Independent International Commission of  
Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic\*, \*\****Summary*

Since the start of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, hostilities show little sign of abating in several parts of the country with a large number of State and non-State actors participating across different theatres of conflict. Multiple, rapidly shifting alliances among these parties continue to create volatility and power vacuums that facilitate violations of international law. The absence of an effective peace process, coupled with the failure of conflicting parties to provide unfettered access to humanitarian actors and independent monitors, renders distant the prospect of improving the immediate protection environment for civilians.

The operations by Turkish forces and the Syrian National Army, under the moniker Operation Peace Spring, followed the sudden withdrawal of troops of the United States of America in early October. The resulting rapid waves of civilians fleeing from the area between Ayn Isa and Tall Tamr contributed to an already dire displacement situation for many, including children, in areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces.

As battles waged over strategic areas in southern Idlib, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham terrorists attempted to tighten their grip over the population. Activists, journalists and civilians continue to be unlawfully detained for criticizing the group's mounting interference. Pro-government forces also carried out aerial and ground attacks in southern Idlib against terrorist organizations, striking civilian infrastructure, including protected objects such as medical facilities. Access to medical care for the wounded was thus undermined, while attacks on women's and children's hospitals prevented pregnant women and new mothers from receiving medical care. Between May 2019 and early January 2020, these attacks caused the displacement of 700,000 civilians.

\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

\*\* The annexes to the present report are circulated as received, in the language of submission only.



In government-controlled areas, conditions for return remained largely absent with significant barriers in place for civilians to claim their property, including expropriation by the Government. In formerly besieged towns and villages where “reconciliation” agreements have been imposed, ubiquitous checkpoints created fear among the civilian population and restricted freedom of movement and access to basic services.

These circumstances left little respite for those in the Syrian Arab Republic and the multitude of violations outlined in the report demonstrate a stark reality for countless women, men and children. Gender roles, and the inequalities that underpin them, have fuelled and amplified the direct impact of these violations. Women, and in particular those belonging to certain religious and ethnic communities, have been adversely affected by the conflict. In camps in areas controlled by Syrian Democratic Forces, foreign children with alleged familial links to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant continued to languish in despair, becoming increasingly vulnerable. As many of their countries of origin refuse repatriation, thousands of children, many unaccompanied, remain in a legal limbo.

All warring parties continue to ignore or deny protection, including guarantees of sustained and unhindered humanitarian assistance, to vulnerable civilians. Despite appeals and recommendations in previous reports for warring parties to take corrective action, the calls have largely gone unheeded.

## I. Mandate and methodology

1. In the present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to its resolution 40/17, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic presents its findings based on investigations conducted from 11 July 2019 to 10 January 2020.<sup>1</sup> The methodology employed by the Commission was based on the best practices of Commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions.

2. The information contained herein is based on 233 interviews conducted in the region and from Geneva. The Commission collected, reviewed and analysed satellite imagery, photographs, videos and medical records. Communications from Governments and non-governmental organizations were taken into consideration, as were United Nations reports.

3. The standard of proof was considered met when the Commission obtained and corroborated a reliable body of information sufficient for it to conclude that there were reasonable grounds to believe the incidents occurred as described and that violations were committed by the identified party.

4. While the Commission remains open to discussing its findings with the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic, its investigations remain curtailed by the denial of access to the country. Protection concerns in relation to interviewees further affected the Commission's inquiry. In all cases, the Commission remained guided by the principle of "do no harm".

## II. Political and military developments

5. There were sustained international efforts to revitalize the political process in the reporting period. The Secretary-General announced in late September that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposition's Syrian Negotiation Commission had agreed to begin the work of the Constitutional Committee. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria characterized the agreement as a "door opener" to a broader political process. The Constitutional Committee was officially launched in Geneva and its 45-member drafting body met on 4 and 25 November. The second gathering ended without the drafting body being convened due to a lack of consensus over the agenda. The pace of developments in the Constitutional Committee highlights the challenge of overcoming the lack of trust among the negotiating parties, and achieving tangible progress in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

6. The humanitarian situation worsened in many parts of the country. Against this backdrop, on 20 December, the Security Council failed to agree on the renewal of the cross-border and cross-line aid delivery mechanism. The Russian Federation and China vetoed the resolution arguing that it must be adapted to the current situation. The Security Council reached, on 10 January, a last-minute agreement to extend the authorization of cross-border aid delivery through two, rather than the previous four, border crossings and for only six months.<sup>2</sup> The failure to reauthorize the Ya'rubiyah border crossing to Iraq is expected to severely affect the entry of humanitarian aid into the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular medical supplies.

7. In terms of ongoing hostilities, fighting between pro-government forces and armed opposition groups, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, in Idlib, northern Hama, Ladhqiyyah and western Aleppo Governorates intensified. The escalation of violence in the north-west continued in July and August when offensives by pro-government forces targeted armed opposition groups near the Al-Ghaab plain, Khan Shaykhun, Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, Saraqib, Ariha and Jisr al-Shughur. Following the collapse of a conditional ceasefire on 5 August, Syrian army units began a major ground offensive. By 21 August, pro-government forces had cut off the M5 motorway, encircled the Turkish observation post in Murak and recaptured several towns in northern Hama and southern Idlib.

<sup>1</sup> The Commissioners are Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Chair), Karen Koning AbuZayd and Hanny Megally.

<sup>2</sup> See Security Council resolution 2504 (2020).

8. The Russian Federation declared that an agreement had been reached for a unilateral ceasefire by the Syrian Government on 30 August. Despite the truce, air strikes targeting localities in Idlib and Ladhqiyyah persisted throughout September and October. At the international level, following an appeal by 10 Security Council members, the Secretary-General declared the establishment of a board of inquiry to investigate the destruction of, or damage to, facilities on the United Nations de-confliction list and facilities supported by the United Nations in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic since April.

9. The President of the United States, Donald Trump, announced that, on 27 October, the leader of ISIL, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, had been killed during a raid by United States special forces in Barisha (Idlib Governorate). Meanwhile, protests against the National Salvation Government, which is affiliated to Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, in parts of Idlib intensified after the terrorist group further restricted political and civil activity and imposed new "taxes".

10. Attacks on territories held by opposition forces and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham continued in November and December. Airstrikes and shelling peaked in mid-December when pro-government forces began a major offensive against Ma'arat al-Nu'man, Saraqib and surrounding rural areas. The campaign enabled the Syrian army to recapture several locations in southern Idlib around the M5 motorway. Retaliatory attacks by armed opposition groups followed in southern Aleppo and Ladhqiyyah. The ground and air campaigns resulted in civilian casualties and massive displacement. Between May 2019 and early January 2020, these attacks induced the displacement of 700,000 civilians towards the northern parts of the governorate. Areas surrounding Ma'arat al-Nu'man and Saraqib were completely depopulated.

11. In the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, following President Erdogan's repeated warnings that Turkey was planning to launch a cross-border offensive against the Kurdish People's Protection Units, the Governments of the United States and Turkey agreed to form a joint operations centre and coordinate the establishment of a "safe zone". Pursuant to the agreement, Syrian Democratic Forces and affiliated forces of the Kurdish People's Protection Units agreed to destroy their positions and withdraw from border areas. While the Government of the United States announced that the "safe zone" agreement would be implemented in stages, Turkish authorities expressed dissatisfaction and affirmed that they would act if Turkish security interests were not addressed.

12. Following a telephone call between the Presidents of the United States and Turkey on 6 October, the White House announced that Turkey would soon be starting an operation in the north of the Syrian Arab Republic and that United States forces would withdraw. On 9 October, President Erdogan declared the launch of Operation Peace Spring by the Turkish Armed Forces, together with the Syrian National Army.<sup>3</sup> Turkish forces, supported by the Syrian National Army, began attacking Kurdish positions in several border towns, including Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn. The launch of Operation Peace Spring and the related withdrawal of United States troops had a significant impact on the population with more than 200,000 people displaced in rapid and uncoordinated evacuations. Ayn-Issa camp, in which many women and children with familial links to the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) lived, was almost deserted.

13. In response, the Government of the United States declared that it would continue to support Kurdish forces and take action if Turkey took measures that were considered "off-limits". The European Union, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel separately called on Turkey to halt the operation, while the League of Arab States adopted a resolution denouncing Turkey's campaign.<sup>4</sup> The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic called for respect of its territory and deployed troops in key towns across the north-east of the country after reaching an agreement with the Syrian Democratic Forces.

14. To contain the escalation of violence in the north-east, on 17 October, Turkey and the United States negotiated a ceasefire to allow forces of the Kurdish People's Protection Units

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<sup>3</sup> On 4 October representatives of various Syrian armed opposition groups announced their formal unification under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army. See A/HRC/42/51, para. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Resolution 8454 was adopted by the League of Arab States on 12 October 2019.

to withdraw. The agreement between the United States and Turkey was followed on 22 October by the signature of a memorandum of understanding between President Putin and President Erdogan that enabled Russian military police and Syrian border guards to enter Turkish-Syrian border areas and facilitate the removal of elements of the Kurdish People's Protection Units.<sup>5</sup> The Russian Federation and Turkey also agreed to begin joint monitoring patrols in the area. Despite the announcement by the Russian Federation of the complete withdrawal of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, clashes between Turkish forces and Kurdish groups, as well as the Syrian army and Turkish-backed forces, continued. On the issue of the return of Syrian refugees, President Erdogan presented the Secretary-General with a plan for new settlement areas within the 30-km "safe zone".

15. On 17 December, the United States Senate passed the "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act" authorizing sanctions against the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and any other individuals who are "responsible for or complicit in human rights abuses committed against citizens of Syria or their family members". President Trump signed the bill into law on 20 December.

16. The situation in centre and south of the Syrian Arab Republic remained volatile. Throughout the reporting period, ISIL attacks in Dar'a, Homs and Dayr al-Zawr Governorates killed several Syrian soldiers. The terrorist organization regrouped in the east of the Syrian Arab Republic and increased attacks against pro-government forces, in particular around Mayadin and Albu Kamal. Sporadic clashes between the Syrian army and ISIL terrorists were also ongoing around Sukhnah and Tadmur (Homs Governorate) and had a significant impact on the security and freedom of movement of civilians. In Dar'a, following protests, the Government issued an amnesty for those arrested after July 2018, in an attempt to reduce tensions, however, few releases occurred. In July, August and November, air strikes by Israel hit Tal-Haraa in the south of the Syrian Arab Republic, several alleged Hizbullah facilities and Iranian and Syrian positions outside Damascus. These developments continued to contribute to a highly complex protection situation for civilians across the Syrian Arab Republic.

### III. Resurging violence against civilians

17. During the period under review, attacks by belligerent parties killed and injured scores of Syrian women, men and children. Fierce battles further destabilized the provision of services, and deprived countless civilians from accessing medical services and education, as well as food and water. As the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic evolves, it has resulted in the active intervention of a number of Member States in support of and in opposition to the Government, through both direct actions on the ground, and through the provision of logistical, material and financial support to non-State armed groups.<sup>6</sup>

18. Displacement was most often caused by the failure of warring parties to take all feasible precautions to spare the civilian population, or by other unlawful conduct by parties that carried out attacks with little regard for civilian life.

<sup>5</sup> The memorandum laid out that, starting 23 October 2019, Russian military police and Syrian border guards would enter the Syrian side of the Turkish-Syrian border, outside the area of Operation Peace Spring, to facilitate the removal of elements of the Kurdish People's Protection Units and their weapons.

<sup>6</sup> States have an obligation under common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 "to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances". As common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions is part of each of the four "present" conventions as well, this obligation extends as a matter of treaty obligation to the minimum guarantees provided for in common article 3 in situations of "armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties". See conference room paper "Human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations in the Syrian Arab Republic, 21 July 2016–28 February 2017 (A/HRC/34/CRP.3, paras. 99–103). Available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx).



## A. Idlib, northern Hama and western Aleppo

### *Pro-government forces*

19. Idlib Governorate, where approximately three million Syrian civilians subsist with limited access to basic services, witnessed renewed outbreaks of brutal violence. At least half of these civilians had already fled attacks or been forcibly displaced through “reconciliation agreements”,<sup>7</sup> while 700,000 of them were displaced between May and early January.

20. Though the announcement of a unilateral ceasefire on 31 August ended a four-month long offensive throughout the “demilitarized zone”,<sup>8</sup> violence intensified from November into early January. Attacks carried out by pro-government forces targeted civilian infrastructure, including specially protected objects. As a result, civilian areas were rendered uninhabitable, in particular towns such as Khan Shaykhun and Ma’arrat al-Nu‘man, in an apparent effort to accelerate capture of strategic motorways from Aleppo to Hama and Ladhqiqyah.

21. The Commission verified unlawful attacks in Ma’arrat al-Nu‘man, Marat al-Harma, Janudiyah village (Jisr al-Shughur), a medical point located near Al-Khasra, and Al-Bara. The findings that follow are examples of attacks by pro-government forces.

22. Attacks affecting crowded marketplaces continued.<sup>9</sup> For example, on 22 July, between 8 a.m. and 8.30 a.m., a series of air strikes hit the main market as well as surrounding houses in a densely populated area in Ma’arrat al-Nu‘man. The air strikes killed more than 43 civilians, including 3 girls and 1 boy, and injured at least 109, including 18 children and 15 women. At least 2 four-storey residential buildings and 25 shops were destroyed. Al-Quza’iz School, located some 700 m from the market, was also damaged. Witnesses recounted that there were no military objectives in the vicinity of the market.

23. Civilians and rescuers rushed to the market after the attack. Within minutes, however, at around 8.35 a.m., a “double-tap” air strike hit the same area, killing scores of civilians, including a member of the rescue team. Medical staff described how victims had been brought to a nearby hospital with missing limbs, while others had arrived in various stages of disfigurement. The Russian Ministry of Defence denied that their aircraft had been present in the area on 22 July.<sup>10</sup>

24. On 16 August, between 7.15 and 7.30 p.m., air strikes struck a compound for displaced civilians located approximately 2 km from Haas. The compound was situated in a rural area, surrounded by agricultural fields, between Kafr Roma and Haas in southern Idlib, with interviewees recalling that no military objectives were nearby. The attack killed 20 people, including 8 women, one of whom was pregnant, and 6 children, and injured at least 40 others. The air strike caused substantial damage to the area, including to an adjacent square surrounded by commercial vendors. At least two residential buildings and a food storage room were destroyed, while the school and the camp medical centre were damaged.

25. Based on the evidence available, including witness testimonies, video footage, data imagery as well as reports by flight spotters, flight communication intercepts and early warning observation reports, the Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that a Russian aircraft participated in each incident described above. In both incidents, the Russian Air Force did not direct the attacks at a specific military objective, amounting to the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks in civilian areas (see annex II for a detailed description of the attacks).<sup>11</sup>

26. As violence escalated, and pro-government forces consolidated power over strategic areas in southern Idlib, civilians fled en masse, leaving Khan Shaykhun, Kafr Nubl and –

<sup>7</sup> On oaths of loyalty and reconciliation, see also A/HRC/36/55, paras. 20–22.

<sup>8</sup> A/HRC/40/70, paras. 14–15.

<sup>9</sup> A/HRC/28/69, annex II, paras. 2–8; A/HRC/30/48, paras. 34–35; and A/HRC/31/68, para. 77.

<sup>10</sup> See [http://eng.mil.ru/en/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12243385@egNews](http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12243385@egNews).

<sup>11</sup> See Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law – Volume I: Rules* (Geneva, International Committee of the Red Cross; Cambridge, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2005), rule 156.

later in December – Ma'arrat al-Nu'man and Khan al-Soubul almost completely depopulated. Schools in Janudiyah village in Jisr al-Shughur became shelters for at least 6,500 civilians fleeing areas retaken by pro-government forces. On 20 November, 16 civilians, including 11 children, were killed and 30 were injured when pro-government forces launched a surface-to-surface missile attack consisting of cluster munitions that struck a camp for displaced persons adjacent to Qah village, near the Turkish border. The use of cluster munitions in densely populated camps for displaced civilians constitutes the war crime of indiscriminate attacks in a civilian populated area (see annex II for a detailed description of other attacks).

27. From 15 December onwards, as pro-government forces increased aerial offensives, residents around Ma'arrat al-Nu'man town began fleeing in anticipation of attacks. Residents described departing at night, using the M5 motorway, with their vehicle lights off, to minimize the risk of being attacked. By 1 January, at least 300,000 people had fled their homes, adding to approximately 400,000 civilians previously displaced from southern Idlib between May and August.

28. Four medical facilities were damaged in the span of three days, between 4 and 6 November, in Jisr al-Shughur, Kafr Nubl and Ariha in southern Idlib. On 6 November, at around 1.30 a.m., pro-government forces carried out two air strikes that struck the Ikhlas maternity and paediatric hospital in Shinan, south of Ariha, rendering the facility non-functional. Later that day, at around 4.15 p.m., a series of air strikes conducted by pro-Government forces struck a surgical "cave" hospital in Kafr Nubl, damaging the western entrance and vital medical equipment.

29. In attacking medical facilities, pro-government forces repeatedly committed the war crime of deliberately attacking protected objects and intentionally attacking medical personnel. In attacking hospitals, medical units and health-care personnel, pro-government forces violated binding international humanitarian law to care for the sick and wounded, and committed the war crime of attacking protected objects.

30. The foregoing incidents follow a pattern of attacks against hospitals (including, most recently, between March and May 2019),<sup>12</sup> which strongly suggests that pro-government forces systematically targeted medical facilities. Government officials repeatedly stated that their aim was to remove terrorist elements, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, from the area. The means and methods of warfare, however, were deployed in a way that decimated segments of civilian infrastructure throughout southern Idlib, and may suggest that pro-government forces also targeted the civilian population. During the period under review, repeated attacks further rendered the area completely uninhabitable, eroding the military and fragile political control of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham.

31. In parts of southern Idlib, including Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, pro-government forces persistently shelled civilian infrastructure in the de-escalation zone, leaving civilians with no choice but to flee. As such, there are reasonable grounds to believe that pro-government forces intended to terrorize civilians,<sup>13</sup> in an effort to depopulate the zone and accelerate its capture.

*Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A/HRC/42/51, paras. 45–46 and para. 52, footnote 16. See also annex II.

<sup>13</sup> International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, *Prosecutor v. Stanislav Galić*, Case No. IT-98-29-A, Judgment, 30 November 2006, at paras. 99–109.

<sup>14</sup> The Commission continues to regard the group as a terrorist entity, as designated by the Security Council in its resolution 2170 (2014) and subsequent entries on its sanctions lists (available from <https://scsanctions.un.org/consolidated/>). Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham currently comprises Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (also known as Jabhat al-Nusrah and previously as the Al-Nusrah Front), Ansar al-Sham and Afnan al-Sham, among others.

32. Armed groups, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham,<sup>15</sup> escalated attacks on government-controlled areas causing scores of civilian casualties.<sup>16</sup> On 21 November, armed groups launched a rocket attack on several neighbourhoods in Aleppo, including Salah al-Din that killed 7 civilians and injured 29 others.

33. Alongside attacks by warring parties, the civilian population in restive areas across Idlib Governorate continued to suffer as Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham terrorists attempted to tighten their grip. In an effort to subjugate populations, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham increasingly took over activities aimed at regulating access to services during the reporting period. The presence of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham impacted residents' access to health and education, and also resulted in the withdrawal of humanitarian actors. In Kafr Takharim, where approximately 40,000 people lived, attempts by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham to consolidate power resulted in an increase in the prices of basic commodities, such as bread and fuel. When Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham imposed a "tax" on olive oil production in the town, protests erupted and progressively spread to other areas that historically had a strong civil society presence, including Saraqib, Salqin, Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, and Atarib.

34. In response, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham fighters launched a rocket attack on Kafr Takharim and in the morning of 7 November they shot at fighters and civilians while entering the town. Some 30 men dressed in military clothing with covered faces stormed a three-storey building where approximately 100 civilians were hiding in the basement, resulting in the death of at least 3 individuals and injuring 10 others, including a 16-year-old boy. Members of the group also prevented injured civilians from leaving and shot at an ambulance transporting the wounded.

35. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham terrorists continued to recruit and use children to participate in hostilities,<sup>17</sup> targeting primarily young boys who had missed years of schooling as guards or checkpoint personnel in Idlib Governorate. Owing to existing gender norms, boys have also been expected to take on the role of breadwinner, especially within female-headed households, and have subsequently joined Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham to ensure income for their families. A 16-year-old boy in Sarmada joined the terrorist group and participated in hostilities in order to support his siblings after the death of his father. One interviewee described how children underwent religious and military training prior to participating in hostilities.

36. Following an air strike conducted by international coalition forces on 31 August targeting one Al-Qaida facility located north of Idlib,<sup>18</sup> young males were observed among the victims, including boys aged between 12 and 13, who were dressed in military clothing. The children were reportedly being recruited and subjected to religious training by members of Ansar al-Tawhid.

37. Individuals expressing dissent or openly criticizing the presence of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, such as activists and media workers, continued to be subjected to persecution. At least six activists were detained between August and September, including one photographer who filmed members of the terrorist group and later released a video reportedly exposing corruption.

38. During the period under review, journalists reported that Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham maintained a list of names and pictures of activists on the basis of which the group detained individuals who had expressed dissent or disagreement. When civilians gathered to protest against Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Bab al-Hawa in November, members of the group took photographs of demonstrators to identify them later at checkpoints. In another case, one activist reported receiving a written warning asking him to report to a "security office" linked to the Ouqab prison run by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib. The warning did not state the

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<sup>15</sup> Protection concerns prevent the Commission from disclosing certain information in this paragraph, such as place names, that could potentially be used to identify individual sources. In all cases, the Commission remained guided by the "do no harm" principle.

<sup>16</sup> See S/2019/922 and S/2019/987.

<sup>17</sup> See Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rule 137.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/STATEMENTS/Statements-View/Article/1949406/statement-from-us-central-command-on-us-forces-strike-against-al-qaida-in-syria](http://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/STATEMENTS/Statements-View/Article/1949406/statement-from-us-central-command-on-us-forces-strike-against-al-qaida-in-syria).

reason for his summons, though he considered it related to his journalism. Members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham threatened another journalist in relation to information she had published online, which criticized the provision of services and other issues in Idlib for which she believed the group bore responsibility. At least one activist was subjected to extrajudicial executions in Ouqab prison, amounting to the war crime of passing sentences and carrying out executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court.<sup>19</sup>

## B. Afrin and adjacent areas<sup>20</sup>

39. Cases of detentions, killings, beatings and abductions, in addition to widespread looting and appropriation of civilian homes, by a variety of armed groups operating under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army have been documented, in a consistent, discernible pattern previously documented in Afrin.<sup>21</sup> While some of those acts, such as abductions, property looting and detentions, suggested financial motivation, the reported incidents primarily affected Kurdish residents in Afrin and adjacent areas.

40. Victims of abduction and detention were predominately male and of Kurdish origin. Certain Kurdish residents were abducted several times. While deprived of their liberty, individuals were subjected to torture and ill-treatment, with little access to food, in poor hygienic conditions.

41. Beyond these violations, large-scale property confiscation and looting of properties have been widely reported. Syrian National Army fighters have placed family members in some of the homes of Kurdish owners who fled the area and provided “rental contracts” to newly accommodated individuals. In other cases, Syrian National Army fighters went to civilians’ houses and requested property deeds from Kurdish owners who had stayed. On occasions, returnees were left with no other option but to share their homes with family members of Syrian National Army fighters who had moved into their residences. When civilians complained to senior members of the Syrian National Army to reclaim their property, they were met by threats and violence. The magnitude of property confiscation prompted the establishment of a complaint mechanism within the structures of the Syrian National Army, although residents indicated that it was largely ineffective.

42. By perpetrating acts of looting and property appropriation, armed groups under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army committed the war crime of pillaging and further violated the right to enjoyment of possessions and property.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that members of armed groups under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army committed the war crimes of hostage-taking, cruel treatment, ill-treatment and torture.<sup>23</sup>

43. In addition, local residents consistently described numerous security threats, which were likely committed by groups opposing the Syrian National Army, including shooting incidents, car bomb explosions and other attacks using improvised explosive devices that led to civilian casualties. In one such attack, on 16 December, a car bomb exploded in the Suq al-Hal, killing at least 8 people and injuring 12 more.

44. In addition, Tall Rif'at, which is in neighbouring I'zaz District and under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces, experiences regular shelling. In a shelling incident, allegedly originating from Jariz near I'zaz City, that occurred in the early afternoon on 2

<sup>19</sup> Common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

<sup>20</sup> Protection concerns prevent the Commission from disclosing certain information in this section, such as place names, that could potentially be used to identify individual sources. In all cases, the Commission remained guided by the “do no harm” principle.

<sup>21</sup> A/HRC/42/51, para. 55–58.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, International Criminal Court, *Prosecutor v. Germain Katanga*, Case No. ICC-01/04-01/07, Judgment, 7 March 2014, paras. 925–957; see also Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 17.

<sup>23</sup> See Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rule 156.

December, 10 civilians were killed, including 2 children, and 12 more suffered injuries. The affected civilians had previously been displaced from the Afrin area.

### C. North-east of the Syrian Arab Republic

#### *Operation Peace Spring*

45. Since 2015, the Syrian Democratic Forces have been in control of large portions of the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. Turkish armed forces, supported by the Syrian National Army, commenced Operation Peace Spring<sup>24</sup> on 9 October with the launch of air strikes and artillery shelling on Syrian border towns, including Ayn al-Arab (Kobane), Tall Abyad, Ra's al-Ayn and Qamishli. The ground advance commenced on 10 October.

46. By 21 November, Turkey secured territory that they referred to as a “safe zone”, which consisted of an area stretching between Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn. While major air strikes and artillery shelling scaled down significantly in late November, the area experienced frequent attacks, including sporadic artillery shelling, ground skirmishes, car bombs and the use of other improvised explosive devices.

47. In carrying out aerial attacks, the Turkish air force employed aircraft, including drones, and precise munitions. The Syrian National Army, financially and logistically supported by Turkish forces, formed part of the ground forces and were lightly armed, although some units deployed tanks, light personnel carriers and several types of artillery.

48. The launch of Operation Peace Spring triggered mass waves of displacement. More than 100,000 people had fled by 11 October. This number rose to more than 175,000 displaced individuals by 22 October, including approximately 80,000 children. More than 10,000 civilians fled across the border to Iraq. By mid-October, as hostilities intensified, international humanitarian organizations reduced their presence on the ground, which further compromised civilians' access to services.

49. Most casualties were inflicted in the early days of the offensive, including in areas outside of the territory eventually controlled by Operation Peace Spring forces. On 10 October in Qamishli, in the neighbourhood of Qadour Beck, at around 4.30 p.m., a mortar hit a civilian house resulting in the death of a boy and seriously injuring one girl aged 8 and one boy aged 11. The children were playing outside when the attack took place. The attack also killed an elderly woman who was passing by at the time of the incident. Witnesses described the Qadour Beck neighbourhood as a civilian area, with no military objectives located nearby. Witnesses reported that shells had been launched from the Nseibin area of Turkey, adjacent to Qamishli.

50. Objects necessary for the survival of the civilian population were affected several times by the hostilities. On 9 October, at around 4 p.m., witnesses reported that an artillery strike had hit the area of Aluk water station. The strike destroyed electricity cables and, as a result, water pumping came to a halt and the water supply for 460,000 people was cut off. The area was hit again by ground shelling the following day, damaging the administrative building of the water station. On 17 October, water repair workers attempted to conduct repairs, but were allegedly abducted by armed group fighters from Ahrar al-Sharqiyah (Brigade 123) though later released. It was not until more than a month later, on 13 November, that the water supply was restored following negotiations by humanitarian actors.

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<sup>24</sup> President Erdogan posted on Twitter “The Turkish Armed Forces, together with the Syrian National Army, just launched Operation Peace Spring . . . . Our mission is to prevent the creation of a terror corridor across our southern border, and to bring peace to the area.” See [www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/111024/-the-turkish-armed-forces-together-with-the-syrian-national-army-just-launched-operation-peace-spring-](http://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/111024/-the-turkish-armed-forces-together-with-the-syrian-national-army-just-launched-operation-peace-spring-). Further on, President Erdogan stated the aim was to create a “safe zone”, stretching some 30 km into the Syrian Arab Republic, in which refugees currently living in Turkey could be resettled. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has condemned Turkey's operation, referring to it as an act of aggression and characterizing it as a flagrant violation of international law and a blatant violation of Security Council resolutions (S/2019/806).

51. On 12 October at 6.50 a.m., an ordinance hit a temporary medical point located within a school in Salihyah, which is between Ra's al-Ayn and Tall Tamr. The noise of an aircraft was heard shortly before the medical point was hit. The attack damaged the building and destroyed a nearby car.

52. In another incident on 12 October, a convoy consisting of between 70 and 80 vehicles, and including up to 400 people, was travelling from Tall Tamr to Ra's al-Ayn. The convoy consisted of private vehicles, mainly minivans and cars, and included journalists and families with children. Interviewees characterized the convoy as civilian in nature, with the purpose of demonstrating "against the Turkish aggression" and showing solidarity. While about a dozen of the participants were carrying rifles, numerous interviewees confirmed that neither military vehicles, heavy weapons nor ammunition were transported by the convoy. At around 3.30 p.m., the convoy was hit by an air strike, targeting the first vehicle, in the centre of Ra's al-Ayn, near the Great Mosque. As a result, 11 people were killed and 74 injured, including 19 women.

53. The Turkish authorities have either denied involvement in or indicated that they have no record of these incidents (paras. 50–52). The Commission continues to investigate these incidents, and calls on the Turkish authorities to launch its own investigations and make the findings public.

54. Beyond active hostilities, civilians in and around Ra's al-Ayn and Tall Abyad were subjected to myriad violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by Syrian National Army fighters consistent with the pattern documented in the Afrin District (see paras. 39-41). These violations instilled fear among Kurdish residents and caused further displacement. Aware of the scale of violations in Afrin, many fled their homes. Anticipating attacks on their community, Yazidi women, men and children, who populated some 13 villages across Ra's al-Ayn District, also left. Videos published on the Internet, purportedly by Syrian National Army fighters, used language comparing their "enemies" to "infidels", "atheists" and "pigs" when referring to civilians, detainees and property, which further amplified fears and created an environment conducive to abuse.<sup>25</sup>

55. During Operation Peace Spring, the Minister of Defence of Turkey announced that 4,219 km<sup>2</sup> and 600 settlements were taken under control and checkpoints established on the M4 motorway.<sup>26</sup> Interviewees reported that checkpoints within the "safe zone" were controlled by Turkish officers and staffed with Syrian National Army fighters.

56. Civilians in and around Ra's al-Ayn and Tall Abyad reported numerous cases of looting and property appropriation by members of the Syrian National Army, primarily affecting Kurdish residents and, on occasions, Yazidi owners who had fled in October. Schools and businesses, such as bakeries, were also looted or expropriated, along with land for making olive oil, agricultural tools and vehicles.

57. Male Kurdish residents from Ra's al-Ayn and adjacent areas in particular feared returning. However, some Kurdish women were able to access their properties during day trips to gather their belongings. When attempting to return to their properties, individuals found that locks had been changed or Syrian National Army fighters had occupied their homes. This prevented potential returns and further facilitated the transfer of families and communities supported by Syrian National Army fighters to the private residences of displaced persons.

58. In the early hours of 12 October, Hevrin Khalaf, Secretary-General of the Future Party of Syria, was travelling with her driver in a black vehicle from Qamishli on the M4 motorway. At around 7 a.m., between Suluk and Tall Tamr, members of Ahrar Al-Sharqiyah (Brigade

<sup>25</sup> See <https://observers.france24.com/en/20191021-syria-turkey-militia-ahrar-sharqiya-investigation-abuses>. The Commission is unable to verify the authenticity of the footage.

<sup>26</sup> See the statement by the Minister of National Defence of Turkey, on 21 November 2019, to the Parliamentary Budget Committee. Available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8h9-5AEzZQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8h9-5AEzZQ).

123) of the Syrian National Army executed Hevrin Khalaf together with her driver, after dragging her out by her hair and mutilating her body.<sup>27</sup>

59. In conducting the aforementioned acts, the Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Syrian National Army fighters perpetrated the war crime of murder and repeatedly committed the war crime of pillaging, further seriously contravening the right to enjoyment of possessions and property. If any armed group members were shown to be acting under the effective command and control of Turkish forces, these violations may entail criminal responsibility for such commanders who knew or should have known about the crimes, or failed to take all necessary and reasonable measures to prevent or repress their commission.<sup>28</sup>

*Areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces*

60. Since the final battles over the last remaining ISIL areas south of Hajin, individuals with perceived links to the group have been either transported to displacement camps or transferred to detention facilities scattered in areas controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces. As many of their countries of origin initially refused to repatriate them, most families of foreign ISIL fighters, including children, are being held in a legal limbo, in squalid living conditions and with meagre prospects to return.

61. In Hawl camp, women and children with familial links to ISIL suffered discrimination on the basis of their perceived affiliation with the group, in violation of international humanitarian law.<sup>29</sup> As interned women and children are believed to pose a security threat,<sup>30</sup> they face restrictions on their movements and are reliant on the Syrian Democratic Forces to facilitate their access to medical facilities. Interviewees described that, on occasion, access to medical care was denied by guards, or they were not allowed to accompany children to hospitals in Hasakah or Qamishli. Instances of harassment, verbal abuse and looting<sup>31</sup> of the tents of family members of ISIL fighters by camp guards have also been documented.

62. Compounding the dire living conditions, prevailing insecurity and violence increased, further weakening the most vulnerable segments of the encamped population. Inside the annexed section of Hawl camp, ISIL sympathizers have established a female morality police to monitor adherence to dress codes and enforce punishments on women perceived to be “infidels”. In September, at least two women were stabbed to death following a decision by a makeshift “sharia court” set up by militant women. At least one Syrian Democratic Forces guard was stabbed inside the annexed section.

63. As Operation Peace Spring progressed in October (see paras. 45–52), fear spread among the population in Hawl and Ayn Isa camps. Interviewees recalled that the number of guards at Hawl camp had been reduced significantly, resulting in sporadic outbreaks of violence affecting the annexed section in particular. As instability increased, the only medical clinic servicing the annexed section was closed, depriving thousands of women and children of medical care. Hostilities further affected Ayn Isa camp, where 249 women and 700 children with family links to ISIL were held. While some of the encamped residents escaped and others were transferred to Mahmudi camp in Raqqah Governorate, some of the women appear to have been apprehended by armed groups.

64. Approximately 11,000 male individuals, including 1,000 foreigners from 50 different countries, remain detained in detention sites run by the Syrian Democratic Forces. Men and boys as young as 9 years of age were being held in squalid conditions without adequate access to food or water; they were visibly ill and had untreated conflict-related injuries. Detainees

<sup>27</sup> In meetings with the Commission, the leadership of the Syrian National Army indicated that individuals had been arrested in connection with this incident.

<sup>28</sup> Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, art. 28. See also Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rule 153.

<sup>29</sup> See Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rules 88 and 118.

<sup>30</sup> A/HRC/37/72, annex III, paras. 12–18.

<sup>31</sup> See Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rule 122.

have limited access to the outside world, with many still unaware of the whereabouts of their family members following the battles for control of Baghuz.

65. Elsewhere in areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces, civilians, including children, suffered violations of their rights. Notwithstanding the signing of an action plan between the Syrian Democratic Forces and the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children under the age of 18 in June 2019, children aged 16 and 17 continued to be recruited by the Kurdish People's Protection Units throughout the reported period, with multiple accounts emanating from Aleppo Governorate.<sup>32</sup>

66. The Syrian Democratic Forces also caused civilian deaths and injuries in other documented events. On 10 August, a 3-year-old child was shot in the back at a checkpoint as his father was parking his car in accordance with the instructions of members of the Syrian Democratic Forces. When a crowd came to protest the killing, members of the Syrian Democratic Forces opened fire and one civilian was injured by bullets in the back and leg. In Tabaqah, on 16 August, members of the Syrian Democratic Forces forced their way into the house of a doctor. The doctor was taken away and his spouse was physically assaulted.

#### IV. Government-held areas

67. Living conditions remained dire in areas retaken by the Government, with residents, particularly in eastern Ghutah (Rif Dimashq), experiencing limited access to basic services and meagre progress on reconstruction. Where electricity is available, it is prohibitively expensive and often rationed. In Duma, electricity is only available on the main street, while water supplies in eastern Ghutah are unpotable. The movement of construction materials and furniture has also been heavily restricted, in particular between Duma and Misraba, further hampering efforts to rebuild homes. While some schools have reopened, the marginalization of qualified teachers with perceived affiliations to schooling systems that were in place under armed groups has affected the quality of education.

68. Civilians in areas retaken by the Government suffered from a general absence of the rule of law. Arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances<sup>33</sup> and detentions continued to be commonplace throughout areas such as Dar'a, Duma and eastern Ghutah. During the period under review, large numbers of adult men were also detained purportedly for conscription. In Duma, a group of students travelling on 20 October to university to take examinations was stopped at a checkpoint staffed by officials from the General Security Directorate. Notwithstanding their status as students, the officers took 15 young men away, as their exemption from mandatory military service was deemed invalid.<sup>34</sup>

69. The Government has also used the arrest and detention of family members to exert pressure during negotiations or to suppress political participation. Relatives of members of the Constitution Committee were detained and interrogated.<sup>35</sup> In the lead up to the convening of the forum at the end of October, security services implied that the treatment of relatives in the Syrian Arab Republic was contingent upon conduct during discussions. Women have also been threatened by the State security apparatus to prevent them from taking part in other civil society initiatives.

70. The use of "security reports" allegedly submitted by civilians as the basis of detention by the security apparatus was a concerning trend. People in eastern Ghutah, as well as other areas under Government control, reported living in constant fear of arrest due to

<sup>32</sup> As of the date of submission of the present report, no response had been received from the Syrian Democratic Forces regarding these incidents.

<sup>33</sup> The Commission has already documented a pattern of enforced disappearances. Relatives continue to pay large sums of money to intermediaries and individuals representing the State for information on the whereabouts of disappeared persons. See, for example, the conference room paper "Out of sight, out of mind: deaths in detention in the Syrian Arab Republic" (A/HRC/31/CRP.1). Available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx).

<sup>34</sup> See Legislative Decree No. 30 of 2007, art. 10 (A).

<sup>35</sup> Protection concerns prevent the Commission from providing additional details.



denouncements through reports by other members of the community. Interviewees reported that denouncements were often used to settle unsubstantiated and unrelated interpersonal grievances. In July, a man fled abroad from a town in Dar'a Governorate following a request to go to the Military Intelligence Directorate, after he received information that a "security report" had been made that accused him of storing medicine for armed groups.

