

# **Indirect Influence: An Analysis of Egypt's Connection with Syria's Afrin Region Before 2010**

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides an exhaustive analysis of the connection between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Afrin region of Syria in the period preceding 2010. The central thesis posits that this connection was not one of direct bilateral engagement but of significant, albeit indirect, influence, mediated entirely through Egypt's state-to-state relations with Syria and its broader geopolitical strategies. This influence manifested through three distinct mechanisms, each corresponding to a specific era of Egyptian leadership. First, under Gamal Abdel Nasser, the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) from 1958 to 1961 established an ideological and administrative precedent for the suppression of Kurdish political identity. The UAR's pan-Arabist doctrine and its policy of dissolving all political parties directly targeted nascent Kurdish organizations and, more consequentially, its collapse catalyzed a reactionary wave of Arab nationalism within Syria that led to discriminatory policies with lasting effects. Second, the era of Anwar Sadat (1970-1981) was characterized by strategic disengagement. Sadat's realignment of Egyptian foreign policy towards the United States and a separate peace with Israel resulted in a complete diplomatic rupture with Syria, rendering the Kurdish issue entirely absent from Cairo's strategic calculus. Finally, under Hosni Mubarak (1981-2011), Egypt's role shifted to that of a pragmatic regional stabilizer. Mubarak's pivotal diplomatic intervention during the 1998 Turkey-Syria crisis, which centered on Syria's hosting of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), fundamentally altered the geopolitical landscape for Kurdish political movements in Syria. By forcing the expulsion of the PKK's leadership, Egypt's mediation inadvertently catalyzed the creation of the PKK's Syrian affiliate, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), which would later become the dominant political force in Afrin. Throughout these decades, Egypt's actions were consistently dictated by its national interests, its relationship with Damascus, and its perception of regional security threats, rather than by any specific policy concerning Syria's Kurdish minority or the Afrin region itself.

## **The Syrian Kurdish Context: Afrin Before 2010**

## **A Homeland in the Northwest: Historical, Demographic, and Cultural Profile**

The Afrin district (Kurdish: Efrîn), located in the northwestern corner of the Aleppo Governorate, represents a historically and demographically distinct Kurdish heartland within Syria.<sup>1</sup> Its history is ancient, having been a crossroads for numerous empires, from the Syro-Hittites and Romans to the Ottomans.<sup>1</sup> While Kurdish settlement in the valley dates back to at least the 16th and 17th centuries, the region became so identified with its Kurdish inhabitants that Ottoman officials referred to it as "The Kurdish City".<sup>1</sup> Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the drawing of the Syria-Turkey border in 1923, Afrin was incorporated into French-administered Syria, detached from its historical provincial capital of Kilis.<sup>3</sup>

Demographically, Afrin stood apart from other Kurdish-populated areas of Syria. Before the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, the district was described as "homogeneously Kurdish," with some estimates placing the Kurdish population as high as 98 percent.<sup>4</sup> A demographic map from before 2011 confirms an overwhelming Kurdish majority across the district's sub-districts and villages, with small, localized Arab and Turkmen communities primarily situated in the eastern part of the district near Azaz.<sup>6</sup> The pre-war population of the district was estimated to be around 200,000, based on the 2004 Syrian census.<sup>4</sup> This demographic homogeneity is a crucial factor in understanding its history, as it largely spared Afrin from the specific demographic engineering projects, such as the "Arab Belt," that were implemented with greater intensity in the more ethnically mixed Jazira region to the east.<sup>8</sup> The region's cultural and economic life was intrinsically linked to the land, particularly its ancient olive groves, which have been cultivated for what some archaeologists believe is more than 4,000 years.<sup>1</sup> Olive oil farming was not merely an economic activity but a cornerstone of Afrin's identity and its primary contribution to the wider Syrian economy, notably as a source for Aleppo's famous soap industry.<sup>1</sup> This deep-rooted connection to the land and its distinct demographic profile created a strong sense of local identity that would later clash with the centralizing and Arabist policies of the post-independence Syrian state.

