



ISOLATED FROM THE WORLD

HOUTHI PRISONS GRAVES OF WOMEN

Introduction

Five years after the start of the Houthi militia coup to power on September 21, 2014, civilians, women and children in particular in Yemen are still the primary target and the most numerous victims in this war, and the women's file is replete with many grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The file of violations of the rights of women in Yemen, especially women prisoners in the Houthi prisons, contains unspeakable cruelty crimes, as well as shocking and painful facts about what women detainees have suffered and are still suffering, accordingly the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, the 8th March Yemeni Union Women, and the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking undertake the responsibility to address the monitoring of human rights violations against women in Yemen and follow up on all details related to their kidnapping and detention and the effects of those violations and their implications on their physical and psychological conditions, their lives and their future.

We, as Yemeni women, affirm our endeavor to achieve lasting peace under a civil-democratic state free of militias and terrorist gangs, the state of citizenship and the rule of law, the just and guarantor state of the rights of all its male and female citizens, without discrimination of any kind, and that guarantees the protection of women from All forms of persecution, insult, lack of opportunity, and equality under the constitutional, legal and institutional frameworks.

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Background and Context

From the outset of the Houthi coup in September 2014, the Houthi militia intentionally removed all protection from women, and grave violations of their rights were practiced, reaching the point of murder, physical assault, kidnapping, and sexual violence. Women have always been the weakest link in the clutches of this war. Violations have been inflicted on them that have shocked the Yemenis, in terms of the magnitude of their horror and violation of all human values and Yemeni traditions, such as beating and kidnapping women, GBV crimes such as harassment, rape, and others. This shock will remain a deep rift in the Yemeni presence that Never before have such horrific practices and crimes been committed against women.

Violations against women have increased after the December 2, 2017 events which led to the assassination of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the General People's Congress and Aref Al-Zouka, Secretary-General of the Congress Party by the Houthi group, and the killing, arrest, and liquidation of thousands of the party leaders, members and activists, and this date is also crucial in the march of Houthi violations of women's rights, as there has become a systematic targeting directed against them, where women were the leaders in the field of political churning, and hundreds of women were arbitrarily arrested and practiced against them various forms of torture and arbitrariness, women were kidnapped from demonstrations and homes, the diversity of psychological, social and economic violations varied, which amounted to killing and unlawful unjust rulings that amounted to the death penalty, in addition to fabricating criminal and immoral charges that are considered in a society such as the Yemeni society as a moral and social liquidation ruling. Women are still at the fore, and only paying the price of this targeted violence, which amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The suffering of women in Yemen will remain tremendous and prolonged, especially those who have gone through the detention experience, and who have lost their security, life, and social status and cannot practice their lives naturally even after they leave the camps, which requires the international community and the Office of the United Nations Envoy to intervene urgently to protect women in Yemen and stop the ongoing crimes against them.



Executive Summary

This report aims to shed light on the types of violations that the Houthi militia has practiced against women in Yemen, especially from December 2017 to December 2020, where the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, the 8th March Yemeni Union Women, and the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking documented the violations committed by Houthi group against women during this period, where the number of detainees reached 1181 detainees, of whom: 274 cases of enforced disappearance, 292 of these detainees are human rights activists and from the education sector, and 246 cases of workers in the relief and humanitarian field. The report also documented 71 cases of rape and 4 cases of suicide. In terms of the age group of the detainees, the number of detainees under the age of 18 reached more than 293 cases, in addition to documenting dozens of cases of male and female children who were detained with their detained mothers. Also, among the detainees, 8 belong to the Baha'i community. So far, 321 detainees have been released. Violations varied between killing, maiming, detention, arrest, kidnapping, torture, and sexual violence, as women detainees were raped by supervisors in militia prisons. Suicide cases were recorded for girls detained in the central prison in Sana'a, and the Houthis neither allowed medical examination of the detainees nor investigation of the causes of deaths within Detention centres. Women have also been subjected to all kinds of physical torture, including beaten with sticks and electric wires, slapping, suffocating, and drowning in water, in addition to verbal torture of insulting, degrading and psychological torture, to recognize things they did not do in addition to fabricating the malicious and immoral charges of the detainees (charges of prostitution networks).

