

Documentary: Rojava in Syria, between compromise and utopia

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In mid-2012 the previously almost forgotten Kurds suddenly emerged as a potential game-changer in Syria's civil war when in an attempt to consolidate its increasingly desperate position the Assad government abruptly withdrew its troops from the major Kurdish areas in Syria. The Kurds in Syria had suddenly won autonomy, a situation that has huge implications for neighbouring Turkey and the near-independent Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq. Indeed, their precipitous rise may prove a tipping-point that alters the boundaries imposed on the Middle East by the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916.

At a time when Trump has decided to withdraw his troops from Syria and with Turkey threatening to invade Manbij and further, 19-minute video by Chris Den Hond and Mireille Court gives some background to the current crisis in the North of Syria. It tells the story of the political project of the Syrian Democratic Forces who controls 30% of the Syrian territory and defeated the Islamic State. "We want a decentralised Syria

with a large autonomy for the regions," says Ilham Ahmed, head of the delegation that went to Damascus for negotiations. "The invasion of Afrin by Turkey is a trauma", says Hikmet Habib, who says that the Free Syrian Army doesn't exist anymore and that Turkey is today a haven for jihadists. The people interviewed in this video explain that the alliance between Kurds, Arabs and other components of the Syrian society strengthened in the last years to create a democratic federal Syria, a far cry from a Turkish or Arabic centralised nation-state. Will this democratic experience survive against all the odds?