



# The Self-Administration of North and East Syria



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## 1- Definition of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria and Its Establishment

Five years ago, the Democratic Self-Administration was announced by political parties, community activists, civil society institutions and notable personalities. They agreed on a Social Contract, regulating the relationship between different ethnicities and religions in Rojava and north and east of Syria. The Social Contract preserved the existing national state institutions. It was drafted to represent a collective decision-making mechanism to prevent any aggression against the will of the people. Hundreds of institutions, councils and communes were established in villages, towns and cities. One of the most important outcomes was the establishment of an advanced level of self-protection that began with the *Asayish* (local police) and the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), which later became part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).



The text of the Charter of the Social Contract of this Administration states:

"We, the peoples of the regions of the Democratic Self-Administration, including the Arabs, Kurds, Syriacs, (Assyrians, Chaldean Arameans) Turkmen and Armenians, and by our free will, declare this Contract to achieve justice, freedom and democracy in accordance with the principles of ecological balance and equality without discrimination based on race, religion, belief and gender. The goal of this Contract is to enable the political and moral fabric of the democratic society to achieve its functions, which are mutual understanding, coexistence within pluralism, respect people's rights for self-determination, the rights of women and children, self-protection and defence, and respect for freedom of religion and belief.

The areas of the Democratic Self-Administration do not accept the concept of a centralised, nationalistic, military and theocratic state. They are open to, and compatible with, democracy and pluralism, so that all socio-cultural groups and ethnicities can

express themselves through their institutions and organisations, respect the Syrian borders and human rights charters and maintain civil and global peace.

In order to realise the principles of the Charter of the Social Contract, to build a democratic society through the Self-Administration that guarantees social justice, and to establish a civilised society, the objectives of all the components of the Democratic Self-Administration, including the Arabs, Kurds, Syrians, Armenians, Chechens and others have been united based on the principle of unity in diversity. We, together with the rest of the components of the Syrian people, agreed that the areas of the Democratic Self-Administration shall be within a democratic and pluralistic Syria. In order to embody this will and to achieve these goals, we have drafted and clarified this Contract.”

The establishment of the Democratic Self-Administration of North And East Syria was based on the decision taken at the Third Conference of the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) held on 16/07/2018 in the city of *Al Tabqa* and was approved by the attendees.

The Democratic Self-Administration of North and East of Syria was announced at a meeting held on 06/09/2018 in the headquarters of the SDC in *Ain Issa* town of *Girê Sipî* province in the Euphrates region.

The Final Communiqué of the meeting stated:

“The decision of the Third Conference of the SDC, held in the city of *Al Tabqa* on 16/07/2018, led to the formation of an administrative structure that coordinates the services between the liberated areas and the Democratic Self-Administrations in the rest of the northern region of Syria. This resolution was approved with the consent of all the participants in the Conference.

On this basis, the Preparatory Committee for the Self-Administration of North and East Syria held a meeting on 06/09/2018, which included 70 members from the various administrations of north and east of Syria (7 administrations), in the headquarters of the SDC in *Ain Issa*. The meeting was attended by the heads of local councils in *Al Raqqa*, *Tabqa*, *Manbej* and *Deir Al Zour*, as well as representatives of the Democratic Self-Administration in the regions of *Al Jazira* and *Afrin* and representatives of the SDF, civil society organisations and national figures. During the meeting and after consultations with the self-administrations and civil councils during the preparatory period, the General Council of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria was established, which included 70 members as follows:

49 members of the legislative councils in the areas of the self-administrations and civil councils, and 21 technocrats, who were agreed upon by the Preparatory Committee.”