Nesma Mohamed was kidnapped on March 24, 2019, from the street by Zinabiyat and taken to the Criminal Investigation Office, she met a woman named Nadia, who was investigated and accused of going out as part of the demonstration of the hungry revolution, the investigator tried to move Nesma after the investigation to another place, but she resisted, saying “Because of this resistance, I was beaten and taken to the new place by force. There I was investigated again and accused of providing coordinates to the Arab coalition countries and that I was an agent of America and Israel, working in a prostitution network”. Nesma continued: “They tortured, beat, electrocuted, and sexually harassed me.”.

After a period of investigations and psychological and physical torture, they forcibly subjected me to attending cultural courses about the American danger, the disadvantages and subordination of the previous regime to America and Israel, and the guardianship of the owners of the house and the right to the state in favour of the Prophet's family only and that the ruling is only valid for the group's supporters.

Upon to Nesma narration; The most surprising and resentful was the (purification) which she heard for the first time these seminars and that it is a type of jihad as it is considered by the Houthis, and that the jihad of a woman with her relief, this was a metaphor for the need to obey to rape, similar to the jihad of marriage to ISIS.

A week after the cultural sessions, Nesma was summoned to a room in which a man nicknamed Abu Hashem raped her. She was crying and begging him not to rape her, but to no avail, she was beaten and raped. A week later, she was moved to another cell and got raped again while she was blindfolded. Nesma did not recognize her rapist. Nesma collapsed and attempted suicide, but she was taken for the third time to another room. There she was photographed and raped by two men on the same day and then she was raped twice a day for 13 days, in the last week before her release, Nesma was feeling very weak and tired with psychological and physical pain caused by rape and torture; moreover, they forced her to hard labour such as washing bathrooms while filming her.

Nesma says: “One day, the Houthis forced me to print on papers and took me to the first place where they held me for the first time, I knew that I was in the first place only because I saw Nadia, and there I knew that my father paid a ransom of 3 million Yemeni riyals to the Houthis so that I can be released”. Nesma is in Cairo now, receiving psychological and physical treatment as a result of the torture and rape she was subjected to. Still, hundreds of women like Nesma are in detention.

Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibits arbitrary arrest or detention of individuals. The Article states: “Everyone has the right to liberty and security of his person. No one shall be arrested or arbitrarily arrested. No one may be deprived of his liberty except for reasons prescribed by law and following the procedure established therein¹. “ The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court states that rape and any other form of sexual violence constitute violations of the Geneva Conventions and is a war crime².



Report Methodology

Documenting human rights violations in a country undergoing conditions of war and a coup against legitimate authority, as in the case of Yemen, is a dangerous and challenging task. Precise documentation of arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and enforced disappearance cases require extensive capacity by human rights organizations to access the correct data.

There are additional challenges that impede access to information when it comes to documenting violations that affect Yemeni women, as the documentation process also requires a willingness on the part of women or their families to discuss their plight, where a large number of victims are exposed to enormous pressure, either psychological or social, which prevents them from speaking openly. For instance, the parents of a detained woman may fear that their daughter will be subjected to further torture, or that her detention is extended.

The report endeavours not to harm the women who have been arrested, and the report confirms that these violations are examples of the abuse of women's dignity, and aims to communicate their voices to those interested in human rights issues in general and women's rights in particular.

The report writing process went through several stages

The first stage

The report's working group (the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, the 8th March Yemeni Union Women, and the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking) relied on several means to reach victims.

- ❖ Testimony of female survivors from the Houthi prisons who contributed to writing the report
- ❖ Direct meetings with the families of the victims and witnesses and listening to their accounts.
- ❖ Testimonies of women subjected to arrest, insult, psychological abuse, and robbery at checkpoints and crossroads.
- ❖ Phone reports and available electronic means of communication.

The second stage

- ❖ Verification of some information published on the media and the reports published by human rights organizations on the detention facilities.
- ❖ Analysing data and information and its approach with international agreements and local laws.

