

# MECHRIC Calls on the US and NATO to Pressure Turkey to Stop Bombing Christians in Syria

WASHINGTON DC:



The Middle East Christian Committee (MECHRIC) is calling on the US and its NATO allies to pressure NATO member Turkey to cease its attacks on Christians in Northern Syria, especially the city of Afrin which has come under heavy bombardment by the Turkish air force in recent days. Afrin has also become home to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, especially Christians and Yazidis, who have fled violence elsewhere in Syria.

The Christians of northern Syria are being attacked by the Turkish military on the pretext that they are clearing out Kurdish PKK (a US-designated terrorist organization seeking separation from Turkish sovereignty in the Kurdish areas of Turkey proper). Afrin is some 50 miles from the Turkish border in Syria.

“The Turks are brazenly attacking US and NATO-backed Kurds in Afrin who have been a key ally in the fight against ISIS,” said Ibrahim Mrad, President of the Universal Syriac Union Party, speaking from Beirut. “At the very least, this should prompt a re-evaluation of Turkey’s standing in NATO.”

“The unarmed Christians of Afrin are not terrorists – a fact of which President Erdogan is well aware,” said Rima Tüzün, Executive Board Member of the Bethnahrin National Council, speaking from Brussels. “This is a blatant effort to

cleanse the area of Kurds and Christians, and this is going on right under NATO's nose! The US needs to take the lead in punishing Turkey for defying the collective will of NATO by openly attacking a US and NATO ally – not to mention attacking the innocent, unarmed Syriac Christians of Afrin, which is totally indefensible.”

US Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, has urged restraint on the part of Turkey, but clearly more needs to be done to help the besieged Christians and Kurds of Syria.