

Social and Political Situation in Syria

In the course of the conflicts of the so-called „Arab Spring,“ a civil war erupted in Syria, with varying regional impacts. In July 2012, following massive protests by the population, the Assad regime withdrew from the predominantly Kurdish-populated region in northern Syria. The people established a democratic self-administration in the region, with the participation of all ethnic, religious, and social groups. In doing so, they also had to fight the advancing so-called Islamic State (IS) and liberate territories occupied by IS. Today, the Democratic Self-Administration encompasses approximately one-third of Syrian territory and guarantees equal rights and participation for women at all levels. Society is organized according to grassroots democratic principles. It represents a model for peace for the people of Syria and the entire region. Under both the Assad regime and IS rule, women were massively oppressed and excluded from public life. The establishment of the democratic self-administration enabled the formation of women's organizations in particular.

Low-Intensity War and Regime Change

However, this societal model is under threat on all fronts. For many years, Turkey and its financed mercenaries have attacked the region, occupying the areas of Afrin, Shahba, Serê Kaniyê, Tel Abyad, and Manbij. This has been accompanied by massive destruction of the water and electricity supplies, energy infrastructure, and food supply. Furthermore, there are targeted killings, often of women involved in the self-administration. The economic and political embargo imposed by neighboring states, the EU, and the US remains in place. The situation is characterized by a shortage of essential goods and construction materials, further exacerbating the already tense situation for the population. In November 2024, the Assad regime was overthrown, and a transitional government was formed by HTS (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham), one of several Islamist groups active in Syria. The transitional constitution it drafted does not grant equality to women and men, and neither recognizes nor protects religious and ethnic diversity. Massacres and abductions of members of the Alawite and Druze ethnic minorities occurred shortly thereafter. The transitional government intends to extend this authoritarian rule to the region of northern and eastern Syria. All these factors influence the work of the women's foundation.

European Committee of WJAS

We are a small group of German and Kurdish women, some of whom have been active in internationalist organizations for a long time. We maintain continuous contact with the Women's Foundation and actively support its diverse work. We share their goal of strengthening the role of women in political and social development, both there and here. To this end, we provide information about current developments and projects through events, exhibitions, and information booths.

The foundation has considerable women's power, but no assets. Therefore, we collect donations and contributions to secure the diverse educational and healthcare programs. The current extremely critical political situation requires both material and political solidarity. This includes supporting the democratic structures and upholding the rights of women and minorities, so that peaceful coexistence in this region can be enabled, maintained, and developed further. Support the work of the Foundation of the Free Woman with your donation!

Account:

Kurdistanhilfe e.V., Hamburg/Deutschland

Keyword: WJAS

Hamburger Sparkasse

IBAN: DE40 2005 0550 1049 2227 04

BIC: HASPADEHHXXX

Contact:

Europakomitee WJAS

c/o Club Voltaire

Kleine Hochstraße 5

D-60313 Frankfurt am Main

Weqfa Jina Azad a Sûri - Stiftung der freien Frau in Syrien

Hililiye / Qamishlo, Syria

Website: www.wjas.org

Mail (Europa): info@wjas.org

Facebook: facebook.de/WJASInternational

Instagram: instagram.com/wjas_int

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Foundation of the Free Woman in Syria



Development work by women in northern and eastern Syria/Syria



Fields of work:

Foundation of the Free Woman in Syria (WJAS)

Founded in 2014 by Kurdish and Arab women, the „Weqfa Jina Azad a Sûri“ (WJAS) foundation is an independent social organization mainly active in northern and eastern Syria. Its aim is to promote the autonomy of women and improve their living conditions by providing educational, health and economic services.

The foundation's work is based on surveys of women in the districts, villages and camps. Increased efforts are being made to expand educational opportunities and create jobs. WJAS strives for cooperation between all ethnic groups and religions, including within its own structures.

The foundation's approximately 150 employees maintain offices, educational centers, and training/workshops in Qamişlo, Girkê Legê, Dêrik, Chelaghe, Hesekekê, Dirbêsiyê, Raqqa, Tabqa, Kobanê, Aleppo, Serin, as well as in the Al Hol, Roj, Waşokani, and Serê Kaniyê camps. When Islamist rebel groups occupied the Manbij region in December 2024, they looted and destroyed the foundation's office there. The work had to be suspended. Since the summer of 2025, WJAS has also been active in Damascus.

The foundation's fields of work are very diverse and adaptable to local situations. In addition, WJAS continuously trains its employees in areas such as trauma and safety, so that they can work effectively and safely in challenging conditions.

WJAS represents women's interests in various self-governing bodies and networks with various stakeholders. There are collaborations with local municipalities, social and medical institutions and with women's associations as well as with various European organizations.



Education

- ♦ Lectures on social topics, history, culture, ecology
- ♦ Literacy courses
- ♦ Language courses (Arabic, English, Kurdish)



- ♦ PC courses
- ♦ Music courses
- ♦ Sports courses

Pedagogy

- ♦ Orphanage and kindergarten in Kobanê
- ♦ Further training for educators
- ♦ Kindergarten in Qamişlo, for the children of the foundation's employees



Training/assistance to secure livelihoods

- ♦ Tailoring trade
- ♦ Knitting craft
- ♦ Hairdressing
- ♦ Arts and crafts
- ♦ Medical assistance



- ♦ Every participant is awarded a diploma

Job creation

- ♦ Sewing workshops
- ♦ Cosmetic laser treatment
- ♦ Shop in Qamişlo for products from the sewing workshop



Health

- ♦ Mobile clinic in Dêrik to care for the rural population, in cooperation with the town-friendship association Berlin Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain – Dêrik
- ♦ Ari clinics: free basic healthcare for women and children in Kobane, Tepke, Hesekekê, Qamişlo and Dirbêsiyê
- ♦ Naturopathy centers (treatment and training) in Hesekekê and Dirbêsiyê
- ♦ Courses and lectures on gynaecological topics, children's diseases, general illnesses and first aid



Offers in refugee camps

- ♦ Resocialization work with relatives of imprisoned IS members
- ♦ Further training courses on various topics, including diseases and naturopathy
- ♦ Training courses (tailoring)
- ♦ Work with children

Networking and committee work/ representing the interests of women

- ♦ in the health committee
- ♦ at the school board
- ♦ at the Women's Council of North and East Syria
- ♦ in the Legal Committee
- ♦ in the assembly of the regional parliament
- ♦ at the Syrian Women's Council

More:

- ♦ Libraries in Qamişlo and Kobanê
- ♦ Designing public parks for women

