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KLA Statement

TURKEY BOMBS YEZIDI MEDICAL CLINIC IN NORTHERN IRAQ

This week, while mainstream media focused world attention on the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban and Afghan people desperately seeking ways to flee their country, a NATO member of nearly 70 years – Turkey – took the opportunity to intensify its ethnic cleansing campaign against Kurds. On the 17 August, Turkish forces shelled Tal Tamar, an Assyrian town in Hasakah province in north-east Syria, killing one child and a woman, and wounding 12 other people. On the same day, Turkey's drones struck a medical clinic in Sinjar (the Kurds' name for the region being Shingal), in northern Iraq killing nine people, and destroying the clinic.

According to Shingal's Autonomous Administration and Murad Ismael, President & co-founder of Sinjar Academy and co-founder of Yazda, the nine killed in the bombing of the medical clinic were eight Yezidis and one Arab. Among them were five volunteer civilian medics (one being a doctor), and four members of the local Sinjar Resistant Unit (YBS), members of the YBS having been incorporated into the Iraqi Armed Forces' as the 80th regiment of the Popular Mobilisation Units (Hashd al-Shaabi). All were survivors of the ISIS genocide of August 2014. This bombardment came a day after Turkish airstrikes killed a local Yezidi military commander and two of his bodyguards, and wounded others on their way to meet Iraqi Prime Minister, Mustafa Al Kadhimi. Prime Minister Kadhimi was visiting the region for the first time to commemorate the ISIS genocide seven years earlier.

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Targeting civilians and hospitals is barbaric, but also a war crime according to the Geneva Convention. Kurds around the world are deeply traumatised by Turkey's ongoing war crimes and support for Islamist extremist militants in northern Syria, Turkey and Iraq. We believe that Turkey acts under the protection of NATO on the pretext of fighting the Kurdistan Worker's Party, or PKK, when in fact, Turkey's intention is to expand its military and Islamist occupation of Syria and Iraq.

Kurdish Lobby Australia (KLA) calls on the Iraqi Government to protect its people from external aggression, and help those who have survived the 2014 ISIS genocide rebuild their towns and villages. We call on the Australian Parliament, the UN, NATO, European countries and the European Union, Amnesty and Human Rights Watch to condemn Turkey's crimes in northern Syria, the disputed territory of Sinjar and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Lastly, instead of issuing platitudes about preserving Iraq's sovereignty, we call on the Biden administration to block Turkey's frequent violations of northern Iraq's airspace. We call on the international community to implement a no-fly zone, if necessary, and take further action if Turkey continues to violate Iraq's sovereignty, and if Turkey continues to ignore ceasefire agreements with the US and Russia, and continues to consolidate its Islamist occupation of Afrin and other districts in northern Syria.

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Medical clinic in the Yezidi region of Shingal completely destroyed by four Turkish drone strikes on 17 August 2021 (Firat News)