



INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ROUNDTABLE

January 3, 2023

The Honorable Joseph Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Request to Impose Sanctions to Stop Turkey's Threatened Invasion and Ongoing War Crimes in Northeast Syria

Dear President Biden:

We are an informal group of organizations and individuals who advocate for international religious freedom. We ask that your Administration take immediate action to impose sanctions under Executive Order 13894 to stop Turkey's threatened invasion of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) and its ongoing war crimes there.

AANES produced our anti-ISIS allies, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Without their sacrifice of 12,000 SDF lives, the war against ISIS's absolutistic religious ideas could not have been won. Most important to us, AANES has a unique governance structure created by its diverse population in 2014.^[1] It gives religious freedom and equal civil and political rights to women and to all religious and ethnic groups—making it unique in the region.^[2] It has lasted until now, despite 8 years of war with ISIS and constant attacks from Turkey.

Contrary to Turkey's characterization of AANES as a "Kurdish terrorist" stronghold, Kurds are an ethnic minority.^[3] Arabs, Christians (Syriac, Assyrian, Armenian, Chaldean), Yazidis, and Kurds live in harmony under a pluralistic and inclusive governmental structure. This is in sharp contrast to Turkey-occupied areas in AANES where minorities and women have been driven out or subjugated by harsh Islamist law.

The UN, NGOs, and our own government have documented the fact that Turkey-controlled jihadi groups commit war crimes in Turkey-occupied Syria on a daily basis.^[4] Turkey has attacked AANES continually since the defeat of ISIS as a territorial caliphate, seizing Afrin in 2018 and the so called "safe zone" from Tel Abyad to Ras al Ain in 2019. The 30 km border zone Turkey now threatens to invade houses the remaining principal Christian, Yazidi, and Kurdish population centers in AANES.

Turkey attacked AANES almost 18,000 times in 2022 alone!^[5] *In just the first five days of the latest attacks* (November 20-25), Turkey unleashed at least 2,500 attacks (air, mortar, drone, artillery, etc.). The targets were overwhelmingly civilian private property (2,332), followed by public infrastructure (94), and military facilities (72). Among others, Turkey destroyed a children's hospital, a health center, an electric power station, essential oil and gas processing facilities, critical grain silos, and a major bakery. Overall, Turkey killed at least 59 AANES civilians and wounded 263 in 2022. It has also killed SDF soldiers, including SDF commanders critical to the anti-ISIS campaign.^[6]

Genocide Watch and the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention issued a joint Genocide Warning *Red Alert* on December 7, 2022. They said: "These military attacks by Recep Tayyip Erdogan's regime are part of a wider Turkish policy of annihilation of the Kurdish and Assyrian people in northern Syria and Iraq."^[7] Multiple witnesses also testified in a Save the Persecuted Christians webinar on December 12, 2022 that the people of NE Syria pose no security threat to Turkey. Instead, Erdogan's real motivation is finishing the job of eliminating Syrian religious and ethnic minorities that was started by ISIS.^[8]

Turkey showed open contempt for the safety of US troops by taking the extraordinarily provocative step of bombing a joint US/SDF base when US forces were present in November. It stridently asserts that US "weakness" now gives Turkey its best chance to advance its interests.^[9] Turkey bombed the SDF security headquarters for the Al Hol prison camp, continuing its efforts to bring about the release of 70,000 imprisoned ISIS fighters and family members. If Turkey invades, ISIS prisoners will escape and regroup—a US national security disaster after years of effort and billions in expenditures.^[10]

We respectfully ask that your Administration make clear to Turkey that it has crossed a red line by imposing the same sanctions originally imposed pursuant to the October 14, 2019 Executive Order 13894 "Blocking Property and Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Syria" (the EO).^[11] You extended the EO on October 14, 2021 and again on October 14, 2022 in recognition that Turkey's actions threatening AANES and the SDF "pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."^[12] We hope the US Congress will adopt legislation and resolutions similar to those enacted in 2019.^[13]

Turkey made commitments to the United States on October 17, 2019 to get the original sanctions lifted: the Joint Turkish-US Statement on Northeast Syria (the "Statement").^[14] The Statement says: "The Turkish side expressed its commitment to ensure safety and well-being of residents of all population centers in the safe zone controlled by the Turkish Forces (safe zone) and reiterated that maximum care will be exercised in order not to cause harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure." Turkey has utterly failed to honor its duties under the Statement. This alone justifies reimposing sanctions.

