



WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS [SYRIACS]

ܡܨܘܚܐ ܡܨܘܚܐ ܡܨܘܚܐ

WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS [SYRIACS]
KLOCKARVÄGEN 104, 151 61 SÖDERTÄLJE, SWEDEN

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN SPECIAL
CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

PRESS RELEASE

Date <i>For Immediate Release</i>	For further information, please contact	E-mail
Amsterdam, 31 January 2018	Ms. Sarah Bakir	sarah.bakir@wca-ngo.org

KURDISH YPG / ASAYESH FORCES KIDNAP MORE ARAMEAN CHRISTIANS IN NORTHEAST SYRIA

The Kurdish YPG/Asayesh forces have begun to intensify their ongoing intimidations and threats towards Christians in Northeast Syria. They are now increasingly kidnapping and conscripting teenagers with the intention to send them to the frontline in places like Afrin.

Local Christian sources, fearing for their lives and speaking on condition of anonymity to the World Council of Arameans (Syriacs) (“WCA”), report that they are facing more and more harassments from the Kurdish YPG and Asayesh (security forces).

On Friday, 19 January, the first grave human rights violations of the new year included the abduction of seven Christians; four Armenians and three Arameans (otherwise known as Syriacs). Nevertheless, following intense negotiations, all of them were released except for the 20-year young Aramean, Saliba A., who was snatched on daylight out of his shop in Qamishli by the Asayesh.

Saliba was initially held at a place near the northeastern Syrian town of Qamishli called Kebek; his condition is now uncertain. This is where the YPG Kurds, according to the locals, seem to have a military processing base or a military station before recruits are being sent into the battlefield. Young Christians like Saliba may be sent to the frontline in Afrin, according to local sources.

A friend of Saliba, who follows the matter closely, stated: “Every day, they keep telling us that he will be released soon. Then they will say tonight, then they will say tomorrow morning. After 10 days, we stopped believing their empty promises and are concerned about Saliba’s wellbeing.” Attempts at interventions have proven futile, as one negotiator noted: “The Asayesh who seize our youth tell us that they have handed them over to the YPG, the Kurdish armed unit. However, the YPG tells us to contact the Asayesh. They are playing games with us and endeavor to instill fear in us. They want us to abandon our homeland so that they can seize more of our properties and land.”

In addition to Saliba, two more Arameans have been kidnapped just a few hours ago by these same forces who are called *Apociye* by the locals, in reference to the jailed Kurdish leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan who is known as Apo. The 19-year old Aramean students from Qamishli, Isho Hanna and Elias Hanna, who are not related, had exams and were on their way to the university in Hassake until they were kidnapped by the Asayesh. As of yet, their whereabouts, too, are unknown.

HEAD OFFICE:
WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS
[SYRIACS]
KLOCKARVÄGEN 104
151 61 SÖDERTÄLJE, SWEDEN

CONTACT:
+46 855 032 810
INFO@WCA-NGO.ORG
WWW.WCA-NGO.ORG

RABOBANK (ENSCHEDÉ, HOLLAND):
ACC-NR: 3967.30.620
IBAN: NL 71 RABO 0396 7306 20
BIC: RABONL2U

REPRESENTED IN:
USA, UK, AUSTRALIA, TURKEY,
ISRAEL, SYRIA, LEBANON,
JORDAN, GERMANY, SWEDEN,
SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA, FRANCE,
BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS.



WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS [SYRIACS]

ܡܨܘܚܐ ܕܡܨܘܚܐ ܕܡܨܘܚܐ

The recruitment process by the YPG is taking place by coercion. The Arameans complain that even teenagers with no military training are cruelly taken by force from the streets, schools and shops. Another informant added: “They are being conscripted with the intention to send them to the battle zones in or near Afrin, because these people consider themselves the new rulers of our region.”

After the threat of ISIS, the current wish of the Arameans is for the nationalist Kurds to leave them, their organizations, schools, churches and their self-defense of Sootoro in peace. The Aramean-led Sootoro even includes Arabs, who are also being seized by the Asayesh and enrolled by the YPG.

Johny Messo, the President of the World Council of Arameans (Syriacs) (“WCA”), strongly condemns the ongoing terrorization by the Kurdish YPG and Asayesh (security forces), stating: “Our people on the ground keep informing us about all sorts of human rights violations, including confiscation of land, intimidations, threats and an increased wave of kidnappings. This must immediately end. We demand from the Kurdish YPG forces to respect Syria’s native Arameans. We further call upon the USA to make this critical message clear to the YPG.”

Until the conflict erupted in 2011, Christians constituted 10% (2,3 million) of Syria’s national population. Hundreds of thousands of Arameans have already fled their war-torn homeland. They have retained their 3,000-year old Aramaic mother tongue, which is widely known as the language of Jesus. The Arameans are the indigenous people of Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon.

###

**For earlier reports and background information on
the Kurdification of Northeast Syria, see:**

- <http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/238-files/syria-file/547-ongoing-kurdish-terror-attacks-against-aramean-christians-in-syria>
- http://wca-ngo.org/wca-news/press-releases/550-new_bomb_attack_aramians_qamishli_syria
- <http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/un-geneva/576-wca-to-un-commision-on-syria-and-human-rights-council-end-ypg-kurdification-of-northeast-syria>
- http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/un-geneva/569-hrc32_gd_syria_iraq
- http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/un-geneva/567-hrc32_coisyria_genocide_isis
- <http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/un-geneva/578-wca-to-un-aramians-in-syria-and-iraq-on-brink-of-extinction>
- <http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/un-geneva/562-wca-statement-syria-31hrc>
- http://wca-ngo.org/our-work/un-geneva/588-34hrc_highlevelpanel_coisyria

HEAD OFFICE:
WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS
[SYRIACS]
KLOCKARVÄGEN 104
151 61 SÖDERTÄLJE, SWEDEN

CONTACT:
+46 855 032 810
INFO@WCA-NGO.ORG
WWW.WCA-NGO.ORG

RABOBANK (ENSCHEDÉ, HOLLAND):
ACC-NR: 3967.30.620
IBAN: NL 71 RABO 0396 7306 20
BIC: RABONL2U

REPRESENTED IN:
USA, UK, AUSTRALIA, TURKEY,
ISRAEL, SYRIA, LEBANON,
JORDAN, GERMANY, SWEDEN,
SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA, FRANCE,
BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS.