



**FORUM:** Security Council

**QUESTION OF:** Mediating the military conflict between Turkey and the Kurdish militia in the Afrin Region

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**POSITION:** Vice-President of the Security Council

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**INTRODUCTION:**

The Kurdish people are considered an indigenous folk that has its roots in a roughly defined region around Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. They have their own culture, language and historical background. However, there is one thing that they are missing and trying to obtain through irredentist claims: A state of their own. Ever since Kurds have been trying to reach the status of autonomy, the Turkish government has fiercely opposed them, denying their existence and even banning words like “Kurds”, “Kurdistan or “Kurdish”, prohibiting their language and banning political parties that represent Kurdish interests.

The Kurds have managed to embrace their opportunity and gain control over large regions in the Syrian Civil War, which started in 2012. The captured areas are located in north-eastern and northern Iraq (state of affairs: April 2018).

**SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM:**

The so called “Operation Olive Branch” is a military offensive launched by the Turkish government in January 2018. The offensive is said to be targeted against the Kurdish-led



Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria, the People's Protection Units (YPG) and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which have positions surrounding the city of Afrin, which is located in Syria. After only two months, on March 18, the Turkish forces have managed to take control over most of the region, including the city of Afrin. The Turkish President Erdogan announced further pushes into to the town of Manbij, which is in control of US-backed SDF forces. Thus, U.S. Generals have stated that they will aggressively respond, if the announced course of events happens to take place. Those who resist the military offensive have been threatened by Erdogan, who exclaimed a "heavy price" for all those opposing him. This conflict has already caused thousands of casualties and the number of refugees fleeing from the Afrin region due to the conflict has risen up to hundreds of thousands in March 2018 already. The Turkish military is furthermore being accused of committing several war crimes, such as indiscriminately shooting refugees and civilians, mutilation of a female corpse and the use of chemical gas. This is yet to be confirmed.

When approaching possible solutions to this conflict, it is important to include the Republic of Turkey into discussions, since it is considered to be the main source of the conflict.

Consider any possible options that might be worthwhile in order to achieve a safer environment for the remaining people in the respective area. Concluding an armistice in order to initiate diplomatic discussion would be ideal, nevertheless this is a target difficult to obtain. Seeing that the Turkish President Erdogan has threatened to expand his offense towards the city of Manbij, it is especially important prevent further escalations and forestall this action since it would result in an even bigger conflict with the U.S. Army.