71. Notwithstanding the ongoing arrests and detentions by government forces, in addition to the scores of individuals already deprived of their liberty, a number of "amnesties" were issued in the reporting period by the Government.<sup>36</sup> However, releases mostly took place in Dar'a Governorate and amounted to few hundred people who had been held for relatively minor offences.

72. The plethora of actors involved, combined with competing approaches to "reconciliation" in certain areas, such as eastern Ghutah, Qunaytirah or Dar'a, contributed to a fragile security situation. The commitments made when government forces imposed a "reconciliation" process on previously besieged areas, including fulfilling promises of releasing those that had been arrested and detained, recognizing educational certificates and reinstating teachers, remained largely unfulfilled. Civilians in retaken areas indicated that the lack of respect for the "reconciliation" processes and agreements was a significant factor of current fear and tension among the population.

73. A network of checkpoints remained across "reconciled areas", including in Dar'a<sup>37</sup> and eastern Ghutah,<sup>38</sup> in contravention of the assurances made during "reconciliation processes". This has severely restricted the freedom of movement of the civilian population, primarily affecting adult men who feared apprehension and forced conscription. Recently, the use of rapidly deployed ad hoc checkpoints in Duma, has instilled additional fear among the population.

74. The ubiquitous checkpoints have further enabled members of the security services to extort residents. One interviewee told the Commission that "even if you are not wanted, you are at risk of being taken at checkpoints. If you need to move, you always need to consider taking some money with you to bribe officials." These restrictions impeded civilians' access to basic services, including health care and education, and confined those lacking financial resources to their homes. In Duma City, authorizations are required in order to enter and exit. Without such authorizations, residents reported having to pay large bribes at checkpoints to gain access to hospitals to treat their medical conditions.

75. The right to adequate housing and shelter continued to be widely violated in the Syrian Arab Republic. A lack of clear procedures regarding reclaiming property, and a complex system of overlapping system of laws, created significant barriers to return. Housing land and property frameworks were used to punish individuals broadly perceived to be associated with opposition groups, including activists, who documented violations by government forces.<sup>39</sup>

76. Interviewees outlined the cumbersome administrative burden upon those wishing to return to their places of origin. Individuals wishing to claim their property in Bayadah, Homs Governorate, were required to present proof of ownership to the Office of the Governorate and then approach the Criminal Security Branch to clear their records. Once cleared, they were required go to the local police. Many people who applied to return were not cleared and the reasons for denial were not specified nor provided in writing, preventing them from challenging the decision.

77. The payment of utility charges further complicated return. In eastern Ghutah, Hulah, Rif Homs and Homs City, those wishing to return to their houses were required to pay utility charges for the entire period of the conflict, including times during which the services were

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<sup>36</sup> For example, Decree No. 20 of 15 September 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Interviewees informed the Commission that the north-west of Dar'a was under the control of State security, the north under the control of political security.

<sup>38</sup> Interviewees informed the commission that Duma was under the control of State security, Misraba and Harasta under the control of the Fourth Division of the Syrian Arab Army, and Irbin, Bayt Siwa, Hammurah and Kafr Batna controlled by Military Security.

<sup>39</sup> A/HRC/40/70, paras. 80–82.

not in place or the individual did not benefit from such utilities. This placed a prohibitively expensive burden upon civilians.

78. In areas such as Qusayr, Dar'a and Darayya, certain segments of the civilian population were compelled by pro-government forces to sell their property at greatly reduced prices. Moreover, interviewees described that notices were put on houses stating that within a month of the notice the claimant must appear before the cadastral office to file a claim. However, the owners of the properties were often barred from entering the city within the time period. In areas such as Qusayr, displaced persons returned to their homes and found their houses being occupied by relatives of members of the security forces or armed groups.

79. In areas such as Qadam, as well as in parts of Qabun, Damascus, displaced residents were prevented by government officials from returning to their properties and visiting their houses to inspect damages. If they were allowed, it was only for a few hours. Other residents were informed by government officials that any permanent return to their homes, or reconstruction of privately owned houses, was prohibited.

80. Under the principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons, refugees and internally displaced persons should be protected from discriminatory housing, land and restitution laws.<sup>40</sup> By imposing arbitrary restrictions on movements and denying freedom of movement, in addition to unlawfully depriving individuals of their property in previously besieged areas, including eastern Ghutah, government forces may have committed the war crime of collective punishment.<sup>41</sup>

## V. Impact of the ongoing conflict

81. As violence has engulfed life in the Syrian Arab Republic, civilians have fled their homes in desperation searching for safe heavens. Often, individuals suffer on the basis of multiple aspects of their identity, including their gender, age or ethnicity. Displacement fragments communities and causes family separation, thus magnifying the impact of civilians' suffering and shaping negative experiences differently.

82. Violence directed at the civilian population may particularly affect civilian women, including those of particular ethnicities. It can also have devastating consequences for older people, especially when access to basic services remains severely curtailed. Women and children with physical and intellectual disabilities are adversely affected by the conflict, in particular when compelled to relocate to displacement camps where health care is largely absent.

### A. Internally displaced persons

83. At the time of writing, displaced women, men and children remain scattered, including hundreds of thousands living in overcrowded makeshift camps that dot the Syrian border, with limited access to food, water, health care and medicine. Elsewhere, displaced civilians remain reliant on already overstretched humanitarian assistance which, if interrupted, will put their lives at risk. Approximately 6.1 million civilians are displaced in the Syrian Arab Republic, while 5.6 million are registered as refugees outside the country.

#### *Northern Idlib*

84. Battles waged by pro-government forces caused civilians to flee their homes in fear and desperation. Thousands of Syrian women, men and children were forced to relocate to overcrowded makeshift camps further north, straining already overstretched humanitarian resources. Due to overcrowding, many were compelled to subsist under olive trees, with

<sup>40</sup> See principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons, principles 18–19.

<sup>41</sup> Special Court for Sierra Leone, *Prosecutor v. Fofana and Kondewa*, Case No. SCSL-04-14-A, Judgment, 28 May 2008, para. 224. See also Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rule 103.

marginal access to humanitarian assistance and limited access to basic services. Others sought refuge in schools or mosques in Ariha or Saraqib, where access to food, water and health care remained severely curtailed.

#### *Rukban camp*

85. Conditions in Rukban camp continued to deteriorate and children died of preventable causes. Humanitarian actors had limited access or means to provide basic supplies and services, which had a significant impact on the population. Notwithstanding these circumstances, in early September, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were able to deliver assistance to approximately 15,000 encamped residents. By January, the number of people left in the camp was estimated at just over 12,000.

86. In late September, a joint United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent team supported a departure convoy of 329 people who were willing to be relocated. Those departing the camp were transferred to “reception centres”, including in Ard Dayr Ba’albah School, in Homs Governorate. The Commission received reports that at least 100 individuals who were evacuated from Rukban had been detained by government forces after arrival in Homs.

87. The decision to leave appears to be motivated by the deteriorating camp conditions, further amplified by a harsh winter and scarcity of resources. Others who remain in Rukban cited fears of forced conscription or arbitrary arrest. Ongoing violations throughout government-held areas, including arbitrary detention and forced conscription, impede the right of civilians to voluntary return, in safety and dignity, to their original or another destination of their choice.<sup>42</sup>

## **B. Women**

88. Women, in particular those belonging to certain religious and ethnic communities, have been adversely affected by the conflict. Within the Kurdish administration, efforts have been made to advance women’s rights and their roles in decision-making processes. Each administrative institution is co-led by a woman and, in addition to all-female councils, a 40 per cent quota reinforces female representation and participation in economic initiatives and civil society organizations.

89. Recent gender-based violations committed against Kurdish women by armed groups with extremist ideologies have, however, demonstrated an attempt to dismantle these efforts. By targeting almost every aspect of Kurdish women’s lives in the Afrin District, and – progressively – in areas affected by Operation Peace Spring – armed groups generated a palpable fear of violence and duress among the female Kurdish population. This resulted in an undermining of women’s ability to meaningfully participate and contribute to their community. Indeed, to avoid being harassed, women described opting to remain at home, relinquish their jobs, or wear a headscarf if venturing outside without a male relative. One interviewee described being sexually harassed and referred to as *kafir* for not wearing a headscarf by members of armed groups at a checkpoint in the Afrin District. Yazidi women in the Afrin District described similar fears.

90. Following the murder of Hevrin Khalaf on 12 October (para. 58), Kurdish women recalled feeling increasingly insecure. Armed groups threatened and harassed women in positions in the political, military, medical and educational sector or otherwise taking active part in civil society.

91. Elsewhere, women’s human rights continued to be undermined, magnifying pre-existing inequalities. In an attempt to ascertain control over Kafr Takharim (paras. 33–35), members of Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham imposed dress codes on teachers and pupils, which

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<sup>42</sup> See Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, principle 28.

systematically discriminated against women and girls.<sup>43</sup> In Salqin, Idlib Governorate, one woman was stopped by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham when travelling without a male relative and subsequently detained with at least 10 other women in a prison-like facility in Salqin, including one woman who had been arrested for attempting to cross the Syrian border without her husband.

92. In areas controlled by the Government, the ongoing campaigns of conscripting men has confined adult males to their homes and further inhibited their movement across retaken areas such as eastern Ghutah. Female interviewees displaced outside the Syrian Arab Republic, consistently reported how their spouses, fearing conscription or detention, forced them to return home to assess the status of properties, often occupied or looted by warring parties. As many female returnees have either lost or lack property deeds in their names, they faced obstacles in proving ownership and claiming property rights upon their return.<sup>44</sup>

### C. Children

93. Children's lives have been scarred by the brutality of the war in the Syrian Arab Republic. Contrary to the principle of the best interests of the child, countrywide, girls and boys have been victimized in numerous ways, continuously denied the special respect and protection they are entitled to under international humanitarian and international human rights law.<sup>45</sup>

94. As violence increased in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic from October onwards (paras. 46–53), approximately 150 schools closed down in Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn, depriving scores of children of access to schooling. Overwhelmed by the growing number of displaced persons, at least 60 schools in Hasakah and Qamishli Cities were temporarily transformed into shelters for displaced persons, which resulted in the suspension of classes for at least 17,000 pupils. Around 20 schools were reported to have been destroyed in Ra's al-Ayn, including Khed Derei school, which was damaged on 11 October. The school hosted approximately 1,500 students.

95. Syrian women with familial links to ISIL fighters continued to face obstacles in registering their children with the competent authorities upon their return to government-controlled areas.<sup>46</sup> Mothers of children born in areas retaken by the Government, such as eastern Ghutah, encounter similar challenges since authorities do not accept civil documentation provided by armed groups. Such decisions substantially compromise children's right to acquire a nationality,<sup>47</sup> as well as access to health and education, and further expose them to the risks of child exploitation and trafficking.

96. Children are particularly vulnerable when forced to relocate to displacement camps. As with Rukban camp (paras. 85–87), tens of thousands of children in Hawl, around 1,200 of whom are unaccompanied, remain stranded with marginal access to food, clean water, medical care and education. Girls and boys, many of whom are orphaned, were adversely affected by the continuously deteriorating conditions in the camp, with children suffering from malnutrition, infectious diseases and measles.

97. Inside camps in areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces, foreign children with familial links to ISIL fighters continued languishing in despair while increasingly vulnerable to abuse, years after they were brought into the country. Given the deplorable decision of many Governments of origin to refuse repatriation,<sup>48</sup> thousands of

<sup>43</sup> See conference room paper "'I lost my dignity': Sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic" (A/HRC/37/CRP.3), footnote 6. Available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx).

<sup>44</sup> A/HRC/42/51, para. 92.

<sup>45</sup> See Henckaerts and Doswald-Beck, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rule 135.

<sup>46</sup> A/HRC/42/51 paras. 93–94.

<sup>47</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, arts. 2 and 7. See also the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 24.

<sup>48</sup> As of November, 17 countries had repatriated children. See [www.unicef.org/press-releases/governments-should-repatriate-foreign-children-stranded-syria-its-too-late](http://www.unicef.org/press-releases/governments-should-repatriate-foreign-children-stranded-syria-its-too-late).

children from over 50 countries, the majority of whom are younger than 12 years of age, remain in a legal limbo waiting to be able to return.

98. In a welcome development, boys, primarily of Syrian nationality, previously unlawfully interned by the Syrian Democratic Forces, have been placed in Al-Houri juvenile rehabilitation centre in Hasakah, pursuant to decisions emanating from makeshift judicial bodies affiliated to the Syrian Democratic Forces. This is one of few viable options given the refusal by States to repatriate their nationals, including children who remain at risk of statelessness, and the record of crimes committed by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>49</sup> In the absence of parallel measures at the State or international level to deal effectively with children with perceived links to ISIL, and the threats posed by young men of fighting age associated with ISIL fighters, the Commission notes that any such measures undertaken by non-State actors (the Syrian Democratic Forces) must adhere to juvenile justice standards, including incorporating the best interests of the child.<sup>50</sup> Investigations into that matter are ongoing.

## VI. Recommendations

99. The Commission reiterates the recommendations made in its previous reports, with particular emphasis on the protection of civilians, including displaced populations, especially in areas in which there are ongoing hostilities.

100. **The Commission recommends that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic:**

(a) **Allow unfettered access for independent humanitarian, protection and human rights organizations in every part of the country;**

(b) **Release all those unlawfully detained, including individuals denied the right to challenge the basis for their detention before a court of law, within a reasonable time;**

(c) **Cease all forms of incommunicado detention or other forms of unlawful deprivation of liberty, including in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance; and disclose the locations of all official and unofficial places of detention, with a full list of the names of all those held in detention;**

(d) **Facilitate the freedom of movements of civilians in retaken areas and prevent arbitrary detention at checkpoints, in particular to allow access to medical care;**

(e) **Review conscription laws to ensure that they adhere to international standards, and apply them in a manner consistent with such standards;**

(f) **Implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations; and recognize its obligations under Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013), reaffirming the need to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence;**

(g) **Ensure that legislation and processes for reclaiming property comply with the principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons and are equally accessible and affordable, in particular for women.**

101. **The Commission recommends that pro-government forces:**

(a) **Cease attacks on civilians and civilian objects, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular against medical facilities, personnel and transport, and comply with their obligation to take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to the civilian population;**

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, "Out of sight, out of mind: deaths in detention in the Syrian Arab Republic".

<sup>50</sup> United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules).

(b) Conduct independent, impartial and credible investigations into incidents in which their forces are implicated and ensure that those responsible are held accountable. The findings of such investigations should be made public;

(c) Cease using unguided weapons and weapons with wide-area effects, including cluster munitions and blast weapons, in densely civilian populated areas.

102. The Commission recommends that non-State armed groups:

(a) Cease all kidnappings, hostage-taking and arbitrarily detaining civilians, in particular individuals expressing dissent;

(b) Effectively ban the recruitment of children and their use in hostilities and ensure access to appropriate rehabilitation services;

(c) Comply with customary international humanitarian law and cease attacks against civilians, including members of religious and ethnic minorities;

(d) Investigate all allegations of violations and crimes committed by their fighters, take urgent measures to discipline or dismiss individuals responsible for such acts, including in cases of looting and property appropriation, and make their findings public;

103. The Commission recommends that the international community and individual Member States:

(a) Take all feasible precautions, when conducting operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, to minimize harm to the civilian population, including by reviewing tactical guidelines related to targeting in the conduct of operations, and conduct independent, impartial and credible investigations into incidents in which their forces are implicated to ensure that those responsible are held accountable. The findings of such investigations should be made public;

(b) Take urgent steps to end violations of international humanitarian law committed by State forces and non-State armed groups receiving any form of support in relation to the armed conflict, in accordance with the obligations of all States under common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and encourage such entities to investigate all allegations of crimes and violations and make their findings public;

(c) Ensure unfettered humanitarian access to all civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic based on the needs of the population, in particular those subsisting in the north-west of the country;

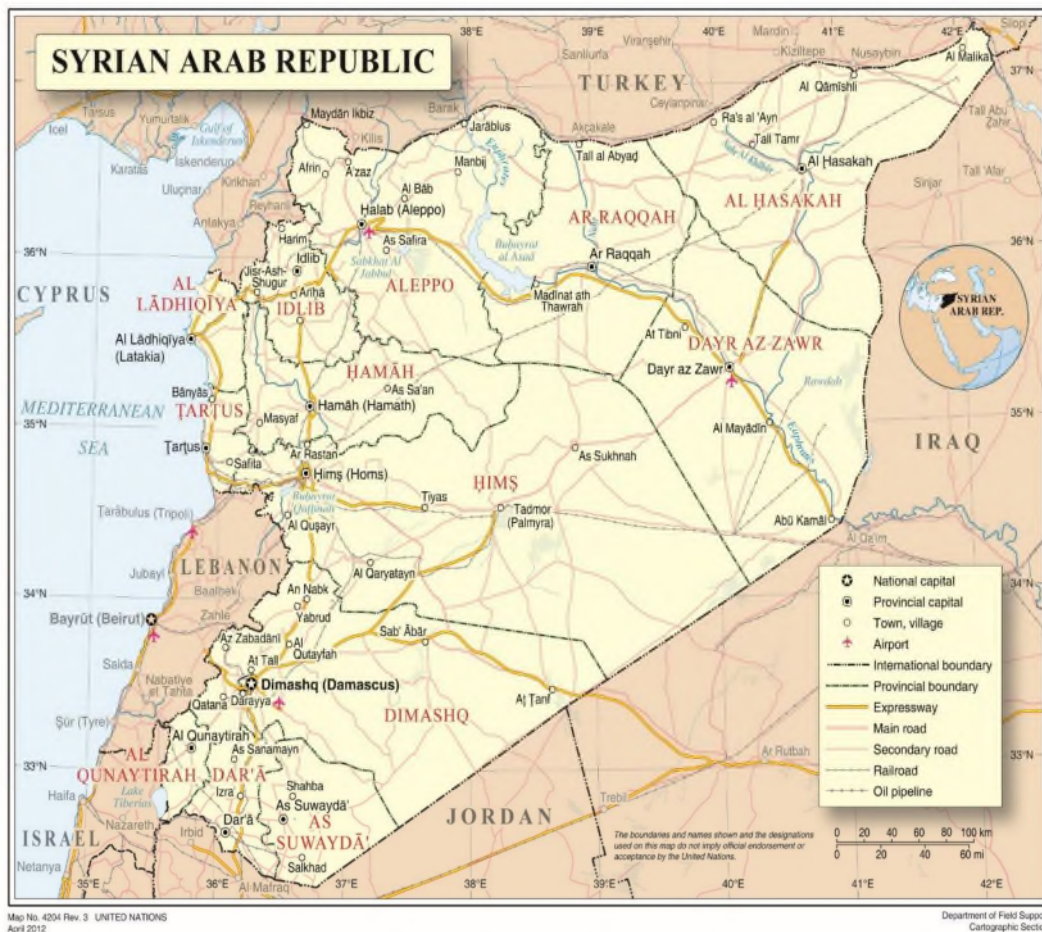
(d) Ensure unfettered access for independent humanitarian, protection and human rights organizations in every part of the country;

(e) Repatriate foreign nationals in the Syrian Arab Republic who are allegedly associated with ISIL, in particular children with their parents, in accordance with the best interests of the child;

(f) Use all available diplomatic means to de-escalate violence in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic, including through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

# Annex I

## Map of the Syrian Arab Republic<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

## Annex II

### Attacks in Idlib and northern Hama

#### 22 July, attack on a market in Marat al-Numan

1. On 22 July, a series of air strikes hit a market and its surroundings in Marat al Numan in southern Idlib, killing at least 43 civilians, including three girls and one boy, and injuring at least 109 others, including 18 children and 15 women. Most of the victims suffered severe injuries, with some being later brought to the Marat al-Numan hospital decapitated, badly burned or without limbs. Family members were forced to identify their loved ones based on birth marks, clothing or other similar features.
2. The market was located on the Marat al Numan main road, in-between residential buildings and around 40 commercial shops. Interviewees recalled that it was a popular market, operating during the entire day, with peak-time known to be between 8:00 a.m. and 1 p.m.
3. In the morning of 22 July, at around 08:00 a.m., flight spotters and early warning observers reported that jet aircraft had departed from Hmemim airbase and were circling in the skies over the Idlib countryside. Minutes later, at least two jet aircraft carried out two consecutive air strikes, dropping at least three munitions in densely populated areas in Marat al Numan. The first two munitions hit a residential house and a prison. At 8:17 a.m., a third munition struck another residential building situated in the southern part of the town's market, known to be busy with visitors in the morning hours, located some 800 meters away from the first location.
4. Eyewitnesses described that approximately 10 to 15 minutes after the attack on the market, civilians and first responders rushed to the scene. Within minutes, however, flight spotters<sup>1</sup> announced that a jet aircraft was coming back to the impacted area. At this point, that jet aircraft launched a "double-tap attack" killing scores of civilians, including at least one member of the rescue team. After the attack, flight spotters reported that jet aircraft, possibly different aircraft, were still circling above the area.
5. Interviewees who visited the impacted market site recalled seeing a large crater on the main street and a number of dismembered bodies scattered nearby. At least two four-storey residential buildings had collapsed and 25 commercial shops were destroyed, whilst the windows of al-Quza'iz school located some 700 meters away from the market, were shattered. A member of the rescue team described hearing the screams of a girl who was trapped under the rubble of one of the destroyed buildings. While the team managed to retrieve the girl and her older brother alive, they also found the dead bodies of their parents. Civilians and first responders spent more than one day retrieving the victims' bodies from under the rubble.
6. Consistent with witnesses testimony, early warning reports and flight spotters reports indicated that at least two Russian fixed wing-aircrafts, departed from Hmemim airbase on 22 July at around 8:03 a.m. and circled near the target area at the same time of the attack. The Commission further obtained flight communication intercepts conducted in the Russian language for the period between 07:40 and 09:59 a.m. The communications confirm that, between 8:17 and 8:35 a.m., two Russian aircraft operated in Idlib airspace, and reported on the progress of on-going aerial attacks in Idlib.
7. Documentary material, including satellite imagery, video footage and photos provided to the Commission show a large crater on the main road of the market. It also shows damage to the roof of one residential building, and that at least one building that has collapsed.
8. Information obtained by the Commission does not indicate that, during the time and day of the attack, the Syrian Air Force engaged in target coordination or carried out attacks in Idlib governorate.

<sup>1</sup> Flight spotters or early warning observers comprise civilians who monitor aircraft flights to provide other civilians with advance warning prior to an air strike



**16 August, Haas compound for displaced civilians**

9. On 16 August, between 7:15 and 7:30 p.m., a series of air strikes hit a compound located two kilometres from Haas in southern Idlib, where displaced civilians from Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Homs, rural Damascus and Dar'a lived. The attack caused substantial damage to areas where civilians often gathered, including children. The attack killed at least 20 people, including eight women, one of whom was pregnant, and six children, and injured 40 others.

10. One interviewee described that, as hostilities in southern Idlib intensified, many civilians were compelled to relocate to the Haas compound as they were unable to afford travel costs to go to the camps along the Turkish border, generally considered to be safer. Fearing attacks, though unable to relocate due to financial constraints, families were left with no other choice but to settle in Haas compound.

11. The Haas compound for displaced civilians was located in a rural area, and was described by witnesses as residential, without checkpoints or armed groups' presence, and situated near agricultural fields. The compound was composed of several residential buildings, where at least 150 families lived. Interviewees described how, during the summer, they would often gather in an open area in the compound in between residential buildings and commercial shops, while children would be playing. The compound also included commercial areas, a non-operational medical centre, a kindergarten, and a makeshift secondary and primary school catering for some 290 pupils, as well as a prayer room.

12. Eyewitnesses recalled that at around 7 p.m. at sunset, before evening prayer, a reconnaissance plane was circling over the Haas compound. As it was not uncommon for encamped residents to witness aircraft, many remained outside in an open area. Minutes later, flight spotters<sup>2</sup> reported that a jet aircraft was in the area and, at approximately 07:25 p.m. a series of air strikes struck the compound killing at least 20 civilians and injuring at least 40 more.

13. Interviewees narrated that a jet aircraft dropped at least two bombs on the compound, primarily impacting the open area to the south-west, located between residential units and commercial shops, where civilians had gathered together. At least two of these buildings, along with the food storage room, were completely destroyed. The windows and doors of the health centre and the school were completely shattered from the blast.

14. Approximately 10 minutes after the attack, civilians and rescuers rushed to the scene and began removing victims from under the rubble. One interviewee described that most of the victims suffered severe burns following the air strikes, and many succumbed to their wounds after being transported to nearby hospitals.

15. Witnesses and flight spotters identified the aircraft as Russian Sukhoi Su-24. Early warning system observation reports indicated that at least two Russian fixed-aircraft departed Hmemim airbase on 16 August, at 7:02 p.m. and were then circling in the area near the Haas compound. Flight communication intercepts – conducted in the Russian language – confirmed that, on 16 August, at the time of the attack, at least two Russian aircrafts operated in Idlib airspace, and reported progress regarding the attacks. Analysis of the intercept data further clarifies that both of the Russian aircraft requested and confirmed having received target coordinates between 7:17 p.m. and 7:44 p.m., with one of the aircraft engaging in an attack at 7:24 p.m.

16. The Commission received no reports indicating the presence of Syrian aircraft during the day and time of the attack on the Haas compound. Consistent with eyewitnesses' statements, video footage, picture material and satellite imagery show a deep, large impact crater in an open area in the Haas compound. The impact and the damage indicate the use of a blast weapon with wide-area effects, such as highly explosive fragmentation bombs. This includes OFAB-250 or KAB-500 bombs, both of which are unguided blast fragmentation munitions, known to be carried by Russian aircraft, and Russian Sukhoi Su-24 in particular.

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<sup>2</sup> Flight spotters or early warning observers comprise civilians who monitor aircraft flights to provide other civilians with advance warning prior to an air strike

17. Given the evidence available, including witness testimonies, video footage, data imagery as well as reports by flight spotters, flight communication intercepts and early warning observation reports, the Commission concluded that a Russian aircraft participated in each incident as described above, and that each of the incidents the Russian Air Force did not direct the attacks at a specific military objective, amounting to the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks in civilian areas

#### **20 November, attack on Qah camp for displaced civilians**

18. In the evening hours on 20 November, pro-Government forces launched a surface-to-surface missile attack consisting of cluster munitions on a camp for displaced civilians located along the Turkish border, where hundreds of families displaced from eastern Ghutah, Dar'a and Homs resided. The camp was situated near Qah village, approximately four kilometres from another major camp in Atma, and was recently expanded to accommodate tens of thousands Syrian women, men and children who had fled the on-ongoing offensive on southern Idlib and northern Hama. Witnesses described hearing one large explosion at 7:19 p.m., followed by a number of smaller bomblets that exploded over the camp, setting numerous tents on fire and damaging the Qah hospital located some 25 meters away. The attack killed 18 civilians and injured at least 40 others, including 17 children.

19. The Commission analysed photographs and video footage of remnants which revealed the use of an OTR-21 missile. The overall size and shape of the blast site was compatible with the OTR-21 "TOCHKA" system, a large tactical ballistic missile system that the Syrian army has in its repertoire.

20. Although the Syrian Arab Republic is not a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the use of cluster munitions in densely populated areas is inherently indiscriminate (given the typically wide dispersal pattern and high dud rate, which continues to endanger civilians years after a cessation of hostilities) and therefore prohibited by customary international humanitarian law. For this reason, their use in densely populated camps for displaced civilians, constitutes the war crime of indiscriminate attacks in a civilian populated area.

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# Exhibit 57



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-fifth session

14 September–2 October 2020

Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

## **Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic\* \*\***

### *Summary*

In the present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to its resolution 43/28, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic presents its findings based on investigations conducted from 11 January 2020 to 1 July 2020.

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\* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

\*\* The annexes to the present report are circulated as received, in the language of submission only.



## I. Mandate and methodology

1. Pursuant to its established methodology, which is based on standard practices of commissions of inquiry and human rights investigations, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic<sup>1</sup> relied primarily on 538 interviews, conducted in person in the region as well as from Geneva, in producing the present report.<sup>2</sup> Official documents, reports, photographs, videos and satellite imagery were collected and analysed from multiple sources, including following the Commission's call for submissions.<sup>3</sup> The standard of proof was considered met when the Commission had reasonable grounds to believe that incidents had occurred as described, and, where possible, that violations had been committed by the warring party identified.

2. The Commission's investigations remain curtailed by the denial of access to the country and protection concerns in relation to interviewees. In all cases, the Commission remained guided by the principle of "do no harm".

3. The Commission thanks all who provided information, in particular victims and witnesses.

## II. Political and military developments

4. Notwithstanding a relative reduction in large-scale hostilities in recent months due to general conflict dynamics and the impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), there were regular spikes in violence and continuous violations of human rights across the Syrian Arab Republic. Idlib Governorate and surrounding areas remained the epicentre of confrontation<sup>4</sup> between pro-government forces<sup>5</sup> and opposition armed groups during the first half of 2020. While the ceasefire starting on 5 March offered respite, sporadic fighting between pro-government forces and terrorist groups<sup>6</sup> resumed in May and intensified in June, including around the Ghab plain and Jabal al-Zawiya, in the southern countryside of Idlib Governorate.

5. In the north-east of the country, while joint Turkish-Russian military patrols resumed<sup>7</sup> along the Syrian-Turkish border, periodic clashes between the Kurdish People's Protection Units, the Syrian National Army<sup>8</sup> and Turkish military forces continued. Car bomb attacks, such as the one on 9 January in Ra's al-Ayn that killed four Turkish soldiers, or the market attack in Afrin on 28 April that caused over 100 casualties (see para. 42 below), further destabilized the region. The security situation also deteriorated in Dayr al-Zawr, where the Syrian Democratic Forces<sup>9</sup> increased raids and arrests of civilians with alleged links to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Between March and May, two major riots in the Syrian Democratic Forces-run Ghweran and Hasakah prisons erupted, allowing the escape of several prisoners. In June, reports of fighting between Turkish-

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<sup>1</sup> The commissioners are Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Chair), Karen Koning AbuZayd and Hanny Megally.

<sup>2</sup> In view of the travel limitations related to COVID-19, the majority of the interviews were undertaken remotely.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/coisyrria](http://www.ohchr.org/coisyrria).

<sup>4</sup> See A/HRC/44/61.

<sup>5</sup> See A/HRC/31/68, footnote 3.

<sup>6</sup> The Commission continues to regard Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, Hurras al-Din and other Al-Qaida-aligned groups as terrorist entities, as designated by the Security Council pursuant to its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), 2170 (2014) and 2253 (2015).

<sup>7</sup> Joint patrols temporarily halted at the height of the Government's campaign in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic in January and February 2020.

<sup>8</sup> A/HRC/43/57, footnote 3.

<sup>9</sup> A/HRC/31/68, para. 11. The People's Protection Units (Kurdish People's Protection Units/Women's Protection Units) operate under the effective command and control of the Syrian Democratic Forces; see <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2019/07/syrian-democratic-forces-sign-action-plan-to-end-and-prevent-the-recruitment-and-use-of-children/>.

backed groups and the Syrian Democratic Forces in the Al-Bab area, infighting between Syrian National Army groups in Ra's al-Ayn, and ISIL attacks against Syrian Arab Army units in the Dayr al-Zawr countryside, were received.

6. ISIL remained active in central areas of the Syrian Arab Republic. In January and February, the terrorist group launched attacks on Syrian Arab Army positions in the Sukhnah region in Homs Governorate. The attacks prompted the Government to increase security measures in eastern Homs Governorate, and by mid-April, the Government had regained control of fuel refineries in the Governorate. Nonetheless, attacks by ISIL cells against Syrian Arab Army positions in the Badiya Al-Sham region and around Resafa continued.

7. In the south of the country, unrest intensified. In Suwayda', protests erupted in January, and continued throughout the first six months of 2020, due to price inflation, corruption and deteriorating living standards. In Dar'a, tensions between local opposition fighters and government forces, as well as civilians, escalated. In mid-March, artillery shelling by the Syrian Arab Army targeted the southerly Dar'a Governorate, triggering retaliatory attacks by local militants near Nawa. The situation remained volatile in May and June following clashes, targeted killings, and the killing of nine Syrian police officers in Muzayrib. In response to these incidents, the Syrian Arab Army deployed additional troops to the region. Throughout the reporting period, Israeli airstrikes were directed at a broad range of targets across the Syrian Arab Republic, including Iranian and Iranian-backed actors.

8. At the political level, the President, Bashar al-Assad, issued a legislative decree granting pardons for a narrow ambit of crimes committed before 22 March 2020, and proposed a limited amnesty for military deserters. The Government announced that parliamentary elections in government-controlled areas would be held in April, which were subsequently postponed until 19 July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On 1 June, the President swore in new governors for the Homs, Qunaytirah, Dar'a and Hasakah Governorates.

9. During the reporting period, the country's economic crisis accelerated. On 18 January, two legislative decrees were issued,<sup>10</sup> which prohibited the use of foreign currencies as payment for commercial transactions and set out tighter penalties for disseminating, what the Government viewed to be, misinformation that caused currency depreciation. The currency crisis, compounded by the global pandemic, led to rapidly rising food prices, food insecurity and growing levels of poverty.<sup>11</sup> In response, the Syrian authorities stepped up measures to clamp down on currency speculators and forced the closure of exchange offices. Despite these measures, the Syrian pound depreciated further, prompting the President to replace the trade minister on 11 May and the Prime Minister on 11 June. The following week, in June, the United States of America brought the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act<sup>12</sup> into force, imposing new sanctions on officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and on military officials and business associates.

10. Internationally, diplomatic efforts to seek a political solution to the conflict continued. In January, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir Pedersen, travelled to Moscow and Damascus where he met with senior Russian and Syrian officials to discuss the Syrian peace process. During the period under review, the Security Council held six meetings on the humanitarian situation and the political process. Moreover, on 11 July, after weeks of discussions, on its fourth attempt, the Security Council authorized cross-border humanitarian aid from Turkey into the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic for one year, limiting the entry of United Nations cross-border aid to only the Bab al-Hawa crossing in Idlib Governorate. Meanwhile, the Government and opposition representatives

<sup>10</sup> Nos. 3/2020 and 4/2020.

<sup>11</sup> The number of Syrians who are food-insecure is now 9.3 million, with an increase of 1.4 million in 2020. See [www.wfp.org/news/more-syrians-ever-grip-hunger-and-poverty](http://www.wfp.org/news/more-syrians-ever-grip-hunger-and-poverty).

<sup>12</sup> See A/HRC/43/57.

agreed to reconvene for the third round of talks of the small body of the Constitutional Committee<sup>13</sup> in Geneva as soon as the pandemic situation allowed.

11. The Secretary-General of the United Nations also submitted to the Security Council a summary<sup>14</sup> of the report of the United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry into certain incidents that had occurred in north-west Syria since 17 September 2018. The Board analysed seven attacks on hospitals, schools, and camps for internally displaced persons and offered conclusions relating to six of the sites. Separately, on 8 April, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons released the findings of the first report of its investigation and identification team<sup>15</sup> on the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force in Ltamenah. Additionally, in April, the first trial in the world on State torture in the Syrian Arab Republic began in Koblenz, Germany.

12. On 22 March, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic confirmed the first COVID-19 case. In response, authorities announced a host of measures, including the temporary closure of businesses, a ban on movement between governorates, a curfew and the creation of medical emergency centres. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary-General issued an appeal for a nationwide ceasefire and encouraged G-20 members to waive sanctions imposed on countries in order to ensure access to food, essential health supplies and COVID-19 medical support.<sup>16</sup> The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria reiterated this message and also called upon all parties to carry out unilateral releases of detainees and abductees.<sup>17</sup> In parallel, the Government intensified calls for the lifting of coercive unilateral measures, indicating that they constituted a challenge in fighting the pandemic.<sup>18</sup> The Syrian Democratic Forces-linked autonomous administration in north-east Syria (hereinafter referred to as the self-administration) closed all crossings into government-held areas, banned movement between towns, imposed a curfew and set up a specialized hospital.

### III. Government-held areas

“Every month I would go to look... They would reply that they had no news about him or even his name in their records. This continued for one year. I then gave up any hope.”

- Father of a disappeared person, Rif Damascus, February 2020

13. In Dar’a and Suwayda’, the security situation significantly deteriorated, with a number of incidents of armed violence between the multitude of armed actors vying for control. In Damascus, around Rif Damascus, Suwayda’ and Dar’a, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture remained pervasive. The price of food and basic goods significantly increased in government-held areas, with the devaluation of the Syrian pound exacerbating an already difficult living situation. At the same time, the Government continued to prevent thousands of individuals from returning to their homes in areas that had been retaken in the preceding five years. In such areas, the denial of freedom of movement also continued to affect people’s ability to access health care, education and other vital services, and to exercise basic rights.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/A8CE345167D1CD0FC12584A9006285A9?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/A8CE345167D1CD0FC12584A9006285A9?OpenDocument).

<sup>14</sup> See [www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/NWS\\_BOI\\_Summary\\_06\\_April\\_2020.pdf](http://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/NWS_BOI_Summary_06_April_2020.pdf). Document S/1867/2020.

<sup>16</sup> See [www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-03-24/note-correspondents-letter-the-secretary-general-g-20-members](http://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-03-24/note-correspondents-letter-the-secretary-general-g-20-members).

<sup>17</sup> See [www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/D6B51AE793261B7BC12585AE00587A85?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/D6B51AE793261B7BC12585AE00587A85?OpenDocument).

<sup>18</sup> See S/2020/471.

## A. Conduct of hostilities

14. In Dar'a and Suwayda' Governorates, armed clashes resulted in civilian casualties. For example, on 1 March, the 4th Division and 9th Division of the Syrian Arab Army launched a ground attack on the town of Sanamayn in Dar'a Governorate. The offensive followed a series of arrests and killings by government and allied forces<sup>19</sup> and reprisals by armed groups who took Syrian Arab Army troops hostage. At least three civilians died due to indiscriminate shelling and rocket attacks on Sanamayn on 1 March by government forces, including an imam who was killed by rocket fire while performing the call to prayer and two other men who were killed by indirect fire, one in his home and one while visiting a relative. A number of injured persons were transferred to the military hospital in Sanamayn. The Commission also received reports of the summary execution of an 18-year-old male by members of the Criminal Security Department, and of government and allied forces deliberately destroying houses after having retaken the town. Clashes ended following the interposition of the Fifth Assault Corps, which negotiated the evacuation of members of armed groups in exchange for the release of Syrian Arab Army troops.