The third stage

- ❖ Writing data in forms designed according to international standards
- ❖ Prepare the initial draft report and arrange the events from oldest to newest
- ❖ The linguistic review of the report
- ❖ Translate the report into English
- ❖ Issuing the report in its final form and printing it



The Theoretical Framework

Yemen has ratified the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its First and Second Additional Protocols, which are bound to respect civilians and spare them the scourge of wars and conflict, especially women and children, and all violations committed against civilians are subject to criminal accountability in all international judicial bodies.

Yemen has also ratified (58) conventions, protocols, covenants, and international declarations, including (20) conventions, declarations, and protocols related to international humanitarian law, (9) agreements related to human rights law, the provisions of which will apply during armed conflicts.

Among the agreements ratified by the Republic of Yemen

- ❖ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, according to which countries agree on the right of every human being to enjoy all rights and freedoms without any discrimination
- ❖ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, according to which the States Parties undertake to respect the rights concerning the political and civil aspects and guarantee them to all individuals without discrimination.
- ❖ The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, whereby under this agreement States Parties are obligated to take all effective legislative or administrative measures to prevent torture in their region and bring the perpetrators to account.
- ❖ The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention includes the fundamental rights of the child, and the State Parties undertake to protect these rights.
- ❖ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, where the Convention affirms that discrimination against women constitutes a violation of the principles of equal rights and respect for human dignity³.

Civil women enjoy dual protection under international humanitarian law, as they enjoy the protection afforded to civilian persons who do not participate in hostilities as public protection, in addition to specific gender-related protection; hence the protection of civilian women becomes more deserving and urgent during armed conflict. It should also provide women with special protection from sexual exploitation and violence, such as rape, forced prostitution, and other forms of abuse. Also, international humanitarian law prohibits the threat of women in any way. Pregnant women and mothers of young children, especially nursing mothers, enjoy special care in international humanitarian law⁴. Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions prohibits arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture, and guarantees all basic judicial guarantees⁵.



3- The agreements that Yemen ratified;
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=193&Lang=EN

4- Protection of women under the Internal Humanitarian Law; www.icrc.org

5- Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Additional Protocols; www.icrc.org



Gender-based Violence (facts and victims)

Gender-based violence is defined as “any harmful act committed against a person’s will. It is based on the differences between males and females whose existence is attributable to social reasons.” The literature of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)⁶ divides gender-based violence into five categories:

- ✘ Physical violence: It is the use of physical force to impose a strong authority on a weak, and the consequences are injury or discomfort. Such as hitting, punching, burning, spraining arms, and the like.
- ✘ Sexual violence: Any act, attempt, initiative, or comment with sexual connotations, trafficking practices, or forced sexual act. Whatever the relationship of the perpetrator to the survivor/victim. It includes rape, sexual harassment, and exploitation, among others.
Economic violence: denial of resources, opportunities, and services (such as health and education). In other words, denial of economic rights. Such as work deprivation, control of his / her funds against his / her will, discrimination in employment opportunities, deprivation of inheritance, and others.
- ✘ Psycho-emotional violence: pain or psychological and emotional harm. This includes many dangerous practices. Such as threat, abuse, verbal humiliation, social exclusion, bullying, ridicule, the threat of abandonment. And others.
- ✘ Harmful traditional practices: These are societal practices related to customs and traditions inherited for an extended period. The perpetrators of these practices present it as part of their culturally and socially accepted customs and traditions. Such as early marriage/marriage of minors, honour killings, forced marriage, and others. However, this classification overlaps in reality. This concept is mainly based on gender inequality. As women are required to do certain things that are different from what is expected of men, and these requirements carry a kind of violence and denial of human rights, such as early marriage to the girls. Gender-based violence is a harmful act that is committed and practiced in a manner more arrogant during wars and displacement, as girls and women are exposed to this type of violence in conflict, displacement, extreme poverty and the situation of minorities, and gender-based violence includes domestic violence, child marriage, honour killings, trafficking in persons, rape and others.



