



**Survey on the human rights activists and organizations
in the Kurdish area in Syria**



YAŞA e.V.

Kurdish Centre for
Legal Studies and
Consultancy

Kurdisches Zentrum
für juristische Studien
und Beratungen

Navenda kurdî ji bo
lêkolîn û rawêjkariya
yasayî

المركز الكردي للدراسات
والاستشارات القانونية

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About YASA:

YASA e.V. is a non-governmental and non-profit organization working to promote and advance human rights to Kurds in their country of origin and in diaspora. YASA was founded in August 2005, in Bonn, Germany, and works and acts in the interests of Kurds in the sphere of human rights, integration, and culture.

On the political level, YASA operates through the use of regional, national, and international legal instruments and works with governmental and non-governmental organizations, which also promote the implementation of human rights.

Through information events and seminars, YASA promotes cultural tolerance; works toward the integration of Kurds in Europe; and supports Kurdish refugees. YASA also focuses on conducting the understanding of the German legal system and the German culture for a successful integration into German society.

Introduction

More than one year ago, the demonstrations that might be called the Syrian revolution in the future started and the Syrian people are still determined to continue demonstrating until they achieve their main objectives: democracy, human rights, and dignity. However, the Syrian government/regime is more willing to stop the revolutionary acts through fire shooting on demonstrators and random bombings within Syrian cities than giving in for talks with the opposition.

Due to the veto power of Russia and China, the United Nations are unable to take any practical and effective steps to support the Syrian people and stop the mass killings in Syria. The international community trying to help the Syrian opposition, which is still not united. Further, the splinted opposition hinders the establishment of what could become anew Syria. A state that guarantees democracy and human rights to all different groups and minorities represented in Syria.

To reduce the international pressure on the Syrian government, the Assad regime has banned foreign independent journalists from the country. this hampers the documentation of killings and arresting tremendously . The official media in Syria is used as propaganda instrument for the Syrian regime, which is continuously showing a stable and peaceful situation in Syria reporting about “some terrorist groups” who are a part of an “international conspiracy” against Syria. Currently the ones in charge to document systematic killings and human rights violations in Syria are the local human rights organizations and activists. Activists are recording videos of the demonstrations trying to capture as much as possible to be able to provide a realistic picture of the actual situation. They write reports and interview victims or their families. However, those activists are not well trained to carry out this kind of work and therefore cannot offer professional results.

Due to the reasons that the media is state controlled and international journalists are prohibited to enter Syria to report independently, it is very essential to give the activists in Syria who became the only sources for reports more support. At present they constitute the only channel to inform the international community about on the reality in the streets of Syria. In addition, they are the only ones being in the position to influence the public opinion in contrast to the government controlled media. Furthermore, it is necessary to report and film the bombings of cities and the soldiers while they attack the cities and the demonstrators and

random shoot on the mass. The human rights activists and reporters suddenly and without any professional training became the only source of information within and going out of Syria.

After a EMHRN organized meeting in Geneva on 17 -18 March 2012, this survey is conducted. .

The aim of this survey is to:

- Introduce the main human rights organizations and the active coordination groups in the Kurdish area in Syria
- Point out the difficulties and challenges these organizations and groups face in their daily work
- Provide recommendations by YASA – Kurdish Center for legal Studies and Consultancy to foster their work

The coordination and human rights groups were asked to provide information regarding:

1. Name of the coordination or human rights groups and major cities in which they conduct their activities
2. Contact details¹
3. Activities of the coordination
4. Mechanisms to document human rights violations and the desired goals of authentication
5. What are the violations that are documented?
6. What are the challenges and difficulties faced by the activists?

¹ If you are interested in contact details of the coordination and the organization please contact us :
info@yasa-online.org

List of the organizations and contact details of those took part in the survey²

➤ *United coordination of Kurdish youth in Syria*

Activities take place in the following cities: Amude, Derbasia, Qamishlo, Efrin, Kobani, Seri Kanye, Raqah, Al- hasaka, Aleppo, Terbesbiha, Derik, Girke lege

Contact details: xxxxx3@gmail.com, xxxxx@gmail.com

Skype: xxxxxxxx

Activities:

- Documentation of killings, arrests, and violations of human rights in the Kurdish areas
- Support for displaced families from other provinces, and establishment of a field hospital in the Kurdish areas

➤ *Kurdish youth group of Qamishlo*

Activities take place in the following cities: Qamishlo

Contact details: xxxxxxxxxxx@gmail.com

Activities:

- Documentation of intentional killing of soldiers who refused to shoot people
- Documentation of death of the dissident soldiers and submission to the human rights organizations
- Documentation of arbitrary detention
- Communication and coordination with the rest of the provinces; daily protests; sit-ins in the sensitive areas near government departments

➤ *Human rights organization in Syria – Maf*

Places of activities: based in Qamishlo but operating in various cities in Syria

Contact details: xxxxxxxx@gmail.com

Activities:

- Promoting a human rights culture,

² We have listed the main Kurdish human rights organizations and coordination groups and those that replied to the survey.

