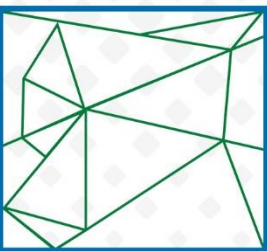


Northeast Syria: The Revolutionary Youth Attacks Headquarters of the Kurdish National Council and a Border Crossing



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*Impunity encourages the Revolutionary Youth's hostile acts and
threatens the Autonomous Administration's credibility*

On 17 December 2021, a group of masked militiamen of the Revolutionary Youth/RY (locally referred to as Ciwanên Şoreşger) – authorized by the Autonomous Administration in northeastern Syria – attacked the Kurdish National Council (KNC) headquarters in the town of Ad Darbasiyah following a ceremony held by the Council celebrating the Kurdistan Flag Day.¹ The attackers threw Molotov cocktails, which resulted in the burning of the headquarters' contents. Furthermore, attackers beat six of the Council's members, with the result that one of them, Nizam Addin Aliko, needed emergency hospitalization to Al-Ali Hospital in Ad Darbasiyah.

Just two days before this incident, members of the RY attacked the Faysh Khabur Semalka border crossing with Iraq's Kurdistan using Molotov cocktails and stones. Notably, the border crossing is one of the only humanitarian crossings in the area. This attack resulted in the wounding of border staff, which led the government of Kurdistan to close the border crossing. The administration of the border crossing issued a [statement](#) following the incident.

In a [tweet](#), the commander-in-chief of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Mazloun Abdi, condemned the attack on the KNC's headquarters by who he named "outlaw saboteurs". Abdi said in his Tweet that the attack targeted the Autonomous Administration itself and that the Asayish (the Kurdish internal security forces) are hunting the perpetrators and will arrest them and bring them to justice.

The attacks mentioned were not the only attacks the RY committed in 2021. On 24 and 25 September 2021, members of the RY attacked a group of protestors that assembled in front of the United Nations' headquarters in the al-Siyahi neighborhood in the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli/Qamishlo. The protestors took to the street at the request of the KNC – it operates under the mantle of the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC) – to condemn what they referred to as price increases imposed on fuel and bread, royalties forced on citizens, and to demand the release of political prisoners. The protests were followed by a series of attacks on offices and headquarters of Kurdish parties.

¹ December 17 of each year is the Kurdistan Flag Day, designated by the Kurdistan Region parliament in 2009. On this day in 1946, the Iranian regime removed the flag of the Kurdish republic of Mahabad in Iranian Kurdistan.

Details of the Attack on the KNC

A source from the private hospital of Al-Ali in Ad Darbasiyah confirmed to STJ that 30-year-old Nizam Addin Aliko arrived at Al-Ali Hospital on 17 December 2021. Aliko received six stitches in his head following wounds he obtained from a beating with sticks.

A source close to Aliko's family told STJ that he attended the ceremony held by the KNC on the Kurdistan Flag Day and that it was a peaceful activity. Following the ceremony, attendees headed to visit the tomb of a member of the KNC, whose date of death coincided on that day. Meanwhile, RY members came in a van to the KNC headquarters, where there were members of the Council, including Aliko. The RY militiamen threw Molotov cocktails inside the headquarters and closed the door on the members. The source went on to say: "When Aliko managed to open the headquarters' door RY members beat him with sticks on his head causing him wounds. In addition, five members of the Council got hurt; including Aliko's brother, Abdul Hamid, and his nephew, Majid, who are members of the Yekiti Kurdistan Party-Syria (PYKS), operates under the KNC." The source indicated that Asayish forces has a headquarters near that of the Council but they made no action to stop the RY attack. One of the wounded – who asked for anonymity- told STJ:

"Following the Kurdistan Flag Day ceremony, attendees headed to Ad Darbasiyah cemetery to visit the tomb of Akram al-Mulla, who was a Kurdish writer and journalist and a member of the KNC. That day was the first anniversary of Mulla's death."

The same source added:

"Me and five other members of the Council remained in the headquarters. We were getting the celebration stuff into the headquarters when a group of the RY came in a van, threw Molotov cocktails into the headquarters and locked us inside. We would have suffocated if Aliko had not rushed and opened the door. As soon as the door was opened, they started beating us with stones, sticks and iron bars."

The source said that the beating caused him and the other Council members light bruises but Aliko had wounds in the head, leading to his hospitalization.

Maheen Shekhani, a member of the central committee of the Kurdistan Democratic Part of Syria (KDPS), operates under the KNC, told STJ:

"I participated in the Council's Kurdistan Flag Day ceremony that was attended by about fifty people. The ceremony's atmosphere was calm and peaceful. I made a balanced speech, in which I did not criticized any party. The Asayish forces saw the celebration, heard the speech, and did not seem to mind."

