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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT



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A REPORT ON AFRIN CITY

March 2018



An introduction:



Afrin is located in the northwest corner of Syria, an administrative area of Aleppo province. It covers an area of 3,850 square kilometers. The population of Afrin region is 523,258 according to the Syrian government statistics in 2012.

But the number has risen because of the internal displacement movement from the province of Aleppo and neighboring cities and towns to reach more than a million people, according to the Kurdish administration that has been there since the loss of the Syrian government control of the region.

Afrin is famous for the production of olive oil, citrus and vineyards, as well as many archaeological sites such as the Citadel of Samaan, the Citadel of the Prophet Hori and Tel Ain Darah, the Roman bridges on the Afrin River and Afrin is famous for the production of olive oil, citrus and vineyards, as well as many archaeological sites such as the Citadel of Samaan, the Citadel of the Prophet Hori and Tel Ain Darah the Roman bridges on the Afrin River and Hra Derah Bridge which was built by the German before the First World War.

There is also a railway coming from Turkey through the region of Afrin and reach the city of Aleppo, which was built by Turkey before the First World War.

The region consists of two regions: mountainous and coastal.

Mountainous region: (Mount Kurd - Mount Lilon - Shakak Heights).

Coastal region: (plain Jumah), where 35% of the population live in the area. Afrin is divided

administratively into 7 subdistricts:

1- Afrin Center: It includes 263 villages and 100 farms.

2- Jondiers: It includes 33 villages and 29 farms.

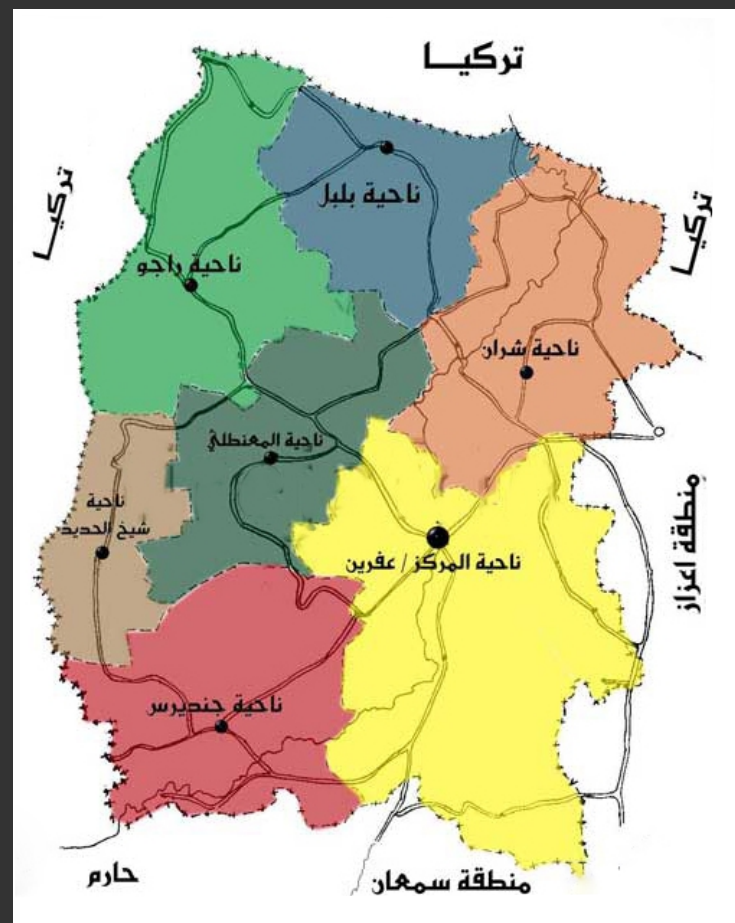
3- Sheikh Al-Hadid: It includes 16 villages and 3 farms.

4- Mobatli: It includes 35 villages and 10 farms.

5- Shoran: It includes 37 villages and 7 farms.

6- Bulbul: 30 villages have 13 farms.

