



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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.

[30 January 2021]

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



## **The human rights situation in Yemen**

### **Targeting civilians**

Despite the outbreak of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in different regions of the world and the emergency health conditions that all countries are experiencing, including Yemen, which is facing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, where more than 80% of the population are in critical need for all forms of assistance, according to the United Nations Population Fund. Nevertheless, the parties to the conflict have not succeeded in ensuring the lowest levels of protection for civilians, especially in the areas under the control of the Houthi group, in light of the ongoing impunity for those responsible for these violations in the areas under the control of the Houthis.

The period from January to December 2020 has witnessed widespread violations by the Houthi group, which harm civilians in the first place at all levels. The National Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen has documented "2901" incidents of violation in various Yemeni governorates, and more than "4292" victims, including men, women and children, while about "1363" have been killed or injured as a result of this escalation by the armed elements of the Houthis against civilians in various Yemeni governorates, with "404" dead, including "56" woman and "83" children, and "751" wounded, including "103" women and "194" children. The Houthi group has indiscriminately shelled up to "30" houses, forcibly displaced "310" citizens, and carried out about "54" extrajudicial killings.

On December 30, 2020, according to Yemeni human rights organizations, the Houthis targeted Aden International Airport in southern Yemen with four ballistic missiles, and as a result, two explosions occurred in the airport lounges, along with intense fire, as members of the legitimate government coming from Saudi Arabia landed at Aden airport within the framework of the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement. At least 25 people were killed and more than 100 others were injured, including three people affiliated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Such unspeakable practices affirm that the Houthis make no distinction between civilians, soldiers and aid workers, making the United Nations member states and the Human Rights Council fully responsible for protecting civilians. These practices also stress the fact that the international community continues to turn a blind eye to the Houthi acts, opening the door wide for further violations against civilians, which contradicts the ban imposed on carrying out attacks against civilians in accordance with the first Optional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, specifically the third paragraph of Article 44 which urges for the protection of civilians from the effects of hostilities, as well as Paragraph 3 (b) of Article 54 on the protection of objects and materials indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

### **The siege in the city of Taiz**

Taiz governorate is at the forefront of Houthi violations in Yemen, and the Houthis have imposed a siege on the city for 6 years, taking control of the surrounding areas. Taiz is the third largest city in Yemen with a population of more than 3 million. The Houthi terrorist militia has carried out various violations including kidnappings, storming buildings, torturing and forcible arresting citizens in the governorate. During the period from January 6 to January 11, 2021, the number of violations committed by the Houthis surged to 334 violations, and on January 19, 2021, the Houthis kidnapped 11 civilians, including 3 women in the village of Al-Haima Northern Taiz, after Houthi gunmen raided the village by force, while the number of those kidnapped since the beginning of this year has reached 207 residents. All these violations were committed under the pretext of allegedly supporting the internationally recognized legitimate government.

December 2020 has witnessed an escalation by the Houthis in the crimes and violations that directly affected civilians. The Houthis blew up 14 homes in the Madarat area west of Taiz, and targeted medical and educational buildings, such as Al-Safwa Hospital in Taiz City and

the Teachers Institute in Cairo Directorate with anti-aircraft fire. Al-Ahly Club in Taiz was also bombed when children were training, leaving two dead and three others injured, including children. The continued siege imposed on Taiz means more that innocent civilian are going to be victimized, especially the sick and the elderly, who are prevented from obtaining medical supplies, especially oxygen cylinders, especially in light of Yemen's continued registration of new Coronavirus infections.

### **Countless violations in Houthi prisons**

At a time when Yemen is suffering from the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, the Houthis have been expanding the circle of violations against their opposition, whether in Sanaa or in other governorates under their control. The frequency of these violations has surged in the prisons under the supervision of the Houthis, and human rights reports estimate the number of detainees in prisons with about 20 thousand detainees, while the actual number is believed to be higher than the revealed. The detainees in the Political Security prison in Sana'a affiliated to the Houthi intelligence service suffer from serious diseases ranging from strokes, heart, kidney and sinus diseases in light of deliberate medical negligence and inappropriate detention conditions that are not compatible with the guarantees of international human rights law and the relevant international covenants.

In cooperation with partner organizations in Yemen, Maat has documented 1635 detainees in Houthi prisons over the past year have been subjected to a wide range of physical and psychological torture and indecent and cruel treatment. Out of this number, there are 109 children, 22 women and 78 elderly, and the common factor in all these cases is the opposition to the ruling Ansar Allah group "Al-Houthis" and the rejection of the widespread violations committed by the group over the past years.

In December 2020, 13 detainees died in one of the group's prisons in Sana'a, as a direct result of violent practices that amount to torture. In November 2020, a detainee in Houthi prisons in the Abyan Yemeni governorate died as a result of torture. The 60-year detainee, Muhammad Ali Hassan Al-Adeeb, was born in the Abyan Yemeni governorate in central Yemen and died as a result of physical abuse 10 months after he was forcibly arrested and tortured. The continuing acts of intimidation and retaliation against the opposition of the Houthis in Sana'a and in other areas under their control pushes Yemen into the abyss and makes the resumption of any peace efforts a demand that does not apply to a broad base of those who were included in these Houthi violations.

### **Recommendations**

- Declaring the Houthi group a Foreign Terrorist Organization as well as to apply sanctions according to the relevant Security Council Resolutions, especially Resolution No. 2216.
- The Human Rights Council encourages all parties to the current conflict in Yemen to resume peace efforts on the basis of the three references agreed locally, regionally and internationally, which are the results of the comprehensive national dialogue conference, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanisms, and the decisions of the relevant Security Council.
- The Houthis lift the siege on the Yemeni city of Taiz and stop the ongoing violations in the village of Al-Haima, in addition to the immediate and urgent release of all individuals who were arrested and arbitrarily detained, especially children and women.
- The Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen should continue the investigation of the violations committed by the Houthi group in the prisons under its supervision, including the investigation in the death of 13 detainees in Sanaa prison in December 2020.