15. On 18 March, in Jallayn, Dar'a Governorate, indiscriminate mortar and rocket attacks by the Syrian Arab Army started at around 2 p.m., killing six civilians, including two children, and injuring one civilian. The shelling was described as originating from the bases of the 5th Division and the 175th Artillery Regiment in Izra', as well as the military base located in the Municipal Stadium in the city of Dar'a. The incident followed tensions due to the establishment of checkpoints around Jallayn. In response to the checkpoints, members of the Central Negotiation Committee<sup>20</sup> attempted to approach Syrian Arab Army troops, reportedly to enter into discussions. When approaching the checkpoint, two of the Committee members were killed and one was injured. Subsequently, the checkpoint was attacked and Syrian Arab Army soldiers were killed. Following this attack, government forces shelled the town.

16. In late March, an incursion by the Fifth Assault Corps in Al-Qurayya, Suwayda' Governorate, resulted in the killing of 10 civilians during exchanges of small arms fire. The incident followed a spate of kidnappings and retaliatory acts in the area that involved the Fifth Assault Corps, elements of the local armed groups affiliated to Yahya Raed Najm,<sup>21</sup> and civilians. The catalyst was the abduction of two cattle sellers from Busra al-Sham in Suwayda' Governorate on 26 March. The next day, on 27 March, Druze villagers, who were armed but, according to multiple interviewees, not members of armed groups, intervened, allegedly to prevent further abductions. Eight villagers from Al-Qurayya were killed in exchanges of fire, and six were kidnapped. Days later, following the intervention of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the bodies of the six villagers were returned to their families; they had allegedly been executed by the Fifth Assault Corps.

17. Reports of targeted killings of individuals increased<sup>22</sup> across Dar'a and Suwayda' Governorates during the reporting period, in what appeared to be retaliatory acts by numerous local armed actors. Reportedly, there were at least 53 such killings across Dar'a between January and June targeting medical professionals, political actors with both pro- and anti-government stances, judges, members of armed groups who had "reconciled" their status, and members of the security apparatus. In nearly all documented cases, the killings were carried out by men on motorcycles using small arms, rendering identification of the perpetrator difficult. For example, on 27 May, at around 8 p.m., an apparent ambush between Muzayrib and Tafas targeted Dar'a Central Committee members and their guard,

<sup>19</sup> "Government and allied forces" denotes entities operating in the southern part of the Syrian Arab Republic – among others, the Syrian Arab Army, the Syrian intelligence apparatus, popular committees and the Fifth Assault Corps.

<sup>20</sup> The Committee comprises former armed group members, civilian activists, sheikhs and jurists, and acts as an intermediary between civilians, the Government and the Russian Federation.

<sup>21</sup> The leader of a local armed group.

<sup>22</sup> Although COVID-19 movement restrictions led to a decrease, the first half of 2020 nevertheless saw an increase in the number of reported targeted killings (see A/HRC/45/24/Add.6, paras. 8–10, for a definition) in comparison to previous years.



resulting in the killing of four persons (a member of the Committee and three bodyguards), and injury to two due to small arms fire.

18. The Commission investigated at least five cases where civilians had been killed. In some incidents, doctors who had been active in treating fighters appeared to be specifically targeted as they left their clinics. Based on the information gathered from interviewees, the Commission has no evidence that the competent authority launched investigations into these incidents.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Findings*

19. Regarding the attacks on 1 and 18 March in Sanamayn and Jallayn respectively, the Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that in each incident, government and allied forces did not direct the attacks at a specific military objective, which may amount to the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in death or injury to civilians.

## **B. Violations outside the context of the conduct of hostilities**

### *Arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture, sexual violence and death in detention*

20. Risks of reprisals and other protection concerns continued to affect the Commission's ability to investigate detention-related human rights violations.<sup>24</sup> The cases below are illustrative of the ongoing patterns of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture and death in detention.<sup>25</sup>

21. Almost all cases of arbitrary arrest and detention that were investigated in the reporting period resulted in enforced disappearance, with at least 34 men, one woman and 10 children disappeared. These took place in Dar'a, Homs, Qunaytirah, Rif Damascus and Suwayda' Governorates, involving government security forces, including the Military Intelligence Directorate and the Military Police.

22. Those subjected to enforced disappearance included defectors as well as current and former humanitarian workers, activists and other civilians, including those who had undergone so-called "reconciliation" processes in Dar'a Governorate.

23. Demonstrating the longevity of this practice and its harrowing impact on families, the Commission, during the reporting period, documented cases of individuals still missing at the time of writing, up to eight years after being disappeared by the Government.<sup>26</sup>

24. Most recently in the city of Suwayda', at least 15 men were detained between 9 and 16 June following their participation in peaceful protests to demand better living conditions. The men were allegedly detained at the Military Police branch in Suwayda' and neither lawyers nor family members were permitted to make contact. At the time of writing, in July, the Commission received information that the protesters had been released following pressure from local actors.

25. Moreover, the Commission documented 13 accounts of torture of persons held in detention by the Syrian authorities,<sup>27</sup> with some having experienced torture over lengthy periods, even beyond seven years. Locations where torture took place included the Criminal Security Department branch in Aleppo, Air Force Intelligence Directorate branches in

<sup>23</sup> On 30 June, the Commission requested information from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding its response to the killing of civilians, but no reply was received.

<sup>24</sup> This section of the report represents only a small anonymized representation of information collected by the Commission in the reporting period.

<sup>25</sup> See A/HRC/31/CRP.1, available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx).

<sup>26</sup> The Commission is of the view that enforced disappearance as a violation of international law continues as long as families do not know the victim's fate and whereabouts; see art. 17 (1) of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

<sup>27</sup> Some were released prior to 10 January 2020.

Abasin, Harasta and Mazzah and the headquarters in Damascus, the Military Police branch in Qaboun, State Security Branch 285, the Political Security Directorate branch in Tartus Central Prison and Air Force Intelligence Branch 227, and, most brutally, at Saydnaya Prison in Rif Damascus. In line with previous patterns,<sup>28</sup> the detainees were beaten with sticks and cables, bound around tyres, hung from ceilings and walls and lashed. One detainee reported being beaten on his genitals. Interviewees also reported witnessing female detainees being sexually assaulted by staff<sup>29</sup> at a number of informal detention sites, including Branch 227, while men were reported to have been sexually abused in Saydnaya Prison.<sup>30</sup>

26. Inhumane conditions were described across both official and informal detention centres. One interviewee detailed how over a dozen people had been held in a 2 x 1 metre cell for over two weeks in Air Force Intelligence Branch 227. Another detainee in Saydnaya Prison had been placed in solitary confinement in a 1.5 x 1 metre cell, with no blanket or floor mat, for three months. One interviewee detailed how water had been cut off from their cell, where the toilets were placed, for 23 days, resulting in there being faeces, urine and vomit around the room. Typical food in a 24-hour period included one loaf of bread with four olives, and detainees described eating the olive pits in order to get extra nutrition.

27. Previous patterns of death in detention<sup>31</sup> continued, with reports of at least 19 cases during the reporting period.<sup>32</sup> One man in Dar'a was allegedly accused of treason in late 2018 and his family was given his death certificate in February 2020. Another interviewee, who tried to visit her 17-year-old son in Saydnaya Prison in December 2019, was informed that he had died and she should approach Tishrin Military Hospital in Damascus, however his body was not at the facility. This was the pattern in the majority of cases, with no body being provided to families and only verbal information provided about the death, or cause of death. In a small number of cases, individuals' bodies were provided to families following deaths in State custody. The family members of one detainee who had been arrested in Damascus in March 2020 were informed that they should collect the body, following the detainee's alleged death from a heart attack, from Tishrin Military Hospital in Damascus in May. The body exhibited injuries and signs of torture.

28. The Commission continues to receive information about limited numbers of persons being released from detention, with 49 persons (including one woman and two children) reportedly released in Dar'a in the reporting period. The Commission also documented a small number of releases elsewhere in the country.

#### *Economic and social rights*

29. Previously reported concerns regarding access to water, electricity and fuel<sup>33</sup> were aggravated by the rapidly deepening economic and currency crisis, and were further compounded by the global pandemic and tightening sanctions (see para. 9 above). This, in turn, risked refuelling the root causes of the conflict, which included deepening poverty and inequalities.

30. Areas formerly under the control of armed groups were particularly affected, due to the continued denial of freedom of movement of people and goods. Checkpoints, in addition to aggravating tensions with communities due to their links with enforced

<sup>28</sup> See A/HRC/31/CRP.1 and [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward\\_DetentionInSyria.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward_DetentionInSyria.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> As previously documented; see A/HRC/37/CRP.3, available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/ICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/ICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx).

<sup>30</sup> See A/HRC/37/CRP.3, paras. 27–50.

<sup>31</sup> See A/HRC/31/CRP.1, para. 46; and [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward\\_DetentionInSyria.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward_DetentionInSyria.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> This figure represents the number that has been reported to families of detainees by authorities, however no confirmation of death can be ascertained given the frequent lack of bodies and of death certificates.

<sup>33</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 67.

disappearance and arbitrary detention, facilitated corruption among the security services and armed actors. For example, in the vicinity of Madaya, Rif Damascus, the 4th Division of the Syrian Arab Army utilized checkpoints to restrict the entry and exit of people and goods into the area, which resulted in an increased cost of living. This was echoed in eastern Ghutah, where the 4th Division confiscated items or required civilians to pay bribes. In Hama Governorate, between Muhradah and Suqaylibiyah, checkpoints run by government intelligence and security branches, as well as by the 4th Division, were used to control crop production and extort money from the civilian population. Checkpoints in Rif Damascus and Dar'a also restricted the access of the population to health care and other basic services, as civilians feared arbitrary arrest, detention and conscription.<sup>34</sup> The scarcity of essential services was compounded by the lack of humanitarian access in these areas, due to governmental restrictions on registration of NGOs, as well as the harassment of former and current aid workers by the security services.

31. Access to housing, land and property rights continued to be a significant obstacle for many in the Syrian Arab Republic, particularly in formerly besieged areas. Civilians reported that they were still being prevented from returning to their often-habitable houses in Qaboun, Jawbar, Yarmouk camp and parts of Darayya. Checkpoints control the entry and exit of all civilians to these areas, some of which were retaken by government forces in 2016. While broad reconstruction projects in areas such as Qaboun were announced with scant detail in 2018, few measures have been taken to implement such projects, and the subsequent denial of freedom of movement continues to result in civilians being denied their property rights. In areas such as Yarmouk camp in Rif Damascus, no official plans have been announced regarding redevelopment for the areas, yet the vast majority of people are still prevented from visiting or living in their homes. This continues to compound an already complex legal situation for thousands of Palestinians who, prior to the conflict, had limited property rights.<sup>35</sup>

32. The impact of counter-terrorism frameworks on the ability to exercise property rights continued to be a concern.<sup>36</sup> The Commission received reports that persons with so-called "security marks" had had their assets temporarily seized under national decree No. 66 of 2012.<sup>37</sup> Various branches of the security intelligence services continued to use unclear legal bases to deny civilians the ability to exercise their property rights. For example, "security marks" were often applied to whole extended families and prevented not only return to their property, but also sale and inheritance, as well as a plethora of civil, social, economic and cultural rights. Moreover, such a mark can also affect an individual's ability to rent a property, as landlords may not issue a formal lease agreement, which in turn reduces the tenant's legal protection. In this regard, the Commission notes that previously in the conflict, as well as during the past two years, thousands of properties belonging to private persons have been seized and their assets frozen, including under the State's counter-terrorism legislation.

#### *Rukban camp*

33. Rukban camp continued to host approximately 10,000 internally displaced persons in dire conditions, with deteriorating access to health care, education and food. Interviewees reported that prices of basic goods, such as flour and sugar, were more than twice as high as

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., para. 73.

<sup>35</sup> In the Syrian Arab Republic, married Palestinian refugees have the right to own a single property. Other property deeds may only be registered by a notary, not at the cadastral registry department. This can substantially reduce the legal protection in cases of expropriation or destruction. Moreover, the land on which Yarmouk camp stands is owned by the General Authority for Palestinian Arab Refugees, a Syrian entity, meaning that it is an "unofficial" camp. Most residents' ownership contracts were registered only with a notary, and, reportedly, many documents stored at the Yarmouk court building were damaged during shelling in early 2013.

<sup>36</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 75.

<sup>37</sup> Security marks (*ishara amnya*) is a colloquial term and is used interchangeably with security clearance (*mawafaqa amnya*) to connote those flagged by the various intelligence branches as persons of interest. The legal basis used by the security services to restrict rights of individuals under this framework is seldom clear.

in other parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. Moreover, schooling, and a medical facility located in Jordan, closed on 29 March, as preventative measures against COVID-19.

34. The Commission has previously noted with concern<sup>38</sup> that it has received reports that over 100 individuals evacuated from Rukban camp were detained. In the period under review, the Commission received first-hand accounts that men had been systematically deprived of their liberty. In one example, an interviewee noted that he had arrived at a school in Homs and spent one night with his family, who were then permitted to leave. Among the remaining men, a large number had been arrested and allegedly taken to Military Security in Dar'a or to Adra Prison in Damascus. Those detained included men in their seventies, a man with disabilities, numerous municipality workers and medical professionals. Following multiple interrogations, the interviewee had been released after 47 days, after having signed three documents that he was not permitted to read.

#### *Findings*

35. In light of new as well as ongoing reported cases of enforced disappearance, in the reporting period, as well as numerous cases of torture, sexual violence and death in custody by government forces across the Syrian Arab Republic, as detailed above, the Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that the Government of Syria, in pursuance of a continued State policy, has continued to perpetrate the crimes against humanity of enforced disappearance, murder, torture, sexual violence and imprisonment.<sup>39</sup> In certain cases, these acts may also constitute war crimes.

36. In addition, by imposing arbitrary restrictions on movements and unlawfully depriving individuals of their property rights in previously besieged areas, government forces may have again committed the war crime of collective punishment in areas of Rif Damascus.<sup>40</sup>

## **IV. Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions**

37. During the period under review, civilians residing in the Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions of Aleppo and Hasakah Governorates witnessed an onslaught of violations perpetrated by members of the Syrian National Army as well as shelling and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices.

### **A. Conduct of hostilities**

38. Between January and April, civilians residing in the Afrin region of Aleppo suffered a barrage of shelling and car bomb explosions, which killed and injured scores of inhabitants and damaged civilian infrastructure, including markets and homes.<sup>41</sup>

39. On 20 January, at around 12.30 p.m., shelling, reportedly from Tall Rif'at, destroyed a house in Al-Barid neighbourhood, located near both a hospital and a school in the city of Afrin. The attack killed a pregnant woman and her toddler son inside their home. Though the deceased mother delivered her baby girl posthumously, the baby did not survive. Two boys from the same family, aged 4 and 12 years, were also injured in the attack. The Commission did not receive information suggesting that a military objective was located nearby.

40. Similarly, at around 1 p.m. on 18 March, at least five rockets, reportedly fired from nearby Tall Rif'at and surrounding areas,<sup>42</sup> struck a residential area, impacting both a house

<sup>38</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 87.

<sup>39</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward\\_DetentionInSyria.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward_DetentionInSyria.pdf), para. 12.

<sup>40</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 80. See also Special Court for Sierra Leone, *Prosecutor v. Fofana and Kondewa*, case No. SCSL-04-14-A.

<sup>41</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25873&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25873&LangID=E); and previous reports by the Commission on similar incidents in Afrin, for example A/HRC/42/51, para. 58.

and a market in the city of Afrin, about 150 metres from a Syrian National Army site. Three men and two children were killed, and another seven men were injured. A pharmacy and several commercial shops were damaged. Information obtained by the Commission indicates the use of 122 mm rockets fired from a BM-21 “Grad” multiple-barrel rocket launcher system.

41. The previous month, on 10 February, at approximately 7 p.m., a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was detonated on Rajo Street in central Afrin, killing 6 civilians and injuring 11 others.

42. Also on Rajo Street, in a particularly grave attack, at least 41 civilians were killed, including 11 children,<sup>43</sup> and 61 others were wounded, when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device on a truck was detonated in a crowded market on 28 April. Imagery and video footage analysed by the Commission indicates possible use of an ammonium nitrate fuel oil explosive substance, detonated from inside the truck, likely mixed with additives thus optimizing the incendiary effects emanating from the explosion.

43. Witnesses described the market area as civilian in nature, located some 500 metres from the building of the Turkish governor (*wali*), and known to be busy between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Information obtained by the Commission suggests that Syrian National Army brigades, including Sultan Murad, Ahrar Sharqiya and Jabhat Shamiya, were headquartered on Rajo Street at the time of the attack.

44. Several civilian houses adjacent to the market, and vehicles parked nearby, were also destroyed, as were numerous shops. Interviewees described seeing large-scale destruction, burning cars and charred bodies scattered along Rajo Street. One doctor who treated victims recalled that many had suffered second-degree burns. The DNA samples of at least 25 unidentifiable bodies were sent by the Afrin central hospital, which is administrated by the Turkish health ministry,<sup>44</sup> to Turkey for analysis. Following the attacks, standard emergency response and police functions were carried out by the Syrian National Army Military Police, sometimes alongside Turkish officials, who arrived at the scene shortly after the attacks and subsequently inspected, secured and sealed off the areas and collected witness testimonies. Victims requiring specialized medical assistance were transported to hospitals in Turkey.<sup>45</sup>

### *Findings*

45. With regard to the use of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices in the city of Afrin (see paras. 41–44 above), no party has claimed responsibility for the two attacks. Moreover, while there is insufficient information<sup>46</sup> to identify the perpetrator(s) of the two shelling and rocket attacks (see paras. 39–40 above), there are significant indications to conclude that all four of these attacks launched on and in the city of Afrin were carried out by armed group factions or fighters, as opposed to members of State forces. The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that these four attacks may amount to the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in death or injury to civilians. Investigations are ongoing.

## **B. Violations outside of the context of hostilities**

46. During the period under review, the Commission corroborated repeated patterns of systematic looting and property appropriation<sup>47</sup> as well as widespread arbitrary deprivation

<sup>42</sup> A/HRC/42/51, para. 56.

<sup>43</sup> See [www.unicef.org/press-releases/eleven-children-reported-killed-attack-crowded-market-afrin-northern-syria](http://www.unicef.org/press-releases/eleven-children-reported-killed-attack-crowded-market-afrin-northern-syria).

<sup>44</sup> See the ministry’s 2019 annual report at [www.sp.gov.tr/upload/xSPRaport/files/nmy6C+36626\\_tc-saglik-bakanligi-faaliyet-raporu-2019pdf.pdf](http://www.sp.gov.tr/upload/xSPRaport/files/nmy6C+36626_tc-saglik-bakanligi-faaliyet-raporu-2019pdf.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> The Commission sent requests for information about these incidents to several Member States, as well as to other entities, dated 30 June and 2 July. By the submission deadline of 30 July, one Member State and two other parties had responded.

<sup>47</sup> A/HRC/43/57, paras. 39–42; and A/HRC/42/51, paras. 55–58.

of liberty<sup>48</sup> perpetrated by various Syrian National Army brigades in the Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions.<sup>49</sup> After civilian property was looted, Syrian National Army fighters and their families occupied houses after civilians had fled,<sup>50</sup> or ultimately coerced residents, primarily of Kurdish origin, to flee their homes, through threats, extortion, murder, abduction, torture and detention. The Commission notes that, during the reporting period, a member of Brigade 123 (the Ahrar Al-Sharqiyah Brigade) was sentenced by a military court of the "Syrian interim government" – which is affiliated to the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces – for the deliberate killing of Hevrin Khalaf and others in October 2019.<sup>51</sup> The "Syrian interim government" also indicated that, in May, it had issued a permanent order on the prohibition of child recruitment.

*Looting and property appropriation*

47. Throughout the Afrin region, multiple accounts indicate that the property of Kurdish owners was looted and appropriated by Syrian National Army members in a coordinated manner. For example, in September 2019, civilians in the Shaykh al-Hadid subdistrict (of the Afrin region) described how members of Division 14, Brigade 142 (the Suleiman Shah Brigade) of the Syrian National Army had gone from door to door instructing Kurdish families with fewer than three members to vacate their houses to accommodate individuals arriving from outside of Afrin. Others had been forced by Syrian National Army members to pay a "tax" on agricultural harvests or a set amount of rent as a precondition for remaining in the homes they owned. Families recalled having been extorted for between LS 10,000 and LS 25,000, depending on their means and ability to pay.

48. Also in Afrin, in December 2019, a senior member of another Syrian National Army brigade went from door to door in a large residential building, requesting proof of ownership only from the Kurdish inhabitants. One resident, unable to provide such documentation, was forced to appear at the brigade's security office, where he was verbally abused and told "if it were up to me, I would kill every Kurd from 1 to 80 years old". He was also threatened with detention. Fearing for his family's safety, the man fled shortly thereafter. One woman who approached Turkish officials in Sheikh Hadid district to complain about the appropriation of her home was told to speak with the Suleiman Shah Brigade, to whom authority had apparently been delegated by Turkey to deal with such cases.

49. Similarly to in Afrin, the civilian properties of Kurdish owners in the Ra's al-Ayn region who had fled battles during Operation Peace Spring<sup>52</sup> in October 2019 were also appropriated by Syrian National Army forces. Members of Division 22 (the Hamza Brigade) of the Syrian National Army engaged in widespread and organized looting and property appropriation in Ra's al-Ayn, including by marking house walls with the names of individual brigades. Civilians narrated consistent accounts to the Commission conveying their fears about remaining and their inability to return to their homes, which had been looted and occupied by the brigades or their families in the immediate aftermath of hostilities. On two occasions, civilians recalled being instructed not to return by Syrian National Army commanders and fighters.

50. Looted household items were transported and sold through a coordinated process, which may indicate a premeditated policy implemented by several brigades. Such items were often moved freely through Syrian National Army-staffed checkpoints by both Syrian National Army fighters and senior-ranking members and were stored in ad hoc locations such as warehouses, or sold at open markets. In one such case in March, a returnee to Tel al-Arisha village found his house looted, including its windows, doors and generators, which had also happened to numerous other houses on the same street. A senior member of Division 24 (the Sultan Murad Brigade) of the Syrian National Army sold back to him his

<sup>48</sup> A/HRC/43/57, paras. 39–40.

<sup>49</sup> The Commission sent related information requests to Turkey and to the Syrian National Army, on 30 June and 2 July respectively.

<sup>50</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 48.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., para. 58.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

own household goods from a warehouse that was being used as a storage point for looted goods. He fled immediately thereafter.

51. In another case, the home of a Kurdish family was appropriated by members of Division 22 (the Hamza Brigade) and later converted into an institute for Qur'anic studies run by a Turkish NGO, the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief. On 22 June, its official opening was inaugurated by the governor of Şanlıurfa (Turkey). Reports of the use of civilian houses for military purposes by Turkish ground forces in Dawoudiya village have also been received. The residents of Dawoudiya have been prevented from returning to their homes, some of which were destroyed between April and June, while other houses have been appropriated for military purposes by Turkish armed forces (see annex II).

*Unlawful deprivation of liberty, torture and ill-treatment*

52. As their properties were systematically looted and appropriated by Syrian National Army forces, civilians approached senior Syrian National Army members in the Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions to lodge complaints. In response, many found themselves threatened, extorted or detained by Syrian National Army members, while others were abducted and forced to pay ransom directly to Syrian National Army senior members for their release. The Commission remains concerned by the prevalent and recurrent use of hostage-taking by Syrian National Army forces.

53. Regarding incidents of detention, civilians in both Ra's al-Ayn and Afrin were most often detained by Syrian National Army members for their alleged past links to the self-administration, and were deprived of access to legal counsel, and on some occasions, interrogated by Turkish officials with the assistance of interpreters prior to or while in detention.<sup>53</sup> In most cases documented by the Commission, civilians were detained in the Afrin central prison or in an underground unit of the Syrian National Army Military Police headquarters located in the building of a former commercial high school in Afrin. The unit is comprised of five larger cells and four solitary confinement cells. Others were taken to unknown detention sites.

54. In detention, civilians – primarily of Kurdish origin – were beaten, tortured, denied food or water, and interrogated about their faith and ethnicity. One boy described to the Commission how he had been detained by the Syrian National Army Military Police in the city of Afrin in mid-2019, and held for five months in the Syrian National Army headquarters, before being transferred to the Afrin central prison and released in March 2020. While detained, both Syrian National Army members and Turkish-speaking officials dressed in military fatigues were present. The boy was handcuffed and hung from a ceiling. He was then blindfolded and repeatedly beaten with plastic tubes. The boy described how the officers interrogated him about his alleged links to the self-administration. In another case, two women were detained by the Syrian National Army in November 2019, at a checkpoint operated jointly with Turkish officials in the Ra's al-Ayn region, when returning to their homes. One of the victims described how, during interrogation, she had been threatened with rape and beaten on the head by Syrian National Army members, in the presence of Turkish officials. The Commission also received information on joint arrest operations launched by the Syrian National Army Military Police and Turkish police forces in Afrin, including criminal forensic units.

55. Syrian National Army forces also held civilians in undisclosed detention sites. For example, on 29 May, video footage widely circulated in the media showed members of Division 22 (the Hamza Brigade) rushing out from an undisclosed detention facility, while ushering 11 women, including one Yazidi and three Kurdish women, and a baby boy to another location. The Commission confirmed that some of the women had been detained by Hamza Brigade members since 2018. At the time of writing, their current location remains unknown.

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<sup>53</sup> A/HRC/40/70, para. 66.

56. Other women belonging to the Yazidi religious minority were also detained by Syrian National Army forces, and on at least one occasion were urged to convert to Islam during an interrogation. Similarly, the Commission is currently investigating reports that at least 49 Kurdish and Yazidi women were detained in both Ra's al-Ayn and Afrin by Syrian National Army members between November 2019 and July 2020.

57. The Commission also obtained information that indicates that Syrian nationals, including women, who were detained by the Syrian National Army in the Ra's al-Ayn region were subsequently transferred by Turkish forces to Turkey, indicted for crimes that would have been committed in the Ra's al-Ayn region, on charges including murder or membership of a terrorist organization, under Turkish criminal law.

58. Furthermore, the Commission is concerned at reports that Syrian National Army forces are recruiting children to be used in hostilities outside of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Sexual and gender-based violence*

59. The situation for other Kurdish women remains precarious. Since 2019, Kurdish women throughout the Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions have faced acts of intimidation by Syrian National Army brigade members, engendering a pervasive climate of fear which in effect confined them to their homes.<sup>55</sup> Women and girls have also been detained by Syrian National Army fighters, and subjected to rape and sexual violence – causing severe physical and psychological harm at the individual level, as well as at the community level, owing to stigma and cultural norms related to ideations of “female honour”.<sup>56</sup>

60. During the period under review, cases of sexual violence against women and men at one detention facility in Afrin were documented. On two occasions, in an apparent effort to humiliate, extract confessions and instil fear within male detainees, Syrian National Army Military Police officers forced male detainees to witness the rape of a minor. On the first day, the minor was threatened with being raped in front of the men, but the rape did not proceed. The following day, the same minor was gang-raped, as the male detainees were beaten and forced to watch in an act that amounts to torture.<sup>57</sup> One eyewitness recalled that Turkish officials had been present in the facility on the first day, when the rape was aborted, suggesting their presence may have acted as a deterrent. Another detainee was gang-raped in the same facility some weeks after this incident.

61. The Commission received further information that families from Tall Abyad chose not to return to their homes, fearing rape and sexual violence perpetrated by Syrian National Army members. At least 30 women had reportedly been raped in February alone. A former judge in Afrin confirmed that Syrian National Army fighters had been charged with rape and sexual violence carried out during house raids in the region, however none had been convicted, but rather had been released after a few days.

62. The Commission also received reports of forced marriage and the abduction of Kurdish women in Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn, which primarily involved members of Division 24 (the Sultan Murad Brigade) of the Syrian National Army. In January, a woman was abducted by a member of the Brigade, who forcibly married her and divorced her shortly thereafter.

#### *Attacks against cultural property*

63. Syrian National Army members also looted and destroyed religious and archaeological sites of profound significance in the Afrin region. For example, Syrian National Army forces looted and excavated ancient artefacts, including mosaics, from the

<sup>54</sup> See also [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25970&LangID=E&fbclid=IwAR0xKFfdKKvbdFnRRHTQAC5q-rDDwJFyEfpA3\\_Nwe8knCpsC11cSU5S1\\_nk](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25970&LangID=E&fbclid=IwAR0xKFfdKKvbdFnRRHTQAC5q-rDDwJFyEfpA3_Nwe8knCpsC11cSU5S1_nk).

<sup>55</sup> A/HRC/43/57, paras. 88–90.

<sup>56</sup> A/HRC/29/27/Add.3, para. 19.

<sup>57</sup> International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, *Prosecutor v. Anto Furundžija*, IT-95-17/1-T, judgment of 10 December 1998, paras. 127 and 129.



Hellenistic archaeological site of Cyrrhus as well as the Ain Dara temple, protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).<sup>58</sup> Satellite imagery showed that both sites had likely been bulldozed between 2019 and 2020 (see annex II).

64. In April 2020, several Yazidi shrines and graveyards were deliberately looted and partially destroyed across locations throughout the Afrin region, such as Qastel Jindo, Qibar, Jindayris and Sharran, further challenging the precarious existence of the Yazidi community as a religious minority in Syrian National Army-controlled regions,<sup>59</sup> and impacting both the tangible and intangible aspects of their cultural heritage, including traditional practices and rites.<sup>60</sup>

#### *Findings*

65. The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that Syrian National Army fighters, in particular members of Division 14, Brigade 142 (the Suleiman Shah Brigade), Division 22 (the Hamza Brigade) and Division 24 (the Sultan Murad Brigade), repeatedly perpetrated the war crime of pillage in both the Afrin and Ra's al-Ayn regions (see paras. 47–51 and 64 above) and may also be responsible for the war crime of destroying or seizing the property of an adversary.<sup>61</sup>

66. The Commission also has reasonable grounds to believe that Syrian National Army members committed the war crimes of hostage-taking (see para. 55 above), cruel treatment and torture (see para. 54 above),<sup>62</sup> and rape,<sup>63</sup> which may also amount to torture<sup>64</sup> (see para. 60 above). Syrian National Army members also looted and destroyed cultural property, in violation of international humanitarian law (see paras. 63–64 above).<sup>65</sup>

67. In addition, the Commission notes that, in areas under effective Turkish control, Turkey carries a responsibility to, as far as possible, ensure public order and safety, and to afford special protection to women and children.<sup>66</sup> Turkey remains bound by applicable human rights treaty obligations vis-à-vis all individuals present in such territories.<sup>67</sup>

68. In this regard, the Commission notes the allegations that Turkish forces were aware of incidents of looting and appropriation of civilian property and that they were present in detention facilities run by the Syrian National Army where the ill-treatment of detainees was rampant, including during interrogation sessions when torture took place. In failing to intervene in both cases, Turkish forces may have violated the above-mentioned obligations of Turkey.

69. The Commission further notes that transfers of Syrians detained by the Syrian National Army to Turkish territory may amount to the war crime of unlawful deportation of protected persons (see para. 57 above).<sup>68</sup> Such transfers provide further indication of collaboration and joint operations between Turkey and the Syrian National Army for the purpose of detention and intelligence-gathering. The Commission continues to investigate the precise extent to which various Syrian National Army brigades and Turkish forces have formed a joint command and control hierarchy and notes that, if any armed group members

<sup>58</sup> The Commission has previously documented that the Ain Dara temple was damaged on 21 January 2018; see A/HRC/39/65, para. 19.

<sup>59</sup> A/HRC/42/51, para. 88.

<sup>60</sup> Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, art. 1.

<sup>61</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) rules 52 and 156.

<sup>62</sup> ICRC rules 90, 96 and 156.

<sup>63</sup> ICRC rules 93 and 156.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, *Prosecutor v. Kunarac, Kovač and Vuković*, IT-96-23 and IT-96-23/1-A, judgment of 12 June 2002, para. 150.

<sup>65</sup> ICRC rule 40.

<sup>66</sup> See A/HRC/34/CRP.3, para. 103, available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session34/Pages/ListReports.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session34/Pages/ListReports.aspx).

<sup>67</sup> *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion*, I.C.J. Reports 2004, paras. 107–113; and see European Court of Human Rights, *Al-Skeini and others v. United Kingdom* (application no. 55721/07), judgment of 7 July 2011, paras. 138–149.

<sup>68</sup> Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, art. 147.

were shown to be acting under the effective command and control of Turkish forces, violations by these actors may entail criminal responsibility for such commanders who knew or should have known about the crimes, or failed to take all necessary and reasonable measures to prevent or repress their commission.<sup>69</sup>

## V. Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah and Hasakah

70. In the reporting period, Dayr al-Zawr and Hasakah Governorates witnessed an increase in attacks targeting the international counter-ISIL coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces. Attacks also took place in Raqqah Governorate on the Syrian Democratic Forces, as well as on government forces, as ISIL increasingly resorted to asymmetric tactics. At the same time, 90,000 Syrians, Iraqis and other “third-country nationals”, predominantly women and children, with presumed family links to ISIL members,<sup>70</sup> were confined in overcrowded displacement camps. Outside the camps, the Syrian Democratic Forces and related entities detained and tortured civilians, and continued to use children in military roles.

### *Camps in the north-east*

71. Individuals allegedly associated with ISIL, including children and Yazidi survivors,<sup>71</sup> continue to be held in Al-Hawl camp in squalid living conditions with meagre prospects of exiting or returning to their home country.<sup>72</sup> The Commission has noted that persons deprived of their liberty must be informed promptly, in a language that he or she understands, of the reasons for internment. They must also have the right to challenge, with the least possible delay, the lawfulness of his or her detention in these camps. Such a review must be carried out by an independent and impartial body.<sup>73</sup> Tens of thousands of women and children, both Syrian and third-country nationals, have now been confined in Al-Hawl and other camps since the Baghuz offensive in early 2019, without access to the necessary legal safeguards.

72. Worryingly, conditions in the camps across the north-east deteriorated in the reporting period, with medical services reportedly being stripped down to skeletal levels due to COVID-19. Camp authorities and the self-administration also reported that the closure of the Ya’rubiyah crossing reduced the sustainability of living conditions due to the inability to provide humanitarian assistance. Between 10 and 12 June, in the annex to Al-Hawl camp, all services, except food and water, were suspended, without notice being given to humanitarian agencies, for all foreign women and children during a registration exercise.<sup>74</sup> During the exercise, biometric data were collected from women in the annex.<sup>75</sup>

73. The camp conditions, combined with the previous experience of conflict, continues to have a significant psychological impact, particularly on children and Yazidi survivors.<sup>76</sup> One NGO worker noted how a 10-year-old girl had lost her communication skills due to trauma, and could only communicate through drawing.<sup>77</sup> At least 75 unaccompanied third-country national children across the Al-Hawl and Al-Roj camps are particularly vulnerable, and in May 2020, eight special procedures of the Human Rights Council called upon Member States to repatriate a five-year-old Canadian girl due to the inhuman conditions in

<sup>69</sup> Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, art. 28. See also A/HRC/43/57, para. 59.

<sup>70</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25986&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25986&LangID=E).

According to United Nations data, 65,516 people were in Al-Hawl camp and 1,772 in Al-Roj camp as at 1 July 2020.

<sup>71</sup> A/HRC/42/51, para. 88.

<sup>72</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 60.

<sup>73</sup> A/HRC/37/72, paras. 12–18 and annex III.

<sup>74</sup> See [www.facebook.com/smensyria/posts/1338333119689955](https://www.facebook.com/smensyria/posts/1338333119689955).

<sup>75</sup> See [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Al%20Ho1%20Snapshot\\_26Jul2020.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Al%20Ho1%20Snapshot_26Jul2020.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> A/HRC/42/51, para. 88.

<sup>77</sup> See [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17512/pdf/childrens\\_crisis\\_report\\_06052020.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17512/pdf/childrens_crisis_report_06052020.pdf).

Al-Hawl.<sup>78</sup> In this regard, the Commission has consistently called upon Member States to repatriate children and mothers in camps in accordance with their obligations under international law,<sup>79</sup> however 2020 witnessed minimal repatriation of those in camps.<sup>80</sup>

74. In December 2019, the self-administration formalized criteria for the release of Syrians in Al-Hawl, noting that priority should be given to the sick and elderly, to the persons who had been kept the longest, to persons with Syrian identity documents and to those with “trustworthy” sponsors. In correspondence with the Commission, the self-administration further elaborated on the procedure for release through this system. The Commission welcomes the fact that between December 2019 and February 2020, approximately 1,500 individuals were released.

#### *Unlawful deprivation of liberty*

75. The Commission documented eight cases of arbitrary detention of civil society workers, political activists and persons of Arab ethnicity by the Syrian Democratic Forces and affiliated Kurdish People’s Protection Units/Women’s Protection Units, including by their military intelligence. Civilians were apprehended in towns in Raqqah and Hasakah Governorates and held in various intelligence facilities under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces, as well as in Ghweran Prison, the Al-Shadadi prison, the former Raqqah juvenile prison, and Ayed, Al-Aid and Ayn al-Arab (Kobani) prisons and were kept incommunicado in nearly all cases. The self-administration has outlined the legal safeguards for detainees, however the majority of interviewees reported that they had received no information on the charges or evidence against them, and nor had they had access to legal representation or been able to have their deprivation of liberty reviewed by a competent judicial authority. In four cases, individuals indicated that they had been interrogated on multiple occasions by representatives of the United States security services during their periods of detention in Syrian Democratic Forces facilities.

76. In line with previously documented cases, incidents of torture and ill-treatment were also reported.<sup>81</sup> For example, a member of an Arab tribe had been held by Syrian Democratic Forces military intelligence in incommunicado detention from March 2019 until March 2020, and accused of collaborating with Turkey. He had been held in military intelligence facilities in Hawarna, Darbasiyah, Malkiyah and Ya’rubiyah and in a makeshift prison in Al-Shadadi. The majority of time in detention had been spent in solitary confinement, with minimal food and water, and he had been regularly beaten by Syrian Democratic Forces military intelligence. He was released following a negotiated agreement with local tribes. In another case, a political activist was detained by Syrian Democratic Forces military intelligence in November 2019 and held in solitary confinement in Hasakah prison for the majority of his detention. He was regularly beaten and suffered a broken rib. The interviewee described being hung with his arms behind his back and kept in that position from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., resulting in paralysis to a number of fingers. He alleged that he had been tortured, including by electrocution and having weights attached to his genitals. Threats of rape had also been made.