## **Life Under Ba'athist Rule: State-Sanctioned Arabization and Suppression**

The rise of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party to power in Syria in 1963 marked the beginning of a systematic and decades-long campaign of state-sanctioned suppression against the country's Kurdish minority, a reality that defined life in Afrin.<sup>9</sup> The Ba'athist ideology, a potent mix of pan-Arabism, socialism, and anti-imperialism, recognized only Arabs as full citizens of the Syrian state and viewed non-Arab identities as a threat to national unity.<sup>10</sup> This ideology was translated into a comprehensive set of discriminatory policies designed to erase Kurdish

cultural and political identity.<sup>1</sup>

Across Syria, including in Afrin, the Kurdish language was banned from public schools, and privately sponsored Kurdish schools were forbidden.<sup>1</sup> It was illegal to register children with Kurdish names, and businesses were prohibited from having non-Arabic names.<sup>9</sup> Cultural celebrations, most notably the Kurdish New Year (Newroz), were often banned or violently suppressed.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the state actively pursued a policy of geographic Arabization, systematically replacing Kurdish place names with Arabic ones.<sup>1</sup> This cultural suppression was enforced by a pervasive security apparatus that routinely arrested, detained, and tortured Kurdish political and cultural activists on charges of separatism or "weakening national sentiment".<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International documented a consistent pattern of persecution, arbitrary detention, and abuse of Kurdish activists throughout the period before 2010.<sup>14</sup>

The most infamous of the Ba'athist Arabization policies was the "Arab Belt" (al-hizam al-arabi), a project conceived in the 1960s and implemented in the 1970s. This policy aimed to create a 10-15 kilometer-deep strip along the Turkish and Iraqi borders populated by Arab settlers, thereby severing the geographic and cultural continuity between Syrian Kurds and their brethren in neighboring countries.<sup>19</sup> The project involved the expropriation of Kurdish-owned land and the forced displacement of thousands of Kurds, particularly in the Jazira region.<sup>9</sup> While Afrin's demographic makeup meant it was not a primary target for the large-scale resettlement component of the Arab Belt, the ideology underpinning this project informed all state policy and created a climate of pervasive discrimination and fear that was acutely felt in the district.<sup>4</sup>

This environment of repression was compounded by a calculated dual policy pursued by the regime of Hafez al-Assad. While the state brutally suppressed any expression of Syrian Kurdish political aspiration, it simultaneously provided sanctuary, training, and logistical support to *foreign* Kurdish militant groups that served its geopolitical interests.<sup>22</sup> Most significantly, from the early 1980s until 1998, Syria hosted the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant group fighting the Turkish state.<sup>23</sup> This was not a contradiction but a pragmatic, if cynical, strategy. The Ba'athist state's policy was not monolithically "anti-Kurdish"; rather, it was vehemently "anti-Syrian Kurdish autonomy" while being "pro-instrumentalization of transnational Kurdish militancy." This distinction is critical, as it explains how a powerful organization like the PKK could establish a deep presence and recruitment network within Syria's Kurdish communities, including in Afrin, even as the local population suffered under state repression. The Assad regime weaponized the PKK for its foreign policy objectives—namely, to gain leverage over Turkey in disputes over water and territory—while ensuring the group did not empower a domestic Kurdish movement that could challenge the Syrian state itself.<sup>25</sup>

## The Era of Union: Nasser, Pan-Arabism, and the United

# **Arab Republic (1958-1961)**

## **The Pan-Arabist Mandate: Centralized Governance and the Dissolution of Pluralism**

The formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) in February 1958, a political union between Egypt and Syria, was the zenith of the pan-Arab nationalist movement led by Egypt's charismatic president, Gamal Abdel Nasser.<sup>27</sup> The initiative for the union came from Syrian Ba'athist leaders, who, along with elements of the Syrian military, feared a potential communist takeover in Damascus and saw an alliance with Nasser as a powerful countermeasure.<sup>30</sup> Pan-Arab sentiment was already strong in Syria, and Nasser was a heroic figure across the Arab world following the 1956 Suez Crisis.<sup>28</sup>

However, Nasser, initially hesitant, agreed to the union only on his own strict terms, which fundamentally reshaped the Syrian state.<sup>33</sup> His conditions were non-negotiable: a single president (himself), a single parliament dominated by Egyptians, and, most critically, the complete dissolution of all political parties in Syria, a measure he had already implemented in Egypt after the 1952 revolution.<sup>32</sup> This policy effectively erased Syria's complex and pluralistic political landscape, replacing it with a highly centralized, authoritarian model governed from Cairo.<sup>28</sup> Syrian political and military leaders felt they had little choice but to accept, viewing the merger as a necessary step to prevent communist ascendancy and maintain stability.<sup>31</sup> The UAR was thus born not as a partnership of equals, but as an absorption of Syria into an Egyptian-dominated political structure, a reality that quickly led to Syrian disillusionment.<sup>28</sup>