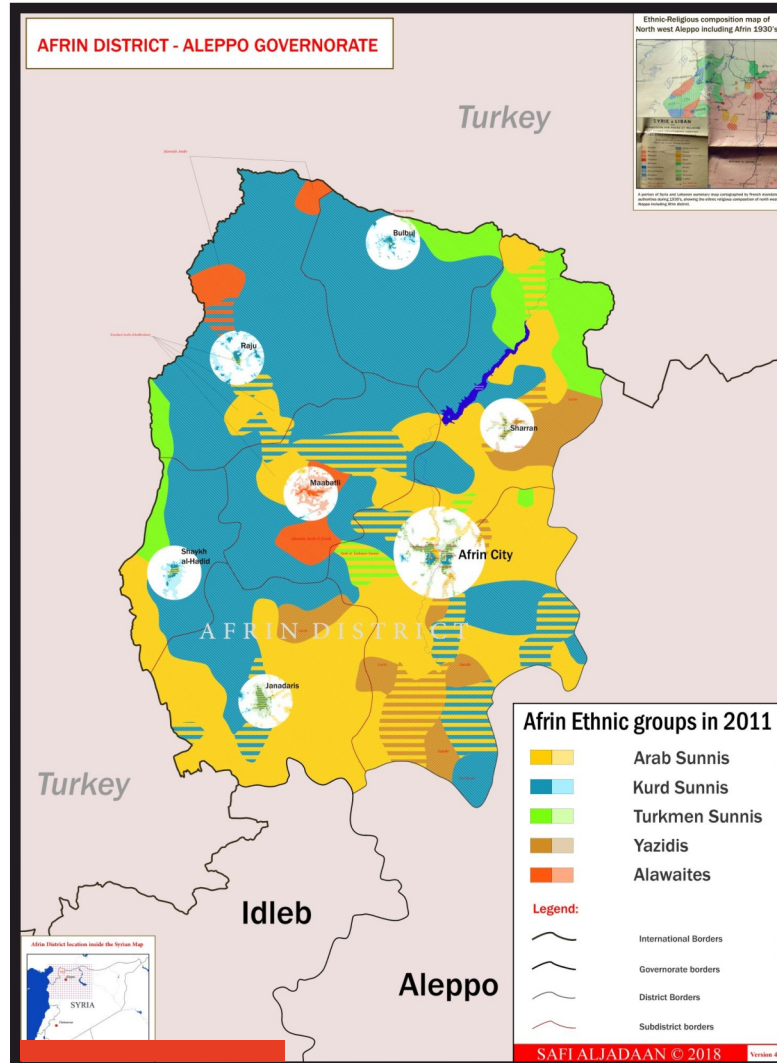
7- Raju: It includes 45 villages and 20 farms.



Population structure:

The blue color shows the Kurdish presence, while the yellow color reflects the Arab presence, while the brown color indicates areas to Yazidis spread, those are a mixture of Arabs and Kurds who can speak Kurdish and Arabic at the same time.

The green color reflects the Turkman presence. Finally, the Alawis live in a few scattered villages (Red color), the largest one is Mobatli, the center of Mobatli sub-district and they speak Kurdish as the first language. Arabs make up more than a third of the population.



The situation of industry and trade in the city of Afrin:

The industrial and commercial movement in the city of Afrin has witnessed a severe decline this year compared with the past few years due to the "ill-considered policies" adopted by the "self-administration" in dealing with industrialists and traders from Afrin and other regions.

Since 2013, Afrin has attracted a large number of workshop owners and merchants from Aleppo and neighboring areas because of the relative safety of Afrin and the events that have spread into the city of Aleppo until it has become a flourishing industrial city.

However, the priorities of self-administration that give war and self-defense a special importance have negatively affected the industrial and commercial situation of the city, With the imposition of self-administration the mandatory service law or the so-called "duty of self-defense" between the ages of 18-40 years, exacerbated the problem of lack of labor, which suffers mainly Afrin, because of the migration of many young people to Turkey and European countries.