سجون الحوثي تعجز بنساء يוניفات اختطفن للضغط
على اهلهم بسبب الاختلاف الفكري والسياسي

Rape and Intimidation

Theoretical framework

Since the end of World War II to the present day, a strong base against rape in wartime and armed conflict has been built. There are articles in international humanitarian law, all criminal court decisions for Nuremberg, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and Sierra Leone, as well as the Rome Statute, classify rape as a war crime and genocide-related crime, and there are also provisions in the Geneva Conventions and Appendix II to the protocol that prohibits rape and consider it a war crime and a crime against humanity.

The four Geneva Conventions of 1969 and their additional protocols

Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that “women must be protected in particular against any attack on their honour, especially rape, forced prostitution and any abuse of their sanctity” (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949).

Despite the importance of this Article, it focuses on the special commitment that parties to armed conflict bear in preventing sexual violence against women. Still, it focuses on the concept of women’s honour and the violation of inviolability and does not mention physical and psychological protection. Rape also falls within the category of “intentional infliction of severe pain or severe harm to physical integrity or health” (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949) mentioned among the grave breaches stated in Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Article 27 of the four Geneva Convention states that “Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honor, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats”. (The four Geneva Conventions of 1949).

Additional Protocol I. comes to prohibit sexual violence and rape, as Article 75 of the Basic Safeguards, which addresses both military and civilian parties, prohibits “outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault” (Additional Protocol I. 1977). Article 76 of Additional Protocol I, which specifically addresses the protection of women, states, “Women shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected in particular against rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault.” (Additional Protocol I. 1977).

Additional Protocol II reaffirms the prohibition imposed on “ Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault” (Additional Protocol II. 1977)

In the texts of international humanitarian law, there is only an implicit prohibition of sexual violence against women and does not explicitly refer to rape. International humanitarian law has attended violence against the lives of persons, cruel treatment, torture, and attacks on personal dignity; moreover, the law provides for the right to apply in situations of international and non-international armed conflicts.

Common Article Three of the Geneva Conventions “It is prohibited to attack life and physical integrity, especially cruel treatment, torture and abuse of personal dignity, in particular degrading and humiliating treatment.” (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949)⁷.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

In Article 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination, 1979, “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of the prostitution of women.”⁸

There are many UN resolutions regarding women, such as Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). This resolution urges all parties to armed conflicts to protect women and children from sexual violence and calls for special measures to protect women and girls from rape and other forms of sexual assault during conflicts. In its resolution 1820 (2008), the council affirmed that sexual violence, when used as a tactic of war and to target civilians deliberately or as part of a widespread and systematic attack against a civilian population, could significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict⁹.

Violence and rape of women are among the most serious crimes that violate human rights and international humanitarian law and whose adverse effects disrupt the community's cohesion, security, and stability, and everything that affects Yemenis women affects their honour and dignity.

Society has not witnessed crimes similar to these of its scale and horrors since the beginning of the Yemeni revolution on September 6, 1962, which makes the Houthi group to the forefront of the list of the most ugly and hideous terrorist organizations in the world, according to reports of independent local organizations working in this field, including the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking and the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen have documented an “hourly crime” against women in Houthi-controlled areas¹⁰, where women face “the most brutal types of violations” that include mutilation, physical and verbal harassment, the exploitation of women in security and other actions, the denial of education and work, and then forced into the early marriage, the Houthi group has an inherent ideological methodology for restricting women, who are the most strict in the context of an environment hostile to women's rights And, the Houthi group deals fully opportunistically with everything related to women's rights in Yemen.

Houthi militias engage in rape as a reward for soldiers or civilians who work with them. This crime and its prevalence have been further entrenched in their dealings due to their belief of being safe from accountability because of the state agencies collapse and their influence and the weakness of the tools of the international community in holding them accountable, and the fear of women in talking and seeking to claim their right, in the cultures of the conservative society, defamation and talking about such issues are due to adverse effects, repercussions and negative consequences on the victim, even more than the ugly rape she was subjected to.

This part of the report is one of the most challenging parts of the report in terms of research and investigation, as it is difficult and complicated for victims to point out the violence they were subjected to or face or submit a complaint, which causes them serious physical damage and health problems, and sexual violence may cause problems related to honour crimes, as well as psychological damage. But we have adopted in the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, the 8th March Yemeni Union Women, and the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking to adhere to strict confidentiality and to keep the testimonies discreetly and not to announce the name and details of the victim-witness except for those who did not object to disclosure while taking measures to ensure their safety.

8- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination;

<https://www.ohchr.org/ar/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

9- <https://www.ohchr.org/AR/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/PeaceAndSecurity.aspx> for the English version; <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/PeaceAndSecurity.aspx>

10- Human rights and gender-related concerns of women in conflict and instability, Human Trafficking Organization Report





Rape is an integral part of the violence practiced by the Houthi militia against Yemeni women to inflict shame on the entire society. Rape for Yemeni society included not only the devastation of women in psychological and physical terms but the destruction of society.

There is a real problem in Yemeni laws that prevent survivors of sexual violence from obtaining justice for rape crimes such as:

In the current Yemeni law, any woman who tries to prove her rape exposes herself to the risk of proving adultery if forensic evidence is not available. The requirement for four male witnesses to the crime makes it virtually impossible for a woman to prove that she is a victim of sexual violence.

The accounts heard by the investigation team confirm the occurrence of rape of detained activist women.

Certificates for Survivors

On January 1, 2018, Amal Muhammad al-Qalisi was killed by several gunmen belonging to the Houthi militant group after raping her and dumping her body in the street in the governorate of Ibb. Our observers confirmed that the Houthi militia in the governorate of Ibb kidnapped the conference activist Amal Al-Qulaisi. Her body was found dumped in one of the streets of Ibb at noon, and this is not the first and only incident of its kind.

Rape is a systematic policy of the group to put the whole family under humiliating psychological pressure in a conservative society that binds honour to the bodies of women, which motivated many families to push their daughters to travel outside the country.

Fawzia Hizam, a survivor from the Houthi prisons, said that she was taken from her home in the middle of the night to the Houthi political office and remained in detention for 11 months, and was physically tortured by burning and electrocution, and confirmed that among the detainee women are taken to the supervisors in the detention facility to be raped.

Enas Muhammad, 22 years old, the daughter of Sheikh Qebli, who was arrested by the Houthi group for four months to put pressure on her father and distort him. She was beaten, tortured, and raped, and now she is undergoing psychiatric and physical treatment.

Faten (a nickname), one of the survivors, testified: "They kept me in a grave-like cell located under the ground about a meter square, without ventilation or a bathroom, and I was deprived of food and drink for long periods. They asked me to confess to prostitution in exchange for my release. Still, I refused, so they asked me to spy on their behalf on the ministers in the Houthi government itself, and senior men in power, but I also refused, so they continued to torture me with electric shocks. She accused the Houthis of sexual abuse against the detainees, saying: "I was subjected to sexual harassment, while my colleagues in the detention centre were sexually assaulted and raped, some of whom became pregnant with interrogators, and they were not released for fear of the scandal."

Another witness of the detainee survivors who refused to reveal her name spoke about the non-human Houthi treatment of the detainees and the conditions of their detention, saying: "Yemeni women are being raped inside the prisons of the Houthi militia, and that the family cannot reach or meet their daughters, and confirmed by saying: "Every minute brings a death." And she emphasized that the rape experienced forced some of the female prisoners to commit suicide.

Another survivor, who refused to reveal her name, says that the burning and electrocuting of prisoners' genitals is one of the Houthi torture methods in the prisons, which would destroy the women's lives forever.

The Houthi, Women trafficking, Human trafficking

Testimonies recorded documenting 71 cases of rape in prisons, as the Houthi security supervisor is working to distribute female prisoners to Houthi leaders, including Abdul Malik Al Houthi himself and others.

Jihad of purification, ISIS-style rape

Women detained by the Houthi group are raped within a systematic policy known as “purification,” whereby the male of the group who affiliated with the Hashemite dynasty, in which they see racial superiority in a Nazi-like concept, rapes the victim, according to their perspective, in this case, the Houthi male gives the female victim a positive feature similar to purification, which is a counterpart the similar terrorist group similar (ISIS) – the marriage jihad -, but women in the ISIS case go to the jihad of their own free will after brainwashing with religious fatwas. In contrast, the Houthi victims are carried out under duress with the religious characterization of the crime. The Houthis are adding to the false religious rooting that ISIS pursues, along with racial, ethnic, sectarian roots.