Moreover, Turkey's goals in Syria clash with US national and regional security priorities. It has consistently supported ISIS and related jihadi organizations inside Syria. Fulfillment of its threatened invasion certainly will bring about the release of the ISIS prisoners of war and family members now guarded by the SDF and end our very effective anti-ISIS collaboration with the SDF. The US Combined Special Operations Joint Task Force-Levant recently noted that the SDF

is “the Coalition’s only combat credible partner force in northeast Syria, willing and capable of continuing the fight against ISIS.”^[15]

Moreover, if we fail to defend our SDF allies, we may leave them with no other option but to let the territory they control come under the authority of the unstable and despotic Assad regime. (The SDF was unable to repel Turkey in Afrin and the Invasion Zone because it has no aircraft or anti-aircraft weapons to stop Turkey’s aerial assaults.) This would give Syria’s allies Russia and Iran unfettered access to territory critical to their regional ambitions. This is antithetical to US regional interests—exposing Israel to attack from Iran’s long desired “path to the Mediterranean,” among other negative outcomes.

Strategically, Turkey, Russia, Iran, and the Assad regime have a common desire to force the people of NE Syria back under the control of Assad and to eradicate their pluralistic democracy and independent military, negating their years of heroic struggle. AANES goals are antithetical to the authoritarianism practiced in Damascus, Moscow, Ankara, and Tehran. Our understandable desire to encourage Turkey to assist Ukraine’s defense against Russia’s invasion does not negate our need to protect US security interests in this region.^[16]

Sanctions are something President Erdogan understands. Please promptly reimpose the same sanctions imposed under the EO in 2019. We also highly recommend that sanctions be imposed individually against additional responsible parties, including the Turkish governors of Afrin, Ras Al Ain, and Tel Abyad, Turkish officials that fund and control the “Syrian National Army,” and others responsible for war crimes identified by the UN Special Commission on Syria and our own military and State Department. Sanctions should not be lifted until Turkey stops attacking AANES, withdraws its invasion threats, and leaves Afrin and the Occupation Zone.

We further ask that the US (1) insist that AANES has a seat at the table in any Syria-wide peace; (2) support the AANES request for a federalized Syrian government that allows for continuance of the AANES system; and (3) strive for a new Syrian constitution that gives equal rights to all citizens, regardless of race, religion, or gender. The AANES system is not a hypothetical governance approach. It has proven workable for all segments of society during a 9-year period in which its citizens also raised up an army and defeated ISIS. The AANES model could have a significant impact on moving all of post-war Syria into alignment with US national security interests. This would promote religious freedom, peace, and social stability and help make Syria a safe place for Christians, Yazidis, and other minority (and majority) refugees to return and prosper.

AANES is a small area in the greater scheme of things, but it is the place where ISIS was brought to its knees. It offers more than a fair chance of being the place where the antidote to ISIS (religious freedom and democracy) takes root and flourishes in Syria and the Middle East. But this will only happen if the United States fulfills its moral obligation to stop the ongoing atrocities by Turkey against people whose primary crime appears to have been joining with the United States in the fight against ISIS.

Respectfully,

The Undersigned Organizations and Individuals

Cc: Office of the Speaker of the House

House Majority Leader

House Minority Leader

Senate Majority Leader

Senate Minority Leader

ORGANIZATIONS

LAW AND LIBERTY TRUST

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF KURDISTAN

ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF AMERICA

ASIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP

ANGLICAN PERSECUTED CHURCH NETWORK

BETHNAHRIN PATRIOTIC UNION IRAQ

BETHNAHRIN WOMEN UNION

CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY NATIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM INTERNATIONAL