Which led to the fact that a large part of the workshop owners are no longer able to secure the labor force, which led them to employ children of school age. The children's period of time is short due to going to school, as well as their lack of productivity due to lack of experience and poor in their Physical structure. "

This leads to the loss of workshop owners because of the large financial expenses of taxes and the rise in the prices of fuel and production tools, with several sources confirming the transfer of more than 100 workshops from Afrin to Aleppo during the current year.

As a result of the decline in commercial and industrial traffic in Afrin, self-administration prevented the entry of cars from outside Afrin, forcing traders to unload their cargo to another truck. As a result, traders incur additional financial costs such as transport and loading charges,

The situation of agriculture in general and olive crop in particular in the city of Afrin:

The situation that the city has been living for more than five years has led to large losses in production and the suspension of free export by the owners of the land. The dominant control of the important crops are traders, smugglers and some influential in the administration of the Authority, in addition to the taxes imposed on the farmers and owners of olive presses, under false pretenses.

Although the nature of Afrin, mostly mountainous areas and planted with olive trees, but there are areas grown in different types of grain due to its moderate climate.

Statistics 2017 indicate that the area planted with wheat 8000 ha and barley 2000 ha, the average grain production 16-17 thousand tons of grain, and most areas of mountainous and coastal lands and valleys planted with olives and grape, along with other trees such as walnuts, pomegranate and many other species. The number of olive trees are 13 million trees, 60% of them are productive and the rest are tiny trees



that do not bear fruit. This means that Afrin region depends mainly on the agricultural economy and needs plans and studies for the development of agriculture and related industries and thus for their economic development, that is, each household has a fixed income throughout the year. So It cannot be achieved unless we give the development side of the existing crops and the introduction of varieties suitable for our regions, and this is not achieved between day and night. The olive picking season has been delayed due to lack of production this year. The actual production of olive oil reached 10-15% compared to last year. In Afrin there is only super phosphate and urea and its price is about 9250 Syrian pounds per bag. The other types are very expensive up to 50 Syrian pounds per kilogram (but very useful for olive trees in increasing production), as well as the high cost of irrigation of trees in water, All these reasons are The above factors have led to the loss of the farmer at the end of the season, which is forced to continue in service until next season, perhaps recover in the coming year, moreover, the de facto authority of up to 10% of each class of products taxes.

Most of the products cost more than profit, especially pomegranates and potatoes seasonal vegetables, and the farmer works day and night and to the end of the season so he can reduce the deficit, The following are the prices of some agricultural products in the city of Afrin in Syrian pounds:

tomatoes	Egg-planet	Apple	Cucumber	Pea	Green paper	Limon	Potatoes	Pomegranate box of 5 kilogram	Olive tank	Item
200	150	350	500	400	300	250	150	125 wholesales	22000 - 25000 S. P	Price /S. P

The situation of education in the city of Afrin:



With the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the so-called "Authority of Education of Self-Management" put its hand on the educational process in Afrin, and developed educational curricula that were imposed as a de facto authority (it changed the curriculum in the three stages and converted its language to Kurdish), where the curriculum lacked the acceptance of the other. And the culture of moderation and also the spirit of scientific development, and this curriculum is far from the concept of public professional education and officially recognized everywhere in the world.

There was an authoritarian partnership between the PYD and the Syrian regime through the Afrin Education Complex, but at the beginning of 2015-2016, the Ministry of Education has suspended the work of the educational complex in Afrin because of the PYD practices and issued a decision to suspend the financial allocations and School supplies and logistical support for schools, such as books, furniture and other things, and requests for the transfer of teachers from Afrin were stopped but only the monthly salaries were paid. The situation continued until 2017, and another decision was issued forbidding teachers, who had fled to Afrin from transferring to another place. So those teachers were asked to go to Aleppo or put themselves at the disposal of ministry of education of Aleppo or education complex of the town of Nobel.

