

# URGENT ACTION

## SYRIAN KURDISH STUDENT DISAPPEARED IN SYRIA

Fidaa Mohammad Qassem, an 18-year-old English student who lives in Kobani, a Kurdish-majority town under the de-facto control of the Autonomous Administration of north-east Syria (AANES), was forcibly conscripted to the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), AANES's female military force, in violation of local law. The authorities deprived her from communicating with her family in violation of international law. On April 6, 2023, Fidaa Mohammed Qassem was returning from English class in Kobani when she went missing. A close relative told Amnesty International that members of the YPJ conducted an unofficial visit to Fidaa Mohammad Qassem's family about two weeks after she had gone missing and claimed that Fidaa Mohammad Qassem had voluntarily chosen to join the YPJ. The YPJ should reveal the whereabouts of Fidaa Mohammad Qassem and allow her to communicate with her family.

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 5.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

**General Newroz Ahmed**  
**Commander-in-Chief of the Women's Protection Units (YPJ)**  
Qamishli, north-east Syria  
Email: [Ypj\\_Womensdefend@protonmail.com](mailto:Ypj_Womensdefend@protonmail.com)  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/YPJDefense>

**His Excellency Qusay al-Dahhak**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations**  
820 2nd Ave, New York, NY 10017  
(212) 661-1313. (212) 983-4439.  
Email: [syria@un.int](mailto:syria@un.int)

Dear General Newroz Ahmed,

I am writing to you regarding **Fidaa Mohammad Qassem**, an English student, who was forced to join the Women's Protection Unit (YPJ) and has been denied access to her family. On April 6, 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 two weeks after she had gone missing and told them that Fidaa had voluntarily joined YPJ.

Despite multiple requests, the YPJ has denied the family's wish to see and communicate with Fidaa. I urge you to reveal the whereabouts of Fidaa and ensure that she has regular channel of communication with her family.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) is the de facto authority controlling most of northeast Syria. The military force of the AANES consist of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a coalition of Kurdish and Arab forces led by the People's Protection Units (YPG), which includes the YPJ (Women's Protection Units).

A close relative told Amnesty International that on April 6, 2023, Fidaa Mohammad Qassem, who had turned 18 years old on April 5, 2023, was returning from her English lessons in neighborhood 48 in Kobani when she went missing. Since then, her whereabouts have been unknown. An individual interviewed by Amnesty International said that around three days after she had gone missing, a family member received information that Fidaa Mohammad Qassem has been conscripted to the Women's Protection Unit (YPJ) and requested that the family end their search. After about two weeks, members of the YPJ visited Fidaa Mohammad Qassem's family and informed them that Fidaa Mohammad Qassem had voluntarily chosen to join their ranks. They admitted that they had been monitoring Fidaa Mohammad Qassem for a year. They also denied the family's request to see or communicate with Fidaa Mohammad Qassem, which is unusual given that conscripts are allowed to see and communicate with their families.

According to the law in force in north-east Syria under the control of the AANES, women can voluntarily join the YPJ, while men aged 18 to 40 must complete a one-year compulsory military service.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** English, Arabic or Kurdish

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** March 25, 2024

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Fidaa Mohammad Qassem (she/her)