



2025 Annual Report

of the Foundation of Free Woman in Syria (Weqfa Jina Azad a Sûrî)

Taking a stand for the rights of all women

The current situation in North and East Syria (as of February 2026)

As we write this annual report for 2025, the situation in North and East Syria is deteriorating dramatically. Since early January, armed groups affiliated with the Syrian transitional government, together with allied Islamist militias, have been attacking areas under the control of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. The violence is directed in particular against Kurds and people who do not cooperate with jihadist groups. Executions, targeted killings, torture, and severe human rights violations have taken place in particular against women from civilian institutions and women's organizations. The violence affects many very different people. Civilian facilities and infrastructure are being systematically looted and destroyed, including the WJAS offices in Aleppo, Taqba, and Raqqa. The work of the foundation there has had to be suspended.

The attacks have led to massive displacement. Several hundred thousand people fled to Kobanê, Dêrik, and Qamişlo, where some were taken in by private households, but most are being housed in schools, mosques, and vacant buildings. The humanitarian situation is marked by extreme insecurity and an acute shortage of basic supplies and medical aid. The winter cold has further exacerbated the situation. WJAS has partially suspended its operations and focused on emergency relief and basic healthcare.



Looted office in Raqqa

Politically, the region's future remains uncertain. In early February, the Democratic Autonomous Administration reached an agreement with the transitional government on the region's integration into a centrally administered Syria. Implementation has begun, but requires the utmost vigilance given past massacres and repeated violations of the ceasefire. As in the previous negotiations in the spring of 2025, the return of internally displaced persons was also agreed upon. However, implementation has been slow to materialize and is fraught with many dangers, as binding commitments and security measures are lacking.

The situation on the ground

The year 2025 was marked by ongoing violence, political instability, and profound social upheaval in Syria. The Islamist militia Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) consolidated its influence and formed a transitional government following Assad's fall. This government sought to legitimize its power through so-called elections, which, however, took place



Distribution of relief supplies to refugees in Qamişlo in 2025

under military pressure and excluded large segments of the population and free media. They are therefore not considered credible either nationally or internationally. Only 4% of the members of parliament are women, and there is only one female minister. Women are increasingly being pushed out of public life, while religiously conservative norms (Sharia law) are being tightened and enforced with increasing violence. At the same time, in 2025, several regions saw severe attacks on religious minorities, particularly on Druze and Alawite communities, resulting in thousands of victims. Women and children in particular were abducted, and parts of the population were displaced. Minorities are under threat.

At the same time, the transitional government held talks with the Democratic Autonomous Administration regarding political agreements and the possible integration of the autonomously administered areas. These processes were marked by mistrust, as the transitional government had repeatedly broken previous agreements.

The Foundation's Activities

In 2025, WJAS continued its work, placing an even greater emphasis on rural areas. There, the organization increased the number of visits and courses it conducted.

With the opening of an office in Damascus, WJAS broke new ground, taking the first step toward expanding its work with women to other parts of Syria. After months of difficult efforts and the necessary legal procedures, WJAS finally received official approval. Since then, sewing classes and seminars on women's rights and other topics have been offered in Damascus. Women from Arab, Kurdish, and Druze backgrounds work together at the foundation.

At the beginning of the year, the emergency aid campaign also continued to support refugees who had been displaced from Minbic and Shehba as a result of the HTS advance. In particular, daily necessities such as blankets, clothing, and food were distributed.

In 2025, five female students received financial support to complete their studies.

Knowledge transfer and pedagogy:



Training on trauma-informed education in Qamişlo in March 2025

In 2025 as well, theoretical educational programs on key social issues were held at the foundation's offices and in community centers in villages, such as: women's rights, the democratic family, women's political participation, violence against women, child marriage, and polygamy, as well as on the topic of mutual acceptance and respect. There were also training programs aimed at empowering women in leadership positions, as well as courses in psychology and education.

Special educational training courses were offered to the teachers at the kindergarten in Qamişlo and to the staff at the orphanage in Kobanê. In the first few months of the year, the children at the orphanage had to be evacuated for several months and housed outside of Kobanê due to the threat of war, but they were able to return to their home.