Teachers who are working in Self-administration areas do not have certificates (they are subject to formal educational courses) and are then appointed in schools. This has led to a low level of education. They have also made the schools like a center for spreading the democratic culture and one party through periodic intellectual meetings of teachers and students. And every teacher who did not attend these meetings is deducted from his salary, it worth to mention that these meetings are not related to the development of the educational process or curriculum.

Most of the children in the Kurdish areas are separated. For example, children are taught according to their nationality or denomination. Kurdish children have schools in which they learn. These schools are self-managed and learn only the Kurdish language. Arab children have schools under the control of the regime, as well as Christianity. , "by this way they create racism among children"

The security situation in Afrin and displacement movements:



The operation of the Turkish army against the People's Protection Units in the northern border town of Afrin, officially called "Olive Branch operation", officially started on Saturday, 20 January 2018, after the launch of the ground phase. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Olive Branch operation had begun, and it will be followed by another operation on Menbij, and will continue to the borders of Iraq, to expel the Kurdish People's Protection Units from those areas, and to protect the Turkish national security.

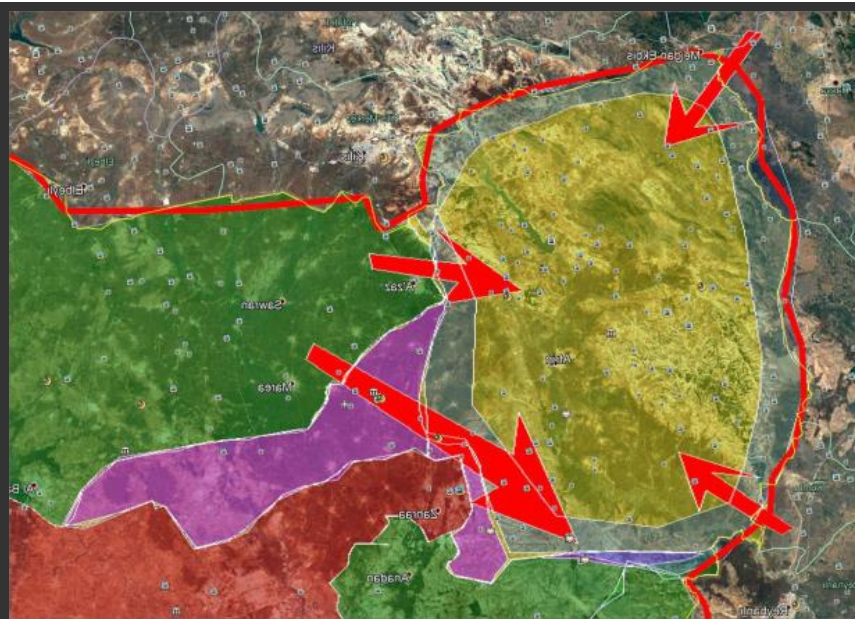
The Turkish Defense Minister announced that the Free Syrian Army would participate actively in the Afrin operation. On 20 January, Turkey carried out intensive air strikes on Afrin, military sources said that the bombing targeted 108 military targets out of 113. The most prominent sites targeted are : the radio station in the Sheikh Hadid sub-district, the headquarters of Hajiko in Raju, and the Ghazawi checkpoint, Mount Barsaya, Qabar camp, Malikya village, Hamdiya, Hajilar, Tel Sallur, Feria, 135th Brigade near Qibar, Tall Rifat, and Ming military airport.

A day later it was announced that the Free Syrian Army take full control of Shankal village, coincided with the disclosure of Turkish Prime Minister Ben Ali Yildirm that "olive branch" will be implemented in four stages, and will create a security area at a depth of 30 kilometers.

Four axes:



According to the plan, the Turkish army and the Free Syrian Army began to break into the Afrin area from four main axes during the process



in order to contact the Free Syrian Army forces in the western and northern parts of Aleppo and to restore the areas to which Kurdish units were extended to, more than two years ago (under the cover of Russian airplane) and was taken from the Free Syrian Army, which will cut the area of Afrin from areas of the regime forces.

