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Open Letter to German Ambassador in Canberra

Dr Thomas Fitschen, Ambassador
119 Empire Cct,
Yarralumla ACT 2600

31 January 2020

Dear Dr Fitschen,

In 2015, when the German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed Syrian refugees fleeing the brutal Syrian regime, she was seen as a humanitarian, in stark contrast to the leaders of several countries, who closed their borders, and others who only reluctantly accepted these desperate people seeking refuge in Europe.

Against this background, Kurdish Lobby Australia (KLA) was disappointed to read reports, such as that featured in Deutsche Welle, 24/1/20, about Chancellor Merkel offering to consider supporting the plan by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to resettle people fleeing war in Idlib, in Northeast Syria. The areas in question have been occupied by Turkey since Turkey invaded on October 9, 2019. Turkey's military offensives, which have relied many on ill-disciplined Syrian mercenaries, have resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths and the displacement of at least 200,000 people, many of whom are Kurds. President Erdogan has also proposed to resettle Syrian refugees currently living in Turkey in these occupied areas.

Turkey continues to attack the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, civilians, infrastructure and property in and around the north east Syrian towns of Tel Abyad, Ras al-Ain, Al Tamr and Ain Issa, on the pretext of creating a "security zone" for refugees. In fact, this is a pretext to destroy the diverse society of North and East Syria.

While we appreciate Germany's concern for Syrian refugees, the support of one group should not be at the expense of another group. The forced transfer of Kurds from the region, replacing them with Arabs from other parts of Syria, amounts to ethnic and political cleansing, in which we are confident the German government does not want to be complicit.

Instead of collaborating with the Turkish government, we urge the German government to take action against the atrocities inflicted by Turkey on the Kurdish population and other groups living in North and East Syria – people who fought so courageously and paid a very high price in terms of deaths and injuries to defeat ISIS militarily, and who established a level of security and democratic self-governance unparalleled in other part of Syria. Unlike the Turkish government, these people have demonstrated that they are reliable partners of the West. Surely, it is time Germany and other western nations repay their debt and demonstrate practical solidarity with the people of Rojava.

Sincerely,

Eziz Bawermend
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