## **Direct Impact on Kurdish Political Life: Suppression of the KDPS**

The UAR's blanket ban on political parties had an immediate and devastating impact on the nascent Syrian Kurdish political movement. The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS), which had been founded just one year prior in 1957 with the modest goals of promoting Kurdish cultural rights, democratic change, and economic progress, was driven underground.<sup>13</sup> The party was never legally recognized and was subjected to severe suppression by the UAR's security apparatus.<sup>13</sup> A major crackdown in 1960 saw many of its leaders arrested, charged with separatism, and imprisoned.<sup>13</sup> Under the UAR, the mere possession of Kurdish-language publications or music became sufficient grounds for detention and interrogation.<sup>13</sup>

This policy, while applied to all Syrian political formations, had a disproportionate effect on minority groups like the Kurds. The pan-Arabist ideology of the UAR was inherently assimilationist, viewing any non-Arab political or cultural expression as a potential threat to

the grand project of Arab unity.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, while Nasser's decree was not explicitly "anti-Kurdish per se," its practical effect was the criminalization of organized Kurdish political life.<sup>36</sup> It established a state precedent that equated Kurdish political aspirations with separatism and treason, a precedent that would be inherited and intensified by the subsequent Ba'athist regime. For the Kurds of Afrin and elsewhere, the UAR period represented the first systematic, state-level effort to erase their distinct political identity under the banner of a unifying, but ultimately exclusionary, Arab nationalism.

## **Agrarian Reform and Its Disparate Consequences**

Shortly after the union's formation, the UAR government enacted the Agrarian Reform Law No. 161 of 1958.<sup>40</sup> This sweeping legislation was presented as a socialist measure designed to dismantle the power of large, semi-feudal landowners by setting a maximum limit on land ownership and redistributing the excess to landless peasants.<sup>41</sup> However, the law's implementation in Syria's Kurdish regions, including Afrin, was fraught with complexities and often resulted in discriminatory outcomes.

The centralized UAR administration, driven by a pan-Arabist worldview, often failed to recognize or respect traditional forms of Kurdish land tenure and ownership, which did not always align with formal state registries.<sup>42</sup> More explicitly, the law was structured in a way that disadvantaged stateless Kurds, who were rendered ineligible to receive any of the redistributed land.<sup>41</sup> This created a situation where Kurdish farmers could have their lands expropriated by the state but were legally barred from benefiting from the redistribution process. While the most aggressive and demographically motivated land confiscations for projects like the "Arab Belt" would occur under the Ba'athist regime in the following decades, the UAR's Agrarian Reform Law laid the crucial legal and administrative groundwork.<sup>21</sup> It established the state's right to intervene massively in land ownership in Kurdish regions and created a system that inherently discriminated against the most vulnerable segments of the Kurdish population. Some reports from the period even indicate that Nasser's government considered a plan to transfer 1.5 million landless Egyptian farmers to settle in Syria's fertile Jazira province, a clear precursor to the Arabization settlement schemes that would later be implemented by the Ba'ath party.<sup>20</sup>

The UAR's brief existence and its ultimate failure in 1961 did not erase the impact of its policies. Instead, it created a political environment in Syria where Arab nationalism became a competitive and increasingly hardline ideology. When Syria seceded, Nasser waged a fierce propaganda campaign against the new "secessionist" regime, accusing its leaders of being enemies of Arabism and agents of imperialism and Israel.<sup>36</sup> To counter these accusations and re-assert its own Arab nationalist credentials, the new Syrian government felt compelled to demonstrate that it was even more committed to the Arab cause than Nasser had been. This reactionary impulse led directly to one of the most catastrophic events in the history of Syria's Kurds: the special census of 1962 in the Jazira province.<sup>9</sup> This census was deliberately designed to disenfranchise the Kurdish population; those who could not prove residence in

Syria prior to 1945 were stripped of their citizenship.<sup>19</sup> As a result, approximately 120,000 Kurds were rendered stateless overnight, becoming "foreigners" (*ajanib*) in their own homeland, denied basic rights to property, education, legal marriage, and travel documents.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Egypt's connection to Afrin during this period was not merely one of direct suppression under the UAR. More profoundly, the UAR project and its acrimonious collapse acted as an ideological catalyst. Nasser's Egyptian-led foreign policy initiative indirectly triggered a dramatic and permanent degradation of the legal and political status of all Syrian Kurds, including the fully-citizen population of Afrin, who now lived in a state that had officially codified discrimination against their ethnic kin.