The Kurdish organizations dependent upon the city of Afrin to reach the Mediterranean, and they pose a threat to areas of the " Euphrates shield" and threat the de- escalation zones in the province of Idlib.

The city of Afrin is politically self-governing, military and security, and is one of the three self-governing groups in Syria (Al-Jazeera, Ain Al Arab, Kobany and Afrin).

Afrin has strategic importance in the Kurdish project, because it is the geographical bridge which let them reach to the Mediterranean If circumstances permit, as many Kurdish officials have said.

The field commander in the national army, Abu Faisal Turkmani: After the end of the first phase of the olive branch, during which control of the border and mountain ranges, the process has been speeded up in the second phase, where the liberation of nineteen villages on all axes, The National Army approached the city of Afrin at an estimated distance of two kilometers from Sharan axes, and our next goal is to liberate Afrin entirely from the PKK gangs. "

- The acceleration of the events led to an increase in the displacement of local population residing, as the displacement started from the areas and villages that are witnessing hostilities towards the center of Afrin and surrounding villages.

- For its part, the United Nations confirmed that it had received reports that "self-management" Kurdish and the regime forces prevent the people of the Afrin from displacement outside the region.

Where the civilians in the area of Afrin north of Aleppo in northern Syria, trying to go outside the area along with their peers in most of the cities of Syria, which is witnessing battles, but the " People's Protection Units " Kurdish control of Afrin and the checkpoint of the Syrian regime forces who separate it from the city of Aleppo and prevent people from displacement, only once they pay large amounts of money as bribes. (One million Syrian pounds to get out of Afrin ... or prison waiting for the one who is trying to escape)

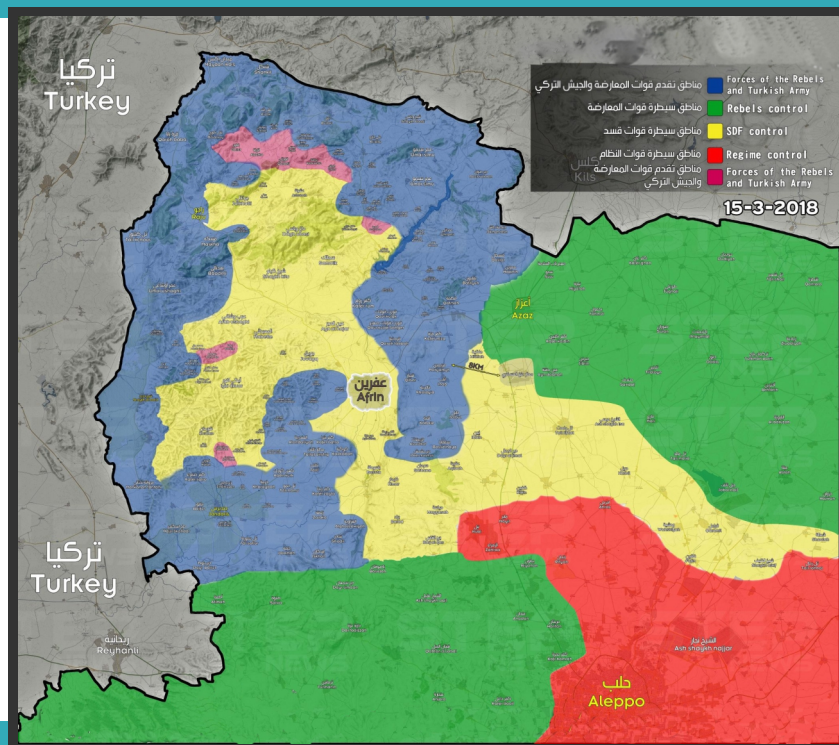
The Kurdish "People's Protection Units" not only prevented indigenous people from leaving, but also prevented the crossing of a displaced convoy of Idlib heading for the city of Azaz.

However, despite all the risks associated with attempts to leave the city of Afrin, on a daily basis, the waves of displacement are increasing.

On 12-3-2018, the sources confirmed that about 200 families arrived in the areas controlled by the Syrian Free Army, mostly Arab and there are five Kurdish families, and the reason for the small number of Kurdish families in the region fear of coming to these areas.

