

## **Assyrian Confederation of Europe Statement on YPG Attack on GPF in Qamishli**

The Assyrian Confederation of Europe condemns in the strongest possible terms the People's Protection Units (YPG) attack on the Gozarto Protection Forces (GPF) which took place on the morning of Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> in the neighbourhood of al-Wusta in Qamishli, Syria.

Following the terrorist attacks targeting Assyrian restaurants in Qamishli on December 30<sup>th</sup>, which claimed the lives of 14 Assyrians and led to dozens of other injuries, the need for Assyrian security forces to control the security of Assyrian neighbourhoods became even clearer.

The decision taken by the Sootoro/GPF to increase security in the overwhelmingly Assyrian Wusta neighbourhood, where these terrorist attacks took place, was, however, met with suspicion and harassment by the YPG.

When Assyrians objected to the YPG attempt to forcibly dismantling the GPF checkpoint erected in Wusta, this suspicion turned to violence.

The YPG ambushed the GPF at around 1:00 AM, leading to the murder of Gabriel Dawood and the maiming of Gabriel Barsom. The GPF had no choice but to defend themselves in response.

The desire of the PYD for total control over the security and administrative affairs of Gozarto stands in marked contrast to their own principles. If the purpose of the self-administration is to allow communities to direct their own affairs in a participatory manner, free from centralised control, why must the self-administration impose itself by force on those who do not submit to it?

Assyrians have the same right as Kurds in Gozarto to steer their own fate and protect themselves in the face of upheaval.

We urge the PYD and the YPG to cease the harassment, intimidation, and murder of Assyrians seeking to manage the protection and affairs of their beleaguered communities, and to adopt a democratic and diplomatic approach to their engagement with Assyrians, in line with

the purported ideals that have helped garner them international support.

We urge the international sponsors and supporters of the PYD and YPG to echo this call, and to not allow the presence of Islamism in the region to deter them from scrutinising the actions of the actors they support in the struggle against it.

### **Assyrian Confederation of Europe**

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