**DTK DELEGATION**

**REPORT ON SHENGAL, MAXMUR AND ROJAVA**

**August 2014**

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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The smallest part of Kurdistan, known to Kurds as Rojava, has gifted "Rojava Revolution" from Kobanê to all over the world on 19th July 2012. The fate of nearly three million Kurds who have been occupied by the Syrian regime has emerged as an upheaval against nation-state in which very important developments and overwhelming events were experienced, and its status quo cringed everywhere and this upheaval has become a revolution.

              Starting in March 2011, protests erupted in Syria, soon escalating into a civil war. The people of Rojava decided not to become a party in the civil war, alternatively following another way to freedom, a "third line". This lead in January 2014 to the creation of a Rojava Constitution, or Social Contract,and the announcement of the creation of three cantons in Kobanê, Cizîr and Efrîn. The Rojava region, through which the Tigris and Euphrates rivers pass, hosts Kurdish, Assyrian/Syriac, Arab, Armenians and Chechen people. They set up their own system, and working with the council declared that the attacks were exposed since, continues to remain.

Attacks have increased as the Democratic People’s Revolution grows. Rojava exposing international attacks and especially those from local forces has resisted against these attacks with self-defense. People Defending Units (YPG), which was founded in 2004 and was officially declared in 2011, and Women Defending Unit (YPJ), which was originally formed in these units have realized self-defense at all Rojava. The dimension of these attacks were not just military; the intention was also to create an isolation in the region by targeting some legal, social, media and humane aspects. Military attacks in Damascus were mainly carried out by inhuman gangs known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/ISIS-DAIS). These gangs focusing on destroying Kurdish people have continued their attacks regularly in Rojava. Heavy weapons were used in these systematic attacks. ISIS, getting anything in the past three year period, attacked Kobane Canton which is the smallest canton and located in a very strategic area, by mobilizing all its forces with the plan of its direct/indirect supporters in the Middle East in 2014; shortly before the anniversary of the revolution. These attacks widely influenced the Kurdish people in Turkey as well and they protested these attacks in the streets and at the borders. These attacks were repulsed by YPG warriors and people.

The gangs whose attacks has been overcome in Kobani began occupations first in Rabia on August 2nd, and on August 3rd, they attacked and took control of Sincar where Yazidi Kurds live.

ISIS, being followed by the entire world and occupying Mosul without any bullet on June 10, has again turned its direction to Kurdistan after the fall of Mosul. Hundreds of thousands of people were internally displaced, creating a refugee crisis in the region. Soon, artillery attacks began against Maxmur Camp, which for years has been under the control of the United Nations. The camp, where approximately 15 thousand people displaced because of their political viewsstayed, was evacuated. It has been observed that the migration wave starting with Sincar has increased so much more with Maxmur.

The Yazidi people were exposed to many massacres and assimilation policies beginning from 13thCentury because of their different life style, belief, identity and culture. Yazidi Kurds, who have been the target of systematic denial and oppression throughout history, have spread to many places around the world today.

Yazidis who migrated to European countries and especially to Germany due to pressures in North and South Kurdistan tried to preserve strictly their belief and culture by turning inward, as every community being exposed to massacres.

Sincar where Yazidi population inhabited is among disputed regions defined as uncertain status in Iraq Constitution under Article 140.

Shiite, Sunni-Arabs and Syriacs whose population was much less than others were living together in Sincar where Yazidis inhabited and whose population was 30 thousand before massacre. It is estimated that apart from Sincar, about 700 thousand Yazidis were living in and around Mosul before the massacre. Since the 1930s, Iraqi state applied many stringent measures including higher taxes and martial law especially to erode social and cultural structure of Sincar and change its demographic structure. Between the years of 1970-1980, the Government of Iraqforcedly settled loyal Sunni Arabs in the places where Yazidis live. Yazidis who were expecting a relief along with the declaration of the Federal Kurdistan Region were again exposed to massacres of radical Islamist organizations. After the invasion of Iraq radical Islamist groups have carried out executions, kidnappings and bombings many times in Sincar region. The largest of these attacks was in Kataniye and Siba Şêx Xidir (Cezire) in Sincar region on 14 August 2007. According to Iraqi Red Crescent, 796 Yazidis were killed and 1562 Yazidis were injured in this bomb attack, in which about 2 tons of explosives were used. More than a thousand families were left homeless.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