The exploitation of women in dirty work and fabricating charges

During 2019, the Houthis announced that they had arrested 44 prostitution networks, in which at least 400 women were arrested, according to their statements, which is a falsehood, those who are in the prisons are mostly female activists who were arrested according to charges fabricated by Houthis. They deliberately fabricated this charge, specifically in a conservative society, to blow up the activists' future and destroy their families. The irony is that all the networks that announced their arrest have no males at all, which nullifies their allegations, but confirms according to their confessions, the numbers of women arrested in 2019 are not less than 400. The survivors also recounted that they were later forced to go to the fronts to cook for the Houthi fighters, to deliver weapons, to carry out dirty missions, and to force sex “rape.” Some survivors also recognized that they were forced to go to Marib and Houthi-controlled areas with the purpose of espionage and to carry out terrorist and sabotage missions, and to entrap the militia opponents of politicians. And luring them through sexual missions.

Naseem Hussain Qasim, a college student, was kidnapped on November 11, 2018, for participating in the Hungry Revolution, malicious and unethical charges were fabricated so that her name would be included in the prostitution networks and she would be sentenced to three years imprisonment. Some of sheikhs interfered in her area and paid a ransom of five million riyals, and she was released.

Houthi and ISIS are two sides of one coin in terms of women's freedoms

The practices of the Houthi militia, the counterpart of ISIS, are increasing in violating the rights of women in their controlled areas, in terms of interfering in women dressing who is already characterized by decency and dignity, where women wear clothes imposed by the nature of the conservative Yemeni society, which is known as *palto* (overcoat) or *abaya*. However, the Houthis also interfered in its colours and sizes, imposed more strict conditions, and launched a campaign to remove the belts girls wearing and burn them in the streets in a humiliating view of women dignity, not to mention the defamation involved, as they attacked the shops selling women's *paltos* (overcoats), and burning their belts as a violation of public morals. The Houthis introduced a new type of punishment for women, which is shaving their hair. Houthi launched a campaign to cover the women's features in advertising banners, hinting that women are a lesser being than men and a source of disgrace which needs to be hidden. With all these practices, the Yemeni society, despite its extremism, had taken positive steps within the state to override the practices. Still, the Houthis have crudely consecrated them, and imposed strangely violent sanctions against women on Yemeni society, the same as that imposed by Al Qaeda and ISIS in the areas where they control and dominate their culture.

Rape Fatwa and Stigma

The Houthi militia relies on religious fatwas for its criminal practices against women. The Mufti the Houthi claimed, during one of Friday's sermons, that "the arrested women were running networks to corrupt the morals of the nation's young men and women." The Mufti of Terrorism called on the Houthi militias to address what he described as "hypocrites who raise the issue of kidnapping women and not tolerating them." Such descriptions of clerics are tantamount to accusation and incitement to murder and justification of rape with explicit references; therefore, the Mufti stigmatized women on societal and outcast charges.





Violation of the Right to Life

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the right to life, which is at the top of fundamental human rights, as is stipulated in Article Three that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.” And the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognized that as “Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life. In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most severe crimes by the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out according to a final judgment rendered by a competent court.

When deprivation of life constitutes the crime of genocide, it is understood that nothing in this Article shall authorize any State Party to the present Covenant to derogate in any way from any obligation assumed under the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence. Amnesty, pardon, or commutation of the sentence of death may be granted in all cases. Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age and shall not be carried out on pregnant women¹¹.

Yemen has ratified all these agreements. Moreover, the sanctity of human life is inherent in Yemeni culture. The Islamic religion as any healthy human society appreciates the value of life, except that since the Houthi coup and their control over the capital and parts of the country, the capital, Sana'a and governorates (Dhamar, Ibb, Amran, and Hodeidah) witnessed bloodshed and wars, and always keeping women and children the most vulnerable link in all Houthi crimes and violations.

2018 is considered the most challenging year for women to experience cases of life loss after the assassination of President Saleh, and most of these crimes were directed against female human rights activists opposed to the Houthi militia.



