



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Robert Wood Johnson
Embassy of the United States of America
33 Nine Elms Lane
London
United Kingdom, SW11 7US

CC: Ellen Wong, Principal Officer, US Consulate General Edinburgh

10 October 2019

Dear Mr Johnson,

Situation in North Eastern Syria

We write to urgently express our concern at President Trump's decision to withdraw US forces from North Eastern Syria, allowing for a Turkish invasion, which has now begun.

As you will be aware, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have played the leading role on the ground in the defeat of ISIS, bringing an end to their so-called 'Caliphate'. This fight took a heavy toll on the SDF, who lost over 11,000 men and women, with over 22,000 more wounded. They led this fight willingly, largely at the urging of the United States and often making strategic decisions not in their own interests but rather for the greater good of global peace and stability.

Out of the chaos that has consumed Syria for almost ten years, Kurdish forces in North Eastern Syria have not only liberated millions from extremism and tyranny but have in its place established a system of secular and democratic governance, one which is all the more remarkable for its commitment to women's participation at every level.

In recent days the US-led Combined Joint Task Force – Inherent Resolve, compelled the SDF to demolish defensive fortifications along the Turkish-Syria border. This action was conducted on the understanding that it would address Turkish security concerns and that US efforts would continue to guarantee the safety of the people of North Eastern Syria from potential Turkish military action. To follow this with the immediate withdrawal of US forces and American consent for a Turkish invasion is nothing other than a gross act of betrayal and is deeply dishonourable.

Turkey's 2018 invasion of the Kurdish enclave of Afrin, North Western Syria in 2018 shows us precisely what President Erdogan has planned for the North East; ethnic cleansing, extensive bombing of civilian areas, the use of proxy forces including former ISIS fighters & other extremists and the destruction of any form of democratic governance. We cannot allow this to happen to the North East, which is currently home to over 2 million Syrians.

The SDF currently hold tens of thousands of former ISIS fighters and activists in detention. The Turkish invasion represents a clear and significant risk of an ISIS resurgence, fuelled by the escape of many of those previously captured to join the cells still operating across the region. Former US officials familiar with the security situation in Northern Syria have explained this threat at length.



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We ask that you convey to your government our strong objections to this betrayal of our Kurdish allies. The decision should be reversed immediately and appropriate action taken against Turkey to prevent further loss of life and destabilisation in the region.

Kind regards,

Ross Greer MSP

Ruth Maguire MSP

Clare Adamson MSP

Bob Doris MSP

Alison Johnstone MSP

Linda Fabiani MSP

John Finnie MSP

Lewis Macdonald MSP

Angus Macdonald MSP

Fulton Macgregor MSP

Gillian Martin MSP

Kenneth Gibson MSP

Rona Mackay MSP

Sandra White MSP

Colin Beattie MSP

Christine Graham MSP

Alex Rowley MSP

Joan McApline MSP

Patrick Harvie MSP

Pauline McNeil MSP

Bill Kidd MSP

Gil Paterson MSP

Neil Findlay MSP

Alex Rowley MSP

Andy Wightman MSP

Claire Baker MSP

Willie Rennie MSP

James Dornan MSP

Emma Harper MSP

Liam McArthur MSP

Maureen Watt MSP

Stuart McMillan MSP

Richard Leonard MSP

Mark Ruskell MSP