## **2- Components of the Self-Administration and Its Organisational Structure.**

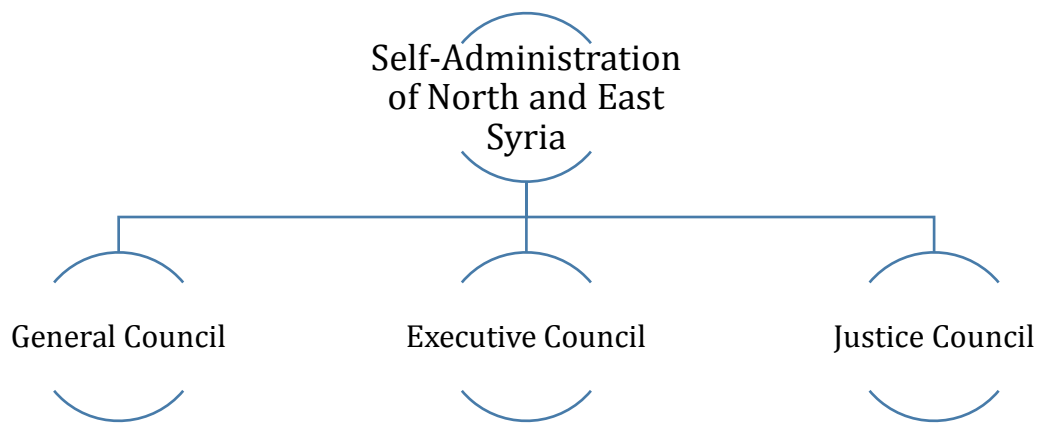
The following seven offices were granted confidence by the general Council of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria on 03/10/2018:

- 1- Office of External Relations: it oversees the reception of incoming foreign delegations to the areas of the Self-Administration, and coordinates with those who want to visit.
- 2- Information Office: it is concerned with the formulation of media policy of the entire north and east of Syria, covering the activities of the Self-Administration and coordinating with the information offices of the seven administrations.
- 3- Office of Religions and Beliefs: it is concerned with religions and religious affairs of all peoples of north and east of Syria.
- 4- Defence Office: it supervises public security issues in the region and follows the conduct of military operations led by the SDF.
- 5- Office of Oil and Natural Resources: it supervises the work of the oil fields and the equitable distribution of natural resources.
- 6- Office of Development and Planning: it is concerned with urban planning and supervises the development of towns and cities.
- 7- Advisory Office: it provides legal and practical consultations for the work of committees of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria.

The Executive Board has recently established an eighth office, the Development and Humanitarian Affairs Office, which licences, monitors and manages the work of the organisations that work in the areas of the Self-Administration.

### **Objective and Vision:**

- 1- To find a ground for social and economic integration.
- 2- To provide security and stability.
- 3- To provide education, health and public services.
- 4- To provide housing and all the necessary support for the refugees and IDPs and help them return to their homes.
- 5- To support the effective participation of the SDC in the peaceful political process to resolve the Syrian crisis.
- 6- To draft a new constitution for the country.

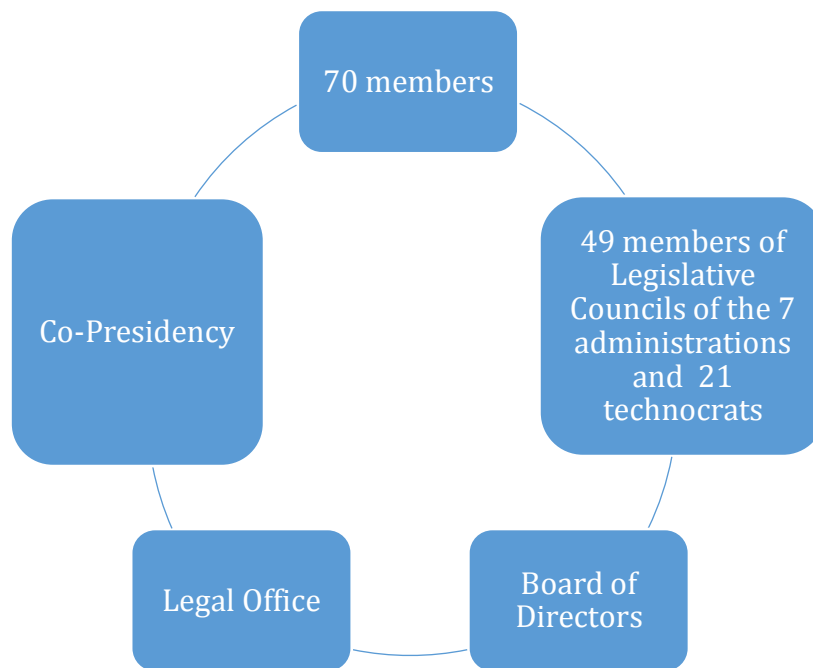


The Councils of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria are composed of the civil administrations of the north and east of Syria:

