

- November 26, 2019

CUPE 3906 condemns invasion of northern Syria by the government of Turkey. Turkish armed forces have been bombarding Kurdish regions in northern Syria since October 9th, causing many civilian casualties and displacements. These actions are illegal and risk developing into genocidal tactics, and as such cannot be ignored or treated frivolously by the international labour community.

CUPE 3906 echoes the serious concerns of the international labour movement and human rights organizations such as the European Public Service Union (EPSU) – which includes the Turkish trade unions KESK and DISK – about the disaster and humanitarian catastrophe in the making if the invasion is not stopped immediately.

This military invasion is not only illegal, but also extremely dangerous for the region as a whole. The immediate casualties of this invasion will continue to be the Kurdish communities of northern Syria – including Rojava – and, more broadly, the working class and ordinary people of Syria, Turkey, and neighbouring countries.

It is important to emphasize that KESK, DISK and other trade unions in Turkey have made it clear that “This is not the time of silence.” These groups assert that the main problems in Turkey are the record-breaking unemployment, incredibly high levels of poverty, the destruction of democracy and justice, and the discriminatory, polarizing and marginalizing policies that stand together against the hope of living in peace. As EPSU reported, “The Turkish government has attempted to silence critical voices speaking out against war in the past, like those of doctors, the Academics for Peace and union and civil society leaders. People were arrested for their critique.”

CUPE 3906 reiterates the international labour movement’s concerns that this invasion could undoubtedly lead to ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Kurds, as well as a resurgence of ISIS in the region. We condemn these actions as not only unlawful but disgraceful and call on the government of Turkey to stop the invasion of northern Syria and unconditionally withdraw Turkish armed forces from the entire region. We also call on CUPE National, the Government of Canada, the United Nations, and all labour and other concerned organizations and individuals to strongly condemn this military invasion and take any necessary steps to help stop the war.

CUPE 3906 also calls on the NDP to return to its former position in favour of pulling Canada out of NATO, as Canada's NATO membership makes Canada complicit in the atrocities committed by the Turkish army, the second largest in NATO, as well as the atrocities committed by the US military all over the globe.

Sincerely,



Nathan Todd
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