#### *Administration of justice*

77. According to the self-administration, as at 12 June 2020, 1,881 Syrians had been convicted for association with ISIL, whereas no trials of third-country nationals for association with ISIL had been held. In total, some 8,650 detainees had been brought to

<sup>78</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25899&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25899&LangID=E). Since this appeal, the girl has reportedly been moved out of the camp to an unknown location.

<sup>79</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 103 (e).

<sup>80</sup> See A/HRC/43/CRP.6, available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session43/Pages/ListReports.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session43/Pages/ListReports.aspx). Only five countries repatriated individuals in the first six months of 2020, according to the self-administration.

<sup>81</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward\\_DetentionInSyria.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/AWayForward_DetentionInSyria.pdf).

trial, and had been either convicted or acquitted, with 1,600 detainees awaiting judicial processes.<sup>82</sup>

78. Regarding juvenile justice, the self-administration reported that, in June 2020, 110 children between 12 and 18 years of age were present in the Hourri Rehabilitation Centre,<sup>83</sup> on the basis of their association with ISIL. The Centre was reportedly full at the time of finalization of the present report. While the Commission welcomes the granting of access to the Centre to United Nations child protection partners,<sup>84</sup> it notes the importance of adherence to fair trial and juvenile justice standards.<sup>85</sup> Interviewees involved in judicial processes reported that representatives were not allowed access to the children during interrogations in which confessions were induced, and lawyers were only appointed once charges had been filed by prosecutors. Moreover, numerous detainees reported that children were also held in other detention facilities, including the Allaya and Hasakah prisons. The majority of these children had also been accused of affiliation with ISIL or had been recruited by Syrian Democratic Forces/Kurdish People's Protection Units and accused of offences including spying. Adults released from these facilities reported that children were held in the same cells as adults at certain periods. It was not clear whether these children had been charged with any offence.

#### *Recruitment of children*

79. In a welcome development, 51 girls from 13 to 17 years of age were removed from the ranks of Women's Protection Units in early 2020 and were housed in a "rehabilitation centre". Eighteen boys were also in the process of being formally released at the time of reporting.<sup>86</sup> The Commission welcomes the commitments and releases made by the Syrian Democratic Forces.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, it documented six accounts of the recruitment and use of boys, and two of girls, by the Syrian Democratic Forces-affiliated Kurdish People's Protection Units/Women's Protection Units. A number of incidents of initial recruitment predate the start of the reporting period, however the violation was ongoing in 2020. One 15-year-old boy was recruited by elements of the Kurdish People's Protection Units in northern Aleppo in October 2019. Subsequently, the father received phone calls from people claiming to be from the Kurdish People's Protection Units, telling him to stop looking for his son. In another instance, a girl was recruited at the age of 14 by the Women's Protection Units in 2016. In April 2020, the family received a phone call from elements of the Women's Protection Units claiming that the girl had committed suicide. The family was provided with a death certificate with scant details about the cause of death. The family requested an investigation into her death, as they doubted the Women's Protection Units' version of events.

#### *Findings*

80. The Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that members of the Syrian Democratic Forces and related entities may have committed the war crime of cruel treatment and ill-treatment of those deprived of liberty in military intelligence facilities.<sup>88</sup> The Commission also has reasonable grounds to believe that in holding tens of thousands of individuals in Hawl camp and its annex, the majority of them children, for 18 months with no legal recourse, the Syrian Democratic Forces have held these individuals in inhuman conditions.<sup>89</sup> The self-administration has communicated with the Commission and highlighted its assessment of the potential security threat posed by those in camps, however

<sup>82</sup> According to a non-public submission.

<sup>83</sup> A/HRC/43/57, para. 98.

<sup>84</sup> A/74/845-S/2020/525, para. 181.

<sup>85</sup> United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, rule 7.1; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 14.

<sup>86</sup> A/74/845-S/2020/525, para. 181.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., and see <https://sdf-press.com/en/2020/07/military-instructions-issued-by-the-general-command-of-the-syrian-democratic-forces/>.

<sup>88</sup> ICRC rules 156 and 90.

<sup>89</sup> A/HRC/40/70, para. 92.

those interned comprise children, elderly persons, infirm persons and others who could not reasonably be perceived to represent an imperative security risk. Therefore, in many instances, the ongoing internment of these individuals continues to amount to unlawful deprivation of liberty.<sup>90</sup>

## VI. Idlib Governorate and western Aleppo

81. In its recent report on Idlib Governorate and western Aleppo, covering the period between November 2019 and June 2020, the Commission documented 52 emblematic attacks by all parties that led to civilian casualties and/or damage to civilian infrastructure.<sup>91</sup> These battles were marked by war crimes, including launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in death or injury to civilians. Continuing previously established patterns, the Commission also documented attacks against medical facilities, schools and markets, which deprived scores of civilians of access to health care, education and food.

82. The battles displaced nearly 1 million people. The Commission found that pro-government forces may have perpetrated the crimes against humanity of forcible transfer, murder and other inhumane acts<sup>92</sup> during the offensives on Ma'arrat al-Nu'man (second half of December 2019), Ariha (29 January 2020), Atarib (between 10 and 14 February 2020) and Darat Izzah (17 February 2020).

83. When civilians fled, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham pillaged their homes. In restive areas under its control, members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham also committed the war crimes of murder; of passing sentences and carrying out executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court; and of cruel treatment, ill-treatment and torture.<sup>93</sup>

### A. Pro-government forces

84. In areas retaken by pro-government forces, including Ma'arrat al-Nu'man and Saraqib, incidents of looting persisted, while a number of fires affecting agricultural crops indispensable to the survival of the civilian population were documented.<sup>94</sup> By early June, following a lull in hostilities, some displaced civilians returned<sup>95</sup> only to flee again as fighting resumed. For example, on 9 June, at around 6.30 a.m., at least three airstrikes were carried out by pro-government forces within a span of 10 minutes, impacting a residential area and adjacent agricultural fields, situated some 200 metres from a maternity hospital in Balyun village.<sup>96</sup> At least three civilian homes were destroyed, while a man and a woman, both previously displaced, were killed. Five others were injured inside their home, including two girls and one boy aged between 4 and 14 years. The wounded were brought to the city of Idlib, as there was no operational hospital in the vicinity of Balyun.

85. Imagery and video footage obtained by the Commission indicate the use of a blast weapon with wide-area effects, such as highly explosive unguided fragmentation bombs (likely of 250 to 300 kg). With regard to potential military targets, the Commission sought but did not receive information from pro-government forces, while it received reports of there being two Turkish military posts located approximately 1 kilometre from the impacted location.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>90</sup> ICRC rules 99 and 87. See also A/HRC/37/72, paras. 12–18.

<sup>91</sup> A/HRC/44/61.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.; and ICRC rules 156 and 90.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. See also A/HRC/42/51, paras. 49 and 53.

<sup>95</sup> Approximately 204,000 spontaneous returns have been recorded in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic since January 2020, including nearly 26,000 people who returned in June, primarily to southern and eastern Idlib. See <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/recent-developments-northwest-syria-situation-report-no-17-13-july-2020>.

<sup>96</sup> The adjacent dentistry building had already been hit in an airstrike on 23 February. See A/HRC/44/61.

<sup>97</sup> Note verbales were sent to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation on 30 June 2020.

*Findings*

86. Based on the above, the Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that, on 9 June in Balyun village, pro-government forces may have committed the war crime of launching an indiscriminate attack resulting in death or injury to civilians.<sup>98</sup>

**B. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham**

87. Between November 2019 and June 2020, and in a pattern previously documented by the Commission,<sup>99</sup> members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Aleppo and Idlib Governorates continued to brutally impose their stringent ideologies on local populations, including through acts of arbitrary detention of individuals expressing dissent. Moreover, they detained, tortured and executed civilians who opposed their oppressive rule.<sup>100</sup>

88. During demonstrations between 29 April and 1 May, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham beat and detained participants.<sup>101</sup> On 1 May, a van drove into a group of protestors, injuring at least one, whereupon members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham opened fire, killing one protestor and injuring two others. On 10 June, 13 journalists who filmed the passage of a Russian-Turkish joint patrol along the M4 highway were beaten by members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, who forced them to stop filming.

89. Members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham also detained individuals over land disputes and for refusing to pay “taxes” for services provided by their “salvation government”.<sup>102</sup> One man recalled how he had been initially summoned by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham “police” and had subsequently been held for five months in various detention facilities. In detention, he was beaten with a cable, handcuffed and hung from the ceiling in his cell, and thereafter forced to thumbprint a statement acknowledging that he had incited others against the terrorist group. He was then transferred to the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham “criminal security branch” and brought before a “criminal court”, was never informed of the charges against him and was sentenced to prison for unknown reasons.

*Findings*

90. Based on the above, the Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham committed the war crimes of murder (see para. 88 above), cruel treatment and torture (see para. 89 above).<sup>103</sup> Moreover, in instituting makeshift courts whose procedures fall far short of fair trial standards, members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham denied essential judicial guarantees to persons convicted through such quasi-legal processes, and consequently, imposing continued detention following such procedures amounts to an unlawful deprivation of liberty.<sup>104</sup>

**VII. Recommendations**

91. **The Commission reiterates its previous recommendations and again calls upon all parties to:**

(a) **Pursue a long-lasting, nationwide ceasefire, in line with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), that allows Syrians to focus on tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, and creates the conditions for meaningful peace talks – building on the**

<sup>98</sup> ICRC rule 156.

<sup>99</sup> See A/HRC/44/61.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> The Commission documented additional cases of detention involving journalists, media activists, aid workers and individuals expressing dissent, which occurred in prior reporting periods. See also A/HRC/43/57, paras. 37–38; and A/HRC/44/61.

<sup>103</sup> Art. 3 common to the 1949 Geneva Conventions; and ICRC rule 156.

<sup>104</sup> ICRC rule 100.

reduction in the level of violence in the Syrian Arab Republic since the onset of the pandemic;

(b) Ensure immediate and large-scale prisoner releases. Worldwide, States have recognized that overcrowded prisons are breeding grounds for COVID-19 and have urgently implemented such steps. Given the dire detention conditions in the Syrian Arab Republic, all makeshift and temporary places of detention should be closed and steps taken to drastically improve health conditions in formal prisons and detention centres;

(c) Immediately cease torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual and gender-based violence, in places of detention; cease all forms of incommunicado detention and release all persons arbitrarily detained; and take all feasible measures, under Security Council resolution 2474 (2019), to search for and reveal the fates of those detained and/or disappeared, and further establish an effective channel of communication with families to ensure that their legal, economic and psychological needs are addressed adequately;

(d) Immediately cease sexual and gender-based violence against women, girls, men and boys, and take urgent measures to discipline or dismiss individuals under their command responsible for such acts.

92. Furthermore, in light of the economic crisis, food insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission calls upon all parties as well as the international community and individual Member States to ensure and facilitate unfettered access for independent humanitarian, protection and human rights organizations in every part of the country, including to places of confinement or detention. All obstacles to humanitarian aid should be removed, including those unintentionally caused by sanctions that have overly cumbersome humanitarian exemption procedures. The Commission reiterates the calls made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ease or waive sectoral sanctions imposed on countries in order to ensure access to food, essential health supplies and COVID-19 medical support.

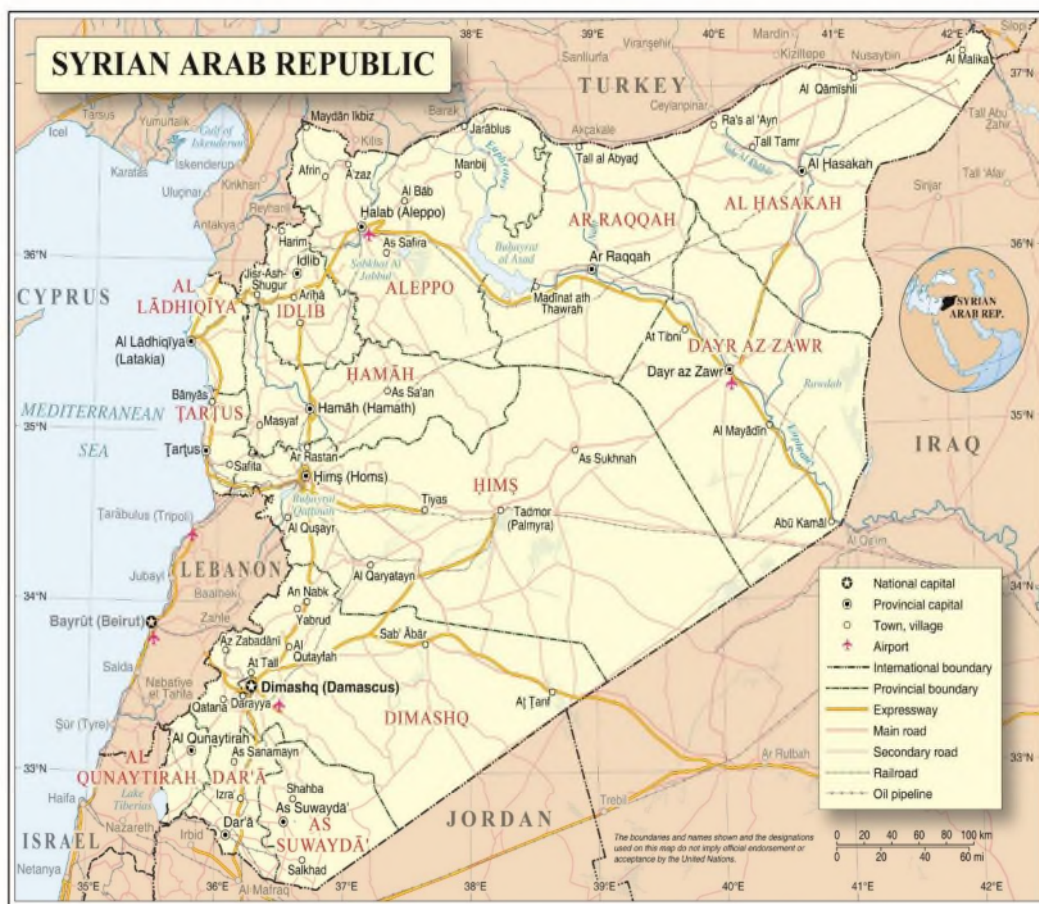
93. The Commission recommends that members of the Syrian National Army immediately cease all looting of civilian property, including of religious and archaeological sites, return such property to its owners, and discipline or dismiss those individuals responsible and make the findings public. In this regard, the Commission recommends that Turkey exert more efforts to ensure public order and safety in the areas under its control to prevent such violations by the Syrian National Army, and refrain from using civilian homes for military purposes.

94. The Commission recommends that the Syrian Democratic Forces make further efforts to end child recruitment by the Syrian Democratic Forces-affiliated Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units.

95. The Commission reiterates its recommendation to Member States to repatriate their nationals in the Syrian Arab Republic who are allegedly associated with ISIL, in particular children with their mothers, in accordance with the best interests of the child, and also in light of the dire camp conditions.

96. Given its findings on violations in the present report, the Commission repeats its recommendation for all Member States to continue seeking accountability, and reiterates its readiness to continue to assist in this endeavour, in close cooperation with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism.

## Annex I

Map of the Syrian Arab Republic<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



## Annex II

### Satellite imagery

- A. Extensive terrain movements and visible bulldozed areas of the Ain-Dara Temple, Afrin region, Aleppo Governorate, protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), between September 2019 and April 2020.**



DigitalGlobe WorldView-2 image collected 28 September 2019 08:36 (GMT+3)  
 (© DigitalGlobe 2019)  
 Analysis conducted by UNITAR-UNOSAT.

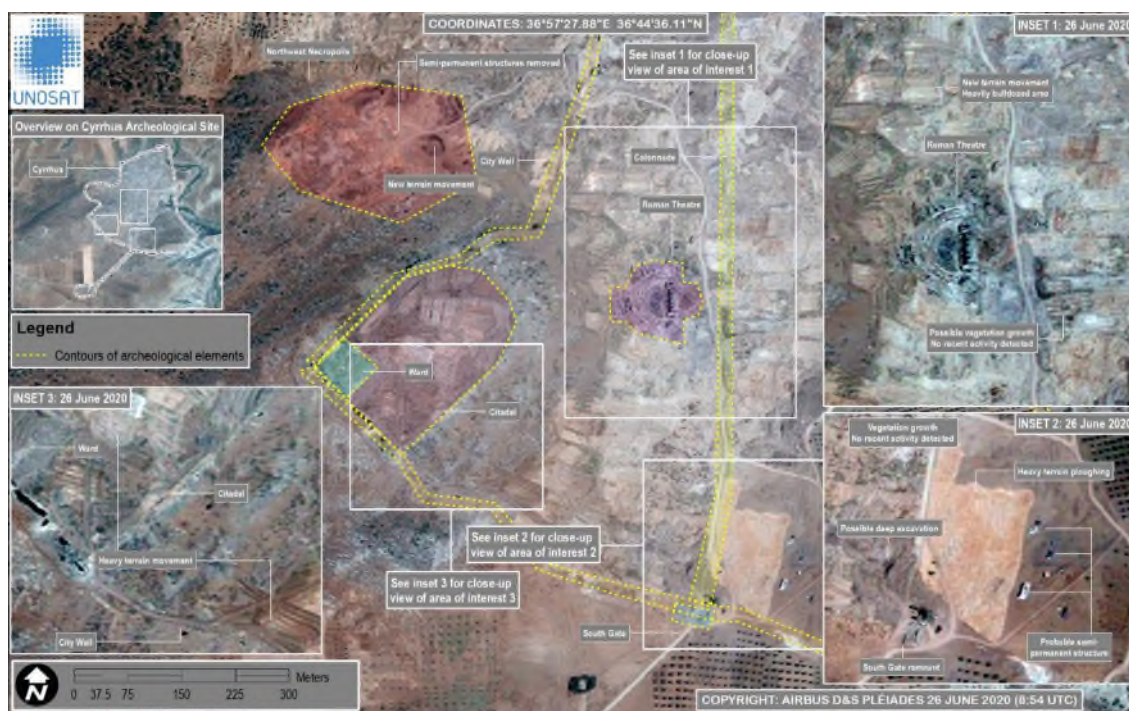


DigitalGlobe WorldView-1 image collected 17 April 2020 08:36 (GMT+3)  
 (© DigitalGlobe 2020)  
 Analysis conducted by UNITAR-UNOSAT.

**B. Hellenistic archaeological site of Cyrrhus, Afrin region, Aleppo Governorate, between September 2019 and June 2020**



DigitalGlobe WorldView-2 image collected 28 September 2019 08:36 (GMT+3)  
 (© DigitalGlobe 2019)  
 Analysis conducted by UNITAR-UNOSAT.



Airbus D&S Pléiades image collected 26 June 2020 08:54 (GMT+3)  
 (© Airbus D&S 2020)  
 Analysis conducted by UNITAR-UNOSAT.

### C. Destruction of civilian houses between October 2019 and May 2020 in Dawoudiya village, Hasakah governorate



DigitalGlobe WorldView-2 image collected 8 May 2020 08:23 (GMT+3), WorldView-3 image collected on 27 January 2020 08:32 (GMT+3) and WorldView-2 image collected on 9 October 2019 08:32 (GMT+3)

(© DigitalGlobe 2019–2020)

Analysis conducted by UNITAR-UNOSAT.

# Exhibit 58

**Q1**  
**2021**

# **THE STATE OF THE OCCUPATION**

**DOCUMENTING RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE TURKISH  
OCCUPIED REGIONS OF NORTH AND EAST SYRIA**



**ROJAVA  
INFORMATION  
CENTER**



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# OCCUPIED AFRIN

- SULTAN MURAD DIVISION, JAYSH AL-NUKHBA, RAJUL AL-HARB
- AHRAR AL-SHAM
- AHRAR AL-SHARQIYA
- FAYLAQ AL-SHAM
- FAYLAQ AL-RAHMAN
- HAMZA DIVISION
- AL-JABHAT AL-SHAMIYYA
- JAYSH AL-ISLAM

- SULTAN MEHMED FATIH
- SAMARQAND BRIGADE
- SULEIMAN SHAH BRIGADE
- SULTAN MURAD DIVISION
- AL-WAQQAS BRIGADE
- SUQOUR AL-SHAM
- JAYSH AL-NUKHBA
- FAYLAQ AL-MAJD (ZINKI)
- TURKISH CONTROL

- HAMZA BASE
- SNA MILITARY POLICE HQ
- SULTAN MURAD BASE

TURKMEN  
FACTIONS

- 1 PRISON (MAYDAN IKBIS)
- 2 PRISON (RAJU)
- 3 'BLACK' PRISON
- 4 AHRAR AL SHAM PRISON (QATMAH)
- 5 HAMZA DIVISION PRISON (BASSOUTA)
- 6 HAMZA DIVISION PRISON (BASSOUTA)
- 7 MIT PRISON (BARAD)
- 8 SULEIMAN SHAH PRISON (SHIYE)

- SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC FORCES
- GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA
- TURKISH ARMY AND  
TURKISH-BACKED GROUPS
- HTS- EXTREMIST GROUPS

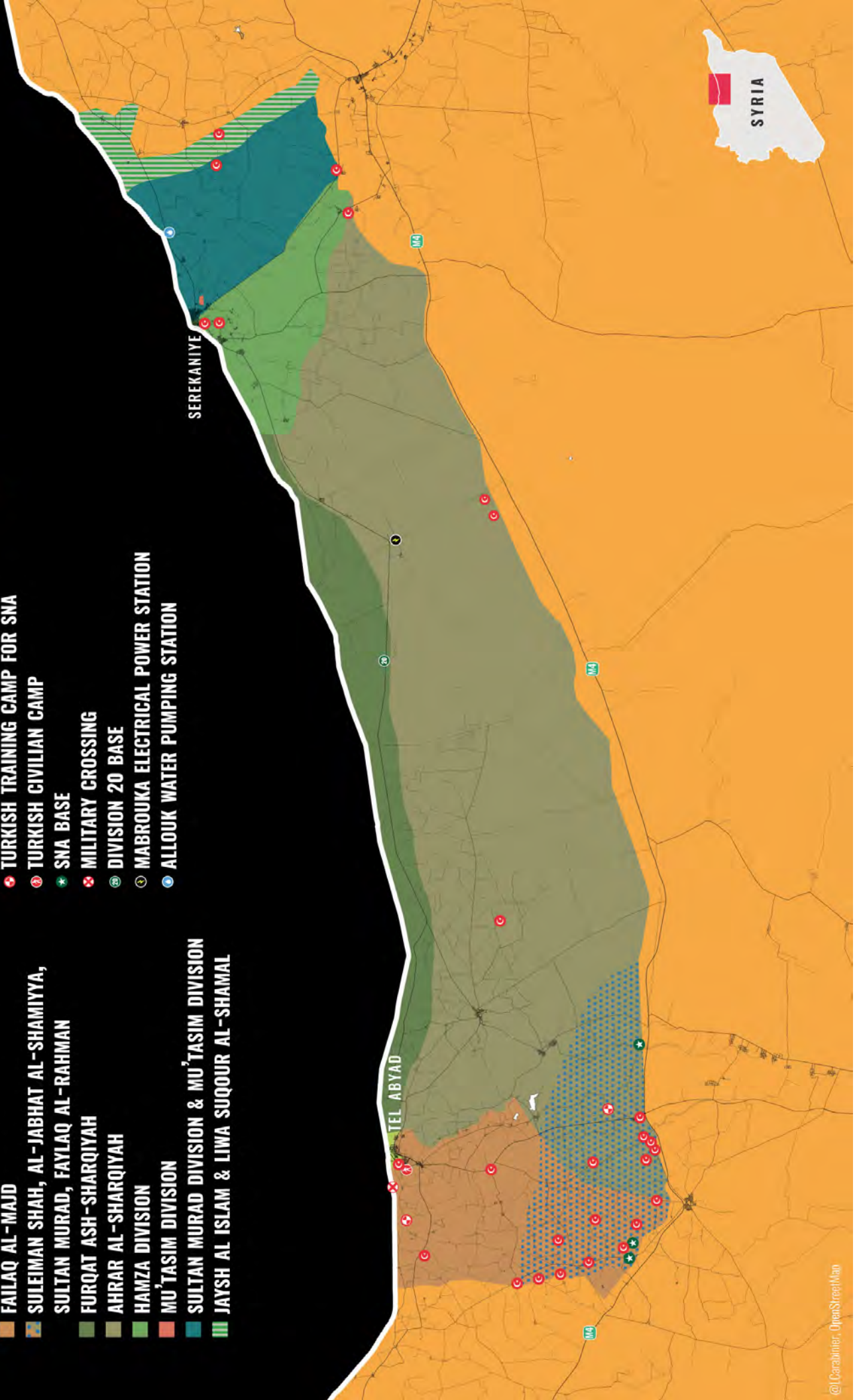


# OCCUPIED M4 STRIP

- AL-JABHAT AL-SHAMIYYA
- FAILAQ AL-MAJD
- SULEIMAN SHAH, AL-JABHAT AL-SHAMIYYA, SULTAN MURAD, FAYLAQ AL-RAHMAN
- FURQAT ASH-SHARQIYAH
- AHRAR AL-SHARQIYAH
- HAMZA DIVISION
- MU'TASIM DIVISION
- SULTAN MURAD DIVISION & MU'TASIM DIVISION
- JAYSH AL ISLAM & LIWA SUQQUR AL-SHAMAL

- TURKISH BASE
- TURKISH TRAINING CAMP FOR SNA
- TURKISH CIVILIAN CAMP
- SNA BASE
- MILITARY CROSSING
- DIVISION 20 BASE
- MABROUKA ELECTRICAL POWER STATION
- ALLOUK WATER PUMPING STATION

■ SDF



# INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Turkey has so far launched two major invasions into the territory of North and East Syria (NES) – in early 2018 and again in late 2019 - as well as further incursion into Syrian Arab-majority territory between Afrin and Kobane in 2016. While international human rights groups have rightly decried these invasions and their subsequent occupations for the litany of human rights abuses that they have caused, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Western governments, and international media do not yet treat the ethnic cleansing campaign conducted by a NATO-partner country with the gravity it deserves and, at times, obscure the true nature of the occupation. To name just one instance, a February 16th, 2021 New York Times article spoke of Turkish forces “protecting” Syrian Arab refugees who Turkey itself had resettled to Afrin in an attempt at engineering demographic change on their border.<sup>1</sup>

This new quarterly report by the Rojava Information Center will shine a light on the gross human rights violations occurring in occupied Afrin and what we have termed the ‘M4 Strip’ (the territory north of the M4 highway occupied in 2019, including the cities of Sere Kaniye and Tel Abyad). The goal of these quarterly reports is to present foreign officials, fellow journalists and researchers, and interested readers with a clear picture of which crimes are being committed, how often, and by whom. We hope to provide up-to-date information and highlight trends in crime statistics. Additionally, the testimonies section seeks give a face and a name to the data we have collected.

## METHODOLOGY

This report was written on the basis of RIC’s own OSINT research, in close collaboration with the ‘Afrin Human Rights Organization,’ a local NGO which collects on-the-ground, first-hand testimonies. We also shared information and cooperated with the ‘Hevdestî Association,’ an advocacy organization for victims of the Turkish occupation of the M4 Strip, based in Qamishlo. ‘Syrians for Truth and Justice,’ and the ‘Violations Documentation Center in Northern Syria,’ two national NGOs who keep

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/16/world/middleeast/syria-turkey-erdogan-afrin.html>

independent databases on Afrin and the M4 Strip, were also consulted. These data were compared against research by the 'Syrian Observatory for Human Rights,' a UK-based organization. RIC faced particular challenges collecting reliable and complete data from the M4 Strip, as the area had a less well-established native news media landscape even before the invasion and fewer informants operate there. For this reason, graphs in the Quarterly Report section are based on Afrin only.

Additionally, RIC reviewed locals news articles from 'Afrin Post', 'Ezdina', and 'Documenting Rights Violations in Sere Kaniye/Ras al-Ayn' in order to corroborate violations data.

Furthermore, RIC travelled to Shehba and Aleppo to collect in-depth testimonies from eight victims of human rights violations in Afrin, as well as interviews with dozens of other victims and with representatives from 'Afrin Human Rights Organization.' Due to security concerns for victims and their families, some accounts have had to be anonymized. Moreover, fearing for family members still in occupied areas, many victims refuse to speak on the record about their experiences, or do so only with people outside of NES. Collecting evidence of gender-based violence is especially difficult, as social stigma often prevents women and girls from speaking about their experiences.

RIC also drew on reports by the United Nations, the European Parliament, as well as academic articles. Historical information is based on previous RIC reports, or on third-party sources where quoted.

Maps were developed with the help of 'Afrin Human Rights Organization', the 'Hevdestî Association', as well as military sources and witness testimonies. RIC could not independently verify all faction ownerships, though some prison locations could be confirmed with the help of satellite data. Witness testimonies also helped to pinpoint militias to single villages and towns. Nonetheless, RIC makes no claim to completeness.

All maps and graphics were produced by mapmaker and designer Eduardo Artika (@LCarabinier).

# THE TURKISH WAR OFFENSIVES & WAR CRIMES

## 2018 AFRIN INVASION

In January 2018, the Turkish army and accompanying proxy militias launched an invasion of Kurdish-majority Afrin, a canton of NES since 2014. The military operation against this olive-rich region of Syria, sardonically christened 'Operation Olive Branch,' included air strikes on over 100 locations, as well as an invasion force of 6,400 Turkish troops and up to 25,000 Syrian militiamen, including former members of ISIS, al-Nusra and other fundamentalist groups.<sup>2 3</sup> Turkey based its aggression on the claim that Afrin had been the base for 700 cross-border attacks, though upon closer inspection, the BBC found only 26 such instances in the previous year, and merely 15 launched from Afrin itself.<sup>4</sup> Afrin had seen virtually no fighting since 2011. The canton's population - 92% Kurdish by some estimates - swelled to up to half a million during the early stages of Syria's Civil War, as internally-displaced people (IDPs) settled in the area. As a result of the 2018 invasion, however, between 250,000 and 300,000 people were forced to flee Afrin. More than half settled in nearby Shehba . Thousands more were dispersed across NES, Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey and Europe.

The operation furthermore led to the deaths of around 500 civilians and the injury of 700, as the invasion forces targeted health, education, and service facilities. Afrin Hospital alone was shelled thrice, as well as ambulances of the Kurdish Red Crescent. The destruction of water facilities furthermore led to acute water shortages. Under the Geneva Conventions, targeting "indispensable objects for the survival of the civilian population," such as water, as well as medical units are both prosecutable war crimes. Turkey's attacks on these facilities were not isolated incidents, but repeated and - in the case of water - ongoing attempts to hamper with or destroy them, and would thus fall within Geneva's Protocol I. In addition, Turkish-backed forces are accused of a multitude of crimes including: murder, kidnapping, torture, rape, religious persecution, extortion, and theft.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/turkey-isis-afirin-syria-kurds-free-syrian-army-jihadi-video-fighters-recruits-a8199166.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-ria-turkey-rebels/fsa-commander-says-25000-syrian-rebels-back-turkish-force-in-syria-idUSKBN1FA00K>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-43262839>

The invading militias imposed laws reminiscent of ISIS' and other fundamentalist groups. Women in particular were targeted. A UN report commented that "severe restrictions on women's rights had been imposed in recent months. Violations include the imposition of strict dress codes for women and girls and limitations on freedom of movement."<sup>5</sup> According to one account, around 90% of women now wear the hijab, where before Afrin had been the most progressive out of all Kurdish areas of Syria.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Turkish-controlled militias committed acts of rape and desecration of female fighters' bodies during the war. Religious minorities were targeted for forced conversion. Over three-fourths of the 25,000 Yazidis inhabiting Afrin were forced to flee.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, (15 August 2019), A/HRC/42/51

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/11/27/who-are-turkeys-proxy-fighters-in-syria/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://afripost.net/ar/2021/03/%d8%a8%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a3%d8%b1%d9%82%d8%a7%d9%85-%d9%83%d9%8a%d9%81-%d8%a8%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%a5%d9%82%d9%84%d9%8a%d9%85-%d8%b9%d9%81%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%86-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%83%d9%8f%d8%b1%d8%af%d9%8a-%d8%a8/>

## 2019 M4 STRIP INVASION

Nearly two years later, after Turkey's President Erdogan's continuous advocacy for a 'security zone' stretching across the Kurdish-dominated Syrian, Turkey unilaterally began shelling the border cities of Tel Abyad (Gire Spi) and Sere Kaniye (Ras al-Ayn) in the aftermath of an abrupt United States (US) troop pull-out. Within days, Turkish jets bombed these two cities as around 200,000 civilians fled from the advancing Turkish Army. Much as in Afrin, border insecurity was the *raison d'être* for the invasion, though only a single cross-border attack launched from Syria was recorded in 2019 (the suspect was arrested by security forces), while 30 attacks originating from Turkey were confirmed.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> <https://anenglishmobile.com/rojava-northern-syria/six-injured-as-rocked-fired-into-ceylan-pinar-36438>

The so-called 'Operation Peace Springs' led to the deaths of 679 civilians and wounded 3,392, according to the 'Violations Documentation Center.'<sup>9</sup> Turkey employed many of the same militias it had used in Afrin for its 2019 invasion. And as in Afrin, health facilities and personnel were targeted. 25 attacks on medical facilities were recorded, as well as the deliberate killing of five medical workers, and the injury of another eight. Four journalists were also killed – two alone when a Turkish air strike targeted a civilian convoy entering the city. Turkish air strikes led to the widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure, including water pumping stations, dams, power stations and oil fields, in a strategy which the UN OCHR called "disturbing."<sup>10</sup> The targeting of Alouk pumping station and other water facilities left 450,000 civilians without access to water, according to the UN.<sup>11</sup> Once again, this constitutes a violation of Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions. The execution of three health workers on October 13th in Suluk, and the October 16th killing of three civilians attempting to return home to Suluk constitute violations potentially amounting to war crimes in their own right.

Crimes directly targeting women were epitomized by the high-profile roadside assassination of Hevrin Khalef, a Kurdish politician, as well as the on-camera humiliation of captured YPJ fighter Çiçek Kobane and desecration of the body of YPJ (Female Protection Units) fighter Amara Rênas. Even though the victims were female fighters rather than civilians, the effect was to spread fear among civilian women of a repeat of the situation in Afrin, where rape, trafficking and kidnapping of women for forcible marriage are commonplace.

The invasion ended as a result of two bilateral agreements Turkey signed with the US and Russia, which fixed the limits of its zone of occupation. It is worth noting that Turkey's plan of establishing a 'security zone' along the border it shares with Syria for the roughly 3,6 million Syrian refugees it hosts is in itself an attempt at 'soft' demographic engineering, as 83% of those refugees are neither Kurdish nor native to NES. Since the end of the 2019 war, Turkey has repeatedly violated the ceasefire agreement. The occupied zone has furthermore insecurity within NES: Security officials at al-Hol camp tell RIC that recently-confiscated rifles in the hands of ISIS sleeper cells originate from Tel Abyad, while ISIS-linked women and children have been smuggled out of the camp and settled in Sere Kaniye. Militiamen active there have been encouraged to marry the widows by their superiors.

<sup>9</sup> <https://vdc-nsy.com/archives/43968>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25129&LangID=E>

<sup>11</sup> OCHA HNAP flash update, provided to RIC, 14 November



# OCCUPATION & TURKISH RESPONSIBILITY

## MILITARY AND SECURITY CONTROL

Following Turkey's 'Olive Branch' and 'Peace Spring' operations, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) system which had established Syria's best standards of security, rule of law and democratic participation was replaced by a patchwork of scores of warring militias conducting rights violations amounting to war crimes against the civilian population on a daily basis. These militias are technically subordinate to the Syrian Interim Government, a Turkish-sponsored body which lobbies on behalf of the Syrian National Army (SNA) in Geneva and other foreign capitals. In practice, they are trained, armed, funded and commanded by the Turkish government. The SNA number "at least 35,000 full-time fighters, all under the near-total control of Turkey's Ministry of Defense and National Intelligence Organization (MIT)."<sup>12</sup>

On the battlefield, the SNA take their commands directly from Turkey. Day-to-day, they are granted very limited autonomy to extort civilians, loot and establish checkpoints in the balkanized zone of Turkish occupation, though inside sources have also revealed that most of the militias' actions are directed by Turkish orders. The militiamen are – as one member put it – nothing more than Turkey's "cannon fodder."<sup>13</sup> Turkey is furthermore careful to retain ultimate control over both its proxy militias and the occupied territories as a whole. To this end, Turkey has established twelve major bases in Afrin, alongside dozens of small outposts along the frontlines with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). There are also at least half-a-dozen Turkish bases in the 'Peace Spring' region, plus a string of observation points along the M4 highway. Turkish intelligence service MIT has also taken over local police stations throughout regions under their control.<sup>14</sup>

As research by Elizabeth Tsurkov, speaking to multiple sources within the ranks of the SNA, confirms: "All decisions, big and small, in the 'National Army' are made by the operations room run by Turkish intelligence."<sup>15</sup> Turkey plays these factions off against one another, allowing them to clash over checkpoints and looted property

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mei.edu/blog/turkish-backed-syrian-armed-opposition-groups-unite-under-one-banner>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/11/27/who-are-turkeys-proxy-fighters-in-syria/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/69657/Khayrallah%20al-Hilu%20-%20The%20Turkish%20Intervention%20in%20Northern%20Syria%20One%20Strategy%20Discrepant%20Policies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/11/27/who-are-turkeys-proxy-fighters-in-syria/>

to prevent any one force growing too powerful, while maintaining ultimate control over the situation in its zones of occupation and ensuring that these factions ultimately conduct only Turkish military and political objectives.

As a result, the SNA has never fought in any battle or operation against the SAA. Turkey has gone so far as to arrest and hand a five-year prison sentence to a leading commander from an SNA faction as punishment for participating in an operation against the SAA in violation of Turkish wishes.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, one of the few Kurdish commanders in the SNA was attacked, detained, tortured and removed from power by Turkey for speaking out against and refusing to participate in Turkey's operation against Afrin.<sup>17</sup> When SNA fighters detained a number of SAA fighters during the Peace Spring operation, Turkey forced their immediate release, much to the chagrin of Syrian opposition activists and many SNA members.<sup>18</sup> These high-profile incidents indicate the extent to which the SNA must remain focused on Turkish objectives of targeting the SDF, AANES and the indigenous (Kurdish) population.