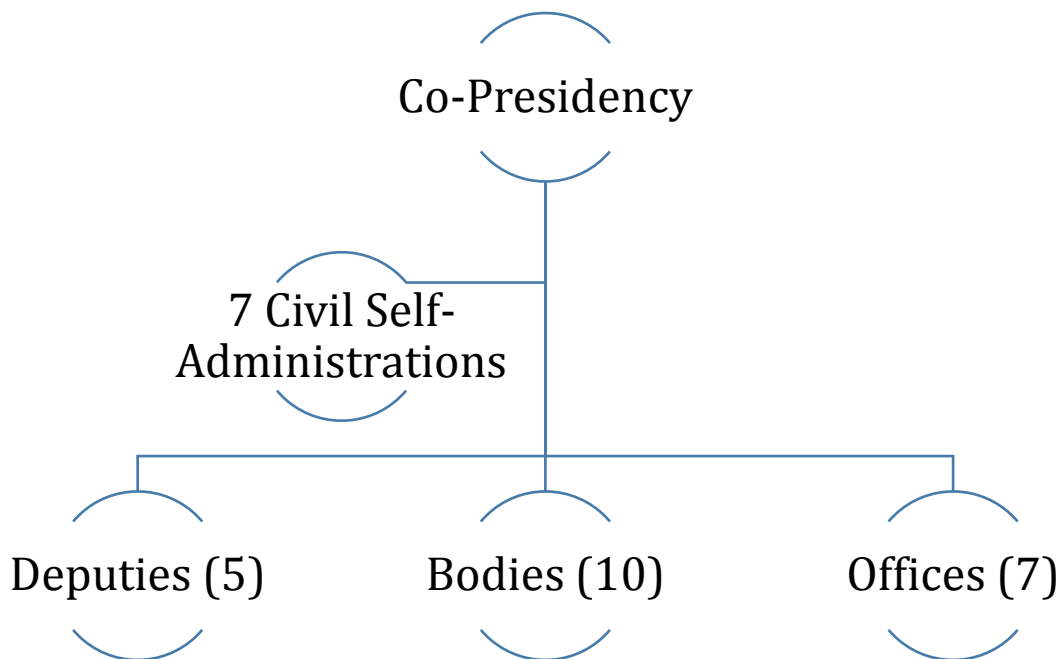
- 1- Democratic Self-Administration of *Al Jazira*.
- 2- Democratic Self-Administration of the Euphrates region.
- 3- Democratic Self-Administration of *Afrin*.
- 4- Democratic Self-Administration of *Manbij* and its suburbs.
- 5- Democratic Self-Administration of *Al Tabqa*.
- 6- Democratic Self-Administration of *Al Raqqa*.
- 7- Democratic Self-Administration of *Deir Al Zour*.

**Role of the General Council:**

- 1- Ratifies members of the Justice Council.
- 2- Grants confidence, or no-confidence, to the Executive Council.
- 3- Issues laws and decrees.
- 4- Unifies custom, civil and economic laws.
- 5- Authenticates internal regulations of the offices and authorities.
- 6- Establishes a general system for all civil society institutions.
- 7- Supervises the work of the Civil Council.



Executive Council of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria:





### 3. Areas of the Self-Administration (Administrations and Councils).

On 27/03/2014, a Joint Coordinating Committee of the Executive Councils of the Self-Administration of the three provinces, *Al Jazira*, *Afrin* and *Kobani*, was established by the Executive Council of *Al Jazira*. The announcement stated:

"After consultation and agreement with our colleagues, heads of the executive councils of the provinces of *Kobani* and *Afrin*, it is incumbent upon us nationally and humanly to shoulder our responsibilities at this dangerous juncture, which obliges the joint defence of the three provinces and unity. Accordingly, a joint consultative committee of the three provinces has been established, based on the legitimate right of self-defence, which has been endorsed by international covenants and conventions."