Shekhani added:

"It seemed that the RY members were watching the headquarters from afar. As soon as the ceremony ended, a group of the RY attacked the Council, beat the members there and burned the contents of the headquarters with Molotov cocktails."

Shekhani indicated that Autonomous Administration officials – who preferred not to disclose their names and ranks – expressed their discontent with acts of the RY members. Shekhani went on to explain that the attack on the KNC adversely affected the Autonomous

Administration and its security institutions and that such acts would disrupt the stability and security of the region.

Responsibilities of the Autonomous Administration

The Autonomous Administration's Constitution officially titled the Charter of Social Contract to the democratic self-management (in the province of Al Jazera)² states in its preamble – which is as an integral part of the Contract according to Article 1 of it – “We ...have announced this to materialize justice, freedom and democracy in accordance with the principle of ecological balance and equality without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed ,doctrine or gender, to achieve the political and moral fabric of a democratic society in order to function with mutual understanding and coexistence.”³...“The areas of the democratic self-management, does not accept the concept of state nationalism, military and religious. It accepts the centralized management, central rule and it is open to the forms of compatibility with the democratic and pluralistic traditions, to enable all social groups, cultural identities, the Athenian and national to express themselves through their organizations”⁴

Article 6 of the Contract of the self-administration says: “All members and democratic managements are equal in front of the law in their rights and duties.”⁵

Furthermore, Article 21 it states: “The self-management ensures the human rights and his supreme values in accordance with the international covenants and conventions and considers freedom the most precious thing that human individuals and groups own.”⁶

Since the Autonomous Administration is the ruling power in Syria's northeast, it is responsible for ensuring the security, safety, rights and freedoms of people in the area, especially those it pledged to protect in its Charter of Social Contract. In this regard, it should be recalled that international human rights law and rule-of-law principles imposes two types of responsibility on states and legitimate authorities in relation to basic human rights and freedoms, which are, first and foremost, *passive responsibility*, which obligates states and legitimate authorities not to interfere or prevent individuals and groups from exercising their legitimate and legally stipulated rights. Additionally, *positive responsibility* obligates states and legitimate authorities to protect individuals and groups against any violation or interference by any party that may impede their exercise of their rights, and to ensure that they enjoy their legitimate rights within the framework of the law.

The Autonomous Administration wrote in Article 10 of its Charter of Social Contract “not to interfere in the internal affairs of other States and take into account the principles of good neighborhoods and work on solving conflicts peacefully.”

² Charter of Social Contract of the Autonomous Administration, the Democratic Union Party (PYD)'s official website, 6 January 2014, <https://pydrojava.org/%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A/> (last accessed: 30 December 2021).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

The RY's attack on the only humanitarian border crossing constitute a violation of the Autonomous Administration's constitution. Thereby, the Autonomous Administration must take actions to prevent such incidents from recurring and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

In Article 24 of its Charter of Social Contract,⁷ the Autonomous Administration committed itself to ensuring and respecting the freedoms of opinion, thought, conscience, and self-expression of every individual or group in proportion to civil peace, in line with what stipulated in Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.⁸

In addition, the Autonomous Administration states in Article 34 of its Charter of Social Contract: "Citizens have freedom of expression and peaceful protest and strike in accordance to the law." This is consistent with Articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The RY's hostile acts against civilians threaten domestic peace and constitute a clear violation to the Autonomous Administration's own laws. Therefore, the Autonomous Administration must open an investigation into the RY attacks and hold perpetrators accountable. In addition, the Autonomous Administration must take all necessary actions to ensure the non-recurrence of such acts.

The Autonomous Administration would breach its positive responsibility owed to people in its areas if it did not open a transparent, public and impartial investigation in the RY attacks.

⁷ Charter of Social Contract of the Autonomous Administration, the Democratic Union Party (PYD)'s official website, 6 January 2014, <https://pydrojava.org/%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%82%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A/> (last accessed: 30 December 2021).

⁸ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx> (last accessed: 30 December 2021).



About Us:

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization monitoring human rights violations in Syria. Founded in 2015, STJ has been based in France since 2019.

STJ is an impartial and independent Syrian human rights organization operating across Syria. Our network of field researchers monitor and report human rights violations occurring on the ground in Syria, while our international team of human rights experts, lawyers, and journalists gather evidence, examine emerging patterns of violations, and analyze how violations break domestic Syrian and international law.

We are committed to documenting violations of human rights committed by all parties in the Syrian conflict and elevating the voices of all Syrians victimized by human rights violations, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, class, and/or gender. Our commitment to human rights monitoring is founded on the idea that professional human rights documentation meeting international standards is the first step to uncovering the truth and achieving justice in Syria.



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EDITOR@STJ-SY.ORG