In addition to its control of the SNA, Turkey also has a formal, direct control of the Syrian National Police and General Security Forces, using these internal security apparatuses to facilitate its control of its zones of operation. These forces are directly trained within Turkey, while Turkey also delivers training and support to special 'commando' forces within its zone of occupation, under the control of the Turkish General Security Directorate.<sup>19</sup> Turkmen factions are singled out for especial support and favor by Turkey, due to their (perceived) loyalty to the Turkish state. As such, factions like the Hamza Division, Sultan Murad and the Mu'tasim Division are granted additional training and funding. These groups are now being manoeuvred by Ankara into a 'Turkmen belt' along the Turkish border, at the expense of other, Sunni Arab-led, factions. (See Occupied Afrin map)

## TURKISH CULPABILITY FOR WAR CRIMES AND VIOLATIONS IN ITS ZONE OF OCCUPATION

Beyond the initial exodus in the aftermath of Turkey's military invasion of Afrin, almost 100,000 mostly-Kurdish inhabitants of the occupied region have been forcibly displaced by a systematic campaign of violence, arrests and torture.<sup>20</sup> They were replaced by up to 400,000 Arab IDPs from northern Homs and the Ghouta neighbourhood of Damascus, as well as Syrian Turkmen, in what the European Union Parliament said could "amount to ethnic cleansing."<sup>21</sup> These refugees said they were

<sup>16</sup> <https://deirezzor24.net/en/activists-from-deir-ezzor-launch-a-campaign-to-demand-the-release-of-abu-khawla-muhassan-a-military-commander-of-the-free-army/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://syriadirect.org/news/%E2%80%98afirin-is-a-red-line%E2%80%99-kurdish-fsa-commander-loses-his-faction-after-refusing-to-fight/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/11/syria-ypg-turkey-russia-national-army-handover-prisoners-war.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://vdc-nsy.com/archives/20694>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088_EN.pdf)

part of an “organized demographic change” at the behest of Turkey,<sup>22</sup> which has transformed an almost heterogeneously Kurdish region into one inhabited to 75% by Arabs and Turkmen.<sup>23</sup>



Since the invasions, at least 172 civilians have been killed in Afrin and the M4 Strip, while up to 8,500 have been detained or kidnapped by the occupation forces. Though most recorded arrests occurred in occupied Afrin, in both regions, statistically, every 6th-7th arrest involved the use of torture. At least 1,100 of those arrested have not been heard of again.<sup>24 25</sup> A further 63 Syrians with alleged ties to the Autonomous Administration or SDF have been illegally extradited to Turkey - a violation of the Geneva Conventions.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, over 150 women have been disappeared by the occupation’s militias. 69 women report having been raped, though the dark figure is believed to be several times that number.<sup>27</sup> Arrests are most often based on the suspects’ alleged collaboration with the AANES, though Human Rights Watch found that, in most cases, “the Turkish authorities have not produced evidence that the detainees were active fighters with the Kurdish-led authorities or

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-yazidis-isis-islam-conversion-afrin-persecution-kurdish-a8310696.html>

<sup>23</sup> <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/11/Turkeys-track-record-The-occupation-of-Afrin.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/210113/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://vdc-nsy.com/archives/43968>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/03/illegal-transfers-syrians-turkey>

<sup>27</sup> <https://missingafrinwomen.org/>

that they committed crimes.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, arrests serve to instil fear in the indigenous population, while extracting hefty ransom payments from the detainees’ relatives.

Turkish-controlled factions have turned the areas under their control into personal fiefdoms of criminal activity. At least 100km<sup>2</sup> of cultivated land (or over 10% of all arable land) has been expropriated in Afrin, as well as over 315,000 fruit-bearing trees.<sup>29</sup> Faction commanders line their pockets by exporting the world-famous Afrin olives through Turkey to Western supermarkets, while in the cities, the trade in loot, rent-extraction from stolen real estate, and extortion is booming.<sup>30 31</sup> The UN noted in a report that this dispossession occurs in a “systematic” manner, on the basis of intimidation, and that it has indication that Turkey was aware of – and in select cases participated in – these crimes.<sup>32</sup>

The same UN report found that Turkish-controlled forces have committed an “onslaught of violations” against civilians including the “war crimes” of “hostage-taking, cruel treatment, torture, and rape.”<sup>33 34</sup> The UN’s key findings in Turkish-occupied areas include:

- “Civilians ‘primarily of Kurdish origin’ beaten, tortured, denied food or water, and interrogated about their faith and ethnicity”
- “Prevalent and recurrent” hostage-taking and torture for extortion and to punish dissenters
- Kurds systematically and violently displaced from their homes, told: “if it were up to me, I would kill every Kurd from 1 to 80 years old”
- Women tortured and raped in presence of Turkish officers
- Mass rape, abduction, forced marriage, ‘climate of fear’ for women now unable to leave home
- Gang-rape of a minor as method of torture
- 30 women raped in Turkish-occupied Tel Abyad in one month
- Mass detention of Kurdish and Yezidi women in unknown black sites
- Yezidis, including women, pressured to convert to Islam
- Desecration and destruction of graveyards, historic & religious sites, threatening “precarious” Yezidi minority
- “Systematic” and “coordinated” looting and property appropriation
- “Coercing primarily-Kurdish residents to flee through threats, extortion, murder, abduction, torture, detention”

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/03/illegal-transfers-syrians-turkey>

<sup>29</sup> Rights defense initiative - A report on Human Rights Violations and Crimes Committed by the Turkish State and the Jihadists Factions in Afrin over three years of occupation

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/syrie-razzia-turque-sur-les-oliveraies-12-01-2019-2285205\\_24.php](https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/syrie-razzia-turque-sur-les-oliveraies-12-01-2019-2285205_24.php)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/210113/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/45/31>

<sup>33</sup> <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2020/09/summary-un-report-on-war-crimes-atrocities-committed-by-turkish-and-other-forces-in-syria/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=26237&LangID=E>

The report also condemned the poor security situation, a “barrage of IEDs and shelling” in Turkish-held areas, and child recruitment by the SNA. All in all, the Turkish incursion into Afrin and the M4 Strip has transformed two of the safest regions of Syria into two of perennial violence and insecurity in a process one researcher at the European Council on Foreign Relations has called the “Gazafication” of Turkish-occupied territory.<sup>35</sup>

A 2021 US Commission on International Religious Freedom report described Turkey’s presence in Syria as a “significant part of the danger” and a “direct threat” to religious and ethnic minorities in the country. Turkey’s support for fundamentalist groups in Afrin is “equally insidious and damaging, as they engage in religious violence, abduction for ransom, and other atrocities,” including the desecration of Yazidi shrines.<sup>36</sup>

It is of particular note that the UN has been able to document some instances of torture committed in the presence of Turkish officers. For example, an underage boy was detained, strung up and beaten with a plastic hose in the presence of both SNA and Turkish officers, while another woman was detained, beaten and threatened with rape in the presence of Turkish officers. A later UN report covering rampant torture and abuse in SNA detention facilities found multiple instances where Turkish officials were present during torture, as well as maintaining a permanent presence in detention centers notorious for torture, abuse and violence against detainees.<sup>37</sup> Other reports and testimony likewise indicate that Turkish officers have been present during the torture and sexual harassment of female detainees.<sup>38</sup> Some of the worst crimes recorded have been committed in prisons directly run by the Turkish secret service (MIT), like Barad prison.

More often, however, Turkey attempts to use its SNA militias as a smokescreen, blaming them for these repeated human rights violations and claiming, without follow-up, that it will locate and punish those responsible. As a recent report indicates, “direct interventions by Turkish intelligence are considered rare in all three regions as Turkey uses the SNA to track down and suppress its opponents. Ankara has even enjoined the SNA to establish prisons for this purpose in order to avoid direct involvement in such violations. Turkish intelligence also relies on investigators from the Syrian National Police and General Security Forces in Afrin and Ras al-Ayn, which are directly tied to the Turkish security apparatus.”<sup>39</sup> Turkey uses its de facto control over the SNA, as well as its formal control over the SNA-linked security apparatus

<sup>35</sup> [https://ecfr.eu/publication/a\\_new\\_gaza\\_turkeys\\_border\\_policy\\_in\\_northern\\_syria/](https://ecfr.eu/publication/a_new_gaza_turkeys_border_policy_in_northern_syria/)

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Annual%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Annual%20Report_0.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Detention-report.aspx>

<sup>38</sup> <https://npasyria.com/en/55910/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/69657/Khayrallah%20al-Hilu%20-%20The%20Turkish%20Intervention%20in%20Northern%20Syria%20One%20Strategy%20Discrepant%20Policies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>40</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/45/31>

mentioned above, to keep these crimes at an arm's length.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Turkey has set up a Military Police, made up of SNA groups with particularly close ties to Turkey. This police force is responsible for most rights violations in the occupied areas (See Quarterly Report), yet operates seemingly independent of the Turkish Army. Nonetheless, as the UN observe:

“In areas under effective Turkish control, Turkey carries a responsibility to, as far as possible, ensure public order and safety, and to afford special protection to women and children... the Commission notes the allegations that Turkish forces were aware of incidents of looting and appropriation of civilian property and that they were present in detention facilities run by the Syrian National Army where the ill-treatment of detainees was rampant, including during interrogation sessions when torture took place.

In failing to intervene, Turkish forces may have violated the above-mentioned obligations. The Commission continues to investigate the precise extent to which various Syrian National Army brigades and Turkish forces have formed a joint command and control hierarchy and notes that, if any armed group members were shown to be acting under the effective command and control of Turkish forces, violations by these actors may entail criminal responsibility for such commanders who knew or should have known about the crimes.”<sup>41</sup>

## POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL

In areas under nominal SNA control, then, these militias are granted limited autonomy to plunder and extort money from the local population, while carrying out Turkish military and security objectives. But real power is retained by Turkey, through direct control of local political bodies, top-down exploitation of economic resources, and governance through proxies “dependent on Turkey’s political, economic and military backing for their survival.”<sup>42</sup> Turkey’s Hatay province oversees Afrin, and Şanlıurfa province administrates Tel Abyad and Sere Kaniye, while the ‘Euphrates Shield’ region which Turkey seized in 2017 is administrated by Kilis and Gaziantep provinces.<sup>43</sup>

A 2021 report by European-funded NGO ACAPS gives a clear overview of the depth and breadth of Turkish control in Afrin:

<sup>41</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/45/31>

<sup>42</sup> [https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/63745/MED\\_2019\\_10.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/63745/MED_2019_10.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

<sup>43</sup> <https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/69657/Khayrallah%20al-Hilu%20-%20The%20Turkish%20Intervention%20in%20Northern%20Syria%20One%20Strategy%20Discrepant%20Policies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Following the Olive Branch operation in 2018, governing bodies known as local councils emerged throughout Afrin, supported by Turkish authorities, to fill a critical need for social and governmental organisation. The elected local councils in these areas officially follow the Syrian Interim Government and are connected to the Aleppo provincial council, with direct administrative, logistical, and financial support from Turkish authorities – mainly the governors of Gaziantep, Kilis, and Hatay in southern Turkey.

Overall, the provision of basic services at all levels, including education, health, telecommunications, electricity, and water, falls under Turkey. For example, the Hatay health directorate and health office in the local council oversee medical and health services. Humanitarian assistance in Afrin district is also coordinated through the Turkish government, in coordination with the local councils. The presence of humanitarian responders is limited and most NGOs operate remotely, primarily from Turkey, and must collaborate very closely with AFAD for full unhindered access to Afrin.<sup>44</sup>

Turkish authorities also control the organization of and access to IDP camps; an education curriculum which forces all students to learn in Turkish and/or Arabic, despite the fact that almost all indigenous Afrinis speak Kurdish as their mother or sole tongue; and all NGO and press access to the zone of occupation. Turkish universities have opened branches in Afrin and elsewhere, while the Turkish postal service operates throughout Afrin and the Turkish zone of occupation, and is the sole provider of Turkish salaries for its formal apparatus of employees throughout the region. Alongside its use in paying salaries, Turkish lira is increasingly the de facto currency in the occupied regions.

The broader, Turkish-backed 'Etilaf' opposition council linked to the Syrian Interim Government and SNA has only ever held one General Assembly within Syria, primarily conducting its affairs from within Turkish territory.<sup>45</sup> (The same council recently came under heavy local criticism for meeting openly with the SNA commander who oversaw the brutal beating and execution of female Kurdish politician Hevrin Khalef.) Similarly, some local council members in the Turkish zone of occupation live in Turkey and cross into Syria only during office hours, in large part due to daily infighting between the Turkish-backed militias who exercise actual day-to-day dominance in these cities.

<sup>44</sup>[https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20200302\\_acaps\\_short\\_note\\_syria\\_huamitarian\\_needs\\_in\\_afrin.pdf](https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20200302_acaps_short_note_syria_huamitarian_needs_in_afrin.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> <https://twitter.com/OmerOzkizilcik/status/1326484903236603905>

The new councils established by Turkey are thus little more than a fig-leaf for the occupation. They are “directly supervise[d]” by the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, with the ‘Interim Government’ playing “no real role” in the administration of councils where “absolute loyalty to Turkey is mandatory.”<sup>46</sup> Turkish coordinators are present at multiple levels throughout these councils, while Turkey’s own ministries also maintain operatives in all the zones of Turkish occupation. Superficial ‘elections’ can only take place with Turkish supervision and approval, while salaries and budgets are directly provided by the neighbouring Turkish provinces, with appointment on the basis of cronyism and loyalty to Turkey rather than merit. These councils tend to under-represent the Kurdish population and are mostly made up of individuals with political ties to Turkey, or economic interests in the ongoing plunder of Afrin’s natural resources.

<sup>46</sup> <https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/69657/Khayrallah%20al-Hilu%20-%20The%20Turkish%20Intervention%20in%20Northern%20Syria%20One%20Strategy%20Discrepant%20Policies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>



## FACTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED AREAS

The 'Syrian National Army', in its current form, was established in late 2017 by the Turkish Army. Initially, the bulk of the group was composed mainly of Turkmen factions, such as Sultan Murad Division and Hamza Division, which had participated in Turkey's 2016 invasion of Syrian territory west of the Euphrates. After the 2018 merger with the National Front for Liberation (NFL), the SNA grew to include a kaleidoscope of militias, including former Free Syrian Army (FSA) militias, armed groups from Deir-ez-Zor in eastern Syria, as well as some Sunni Muslim extremist groups. It now numbers between 40,000 and 100,000 men.<sup>47</sup> Of some 37 major factions at the SNA's inception, 21 had at one point received CIA or Pentagon backing.<sup>48</sup> Yet many groups also harbour extremist sentiments. RIC was able to identify at least 40 former ISIS members now embedded with Turkish-controlled forces.<sup>49</sup>

Most of SNA's groups participated in the 2018 and 2019 invasions and continue to control different areas of the occupied territories. While the SNA proclaims to be the army of Syria's opposition, the coalition group is really under the thumb of the Turkish Army. Turkey pays the militiamen's salaries; Turkish hospitals care for their wounded; and Turkish forces and SADAT International Defence Consultancy, a private military contractor close to President Erdogan, trains them.<sup>50</sup> In the past, Syrian militiamen have been hired as Turkish mercenaries in conflicts from Libya to Armenia.<sup>51</sup> Between 5,000 and 17,000 SNA militiamen were sent to Libya, while an unknown number were sent to aid Azerbaijan with its assault on Armenia in 2020.<sup>52</sup>

In the occupied regions of NES, the SNA is organized into three legions, each with varying numbers of division; the divisions at times breaking into brigades. These groupings escape logic and only serve to give the SNA the appearance of a professional standing army. While it is true that legions occasionally cluster around certain geographical areas (the 1st Legion in the south-west of Afrin; the 2nd Legion around Sere Kaniye; the 3rd Legion around Tel Abyad), these observations are broken by multiple exceptions. Legions are also not organized by ethnicity, with Turkmen and Arab divisions strewn across all three. Moreover, bloody infighting often occurs within legions, divisions, and even brigades.

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/10/turkey-syria-kurds-militias-in-operation-peace-spring.html>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/10/turkey-syria-kurds-militias-in-operation-peace-spring.html>

<sup>49</sup> <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2019/08/database-over-40-former-isis-members-now-part-of-turkish-backed-forces/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/188513/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/syrians-for-truth-and-justice-submission.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-middle-east/long-read-how-erdogan-built-his-own-private-military-and-paramilitary-system-dr#>

# STRUCTURE OF THE SNA

## FIRST LEGION

### DIVISION 11

BRIGADE 111: LIWA AL-SHAMAL  
BRIGADE 112: JAYSH AL-AHFAD  
BRIGADE 113: JAYSH AL-AHFAD

### DIVISION 12

BRIGADE 121: LIWA SAMARKAND  
BRIGADE 122: LIWA AL-MUNTASIR BILLAH  
BRIGADE 123: TAJAMMU' AHRAR AL-SHARQIYA

### DIVISION 13

BRIGADE 131: LIWA AL-SULTAN MUHAMMAD AL-FATIH  
BRIGADE 132: GHAZAL BASE  
BRIGADE 133: LIWA AL-WAQQAS

### DIVISION 14

BRIGADE 141: FAYLAQ AL-SHAM (NORTH ALEPPO CONTINGENT)  
BRIGADE 143: NINTH DIVISION  
BRIGADE 144: DIVISION 20  
BRIGADE 145: JAYSH AL-NUKHBA  
BRIGADE 146: JAYSH AL-SHARQIYA

## SECOND LEGION

### DIVISION 21: SULTAN MURAD DIVISION

BRIGADE 211  
BRIGADE 212  
BRIGADE 213

### DIVISION 22: AL-HAMZA DIVISION

BRIGADE 221  
BRIGADE 222  
BRIGADE 223

### DIVISION 23: AL-MU'ATASIM DIVISION

BRIGADE 231  
BRIGADE 232  
BRIGADE 233: MEN OF WAR BRIGADE

### DIVISION 24: SULTAN MURAD DIVISION

BRIGADE 241  
BRIGADE 242 (CF. HERE)  
BRIGADE 243

### DIVISION 25: JAYSH AL-ISLAM

BRIGADE 251  
BRIGADE 252  
BRIGADE 253  
BRIGADE 254  
BRIGADE 255  
BRIGADE 256  
BRIGADE 257

### DIVISION 26: FAYLAQ AL-RAHMAN

BRIGADE 261  
BRIGADE 262  
BRIGADE 263

### DIVISION 27: SULTAN MALEK SHAH DIVISION

BRIGADE 271  
BRIGADE 272  
BRIGADE 273

### SULEMAN SHAH DIVISION

## THIRD LEGION

### DIVISION 31

BRIGADE 311: NORTHERN STORM BRIGADE  
BRIGADE 312: AHRAR MENNAGH  
BRIGADE 313: EMERGENCY FORCE

### DIVISION 32

BRIGADE 320  
BRIGADE 321  
BRIGADE 322  
BRIGADE 323

### DIVISION 33

BRIGADE 331: FACTIONS OF MARE'A. LIWA FURSAN AL-SHAMAL.  
BRIGADE 332: FORCE 55 OF TEL REF'AT  
BRIGADE 333: GROUP OF FACTIONS INCLUDING LIWA JUND AL-ISLAM, SUYUF AL-SHAM, SAJIDUN AND LIWA AL-FATAH.

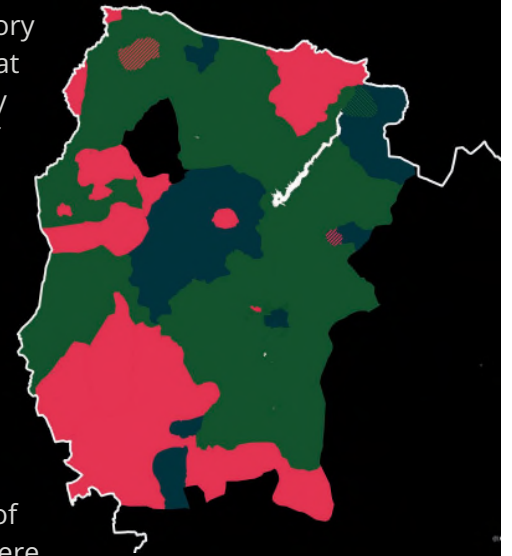
### DIVISION 34

BRIGADE 341: DIVISION 51  
BRIGADE 342: FAWJ AL-MUSTAFA AND AL-FAWJ AL-AWAL  
BRIGADE 343: LIWA AL-SULTAN OSMAN AND THUWAR AL-JAZEERA  
BRIGADE 344: LIWA AL-SALAM, DIVISION 23 AND TAJAMMU' FASTAQIM KAMA UMIRTA.

What follows is a brief description of the major factions active in the occupied areas of NES.

## SULTAN MURAD DIVISION

As with all groups eponymized after Ottoman rulers, Sultan Murad Division is a Turkmen militia - the largest one operating in Turkish-occupied areas. It claims to have a manpower of 9000 fighters.<sup>53</sup> According to our own research, at least two former ISIS-members are part of Sultan Murad, including one of the militia's commanders.<sup>54</sup> The group was active in Aleppo during the early years of the Civil War, but now operates exclusively in Turkish-controlled territory as one of Turkey's closest proxies. Sultan Murad Division was at the helm of both the 2018 and 2019 invasions and currently controls large swaths of Afrin's north-east, the north flank of the city of Afrin, it shares Sere Kaniye with Hamza Division, and controls territory east of the city, including the important water-pumping station at Alouk.



Legion distribution in occupied Afrin

Sultan Murad Division was found to have committed war crimes by the UN for participating in bombardment of a Kurdish neighbourhood in Aleppo, killing at least 83 civilians and 30 children.<sup>55</sup> Amnesty International has also documented cases of illegal detention and torture of POWs and media activists, and "beating men for fun."<sup>56</sup> In the Bulbul region of north Afrin, 600 families of Sultan Murad Division's fighters were brought in to settle formerly-Kurdish towns. They are integral to Turkey's demographic project of establishing a 'Turkmen Belt' on Afrin's border with the country. The militia was in charge of recruitment and supplied most of Turkey's mercenaries for the wars in Libya and Armenia, including most of around 180 minors who were sent to the two theatres from Syria.<sup>57</sup>

The base of Sultan Murad Division's leader, 'Abu Yazan', was raided by the Turkish military in January, allegedly because of his smuggling operation. 'Abu Yazan' escaped, while some militiamen were arrested.<sup>58</sup> The group also previously feud with al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya.

<sup>53</sup> <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2019/08/database-over-40-former-isis-members-now-part-of-turkish-backed-forces/>  
<sup>54</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/syria-armed-opposition-group-committing-war-crimes-aleppo-new-evidence>  
<sup>55</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/syria-turkey-must-stop-serious-violations-by-allied-groups-and-its-own-forces-in-afrin/>  
<sup>57</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/syrians-for-truth-and-justice-submission.pdf>  
<sup>58</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2021/01/leader-in-sultan-murad-militia-fled-from-the-village-of-ikidam-and-turkish-intelligence-arrests-his-militants/>

## HAMZA DIVISION

Hamza Division is a former FSA outfit formed in the countryside of Hasakah Governorate in 2013. It received weapons through the US 'Syrian Train and Equip Program'.<sup>59</sup> Its exact ethnic make-up is unclear, though the 'Samarkand Brigade', a Turkmen militia, once formed part of Hamza Division. The division closely collaborated with Turkish forces during the 2016 invasion and occupied the city of Jarablus. It again participated in the 2018 and 2019 invasion. Today, Hamza Division controls large swathes of territory in the north-west and south-east of Afrin, in the north of Afrin city, as well as Tel Halaf and the area south from there to the frontline, the western half of Sere Kaniye, and the Sere Kaniye border crossing, where they act as Turkey's middlemen. Many prisons known to RIC are under the Division's control.

In 2020, Turkish propaganda channel TRT claimed Hamza Division commanded 6,500 militiamen.<sup>60</sup> Many of them have been sent as mercenaries to Libya, and reportedly to Armenia as well.<sup>61</sup> Hamza Division stands accused of torturing and raping women in their prisons and beating and humiliating captured Kurds.<sup>62</sup> Of the three months in which RIC recorded crime statistics, Hamza Division was found to have committed the most violations out of any faction. (See Quarterly Report)

The militia has clashed with many other groups including Ahrar al-Sharqiyya, Ahrar al-Sham, al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya, and a splinter group within the division which stated its desire to merge with Faylaq al-Sham.

## AL-JABHAT AL-SHAMYYA ('LEVANT FRONT')

Al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya was established in Aleppo in December of 2014 as an Islamist militia opposed to President Bashar al-Assad's rule. Its ideology ranges from hard-line Salafists to more moderate Islamists, though they received US military support, including TOW missiles.<sup>63</sup> In 2016, their fighting strength was estimated at 3,000 men.

Al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya has been accused of summary executions through its system of Sharia courts by Amnesty International.<sup>64</sup> In 2018 it was declared a "criminal or-

<sup>59</sup> The Syrian National Army (SNA): Structure, Functions, and Three Scenarios for its Relationship with Damascus, Ömer Özkizilcik, SETA Foundation

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/syrian-opposition-forces-open-first-military-barracks-42056>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/syrians-for-truth-and-justice-submission.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> [https://twitter.com/Mekut\\_Mallet/status/976147595679682571](https://twitter.com/Mekut_Mallet/status/976147595679682571)

<sup>63</sup> The Syrian National Army (SNA): Structure, Functions, and Three Scenarios for its Relationship with Damascus, Ömer Özkizilcik, SETA Foundation

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/07/syria-abductions-torture-and-summary-killings-at-the-hands-of-armed-groups/>

ganisation of terrorist intent” and a “salafist and jihadist” group that “strives for setting up of the caliphate” by the Dutch government, its former backers.<sup>65</sup> Crime data collected by RIC over the first three months of 2021 suggests that al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya is one of the groups with the highest number of violations. (See Quarterly Report)

It took part in both the 2016, 2018 and 2019 invasions and currently controls the border crossing at Tel Abyad, as well as part of the frontline at Ayn Issa, and central Afrin. Some of their militiamen were recruited to fight in Libya.<sup>66</sup> They have also targeted Kobane from their base at Jarablus. Al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya have recently clashed with Jaysh al-Islam and the Sultan Muhammad al-Fateh brigade.

## AHRAR AL-SHAM (HARAKAT AHRAR AL-SHAM AL-ISLAMIYYA, ‘ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF THE FREE MEN OF THE LEVANT’)

Ahrar al-Sham is a Salafist outfit formed in 2011 in Idlib. They cooperated with ISIS until 2014, when a bloody feud with the terror group almost wiped out al-Sham. From 2015 they received Saudi and Turkish funding, and even attempted to negotiate with the Assad government. Before the merger, they were part of the NFL, though are not part of the SNA today. They currently control the town of Qatmah in Afrin, as well as some parts of west Afrin city.<sup>67</sup>

## AHRAR AL-SHARQIYA (TAJAMMU AHRAR AL-SHARQIYA, ‘GATHERING OF FREE MEN OF THE EAST’)

As their name denotes, Ahrar al-Sharqiya hails from eastern Syria. It established itself as an independent group in 2016, when it split from Ahrar al-Sham. Nonetheless, the majority of Ahrar al-Sharqiya’s militiamen are former members of Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda’s branch in Syria), including its leader, al-Nusra’s leading Shari’a judge in eastern Syria. Additionally, RIC has identified at least two former ISIS fighters who are now part of Ahrar al-Sharqiya, including a commander.<sup>68</sup> Citizens in Afrin have spoken to reporters about al-Sharqiya’s attempts to impose the veil and other sharia-law measures.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> [https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/03/TNA\\_report.pdf](https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/03/TNA_report.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-middle-east/long-read-how-erdogan-built-his-own-private-military-and-paramilitary-system-dr#>

<sup>67</sup> <https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>

<sup>68</sup> <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2019/08/database-over-40-former-isis-members-now-part-of-turkish-backed-forces/>

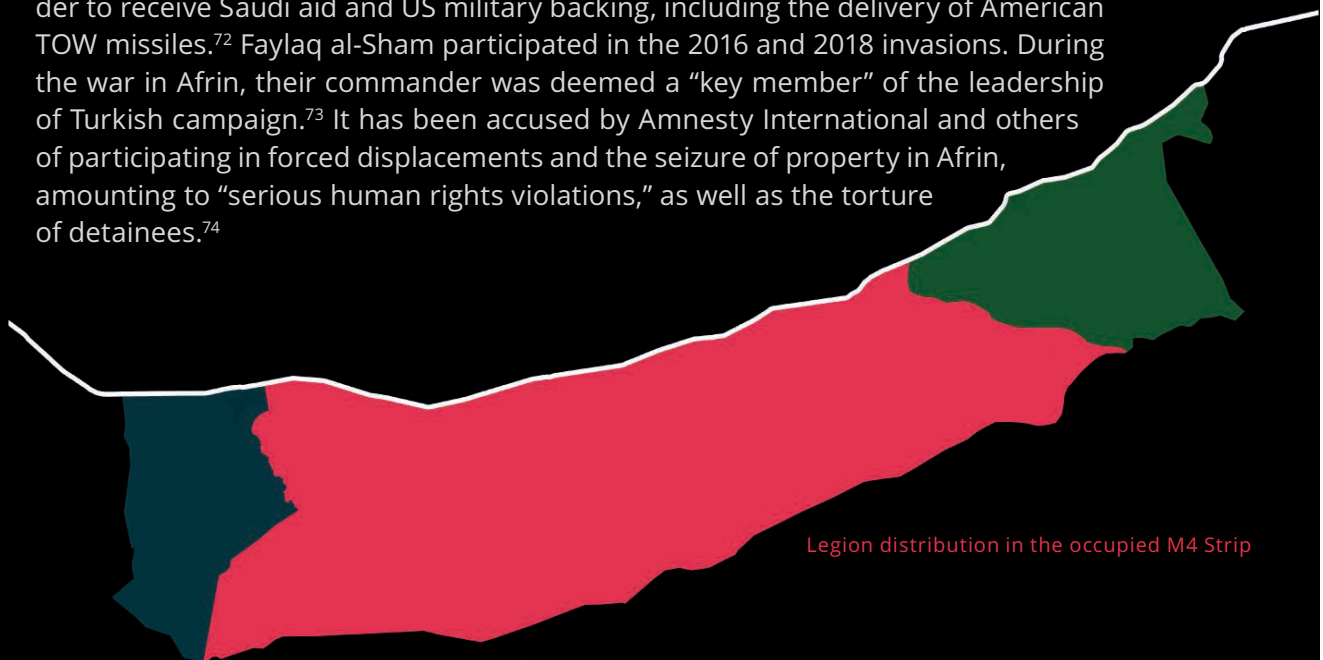
<sup>69</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/culture-clash-campaign-syrias-liberal-afrin-tells-women-cover-328145705>

They have been accused by Amnesty International and others of participating in forced displacements and the seizure of property in Afrin, amounting to “serious human rights violations.”<sup>70</sup> Most infamously, Ahrar-al-Sharqiya attracted particular media attention following their execution of Hevrin Khalef, a Kurdish politician, near Tel Abyad in 2019. The head of Ahrar al-Sharqiya’s branch in Jarabalus was also caught on video sexually abusing a 13- or 14-year-old girl.<sup>71</sup>

Ahrar al-Sharqiya commands around 2,000 men. It has taken part in all Turkish invasions and today controls the city of Rajo and surroundings, and the region of Jarabalus in Afrin, as well as the old town of Afrin city, and over 1,800km<sup>2</sup> of territory between Tel Abyad and Sere Kaniye, including the Mabrouka power station. Ahrar al-Sharqiya clashed with Hamza Division in 2018.

### FAYLAQ AL-SHAM (“SHAM LEGION”)

Another former NFL group, Faylaq al-Sham was borne out of a 2014 alliance between 19 Aleppo region-based militias. Though the group had strong ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, Faylaq al-Sham distanced itself from the brotherhood in order to receive Saudi aid and US military backing, including the delivery of American TOW missiles.<sup>72</sup> Faylaq al-Sham participated in the 2016 and 2018 invasions. During the war in Afrin, their commander was deemed a “key member” of the leadership of Turkish campaign.<sup>73</sup> It has been accused by Amnesty International and others of participating in forced displacements and the seizure of property in Afrin, amounting to “serious human rights violations,” as well as the torture of detainees.<sup>74</sup>



Legion distribution in the occupied M4 Strip

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/syria-turkey-must-stop-serious-violations-by-allied-groups-and-its-own-forces-in-afrin/>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.francesoir.fr/en-coop-matteo-puxton/syrie-ahrar-al-sharqiya-ces-anciens-dal-nosra-qui-combattent-avec-larmee?platform=hootsuite>

<sup>72</sup> The Syrian National Army (SNA): Structure, Functions, and Three Scenarios for its Relationship with Damascus, Ömer Özkizilcik, SETA Foundation

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/24118>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/syria-turkey-must-stop-serious-violations-by-allied-groups-and-its-own-forces-in-afrin/>

Faylaq al-Sham counted between 8,500 and 10,000 militiamen in 2018,<sup>75</sup> and provided the SNA with its top commander, Fadlallah al-Haji. In Afrin, it shares much of Hamza Division's territory, controlling the region's southern flank, as well as positions along the north-west. It also provided mercenaries to Azerbaijan's war effort against Armenia in 2020.<sup>76</sup>

## JAYSH AL-ISLAM ('ARMY OF ISLAM')

Liwa al-Islam was established in the Eastern Ghouta neighbourhood of Damascus in late 2011, and in 2013 merged with 50 other Salafist factions to form Jaysh al-Islam. Partially funded by Saudi Arabia, it advocated for the "cleansing of the filth" of religious minorities, including Shi'a Muslims, in Syria.<sup>77</sup> With around 10-15,000 militiamen,<sup>78</sup> the Salafist group held East Ghouta under totalitarian rule for years, until it was forced out as the tide of war turned in Assad's favour. Around 1,500 fighters and their families escaped to Turkish-occupied territories.

Testimonies from its al-Tawba prison describe electrocution, beatings and mass detention of minors.<sup>79</sup> The Idlib branch of Jaysh al-Islam was also among the forces found to have committed war crimes by the United Nations for participating in bombardment of a Kurdish neighbourhood in Aleppo, killing at least 83 civilians and 30 children.<sup>80</sup> Since arriving in Afrin and joining the SNA, the group has made public statements declaring Kurdish people to be its enemy.<sup>81</sup> Per the Syrian Observatory of Human Rights, its members have been extorting local farmers, forcing them to hand over produce for half its value, and imprisoning those who refuse to obey; expropriating land from religious minorities; and raping women.<sup>82</sup> They have also sent mercenaries to Libya.<sup>83</sup>

Currently, Jaysh al-Islam controls the frontlines with the SDF around Tel Tamir, as well as territory south of Afrin city. It fused with al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya and Hamza Division in 2020, as well as with Faylaq al-Rahman in recent months.

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/pro-turkey-rebels-start-pullout-from-syrias-idlib-under-deal/a-45693917>

<sup>76</sup> <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-middle-east/long-read-how-erdogan-built-his-own-private-military-and-paramilitary-system-dr#>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/zahran-alloush/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://medium.com/@ryanmofarrell/jabhat-al-shamiya-is-one-of-the-more-complicated-rebel-factions-and-has-gone-through-multiple-a7f24030e1f>

<sup>79</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/syria-torture-army-of-islam\\_us\\_56f54d0fe4b0143a9b47fc59](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/syria-torture-army-of-islam_us_56f54d0fe4b0143a9b47fc59)

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/syria-armed-opposition-group-committing-war-crimes-aleppo-new-evidence>

<sup>81</sup> SOHR, <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=92283>

<sup>82</sup> SOHR, <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=106133>

<sup>83</sup> <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-middle-east/long-read-how-erdogan-built-his-own-private-military-and-paramilitary-system-dr#>

## FAYLAQ AL-RAHMAN ('AL-RAHMAN LEGION')

Faylaq al-Rahman is a moderately Islamist militia from Eastern Ghouta, funded by Qatar. According to a 2018 surrender agreement with the Assad government, 5,000 of its militiamen left Damascus in 2018 toward Turkish-controlled territory. It currently holds some minor territory north-east of Afrin city, as well as south of Tel Abyad. In previous years, when the Gulf Crisis was at its peak, Faylaq al-Rahman fought a bloody war against Saudi-backed Jaysh al-Islam in Damascus.<sup>84</sup> Today, they are Division 26 and 25, respectively, of the SNA's 2nd Legion.

## MU'TASIM DIVISION

Mu'tasim Division is a former FSA militia with a minor footprint within the occupied territories of NES, though it claimed to employ 1,000 fighters in 2017.<sup>85</sup> It has participated in all three Turkish invasions of Syria, having been accused of abusing, beating and trampling on captured Kurdish YPG soldiers in Afrin,<sup>86</sup> and reportedly sent a high number of mercenaries to Libya on behalf of Turkey, for which it also recruited militiamen from other factions.<sup>87</sup> It currently has training camps south of Rajo in Afrin and south-east of Sere Kaniye.

## OTHER MILITIAS

A number of minor Turkmen militias are also active in Turkish-occupied areas. The **Suleiman Shah Brigade**, **Samarqand Brigade**, **Sultan Mehmed Fatih**, and **al-Waqqas Brigade** control territory along the south-western border between Afrin and Turkey. Suleiman Shah in particular is a close proxy of Turkey's, having recruited for and provided a large amount of mercenaries for the Libyan War as well as the 2020 assault on Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>88</sup> All groups have been accused of crimes, though Suleiman Shah in particular has been accused of repeated grave human rights violations. The group provoked mass protests in Afrin following accusations of repeated rape of a local woman. Suleiman Shah additionally controls part of the frontline north of Ayn Issa. In April 2021, the militia left the 1st Legion for the 2nd, and changed from identifying as a brigade to identifying as a division. The three latter groups declared their intention to merge to form the 13th Division in May 2021.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-gulf-qatar-syria/gulf-crisis-seen-widening-split-in-syria-rebellion-idUKKBN19517W?edition-redirect=uk>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2017/04/free-syrian-army-training-camps-turkey-islamic-state.html>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.rudaw.net/NewsDetails.aspx?pageid=242071>

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/syrians-for-truth-and-justice-submission.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/syrians-for-truth-and-justice-submission.pdf>

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.aymennjawad.org/2019/11/the-structure-of-the-syrian-national-army>



Some smaller non-Turkmen militias are also active in the occupied areas, including **Jaysh al-Nukhba ('Elite Army')**, a former NFL group which now controls the important border area in the north of Afrin; **Suqour al-Sham ('Northern Falcons Brigade')**, an offshoot of Ahrar al-Sham which has sent mercenaries to Libya and is currently active on the Tell Tamir front and in the town of Sa'ra in Afrin<sup>90</sup>; **Faylaq al-Majd ('Glory Corps')**, a group established in 2017 to serve in the 3rd Legion of the SNA under the helm of al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya and which incorporated a number of former **Nour al-Din al-Zinki Movement's** fighters in 2019; while also sending mercenaries to the war in Libya, and finally the **20th Division**, a militia made up mostly of fighters from Syria's east which controls the Turkish-Syrian border region between Tel Abyad and Sere Kaniye.

