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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **General Newroz Ahmed** Commander-in-Chief of the Women’s Protection Units (YPJ)
Qamishli, north-east Syria

**Email:** **Ypj\_Womensdefend@protonmail.com** **Twitter/X:** [**https://twitter.com/YPJDefense**](https://twitter.com/YPJDefense)

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Dear General Newroz Ahmed,

As a member/sympathizer of ACAT-Switzerland, I am writing to you to express my deep concern concerning the situation of **Fidaa Mohammad Qassem.** According to my information, the English student was forced to join the Women’s Protection Unit (YPJ) against her will and has been denied access to her family.

On 6 April 2023, a day after she turned 18, Fidaa went missing as she was returning from an English language institute in Kobani in North East Syria. A close relative told Amnesty International that members of the YPJ unofficially visited Fidaa’s family about two weeks after she had gone missing and told them that Fidaa had voluntarily chosen to join the ranks of the YPJ. The close relative added that the family did not believe this, given her plans to finish English lessons and continue her education abroad.

Despite multiple requests via all available communication channels, the YPJ has refused the family’s wish to see Fidaa and communicate with her. In July 2023, the YPJ denied that Fidaa had joined their ranks and refuted allegations of her disappearance in their response to a letter sent by Amnesty International which asked the YPJ to provide details of Fidaa’s whereabouts to her family members. The reported circumstances of Fidaa Mohammad Qassem’s disappearance and the YPJ’s refusal to allow her to contact her family suggest that she may have been arbitrarily deprived of her liberty, in violation of international law.

Article 25 of the Charter of the Social Contract, adopted on January 29, 2014 by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), states that everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. Article 22 further specifies that all international rights and responsibilities relating to civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights are guaranteed. In accordance with article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, everyone has the right to liberty and security of person.

**In light of the above, I urge you to:**

* **reveal the whereabouts of Fidaa;**
* **ensure that she has a regular channel of communication with her family;**
* **if Fidaa refuses to take part in the YPJ, to release her from her commitment to this military corps.**

Yours sincerely,