

# REVOLUTION IN ROJAVA

## SYRIA: AREAS OF CONTROL MAY 2020



Kurdistan is divided between the modern states of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. **Rojava**, a majority Kurdish part of northeastern Syria, became an autonomous region run by the **Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES)**. It is currently home to approximately 5-6 million people and includes a multiplicity of ethnic and religious groups, including Arabs, Syrians, Assyrians, Armenians, Chechens, Turkmens and others. Since 2012, the people of NES have been collectively building a new society based on principles of women's liberation, direct democracy, environmental sustainability, and a cooperative economy.

## WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Rojava is founded on the principle that there can be no true equality without gender equality, thus creating a new social paradigm. Institutions have female and male co-chairs and require at least 40% women members, while women's councils have veto power over decisions affecting women.

## SOCIAL ECOLOGY

Ecology and sustainability are principles of Rojava's economy; large areas previously used for grain monoculture are being reforested, while international and local people are working together to preserve the water supply and develop alternatives to fossil fuels.

## DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Citizens participate actively in all public decision making and management, in a system of democratic confederalism beginning with neighborhood communes which elect delegates to higher levels of government. Ethnic and religious discrimination is against the law and all groups have political representation.

This informational sheet about the Rojava revolution was prepared by the Emergency Committee for Rojava. Learn more about Rojava's struggle for freedom, equality and an ecological future at [www.defendrojava.org](http://www.defendrojava.org). Follow us on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram at [@defendrojava](https://www.instagram.com/defendrojava)

## **COOPERATIVE ECONOMY IN ROJAVA**

The AANES has one of the most extensive regional networks of co-ops in the world. Making up 1% of the total economy, there are over 250 co-ops scattered across the region, which is roughly twice the size of Vermont. Co-ops range from agricultural to manufacturing and industrial, and wheat is the leading co-op produce. Other common types of co-ops are barley, vegetable, chicken, sheep, car-repair, neighborhood generator, water-bottling and canned food. The majority of co-ops are collectively owned and maintained, where membership ranges from 12 to 300 and members share profits equally.

What makes the collective economy in Rojava unique is that coops operate locally but come under the umbrella of regional co-op centers, producing a well organized decentralized network. Each network-member co-op channels 5% of their annual profit to the network, which can only use it to support the establishment of new co-ops, communes and co-op networks. The network of co-ops in Rojava provides the world with a promising examples of collective economic organization but needs urgent international attention and solidarity.

## **TAKE ACTION**

- Share this info sheet on your social media and with your mailing lists.
- Contact your representatives and key members of congress by using our toolkit.
- Publish our Letter to Editor addressing the current threat with your local news and media outlets or online forums.
- Reach out to us at [info@defendrojava.org](mailto:info@defendrojava.org) to organize an internal or public educational event with your organization.
- Contact us if your have any other ideas for solidarity action!

## **ROJAVA IS UNDER THREAT**

While the people of AANES defeated ISIS territorially in 2019, the persistent threat of an ISIS revival continues to require much effort and resources on part of the administration. Despite its ongoing sacrifice in the fight against ISIS, the AANES has no internationally recognized status, has been subjected to an economic and humanitarian embargo, and, most importantly, faces the risk of annihilation by Turkey.

Over the last four years, the Turkish state, known for its patronage of al-Qaeda and ISIS in Syria, has invaded and occupied different pockets of NES, destroying its co-ops and communes.

Most recently, presiding over a tanking economy and worried about his political future, Turlish president Erdogan has intensified his threats of once again invading NES as he attempts to exploit the Ukraine conflict and Turkey's position in NATO to carry out his own war of aggression against the Kurdish people. Such an invasion would kill or displace hundreds of thousands of civilians and further destabilize the region, as Turkey did in its previous two invasions.

