

An email from the Office of Senator Janet Rice

14 October 2019

Dear Eziz and Gina,

Thank you for getting in contact with enator Rice. Janet has asked that I respond on her behalf.

Greens leader Senator Richard Di Natale has put out two statements relating to the appalling situation in Syria this week, in which he condemned in the strongest possible terms Turkey's decision to unilaterally invade Kurdish North East Syria, with the tacit support of the Trump Administration.

The Kurdish people have put their lives on the line to help defeat ISIS. They have helped the Yazidi people escape genocide. They have been persecuted for years and years across the Middle East: in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. President Trump's decision to pull his troops was an act of callous betrayal.

We have already seen civilian casualties in the last 48 hours. We know that Turkish President Erdogan wants to continue his persecution of Kurds across the border in Syria. We also know that he intends to settle up to 2 million ethnic Syrian refugees in these Kurdish areas once Kurds have been removed.

That type of behaviour has a name under international law: it is called ethnic cleansing. The Greens won't stand for it, and the Australian Government shouldn't stand for it either.

We're also concerned that Turkey and the US' actions will trigger another humanitarian crisis in a country that has already suffered so much. And as we have heard from commentators right across the political spectrum, it could very well lead to a resurgence of ISIS.

So the Greens stand in solidarity with our Kurdish friends. We call on Scott Morrison to pick up the phone and urge Donald Trump to reverse his catastrophic decision to abandon the Kurdish people. And we demand an immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Turkish forces involved in the operation.

The Leader of the Victorian Greens, Samantha Ratnam, spoke this weekend at a rally in support of the Kurds in Melbourne. Richard also intends to raise the matter in Parliament this week.

Thank you,

Rachel

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