Among these cases was the activist: Amal Muhammad al-Qalisi, whose body was found dumped in the street in the Ibb governorate after being raped, as previously mentioned, and Asela Al-Doudhi, the under 18 years child, who was sniped with a malicious bullet in her head by the Houthi militia to leave her drawing in blood while she was rushing to save her uncle's body, who got killed by 30 Houthi gunmen during their attack on Asela's village in Dhofar Al-Sharnama, in the district of Baadan, east of the governorate, and there, she was killed while she was trying to protect her home, the militias did not give her the chance to defend herself and her family. There are other cases of Yemeni women losing the right to life after losing any desire to live because of the unfair criminal physical and psychological violations that they were subjected to by the Houthi militia, and tarnishing their reputation, so they commit suicide. According to the report of the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking, four female suicides were documented by female prisoners in the prisons of the Houthi group, and another nine kidnappers attempted suicide in their prisons.

Women awaiting the death sentence

In an unfair trial that lacks the minimum standards of transparency, fairness, and the rights of the accused to defend themselves, 22-year-old Yemeni Asma Mater Al-Omeisi, who is the mother of two children, faces the death penalty imposed by the Houthi courts for spying for the benefit of the coalition countries.

Asma was arrested in October 2016, on the pretext that she was held hostage to blackmail her husband until he surrendered to the militia. On January 30, 2018, a quick ruling was rendered by the Houthi Specialized Criminal Court in Sana'a, which issued a death sentence in the presence of the citizen, Asma Mater Al-Omeisi. The issued death sentence against Asma was delivered in a quick trial without going through the legal frameworks that usually require investigation in death penalty cases. Asmaa Al-Omeisi remains in Houthi prisons for nearly three years, awaiting execution¹².

This ruling is the first of its kind in the history of the trials in Yemen to pass a death sentence against a political opponent, not to mention that it was against a simple Yemeni woman who had no political activity and was not associated with any terrorist act.

Asma Mater Al-Omeisi was beaten and tortured, and the Houthis refused her request to resume the death sentence despite international calls that condemned the death sentence issued against her and demanded its stop and release her.

The death sentence for Al-Omeisi is a political ruling directed against women with distinction, not only against Asma's right. It is a provision that aims to terrorize women and silence their mouths, and prevent them from going out for public work and exercising any political role or opposition activity, or to go out with marches and demands.



12- Yemen War: No End Insight <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/latest/news/2015/09/yemen-the-forgotten-war/>
For English version; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/09/yemen-the-forgotten-war/>

Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearance

Yemeni women in detention

No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and following such procedure as are established by law, anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him, anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release. This is what the International Covenant on Human Rights has ratified by the Republic of Yemen, and therefore international law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. Detention is considered arbitrary if the authorities do not offer any proper legal basis justifying the deprivation of liberty¹³.

The Yemeni constitution states that “the state guarantees citizens personal freedom and preserves persons dignity and security.” The constitution prohibits arrests, inspection, and detentions except individuals caught in the act, or based on a judicial order from the Public Prosecution. The constitution, which includes the essential elements of criminal justice procedures, also determines that “the Attorney General must indict anyone who is being arrested in connection with a crime within 24 hours,” and that “only judges have the right to extend the arrest warrant for more than the first seven-day period.” The Yemeni Penal Code also provides for the imposition of “a prison sentence of up to five years against officials who mistakenly deprive people of their liberties.”¹⁴

During the period covered by the report, hundreds of cases of arrests and detentions of Yemeni women and even foreign women working in the humanitarian, media, and human rights fields and political activists were monitored, especially in the Sana’a region and the governorates subject to Houthi militia control.



The number of detainees reached 1181 detainees, of whom: 274 cases of enforced disappearance, 292 of these detainees are human rights activists and from the education sector, and 246 cases of workers in the relief and humanitarian field. The report also documented 71 cases of rape and 4 cases of suicide. In terms of the age group of the detainees, the number of detainees under the age of 18 reached more than 293 cases, in addition to documenting dozens of cases of male and female children who were detained with their detained mothers. Also, among the detainees, 8 belong to the Baha'i community. So far, 321 detainees have been released.