The gangs of ISIS occupied Sincar by planting their flags and destroying their worship places on August 3. Sincar residents who were "defenseless" against attacks of ISIS fled to the mountains in the face the threat of massacre. The gangs started slaughtering Yazidi villages, kidnapped the women and children, and killed the men. Thousands of people were forced to flee to the mountains. Sincar people who escaped barefoot and are hungry and thirsty and were mainly composed of women and children began to struggle for life in the mountains.Children who could not meet basic food and drink needs in desert climates died in the arms of their parents. The families who could go to other provinces and had passport/ability went to Duhok, Zaxo, Laleş, Uludere, Silopi, Cizre, Midyat and Nusaybin, Viranşehir, Batman and Amed.Moreover, tens of thousands of people without any identification could cross the Roboski border into Turkey. Migration is still ongoing.

The cries of those people, who created long queues with their bare feet in Sincar Mountains, were announced by the press to the world. Women were saying that their daughters had been kidnapped and husbands killed. As time passed, it came out that thousands of women had been kidnapped and many killed in the villages. The tale of brutality has not been clarified yet in Sincar, where slaughter was carried out in its villages.Because of this situation, especially the center of Sincar and almost all of the villages and districts around it are empty. The number of families who fled everything except with the clothes on their backs, has reached 500 thousand. About 350 thousand of them are still located in and around Duhok and Zaxo.The other region where the wave of immigration is the most intense is Rojava. The number of people who were brought to Rojava via safe corridor opened by YPG forces exceeded 100 thousand. Nearly 20 thousand people with or without passports passed to Northern Kurdistan (Turkey Kurdistan).

Another major wave of migration occurred because of the evacuation of the Maxmur camp. People in the camp, which was evacuated by PKK and YPG before the attack, were transferred to safe places. People removed from the camp were settled in Rojava, Ranya and other safe places.

The U.S.A, EU and UN Security Council were effective in calling attention and taking action and calling attention to the plight of the people of Sincar and the threat of ISIS.

With the historical background summarized above and current situation, the committee (Democratic Party of Regions representatives, Peoples Democratic Party representatives, women organizations' representatives) established within Democratic Society Congress visited Maxmur, some provinces of South Kurdistan and Cizire Canton, which is the biggest canton in Rojava and was established in the first month of 2014 after the declaration of democratic autonomy in 19 July 2012.The main objective of these interviews is national unity of Kurds and an urgent solution plan for migrated people.

**COMMITTEE'S WORK SCHEDULE / EVENTS**

August 16, 2014 Zaxo, Duhok and Beyta Lalesh, August 17, 2014 Maxmur Camp, Heci Awa, Ranya, August 18, 2014 Ankawa, 21-22 August 2014 Cizîr Canton's cities (Derik, Kamişlo and Amude) in Rojava are visited. Contacts were completed and returned on 22 August.

The delegation visited:

- Construction areas which lodged the refugees, sacred places, open fields and camps

- Political parties and representatives of the Government in Cizîr Kanton of Rojava

- Representatives of armed political parties defending against ISIS

- Provincial governorships

- County governorships

- City and County municipalities / councils

- Useful and symbolic political figures and institutions

**THE DELEGATION'S PURPOSE**

The number of refugees coming from South Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan) to Turkey's Kurdistan with their own means, through the Zaxo/Ibrahim Khalil border gate and Roboski border is increasing with each passing day. The delegation was informed by those who have already been to Zaxo and Duhok that there had been increasing chaos beyond the border.Thus, the necessity to determine the situation of our people who were forcibly displaced at the other side of the border in order to better plan; take necessary measures and a better distribution of tasks; to give them moral support and to make them feel that they are not alone arose.

In addition to physical genocide and forced migration, another significant risk faced by Yazidis is "White Genocide." Another series of meetings with Yazidi leaders were carried out in order to avoid such an outcome.

**Our Findings and Observations on the visited places;**

**1) ZAXO**

The delegation observed many people were living outside, as well as in traffic islands, empty buildings and religious facilities. Almost all of these families live in unhealthy conditions, vulnerable to any danger.