Health Courses

In the area of health education, numerous seminars were held in community centers and villages to improve health literacy and teach preventive measures. Topics covered included infectious diseases, menstruation, anatomy and bodily functions, breast cancer, as well as uterine and ovarian cancer, influenza, personal hygiene, leishmaniasis (a skin disease

caused by malnutrition and/or contaminated (drinking water), cholera, childhood illnesses, and child nutrition. There were also seminars on: natural childbirth, breastfeeding, and the use of natural medicine. First aid courses were also offered again in 2025.

In addition, a campaign for early breast cancer detection was launched. Many women were referred for mammograms; 19 women were diagnosed with breast cancer, and treatment was initiated.



Seminar on childhood illnesses in the Dêrik area

The Ari Clinics and naturopathic centers remained open and treated women and children at virtually no cost

Economy

During the reporting period, a beauty salon offering laser hair removal treatments was opened in Aleppo. The aim was to create jobs and use the profits generated to fund WJAS's operations. This was intended to secure the organization's work in the medium term and achieve greater financial independence from donations.

A small shop selling handicrafts and clothing has opened in the center of Raqqa. The shop sold products made by foundation staff members. There were also plans to sell goods made by women participating in courses and the sewing workshop.

Due to high demand, the planning and establishment of a sewing workshop in Raqqa were expedited. Thanks to financial support from Kurdistanhilfe and Stiftung Umverteilen, the premises were renovated and materials and machinery were purchased. The opening was scheduled for February 2026. Unfortunately, Raqqa was also captured in the course of the current hostilities; the workshop and office were looted and destroyed. Work in Aleppo also had to be suspended.

As in previous years, various educational and vocational training programs were offered at all of the foundation's locations, including courses in sewing, hairdressing, computer skills, languages, and literacy. Music classes also continued.

German-Syrian Hospital Partnerships: Mobile Clinic

In 2025, the European Committee, together with WJAS in Syria and the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg-Dêrik city partnership, submitted an application to Klinikpartnerschaften, a project of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale



Computer course in Aleppo

Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). As part of the project development, a needs assessment was conducted, followed by the creation of a concept for maintaining the mobile clinic and renewing its inventory, as well as for an additional educational program that includes regular seminars on health topics and first-aid courses for women in the Dêrik area. In addition, further training for WJAS medical staff at Dêrik Hospital is to be provided using the train-the-trainer principle. The application was approved in October 2025, and implementation began immediately. Already in the first few months of the project, many purchases were made, and numerous seminars, as well as a multi-day first aid course and a training session on emergency medicine, were successfully carried out. The response was very positive, and participants benefited from the experience and the positive atmosphere.

As part of the military attacks (see above), numerous refugees from the embattled and occupied regions have also fled to Dêrik, so that the mobile clinic, in addition to its regular work, has provided urgent emergency aid and helped care for the refugees.



Continuing education in emergency medicine as part of hospital partnerships

Advocacy and Networking

In 2025, WJAS continued to participate in local and regional committees and advocate for women's interests:

- Women's Council of North and East Syria
- Syrian Women's Council
- Council of Civil Society Organizations (CSO)

- Children's Coordination in North and East Syria (Youth Office)
- Health Council of North and East Syria
- Syrian Network of Civil Society Organizations for Women-Led Civil Society Organizations
- Council of North and East Syria

In December 2025, the Foundation's annual meeting was held in Qamişlo. Nearly 40 women from the management teams of all the Foundation's locations gathered to evaluate the work done and set goals for 2026. Due to the situation described above, the discussions and plans developed at that time have had to be put on hold for the time being.



On October 19, representatives of WJAS attended the dialogue conference of the Democratic Islamic Conference in Qamişlo, which was held under the theme "No to Extremism – Yes to Diversity."

Outlook for the work in 2026

Due to the current difficult situation, the focus is now on emergency aid for refugees and traumatized people, which was not originally planned. It is not yet clear when or how the situation will ease. However, WJAS will hold collective discussions on how to structure and continue its work, and whether and to what extent existing and planned initiatives need to be adapted or modified. One thing is clear, however: the women are highly motivated and want to stay committed to the work. They want to continue their work under any circumstances. In light of current developments, this is all the more necessary. Thus, international solidarity and concrete support for the foundation's work are more important than ever.

