



Children and women filling containers with water from a makeshift cistern provided by international NGOs, to transport them to their homes in al-Hasakah City, on July 4, 2023, due to the severe water crisis in northeast Syria. Source: Synergy and Malva.

110 Syrian Organizations Condemn the Deprivation of Civilians in Northeast Syria of Their Right to Access Adequate and Safe Water

The signatory organizations call on the United Nations to take the necessary procedures to find an urgent and sustainable solution to the water crisis in northeast Syria and to neutralize water resources from political and military disputes.

The regions of northeast Syria are experiencing the worst drought in nearly 70 years, primarily due to climate change, reduced rainfall, and rising temperatures. Additionally, using water as a weapon by parties to the conflict has exacerbated the existing humanitarian crisis, leaving devastating impacts on the local communities.

The main challenge lies in the fact that Syria's water resources are greatly entangled in the ongoing conflict in the country. Water resources are not run by a single unified management but are rather controlled according to the policies of the governing party. Parties such as the Turkish government and its Syrian affiliated factions deliberately deprive civilians in northeast Syria of their right to water. Meanwhile, the Syrian government targets and disrupts water stations that supply large areas in northwest Syria.

The exacerbating water crisis in northeast Syria remains one of the main causes for food insecurity, undermining livelihood, and immigration seeking resources. Let alone that water

scarcity and its poor quality, poor sanitation and inadequate hygiene, notably in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) makeshift camps, cause serious diseases.

The worsening and ongoing water crisis in northeast Syria has had catastrophic effects on the lives of more than four million people, including approximately one million IDPs, who rely on water resources for drinking, daily use, agriculture and industry, all while the conflict persists and the essential infrastructure deteriorates. According to UN [estimates](#), two-thirds of water treatment plants in Syria, half of the pumping stations, and one-third of water towers have been damaged since 2011.

[Several factors](#) have contributed to the severe water crisis that has significantly affected the residents of northeast Syria since late 2020. These factors include a series of recurring interruptions in the supply of drinking water from [Allouk Water Station](#) in the countryside of Ras al-Ayn/Serê Kaniyê, following the occupation of Turkey and the opposition Syrian National Army (SNA) of the region in October 2019, as a result of the military operation called "Peace Spring".

[Allouk Water Station](#), which experienced numerous disruptions, is the only source for drinking water for approximately 800,000 people in northeast Syria, particularly the residents of [al-Hasakah](#) City, [Tall Tamr](#) Town and the adjacent countryside. In addition to being the main source for water trucking for [al-Hol](#), [al-Areeshah/al-Sed](#), [al-Twinah/Washokani](#) and [Serê Kaniyê](#) camps (which include tens of thousands of IDPs from different provinces and parts of Syria, as well as thousands of Iraqis and foreigners), according to the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC).

Additionally, there are critically low levels of water flowing from Turkey into the Syrian portion of the Euphrates River, the main source of water for over five million people in Syria, according to UN. This impacts the ability of authorities controlling the water to serve communities, while the high concentration of pollutants in the water leads to the spread of diseases.

The Euphrates River is the most important source of water and electricity for northeast Syria and other parts of the country. However, the Turkish authorities have imposed severe restrictions on the flow of water into the Syrian part of the river since February 2021, by far less than 500 M³/Sec, as stipulated in the 1987 Agreement between Turkey and Syria.

While countries have signed bilateral agreements, there is no comprehensive or long-term treaty between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq regarding water sharing. Syria and Iraq have long [accused](#) Turkey of using its control over the river as a [political tool](#), and Turkey's actions at times have implied that the [river is actually Turkish](#).

Several universal principles govern the use of shared waters, including the principle of equitable and reasonable use of water resources, the obligation not to cause serious harm to riparian states, and the general duty to notify and consult states when planning any relevant economic activity.

The organizations signing this statement call on the Turkish government to equitably share the water resources of the Euphrates River with Syria and Iraq and ensure the continued operation of Allouk Water Station to supply water to communities in need, adequately and without interruption. They also urge all parties to the conflict to fulfill their duties towards the right of all Syrians to access sufficient and safe water.

