



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

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Bologna, Donostia, Düsseldorf, Vienna, 25/01/2026

ELDH STATEMENT

On the escalating violations of international law and the threat to Kurdish population in North and East Syria (Rojava)

The European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH) expresses its grave concern over the renewed and escalating attacks against Kurdish populations in North and East Syria (Rojava). These attacks constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and place entire communities at imminent risk.

Since early January 2026, large-scale military operations have targeted Kurdish population and other communities living in Rojava, following a broader pattern of mass violence across Syria, including massacres committed against Arab Alawite civilians in December 2024 and against the Druze population in Suwayda. This escalation risks plunging Syria into renewed large-scale civil conflict.

Credible reports indicate that these attacks have been carried out with the involvement or cooperation of the Syrian Transitional Government and armed jihadist groups. Particularly alarming are reports that attacks have occurred in areas where ISIS detainees are held, creating a serious risk of escapes and renewed regional and international security threats.

Reliable sources document acts that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes, including indiscriminate killings of civilians, forced displacement, demographic alteration, extrajudicial executions, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, abductions, and the systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure. The deliberate deprivation of water, electricity, food, medical supplies, and communications further exacerbates the humanitarian crisis.

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For more than a decade, the peoples and institutions of North and East Syria have played a crucial role in combating ISIS and fostering systems of peaceful coexistence among ethnic and religious communities. The current attacks not only threaten these achievements but also undermine international peace and security.

ELDH strongly condemns all attacks against Kurdish population and other communities and their infrastructure in Rojava and calls for their immediate cessation. We urge States, the European Union, and the international community to take effective and coordinated action to protect civilian populations and to ensure full compliance with international law.

ELDH further calls for the activation of international accountability mechanisms, including independent investigations into alleged international crimes, and for decisive action by the United Nations Security Council to ensure accountability, including through referral to the International Criminal Court. Immediate measures must also be taken to establish humanitarian corridors and protected zones to guarantee access to life-saving assistance.

Finally, ELDH stresses the urgent need for international legal and political measures to safeguard the rights and security of all peoples in North and East Syria and to prevent further mass atrocities. Silence and inaction in the face of these violations risk enabling irreversible harm. Immediate and decisive action is required.