## **The Era of Disengagement: Sadat's Realignment and the Kurdish Question (1970-1981)**

### **From Confrontation to Peace: The Camp David Accords and the Severing of the Alliance**

The presidency of Anwar Sadat marked a seismic shift in Egyptian foreign policy, representing a definitive break from the pan-Arab, anti-imperialist doctrine of his predecessor, Gamal Abdel Nasser.<sup>45</sup> Upon assuming power, Sadat embarked on a pragmatic and transformative path aimed at reclaiming Egyptian sovereignty and revitalizing its economy.<sup>47</sup> The cornerstone of this new direction was a strategic realignment away from the Soviet Union and towards a close alliance with the United States.<sup>27</sup>

The final act of the once-powerful Egypt-Syria military alliance was the October War of 1973. While initially launched as a coordinated offensive with Syria to liberate territories occupied by Israel since 1967, Sadat viewed the war as a political tool to break the diplomatic stalemate and pave the way for negotiations.<sup>27</sup> His subsequent diplomatic overtures, culminating in his historic 1977 visit to Jerusalem and the U.S.-brokered Camp David Accords in 1978, led to the signing of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979.<sup>45</sup> This separate peace with Israel, achieved without prior consultation with other Arab states, was seen as a profound betrayal by Syria and the wider Arab world.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, Egypt was suspended from the Arab League, and its diplomatic relations with Syria were severed, plunging the two nations into a period of deep hostility and mutual suspicion.<sup>27</sup>

### **A Narrowing Foreign Policy Focus: "Egypt First"**

Sadat's foreign policy was governed by a principle of "Egypt First," prioritizing tangible

national interests over ideological commitments.<sup>46</sup> The primary objectives were the full recovery of the Sinai Peninsula from Israeli occupation, which was achieved through the peace treaty, and the economic reconstruction of Egypt.<sup>45</sup> To this end, he launched the *Infitah* or "Openness" policy, which dismantled Nasser's socialist controls and encouraged private and foreign investment.<sup>45</sup>

This inward-looking focus meant that broader pan-Arab causes, which had been central to Nasser's identity, were largely abandoned.<sup>46</sup> While the Camp David Accords included a framework for Palestinian autonomy, Sadat's willingness to proceed without securing a clear path to a Palestinian state was a major point of contention with other Arab leaders, including Syria's Hafez al-Assad.<sup>27</sup> Cairo's diplomatic energy was consumed by the complex negotiations with Israel and the cultivation of its new strategic partnership with Washington, leaving little capacity or appetite for engagement in other regional conflicts or issues that did not directly impact Egypt's core interests.<sup>49</sup>

## **The Kurdish Issue as a Non-Factor: A Connection of Absence**

During the entirety of Anwar Sadat's presidency, the connection between Egypt and the Afrin region can be most accurately described as a "connection of absence." With diplomatic ties to Damascus completely severed and Cairo's strategic focus fixed on the Sinai, Israel, and the United States, the internal affairs of Syria were of no interest to Egyptian policymakers. The plight of Syria's Kurdish minority, including the population of Afrin, did not register on Cairo's foreign policy agenda.

This period is significant precisely because of this void. While the Syrian Ba'athist state continued and, in many ways, intensified its policies of Arabization and suppression throughout the 1970s—implementing the "Arab Belt" project and cracking down on any signs of Kurdish dissent—Egypt was a hostile and distant actor with no leverage, influence, or interest in the matter.<sup>1</sup> The ideological fervor of the UAR era had been replaced by a cold, pragmatic realism. For the Kurds of Afrin, this meant that one of the primary external forces that had shaped the political context of the early 1960s was now entirely removed from the equation. Their struggle for cultural and political rights continued solely within the oppressive framework of the Syrian state, without any external influence, positive or negative, emanating from Cairo.