A meeting was held with Zaxo governor Khalil Mahmut. In this interview, we were told that 160 thousand people from 18 thousand families have immigrated to Zaxo. Some of these 18 thousand families have been placed by the governorate, while the rest have taken initiativeto find a place to live themselves.The number of those who came to the city is more than the population of Zaxo. The governor of Zaxo, faced with such a migration wave in one single week, emphasized the importance of joint action.

✓        In response to our delegation's question to Mr. Mahmut what are the priority needs, he said "everything needed by humankind."

✓        As covered by the national media, it was expressed that the initiative taken by Turkey to set up two tent cities for 20 thousand people in Duhok and Zaxo should be started as soon as possible.

✓        The general demands of those who live in madrasas, buildings and all other places are "status, right to identity, safe return to their homeland and their voices to be heard". It was observed that almost all of those displaced are lacking fundamental needs and living under very trying circumstances.

✓        A church in a predominantly Syriac, Chaldean, Assyrian inhabited neighborhood in Zaxo were visited, information was obtained from the church priest."1840 families have come to reside with us," the priest stated.

✓        It was observed in Zaxo that a major humanitarian crisis has been faced and the city population has been trying to help those in need with their own means.

**2) DUHOK**

✓        After Zaxo, the delegation headed to the city of Duhok. It was observed here that families were located in desolate places and in the streets, open areas or empty buildings.

✓        The first visit was made to the Assembly Council Chairman Abdullah Fahim. Abdullah Fahim said "it will be very difficult without the help of the people. Between 150-180 thousand people have immigrated here. We tried to settle the immigrants in appropriate places including madrasas. We want them to return, but for that, we must act quickly.” The major criticism of Abdullah Fahim was addressed to "the Iraqi Central Government," stating that they did not help at all.

✓        The second visit was made to Duhok Governor Farhad Etrushi.

✓        Etrushi briefly explained the situation to the delegation and again, criticized the Iraqi Central Government. He expressed the need of help from Turkey, the United Nations and other countries; to inform the rest of the world about this migration wave and mentioned medicine as a basic need. The governor expressed difficulties in welcoming them and finding solutions, since the number of people in need is so high.

**3) LALES**

✓        After completing their contact in Duhok, the delegation went to Laleş, a sacred place for Yazidis.

✓        Sergeant Bavê guiding the delegation said that 450 families and 2,370 people have stayed there up to now.He also added that this number was constantly changing.

✓        Sergeant Bavê emphasized that those who had migrated should turn back to Sincar and drew attention to the fact that there were still thousands of people who were living in Sincar.

✓        It was seen that the families who have taken refuge in Laleş were living a commune life here. The needs such as cleaning, cooking, etc. are met with division of labor. Daily beliefs and rituals continue.

* It has been observed that dignitaries who came here from Sincar were still mourning. Aids from outside to Laleş still continue

✓        After a meeting with dignitaries of Laleş, the delegation visited the villages and interviewed families.In general, the people interviewed had said that they were praying for the situation to be resolved.

**4) MAXMUR**

✓        Maxmur, which was emptied because of the intensification of the attacks of ISIS forces, is now defended by HPG, KDP, YNK forces and Goran movement jointly. In addition to these forces, there are also Communist resistant in a small number as well. This camp, in which there is a joint defense, has the most important position that calls for national unity.

✓        The delegation conducted interviews with representatives of the four powers.

✓        Conditions are not suitable to live in the camp yet. It has been confirmed that there are only defense forces in the camp.

✓        Maxmur camp, being under the aegis of the United Nations, was completely emptied.

✓        The President of Federal Kurdistan Region Mr. Massoud Barzani visited the camp and congratulated all Kurdish armed forces in the region because of their success in defending and thus cheered them up.

✓        There is no visible severe damage in the camp.Some animals that were cut up by ISIS gangs and food waste in some houses where ISIS gangs had stayed have been observed. It has been also observed that bad odors have occurred because of power shortage. It is possible to see small-scale damage.

✓        It has been observed that the morale of Kurdish armed forces defending the camp is quite well.

**5) RANYA**

✓        The delegation went first to Heci Awa which is a town of Ranya. They met with district governor Hira Karani. The Mayor, Guard Chief and Public Security officer participated in the meeting as well. The Governor has expressed that they have hosted about four thousand people. He said that people in the town helped them and tried to do their best.