- Documentation of human rights violations (killings, arrests, torture, rape etc.) and provision of data and news to the international media and human rights organizations
- Offering courses in the area of human rights,
- Issuing an annual report on the activities of the organization

➤ ***Defence of Detainees of Opinion Organization in Syria – Rawanga***

Places of the activities:

1. Hasakah province: Alhasakah, Qamishlo, Amuda, Derbasia , Seri Kanye (Ras al-Ain), Terbesbiha (Qahtaniya) ,Derik (Al- Malikia)
2. Aleppo province: Aleppo University, Al-Sheikh makqsud neighborhood, Saif aldaulah neighborhood, Selah Al- Dien neighborhood, Kobani (Ain Al- Arab), Afrin
3. Hama
4. Homs
5. Damascus province: Damascus University, Al- Akrad neighborhood (حي الأكراد), Zur Awa neighborhood (حي زور آفا), Mesaken Berze neighborhood (حي مساكن برزة)
6. Countryside of Damascus: Harasta (حريستا), Duma (دوما), Jdede Artouz (جديدة عرطوز) – Kasuah (الكسوة)
7. Deraa province: the city of Daraa (مدينة درعا), Anhkel(انخل), Beser Al-Harir (بصر الحرير)

Contact details: xxxxxxxxxx@gmail.com**Activities:**

- Documentation of human rights violations
- Offering small internal courses in the field of human rights
- Contact Arab and international organizations, which work on human rights
- daily, weekly, and annual electronic reports

➤ ***Sawa Youth Coalition***

Activities take place in the following cities: Alhasakah, Qamishlo, Derik (Al- Malikia)

Contact details: xxxxxxxxxx@gmail.com

Activities:

- Boycotting of products from companies that support the Syrian regime
- Preparation and implementation of civil protests, demonstrations, strikes

- Offering courses to increase knowledge of youth, especially with regard to peaceful protests
- Continuing with various components of the community life to restore confidence
- Awareness campaigns regarding the role of women, and the exploitation of children in the protests and demonstrations
- Monitoring and documenting violations against human rights in the areas in which “Sawa coordination” is active

➤ ***Kurdish youth movement T.C.K***

- Activities take place in the following cities: Active in all Syrian Kurdish cities as well as in Aleppo and Damascus

Contact details: xxxxxxxxxxxxx@hotmail.com, Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Activities:

- Documenting violations with the help of photography, events, and released detainees
- “Smuggling” of people out of Syria who are injured to medicates and talk to the media
- Moving of public opinion

➤ ***Syrian Kurdistan movement***

Activitites take place in the following cities: active in all Syrian Kurdish cities as well as in Aleppo and Damascus

Contact details: www.serheldan.com, Email: info@serheldan.com

Activities:

- Demonstrating peacefully against the regime
- Claiming legitimate rights of the Kurdish people
- Filming demonstrations

➤ ***Coordination of Kurdish brotherhood***

Place of the activities : In all Kurdish neighborhoods in Aleppo

Contact details: xxxxxxxxx@hotmail.com

Activities:

- Doing peaceful demonstrations against the regime in all Kurdish neighborhoods in Aleppo and at the university

- Filming demonstrations

For more details please click on the YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/birayeti

➤ ***Kurdish Organization for Defending Human Rights and Public Freedoms in Syria – DAD***

Places of activities: The organization is active in all cities and areas of Syria in particular in the mainly Kurdish areas and in the mainly Kurdish neighborhoods in Damascus

Contact details: xxxxxxxxxx@gmail.com

Activities:

- The organization monitors individual and public violations of human rights of any source in Syria . (Extrajudicial killings, torture and arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and trials of political and opinion prisoners, and those violations that are on the women and children and the environment, and those violations, which are on the Kurds that are originating in laws, policies and projects or behaviors or acts of daily and which are racist or discriminatory)
- Issues statements, declarations, news appeals.
- Annual Reports
- Issuing legal studies on women in the Syria
- Attending and monitoring of trials
- Organize a campaign collection of signatures

➤ ***Alend coordination***

Place of activities: Kobani (Ain Al- Arab)

Contact details: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Activities:

- Doing peaceful demonstrations against the regime
- Documenting arbitrary arrests

Mechanisms of the documentation of human rights violations – challenges and difficulties faced by the activists?

With regards to the documentation of human rights violations, the Kurdish NGOs work in an organized and professional way. They have long term experience and many lawyers working for the organization. We notice at the Human rights organizations (DAD for example) in addition to the documentations, a professional legal work. NGOs watch the government's and administration's acts to publish it in statements or appeals. NGOs accompany political prisoners, watch their judicial proceedings, and trail. NGOs publish monthly or yearly reports on the violation of human rights. DAD has published many studies and did campaigns regarding stateless Kurds in Syria.

The Kurdish NGOs and activists document violations by producing daily, monthly, and/or annual reports making use of filming and interviewing witnesses or detainees who were released. Despite, this does not reach international standards regarding the documentation of human rights violations.

Indeed, activists and NGOs in Syria are overburdened and face enormous difficulties and challenges doing their work, as the killings and violations against the human rights are happening continuously. Kurdish human rights organizations are not registered and work undercover, this increases their risk of being arrested at any time. Because of the same reason, they only have a few trained members and lack qualified staff in human rights area. Active members of Kurdish NGOs and coordination groups are observed by the Syrian secret service and are usually banned to travel.

NGOs and activists suffer from a lack of direct communication and cooperation with international NGOs and Media. NGOs and activists need support in all areas of their work such as:

- Medical support during and after demonstrations as they lack medical equipment and drugs for injured demonstrators, and first aid training
- Legal support
- Media work support
- Financial support

Our Recommendations

- Provide NGOs and human rights activists with informative reports about human and minority rights and about democracy and good governance.
- Provide NGOs and human rights activists with studies and reports about human rights work in the conflict region
- Offer trainings for proper documentation of killings and violation of human rights for the activists. These should include:
 - Training in audio-visual interviews to the victims and witnesses to documented testify
 - Training in audio-visual to film demonstrations and bombing the cities
 - Training in computer software and security sector for programs that support the documentation of human rights violation
- Improve the cooperation among NGOs and coordination groups in Syria.
- Provide the activists of the coordination groups and NGOs with the equipment they need
- Link activists with international media and NGOs, and give those access to these information and documentation provided by the activists
- First aid training in conflict region
- Support the activists financially

