



# Centre Europe - Tiers Monde

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## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*52<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council  
(27 février – 4 avril 2023)*

### **Item 4 : Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

#### **Oral intervention of the CETIM**

*Check against delivery*

#### **Interactive dialogue with the International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic**

Mister President,

CETIM is highly concerned about the human rights situation in North and East Syria, particularly following the military occupation lead by Turkish forces and Turkish-backed militias in 2018 and 2019. Since then, the civilian population of this region lives under constant repression, bombings, extra-judicial killings through the use of drones and other forms of violence. As a result, tens of thousands of civilians are leaving their homes to find a safe place in neighbouring countries or in Europe.

Furthermore, ethnic oppression has become a concerning issue in the framework of the on-going conflict, as reported by direct testimonies from partner organizations on the field, in particular the Afrin Human Rights Organizations.

In fact, using the humanitarian emergency in the context of the Syrian civil war and of the devastating earthquake as a pretext, and taking advantage of many people fleeing the country – in particular those from most oppressed ethnic groups – Turkey and foreign related entities are promoting new settlements projects to settle Arab and Turkmens families in the region.

For example, *Qatar Charity* implemented several settlement projects for millions of Syrian internally displaced people, namely Al Rayyan Model City and Dohat Al-Khair City, both in the Syrian-Turkish border.

These demographic changes are leading to a concerning switch in the ethnic equation of the autonomous region of North and East Syria, increasing the social and political tensions, as well as ethnic oppression.

We would like to ask the International Commission of Inquiry if they are aware of this on-going situation and what could be done to prevent this kind of demographic strategies for ethnic purposes? Finally, we urge the Commission to investigate and to call on Turkey to put an end to the illegal military occupation.

Thank you very much for your attention.

*Geneva, March 21, 2023*