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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,

**I am writing to you with regards to Fidaa Mohammad Qassem, an English student, who 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 that Fidaa voluntarily chose to join the YPJ given her plans to finish English lessons and continue her education abroad.

Despite multiple requests via all available communication channels, the YPJ has denied the family’s wish to see and communicate with Fidaa. In July 2023, the YPJ denied that Fidaa had joined their ranks and denied allegations of her disappearance in their response to a letter sent by Amnesty International which asked the YPJ to provide details on the whereabouts of Fidaa 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.

**In light of the above, I urge you to reveal the whereabouts of Fidaa and ensure that she has regular channel of communication with her family.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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