## **The Era of Pragmatism: Mubarak, Regional Stability, and the PKK Factor (1981-2010)**

### **The Damascus-PKK Axis: Syria's Strategic Use of a Non-State Actor**

The foreign policy of Hosni Mubarak, who succeeded Sadat in 1981, was characterized by a cautious pragmatism aimed at restoring Egypt's central role in the Arab world while maintaining the peace with Israel and the strategic relationship with the United States.<sup>27</sup> A key objective of this policy was the promotion of regional stability, positioning Cairo as an indispensable mediator in interstate conflicts.<sup>51</sup> This role would prove crucial in a crisis that directly impacted the geopolitical environment for Syria's Kurds.

The context for this crisis was the long-standing strategic relationship between Hafez al-Assad's Syria and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Following the 1980 military coup in Turkey, which dismantled the PKK's infrastructure there, Syria provided the organization and its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, with a vital safe haven.<sup>24</sup> For nearly two decades, Damascus allowed the PKK to establish its political headquarters and training camps in Syria and the Syrian-controlled Beqaa Valley in Lebanon.<sup>25</sup> This was a calculated geopolitical move by Assad, who used the PKK as a potent instrument of proxy warfare against Turkey.<sup>22</sup> The PKK's insurgency served as leverage for Damascus in its long-standing disputes with Ankara over the territorial claim to Hatay province and, more critically, the allocation of water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which Turkey controlled upstream.<sup>23</sup> The PKK's presence was deeply embedded in Syria's Kurdish regions, including Afrin, which became a significant source of recruitment for the organization's fight against the Turkish state.<sup>25</sup>

## **The 1998 Adana Crisis: Egypt's Pivotal Mediation**

By the late 1990s, Turkey's patience with Syria's support for the PKK had exhausted. Buoyed by a new and powerful strategic military alliance with Israel, which effectively encircled Syria, Ankara felt emboldened to force a confrontation.<sup>57</sup> In September 1998, Turkey amassed a significant military force on the Syrian border and issued a clear ultimatum to Damascus: expel Öcalan and shut down all PKK activities, or face a full-scale invasion.<sup>23</sup> The threat was credible and plunged the region into its most dangerous crisis in years, with the prospect of a major war between two of the Middle East's largest armies looming.

It was at this critical juncture that President Hosni Mubarak intervened. Acting swiftly to de-escalate the situation, Mubarak engaged in shuttle diplomacy, traveling between Ankara and Damascus to mediate a peaceful resolution.<sup>23</sup> Egypt's diplomatic strategy was carefully calibrated. Mubarak's government framed the issue not as a matter of Kurdish rights or the PKK's political nature, but as a grave threat to regional stability.<sup>52</sup> In his discussions with Turkish leaders, Mubarak emphasized that a military attack on Syria would be viewed as an attack on the entire Arab world, shattering regional peace and damaging Turkish interests across the Middle East.<sup>59</sup> Simultaneously, he conveyed to Assad that Syria's position was untenable and that a diplomatic solution was the only viable path forward.

The Egyptian mediation proved successful. Faced with overwhelming military pressure from Turkey and diplomatic pressure from Egypt, Hafez al-Assad capitulated. In October 1998, Syria



and Turkey signed the Adana Protocol, an agreement in which Syria acceded to all of Turkey's demands.<sup>26</sup> Damascus officially designated the PKK as a terrorist organization, pledged to close all of its camps, and, most consequentially, expelled Abdullah Öcalan from the country.<sup>28</sup> This expulsion set in motion a chain of events that led directly to Öcalan's capture by Turkish intelligence in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 1999.<sup>3</sup>

The resolution of the Adana crisis was a significant, if paradoxical, moment in the history of Egypt's connection to the Syrian Kurds. Egypt's primary motivation was the prevention of a war between two regional powers, a goal rooted in its own national security interests and its desire to maintain its status as a key regional arbiter.<sup>52</sup> The Kurdish question itself, whether the political aspirations of the PKK or the rights of the Kurdish population in Afrin, was entirely incidental to Cairo's calculations. The PKK was viewed purely through a security lens as the *casus belli* that needed to be removed to avert a catastrophic conflict.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, the outcome of this Egyptian-brokered deal had profound and lasting consequences for the Kurdish political landscape in Syria. The expulsion of Öcalan and the dismantling of the PKK's official infrastructure in Syria represented a seismic shock to a movement that had been deeply embedded in the country for nearly two decades. This forced the organization to fundamentally restructure its presence and strategy within Syria. This strategic adaptation led directly to the formation of its Syrian affiliate, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), in 2003.<sup>19</sup>

The PYD was created by PKK members to carry on the movement's ideological and organizational work within Syria under a new, localized banner. By successfully mediating the Adana crisis, Egypt, therefore, acted as an unwitting architect of the next phase of Kurdish political organization in Syria. A diplomatic intervention aimed at preserving the state-centric regional order inadvertently catalyzed the creation of the very political party that would, less than a decade later, come to establish autonomous rule in Afrin and other Kurdish regions following the collapse of Syrian state authority in 2012. Egypt's most significant connection to Afrin in the pre-2010 era is thus a powerful illustration of the law of unintended consequences in international diplomacy.