CSW (CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE)--UK

EUROPEAN SYRIAC UNION

FoRB WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

FREE YAZIDI FOUNDATION

GENOCIDE WATCH

HELLENIC AMERICAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

IN DEFENSE OF CHRISTIANS

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION TO PRESERVE HUMAN RIGHTS

JUBILEE CAMPAIGN USA

KARARTISMOS GLOBAL

MIDDLE EAST FORUM

PRAYER PIONEERS

SALLUX (ECPM FOUNDATION)

SAVE THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

SURYOYE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

SYRIAC NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SYRIA

SYRIAC UNION PARTY SYRIA

SYRIANS FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE

THE ENDOWMENT FOR MIDDLE EAST TRUTH (EMET)

THE INSTITUTE FOR FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY

THE SHAI FUND

UNIVERSAL SYRIAC UNION PARTY LEBANON

VIETNAM FORB ROUNDTABLE

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

INDIVIDUALS (with title for identification purposes only)

Diliman Abdulkader, President, American Friends of Kurdistan

Bassam Alamad, Executive Director, Syrians for Truth and Justice

Ibrahim Anli, Executive Director, Rumi Forum

Dr. Russell Blacker, Founder, The Caucus for the Persecuted Church (UK)

Karmella Borashan, Director & Board Member, Assyrian Aid Society of America

Nadia Cavner, Activist and Philanthropist

Brian Cox, President, The Institute for Faith-Based Diplomacy

Johannes de Jong, Director, Sallux (ECPM Foundation)

Dr. William Devlin, Volunteer CEO, Widows and Orphans

Tugba Tanyeri Erdemir, Non-Resident Scholar, Middle East Institute

Richard Ghazal, Executive Director, In Defense of Christians

Hamid Gharagozloo, President, International Organisation to Preserve Human Rights

Lela Gilbert, Senior Fellow for International Religious Freedom and Coalitions Coordinator, Family Research Council; Adjunct Fellow, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute

Charmaine Hedding, President, Shai Fund

Lauren Homer, President, Law and Liberty Trust; Co-Chair IRF Roundtable Middle East Working Group; Owner, Homer International Law PLLC

Bassam Said Ishak, President, Syriac National Council of Syria, Co-head AANES Representative Office in Washington, DC

Lareina Kiser, Prayer Pioneers

Dede Laugesen, Executive Director, Save the Persecuted Christians

Nadine Maenza, Executive Director, IRF Secretariat

Faith Hooper McDonnell, Director of Advocacy, Katartismos Global

Scott Morgan, President, Red Eagle Enterprises

Bryan Nerren, President, Asian Children's Education Fellowship

Patrice Pederson, President, First Freedom Foundation

Dr. Christine M. Sequenzia, MDiv. Founder, Oliva International, LLC

Nina Shea, Director, Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute

Cliff Smith, Washington Project Director, Middle East Forum

Gregory Stanton, Founding President, Genocide Watch

Sarah N. Stern, Founder and President, The Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)

Rev. Susan Taylor, Church of Scientology National Affairs Office

Tugba Tanyeri Erdemir, Non-Resident Scholar, Middle East Institute

Liz Yore, Founder, Yore Children

John Zmirak, Senior Editor, The Stream

[1] Detailed information on AANES is found here: <https://recognizemeproject.org/what-is-aanes/>; *Social Contract of the Democratic Self-Administration of Northern Syria, January 29, 2014, as amended December 29, 2016* <https://vvanwilgenburg.blogspot.com/2017/03/social-contract-of-democratic.html>; *Beyond the Frontlines: the mbuilding of the democratic system in North and East Syria*, Rojava Information Center, June 30, 2020, <https://rojivainformationcenter.com/2019/12/report-beyond-the-frontlines/>

[2] *Can America Stop Turkey's Assault on Northern Syria?* 12/4/2022

<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/can-america-stop-turkey's-assault-northern-syria-205975>. Minorities hold more government administrative posts than their share of the AANES population. Women hold half these posts by law. Syriac (the language of Jesus) and Kurdish are legal languages. New religious organizations and conversion to another faith is freely permitted, unheard of in most Muslim majority countries.