The sources pointed out that more than 50 percent of the people of the city of Afrin left the city after the Turkish warplanes targeting the checkpoint, "Al-Ahlam" " People's Protection Units" the Kurds, who prevent civilians from leaving, With the existence anger situation among residents for not being allowed to leave the city

As the olive branch approached the encirclement of Afrin, the pace of displacement intensified:



- 1 - Displacement to areas controlled by opposition forces and the Free Army.
- 2 - Displacement to areas controlled by the regime forces.
- 3 - Return from the center of Afrin to the origin villages from which they fled after the control of the Turkish army and the Free Army.
- 4 - Displacement to the areas controlled by separatist parties and Kurdish self-administration in the eastern regions (such as Manbij).
- 5 - Displacement (from the city of Azaz and villages of Euphrates shield) to the villages of Afrin, which was controlled by the Turkish army and the Free Army.



According to some sources (in addition to reports from researchers in the region):

- 1 – The number of displaced from the areas of Afrin towards the city center about 250 thousand displaced.
- 2 - More than ten thousand displaced people towards the towns of Nobel and Zahra and the number is increasing.
- 3 - There are about 120 thousand displaced people went to Menbij and Aleppo and the number is increasing.
- 4 - Thousands of displaced people arrived in the town of Azaz (and the number is increasing), and some of them began to return in the direction of the northern villages of Afrin under the control of the Turkish army and the Free Army.



The 18th of March was the starting point in Operation Olive Branch, with the entry of the Free Syrian Army to the center of Afrin city and full control over the city within a few hours. The remaining members of the "People's Protection Units" and their leaders fled the city, so we can say that operation olive branch has reached its strategic objective. Local sources in Afrin confirmed that more than 200,000 people have recently been displaced from the city and are suffering from difficult humanitarian conditions, as they are currently deployed in areas without housing or food and drinking water.



■ فصائل المعارضة
 ■ حزب PYD
 ■ قوات النظام

Some sources confirm that on 19/3/2018 a conference for Afrin will be held in the Turkish city of Gaziantep under the auspices of the Turkish government. 100 Kurdish personalities from Afrin (inside and outside Turkey) were invited to discuss the fate of Afrin after they take control on it.

The Afrin Rescue Conference concluded the following recommendations:

- 1 – Securing and protecting civilians
- 2 - Open safe passages for the people of Afrin to enter and exit safely.
- 3 - Respect for the privacy of all ethnic, religious and sectarian components in Afrin.
- 4 - Interest in education, health, justice and all aspects of life.
- 5- Respect for women and women's rights.
- 6- Abolition of all armed manifestations inside the city.
- 7- Release all prisoners of conscience from the prisons of Afrin.
- 8- Call for national reconciliation among the components of the city.
- 9- Delivery of the administration of the city and its surroundings to the people of Afrin.
- 10- Establishment of a local council elected from the people of Afrin under the supervision of human rights organizations and civil competent.
- 11- Forming committees to compensate those affected by the recent events in the city and its villages, reconstructing the affected areas, guaranteeing the return of the people to their homes and providing the people with the means to return.
- 12- The establishment of local police from the area of Afrin is not a party and does not follow any party to protect the city in order to maintain security and safety.
- 13- Not to impose forced and compulsory recruitment and must be the protection of the city voluntary and pay salaries provided by the Civil Administration Fund.
- 14- Reconciliation with the interior and the ocean and abroad and the dissemination of a culture of tolerance and renounce the principle of revenge and exclusion.
- 15- Guaranteeing the right to demonstrate peacefully.
- 16- Securing the necessary services "water, electricity and fuel"
- 17- Opening humanitarian crossings between Turkey and Afrin to facilitate matters of citizens.

Sources and References:



- 1 – Turkish state news agencies.
- 2 - Official website (Rojava News).
- 3 - sites of the Syrian opposition.
- 4 - Syrian News Agency.
- 5- Battle News Network.