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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, 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.


[23 May 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Yemeni People Are Deprived of their Human Rights

According to Yemen Ministry of Health, the first month of heavy bombardments in Yemen resulted in over 4100 Yemeni casualties, including 115 children according to UNICEF. Also, according to the World Health Organization over 254,000 others including women and children are being displaced, and there are fears over the forced displacement of millions of other Yemenis while many of them lose their lives in the sea trying to escape their conflicted homeland. Airstrikes launched in and around Yemen's capital Sanaa, targeted bazaars, schools and hospitals leaving many civilian people killed and injured. In the ongoing conflicts dozens of people are losing their lives every day. For example, Airstrikes by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition that hit a dairy factory in Yemen on March 31, 2015, killed at least 31 civilians and wounded another 11.1 Also, on May 1st 2015, Warplanes from a Saudi-led coalition struck a residential district of the Yemeni capital Sanaa overnight, killing eight to 10 civilian residents. The Saba state news agency, controlled by the Houthi movement, announced that the airstrike have caused 20 deaths and made more than 50 people including woman and children injured.²

Saudi Arabia is also accused of dropping U.S.-supplied cluster bombs in the fight against Houthi rebels in Yemen. The small bombs, if unexploded, can lay dormant and then blow out when people stumble upon them by chance, killing or maiming them as a result.

Saudi-led cluster airstrikes have been hitting areas near villages, putting local people in danger while according to international law these weapons should never be used under any circumstances and according to The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) the use, transfer and stockpile of cluster bombs is prohibited.

Hospitals in Yemen are struggling to cope with a stream of patients mostly victims of the violence that has gripped the country. They are facing an unprecedented shortage of medicine and qualified staff. There is not enough space to receive injured civilians and some of the seriously injured cases in ICUs have no beds.

In addition, the country is seriously suffering from shortage of food. Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the world, already was a country where 60 percent of the people were living under the poverty line and the situation is worsening every day.

One in four Yemenis is undernourished and more than half of Yemen's 25 million people are 'food insecure', that is lacking access to sufficient food for their needs. With a high proportion of the population living off the land and some 90 percent of Yemen's water resources being used in agriculture, people are especially vulnerable when conflicts disrupt farm production.

According to FAO, the escalation of violence in Yemen, risks aggravating an already dire food security situation.

The civil society actors are deeply concerned about the ongoing violence in Yemen. For example, Amnesty International is disturbed by the high number of civilian casualties and deaths as a result of Saudi Arabian led airstrikes in Yemen announcing that "the high toll of civilian deaths and injuries in these attacks raises concerns about compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law." Also, Human Rights Watch, in letters to Saudi Arabia's King and U.S. Secretary of Defense, expressed concern that some of the airstrikes conducted by a U.S.-backed, Saudi-led coalition in Yemen appeared to violate the rules of engagement and urged the United States and Saudi Arabia to take steps to minimize harm to civilians.

According to political analysts, Yemen is on the brink of civil war, or at least wide-scale revenge killings with different types of arms available in almost every Yemeni house.

¹ . www.hrw.org/.../yemen-factory-airstrike-killed-31-civilians

² . <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/21/us-yemen-security-idUSKBN0060VN20150521>

Considering the fact that Yemeni people are suffering from the bitter consequences of the ongoing violence despite the UN criticisms³, immediate actions are required to stop the ongoing violation of human rights, especially the right to life and the right to food, preventing the worsening trend of Yemen human tragedy.

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence condemns the ongoing grave violation of people's fundamental human rights and illegal interference in Yemen. ODVV echoes the UN Secretary General call for a freeze in all forms of violence in Yemen and urges the UN Security Council and the General Assembly to take immediate actions to stop all external attacks as well as any cases of internal conflicts and violations of human rights in the country.

ODVV also calls on the US and Saudi Arabia to join The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and follow the rules of engagement as determined by the international law to protect civilian rights in armed conflicts.

³ . <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50813>