On 10/10/2015, the SDF was formed to fight terrorism and liberate the remaining areas of the north and east of Syria from Daesh mercenaries. They started their campaign and liberated *Al Houl*, *Al Shadadi*, *Manbij*, *Al Tabqa*, *Al Raqqa* and currently fighting Daesh in its last remaining pocket in *Deir Al Zour*. Accordingly, the components of the north and east of Syria formed the Self-Administration to organise the region and administer its affair. The Self-Administration is composed of regions, such as, *Al Jazira*, the Euphrates, *Afrin*, *Al Raqqa*, *Tabqa*, and *Deir Al Zour*.

#### I- *Al Jazira* Region



It is the largest region in the northeast of Syria and the most densely populated, which includes the Arabs, Kurds, Syrians and other components. The territory of *Al Jazira* Region



consists of the provinces of *Qamishlo* and *Hasaka*, which in turn consist of several other areas.

The Self-Administration of *Al Jazira* Region was announced on 21/01/2014. It established its own administrative bodies and institutions. Since its establishment, the Self-Administration has tried, with all its capabilities, to fulfil the demands of the people of northern Syria without any discrimination.

## **II- Euphrates Region**

### **- Kobani Province**

Since the 19/07/2012 revolution, *Kobani* has undergone many changes, the most prominent of which is that the people administered themselves in all organisational, military and political aspects. After that, it was necessary to establish local institutions to organise all segments of society. The Democratic Self-Administration of *Kobani* was established on 27/01/2014 and started its work in the community.

In the beginning, the Administration encountered many difficulties. The most important of these difficulties was the suffocating siege imposed on the province by the Turkish state from the north and by the armed terrorist groups from the other three sides. However, despite this suffocating siege, the people of the province joined the Administration and took serious steps, such as educating their children in their mother tongue. The Administration opened its doors for the people to join its institutions as well as joining the units defending the province. In addition, the relations between the Arabs, Kurds, Armenians and Turkmen in *Kobani* was much better than they were during the rule of the Ba'ath Party. The sons and daughters of those components worked in the institutions and bodies of the Self-Administration. This, in itself, was the first achievement of its kind in Syria. This experience has made the components in north Syria sit together and discuss their own future and the future of the country.

### **- Girê Sipî Province**

Daesh mercenaries used *Girê Sipî* town as their centre to launch attacks on northern Syria, particularly the attacks on *Kobani* and *Serê Kaniyê*. In addition, the border gate in *Girê Sipî* was used for all the mercenaries from all over the world to join Daesh in northern Syria. It was considered a centre for new recruits to join Daesh.



On 15/06/2015, the YPG, the YPJ, the Euphrates Volcano and *Al Tahrir* Brigade liberated *Girê Sipî* town from Daesh mercenaries.

On 27/07/2015, the Council of the Elders of the *Girê Sipî* area held its founding conference after several preparatory sessions in the presence of representatives of all the components of the city, including the Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen and Armenian, and guests from the Self-Administration of *Kobani* and the Council of Fraternity and Civil Peace of *Serê Kaniyê*.

On 21/10/2015, the Self-Administration of *Girê Sipî* was declared by the Council of the Elders of *Girê Sipî* city. The Council granted confidence to 2 co-presidents and 9 committees of the Self-Administration.

Based on the administrative division of the North Syria Federation, which was announced in 2016, the two provinces, *Girê Sipî* and *Kobani*, were included in one region, namely the Euphrates Region.

### **III- Afrin Region**

The Self-Administration of *Afrin* Region was announced on 28/01/2014 in conjunction with other regions. The Self-Administration consists of legislative and executive councils as well as a supreme court, representing all the components, including various different religions and cultures, women and the youth. The Self-Administration managed to provide all the necessary services, including socio-economic, culture, education and health, to the locals, as well as security and stability. In comparison to other parts of Syria, *Afrin* was stable and secure and became a safe haven for many IDPs and refugees from other Syrian cities.