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-send-syrian-rebel-fighters-fight-haftar-libya>

## QUARTERLY REPORT

In February of 2021, the Turkish occupation forces invited Carlotta Gall of the New York Times and Lluís Miquel Hurtado of the Spanish daily El Mundo on press tours of occupied Afrin.<sup>91 92</sup> The subsequent articles they filed caused widespread indignation, as human rights workers, journalists, and activists familiar with Afrin saw them as an attempt at whitewashing a violent military occupation. Gall, for instance, called Afrin a “safe zone” for IDPs, concealing the fact that these refugees formed part of Turkey’s demographic engineering project. The Times article describes Turkey handling security “like any NATO force,” but does not mention the litany of rights violations committed by its own forces and the militias they have installed in Afrin, including many Sunni fundamentalist outfits. The cultural erasure of this majority-Kurdish region is branded “the choice of the people.” Barely one Afrin resident was quoted.

The press tours were only one of a multitude of strategies employed by the occupying forces to soften the brutal reality of life under Turkish occupation. For the first time since 2018, Kurds in Afrin were allowed to celebrate Newroz [Kurdish New Year] on March 21st of this year, albeit under Turkish supervision. As a direct response to such attempts at soft-pedaling their military occupation of Syrian-Kurdish territory, the Rojava Information Center began tallying the crimes committed under Turkish control from the start of 2021.

For the first quarter of 2021, RIC recorded 363 arrests across all Turkish-occupied areas of North and East Syria, with 312 arrests in Afrin and 51 in the M4 Strip. Nearly all those arrested are Kurdish, even where – as in Afrin – Kurds have been made a minority group. The reason given for their arrest in nearly all cases is the suspicion of harboring sympathies for the AANES. Arrests in Afrin spiked in February, with 135 arrests, due in part to the large raid on Bassouta, Afrin district, in which around 50 people were arrested, including five women and a young man who are still missing, and large amounts of property confiscated. The raid followed an IED explosion in one of the town’s houses, which Turkish media reported as a terrorist plot gone awry, but a reliable on-the-ground source tells us was planted by the military police of Hamza Division in order to rob a wealthy local tradesman. He and his niece were killed during the explosion. At least one of the detained women has been tortured.<sup>93</sup>

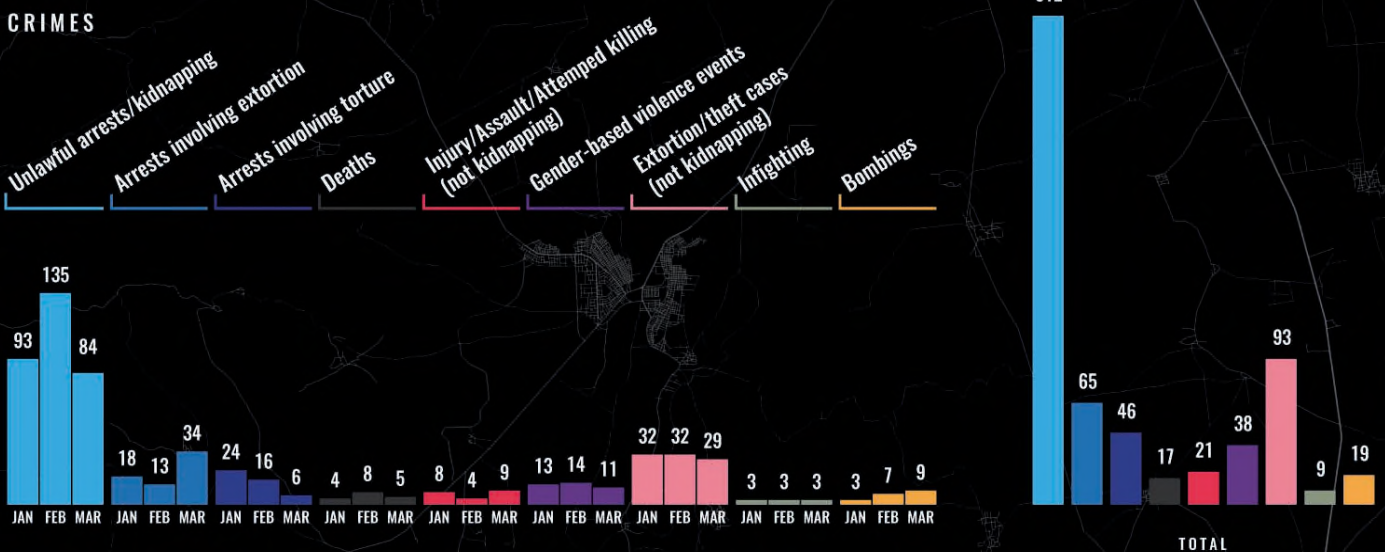
<sup>91</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/16/world/middleeast/syria-turkey-erdogan-afrin.html?searchResultPosition=1>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2021/02/07/601ef0e021efa0144d8b4685.html>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/206413/>

Maydan Ikbis, in north Rajo district, also saw a large raid by Hamza Division in which 11 people were arrested and one, Sheikmous Mustafa Qasim, was tortured to death while imprisoned. His crime was his alleged work for the AANES. In a January raid in the town of Kakheres, Maabatli, by the Suleiman Shah brigade following the burning of an official’s car, 17 men were arrested and tortured – one so severely that he is now permanently disabled. (See testimonies section) During the first quarter of 2021, RIC was able to identify 46 cases out of 312 in Afrin in which those arrested had been tortured. The true figure is likely higher. A representative of ‘Hevdestî Association’, a documentation center for crimes committed in the occupied areas, told RIC that in the M4 Strip “most arrests include the use of torture.” Turkish intelligence services (MIT) were present in at least one case of torture during the first three months of 2021. In 65 cases in Afrin, monetary gain seems to have been the motivating factor for citizen’s arrests. Ransom payments usually ranged from \$1,000 to several thousand dollars. Torture and ransom extraction are by no means mutually exclusive categories, as torture is often employed to pressure families into paying.

CRIMES



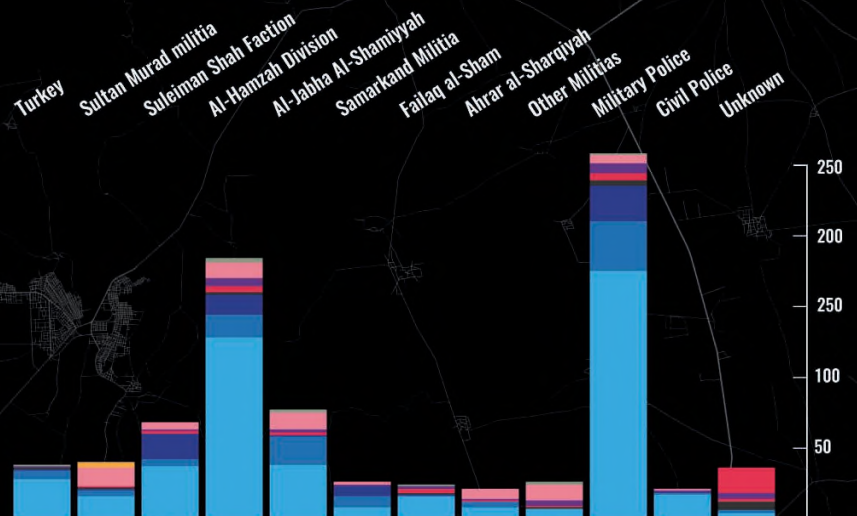
Furthermore, no less than 25 people died across all occupied areas as a direct result of Turkish forces or Turkish-backed militias, with at least three murdered Afrin women among them. These form part of 38 gender-based violence events recorded across the three months. They include the arrests of a minor as well as that of a disabled woman in night-time raids,<sup>94</sup> and the temporary extradition to

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/202337/>

Turkey of Ghezale Mannan Salmo, an elderly Yazidi woman who was tortured so severely by her captors that she suffered severe memory loss. (See testimonies section) The aforementioned USCIRF report, released in May, made use of her story to highlight Turkey’s appalling track record in relation to religious minorities, and to call for a Turkish withdrawal from its occupation zones in Syria.<sup>95</sup> RIC visited friends of Mrs. Salmo’s in Shehba, who accuse Turkish authorities of delaying her release in order to cover up their crimes.

FACTIONS

- BOMBINGS
- INFIGHTING
- EXTORTION/THEFT CASES (NOT KIDNAPPING)
- GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EVENTS
- INJURY/ASSAULT/ATTEMPTED KILLING (NOT KIDNAPPING)
- DEATHS
- ARRESTS INVOLVING TORTURE
- ARRESTS INVOLVING EXTORTION
- UNLAWFUL ARRESTS/KIDNAPPING



Mrs. Salmo’s is only the latest case of illegal extraditions to Turkey from the occupied areas. In March 2021, Çiçek Kobane, an SDF soldier illegally extradited from near occupied Sere Kaniye in 2019, was sentenced to life-long imprisonment in Turkey.<sup>96</sup> March also brought to light the experience of Nadia Suleiman, a young Kurdish woman who was repeatedly tortured and raped during her over two-year imprisonment by Hamza Division and MIT.

Across the first quarter of 2021, RIC was able to identify 93 instances of theft and extortion. These include the imposition of fees by militias, the expropriation and sale of real estate, as well as the theft of harvest trees, particularly olive trees. At least 2,877 privately-owned trees were cut down by militiamen from January to March. In March, Turkish-backed Afrin local councils in Afrin issued a decree legalizing the sei-

<sup>95</sup> [https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Annual%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Annual%20Report_0.pdf)  
<sup>96</sup> <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/240320211>

zure of property of those forcibly displaced.<sup>97</sup> A report by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights depicts money laundering as endemic among militias and conducted with the tacit approval of Turkish superiors. According to them, one particularly astonishing case,

“is the businesses of the commander of Suleiman Shah Division, Mohammed Al-Jasem ‘Abu Amsha’. Abu Amsha has turned Sheikh Hadid district into a private kingdom, appointed himself as the ‘Sultan’ of hundreds of affiliated members, opened a mall, coffee shop and other businesses with Turkish support and after looting the residents’ properties and deducting 300 to 600 USD from the salary of every affiliated militiaman sent to Libya and Azerbaijan, 1,250 of who have been sent to Libya only.”<sup>98</sup>

Another Observatory report alleged that an unnamed SNA group is conducting illegal excavations at the Roman amphitheater of Cyrrhus (Nebi Hurri), in territory RIC can ascribe to Jaysh al-Nukhba. According to the Syrian Observatory, militiamen conduct excavations in full view of Turkish soldiers. As was the case with earlier instances of archaeological plunder, the finds will likely be transported to Turkey and find private buyers there.<sup>99</sup>

In Sere Kaniye, sources tell RIC that efforts continue to settle ISIS women and their children in the al-’Abra and Zerdesh neighborhood. These families - Iraqi escapees from al-Hol camp 40km to the southeast - were first observed in the city at the end of 2020. According to Ezdina, a Yazidi news website, they were smuggled into the city with the help of Sultan Murad Division and Ahrar al-Sharqiya under the supervision of MIT.<sup>100</sup> SNA militiamen have been encouraged to marry the ISIS widows and adopt their children. In al-Hol camp, security officials told RIC that rifles confiscated from ISIS sleeper cells during a recent security operation originated from occupied Tel Abyad.

In the town of Qibare, near Afrin city, an extremist group close to Faylaq al-Rahman named Habibat Allah intimidated the local Yazidi population into attending Muslim prayer in late March. Its members furthermore asked passersby to recite the shahada (the Muslim profession of faith) and for women to wear the veil. According to one report, women affiliated with the group were also active in the region.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> <http://afripost.net/ar/2021/03/%d8%a7d9%84d9%85d8%ac%d8%a7d9%84d8%b3-%d8%a7d9%84d9%85d8%ad%d9%84d9%8a%d8%a9-%d8%a7d9%84d8%aa%d8%a7d8%a8%d8%b9%d8%a9-%d9%84d9%84d8%a7d8%ad%d8%aa%d9%84d8%a7d9%84-%d8%a7d9%84d8%aa/>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/206384/>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.syriahr.com/en/206676/>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.ezdina.com/2020/12/Reportag-Ezidi288.html?m=1>

<sup>101</sup> <http://afripost.net/ar/2021/03/%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%8C%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%8F%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B2/>

The first three months of the year saw a large amount of infighting between various SNA groups. Hamza Division feud with Faylaq al-Sham over a splitter group, leaving several dead and more injured; with Ahrar al-Sharqiya for the village of Jolaqe, which they share; and with civil police for the border crossing in Sere Kaniye, likely in order to aid its smuggling business. The governor of Urfa has reportedly urged the civil police and Ahrar al-Sharqiya to expel Hamza Division from the city. Factions within Hamza Division also repeatedly fought among themselves, leaving at least three militiamen dead. In January, Turkish forces raided the village of Ikdam in order to arrest a Sultan Murad commander who had established a smuggling ring. Another commander was shot dead in occupied Azaz by his cousin, commander of Suqour al-Shamal. A shootout between military police and Sultan Murad militiamen killed one bystander and injured his daughter in Afrin city. Al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya feud with Jaysh al-Islam in February, leaving two dead and twelve injured. In March, militiamen from Sultan Mehmed Fatih shot at an al-Jabhat al-Shamiyya checkpoint.

Insecurity in both occupied regions is further augmented by periodic bombing attacks in their civilian centers. At least 14 of the attacks that rocked Afrin and 4 in Sere Kaniye can be attributed to local Kurdish liberation movements. These attacks tend to target buildings belonging to one of the militias, though bystanders are also often killed. At least 26 militiamen and settlers have been killed by such attacks, with dozens more injured. Seven children were also killed this month. In Afrin, these attacks were likely perpetrated by the 'Wrath of Olives', a clandestine Kurdish insurgent group, while others might have been executed by the 'Afrin Liberation Forces', a guerrilla group with ties to Kurdish armed forces which has also struck against Turkish military targets in the region.

While the year began with efforts to downplay and normalize the Turkish occupation, the figures for the first three months of 2021 paint a different picture. Arrests have continued at a steady pace month by month and even peaked in February. Human rights abuses are still widespread, as a March 2021 UN report on arbitrary imprisonment and detention in Syria shows. It found that human rights violations were "rampant" in SNA prisons, with 87% of victims belonging to minority groups (including Kurds). "Turkish forces," it said, "were regularly present" at these facilities.<sup>102</sup> The data collected by RIC corroborates these findings. The fact that the groups with the closest ties to the Turkish army (the military police and Hamza Division) top the charts for rights violations this quarter betrays the fact that the SNA's crimes are not just 'militiamen gone amok', but rather part of a centrally-controlled intimidation campaign. Taken together, the figures for the first quarter of 2021 lay bare the fact that the Turkish occupation and ethnic cleansing project is far from over. More important still, the accounts of victims of the Turkish occupation provide a powerful counter-narrative to those spread on the pages of some of the world's leading newspapers.

## TESTIMONIES

### “AMINA SHERO”

My name is Amina Shero [name changed] from the village Basufanê, born in '98. Some of my family members still live in the village. On the day they took Ghezal Salmo, a 45-year-old woman, militiamen from Faylaq al-Sham were arresting the young men of the village, 15 to 20 of them, and they wanted to arrest her son as well. He is sick; he is only 13 years old. They came in plain clothes. They wanted to take him by force so they hit him and his father. Ghezale told [the militiamen] not to take her son because she wanted to bring him to the hospital, that he needed surgery. He had an infection. While in their house, the militiamen saw a picture of her other son, who is a shehid [martyr of the YPG]. They beat the younger son in their house, so Ghezale slapped a mercenary in the face and they arrested her and brought her to jail. It was the morning of the 5th of January. It's been four months since she was taken to jail. They brought her to Iska village. Afterwards, they extradited her to Turkey, to bring her before court, they said. But until now, she wasn't brought before any court. After less than a week – three or four days - they then returned her to Iska. She has been there until today.

I talked with her daughter, and she said that they had tortured her mother so much that she is unrecognizable. Everybody in the family tried to visit her, but they don't let anybody see her. Some time ago they asked for money. They asked for 1,100,000 SYP to release her. The family said, “OK, we will give you the money if you release her,” and the mercenary said, “no, we will release her whenever we want.” They said that she forgot everything, she doesn't recognize people she knows.

There was a car bomb attack in the village on the road from Basufane to Tahlê. One of the mercenaries of Liwa was killed and now they say that it was their mother who did it, they say that sher has links to the YPG and that it's she who was responsible for the bombing. In their prison they told her she was an agent of the YPG and that she was feeding them information.

When they brought Ghezale to be interrogated, they said, “one of your children is a shehid [martyr] and your other daughter is in the YPJ,” and she answered, “yes, and I am proud of it.” They told her to change her answer in her statement, but she refused. Because she has two daughters in the YPJ, the mercenaries told her to bring her daughters. “We want your daughters,” they said. That’s also why they don’t release Ghezale: because they want her daughters to go there. Her youngest daughter went to see her [in the jail] on Thursday. [She said that] they had beaten her mother so much that she tried to cut open her veins with a sharp stone, so they had to bring her to the hospital, and she survived. She wanted to kill herself. Because of all the torture she has lost her mind. Her daughter told me, “sometimes my mother recognizes me, sometimes she does not.”

Ghezale’s husband also suffered: his eye popped out of the socket. Before she was arrested, the mercenaries had brought him in by force to cut wood one day, and he wounded himself with a piece of the tree. He lost his eye. The mercenary wanted to bring him to the hospital in Sermeda (next to Idlib), but in the end they didn’t. He was forcibly brought to work, without a salary. They are cutting the trees of the people, and they force them to cut the trees themselves. They didn’t give him money and didn’t bring him to the hospital, either. Now he is disabled.

A week ago, I told my own brother that I wanted to take him and my sister to Shehba. My brother said, “I am not coming, I am afraid of being arrested on the way, I have been tortured once, I don’t want to go through this again.” He is too afraid to come. My brother was beaten a lot. He was arrested again a month ago, in late March. The last time I wanted to get him out of Afrin, he was beaten. Every month they arrest the young men of the village, beat them up, and release them. My sister, who is only 15, was also arrested and beaten up. They also released her. Every time there is a bomb attack or an IED, they arrest people and put them in jail. They use electric cables to beat you. The thick ones. They are beating the body and the back, they are also using the butts of their weapon (Kalashnikov rifles). Sticks, too. When they arrested my sister, they were slapping her while she was in jail, but the one who was really being beaten was my brother.

Our village is a Yazidi village; the mercenaries tell them that they are kufar [unbelievers]. They destroyed all of our shrines. They built a lot of mosques and they force the people to go to the mosque five times a day or else they beat them. There used to be 300 Kurdish families in Basufanê, now there are only 40 left. Every couple of days they arrest someone and extract a ransom from them and then release them.



The mercenaries took most of the trees of the village; they rake in all of the harvest. I desperately want to get my family out, especially my sister. Because of the mercenaries and what they do to women. But they don't want to; they are too afraid. Now she is wearing long clothes and a hijab. I wanted to get her out and [the smugglers] wanted 250 dollars, but I told them I didn't have that kind of money. We also wanted to get my brother out, to Manbij, but he didn't accept out of fear.

### “ALI SULEIMAN HASSAN”

My name is Ali Suleiman Hassan [name changed], from Afrin, Mabata district, Kaxrê village. Since I left Afrin, I hear what's happening in my village from my friends and parents, they are secretly communicating with me through WhatsApp. Nobody can talk freely about what's happening, so they have to hide to talk with me.

In our village, Kaxrê, there used to be 500 families, now about 300 families are gone, to Shehba, Aleppo and Jazeera. Less than 200 families stayed. A relative of mine is still there. Other than him, everybody in my family left the region. Only Kurdish Muslims lived in our village. After we left, they started with the violations. They gathered everybody in the village, forced them to the mosque, stole their houses. And for the proprietaries of the ones that left, it's easy: they took everything. They looted everything from the houses, moved into them and took the olive trees and the land for themselves.

I know someone who had an olive oil factory. He and his family left Aleppo [at beginning of the Syrian Civil War], and brought all of their belongings with them. All the things that were in their shop in Aleppo, they brought to Afrin, about 20 million SYP's worth. All of this was stolen. And if you take into account all of their belongings from the different houses, you can add 100 million on top of that. They took everything.

I myself had 500 olive trees, and they stole everything, 100 walnut trees, too. They also cut down 200 olive trees. What did they do with our 500 trees? They cut one, left one, cut one, left one. Some time ago, I got the information that they were bringing refugees from Ghouta, Homs, Idlib, etc. to settle the village. The people of the village were really angry. Everybody had to give money to the mercenaries in order not to be thrown out of their houses. 1500 USD each.

Two months ago, a car was burned down in our village. In the aftermath, Ahrar al-Sham mercenaries arrested 17 people and surrounded the village for four days. Nobody could leave or enter the village. Of the ones that were arrested, some had their hand broken, some their rib cage, their legs broken or their teeth broken. They employed every method of torture. They beat them with sticks, cables. There was one who had all of his nails ripped off. Most of them were released by paying up 1000 USD, 1000 TL, as much as they could get together, and after all of this, they told them, "it was not your fault [ie. the arson attack]." At the end it was made clear that it had been them [the mercenaries] who burned it.

The torture was by order of the Turks, although the mercenaries were doing the torturing. The Turks are hiding behind the backs of the mercenaries. Everything that happens here is happening in full knowledge of Turkish forces. The mercenaries told the villagers, "if we'd do everything the Turks ask us to do, you wouldn't be able to survive half an hour here." Everything that happens in Afrin is happening by the orders of the Turks. We know this. If there were no Turks, the mercenaries couldn't last more than 24 hours in Afrin. The Turks help them with everything - with logistics, military planning, planes, weapons, everything.

In the village, they are forcing the people to go to the mosque. Every day, every prayer. The people, all of them, they are afraid at all times. Even when they hear someone knocking on their door they are afraid. They say, "we don't know when and where they will come to take us," "we don't know when a bomb will fall on our house," "when we want to go on our lands, we need to get an authorization from them," "if the land is my brother's, they don't let me cultivate it." I know one man who went and tried to harvest a bag of olives one day, from his own fields. And just for this they imprisoned him for two days and took 1000 USD from him. Nobody can do anything. Now my land's there, but they occupy it, take our trees, cut our trees, everything...

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# Exhibit 59

October 18, 2019 12:01 am

## **Syria: Damning evidence of war crimes and other violations by Turkish forces and their allies**

Turkish military forces and a coalition of Turkey-backed Syrian armed groups have displayed a shameful disregard for civilian life, carrying out serious violations and war crimes, including summary killings and unlawful attacks that have killed and injured civilians, during the offensive into northeast Syria, said Amnesty International today.

The organization gathered witness testimony between 12 and 16 October from 17 people including medical and rescue workers, displaced civilians, journalists, local and international humanitarian workers, as well as analyzing and verifying video footage and reviewing medical reports and other documentation.

The information gathered provides damning evidence of indiscriminate attacks in residential areas, including attacks on a home, a bakery and a school, carried out by Turkey and allied Syrian armed groups. It also reveals gruesome details of a summary killing in cold blood of a prominent Syrian-Kurdish female politician, Hevrin Khalaf, by members of Ahrar Al-Sharqiya, part of the Syrian National Army, a coalition of Syrian armed groups equipped and supported by Turkey.

“The Turkish military offensive into northeast Syria has wreaked havoc on the lives of Syrian civilians who once again have been forced to flee their homes and are living in constant fear of indiscriminate bombardment, abductions and summary killings. Turkish military forces and their allies have displayed an utterly callous disregard for civilian lives, launching unlawful deadly attacks in residential areas that have killed and injured civilians,” said Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

“

**Turkish military forces and their allies have displayed an utterly callous disregard for civilian lives, launching**

**unlawful deadly attacks in residential areas that have killed and injured civilians**

## KILLED AND INJURED CIVILIANS

### Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International

“Turkey is responsible for the actions of the Syrian armed groups it supports, arms and directs. So far, Turkey has given these armed groups free rein to commit serious violations in Afrin and elsewhere. We call on Turkey again to end violations, hold perpetrators accountable, and protect civilians living under their control. Turkey cannot evade responsibility by outsourcing war crimes to armed groups.”

The Kurdish-led administration’s health authority in northeast Syria **said on 17 October that at least 218 civilians have been killed in Syria, including 18 children**, since the offensive began.

According to the Turkish authorities, 18 civilians have died and 150 have been injured in Turkey up to 15 October, as a result of mortar attacks they attribute to Kurdish forces in Syria. If Kurdish forces are firing imprecise explosive weapons into civilian areas in Turkey this would violate international humanitarian law. They should stop such unlawful attacks immediately.

## Attacks on civilians in northeast Syria

In one of the most horrific attacks documented, a Kurdish Red Crescent worker described how he pulled bodies from the wreckage of a Turkish air strike on 12 October at around 7am, in which two munitions landed near to a school in Salhiye, where civilians displaced by the fighting had sought shelter.

“Everything happened so fast. In total, there were six injured and four killed, including two children. I couldn’t tell if they were boys or girls because their corpses were black. They looked like charcoal. The other two people killed were older men, they looked older than 50. Honestly, I am still in shock,” he said, adding that the nearest frontline was more than 1km away and that there no fighters or military objectives in the vicinity at the time of the attack.

Another Kurdish Red Crescent worker described to Amnesty International his attempts to rescue an 11-year-old boy and an eight-year-old girl who were injured when mortars landed as they played outside their home near al-Salah mosque in Qamishli. He said that Qamishli had come under heavy indiscriminate attack since 10 October and residential homes, a bakery and restaurant had been struck.



“The boy was injured in his chest. The injury was horrible. He had an open wound... and he couldn’t breathe. It looked like a [piece of] shrapnel ripped his chest open,” the Kurdish Red Crescent worker said.

The boy later died of his wounds. His sister was also struck by shrapnel in the attack and doctors were forced to amputate part of her leg below the knee. The rescue worker said there were no military bases or checkpoints anywhere in the vicinity.

In a separate incident on 13 October, according to independent international monitors, a Turkish air strike on a market struck a civilian convoy that included several journalists travelling between Qamishli and Ras al-Ain. According the Kurdish Red Crescent six civilians, including one journalist, were killed in the incident and 59 people were injured. A journalist who was present on the scene and witnessed the attack described it as “an absolute massacre”. He said the convoy was made up of around 400 civilian vehicles and that there were no fighters present, only a handful of armed guards protecting the convoy.

“All parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law, which requires that all feasible precautions are taken to avoid, or at least, minimize civilian harm. Striking a civilian convoy is inexcusable,” said Kumi Naidoo.

“There is also no justification for indiscriminately shelling civilian areas using imprecise weapons such as mortars. Such unlawful attacks must be investigated and those responsible held to account.”

“

**All parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law, which requires that all feasible precautions are taken to avoid, or at least, minimize civilian harm.**

**Kumi Naidoo, Amnesty International**

The USA is the largest exporter of weapons to Turkey. Other suppliers include Italy, Germany, Brazil and India. Amnesty International is calling on states to immediately suspend arms transfers to Turkey and other parties to the conflict in Syria, including

suspected arms transfers to Turkey and other parties to the conflict in Syria, including Kurdish forces, against whom there are credible allegations of serious violations of international law, of weapons that could be used to commit or facilitate human rights violations.

## Summary killings and abduction

Amnesty International also corroborated witness testimony, verified video footage and reviewed a medical report to shed light on how Hevrin Khalaf, a Kurdish female politician and Secretary General of the Future Syria political party, was ambushed on 12 October on the international highway linking Raqqa to Qamishli. She was dragged out of her car, beaten and shot dead in cold blood by fighters from Ahrar al-Sharqiya. They also summarily killed her bodyguard.

On the same day and location Ahrar al-Sharqiya fighters also captured and then killed at least two Kurdish fighters. They also abducted two civilian men, both of whom work with a local medical organization and were transporting medicine at the time they were captured. Family members confirmed to Amnesty International that their whereabouts remained unknown. Amnesty International verified the time and date of the videos showing that the summary killings and abduction of the two civilians carried out on the afternoon on 12 October.

“

**Killing defenseless people in cold blood is utterly reprehensible and a blatant war crime.**

**Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International**

Hevrin Khalaf's close friend told Amnesty International that when she tried to call Hevrin's phone, a man who identified himself as a Syrian armed opposition fighter answered. In Arabic, he told her: "You Kurds are traitors, all of you in the [PKK] party are operatives" and informed her that Hevrin had been killed.

A medical report seen by Amnesty International lists a series of injuries inflicted on Hevrin Khalaf, including multiple gunshot wounds to the head, face and back as well as fractures to her legs, face and skull, detachment of skin from her skull and loss of hair as a result of being dragged by the hair.

“Killing defenseless people in cold blood is utterly reprehensible and a blatant war crime. Ahrar’s al-Sharqiya’s murder of Hevrin Khalaf and others must be independently investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. Turkey has a responsibility to stop war crimes and violations committed by forces under its control. Unless Turkey reins in its proxy forces and ends impunity for violations, it will encourage further atrocities,” said Kumi Naidoo.

## **Deteriorating humanitarian situation**

Local and international aid workers told Amnesty International that the US withdrawal from northeast Syria, Turkey’s military offensive and the Syrian government joining the fray was a combination of worst-case scenarios happening all at once.

There are real fears about whether the 100,000 displaced are getting enough food, clean water and medical supplies – and how those in need will continue to receive assistance in the longer term. In camps for the internally displaced, such as al-Hol, the population is entirely dependent on humanitarian aid. A group of 14 international humanitarian organizations warned on 10 October that the offensive could lead to cutting off aid to the population, while the ICRC warned a few days later that hostilities could lead to the displacement of 300,000 people, with serious concerns about water shortages.

Many of those displaced have nowhere to go and are sleeping out in the open, in gardens and in the streets. Some have sought shelter in schools.

In the town of Derbassiya, around 90% of the population are people who were displaced from their homes and moved there. One man in Derbassiya, who fled with his family, told Amnesty International that around half were staying with relatives in the south and the rest had sought shelter in schools and mosques.

“There are no humanitarian organizations in south Derbassiyeh. We didn’t see anything from them. We need basic supplies like water, food, clothes, blankets and mattresses. We need a medical clinic... Winter is on its way. We need a solution especially for the families who are living outside in the open,” he said.

A humanitarian aid worker told Amnesty International: “People already suffering from chronic diseases will be at huge risk. Their survival will depend on how long this fighting lasts, and whether we are able to operate going forward.”



# **All parties to the conflict including Turkey, armed groups allied to Turkey, as well as Syrian government and Kurdish forces must provide unfettered access to local and international humanitarian organizations**

**Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International**

Many expressed serious concerns that the security situation would lead to further evacuation of international staff and that the advance of Syrian government forces could pose risks to local Arab and Kurdish staff, as well as to displaced civilians who fled other parts of Syria. There are also fears that the ability of aid agencies to carry out crucial cross-border operations to deliver aid would be limited.

“All parties to the conflict including Turkey, armed groups allied to Turkey, as well as Syrian government and Kurdish forces must provide unfettered access to local and international humanitarian organizations,” said Kumi Naidoo.

“Turkey’s continued military offensive has driven thousands of already displaced people from what had been places of safe shelter. Turkey’s actions risk hampering the delivery of life-saving assistance and medical aid to those in need, causing a full-blown humanitarian catastrophe in a country already ravaged by war.”

## **Topics**

**MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

**SYRIA**

**TURKEY**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ARMED CONFLICT**

# Exhibit 60

# Video Evidence Sheds Light On Executions Near Turkey-Syria Border

October 31, 2019  
Newsy Syria



On October 12, Hevrin Khalaf was traveling through northeastern Syria in a heavily armored car — three days after Turkey launched an offensive in the region.

Hevrin's vehicle was fired at and forced to stop. The Kurdish politician was then pulled from her vehicle and killed. On the same day and in the same area, there's evidence a separate execution was also likely carried out.

Rebels backed by Turkey who were spotted in the area claim they weren't involved.

But using photos and videos from that area, we can connect a few dots between the two

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## Eliot Higgins

Eliot Higgins is the founder of Bellingcat and the Brown Moses Blog. Eliot focuses on the weapons used in the conflict in Syria, and open source investigation tools and techniques.

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# Exhibit 61

## Turkey's Syrian Mercenaries in Karabakh "Feel Tricked" as Bodies Pile Up by Lindsey Snell

September 30, 2020

*"People are dead. Torn to pieces. There are 35 people we don't know anything about."*—a Syrian militant in Karabakh.



Purportedly the first deployment of SNA militants to Azerbaijan. SNA Source.

On September 22nd, I received several reports from sources inside the Syrian National Army (SNA), the umbrella organization of all Syrian opposition factions backed by Turkey, that the first deployment of SNA men to Azerbaijan had taken place. For months before this, rumors that Turkey would be sending militants to Azerbaijan had been swirling among the SNA. "The men were taken to Turkey, forced to shave their beards and wear civilian clothes, and then they began their journey," a Hamza Division militant in Afrin said.

Days later, reports emerged that Syrians had been among those killed as the tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh area escalated. "They tricked us. They told us we were coming to guard a Turkish base. Then we get here and it's fighting, right away, it's fighting. The sons of bitches will not return us," said a Hamza Division militant in Azerbaijan. "The fighting isn't like anything I have seen. It's like a movie. It's constant bombardment."

This isn't the first time Turkey has sent their Syrian mercenaries into foreign conflicts. Since December 2019, as part of an agreement with the Tripoli-based, UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), Turkey has been sending SNA militants to buttress GNA-affiliated militias against the rival Libyan National Army (LNA), led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. SNA militants signed up for deployment en masse, lured by promises of salaries around \$2000 a month, exponentially more than the ~\$100 such fighters would receive in Syria.

In reality, none of the dozens of SNA militants I've communicated with in Libya received more than a fraction of the payment they were promised. Across all factions, the average monthly payment of an SNA militant in Libya is around \$400. Most I've spoken to openly admit to looting civilian homes to supplement their incomes.

Most of the SNA militants didn't know much about the situation in Libya. "We will be there to fight Russia," one SNA militant told me. "Haftar wants to destroy the Sunnis," another said, unaware that Haftar, like the vast majority of Libya, is a Sunni. Of the dozens of Syrian mercenaries I was able to communicate with in Libya, all said that they were told to expect little combat.

Initially, the mercenaries' expectations of their Libyan deployment were met. The men lounged in plush villas in and around Tripoli that had been abandoned by civilians fleeing the fighting. They told their friends in Syria it was an easy time and encouraged them to come, too. Then, intense fighting between the GNA and LNA began. Some factions, such as Sultan Murad, lost hundreds of men over the course of a few weeks. "The Turks said they would be with us," one Sultan Murad militant in Ain Zara said. "But they're not with us. We're dying alone. The bodies of our men are rotting in the streets."



SNA Militants from Hamza Division (faces blurred) hang out with Libyan GNA militants in Tripoli. SNA source.

In June, GNA forces, backed by SNA militants, captured the city of Tarhuna from the LNA. The GNA made a push for the strategic city of Sirte immediately after and were repelled by LNA forces. Since then, for the most part, fighting in Libya has stalled. Syrian militants in Libya have had little to do. Those who have been in the country for several months have been granted new freedoms, such as permission to leave their bases in civilian attire without a Libyan escort, a luxury previously forbidden by the GNA.

Despite their apparent lack of purpose, Turkey continues to send SNA forces to Libya. "I should return to Syria soon," said one Faylaq al-Majd militant who has been based in Misrata for several months. "I'll prepare myself quickly, and then I'll go to Azerbaijan. They just sent 450 to Misrata from Syria to replace the ones who have been here for a long time. Most of us will go on to Azerbaijan."

For as little as the SNA militants knew about Libya before agreeing to go there to fight, their knowledge of Azerbaijan is even more lacking. SNA factions are exclusively Sunni and adhere to an extremist interpretation of Islam. Azerbaijan is a Shiite-majority country, a detail few of the Syrian militants were initially aware of.

"We can't fight alongside the Shias," one SNA militant said, in a recording disseminated across several factions. "I understand if you want to go to Azerbaijan, and it's not a problem. I know financially, things are hard. But the Shias are our enemies more than the Christians are Jews."

Some SNA militants in Libya were less conflicted about supporting what they consider to be an enemy force. "We'll fight whoever," said the Faylaq al-Majd man in Misrata. "I swear, we'll steel the cloth off the Kaaba [the holiest site in Islam]. Maybe that's why they want to send the ones who were already in Libya for a long time. They know we will do anything for money."

It's unclear whether reports of hellish conditions from their SNA brethren in Azerbaijan will deter more from agreeing to join the fight there. "People are dead. Torn to pieces. There are 35 people we don't know anything about," one said today. "There hasn't been one Azerbaijani or one Turk with us when we are fighting. So many of us want to return to Syria, but they pulled their weapons on us and forced us to stay and keep fighting."

# Exhibit 62



## Turkey

# Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey's ambition

**Volunteers in Syria's last rebel stronghold claim Turkish firm signing up fighters**

**Bethan McKernan** *in Istanbul*

Mon 28 Sep 2020 14.13 EDT

Syrian rebel fighters have signed up to work for a private Turkish security company as border guards in [Azerbaijan](#), several volunteers in Syria's last rebel stronghold have said, at a time when the long-running conflict between Baku and neighbouring Armenia is showing dangerous signs of escalation.

The potential deployment is a sign of Turkey's growing appetite for projecting power abroad, and opens a third theatre in its regional rivalry with Moscow. Ankara is already engaged in a volatile power struggle with [Russia](#) in the conflicts in Syria and [Libya](#), and tensions could now spill over into Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia and Azerbaijan clash over disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region



and Baku over the [disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region](#), an enclave legally considered to be part of Azerbaijan but which has been run by ethnic Armenians since it declared independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The area attracts western concern because it is a major oil and gas pipeline corridor.

Clashes in July that killed 17 people in a different border region, as well as fresh hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh in the last two days, which have left 15 dead so far, have led to concerns that the dormant conflict could once again be lurching into [full-blown war](#).

Turkey has strong cultural and economic ties with Azerbaijan. Russia has been traditionally close to [Armenia](#) but has forged links with the Baku elites in recent years, and continues to sell arms to both sides.

While most of the international community, including Moscow, have called for de-escalation and a return to the diplomatic process in Nagorno-Karabakh, [the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#), said on Sunday that Baku had his country's full support.