Work of the European Committee

In 2025, the Europe Committee continued to meet regularly, both online and in person in Berlin, and maintained close contact with our friends in Qamişlo. Thanks to the rotating participation of staff members from different departments and regions in the joint video meetings, the Committee gained deeper insights into the organization of the work, the development of project content, as well as the realities of life on the ground and the effects of recent political upheavals. Various aspects of the work could be discussed and coordinated together.

In March, a delegate from the Europe Committee visited the foundation on site, which also provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions on various areas of work, particularly public relations and media relations. In November, members of Kurdistanhilfe visited the foundation.

Public Relations

The exhibition on women's institutions in northern and eastern Syria was shown in various cities, accompanied by lectures and events. In addition to the exhibition, informational events on northern and eastern Syria and the work of WJAS were also held at other locations. Information booths were set up at various festivals and markets, where many interesting conversations took place, the work of the Women's Foundation was promoted, and donations were collected. Some of these activities were carried out in cooperation with other groups.

Articles about the foundation have been published in several magazines, including *Wir Frauen*, *taz*, and the commemorative publication **20 Years of LAGG: Living and Working in Gallus and Griesheim, Frankfurt**.

The text of the "Emergency Campaign" fundraising appeal was revised, and the campaign ran through May 2025. The general WJAS flyer was also updated.

The website has been updated and expanded with new content and materials. Information about the foundation's work has also been shared via its social media accounts.

Fundraising campaigns

Donations were collected on various occasions, sometimes in cooperation with other organizations such as Heyva Sor a Kurdistane. The organization played a significant role in the THIRTYSIXFIGHTS Vol. 4 event, a solidarity martial arts event held in Berlin. The European Committee assisted with and supported the preparations and planning, coordinated organizational processes, and contributed to public relations efforts.

Following a delegation trip to northern and eastern Syria, a group of Austrian women organized a series of events in Austria and Germany to share their impressions and raise awareness about the situation of women in the region. The European Committee provided support in the form of materials and information booths. The proceeds went to women's organizations in the region, including WJAS.

The Sumud fundraising gala took place in Hamburg. WJAS was one of three projects participating.

The "Rosa Platz" at the Fusion music festival once again provided information about WJAS's work this year and collected donations to support the foundation's activities in Damascus.

Two new notebooks were designed for the 2025 Christmas campaign, featuring artwork by the Kurdish artists Aslı Filiz and Luqman Ahmad.

The Women's Foundation's applications received strong support:

- for the Operation Daylight South Tyrol Human Rights Award in May 2025
- for the nomination for the International Gender Equality Prize in Finland

The following grant applications were successfully submitted:

- to the Umverteilen Foundation (Berlin) for funding to establish the Raqqa sewing workshop
- to the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in the area of hospital partnerships for the Dêrik Mobile Clinic
- to the Doria Feminist Fund (DFF) (Lebanon)

A conference on hospital partnerships in Syria was attended, and the "Permanent Peoples' Tribunal" on Rojava in Brussels was participated in.

Partnerships and exchanges with:

- City partnership Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg – Dêrik (Berlin)
- Kurdistanhilfe e.V.
- City partnership Frankfurt-Kobanê
- City partnership Oldenburg-Raqqa e.V.
- Kinderhilfe Mesopotamien/Kölner Helfen (Köln)
- Initiative für Frieden und Hoffnung (Bielefeld)

In 2025, €148,064.13 was transferred to the foundation (through Kurdistanhilfe e.V.) to support its various projects. Of this amount, €41,000 was allocated to emergency aid.

The City partnership Frankfurt-Kobanê raised €8,500 to support the foundation's work in Kobanê.

The City partnership Berlin-Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg – Dêrik e.V. provided €10,800 to cover the salaries of the Mobile Clinic's staff.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Cologne-based organization "Kinderhilfe Mesopotamien e.V." for their tremendous support through their fundraising efforts for the Foundation's emergency aid. And an equally heartfelt thank you to the many donors who cannot be named individually here, but whose dedication plays a vital role in supporting the work of the Women's Foundation.

We greatly appreciate this solidarity!

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