

Statement of Academic Solidarity with the Universities of Rojava

Over the past few weeks, Rojava/Northern and Eastern Syria has been under constant attack by the Syrian Arab Army and the Turkish state-backed mercenaries, pushing the region to the brink of yet another genocide. As faculty, teachers, and researchers based across the world, we have built enduring relationships with universities in Rojava, collaborated on research projects, co-organized conferences and summer schools, and jointly designed and taught courses. Through these institutional ties, we have shared spaces of learning and alternative curriculum development, and we have been deeply moved by the commitment, pedagogical clarity, and politics of solidarity of the faculty, students, and staff at Rojava's universities. Our experience has shown us that Rojava's emancipatory promise has never been confined by borders and has refused the manufactured logic of religious and ethnic strife.

As academics and researchers with long-standing experience working with communities and institutions across four parts of Kurdistan and the universities in Rojava, we share the statement from the Universities in Rojava below and call on allies, colleagues in higher education institutions, academic associations, university governing bodies, and political representatives to act now:

1. Circulate and publish this statement through your networks;
2. Contact your organizations, institutions and political representatives and demand action to stop the genocide and end the siege;
3. Organize teach-ins, panels, and events to inform the public;
4. Donate to [Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê](#) and [Medico International](#) for direct humanitarian assistance;
5. Speak publicly in defense of the self-determination rights of the Kurds and other minoritized groups in the region;
6. Reject the normalization of the former al-Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) rule and demand accountability for past and ongoing human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law.

A Call for Solidarity from the Universities in Rojava/Northern and Eastern Syria

We, the faculty, students, and staff of the Universities in Rojava/Northern and Eastern Syria, send you this message as we leave our classrooms to help defend our universities, our cities, and our revolution alongside the self-defense forces. Before the autonomous administration, Raqqa (Sharq) and Kobanê had no universities. Our campuses, built in the midst of war, have reclaimed long-denied education to young people, grounding learning in women's liberation, ecology, and a democratic, communal life for the people.

For the past fifteen years in Rojava/Northern and Eastern Syria, under constant pressure and repeated attacks by imperial, sub-imperial, and colonial powers, our people have built a shared life through collective capacity. Against capitalism and patriarchy, we have worked to advance a society rooted in women's liberation, ecological life, and democratic self-rule. Under the conditions of war across the region, and against the violence and impositions of regional states and their mercenaries, we relied on our own self-defense and our own diplomacy to carve out space, and within that space, we struggled to build a life that once seemed impossible.

Today, that life is under attack. What we have built, this source of hope for oppressed peoples in the region and around the world, is being targeted from all sides by the fascist forces of the Syrian Arab Army, an al-Qaeda lineage rebranded into state authority and dressed in suits, and by mercenaries, backed by regional and global imperial powers.

We are living through an unfolding feminicide and genocide. The situation on the ground is urgent and worsening by the day. Our university buildings are full of displaced people trying to survive the winter without blankets or extra clothing. Turkish drones have targeted several places near the University of Rojava in Qamishlo during the last few days. Students in the dormitories in Qamishlo are cut off from their families in Kobanê, not knowing if their loved ones are safe, and unable to reach them.

The situation in Kobanê is particularly dire. The city is currently under siege, surrounded by Syrian Army forces on one side and the Turkish army on the other. For seven days, there has been no electricity, no access to water, and no reliable access to basic necessities. Under these conditions, learning, safety, and survival are being targeted as part of a coordinated siege.

We say this clearly to our friends, colleagues, and comrades: we will defend ourselves with everything we have. We will defend our people, our universities, and the possibility of the life we have struggled to build.

We call on you, wherever you are, to stand with Rojava. Raise your voice. Organize on your campuses, in your unions, and in your communities. Use your positions, however limited they may feel, to push for action, to demand accountability, and to refuse silence. Strengthen the networks of solidarity that make resistance possible. Stand up for the revolutionary aims of freedom, women's liberation, ecological life, and democratic communal life. Your solidarity is part of our self-defense, and it can help shift the balance and prevent yet another genocide in the region.

January 22, 2025

Universities in Rojava/Northern and Eastern Syria

Students, Faculty and Staff

