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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 August 2020]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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## The human rights situation in Yemen

### Preamble

In light of the increase in the violations committed by Ansar Allah group or "the Houthis" inside Yemen, especially against civilians and vulnerable groups of women and children, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights submits this intervention to the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, to highlight the ongoing violations of the rights of the aforementioned groups of civilians, namely women and children. Maat for Peace would like also to draw the attention of the Group of Experts to the fact that the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic has not dissuaded the conflicting parties from the continuation of the war in Yemen. Accordingly, the war-torn Yemen is once again on the brink of famine, as according to the United Nations (UN) it is the world's largest humanitarian crisis, in addition to the collapse of the health system after most hospitals went out of service, in light of the Houthi bombing of some government hospitals.

### Targeting civilians

Since its outbreak in mid-2014, the current devastating war in Yemen has been moving forward towards, sparing no one, undermining the lives of Yemenis for nearly six years, including women and children who are constantly killed and wounded, along with the devastating consequences on the country's most urgent infrastructure, such as public and private buildings and facilities, schools, hospitals, public roads, places of worship and residential homes.

The escalation of human rights violations against civilians by the Houthi militia is clearly evident, and many of these violations may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, along with the continuing impunity for those involved in committing violations to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. During the first half of April 2020, the Houthi militia committed 180 violations against civilians, killing 36 civilians and wounding 51 others, including women and children, in the governorates of Taiz, Ibb, Al-Hodeidah, Al-Bayda, Al-Dhalea, Marib, Hajjah and Sana'a. The Houthi militia also indiscriminately bombed residential neighborhoods in the governorates of Ma'rib, Al-Hudaydah, Taiz, and some residential neighborhoods in Al-Dhalea governorate. The indiscriminate bombing operations resulted in the killing and wounding of many others.<sup>1</sup> In a related context, the Houthi militia carried out about 242 attacks on civilians and military sites belonging to the Yemeni army, even despite holding a truce between the different parties to the conflict, and the ceasefire on April 9, 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the governorate of Ma'rib in Yemen has witnessed massive violations against civilians since the Houthi coup against the legitimate government in Yemen in September 2014 until now. And the Houthi militia targeted the province, located northeast of the capital, Sana'a, with "Katyusha" missiles in addition to ballistic missiles. About 244 missiles has been fired by the Houthis on residential neighborhoods in the city of Ma'rib from April 2015 to July 14, 2020, including 112 ballistic missiles, 131 Katyusha rockets, and an "Organs" missiles. Firing these rockets has resulted in the killing and wounding of about 689 civilians, including 92 children and women. As 251 civilians were killed, including 25 children and 12 women, while the number of injured and wounded reached 438 civilians, including 47 children and 8 women, in addition to the elderly and old-aged citizens.<sup>3</sup> On June 26, 2020, the Houthi militia bombed the Leprosy Hospital in Taiz, wounding three civilians.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> تصاعد انتهاكات الحوثيين ضد المدنيين وتقرير حقوقي يكشف ارتكابهم خلال 16 يوماً 180 انتهاكاً، مدى برس، 20 أبريل 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/y5envd5l>

<sup>2</sup> Yemen Army: 'Houthis carried out 242 attacks on our sites since start of ceasefire', The Middle East Monitor, 15 April 2020. Available at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2PGPDBj>

<sup>3</sup> إحصائية تكشف حصاد 5 أعوام من الإرهاب الحوثي ضد المدنيين في مدينة مأرب، الأنباء أونلاين، 16 يوليو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/y38z2glc>

<sup>4</sup> <https://bit.ly/31DPAMg> تحالف رصد يدين قصف مليشيا الحوثي لمستشفى الجذام بتعز ووقوع ضحايا، تحالف رصد، 30 يونيو 2020.

In a related context, planting mines by the Houthi militia posed a real threat to civilians, claiming the lives of hundreds, as it planted more than two million landmines in more than 15 Yemeni governorates, of all types: anti-vehicle, personnel and marine mines, in contravention of the rules of international law related to the prohibition of planting mines. These mines claimed the lives of 8 thousand civilians, most of whom are women and children, and until the beginning of 2020, 55 workers were also reportedly killed in mine clearance programs and 50 others were injured.<sup>5</sup>

The last victim to mine planting was the Yemeni girl (F. W.), who died after the explosion of an anti-personnel landmine in the Jabal Habashi area in Taiz governorate, south of Yemen, while she was herding sheep.<sup>6</sup> In July 2020, two civilians were killed and another wounded, after the explosion of a landmine planted by the Houthis in Al-Bayda governorate.<sup>7</sup>

## Violence against women and children

All parties to the conflict in Yemen, especially the Houthi militia, are part of the reason why women and children feel insecure, with medical facilities and schools are being constantly shut down and attacked, causing more anxiety to women who fear that they and their children will not have access to medical care and education. The Houthi militia has also committed crimes specifically targeting women, such as the kidnapping, which has alarmingly increased in recent years in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a.

The Houthi militia detained up to 350 women in the capital city of Sanaa, where the (de facto forces) impose their control, while 33 women as a result of the torture they were subjected to in Houthi prisons.<sup>8</sup> As violence against women continues, the Houthi militia had shelled the women's ward of the Taiz Central Prison, killing 6 women and wounding about 20 others.<sup>9</sup>

Houthi militias continue to suppress women in areas falling under their control in Yemen using an all-female militia, mostly drawn from Hashemite families, called Zeinabeyyat. The Zeinabeyyat's responsibilities include arbitrary arrest and detention of women, looting, sexual assault, beatings, torture and facilitating rape in secret detention centers. The Houthi militia is headed by Sultan Zaben, Director of the General Department of Criminal Investigation in Sana'a, and one of inner circle of the Houthi militia leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi,<sup>10</sup> according to UN reports.