✓        It has been seen that there is order in Ranya, a YNK region, because of the fact that the people migrated to Ranya were completely organized. Families coming from Maxmur are staying in Heci Awa town. People were placed in 24 mosques and 3 or 4 madrasa in the town.

✓        The delegation and dignitaries of the town have visited 3 mosques and took information from the people staying there.

✓        First, Hesen Şekir mosque has been visited. About 270 people stay in this mosque.  It has been observed that there were mattresses, blankets and basic materials for cooking in mosque and courtyard. It was cold in mosque because of air conditioner. People were praying in the same place that they slept.

✓        Families buy flour with their own money. The breads are prepared in the ovens.

✓        People staying in the mosque use mosque sinks and water.Besides, it has been observed that they have established some additional water places.

✓        It has been expressed that the needs here were food and clothing.It is also unclear how and when the housing problems would be solved.

✓        Citizens in Hesen Şekir mosque have said that there should be someone competent in Maxmur. They drew attention to international protection and expressed that if there was no political unity nowhere would be safe and thus falling of Duhok and other places would be possible as well.

✓        The second place being visited is Daban Mosque that 80 families,307 people stay here. Their situation and living conditions are almost the same with other visited mosque. It has been seen that the basic needs were shelter, clothing and food.

✓        Zeynep Kara who has talked here on behalf of the people staying in the mosque has said that ISIS were supported by every side and that this situation should be questioned and she has also added that Mr. Öcalan's warnings and road map should be taken into consideration.

✓        The delegation then passed to the city of Ranya and discussed for a possible solution for the problems of people from Maxmur here.

**6) ANKAWA**

✓        In Erbil’s Ankawa district, a largely Christian area with about 25,000 inhabitants, about 7 thousand Chaldean, Assyrian, Syriac families migrated from Mosul. Refugees stay in parks and on the pavement. People stated that they did not receive any help from the government and said that they were not defended and that their needs were met by their own facilities and rest of the people staying with them in the region.They need food, medicine and clothing.

✓        Their basic demands are involvement of the United Nations and providing the conditions for returning to their lands. They also demand a camp to be established in Duhok and Ankawa.

✓        Interviews were conducted with Transport and Communications Minister Jonson S. Ayo, Metropolitan of Karakuş Abraşiye MorYuhanna Petrus Muşe, Bethnarin Political Entity authorities and Central Government Deputy of Bethnarin Democracy Party Amir H. Nissan. In these interviews they said there were no Syriacs left in Mosul; a referendum should be made in Ninewa; they did not receive any aid from Central Government which has not fulfill its responsibilities; children died from heat and finally that the UN should do something immediately.

They emphasized that there were 1.5 million Chaldean / Assyrian / Syriac in 2003, but now that there were only 300 thousand.

**7) DÊRİK / NEWROZ CAMP**

 ✓        After entering from Semelka Border Gate, the delegation made investigations in Newroz Camp. Aldar Xelil, an Executive Board member of Kurdish Supreme Council and Kurdish Democratic Society Movement(TEV-DEM),has stated that 12 thousand people were staying in the camp where 700 tents have been established. He has also said that there were 2 thousands Ezidis in Tirbespî/ Til Xatun village and 1500 Ezidis in Tonko and Berzan villages in Haseke. He said that the current number of tents was not enough to meet demand.

✓        The needs of immigrants in the Newroz camp, 12 thousand people have been settled, are met by the Government of Cizire Canton and Rojava Humanitarian Aid Agency.

✓        It has been observed that Rojava people and Cizire Government have mobilized with their all forces in order to meet the basic needs of the camp as well as provide food, water, medicine and milk for the kids.

✓       It has been seen that Public Security forces of Cizire Canton have placed a large number of security guards around the camp.

✓        The officials of Cizire Canton’s Government stated that several committees were established to serve Yazidis. The Kurdish Red Crescent is in the camp to provide health services and the necessary medicine was provided and seriously ill and wounded people were treated in Derik hospital.

✓        The majority of camp residents stated that “we do not want to return back to South Kurdistan without Sincar being totally liberated and without safety requirements being provided.” They also added that there was not any problem between the people and religious groups in Kurdistan, butthat massacres occurred as a result of the dirty games of international and regional reactionary states.

