



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Afrin Statement

I'm sorry I cannot be with you today.

What is happening in Afrin is clearly against international law with Turkish troops putting hundreds of thousands of people at risk.

Turkey claims that its so-called Operation Olive Branch seeks to remove what it sees as the Kurdish threat from Afrin, but this invasion is not legally legitimate and it is not justified.

My concern, and the concern of the Labour Party, is the protection of innocent civilians and that access is granted for humanitarian aid. Several hundred, if not thousands, of Kurds have died with Turkish forces using artillery and other explosive weapons to target civilian areas. The use of artillery and explosive weapons against residential areas is clearly prohibited by international humanitarian law.

Given that Turkish forces have now taken control of Afrin I am concerned that there will be widespread atrocities as they seek to root out those they call terrorists. Access needs to be granted for humanitarian aid and human rights monitors ensuring that reprisals and attacks on Kurdish civilians do not happen.

Now more than ever the UK Government has to step up its support for the humanitarian response, both immediate humanitarian aid and long-term support

Those in the Kurdish community across the UK are watching, and they deserve to know that the UK is doing absolutely everything we can to help civilians in Afrin.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Ashworth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jonathan Ashworth

Member of Parliament for Leicester South