Furthermore, the signatories call on the United Nations to find an urgent and sustainable solution for the water crisis in northeast Syria and throughout the country, as well as to neutralize water resources from political and military disputes, through:

- Establish an impartial and independent monitoring mechanism for the Euphrates River and all transboundary water resources shared by Syria, Turkey, and Iraq. Its mission should be tasked to oversee compliance with signed agreements and the provisions of international law, as well as to facilitate dialogue between key stakeholders to reach a sustainable settlement that ensures equitable and reasonable water usage.
- Call on the Turkish government and other parties to the conflict to abide by their duties towards human rights and respect the right of all Syrians to access drinking and usable water, as well as neutralize water resources from political rivalries.
- Reinforce monitoring and oversight of violations of the right to water and seek justice for victims: The Human Rights Council and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic must systematically include water-access related violations in their reports and raise this issue with the relevant authorities.
- Develop a strategy for the region on transboundary water challenges: the United Nations must take the necessary measures to ensure the right of the civilians in northeast Syria to access safe and sufficient water, and address the conflict challenges influencing surface water, groundwater, soils and vegetation cover.
- Ensure inclusive participation in water resources management, access to information and transparency measures: platforms must be established to involve key stakeholders, including local communities and civil society bodies, in consultations or policies about water resources and transboundary water, while increasing the platforms' transparency in reporting on water resources management issues.
- Prioritize the conservation of existing water resources and the prevention of their depletion, in addition to the rehabilitation of their infrastructure, along with initiate the clean-up and treatment of all contaminated water resources and rivers.

Organizations and Associations Signing the Statement:

1. Adel Center for Human Rights
2. Afrin Platform
3. Ajyal Development Organization
4. Al Aseel Development Association
5. Al Baraka Association
6. Alahd Organization
7. Al-Diyar Society
8. Al-Khaboor Association
9. Al-Massa Center for Studies, Research, Consulting, Arbitration and Training in Deir Ezzor
10. Amal Al-Furat organization

11. Analysis and Strategic Studies Organization (ASO)
12. Anoar Al-ghad
13. Aras Charity Association
14. Areej Organisation
15. Ashna for Development
16. ASSYRIAN Society for Helping and Development
17. Bader for Development and Community Media
18. Balsam Center for Health Education
19. Better Hope for Al-Tabqa
20. Better Tomorrow organization
21. Bukra Ahla Association for Relief and Development
22. Center for Research and Protection of Women's rights in Syria
23. Center of Liberties Defense
24. Chaushka Women's Association
25. Community Solidarity Organization
26. DAN for Relief and Development
27. DAR Association for Victims of Forced Displacement
28. Das Leben e.v.
29. Degla Organization for Development and Environment
30. Deirna Organization
31. DemoS
32. Development Srrds Center
33. DOZ ORGANIZATION
34. Dya Al-aml
35. Ebdaa Organization for Development
36. Ella Organization For Development and Peacebuilding
37. Emaar Almansura
38. Enma Aljazera
39. Environment and Water Association
40. Eternity
41. Euphrates NGO
42. Faidh development organization
43. Fajr
44. Fariq Sunaae Almustaqbal
45. For Them Organisation
46. Friends Association for Relief and Development
47. Green Tress
48. Hevy for Relief and Development
49. Hope Links for Development (HLD)
50. Hope Makers
51. House of Citizenship Organization
52. Humanitarian and Development Cooperation HDC
53. Jasmine Society
54. Jiyan Charity Association
55. Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights
56. Jsor Al-amal
57. Justice For Life (JFL)

58. Kobani for Relief and Development
59. Lamsat Al-khier Reilef and Development
60. LIGHTS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION
61. Malva for Arts and Culture
62. Manara Organization
63. Mary Association for Culture, Arts and Environment
64. Nasmel Amal Organization
65. Nawat
66. Nawras Development Organization
67. North Press Agency
68. Nudem organization
69. Nujin Society for Community
70. Okaaz
71. Oxygen Shabab
72. Peace Pioneers Organization
73. PEACE SHE LEADERS NETWORK
74. PÊL- Civil Waves
75. Purity
76. Qadar Organization organization
77. Rahma Organization for development
78. Raja Organization
79. Ras al-Ain/Serê Kaniyê Platform
80. Roj Kar for Relief and Development
81. Rojava Organization for Relief and Development
82. Rose Organization for Support and Empowerment
83. SALAM Organization
84. Sanad Humanitarian Organization
85. Sara Organization to Combat Violence Against Women
86. Sawaed al-Furat Organization
87. Shaqiyq Alkhayr Organization
88. Sighted Hands Organisation
89. Slav Organization for Civil Activities
90. Snabel Al-furat Organization
91. Sphere for Development
92. Stability Support Centre
93. Swaedna Organization for Relief and Development
94. Synergy Association for Victims
95. Syria Help Organization
96. Syriac Cross Organization for Relief and Development
97. Syrian Center for Studies and Dialogue (SCSD)
98. Syrians for Truth and Justice - STJ
99. Tara organization
100. The Committee of Displaced People of Serekaniye/ Ras Al-Ain
101. Togethr For Aljarnya Organization
102. Totol Foundation for Relief and Development
103. Vision
104. Warshin Association Of Environment

105. Wesal organization
106. Wheat & Olive Platform
107. White Hope
108. Youth for Change
109. Zameen for Development and Peacebuilding
110. Zin for Development