On the other hand, the impact of the conflict in Yemen runs deep and has not spared a single child. The total number of children killed or injured since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen between the Houthis and the legitimate government has been estimated by 8,600 children.<sup>11</sup> In total, 4,042 grave violations against 2,159 children in Yemen were verified last year, including 451 young girls. The Houthis has also recruited 686 children (643 boys and 43 girls) to carry out hostilities for few riyals. In a related context, the Houthi militia has reportedly detained 97 children, between the ages of 12 and 16, killed 395, and maimed about 1052 children.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> الحوثي يستغل غياب الرقابة الأممية ويغرق اليمن بالألغام، المشهد العربي، 20 أبريل 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/y6msx2mw>

<sup>6</sup> سياسة الألغام الحوثية.. إرهاب إيراني يواصل حصد أرواح اليمنيين، العين الإخبارية، 24 يوليو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/yxsbb6ox>

<sup>7</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y4svncug> قتل وجرى بانفجار لغم حوثي في البيضاء، صنعاء أونلاين، 28 يوليو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي

<sup>8</sup> يمنيات بروين ويلات التعذيب والاعتصام في سجون الحوثي، العربية.نت، 20 مايو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/yxe85kwy>

<sup>9</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y5chvln3> تعز.. مقتل وإصابة سجينات في قصف حوثي، المدينة، 5 أبريل 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي

<sup>10</sup> تقرير أممي يكشف "زنيبيات" الحوثي.. قمع ومهام مرعبة، العربية.نت، 20 مايو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/yynxos4x>

<sup>11</sup> اليمن: هناك حاجة إلى 2.41 مليار دولار لتوفير المساعدة في ظل "كارثة ثلاثية" تتمثل بالصراع والاقتصاد المتدهور وتفشي الجائحة، <https://tinyurl.com/yxt9yahe> أخبار الأمم المتحدة، 28 مايو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي

<sup>12</sup> المتحدة ترصد آلاف الانتهاكات الجسيمة ضد الأطفال عبر العالم، الشرق الأوسط، 17 يونيو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/ygy2hrq>

## Houthi violations in light of the Coronavirus pandemic

Yemen is now the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with about 12 million children and 6 million women suffering from various risks, including malnutrition and the inability to access treatment and medical care, while nearly 3 million displaced people live in unsanitary conditions. Coronavirus has severely impacted the health sector in Yemen due to pressure it placed on health centers and the shortage of personal protective equipment for health workers, such as gloves and masks, in addition to not paying the medical staff their salaries.<sup>13</sup> On March 30, 2020, the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen warned of the repercussions of the continuation of the war between the conflicting parties in Yemen on the outbreak of the new Coronavirus, and the collapse of the health sector, especially in light of the humanitarian deterioration and the fragile situation of detention facilities, political detainees, and the entire Yemeni population. However, the Houthi militia did not comply with the UN warnings.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it violated the ceasefire resolution that entered into force on April 9, 2020, committing 2,399 violations to the ceasefire resolution that the parties to the conflict adhered to at the beginning.<sup>15</sup>

Some of the Houthi violations included the attack on hospitals and medical personnel, as the Houthis targeted Al-Jufra Hospital, west of Ma'rib Governorate, on April 20, and the Houthi bombing of the government hospital resulted in killing four people, including the head of the medical division in the seventh military region, Numan Al-Lahbi, and others were injured in the process.<sup>16</sup> A Houthi leader named "Abu Rami", the director of Al-Thawra General Hospital in the Ma'rib governorate, and his two deputies, and a number of other doctors and workers at the hospital were also abducted, after the hospital's ambulance drivers refused transferring dead members of the militias to ceremonial places due to the lack of oil in the ambulances' tanks.<sup>17</sup>

Houthi fighters also assaulted doctor "A. M.", who works in a coronavirus treatment center, in Ibb governorate, and tried to abduct him. In the same context, a Houthi leader called "Z. A" tried to kill the doctor (N. S), head of the operations department at Nasser Governmental Hospital in Ibb governorate.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, Maat for Peace calls for conducting an international investigation in the issue of targeting women by the Houthi militia and hold the perpetrators of these violations accountable.

<sup>13</sup> اليمن وكورونا.. قطاع صحي منهار وفحوص طبية فاشلة وهيئات دولية مفلسة، الجزيرة نت، 29 مايو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط <https://bit.ly/2PAavdN>.

<sup>14</sup> بيان فريق الخبراء البارزين الدوليين والإقليميين بشأن اليمن حول إطلاق سراح المعتقلين والمعتقلين السياسيين، الأمم المتحدة، مجلس حقوق الإنسان، 30 مارس 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/y3d5qubo>.

<sup>15</sup> التحالف العربي: خروقات الحوثيين لوقف إطلاق النار بلغت 2399 خرقة، البوابة نيوز، 5 مايو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/y38zuwxl>.

<sup>16</sup> مليشيا الحوثي تقصف مستشفى حكومي في مأرب ومقتل 4 مدنيين، عدن نيوز، 21 أبريل 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/yy2yc9k3>.

<sup>17</sup> جرائم الحوثي بحق الكادر الطبي.. وباء يعمق ألم الفيروس، العين الإخبارية، 21 يوليو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي <https://tinyurl.com/yyq5493w>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yyq5493w> أنظر: مصدر سبق ذكره، علي الرابط التالي