[3] Map and statistics in *After ISIS: Ensuring a Future for Christians and Other Minorities in North and East Syria*, Rojava Information Center (September 8, 2020).

<https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2020/09/after-isis-ensuring-a-future-for-christians-and-other-minorities-in-north-and-east-syria/>

[4] The UN, the US Inspector General for Inherent Resolve, the Rojava Information Center, Human Rights Watch, and numerous other organizations have extensively documented the ongoing suppression and expulsion of religious minorities, pillage, plunder, killings, rapes, and other war crimes happening in Afrin and other areas under Turkish control. *Id.*; *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*, UNHRC, August 14, 2020, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/45/31>; *Report of the Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve to the US Congress* <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Aug/04/2002470215/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20INSPECTOR%20GENERAL%20FOR%20OPERATION%20INHERENT%20RESOLVE%20APRIL%201,%202020%20-%20JUNE%2030,%202020.PDF>.

[5] MedyaNews Web TV, <https://youtu.be/4G2YDEY53fY>; <https://medyanews.net/turkey-kills-dozens-of-civilians-in-north-and-east-syria-in-2022>.

[6] <https://sdf-press.com/en/2022/12/the-annual-report-of-the-violations-outcome-of-the-turkish-occupation-and-isis-mercenaries-against-north-and-eastern-syria/>; <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2022/12/turkeys-attacks-in-north-and-east-syria-al-hol-camp-and-the-battle-against-isis/> Turkey's pretext for the attacks is the November 13, 2022 bomb explosion in Istanbul. SDF strenuously denies any AANES role in the attack, and evidence actually points to Syrian areas Turkey controls as the source of the attack. In November, Turkey also launched widespread bombing of Northern Iraq, driving out and destabilizing Assyrian and Yazidi minorities as well as Kurdish civilians. This jeopardizes US and Iraqi efforts to combat ISIS in Iraq.

[7] <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-emergency-turkey-s-aggression-in-syria-and-iraq>; <https://www.lemkininstitute.com>. A copy of the Genocide Warning Red Alert issued by Genocide Watch and the Lemkin Institute is attached.

[8] *Webinar: Is it Genocide? Turkey Targets Syria's Christians, Yazidis & Kurds*, 12/12/2022; <https://savethepersecutedchristians.org/webinar-is-it-genocide-turkey-targets-christians-yazidis-and-kurds-in-syria/>; *Turkey's Latest Genocidal Campaign on Christians and Other Minorities*, 12/29/2022, <https://stream.org/turkeys-latest-genocidal-campaign-on-christians-and-other-minorities/>. In this article, Raymond Ibrahim noted that Turkey like ISIS is a "Muslim force with caliph aspirations."

[9] <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkish-minister-says-deadly-gun-attack-was-america-based/6771667.html>; <https://twitter.com/abdbozkurt/status/1600392508496039936?s=20&t=nL9uKtusW-8mGBSbAqxuyg> (clip of Turkish Interior Minister saying this is a key time to take advantage of Western "weakness").

[10] ISIS still ranks Syria as its third highest target with 297 attacks and 887 casualties during 2022. <https://twitter.com/1MedyaNews/status/1611402211547877376?s=20&t=5RVqWFR9j2IPRkQe7osIbg>.

[11] *Blocking Property & Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Syria*, October 14, 2019, 84 FR 55851, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/10/17/2019-22849/blocking-property-and-suspending-entry-of-certain-persons-contributing-to-the-situation-in-syria> Initial targets included Turkey's Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and Ministry of National Defense and its Minister of National Defense, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and Minister of the Interior. All were added to the list of Specially designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN List). The US halted trade negotiations with Turkey, raised steel tariffs by 50%, and filed charges against a Turkish state-owned bank.

[12] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/10/12/notice-on-the-continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-the-situation-in-and-in-relation-to-syria-2/> Your letter to then Speaker Pelosi announcing the continuation of the national emergency said Turkey was endangering the fight against ISIS. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2021/10/08/US-President-Biden-singles-out-Turkey-for-undermining-fight-against-ISIS-in-Syria>.