The isolated geographical location of *Afrin*, separated from the areas of the other self-administrations, put it under a suffocating siege by the Turkish state and its associated jihadists groups. *Afrin* was attacked numerous times by these jihadist groups, but all their attempts to occupy the region failed.

On 18/03/2018, the Turkish army completed its occupation of the region of *Afrin*. It resulted in the displacement of 350,000 civilians from their homes and a new phase of annihilation against the citizens of *Afrin* began. The most heinous crimes are committed by the Turkish army and its affiliated Islamist groups against the people who have remained in their homes in *Afrin*. The region is also undergoing systematic demographic change by the Turkish state, where families of the Turkish army's affiliated mercenaries have been settled. Nevertheless, the Self-Administration continued its work and provided assistance to IDPs in *Al Shahba* area.

#### **IV- *Al Raqqa***

On 04/03/2013, the mercenaries of *Ahrar Al Sham*, supported by *Al Nusra* Front mercenaries, occupied the city of *Al Raqqa*. They abused local people, who thought that these groups that entered the city would be better than the Syrian regime. The occupation did not last long and Daesh quickly took their place in early 2014, and declared *Al Raqqa* the capital of its alleged, "Islamic Caliphate." On 05/11/2016, an operations room, *Euphrates' Anger*, was formed to lead the process of liberation and coordination between all participating groups under the auspices of the SDF, with the active participation of the YPG and YPJ in coordination with the international coalition forces.



In conjunction with the military campaign to liberate *Al Raqqa*, the SDC started the preparation for the establishment of a civil council to oversee the administration of the city and provide the locals with their daily needs. On 18/04/2017, more than 100 dignitaries from local clans, political figures and professionals of *Al Raqqa* city and its surrounding villages met after the defeat of Daesh by the SDF in cooperation with the international coalition. They established the *Al Raqqa* Civil Council, which would administer the affairs of the city through its specialised committees. The Council was established to organise the components of the city on the basis of democracy, equality and social justice, and to provide services to local people. The Council is also the only body authorised to deal with the administrative process in *Al Raqqa* and has the power to change what it deems appropriate in all aspects of the work within the various institutions.

### **V- *Al Tabqa***

On 26/03/2017, the SDF liberated *Al Tabqa* Airport after days of clashes with Daesh mercenaries, who occupied the airport in August, 2014. The airport is located to the west of *Al Tabqa* city.

On 16/04/2017, the SDF, supported by the international coalition, entered the outskirts of *Al Tabqa*. On 10/05/2017, the SDF announced the liberation of the entire city of *Al Tabqa* from Daesh.

Based on the decision of the *Al Raqqa* Civil Council on 18/04/2017, the Preparatory Committee for the establishment of the *Al Tabqa* Civil Council was established.

On 15/05/2017, representatives of the *Al Tabqa* city met with tribal leaders, notable local figures, dignitaries, and representatives of the women and youth organisations in the city. After discussing the political, social, cultural and economic conditions of the city, the *Al Tabqa* Civil Council was established, which represented all segment of society. During the meeting, Mr *Ahmed Sha'aban* and Ms *Roshen Hanifa* were elected as Co-Presidents of the

Council together with 3 deputies, Mr *Ahmed Sulaiman*, Mr *Hawas Khalil* and Ms *Asiya Al Gharby*. Service Committees and City Management Committees were also formed.

## **VI- *Deir Al Zour***

In 2012, many terrorist groups, including *Al Nusra Front* and *Ahrar Al Sham*, took control of large parts of the city of *Deir Al Zour*. Only the military airport, which is located in the south-west of the city and some of the city's neighbourhoods remained under the control of the Syrian regime.

In 2014, the city of *Deir Al Zour* came under the control of Daesh, which controlled a large parts of the city, including *Al A'ardi*, *Al Sheikh Yasin*, *Al Hamidyeh*, *Al A'arfi*, *Al Huwaika Al Shamaliyeh*, *Al Hawayikeh Al Gharbuyeh*, *Al Rashdiyeh*, *Al Jabaliyeh*, *Al Mwazafyn*, *Al Rasafa*, *Al Sana'a* and *Al Matar Al Qadym*. Daesh controlled 95% of the city of *Deir Al Zour*.

