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Press Release

After the liberation of Al-Baghouz and the military fall of ISIS, the war effort against ISIS entered a new phase. Thousands of ISIS detainees and their families as well as the sleeper cells have posed serious challenges for the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES).

We, as AANES, believe that the children need to get out of the radical atmosphere in the camps, and receive proper rehabilitation to live a normal life. Therefore, we handed over orphaned children to official bodies from their countries based on our humanitarian approach. However, the number of repatriation cases is still low.

As for women and their children, we, from the very beginning, have followed and abided by the relevant laws that do not permit separating the mothers from their children, except in some very special humanitarian cases, and at the request of some mothers after getting their written consent. We have called on the international community on several occasions to repatriate women who were victims of ISIS and who we do not have any proof against. The response was insufficient, and some countries insisted to repatriate the children without the mothers.

With regard to ISIS fighters, who belong to more than 50 countries, the AANES submitted a request, on March 25, 2019, to the international community and the countries that have ISIS members in our custody, to establish an international tribunal or hybrid domestic-international tribunal to try them in accordance with international laws. Until now, we have not received enough cooperation and response. As for the Syrians, they are being tried according to the local laws and procedures, but the foreigners constitute a burden, and we need the cooperation of their countries and the international community.

The AANES suffer from huge difficulties to accommodate ISIS fighters and their families. This file constitutes a great burden on us, which we cannot bear on our own, and the international community should assume its responsibilities to help us address this file. Also, ISIS is still organized in terms of ideology in our region, and there is clear support for ISIS through the cells who receive support from the Turkish occupied regions.

The AANES rejects the claims that ISIS fighters are illegally detained in our region, as we repeatedly called on establishing a tribunal to prosecute them. The AANES welcomes the cooperation with the international community on the issues of repatriating the children, solving the issue of women, and making reparation for the victims.

In conclusion, we affirm that we welcome legal cooperation and international expertise in order to provide support for the tribunal, which we want to be hybrid domestic-international. We request international cooperation with us to resolve this issue, which does not concern us only, but is the responsibility of the entire world. We reiterate that our appeals did not receive the necessary response, and there is an exacerbation of the situation, especially in the camps, which creates huge difficulties for us.

Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria

Ain Issa

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