✓        Dijwar Ahmed, who is responsible for overseeing the Newroz Camp and at the same time Minister of Social Policy, reported that the urgent needs for camp were blankets, dry food, electrical devices (five thousand pieces), baby food, winter clothingand fabric for old Yazidis and thermos.He stated that the Yazidis would not want to receive any blue clothing because blue color was accepted as a sin according to Ezidis belief.

**8) AMUDE**

✓       The delegation first met with Prime Minister of Cizire Canton, Ekrem Hiso, and Deputy Prime Minister İzabel Gewriye, as well as Ministers of Health, Education, Social Policy and Finance.

✓   The government officials indicated that they were fighting against the most dangerous organization in the world, ISIS. They also requested arms aid to Rojava as well as South Kurdistan.

       ✓      Interviews were also conducted withKurdistan Communist Party Central Committee member Dijwar Ahmed, the Liberal Union Party Secretary Ferhat Telo, the Democratic Unionist Party Co-chairman Asia Abdulla, Democratic Peace Party Chairman Talal Mihemed, Mihemed Abbasin charge of Tecemma'ul Watanîl Kurdistan, TEV-DEM Board Member Ilham Ahmed and the Secretary General of Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (KDP-S) Kerim Sıko.

✓        Health Minister Abdulmecit Sabri said that Yazidis urgently needed food for children, antibiotics, drugs for diabetes and hypertension disease, and an ambulance.

**THE REVIEW**

The attacks of ISIS that started in Syria and then spread to Iraq, combined with large-scale massacres, are dragging the entire Middle East in the short term and most of the world in the long term into chaos.

It is an urgent necessity for the international community to take measures in a collective manner against ISIS and similar fundamentalist organizations. It is required that international organizations and particularly United Nations should take action as soon as possible against massacres, attacks and mass deportations, especiallythose which have affected minorities in Sincar such as the Yazidi Kurds, Shabak and Kakai Kurds, Assyrians, and Shia / Nusayri Arabs and Turkmen.

The main problem that came to light from interviews and observations that our delegation conducted in Iraqi Kurdistan and Rojava is that the demographics of the region has changed substantially as a result of the attacks of ISIS. Millions of people have been displaced in Iraq, the KRG, Syria and Rojava – it is unclear whether those that have been displace will ever be able to return to their homeland. Conventional weapons in the hands of ISIS and logistical supports from some states indicate that the situation could get worse before it gets better. While it is predicted that the joint Kurdish Front can provide security for civilians to some extent, it should not be overlooked that it is essential for international community to support this joint front politically and economically.

During the two-day program of the delegation staring in Zaxo and ending in Ankawa, interviews were conducted with many institutions, parties and internal immigrants. In general, talks were positive.

It is difficult to predict what will happen to the hundreds of thousands displaced in Zaxo and Duhok, although it is clear the situation necessitates urgent action. Governors of both cities have hopes for the aid from the international community. Both of them criticize the Iraqi Central Government.Using their own means, internally displaced and Yazidis are trying to take are of themselves. Clothing, food, water and housing problems are high. Provision of healthcare is a problem. Children and women remain exposed to unhealthy conditions. No concrete suggestion were provided by those interviewed to make the situation better. They only said “you can help”.

It has been identified that the overall situation in Newroz camp is very hard to cope with.Many families stated that women have been raped or retained to be sold in the markets. The first target of ISIS gangs that tramples the dignity of a people over women's bodies has been women and children. Apart from physical and cultural genocide initiated against Yazidis in Sincar by ISIS gangs, one of the strategic target of these attacks is to defeat the Rojava Revolution by conquering Sincar, then dominating about 400 km long area from Mosul to Til Koçer.

It has been observed that the conditions of Ezidis and the people coming from Maxmur in Laleş and Ranya regions were more easily handled in part because of the discipline and organization of the displace. It was also observed women and children in particular were in need of help and aid.

Our evaluations under social, legal, security, and executive-judicial headings regarding interviews with migrants and places visited are as follows:

**Legal Aspect;**

The displaced have nowhere to go. They ask from the state to grant their rights. They think that their non-identity situation is an indicator of lawlessness. They also said that atrocities committed against them should be tried, even by an international court.