In October 2017, the military campaigns to eliminate Daesh from *Deir Al Zour* began. These campaigns were divided into 2 parts:

- The first campaign was carried out by the Syrian regime's army with Russian and Iranian support to control the west bank of the Euphrates River.

- The second campaign was carried out by the SDF with the support of the international coalition to liberate the eastern bank of the Euphrates River.

As a result of the *Al Jazira Storm* campaign to liberate *Deir Al Zour*, the *Deir Zour Civil Council* was established, which included all segments of society without exception. A focus was placed on the youth, as they represent the future of *Deir Al Zour*.

All liberated areas would be handed over to the Council to manage the citizens' affairs and meet their life requirements. The Preparatory Committee, composed of local people, formed the committees of the *Deri Al Zour Civil Council*, totalling 14 committees:

- 1- Women's Committee.
- 2- Justice Committee.
- 3- Reconciliation Committee.
- 4- Youth and Sport Committee.
- 5- Organisations and Humanitarian Affairs' Committee.
- 6- Services and Municipalities' Committee.
- 7- Education Committee.
- 8- Antiques and Culture Committee.
- 9- Agriculture and Livestock Committee.
- 10- Finance Committee.
- 11- Internal Security Committee.
- 12- Protection Committee.
- 13- Martyrs' Families' Committee.
- 14- Councils' Organising Committees.

With the administrations of each city and region in place, representatives of these administrations met to establish a joint administration to develop services and establish a coordination mechanism among all the councils of the Self-Administrations to manage



the affairs of the people of north and east of Syria. On 06/09/2018, the Self-Administration of North and East Syria was established.

### **Coordination Mechanism between the Self-Administration and Local Councils and Administrations**

The Self-Administration of North and East Syria takes unified decisions at the level of the north and east of Syria through dialogue between the civil councils and the local self-administrations, such as the unification of custom duties, fuel prices, travel permits and movement between the cities of north and east of Syria. Each administration respect the laws of other administrations, their official records and judicial procedures. The Self-Administration of North and East Syria may determine their rules and regulations.

## **4. Mechanism of the Work of Local Administration and Councils**

- The residents of each civil and self-administration have the similar rights to the residents of other administrations. The Self-Administration of North and East Syria ensures that each civil administration has its own local authority and protects them from external threats and internal violence.
- The members of the self-administrations, civil and local council are elected through the ballot box by citizens residing in those areas.
- The powers of the administrative bodies in both the self-administrations and civil and local councils are regulated and defined by a law issued by the Self-Administration of North and East Syria.
- Supervision of the administrative bodies is regulated and defined by a law issued by the Self-Administration of North and East Syria.
- The decision of the administrative bodies may be objected or rejected by a decision of the Co-Presidency of the Executive Council of the Self-Administration, provided they are contrary to the law or public interests.
- The collection of taxes and fees are regulated by the Executive Council of the Self-Administrations in the regions. They also regulate their financial relations with the Executive Council of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria by law.

In addition, the local administrations and councils continue their regular work in the regions in the north and east of Syria. As for the Self-Administration, its task is to coordinate and organise these administrations.

The objective of this project is to form an administrative structure that coordinates the services between the regions. The Democratic Self-Administration, which was formed to fill the administrative and security vacuum in the north and east of Syria, managed to maintain security and stability in the region, protect the people from terrorist threats and provide services to local residents. Administrations were formed at different dates, hence, the quality of the services provided to the people were affected. Therefore, it was

essential to establish an administrative structure to supervise and coordinate the work of all local administrations.

The establishment of the Self-Administration of North and East Syria was a political and structural necessity to consolidate the Social Contract, to rebalance the Syrian equation nationally and globally, and to activate the role of women in assuming their duties and defending themselves and their freedom in society, according to the principle of the legitimate right of self-defence.