"The Turkish people stand with their Azeri brothers with all our means, as always," he said on Twitter, going on to criticise other nations for "double standards and insufficient reaction" against what he characterised as Armenian attacks.

Observers have questioned why Baku's highly-trained and well-armed military forces would be in need of assistance from Syrian mercenaries. Men in Syria's rebel-held Idlib province, however, say that a recruitment drive began a month ago.

Two brothers living in Azaz, Muhammad and Mahmoud, who asked for their names to be changed because of the sensitivity of the issue, said they were summoned to a military camp in Afrin on 13 September.

On arrival they were told by a commander in the Turkish-backed Sultan Murad division that work was

available guarding observation posts and oil and gas facilities in Azerbaijan on three or six month contracts at 7,000-10,000 Turkish lira (£700-£1,000) a month - significantly more than they could earn at home.

The commander did not give details on what the job would entail, how long the posting would be, or when they were expected to leave. The men are also not clear about the name of the Turkish security company, or who would be paying their wages.

“Our leader told us that we won’t be fighting, just assisting in guarding some areas,” Muhammad said. “Our salaries aren’t enough for living, so we see it a great opportunity to make money.”

“There are no jobs available,” his brother added. “I used to work as a tailor in Aleppo but since we were displaced to Azaz [after Aleppo fell to Assad in 2016], I’ve tried many times to practise my craft but my family and I can’t earn enough.”

The promised salaries are vast sums compared with the 450-550 Turkish lira a month Syrian rebels earn from Ankara in the fight against Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

Ankara has supported the Syrian opposition since the early days of the war, even as the original Free Syrian Army umbrella group grew weak and splintered because of infighting and the growth of Islamist elements within rebel ranks.

Turkey also uses some rebel fighters as proxies against Kurdish-led forces despite allegations of human rights abuses from watchdogs.

Since December, Ankara has also facilitated the movement of [thousands of Syrian rebels to Libya](#) as mercenaries, where they have helped turn the tide of the civil war in favour of the UN-backed government fighting warlord Khalifa Haftar.

Omar from Idlib city, who also asked for his real name not to be used, was called to Afrin on 22 September along with 150 other men and was asked to prepare to leave, only to be told later the same day the deployment had been delayed until further notice. He said he had asked around for a broker’s number after hearing about the potential deployment, registering his name with a local agent on the understanding that Omar would pay him \$200 (£156) of his first month’s wages.

“When we first started being offered work abroad in Libya, people were afraid to go there, but now there are definitely thousands of us who are willing to go to either Libya or Azerbaijan,” he said. “There is nothing for us here.”

As with the Azerbaijan proposition, some men who went to Libya have said they were also told they would be employed as guards, but found themselves caught up in frontline fighting instead. Many have also reported that commanders pocketed up to 20% of their salaries.

Elizabeth Tsurkov, a fellow at the Washington DC-based Center for Global Policy, said: “The international community regards the lives of Syrians as expendable, with Syria serving as an arena to settle geostrategic scores and advance the interests of countries intervening in the country at Syrians’ expense.

“Syrians resisted and still resist this logic, but the economic ruin stemming from the war and the recent

depreciation of the Syrian currency mean that most Syrians are now struggling to feed themselves. Faced with few choices, many are now willing to sell themselves to the highest bidder.”

Several sources in the Syrian National Army (SNA), the main umbrella of Syrian rebel groups funded by Turkey, as well as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor, say that a first batch of 500 Syrian fighters from the SNA’s Sultan Murad and Al Hamza divisions has already arrived in Azerbaijan, including two senior commanders: Fahim Eissa, the leader of Sultan Murad, and Saif Abu Bakir of Al Hamza. The Guardian could not confirm the reports.

The rumours have been bolstered by several unverified videos circulated on social media that purport to show armed Syrian rebels travelling along an Azerbaijani road in the back of pick up trucks while chanting battle songs.

Both the Armenian government and Russian media have alleged that up to 4,000 Syrian men are already present in [Nagorno-Karabakh](#), claims which have been denied by Baku as “nonsense”.

A Turkish defence ministry source said on Monday: “We strongly reject such claims. Our support consists of military advice and training of Azerbaijan’s armed forces ... The Turkish ministry of defence does not deal with recruiting or transferring militiamen anywhere in the world.”

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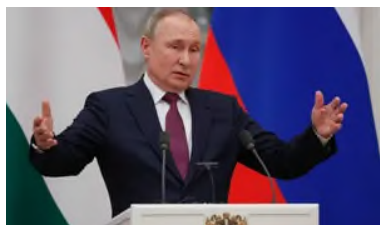
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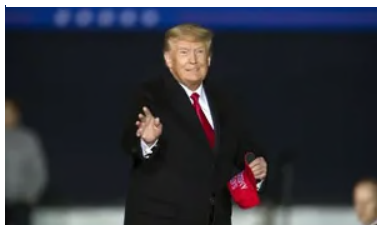
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# Exhibit 63



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**Human Rights Council**

Forty-second session

9–27 September 2019

Agenda item 3

**Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council  
on 26 September 2019****42/9. The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and  
impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination***The Human Rights Council,*

*Recalling* all previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on Human Rights on the subject, including Assembly resolution 64/151 of 18 December 2009 and Council resolutions 10/11 of 26 March 2009, 15/12 of 30 September 2010, 15/26 of 1 October 2010, 18/4 of 29 September 2011, 24/13 of 26 September 2013, 27/10 of 25 September 2014, 30/6 of 1 October 2015, 33/4 of 29 September 2016, 36/3 of 28 September 2017 and 39/5 of 27 September 2018,

*Recalling also* all relevant resolutions that, inter alia, condemn any State that permits or tolerates the recruitment, financing, training, assembly, transit or use of mercenaries with the objective of overthrowing the Governments of States Members of the United Nations, especially those of developing countries, or of fighting against national liberation movements, and recalling further relevant resolutions and international instruments adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the African Union and the Organization of African Unity, inter alia, the Organization of African Unity Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa,

*Recalling further* Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1, on institution-building of the Council, and 5/2, on the Code of Conduct for special procedure mandate holders of the Council, of 18 June 2007, and stressing that all mandate holders shall discharge their duties in accordance with these resolutions and the annexes thereto,

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations concerning the strict observance of the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, the territorial integrity of States, the self-determination of peoples, the non-use of force or threat of use of force in international relations and non-interference in affairs within the domestic jurisdiction of States,

*Reaffirming also* that, by virtue of the principle of self-determination, all peoples have the right to determine freely their political status and to pursue freely their economic, social and cultural development, and that every State has the duty to respect this right in accordance with the provisions of the Charter,

*Reaffirming further* the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,



*Extremely alarmed and concerned* about the threat posed by the activities of mercenaries to peace and security in developing countries in various parts of the world, in particular in areas of conflict, and about the threat they pose to the integrity of and respect for the constitutional order of the countries affected,

*Deeply concerned* at the loss of life, the substantial damage to property and the negative effects on the policies and economies of affected countries resulting from international criminal mercenary activities,

*Convinced* that, regardless of the way in which mercenaries or mercenary-related activities are used or the form that they take to acquire a semblance of legitimacy, they are a threat to peace, security and the self-determination of peoples and an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights by peoples,

1. *Reaffirms* that the use of mercenaries, and their recruitment, financing, protection and training, are causes for grave concern to all States and violate the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

2. *Recognizes* that armed conflicts, terrorism, arms trafficking and covert operations by third Powers encourage, inter alia, the demand for mercenaries and for private military and security companies on the global market;

3. *Urges once again* all States to take the necessary steps and to exercise the utmost vigilance against the threat posed by the activities of mercenaries, and to take legislative measures to ensure that their territories and other territories under their control, and their nationals, are not used for the recruitment, assembly, financing, training, protection and transit of mercenaries for the planning of activities designed to impede the right to self-determination, to overthrow the Government of any State or to dismember or to impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the right of peoples to self-determination;

4. *Requests* all States to exercise the utmost vigilance against any kind of recruitment, training, hiring or financing of mercenaries;

5. *Also requests* all States to exercise the utmost vigilance in banning the use of private companies offering international military consultancy and security services when intervening in armed conflicts or actions to destabilize constitutional regimes;

6. *Encourages* States that import the consultancy and security services provided by private companies, including in the extractive industries, to establish national regulatory mechanisms for the registering and licensing of those companies, for accountability of the companies and their personnel and for remedies for violations resulting from their activities in order to ensure that imported services provided by those private companies neither impede the enjoyment of human rights nor violate human rights in the recipient country;

7. *Calls upon* all States that have not yet become a party to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries to consider taking the necessary action to do so;

8. *Welcomes* the cooperation extended by those countries that were visited by the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, and the adoption by some States of national legislation that restricts the recruitment, assembly, financing, training and transit of mercenaries;

9. *Condemns* mercenary activities in developing countries in various parts of the world, in particular in areas of conflict, and the threat they pose to the integrity of and to respect for the constitutional order of those countries and to the exercise of the right to self-determination of their peoples, and stresses the importance for the Working Group of looking into sources and root causes, and into the political motivations of mercenaries and for mercenary-related activities;

10. *Calls upon* States to investigate the possibility of mercenary and mercenary-related involvement whenever and wherever criminal acts of a terrorist nature occur, and to

bring to trial those found responsible or to consider their extradition, if so requested, in accordance with national law and applicable bilateral or international treaties;

11. *Recognizes* that mercenary activity is a complex crime in which criminal responsibility falls upon those who have recruited, employed, trained and financed the mercenary or mercenaries, and upon those who have planned and ordered their criminal activity;

12. *Condemns* any form of impunity granted to perpetrators of mercenary activities and to those responsible for the use, recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to bring them, without distinction, to justice;

13. *Calls upon* the international community and all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to cooperate with and assist the judicial prosecution of those accused of mercenary activities in transparent, open and fair trials;

14. *Acknowledges with appreciation* the work and contributions of the Working Group, including its research activities, and takes note of its most recent report;<sup>1</sup>

15. *Requests* the Working Group and other experts to broaden their active participation, including by submitting contributions, in other subsidiary bodies of the Human Rights Council considering issues related to the use of mercenaries and mercenary-related activities in all their forms and manifestations, including private military and security companies;

16. *Requests* the Working Group to continue the work already carried out by previous mandate holders on the strengthening of the international legal framework for the prevention and sanction of the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries, taking into account the proposal for a new legal definition of the term “mercenary” drafted by the Special Rapporteur on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination in his report submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session,<sup>2</sup> and also the evolving phenomenon of mercenaries and its related forms;

17. *Also requests* in this regard the Working Group to continue to monitor mercenaries and mercenary-related activities in all their forms and manifestations in different parts of the world, including instances of protection provided by Governments to individuals involved in mercenary activities, and to continue to update the database of individuals convicted of mercenary activities;

18. *Further requests* the Working Group to continue to study and identify new sources and causes, emerging issues, manifestations and trends with regard to mercenaries and mercenary-related activities and their impact on human rights, particularly on the right of peoples to self-determination, and to consult in this regard with Member States and regional and international organizations, academia, civil society, as well as with other relevant stakeholders;

19. *Renews* for a period of three years the mandate of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination for it to continue to undertake the tasks described by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 7/21 of 28 March 2008 and in all other relevant resolutions on the subject;

20. *Urges* all States to cooperate fully with the Working Group in the fulfilment of its mandate;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide the Working Group with all the assistance and support necessary for the fulfilment of its mandate, both professional and financial, including by promoting cooperation between the Working Group and other components of the United Nations system

<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/42/42.

<sup>2</sup> E/CN.4/2004/15.

that deal with countering mercenary-related activities, in order to meet the demands of its current and future activities;

22. *Requests* the Working Group to consult States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other relevant civil society actors in the implementation of the present resolution, and to report its findings on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination to the Human Rights Council at its forty-fifth session and to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session;

23. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this matter under the same agenda item at its forty-fifth session.

*39th meeting  
26 September 2019*

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 29 to 14, with 4 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

*In favour:*

Angola, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Fiji, India, Iraq, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay

*Against:*

Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

*Abstaining:*

Afghanistan, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico]

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# Exhibit 64



THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH  
HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN



# **SECOND INTERIM REPORT**

UPDATED EDITION

ON THE AZERBAIJANI ATROCITIES AGAINST THE  
ARTSAKH POPULATION IN SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020

STEPANAKERT | OCTOBER 18, 2020



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## INTRODUCTION

Starting from the early morning of 27 September, 2020, Azerbaijan began launching indiscriminate airstrikes (including UAV strikes) and artillery assaults against the Republic of Artsakh (Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh) along the entire line of the border.

Villages, towns and the capital Stepanakert have been intensively attacked, which caused numerous casualties and injuries among civilians. Large-scale damages have been caused to civilian objects, such as residential buildings, schools, etc, as well as, infrastructure vital to the survival of the civilian population. Life and health of children, women and the entire population of Artsakh are still under an imminent and real threat.

The current updated edition of the second interim report follows the second interim report published on 9 October, as well as, the first interim report<sup>1</sup>, published by the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh on 2 October, 2020. It presents the facts of targeted attacks on civilian settlements and casualties derived thereof also the deployment of mercenaries and the use of multiple rockets launching systems and cluster munitions from 27 September to 9 October. The threatening situation on dissemination of massive hate speech towards ethnic Armenians by Azerbaijan and its results are also analyzed.

For the purpose of preparation of the report, fact-finding missions were commissioned, conducted interviews and applications submitted to the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, inquiries to public authorities, as well as, media and social media publications have been analyzed.

The Azerbaijani aggression included also indiscriminate attacks in villages of Vardenis Region, Gegharkunik Province of Armenia, which are presented in the *ad hoc* report of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia.<sup>2</sup>

On 10 October a cease-fire agreement was reached in Moscow, effective from noon. But Azerbaijan has continued offensive military actions and even struck capital Stepanakert and other populated areas with heavy missiles, causing new casualties.

The military aggression against the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia by Azerbaijan are even more condemnable, since it was launched during the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic. On March 23, the Secretary-General of the United Nations called for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world due to the threat of coronavirus.

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1 Artsakh Ombudsman, "INTERIM REPORT ON THE AZERBAIJANI ATROCITIES AGAINST ARTSAKH POPULATION IN SEPTEMBER 2020," October 2, 2020, [https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/722?fbclid=IwAR2sGPtWWisSe61tVQeHOVZ27Nkd4sSt6sHrigYNrZm4bs\\_GPXWYctOWcE](https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/722?fbclid=IwAR2sGPtWWisSe61tVQeHOVZ27Nkd4sSt6sHrigYNrZm4bs_GPXWYctOWcE)

2 Armenia Ombudsman, "Ad-hoc report on fact-finding activities in villages of Gegharkunik province of Armenia damaged by Azerbaijani military attacks (30 September-1 October)," Yerevan, 2020, [https://ombuds.am/images/files/dc1b379419a1a9aaeec5191128277502.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0RTdx9q8m8qdOOO\\_Ccwfykv0VHZDBY7TsciCFamuDjUIRcjo-Cx2XfWQ0](https://ombuds.am/images/files/dc1b379419a1a9aaeec5191128277502.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0RTdx9q8m8qdOOO_Ccwfykv0VHZDBY7TsciCFamuDjUIRcjo-Cx2XfWQ0)

## **SECTION 1. THE DAMAGES TO LIFE, DIGNITY, HEALTH, VITAL NEEDS AND PROPERTY OF THE PEOPLE OF ARTSAKH**

### ***1.1. TARGETED OR INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND CIVILIAN OBJECTS***

The Azerbaijani armed forces attacked more than 130 civilian settlements, including densely populated ones (capital Stepanakert, towns of Shushi, Hadrut, Martuni, Martakert, Askeran, Karvajar, Berdzor, villages of Taghaser, Vardashat, Spitakshen, Maghavirus, Nerkin Horatagh, Alashan, Mataghis, etc) with aerial, artillery, rocket and tank fire strikes, most of which were targeted or indiscriminate, killing and injuring civilians. In the cases of indiscriminate attacks, the Azerbaijani armed forces failed to abide by the obligation to distinguish between military targets and civilians, who may not be targeted for attack. Nor do they take feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians. In many cases, attacking the civilians was targeted and intentional, since military targets were located very far from civilian objects, and the Azerbaijani forces used accurate armament like missiles and striking drones. The absence of military targets in the vicinity of attacks further confirms their deliberate nature, which amounts to a war crime.

*Figure 1. A Civilian Killed by Azerbaijan in Martuni Town*



*Figure 2. A Child Injured by Azerbaijan in Martuni Town*



*Figure 3. A Child Injured by Azerbaijan in Maghavuz Village*



*Figure 4. A Pregnant Woman Injured by Azerbaijan in Mataghis Village*

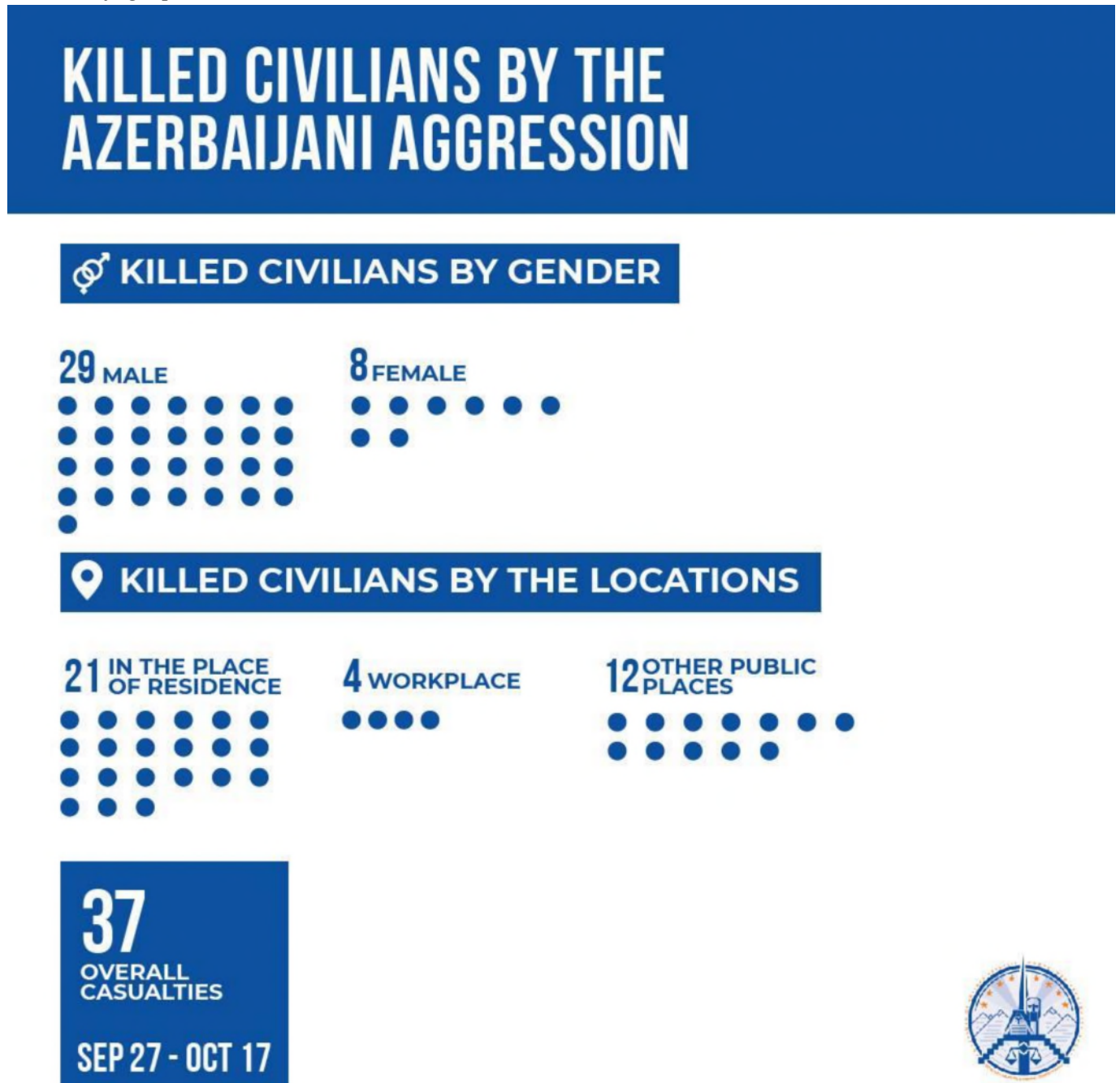


*Figure 5. A Woman Injured by Azerbaijan in Martakert Town*



As of 17 October, 2020, 37 civilians (8 females and 29 males, 1 child and 36 adults) have been killed.<sup>3</sup> 60% of them were killed at the places of their residence. See infographic 1.

*Infographic 1*



<sup>3</sup> Artsakh Ombudsman, “19 civilians killed, 80 wounded, over 2700 property and infrastructure damaged in Artsakh from Azerbaijani war crimes,” 5 October, 2020, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/news/463>

116 civilians have been wounded, of which 96 received serious injuries. The injuries mostly involve upper and lower limbs and facial fractures, in the form of shrapnel wounds. About half of the serious injuries among civilians occurred in their places of residence, about one-third – in public places, 12 civilians received serious injuries at their workplaces, and 6 civilians - while moving to a safer place. See infographic 2.

*Infographic 2*



The civilians were mostly affected by the Azerbaijani armed forces attacks at the capital Stepanakert (10 killed and 39 injured), the town of Martuni (7 killed and 16 injured) and the town of Hadrut (at least 8

killed and 5 injured). The case of Hadrut differs from others, since on 10 October, a large subversive group of the Azerbaijani armed forces took partial control over the town and perpetrated executions of Hadrut civilians, including those of vulnerable groups. Based on our preliminary data, the number of executed civilians in Hadrut since 10 October could be higher than presented 6. For detailed mapping of the civilian death and injury cases see infographic 3.

Infographic 3





Figure 6. Killed Disabled civilian in Hadrut Town after the Ceasefire Announcement



As part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against civilian population, wanton destruction of homes and other property was carried out with discriminatory intent against ethnic Armenians. Besides, large-scale damages have been caused to civilian objects, such as residential buildings, kindergartens, schools, vital infrastructure<sup>4</sup>. Based on preliminary data, more than 7,800 privately owned immovable property (residential houses, apartments, shops, etc), more than 1,310 infrastructure, public and industrial buildings (electricity, gas, telecommunication, water supplies, bridges, schools, kindergartens, cultural centers, factories etc) and more than 720 cars have been seriously damaged. See infographic 4.

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<sup>4</sup> Armenian Public TV, “Քաղաքացիական բնակչությունը՝ Ադրբեջանի թիրախում,” 5 October, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVDKVYQp8Fo&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVDKVYQp8Fo&feature=emb_logo)

# MATERIAL DAMAGE TO CIVILIAN OBJECTS BY THE AZERBAIJANI AGGRESSION IN MORE THAN 130 SETTLEMENTS



**7800**

**PRIVATE IMMOVABLE  
PROPERTY**



**720**

**PRIVATE MOVABLE  
PROPERTY**



**1310**

**INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC  
AND INDUSTRIAL OBJECTS**

**SEP 27 - OCT 16**



*Figure 7. Struck Residential Building in Stepanakert City*



*Figure 8. Shelled House in Hadrut Town*



*Figure 9. Residential Area in Stepanakert City After Shelling by Azerbaijan*



*Figure 10. Damaged car in Stepanakert City as a Result of Shelling by Azerbaijan*



*Figure 11. Damaged House in Ivanyan Village as a Result of Shelling by Azerbaijan*



*As a result of the Azerbaijani hostilities and indiscriminate, targeted and systematic strikes against civilian objects, approximately 60% (over 90,000) of the entire population of the Republic of Artsakh have fled their homes to shelter at safer places. Some of them have moved to other settlements of the country and others moved to the Republic of Armenia. The overwhelming majority of the current population has to live at shelters to avoid Azerbaijani indiscriminate and targeted strikes. For that reason, tens of thousands of children, women, elderly, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups live not only with constant security threats and psychological terror, but also with certain deprivations of basic rights and conditions, such as food, healthcare, education etc. Those children who have stayed in the country are deprived of getting education, as the schools are closed because of the Azerbaijani attacks on the civilian areas. While those children who have left for the Republic of Armenia face natural difficulties with integration with their new environments and schools.*

*Figure 12. One of the Shelters for Civilians in Stepanakert City*



*Figure 13. Persons with Disabilities Staying at a Shelter in Stepanakert*



Customary international humanitarian law requires that the parties to the conflict at all times distinguish, on one hand, between civilians and combatants, and on the other hand between civilian and military objects. Attacks may only be directed against combatants and military objects. Attacks must not be directed against civilians and civilian objects.

According to the general rules of protection of the civilian population, the latter as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited. Likewise, it is prohibited to deliberately target civilians and civilian objects.

*The concept of indiscriminate attacks represents an implementation of the principle of distinction. The latter requires that states must never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets.*

## **1.2. TARGETED ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS**

The work of media representatives is important to report accurate, objective, comprehensive and evidence-based information from conflict zone and safeguard to inflame further tensions, protect human rights. This in mind, the Azerbaijani armed forces conducted targeted attacks on civilian journalists engaged in covering the areas of armed conflict. Those attacks resulted in 7 injuries and a death of the person accompanying the journalists' group.<sup>5</sup>

Particularly, on 1 October 2020, a group of journalists were subjected to a targeted shelling in the downtown of Martuni. As a result, two journalists of the French "Le Monde" newspaper, a journalist of Armenian media "24News.am" and the cameraman of "Armenia" TV were injured, while the local resident accompanying the group was killed.<sup>6</sup> The injuries of the reporter of "Le Monde" were serious and his life was saved through a hard surgery. A deputy chief editor of the Russian television network "Dozhd" among other foreign and Armenian journalists, was also under the shelling but could hide in a bomb shelter and avoided injuries<sup>7</sup>. On the same day the Azerbaijani armed forces also targeted a car transporting journalists of the Agence France-Presse international news agency<sup>8</sup>.

On 2 October, Azerbaijan again targeted a minibus with Armenian and foreign journalists in the town of Martakert<sup>9</sup>.

On 8 October, three Russian journalists were injured (the injuries of one journalist were critical and the others - heavy) while they were reporting from the area of the struck Holy Savior Ghazanchetsots Cathedral of Shushi. 4 hours after the first hitting the Azerbaijani armed forces struck the Cathedral again, knowing that some journalists must have been there to cover the breaking event. Moreover, there are

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5 Armenian Unified Center, "Reporters of 24news.am and Armenia TV wounded from Azerbaijani bombardment," 1 October, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianUnifiedInfoCenter/posts/798135994355663>

Dozhd TV, "Обстрел города Мартуни в непризнанном Нагорном Карабахе. Репортаж корреспондента Дождя," 1 October, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDqffvkSf-8>

6 Armenian Unified Info Center on the targeting of the French journalists, 1 October, 2020, <https://twitter.com/ArmenianUnified/status/1311717564742021120?s=20>

Artsakh Information Center on the same incident and medical operation results, 1 October, 2020, <https://twitter.com/ArtsakhCenter/status/1311718300913676289?s=20>

7 Tass, "Замглавреда телеканала "Дождь" Дмитрий Еловский попал под обстрел в Нагорном Карабахе", 1 October, 2020, [https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/9601327?fbclid=IwAR1o59E8m9\\_IdWCuUR7DuYtOkOSn8XOAFEqm7xkYFvHZL6B13nwiz4GPA98](https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/9601327?fbclid=IwAR1o59E8m9_IdWCuUR7DuYtOkOSn8XOAFEqm7xkYFvHZL6B13nwiz4GPA98)

8 Armenian Unified Info Center on the same incident, 1 October, 2020, <https://twitter.com/ArmenianUnified/status/1311631007452405760?s=20>

9 Factor TV, "ՀՐԱՏԱՊ. Կրակահերթը լրագրողների մերկնայի վրա Մարտակերտում", 2 October, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sAef\\_\\_znJM&fbclid=IwAR1UQznp0FAa1OzxJfU6YFckbnTkb\\_uoRANK3PrYM0JYUai g19dsfKYs5p8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sAef__znJM&fbclid=IwAR1UQznp0FAa1OzxJfU6YFckbnTkb_uoRANK3PrYM0JYUai g19dsfKYs5p8)

reports on the use of drones in the area at the time of the second strike, which means that Azerbaijan possessed verified information about the presence of journalist in the scene.<sup>10</sup>

It is worth-mentioning that (1) all journalists of the described episodes wore special uniforms with distinctive sign “PRESS” (their car also had the “PRESS” sign), (2) the journalists were attacked while were carrying out their professional activities in civilian settlements, but not in the hot-spots of hostilities and not even close to any kind of military object.

*Figure 14. A Reporter of "Le Monde" French Newspaper Injured by Azerbaijan in Martuni Town*



Figure 15. A Screenshot from ArmNews TV Broadcast: an Injured Reporter is Evacuated from the Holy Savior Cathedral in Shushi After Being Struck by Azerbaijan



<sup>10</sup> 168.am, “The Russian journalist stressed that I should reiterate that he had seen with his own eyes how the targeted blow was inflicted on the Mother Cathedral at a time when there were only children, women and elderly present. Arman Tatoyan,” 10 October, 2020, [https://en.168.am/2020/10/10/40074.html?fbclid=IwAR1nxJDCXJDQrpPPPFm0Lnsa\\_KZCjswV1VqU5HdbGM7Wnchr5FHNmPdjwm0](https://en.168.am/2020/10/10/40074.html?fbclid=IwAR1nxJDCXJDQrpPPPFm0Lnsa_KZCjswV1VqU5HdbGM7Wnchr5FHNmPdjwm0)



The continuous nature of the attacks against journalists engaged in media activities in civilian settlements and having distinctive signs, demonstrates that these actions are aimed at preventing the coverage of hostilities and dissemination of objective information to the international community. Another demonstration of that unlawful purpose of Azerbaijan is the launch of criminal prosecution against Russian journalist Semyon Pegov on 12 October<sup>11</sup>, who actively and in detail covers the military activities, as well as, the Azerbaijani war crimes in Artsakh.

Under international humanitarian law, journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and thereby benefit from all the protection conferred by international humanitarian law on civilians.

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<sup>11</sup> Azertag, “Prosecutor General’s Office launches investigation into social media videos with open calls to violate territorial integrity of Azerbaijan,” 12 October, 2020, <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/1611447>

### ***1.3. TARGETED ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN VITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS***

Since 3 October, the Azerbaijani armed forces have deliberately and regularly targeted the key civilian infrastructures (electricity, communications, gas and water supply systems, bridges, foodstuffs, etc), around the whole country but mostly the capital Stepanakert, aiming at depriving tens of thousands of peaceful population of basic living conditions and means for further survival. In attacking these objects Azerbaijan also resorted to long range accurate missiles and striking drones. The preliminary data is presented in the infographic 4 above.

More than 25 crucial energy infrastructure objects and equipment have been totally destroyed and a large number of networks have been damaged throughout the entire country. Particularly, Azerbaijani armed forces hit the central electricity station and local stations in Stepanakert, local electricity stations in other towns and villages, as well as, a big number of electricity networks. As a result, more than 10 stations have been destroyed or seriously damaged. The whole population of Artsakh has been regularly deprived of electricity for a few days.

The Azerbaijani armed forces have intentionally struck also several hydro-power stations in the depth of the country aiming at destructing the electricity production system, too.

*Figure 16. The Head Office of “Artsakh Energy” Company after Being Struck by Azerbaijan*



*Figure 17. The Central Electricity Station in Stepanakert after Being Struck by Azerbaijan*



*Figure 48. A Hydropower Station in Martakert Region after Being Struck by Azerbaijan*



Another intentional target was the phone and internet communication network since 27 September. Firstly, the Azerbaijani hackers made extensive problems in the system for a few days, for tens of

thousands of civilians hindering the communication possibilities for a long time. Since October 3, Azerbaijani armed forces have systematically and intentionally targeted the communication stations and networks again with accurate missiles and striking drones. As a result of those strikes, tens of key communication infrastructure (stations, towers, hubs etc) have been destroyed or seriously damaged.

Figure 59. The Head Office of the Telecommunication Company Struck by Azerbaijan



For a few times the central and much more times local gas pipelines have been also targeted intentionally, as a result of which all the gas clients have been deprived of gas supplies, heating and hot water.

Figure 20. The Main Gas Pipeline in Stepanakert City Struck by Azerbaijan



There are certain proofs demonstrating that Azerbaijan also targeted particular water stations and pipelines, all of these intentional strikes to vital infrastructure and supply networks have posed an existential threat to the lives and health of women, children, elderly and the entire population of Artsakh.

The Azerbaijani armed forces have deliberately struck food storage objects in different parts of the country, including capital Stepanakert, and some of them have been damaged. Apparently, those strikes against the vital infrastructure of humanitarian supplies has aimed at depriving the civilian population of the basic conditions for life.

The Azerbaijani armed forces have systematically and deliberately targeted also the road network throughout the entire country, including those of interstate ones. In addition to striking different parts of the roads and highways, Azerbaijan targeted some key bridges in order to paralyze the transportation internally and with the Republic of Armenia.

*Figure 21. A Bridge in Berdzor after Being Struck by Azerbaijan*



The Azerbaijani armed forces have deliberately targeted also industrial objects (factories, hydropower stations, agricultural objects, services etc). They directly destroyed hundreds of such business activities, negatively affecting their productions, supplies and services.

*Figure 22. A Stone Factory After Shelling by Azerbaijan*



*Figure 23. A Market in Stepanakert After Being Struck by Azerbaijan*



Azerbaijan has indiscriminately and intentionally struck a large number of public and religious institutions, too, such as schools, kindergartens, cultural centers, cathedrals etc. The geography of such destructions includes from the North to the South, from the bordering to deep communities.

*Figure 24. Public School no. 10 in Stepanakert After being Struck by Azerbaijan*



*Figure 25. A damaged Kindergarten in Stepanakert City*



*Figure 26. The Cultural Center in Shushi After Being Struck by Azerbaijan*



On 8 October 2020, Azerbaijani armed forces launched two intentional assaults on Holy Savior Cathedral in the town of Shushi, which is the recognizable cultural and religious symbol of Artsakh. The analysis of that war crime demonstrates that it was fully intentional and targeted, because the Azerbaijani forces struck the cathedral for two times within a few hours with use of striking and manageable drones. This act of Azerbaijan is in line with its continuous practice of destroying Armenian cultural heritage of Artsakh. It also demonstrates radical disrespect towards Christian element of Armenian identity.

*Figure 27. The Holy Savior Cathedral of Shushi After the First Strike by Azerbaijan (exterior)*





*Figure 28. The Holy Savior Cathedral of Shushi After the Strike by Azerbaijan (interior)*



#### ***1.4. THE FACTS AND RISKS OF WAR CRIMES AGAINST COMBATANTS***

There is clear information from both open and closed sources that a certain number of military servicemen of the Republic of Artsakh or the bodies thereof are under the control of the Azerbaijani armed forces. Some Azerbaijani media and social media representatives have already spread some videos and photos showing some possible crimes against Artsakh combatants. Taking into account those preliminary proofs and the large number of examples of the 2016 April war, the likelihood is very high that the Artsakh military servicemen and/or their bodies might be extensively abused by the Azerbaijani armed forces again.

*Figure 29. A Photo of Beheading and Mutilation of an Armenian Combatant's Body by an Azerbaijani Combatant<sup>12</sup>*



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<sup>12</sup> “HƏRBİ – XƏBƏRLƏR” Telegram leading channel covering military topics of Azerbaijan, the photo was published on October 8, 2020, then has been removed, <https://t.me/herbixeber>

During the April war of 2016, about 90% of soldiers and/or their bodies that were under Azerbaijani control underwent war crimes and the perpetrators were decorated and encouraged by the authorities of Azerbaijan.<sup>13</sup> In particular, in 2016 April war, the Azerbaijani armed forces perpetrated tortures, executions and mutilations of dead bodies against the civilians and combatants of Artsakh. All of those actions are considered war crimes under international law. Thus:

1. Torture. Four Geneva Conventions of 1949<sup>14</sup> strictly prohibit torture. The relevant clauses are set forth, inter alia, in the First Geneva Convention, Article 12<sup>15</sup>; and in the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 32<sup>16</sup>. The prohibition of torture is one of the most fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, International Court of Justice has ruled that “the prohibition of torture is part of customary international law and it has become a peremptory norm (jus cogens)”<sup>18</sup>. Geneva Conventions do not specify a definition of torture. Thus, a definition stipulated in the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT)<sup>19</sup> of 1984, Article 1.1, can be applied. It states: “[t]he term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him, or a third person, information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.” In the *Kunarac* case the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) formulated the definition of the offence of torture under the international humanitarian law, which is broader than the definition under the UNCAT. It states: “[I]n the field of international humanitarian law, the elements of the offence of torture, under customary international law are as follows: (i) The infliction, by act or omission, of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental; (ii) The act or omission must be intentional; (iii) The act or omission must aim at obtaining information or a confession, or at punishing, intimidating or coercing the victim or a third person, or at discriminating, on any ground, against the victim or a third person.”<sup>20</sup>
2. Execution (violence to life). Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 strictly prohibit violence to life. The relevant clauses are set forth, inter alia, in the First Convention, Article 12<sup>21</sup>; and in the Fourth

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13 Artsakh Ombudsman, “Report on Atrocities Committed by Azerbaijan During the 2016 April War,” December 9, 2016, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/568>

14 Azerbaijan is a state party since 1993.

15 “[Wounded or sick combatants] shall not be ... subjected to torture...”

16 “The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering ... of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to ... torture ... but also to any other measures of brutality ...”

17 It's clearly specified in the Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions, which sets the core and indispensable principles of IHL: "cruel treatment and torture" are prohibited with regard to "[p]ersons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces ... placed hors de combat by ... wounds,... or any other cause" (Article 3(1)(a))

18 See Questions Relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (*Belgium v Senegal*), Judgment of 20 July 2012, ICJ Reports 2012, §99.

19 Azerbaijan is a state party since 1996.

20 See ICTY, *Kunarac* case, Judgment, 22 February 2001, §497.

21 “[Wounded or sick combatants] shall not be murdered or exterminated...”

Convention, Article 32<sup>22</sup>. The prohibition of the violence to life is one of the most fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law<sup>23</sup>. Well-established customary law particularly prohibits attacking persons, who are recognized as hors de combat. A person hors de combat, inter alia, is: (a) anyone who is in the power of an adverse party; (b) anyone who is defenseless because of unconsciousness, shipwreck, wounds or sickness; provided he or she abstains from any hostile act and does not attempt to escape<sup>24</sup>.