[13] *Congress on US Policy Toward Syria and Turkey: An Overview of Recent Hearings*, October 29, 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/congress-us-policy-toward-syria-and-turkey-overview-recent-hearings>. The Senate introduced legislation to sanction Turkey; the House overwhelmingly approved a resolution on the AANES invasion.

[14] *The United States and Turkey Agree to Ceasefire in Northeast Syria*, 10/17/2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/united-states-turkey-agree-ceasefire-northeast-syria/> Because of the agreement reflected in the Statement, sanctions under EO 13894 were lifted on October 23, 2022. A copy of the agreement is attached.

[15] https://twitter.com/lawandliberty1/status/1609644308449165313?s=20&t=rtcC7zq67wiz7ir7_hYO0Q

[16] *Remember ISIS? It's why Biden must stop a Turkish invasion of Kurdish Syria*, <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3753563-remember-isis-its-why-biden-must-stop-a-turkish-invasion-of-kurdish-syria/>



Genocide Emergency Alert Turkey's Aggression in Northern Syria and Iraq

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Genocide Watch are issuing a Genocide Emergency Alert for Turkey's aggression in Northern Syria and Iraq.

On November 20th, 2022, Turkey launched airstrikes across northern Syria and Iraq targeting the Kurdish population and Kurdish towns. Turkey claimed the attacks were in reprisal for a terrorist attack in Istanbul. Ankara blamed two Kurdish parties: the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and the PYD (Syria's Democratic Union Party). Turkey claims that the Istanbul bomber was a Syrian woman named Ahlam Albashir. The PKK denies any connection with the bomber.

The Turkish Defense Ministry said it was, "Payback time! The scoundrels are being held to account for their treacherous attacks." Turkey's 'reprisals' in northern Syria and Iraq targeted Kurdish towns such as Kobani, Tel Rifat, and Sinjar, where many Kurdish refugees have fled.

Turkey's goal is to collectively punish all Kurds for an unrelated attack in Istanbul for which Turkey needs a scapegoat. Since ISIS was defeated in 2019, Turkey has repeatedly targeted areas along its border with Iraq and Syria where Kurds live, killing Kurdish civilians and Internally Displaced Persons. The attacks spread terror in Kurdish towns to forcibly drive out their inhabitants. Turkey also hopes to crush the autonomous Syrian Kurdish administration of Rojava.

Turkish and Syrian Kurds have demanded autonomy within Turkish and Syrian borders for decades. Turkey's policies are part of its historical rejection of ethnic and religious diversity. Turkey's historical response has always resulted in genocide.

Turkey's Erdogan has embraced Ottoman-era Pan-Turkish (Pan-Turanist) eliminationist policies towards minorities. Turkey's Kurdish policies reflect the Ottoman genocides of Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks in 1915-1923 as well as Turkey's continuing denial of the Ottoman genocides.

These military attacks by Recep Tayyip Erdogan's autocratic regime are part of a wider Turkish policy of annihilation of the Kurdish and Assyrian people in northern Syria and Iraq. Turkey has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including bombing, shelling, abduction, torture, and extrajudicial killings. The attacks are part of Turkey's genocidal policies towards Kurds, Christians, and Ezidis.

Turkey also actively supports Azerbaijan's genocidal attacks against Armenians in the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh. Sharing mutual denial of the Armenian Genocide, Ankara partners with Baku to destroy Artsakh Armenian independence.

Genocide Watch issued Genocide Warnings for Turkey in [November 2020](#), and for Azerbaijan's invasions of Artsakh in November [2020](#) and [2022](#). The Lemkin Institute's Red Flag Alert for Genocide for Azerbaijan (7 October 2022), stated: "Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey has contributed greatly to creating the impunity with which these two states now operate."

In the wake of the Istanbul terrorist attack, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre announced that the US stood "shoulder-to-shoulder with [its] NATO Ally [Turkey]." While Genocide Watch and the Lemkin Institute condemn the Istanbul terrorist attack, we must also call the US government's attention to Turkey's open threats of renewed genocide against Kurds, Armenians, Christians, and other minority groups in Northern Syria and Iraq.