## **Conclusion: A Relationship Defined by Distance and Geopolitics**

The connection between Egypt and the Syrian region of Afrin before 2010 was never direct, but was consistently shaped by the overarching dynamics of Egypt's foreign policy and its state-to-state relationship with Syria. The analysis across the distinct eras of Egyptian leadership reveals a pattern in which the fate of Syria's Kurds, including the population of Afrin, was an incidental consequence of Cairo's pursuit of its own strategic interests. The relationship was one of indirect influence, varying in nature from ideological and suppressive to non-existent, and finally to transformative through pragmatic crisis management.

Under Gamal Abdel Nasser, the connection was forged through the powerful ideology of pan-Arabism. The United Arab Republic, an Egyptian-led project, imposed a centralized,

assimilationist model on Syria that criminalized all non-Arab political expression. The suppression of the KDPS and the implementation of discriminatory land reforms established a precedent for state repression. More profoundly, the UAR's collapse and Nasser's subsequent political attacks on the new Syrian regime catalyzed a reactionary hardening of Arab nationalism in Damascus, leading directly to the 1-962 census that rendered thousands of Kurds stateless. In this era, Egyptian policy indirectly created the political and legal foundations for decades of systematic discrimination against all Syrian Kurds.

The era of Anwar Sadat represented a stark reversal, resulting in a "connection of absence."

Sadat's strategic pivot towards the United States and peace with Israel led to a complete diplomatic rupture with Syria. With Cairo's focus narrowed to its own national interests, the internal situation in Syria, including the intensified Ba'athist Arabization campaigns of the 1970s, fell completely outside the purview of Egyptian foreign policy. During this period, Egypt exerted no influence, positive or negative, on the conditions faced by the people of Afrin.

Finally, under Hosni Mubarak, the connection became one of high-stakes, pragmatic diplomacy. Mubarak's successful mediation of the 1998 Adana crisis was arguably the single most significant Egyptian action to affect the Syrian Kurdish sphere. Driven by a desire to prevent a regional war and maintain stability, Egypt's intervention was indifferent to the Kurdish cause itself. However, by forcing Syria to expel the PKK's leadership, Cairo's diplomacy acted as an unwitting catalyst for a fundamental reorganization of the Kurdish political movement in Syria. This led directly to the founding of the PYD, the party that would eventually establish de facto rule in Afrin.

Ultimately, Egypt's engagement with the Syrian political arena was always conducted at the level of the state. Whether uniting with it, breaking from it, or mediating for it, Cairo's policies were consistently framed by its relationship with Damascus. The Kurds of Afrin were never a subject of Egyptian foreign policy, but they were, at critical junctures, profoundly affected by its consequences.

**Table 1: Summary of Egyptian Foreign Policy and its Indirect Implications for Syrian Kurds (1958-2010)**

Era / President	Dominant Foreign Policy Doctrine	Egypt-Syria Relations	Key Actions Affecting the Syrian/Kurdish Sphere	Nature of Connection to Afrin/Syrian Kurds
<b>Gamal Abdel Nasser</b> (1958-1970)	Pan-Arabism / Anti-Imperialism	Political Union (UAR, 1958-61); Hostility post-secession	Dissolution of all political parties (incl. KDPS); Discriminatory agrarian reform; UAR collapse catalyzed 1962 statelessness census.	Indirect Ideological & Political Suppression
<b>Anwar Sadat</b> (1970-1981)	"Egypt First" / US Alignment	Hostility / Diplomatic	Severing of diplomatic ties;	Strategic Neglect / Connection of

		Isolation	Separate peace with Israel (Camp David Accords).	Absence
<b>Hosni Mubarak</b> (1981-2010)	Regional Stability / Pragmatism	Cautious Rapprochement / Mediation	Successful mediation of the 1998 Adana crisis, forcing Syria to expel the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.	Indirect Geopolitical Reshaping

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