3. Mutilation of dead bodies. The customary nature of prohibition of mutilation, as well as its applicability on Azerbaijan, clearly follows from a long list of arguments. Some of them are as follows: (a) Article 19 of the Laws of War on Land adopted by the Institute of International Law back in 1880 (the Oxford Manual) provided: "It is forbidden to ... mutilate the dead lying on the field of battle."; (b) Mutilation or other maltreatment of dead bodies during armed conflict is prohibited under the military manuals of more than twenty different countries, including Australia, Canada, Greece, Israel, Netherlands, Spain, USA etc.<sup>25</sup>; (c) Mutilation of dead bodies during armed conflict is considered a criminal offence in at least 25 national legislation of countries representing different legal systems from all the continents, including Australia, Bangladesh, Morocco, Ethiopia, Somalia, USA, Venezuela, Italy, Spain, etc.<sup>26</sup>; (d) The prohibition of mutilating dead bodies in international armed conflicts is covered by the war crime of "committing outrages upon personal dignity" under the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which according to the Elements of Crimes, also applies to dead persons<sup>27</sup>; (e) Article 3(a) of the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam adopted by The Organization of Islamic Conference<sup>28</sup> provides: "In the event of the use of force and in case of armed conflict... it is prohibited to mutilate dead bodies"; (f) Azerbaijan's state practice also proves its acceptance of the aforementioned customary rule. In particular, in 1993 the Ministry of Interior of Azerbaijan ordered that troops "in zones of combat, during military operations . . . must not desecrate the remains of enemies".<sup>29</sup>

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22 "The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering ... of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to murder... but also to any other measures of brutality ..."

23 It's clearly specified in the Common Article 3 of the four GC's, which sets the core and indispensable principles of IHL: " violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds" are prohibited with regard to "[p]ersons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces ... placed hors de combat by ... wounds, ... or any other cause" (Article 3(1)(a)).

24 For extensive national practice, see: ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Vol. II: Practice, edited by Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck, 2005, pp. 930-938.

25 ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Vol. I: Rules, by Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck, 2009, p. 410

26 Ibid.

27 Elements of Crimes for the ICC, Definition of outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, as a war crime (ICC Statute, Article 8(2)(b)(xxi) and (c)(ii)).

28 Azerbaijan joined the Organization in 1991. In 2011 it was renamed to Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

29 Azerbaijan, Ministry of the Interior, Command of the Troops of the Interior, Order No. 42, Baku, 9 January 1993, §5; cited from ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Vol. II: p. 2668.

The representatives of the Human Rights Ombudsman also visited the morgue of Artsakh and check whether the dead bodies of the Azerbaijani military servicemen keeping there have any signs of mutilation. They recorded no mutilations made on the bodies.

Welcoming the announcement of humanitarian ceasefire on October 10, the Ombudsman emphasizes the need of exchange of information on possible war prisoners and bodies, ensuring favorable conditions for their transfers according to the norms of international humanitarian law. However, it is extremely worrying that after the ceasefire announcement, too, the Azerbaijani side has continued offensive military activities against the Artsakh civilians and combatants, committing new war crimes.

## SECTION 2. USE OF BANNED MEANS AND METHODS

### 2.1. USE OF BANNED WEAPONS

Since the launch of the large-scale aggression against Artsakh, Azerbaijan has been repeatedly using multiple rocket launching systems and cluster munitions in areas where civilian population and civilian objects are located.

The use of multiple rocket launching systems effects broad areas and precludes sufficient precision in targeting, meanwhile cluster munitions release dozens or hundreds of bomblets, or submunitions, and spread them over a large area. Cluster munitions cannot be directed at specific fighters or weapons and their use in populated areas guarantees civilian casualties. Cluster munitions also threaten civilians after conflict: by leaving behind unstable “minefields” of unexploded bomblets, they put more civilians, especially children, at risk.

**On September 27-28, October 2-8 Azerbaijan deployed LAR-160 and SMERCH cluster-warhead missiles against the capital Stepanakert, towns of Shushi and Hadrut and the village of Shosh near Stepanakert.<sup>30</sup> There are many other reports on usage of cluster weaponries in other settlements and days, too. The Emergency State Service of the Republic of Artsakh stated that since September 27 by October 10 the Service found over 180 cluster munitions only in Stepanakert.<sup>31</sup>**

Azerbaijan, while targeting the civilian settlements and peaceful population of Artsakh, also used **military drones** (unmanned aerial vehicles, UAVs) as means of aggressive, indiscriminate and deliberate attacks.<sup>32</sup> Azerbaijan has used the following types of drones to target peaceful population in Artsakh:

- intelligence drones, Orbiter -2, Orbiter – 3, Aerostat, among others;
- striking drones, including Harop, Zaoba-1K, Sky Striker;

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30 Armenpress, “Azerbaijani forces fire internationally prohibited munitions at Artsakh’s civilian population,” 4 October, 2020 <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1030241.html?fbclid=IwAR2jiDqQP28JLqXwggRW4Ef1k6Ly9VJ1cZJXJDGO3nARnijw1Mooq66JfOw>

A1plus, “Արցախի մայրաքաղաք Ստեփանակերտը հրետակոծությունից հետո”, 3 October, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JM28Q96gqh4&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JM28Q96gqh4&feature=emb_logo)

Hetq, “Oct. 4 – Stepanakert: After the Shelling,” 4 October, 2020, <https://hetq.am/en/article/122543?fbclid=IwAR21Vrav5u9M7yu5AgUBEXjnot6k85Xy0GtWrSp2JvfErvhW5pXvmeyiY2A>

31 Armenpress, “Ստեփանակերտում սեպտեմբերի 27-ից սկսած զոհվել է մոտ 180 կասետային ռումբ”, 10 October, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/1031170.html?fbclid=IwAR27rZ7X-NPfoUwHdSIMQBIG0aN4z3dbRFE9IPc3F-vKf7zyN2XAsVTx9o>

32News.am, “Ադրբեջանական ԱԹՍ-ի մասնիկները Հարոպը”, 29 September, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKktBBYQqtU>

News.am, “Խոցված ադրբեջանական ԱԹՍ-ն Վարդենիսի տարածքում”, 28 September, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmNl3XfU3Eo>

- intelligence-striking drones, Bayraktar TB-2, AN-2, etc.

These attacks have caused casualties and destruction of private and public properties. Almost all civilian settlements in Artsakh, including densely populated cities and towns, have been under targeted attacks of above-mentioned drones.

*Figure 30. A Part of “Smerch” Missile in Residential Area of Stepanakert City*



*Figure 31. Unexploded Cluster Munition in Stepanakert*



*Figure 32. A Part of Azerbaijani Missile on a Residential building of Stepanakert City*





*Figure 33. An Azerbaijani “Harrop” Suicide UAV Downed in Askeran Town*



*Figure 34. A Part of an Azerbaijani Rocket Launched at a Residential Area*



In the advisory opinion in the Nuclear Weapons case, the International Court of Justice stated that the prohibition of weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets constitutes an “intransgressible” principle of customary international law. The Court observed that, in conformity with this principle, humanitarian law, prohibits certain types of weapons “because of their indiscriminate effect on combatants and civilians”. In its review of the indictment in the Martić case in 1996, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia examined the legality of the use of cluster bombs according to customary international law, including the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks involving a means or method of warfare which cannot be directed at a specific military objective.

The Geneva Conventions and the UN Convention on Cluster munitions (Azerbaijan is not a party) limits the right to choose the methods and means of warfare, prohibiting the use of such dangerous weapons. International legal instruments and customary international law prohibits the use of cluster munitions, considering them lethal and inhumane. These types of munitions have an indiscriminate effect, and endanger the lives and health of the civilian population, causing additional damage and suffering.

Thus, international law forbids to attack civilians, including journalists, and civilian objects, as well as use cluster munitions in any case, when the distinction between military targets cannot be ensured.

## **2.2. DEPLOYMENT AND USE OF TERRORIST GROUP MEMBERS AS MERCENARIES**

There are multiple strong evidences that confirms the deployment of mercenaries to fight in the side of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia. Moreover, the same evidence discloses the key role of Turkey in this matter.

Turkey has deployed mercenaries from northern part of Syria, Libya to Azerbaijan to use them against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Armenia. About 3,000-4,000 mercenaries were hired to participate in the ongoing war activities against Artsakh and Armenia for 1,500-2,000 USD, as reported by multiple media sources and investigations. The deployment of mercenaries and their involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by Turkey has been regularly confirmed also by international media, some foreign human rights organizations, Governments (e.g. USA, France, Russia, Iran) and more.<sup>33</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia also confirmed in its statement of September 28th that the Ministry has information about mercenaries' recruitment by Turkish authorities in the Middle East to be deployed in the conflict zone in Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the statement, "Turkey is recruiting terrorists and mercenaries in some of the Middle Eastern countries and is sending them to Azerbaijan".<sup>34</sup>

The Foreign Minister of Armenia and his Russian counterpart considered the steps undertaken by extra-regional countries towards undermining regional peace and security.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, the National Security Service of Armenia presented facts on participation of the Turkish side in hostilities, presence of mercenary terrorists and panic among them.<sup>36</sup>

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33 The Guardian, "Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey's ambition," 28 September, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition>

Human Rights Organisation -Afrin -Syria, "Turkey is sending more convoys of Syrian mercenaries from northern Syria to Azerbaijan," 28 September, 2020, [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=366061181444110&id=114977619885802](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=366061181444110&id=114977619885802)

BBC Arabic Service, "البلدين بين النار خط على سوريا مقاتلا تحاور عربي سي بي بي: وأذربيجان أرمينيا," 30 September, 2020, [https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-54346711?fbclid=IwAR3c0dJgE8veTgg54FArDq2AFYLh\\_5vP3eousEuIR9dnyd3\\_7rsbImHuVo4](https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-54346711?fbclid=IwAR3c0dJgE8veTgg54FArDq2AFYLh_5vP3eousEuIR9dnyd3_7rsbImHuVo4)

Tass, "Armenian Foreign Ministry says Turkey sending mercenaries from Middle East to Karabakh," 28 September, 2020, <https://tass.com/world/1205995>

34 Ibit

35 Armenian MFA, "Regarding the phone conversation of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Russia," 30 September, 2020, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2020/09/30/fm\\_armenia\\_russia\\_/10478](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2020/09/30/fm_armenia_russia_/10478)

36 Armenian National Security Service, "National Security Service presents facts on participation of the Turkish side in hostilities, presence of mercenary terrorists and panic among them," 03 October, 2020, <https://www.sns.am/en/press-releases/2020/10/03/national-security-service-presents-facts-on-participation-of-the-turkish-side-in-hostilities-presen/471/>



Azerbaijan is a state party to the Convention of 1989; Turkey is a party to none. However, the prohibition of using mercenaries in hostilities is of customary nature and is binding upon any state. The United Nations Human Rights Council, by the Resolution 42/9 resolution of 26 September 2019 has strongly condemned use of mercenaries to impede the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, considering it a complex crime in which criminal responsibility falls upon those who have recruited, employed, trained and financed the mercenaries. The Resolution considers the activities of the mercenaries as a threat to peace, security and human rights.<sup>41</sup>

Deployment and use of these militants not only go against the obligations of Turkey and Azerbaijan under public international law but create major threats for the violation of human rights and the very essence of relevant humanitarian principles.

The situation raises major legal questions with respect to compliance of Turkey with its international legal obligations. Thus, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations lays down the basic principle according to which “[e]very State has the duty to refrain from organizing or encouraging the organization of irregular forces or armed bands including mercenaries, for incursion into the territory of another State”.

Furthermore, both Azerbaijan and Turkey are parties to the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The latter provides for the obligation of the states to prevent, prosecute and punish direct or indirect, unlawful and willful, provision or collection of funds with the intention that those are used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out, *inter alia*, any act “intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act” (Article 2(1)(b)).

Despite the fact that the Convention is an instrument aimed at struggling against individuals committing certain crimes and not talking (at least directly) about negative obligations (commitment of prohibited acts on their own) of the States parties, it must be noted that according to the ruling of the International Court of Justice in *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro* case “it would be paradoxical if States were thus under an obligation to prevent, so far as within their power, commission of [prohibited acts] by persons over whom they have a certain influence, but were not forbidden to commit such acts through their own organs, or persons over whom they have such firm control that their conduct is attributable to the State concerned under international law” (*Application of the Convention on the*

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41 UN Resolution 42/9 “The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination,” 4 October, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/42/9>

*Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*, 2007 I.C.J. Reports 43, p. 113, ¶166).

It is worth-mentioning that on 6 October the European Court of Human Rights received a request for an interim measure lodged by Armenia against Turkey due to the latter's involvement in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through direct military presence and deployment of mercenaries. The European Court granted the request and called on Turkey to refrain from actions that contribute to breaches of the Convention rights of civilians, and to respect its obligations under the Convention.

### **2.3. MASSIVE HATE SPEECH TOWARDS ETHNIC ARMENIANS**

Aggressive military air and artillery shelling against peaceful population of Artsakh launched by Azerbaijan on 27 September is accompanied with massive hate speech towards ethnic Armenians (Armenophobia) that enjoys state support.

Monitoring of mass media and especially social networks has revealed hatred and incitement to hatred and calls for violence, including calls for killings, spread from Turkish and Azerbaijani sources. At the same time, extensive number of social network individual and group pages spread videos and texts containing hatred towards Armenians; scenes of violence and calls for killing and destruction. Significant number of fake profiles is with Armenian names and surnames, which also send messages to real Armenian accounts with threats and intimidation.

The mentioned materials are disseminated through Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and other social media networks. They target Armenian social media users, including minors. At the same time, more aggressive materials are spread through TikTok with purpose to spread fear and alarms in the peaceful population. Consultations of the Human Rights Ombudsman with experts show that this specific social network is more dangerous than others, since in many cases it is impossible to have control over them.

The Armenophobia and massive hate speech against ethnic Armenians coordinated by Azerbaijani authorities had been thoroughly analyzed and documented by independent experts and published by the Ombudsman of Artsakh.<sup>42</sup>

The results of Azerbaijani state lead hate speech against ethnic Armenians were revealed also during the outbreak of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on April 2016. Within his *ad hoc* reports the Ombudsman of Artsakh addressed a wide range of human rights issues stemming from the Azerbaijani aggression, including beheading, torture, and mutilation of combatants' and civilians' dead bodies, as well as indiscriminate shelling of civilian objects, etc.<sup>43</sup>

This is a continuation of long-lasting Armenophobia which has been confirmed also by the European Court of Human Rights case of "Makuchyan and Minasyan v. Azerbaijan and Hungary" (paras.

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42 Artsakh Ombudsman, "ARTSAKH OMBUDSMAN INTERIM PUBLIC REPORT ARMENOPHOBIA IN AZERBAIJAN ORGANIZED HATE SPEECH ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ARMENIANS," 25 September, 2018, <https://artsakhombuds.am/hy/document/570>

43 Artsakh Ombudsman, "ARTSAKH OMBUDSMAN INTERIM PUBLIC REPORT LEGAL ASSESSMENT FACTS ON HUMAN SHIELDING AND USE OF INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF NAGORNO KARABAKH BY AZERBAIJANI MILITARY FORCES," 21 April, 2016, <https://artsakhombuds.am/hy/document/566>

Artsakh Ombudsman, "ARTSAKH OMBUDSMANS SECOND INTERIM REPORT ON ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY AZERBAIJAN DURING THE 2016 APRIL WAR," 9 December, 2016, <https://artsakhombuds.am/hy/document/568>

213-221). It is related to the release and glorification of Ramil Safarov by Azerbaijani authorities, who brutally killed Armenian officer Gurgen Margaryan. This ECtHR judgment is a ruling against Azerbaijan's policy of Armenophobia. It not only recognizes, but also adjudicates on the inadmissibility of the promotion on the state level of hate crimes committed against the Armenians by Azerbaijan.

The Strasbourg Court condemned for the release and glorification of a person who committed murder as a result of ethnic hatred, which is a dangerous impetus for creating an atmosphere of impunity. The European Court, in this case, found a violation of right to life guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 2), as well as the right to prohibit discrimination (Article 14), in conjunction with the Article 2. The above mentioned is only one example of the result of the Armenophobic propaganda of the Azerbaijan.

The hate speech is being disseminated also by the Turkish government. According to Garo Paylan, member of the Turkish Parliament, the Turkish government engages in war propaganda by openly supporting the military conflict and is publicly resorting to belligerent rhetoric against the Armenia. Moreover, Turkey's Armenian community has also been intimidated in this climate of hate speech. Provocateurs gathered at the Armenian patriarchate with Azerbaijani flags and Turkey's Armenian community and citizens of Armenia who live and work in Turkey no longer feel safe.<sup>44</sup>

**All these factors clearly demonstrate a policy by Azerbaijan and Turkey of ethnic cleansing and terror-inspiring means against the Armenian civilian population.**

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<sup>44</sup> Garo Paylan - Շարք Փայլան, "Press Statement," 3 October, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/792138110876107/posts/3362613830495176/>



## **Annotation**

The institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh is an independent national human rights institution functioning with Paris principles. It was established in 2008, according to the Constitution and the Law on Human Rights Ombudsman.

The first Human Rights Ombudsman was Yuri Hayrapetyan, who served in 2008-2016.

The second Human Rights Ombudsman was Ruben Melikyan, who served in 2016-2018.

The incumbent Ombudsman is Artak Beglaryan, who has been elected on October 31, 2018.

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**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/ArtsakhOmbuds>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhOmbuds>

# Exhibit 65



## Armenia

🕒 This article is more than **1 year old**

# Nagorno-Karabakh: at least three Syrian fighters killed

**Syrians on the ground are believed to be contractors working for Turkish security companies**

**Bethan McKernan and Michael Safi**

Wed 30 Sep 2020 13.59 EDT

At least three Syrian opposition fighters have been killed in skirmishes in the disputed region of [Nagorno-Karabakh](#), the Guardian has learned, confirming earlier reports of foreign involvement in the battle between Armenian and Azerbaijan over the territory and increasing fears it may spiral into a wider regional conflict.

As fierce combat between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces stretched into a fourth day, the presence of Syrians on the ground - believed to be contractors working for Turkish security companies - signalled a new frontier for Ankara's increasingly assertive foreign policy.

Turkish intervention in a dispute that foreign powers have traditionally sought to restrain was a dangerous new factor that threatened to make the fighting there longer and bloodier, analysts said.

It also risked drawing in other regional actors - opening a third theatre in Turkey's power struggle with [Russia](#), with the rivals already supporting opposite sides in conflicts in Syria and Libya, while also ringing alarm bells in neighbouring Iran.

Turkey has declared its staunch support for Azerbaijan, while Russia has a military alliance with [Armenia](#) but has links and sells weapons to both sides. Turkey borders Armenia and Russia borders Azerbaijan.

In Wednesday's clashes, Armenia accused Azerbaijan of using heavily artillery across the entire front line and killing three civilians in the town of Martakert. Azerbaijan, which claims 14 of its civilians have died since Sunday, said it repelled several Armenian counter-attacks. It was not possible to independently verify either sides' claims.

Turkey and Azerbaijan have denied that Syrians are fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and accused Armenia of deploying men from Kurdish militant groups, but have not produced proof.



Several men in Syria's last opposition stronghold of Idlib province told the Guardian this week that military commanders and brokers had offered them work guarding observation posts and oil and gas facilities in Azerbaijan on three or six month contracts at 7,000-10,000 Turkish lira (£700-£1,000) a month - relatively large sums of money which could help them escape Syria's grinding poverty.

Omar Abdo, the cousin of killed fighter Muhammed Shaalan, from the town of al Atarib, said that men in Shaalan's unit in the al Hamza division had contacted the family on Tuesday to inform them of Shaalan's death.

"He told us he was leaving for Azerbaijan on 20 September. We don't know the circumstances of his death and we were told it's hard to bring his corpse at the moment, but they will try," he said.

The families of Hussein Talha, from Ain Jara village, and Saddam Aziz Azkor of al Kareem, also said unit commanders had called them on Tuesday to say that their relatives had been killed. Local media has reported another three dead.

While observers have questioned why Baku's highly-trained and well-armed military forces would be in need of assistance from Syrian mercenaries, the quick mobilisation of Syrians to the front lines, as

well as the fact that Syrian volunteers said the recruitment drive began a month ago, suggested Azerbaijan had been planning its military campaign for some time.



Armenia and Azerbaijan clash over disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region - video report

The fighting was the fiercest since a 1994 war over the region, “but it doesn’t yet look like a full-scale military offensive”, said Thomas de Waal, a senior fellow with Carnegie [Europe](#).

“So far, it’s an offensive on two or three fronts. These are small countries and they don’t want to lose men, which possibly explains shipping in these Syrians - you don’t have to sacrifice young Azerbaijani lives.”

He said other powers such as Russia and Iran would be very reluctant to explicitly throw their weight behind Armenia. “Russia has its hands tied because it has relationships on both sides,” he said. “All they and Iran can do is try to get a ceasefire. Neither of them want to get involved on the ground.”

While the UN and most of the international community have called for the resumption of peace talks, Turkish president [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#) has struck a decidedly different tone, pledging his country’s full support for Baku against what he called “Armenian aggression”.

Moscow appeared to be weighing its options, urging restraint and calling for a peaceful resolution.

“We call on all countries, especially our partners such as Turkey, to do everything to convince the opposing parties to cease fire and return to peacefully resolving the conflict by politico-diplomatic means,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday.

The French president, Emmanuel Macron, is already at loggerheads with his Turkish counterpart in a dispute over oil and gas drilling rights in the eastern Mediterranean, and said on Wednesday: “France

remains extremely concerned by the warlike messages Turkey had in the last hours, which essentially remove any of Azerbaijan's inhibitions in reconquering Nagorno-Karabakh. And that we won't accept."

With the deployment of Syrians, Turkey may be seeking to repeat a strategy that worked well in Libya earlier this year. Ankara has facilitated the arrival of at least 10,000 Syrians to the north African state's battlefields, helping turn the tide of the war in favour of the UN-backed government fighting renegade General Khalifa Haftar.

As 2022 begins, there's a new year resolution we'd like you to consider. We'd like to invite you to join more than 1.5 million people in 180 countries who have taken the step to support us financially - keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent.

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# Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan, two fighters say

By Reuters Staff

5 MIN READ



ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkey is sending Syrian rebel fighters to support Azerbaijan in its escalating conflict with neighbouring Armenia, two Syrian rebels have said, as Ankara pledges to step up backing for its majority-Muslim ally.



FILE PHOTO: Azeri men living in Turkey wave flags of Turkey and Azerbaijan during a protest following clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia, in Istanbul, Turkey, July 19, 2020. REUTERS/Murad Sezer/File Photo

The clashes over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh are the heaviest since 2016, with reports of dozens of deaths and hundreds wounded.

Armenia's ambassador to Moscow said on Monday that Turkey had sent around 4,000 fighters from northern Syria to Azerbaijan and that they were fighting there, an assertion denied by an aide to Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev.

Armenia also said Turkish military experts were fighting alongside Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous breakaway region of Azerbaijan run by ethnic Armenians, and that Turkey had provided drones and warplanes.

Azerbaijan denied the reports. Turkey did not immediately comment, although senior officials including President Tayyip Erdogan, who has increasingly been flexing Turkey's military muscle abroad, have promised support for Baku.

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The two fighters, from Turkish-backed rebel groups in areas of northern Syria under Turkish control, said they were deploying to Azerbaijan in coordination with Ankara.

They declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue. Reuters could not independently verify their accounts.

“I didn’t want to go, but I don’t have any money. Life is very hard and poor,” said a fighter who had fought in Syria for Ahrar al-Sham, a group that Turkey has supported.

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Turkey's Erdogan says Armenia must withdraw from Azeri lands

## **\$1,500 A MONTH**

Both men said they had been told by their Syrian brigade commanders they would earn around \$1,500 a month - a large wage for Syria, where the economy and currency have

collapsed.

The fighter said he had arranged his assignment with an official from the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) in Afrin, a region of northwest Syria seized by Turkey and its Syrian rebel allies two years ago.

A spokesman for the SNA, an umbrella group of Syrian rebel groups backed by Turkey, did not respond to a request for comment.

The other fighter, from the SNA-affiliated Jaish al-Nukhba militia, said he had been told nearly 1,000 Syrians were set to be deployed to Azerbaijan. Other rebels, who also declined to be named, gave figures of between 700 and 1,000.

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The two men, who spoke to Reuters last week, said they expected to be despatched on Sept. 25, to guard facilities but not to fight. Reuters was not able to contact them on Monday to confirm their location.

Hikmat Hajiyev, a foreign policy aide to Azeri President Ilham Aliyev said it was “complete nonsense” to say Syrian fighters were coming to help his country: “Our armed forces have

more than enough personnel and reserve forces.”

In recent years, Turkey has projected growing power abroad with incursions into neighbouring Syria and Iraq, and military support for the internationally recognised government in Libya.

Turkey has repeatedly said it is also ready to provide support to Azerbaijan, with which it has strong historical and cultural ties and runs joint energy projects.

## RIVALRY WITH RUSSIA

Defence Minister Hulusi Akar attended joint military drills in Azerbaijan in August, and Erdogan used his speech to the United Nations General Assembly last week to accuse Armenia of attacking its neighbour.

Concern that Turkey could get more involved in the conflict helped drag its currency [TRYTOM=D3](#) to a record low against the dollar on Monday.

Mustafa Sejari, a senior Syrian rebel, did not confirm the deployment of fighters to Azerbaijan but said Turkey was the “only hope” left for opponents of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has retaken most rebel-held land in Syria with Russian and Iranian support.

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“Our alliance with (Turkey) takes different forms and is truly a common fate,” he said. “I don’t rule out at all Turkey becoming a strategic choice for Syrian youths.”

Turkey has already used Syrian fighters to help block an assault on the Libyan capital Tripoli earlier this year by General Khalifa Haftar’s eastern-based Libyan National Army, backed by Russia among others.

Their use in Syria would create a third theatre for Turkey’s regional rivalry with Moscow, which has a military base in Armenia, considers it a strategic partner in the South Caucasus, and supplies it with weapons. It has not commented on the reports of Syrian fighters being sent to Azerbaijan.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow was following the situation very closely and that the conflict had to be resolved through diplomacy.

Additional reporting by Nailia Bagirova in Baku and Suleiman al-Khalidi in Amman; Writing by Dominic Evans; Editing by Mike Collett-White and Kevin Liffey

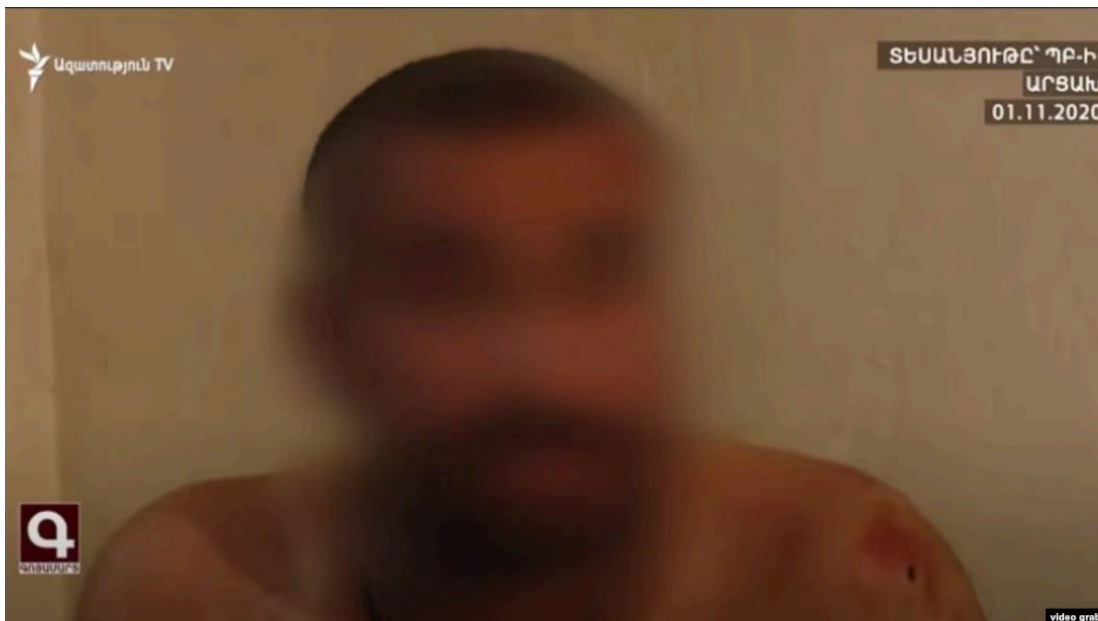
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# Exhibit 67

IN ENGLISH

## ‘Syrian Mercenaries’ Sentenced To Life In Prison

Մայիս 04, 2021 [Naira Bulghadarian](#)



Armenia - Yusef al-Haji, a Syrian man captured during fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, is shown on Armenian television, November 3, 2020

**An Armenian court on Tuesday handed a life sentence to two Syrian men who were captured during last year’s war in Nagorno-Karabakh.**

Karabakh’s Armenian-backed army took them prisoner in fierce fighting with Azerbaijani forces stopped by a Russian-mediated ceasefire November 10. They were handed over to Armenia to stand trial on a string of criminal charges, including terrorism.

The trial lasted for just a few hours, with both defendants, identified as Muhrab al-Shkheri and Yusef al-Haji, apparently pleading guilty to the accusations.



The court in the southeastern Armenian town of Kapan sentenced them to life in prison, backing investigators' claims that they are mercenaries who were recruited by pro-Turkish militant groups to "terrorize civilians" in Karabakh and commit other war crimes.

The trial prosecutors said the Syrians underwent military training at a camp in northern Syria in June-September 2020 before being transported to Azerbaijan via Turkey. In addition to a fixed wage of \$2,000, the recruiters also promised to pay \$100 for every Armenian killed by them, according to the prosecutors.

Both men admitted being mercenaries in their testimonies shown on Armenian television late last year. Armenian officials portrayed that as further proof that thousands of Syrians fought in Karabakh on Azerbaijan's side for money.

The Armenian claims were backed by France and, implicitly, Russia.

French President Emmanuel Macron accused Turkey of recruiting jihadist fighters from Syria for the Azerbaijani army shortly after the outbreak of large-scale hostilities in and around Karabakh on September 27. Russia also expressed serious concern about the deployment of "terrorists and mercenaries" from Syria and Libya in the Karabakh conflict zone.

Turkey and Azerbaijan denied the presence of any foreign mercenaries in the Azerbaijani army ranks. Baku dismissed the Syrians' televised confessions as a fraud.

Multiple reports by Western media quoted members of Islamist rebel groups in areas of northern Syria under Turkish control as saying in late September and October that they are deploying to Azerbaijan in coordination with the Turkish government.

# Exhibit 68

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## Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone must be withdrawn – UN experts

GENEVA (11 November 2020) – UN human rights experts\* noted the agreement reached on 9 November to put an end to hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and hope that it will lead to sustained peace in the region. They are nonetheless concerned by the use of mercenaries in and around the conflict zone until this agreement was reached, and expressed alarm at the devastating consequences for the civilian population, with little prospects of accountability.

The UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries said there were widespread reports that the Government of Azerbaijan, with Turkey's assistance, relied on Syrian fighters to shore-up and sustain its military operations in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, including on the frontline. The fighters appeared to be motivated primarily by private gain, given the dire economic situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the UN experts said. In case of death, their relatives were reportedly promised financial compensation and Turkish nationality.

The way in which these individuals were recruited, transported and used in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone appeared consistent with the definition of a mercenary, as set out by relevant international legal instruments, including the [International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries](#), to which Azerbaijan is a party, said Chris Kwaja, who chairs the Working Group.

Moreover, reports indicate that Turkey engaged in large-scale recruitment and transfer of Syrian men to Azerbaijan through armed factions, some of which are affiliated with the Syrian National Army. "The alleged role of Turkey is all the more concerning given the [similar allegations](#) addressed earlier this year by the Working Group in relation its role in recruiting, deploying and financing such fighters to take part in the conflict in Libya," Kwaja added.

The Working Group also received reports indicating that Armenia has been involved in the deployment of foreign nationals to fight in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The experts are looking into these reports to ascertain possible links to mercenary-related activities, such as the context in which these actors operate and their possible motivations. The Working Group will continue to monitor any use of mercenary-related actors by the sides.

Since the resumption of hostilities on 27 September 2020 and up to the latest ceasefire, the Working Group has been increasingly concerned about repeated reports of deliberate and indiscriminate attacks in populated areas in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, as well as other areas away from the fighting, which has led to a mounting number of civilian casualties, including children. Considerable damage to civilian property and infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, has also been widely reported; as well as incidents involving journalists.

“In this context, it is even more worrisome that the Syrian fighters deployed to Azerbaijan are allegedly affiliated with armed groups and individuals that, in some cases, have been accused of war crimes and serious human rights abuses during the conflict in Syria, thus seemingly perpetuating a cycle of impunity and risking further abuses of international law,” they added.

“We call strongly on the sides, and the States supporting them, to immediately withdraw any mercenaries and related actors and not to engage in further recruitment, funding and deployment,” the experts said.

The experts have also conveyed their concerns about the above allegations directly to the Governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey, and informed the Syrian Arab Republic.

ENDS

(\* ) The [Working Group on the use of mercenaries](#) is comprised of five independent experts: **Chris Kwaja** (Chair-Rapporteur), **Jelena Aparac**, **Lilian Bobea**, **Ravindran Daniel**, and **Sorcha MacLeod**.

This statement has been endorsed by **Irene Khan**, [Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression](#) and **Nils Melzer**, [Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#).

The **Working Groups** and **Special Rapporteurs** are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. *Special Procedures*, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. *Special Procedures'* experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

For more information and **media requests** please contact Cristina Michels ([cmichels@ohchr.org](mailto:cmichels@ohchr.org)) and Sofia Palli ([spalli@ohchr.org](mailto:spalli@ohchr.org)), or write to [mercenaries@ohchr.org](mailto:mercenaries@ohchr.org).

For media enquiries regarding other UN independent experts, please contact Renato de Souza (+41 22 928 9855 / [rosariodesouza@ohchr.org](mailto:rosariodesouza@ohchr.org)), Jeremy Laurence (+ 41 22 917 7578 / [jlaurence@ohchr.org](mailto:jlaurence@ohchr.org)).

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# Exhibit 69

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

# Treasury Sanctions Wagner Group–linked Companies in the Central African Republic

May 30, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) continues to counter Russia’s destabilizing activities in Africa by sanctioning two companies that are linked to the Private Military Company “Wagner” (Wagner Group). Mining Industries SARLU and Logistique Economique Etrangere SARLU are being designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14024 for enabling Wagner Group security operations and Wagner Group-linked illicit mining endeavors in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Since its arrival in CAR in late 2017, the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group and companies formerly controlled by the now-deceased Yevgeny Prigozhin have established a vast security and business network in CAR, among other African counties. This network has advanced Russia’s destabilizing activities at the expense of CAR’s sovereignty, including the Wagner Group’s destructive operations and Wagner Group-linked companies’ involvement in illicit gold and diamond mining and logging. OFAC has taken previous action against several Wagner Group-linked companies in CAR, including [Lobaye Invest](#), [Midas Ressources SARLU](#), and [Bois Rouge SARLU](#) (Bois Rouge), now known as Wood International Group SARLU.

“The Russia-backed Wagner Group and its network of businesses have exploited the people and natural resources of the Central African Republic to advance the group’s agenda,” said Brian E. Nelson, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “The United States will continue to use its sanctions authorities to disrupt those supporting Russia’s destabilizing activities in Africa.”

OFAC collaborated closely with Homeland Security Investigations during the investigation of Mining Industries.

## WAGNER GROUP-LINKED COMPANIES

**Mining Industries SARLU** (Mining Industries) is a CAR-based mining company that the Wagner Group’s chief logistician, Valery Chekalov—who reportedly died alongside Prigozhin in August

2023-- used to lease aircraft from Kratol Aviation (Kratol), a UAE-based aviation company. OFAC designated Kratol on January 26, 2023 pursuant to E.O. 13667 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the Wagner Group. The Wagner Group uses aircraft leased by Mining Industries to move personnel and equipment through CAR and elsewhere in Africa. Additionally, Mining Industries has imported chemicals commonly used in mining, including hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, and sodium cyanide, presumably to advance Wagner Group-linked illicit mining.

**Logistique Economique Etrangere SARLU** (Logistique) is a CAR-based company that in 2021 received hundreds of shipments of heavy materials from Limited Liability Company Broker Expert (Broker Expert), a Russia-based company linked to Prigozhin that has supported Russian interests in Ukraine and throughout Africa. OFAC designated Broker Expert on March 8, 2024 pursuant to E.O. 14024 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Bois Rouge. The shipments Logistique received from Broker Expert were likely intended for Wagner Group-linked illicit mining, such as developing a mining site or building a new processing plant.

OFAC designated Mining Industries pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Wagner Group, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 14024. OFAC designated Logistique pursuant to E.O. 14024 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Broker Expert, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 14024.

## **THE WAGNER GROUP**

The United States has sanctioned numerous entities and individuals globally that support the Wagner Group. The Wagner Group has committed widespread human rights abuses, and companies linked to the group have appropriated natural resources across multiple countries in Africa. A proxy paramilitary force of the Kremlin, the Wagner Group has carried out combat operations around the world, including in Russia's brutal war against Ukraine.

On June 20, 2017, OFAC designated the Wagner Group pursuant to E.O. 13660 for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine. On November 15, 2022, the [Department of State redesignated the Wagner Group pursuant to](#)

[E.O.14024](#) for operating or having operated in the defense and related materiel sector of the Russian Federation economy. On January 26, 2023, [OFAC redesignated the Wagner Group pursuant to E.O. 13581](#), as amended by E.O. 13863, for being a foreign person that constitutes a significant transnational criminal organization. Wagner Group personnel have engaged in an ongoing pattern of serious criminal activity, including mass executions, rape, child abductions, and other brutalities against innocents in the CAR and Mali. On the same day, OFAC designated the Wagner Group pursuant to E.O. 13667 for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence, or abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law in relation to the CAR. The Wagner Group has also been sanctioned by Australia, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.

## **SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated persons described above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons.

In addition, financial institutions and other persons that engage in certain transactions or activities with the sanctioned entities and individuals may expose themselves to sanctions or be subject to an enforcement action. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any designated person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the SDN List, but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to [OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897](#). For



detailed information on the process to [submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list](#).

[Click here for more information on the individuals and entities designated today.](#)

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