Turkey, as a NATO member, operates with impunity against Armenians, Kurds, Ezidis, and the other groups it has attacked. The Atlantic Charter of NATO states that its members "reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments."

Genocide Watch and the Lemkin Institute call on NATO to suspend Turkey's membership if it again invades Northern Syria and Iraq. Suspension from NATO will warn Erdogan that his aggression will be punished.

History must not repeat itself. The world must stand up against those who would commit genocide. NATO's blind support for Turkey will amount to complicity in genocide.

Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention

info@lemkininstitute.com

www.lemkininstitute.com

GENOCIDE WATCH

president@genocidewatch.org

www.genocidewatch.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 17, 2019

The United States and Turkey Agree to Ceasefire in Northeast Syria

The United States and Turkey today announced an historic agreement putting an end to a week of hostilities in the border region of Syria:

- Turkey is implementing an immediate ceasefire.
- The two governments committed to safeguard religious and ethnic minorities.
- Both governments are increasing cooperation to help detain ISIS fighters.
- Relations between the United States and long-standing NATO ally Turkey have been bolstered.

This agreement is the result of President Donald Trump's forthright leadership over the past week and the successful negotiations in Ankara led by Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, backed by a team of skilled and dedicated diplomats and military officers.

Turkey has agreed to pause its offensive for 120 hours to allow the United States to facilitate the withdrawal of YPG forces from the Turkish-controlled safe zone. Turkey has agreed to a permanent ceasefire upon completion of the YPG withdrawal. The U.S. has already begun to facilitate the YPG withdrawal from the safe zone area.

The Administration lauds President Erdogan's willingness to step forward, agree to a ceasefire, and take this opportunity for resolution. The two governments are committed to a peaceful safe zone in northeast Syria.

- 1. The US and Turkey reaffirm their relationship as fellow members of NATO. The US understands Turkey's legitimate security concerns on Turkey's southern border.*
- 2. Turkey and the US agree that the conditions on the ground, northeast Syria in particular, necessitate closer coordination on the basis of common interests.*
- 3. Turkey and the US remain committed to protecting NATO territories and NATO populations against all threats with the solid understanding of "one for all and all for one".*
- 4. The two countries reiterate their pledge to uphold human life, human rights, and the protection of religious and ethnic communities.*
- 5. Turkey and the US are committed to D-ISIS/DAESH activities in northeast Syria. This will include coordination on detention facilities and internally displaced persons from formerly ISIS/DAESH-controlled areas, as appropriate.*
- 6. Turkey and the US agree that counter-terrorism operations must target only terrorists and their hideouts, shelters, emplacements, weapons, vehicles and equipment.*
- 7. The Turkish side expressed its commitment to ensure safety and well-being of residents of all population centers in the safe zone controlled by the Turkish Forces (safe zone) and reiterated that maximum care will be exercised in order not to cause harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.*
- 8. Both countries reiterate their commitment to the political unity and territorial integrity of Syria and UN-led political process, which aims at ending the Syrian conflict in accordance with UNSCR 2254.*
- 9. The two sides agreed on the continued importance and functionality of a safe zone in order to address the national security concerns of Turkey, to include the re-collection of YPG heavy weapons and the disablement of their fortifications and all other fighting positions.*
- 10. The safe zone will be primarily enforced by the Turkish Armed Forces and the two sides will increase their cooperation in all dimensions of its implementation.*
- 11. The Turkish side will pause Operation Peace Spring in order to allow the withdrawal of YPG from the safe zone within 120 hours. Operation Peace Spring will be halted upon completion of this withdrawal.*
- 12. Once Operation Peace Spring is paused, the US agrees not to pursue further imposition of*

sanctions under the Executive Order of October 14, 2019, Blocking Property and Suspending Entry of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Syria, and will work and consult with Congress, as appropriate, to underline the progress being undertaken to achieve peace and security in Syria, in accordance with UNSCR 2254. Once Operation Peace Spring is halted as per paragraph 11 the current sanctions under the aforementioned Executive Order shall be lifted.

13. Both parties are committed to work together to implement all the goals outlined in this Statement.

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