

gesellschaft für bedrohte völker

(GfbV)

To
Autonomous self-government
in the Jazira Region (North Syria)
Per Email

Göttingen, 21.08.2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

we, the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) and the Central Association of the Assyrian associations in Germany and European section (ZAVD), have heard the decision of the democratic autonomous self-government in the Jazira region (North Syria) with great concern. They demand the "registration" of specific private schools, which are run by several Christian churches as well as by private persons, members of the Assyrian-Aramaic and Armenian minority in the province Al-Hasaka in the Northeast of Syria. This demand will cause the full closure of these schools. On social media a decree of your administration is circulating, stating that these schools "must be registered" immediately at the Regional Democratic Autonomous administration of the province Al-Hasaka. While your administration wants to impose new curricula on schools, the operators of the schools want to stick to the old curriculum provided by the Government of Damascus. In the event of a change in curricula, the schools fear that their school reports will no longer be recognized by the Government in Damascus.

You know that the new school year should start in a few weeks. If by then the dispute over the "registration" of the schools is not settled, at least 7,000 students will have to stay away from their schools. Therefore, we urge your administration to settle the dispute on the "registration" of schools immediately, so that the schools can start teaching after the beginning of the new school year 2018/2019 at the beginning of September without obstructions.

In northern Syria, the impression should not arise that the Christian minority of the Assyrians/Aramaic/Chaldeans and Armenians are not welcome. The region of northern Syria has also been home to the Christian Assyrians/Aramaic and Armenians for thousands of years. Instead, all Kurdish parties and Christian organizations should focus on the common adversary, which are radical Islamist groups supported by the Turkish government. They threaten the peace and life of all ethnic groups in northern Syria.

The People's Protection Units (YPG) together with Assyrian-Aramaic as well as Arabic associations as part of the military alliance "Syrian Democratic Forces" (SDF) were able to protect and defend the region with the Kurdish, Christian and Yezidi population against the "Islamic State" (IS) and other radical Islamic groups.

Society for
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GESCHÄFTSKONTO: Sparkasse Göttingen • BLZ 260 500 01 • Kto.-Nr. 1917 • (IBAN) DE 65 2605 0001 0000 0019 17 • (BIC) NOLADE 21 GOE

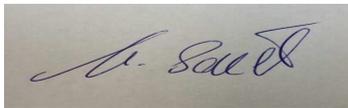
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The effort of the YPG/SDF against the radical Islamists has gained recognition worldwide. If the dispute over the "registration" of schools will not be resolved soon and in the interest of the Christian minorities as well as in the sense of a peaceful coexistence, the success and recognition of the YPG / SDF will be greatly damaged.

Furthermore, we appeal to you to resolve the quarreling in Assyrian villages at the Khabur River peacefully in the interest of the local Christian Assyrian population. The people in these villages suffered a lot in the past years. The IS attacked, abducted and expelled them. Although the villages were rescued from YPG / SDF, the risk of getting attacked again by IS or other radical Islamist groups is quite high. In these villages, no measures should be taken that could affect the interests of the local population.

We are convinced that every government and administration needs to be judged by how they treat their minorities. Therefore, we hope that your administration solves the conflict in terms of human and minority rights.

Kind regards,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Aziz Said".

Aziz Said, Chairman of ZAVD
GfbV

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Kamal Sido".

Dr. Kamal Sido, Head of Department Middle East