**Security Aspect;**

Families staying in public areas with their children do not want to be separated from each other. People remain in fear. Many remain in insecure places, exposed to possible attacks. The displaced say that they will only be able to return to their homes once those areas are secure. They demand a state guarantee for their safety. This was very clearly stated.

**Social Aspect;**

People from Maxmur and Ezidis now share a common trauma.Many cannot meet their daily needs. The memories of these people interviewed, especially in Zaxo and Duhok, is one of being exposed to socio-political genocide. They now share this experience, living nose to nose with death in deserts and mountains.

**Political Aspect;**

While the migration continues along the borders, political moves of countries have also begun in this manner. Turkey has set up a camp on the other side of the border in order to prevent entry to the country and decided to provide aid from here. People wait for help especially from the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, the West, and United States. There is also considerable expectation from the United Nations as well. For example, as Maxmur is a camp recognized by UN, it has remained silent in the face of evacuating of the camp.

**Cultural Aspect;**

One aspect of displacement is cultural erosion and slaughter. The Yazidis’ displacement would also increase the speed of assimilation and traditional-cultural separation. These people who are far away from living their own culture in their own places are also scattered all over. Ezidis also warn that their beliefs might be destroyed.

**Conclusion:**

Yazidis are exposed to genocide before everyone’s eyes at a time when different beliefs being the symbol of peace in the Middle East are intended to be poisoned by nationalist diseases.These people, who are principally lovers of all creations of human and nature are now being killed with severe brutality. In a historical irony, Yazidis are now dying of thirst and fatigue under the sun and in a condition being far away from their small fire burning at their grave.

International support should be carried out systematically in order to continuously meet the minimum needs of the people and to host some of the refugees coming from surrounding cities to the north and the people from Sincar. We urge the international community,competent authorities andgovernments to take into consideration our report in the light of the information given by our delegation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Truth is decaying in the Middle East.The genocide against the peoples living in the Middle East has a nation-state character. It is clear that a national homogeneous society which is intended to be created by this nation-state hegemony at the expense of the destruction of everything brings disaster for peoples. It is also accepted that the biggest disaster for a society is to lose the power of thinking and action for itself.

In this context, the thesis of democratic nation realized in Rojavais an antidote for diseases arising in the Middle East. It is a protection for fragmented truth. It is a solution model especially for oppressed people and all the people taking refuge in Mesopotamia.It is for sociality, coexistence, peace and future. In this manner:

* We urge especially United Nations and other supranational political organizations, to take decisions to recognize at the international and national platforms the massacre realized in Sincar as a genocide.
* International Criminal Court to start proceedings for the trial of the governments and public institutions whose support to ISIS has been proved
* We call for all supranational institutions, especially the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to create a summit against ISIS which is a great threat for humanity and to be in cooperation with Joint Kurdish Front struggling against ISIS.
* The United Nations has committed crime by remaining silent against brutal attack and destruction attempts against Maxmur camp which is under the supervision of UN.
* Opening of representative offices of United Nations, European Union and other supranational political institutions, and governments in Rojava would enable faster coordination.
* Political and economic sanctions must be implemented immediately in order to prevent much more destructions by ISIS and other organizations in the region. ISIS supporters must be removed and the governments and institutions which support directly or indirectly ISIS must be subject to sanction.
* The most active war against ISIS is being carried out by Kurdish organizations. The international community should support without differentiating to Kurdish organizations which are fighting against ISIS especially for Yazidis, Kakai, Assyrian, Shia / Nusayri Arab and Turkmen to return their own lands and trying to establish a secure environment.
* The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) prevented genocide by defending Sincar and Maxmur regions should be immediately removed from the terrorist list.
* Forcibly displaced peoples (Kurds, Yazidis, Syrian, Assyrian,Chaldean, etc.) request immediate assistance from the UN. For this issue, a commission/diplomacy team should be formed in the UN.
* Autonomy of Rojava should be recognized by international community for the establishment of a democratic Syria and regional stability in favor of peoples
* A representative office which is planning to be opened in some of European cities (Brussels, Geneva, Strasbourg, etc.) of a unit formed by Refugee Camp Coordination in Rojava and camp coordination in North and South Kurdistan should be supported by international organizations.