The highest rates of kidnapping, disappearance, and torture were recorded in the capital, Sana'a. The highest cases of kidnapping and disappearance were monitored after the coalition's separation between the Houthi militia and the General People's Congress party, and their killing of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, as many women's marches denouncing the Houthis. A large number of women were kidnapped and arrested after being beaten and abused in marches.

Women, a target for arrest

Yemeni women have become a direct target of the Houthi group, as women are forcibly led from homes, markets, marches, and demonstrations on various charges and transferred to criminal investigations.

In the forefront of the marches in which female activists, journalists, and human rights workers were arrested, the two mass demonstrations that took place in front of the Military Hospital in Sanaa, Tahrir, and Alsabeen Street, demanding the handing over of the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh body as well as stopping the violations, arrests, looting of public and private property, stifling dissent, and denial of freedom carried out by the Houthi militia against the various parties and different political forces.

On December 7, 2017, a march was held in which more than 77 women were arrested. On March 21, 2018, the Houthi coup militia fired live bullets at a women's demonstration holding flowers on the occasion of the birthday of the former President of the Republic, the General People's Congress Party. They launched a massive campaign of arrests and cut the roads leading to the house of the late President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Witnesses confirm that the Houthi militias have deployed extensively in the vicinity of the house, and prevented dozens by force from accessing the house, and also fired live bullets to disperse the gathering women and force them to leave, and attack the demonstrators. Faiqa, the Assistant Secretary-General of the General People's Congress, who called for the demonstration, was taken to the hospital after being attacked by the Houthis with batons and live bullets and prevented her from leaving the hospital. The militias also arrested Wafaa al-Da'is - a member of the General Committee of the Congress-, and dozens of other women. This was the third time that the Houthi coup militia attacked a women's demonstration after the demonstration of the Military Hospital and Tahrir Square.



The arrest of demonstrators against the policy of starvation

On October 6, 2018, (Sabah Ali Mosannaf)- sorority house officer at the University of Sana'a, was arrested by the Houthi militia along with 33 girls residing in the sorority of the university. The justifications for the arrest were the participation in the hungry revolution launched by a group of activists on social media, and the girls were detained for nearly a day. The militias practiced the most heinous means of torture and did not release the girls except with guarantee and ransom to one million riyals for each detainee.

Also, on the same day, Houthi shooters assaulted Sanaa women's demonstration. They arrested about 34 Yemeni women after they went out to condemn the collapse of the currency and the deterioration of living conditions. Among the detainees are (Azal Ali, Rehab Al-Aghbry, Asmaa Al-Akwa, Yasmine Saad, Khulud Al-Rahbi, Faten Al-Dhaifi, Yasmin Al-Marani, Balqees Al-Aden, and Raoa Al-Jaifi), bringing the number of detainees in one day to 102 women. Most of them are students at the University of Sanaa.

On January 28, 2019, the security apparatus of the Houthi group arrested (Ofi al-Naami), the resident director of Seferworld organization, and moved her to the National Security Agency prison for two months, where the senior terrorists are usually held with no telephone calls allowed. Her family was neither allowed to speak nor see her until her release. After that, arrests escalated against women and became commonplace by the Houthi group, as it has become customary to arrest the female relatives of whom joined the law and use them as a pressure card to blackmail the men or exchange them for Houthi prisoners.

Among the detainees who were reached and authorized us to mention their names in the report (Dr. Nawal Hammoud Ali Ghaleb Al-Wasabi, daughter of Professor Fatima Ghaleb) is one of the school managers of Hodeidah who were arrested because of her criticism of the group and was not released until after her mother paid the amount of two million Yemeni riyals and a commercial guarantee.



Wafa Muhammad Ali al-Shabibi, 25, Assistant Secretary-General of the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, was arrested on November 24, 2018, in the Dhamar governorate when she was coming from Aden. The Houthi militia threw her in the Political Security prison in Dhamar and her three children (Mai Hassan Al-Badani six years) (Hamad Hassan Al-Badani five years) and (Engi Hassan Al-Badani two years) with a commercial guarantee, her sister (Lula Muhammad Al-Shabibi 20 years old), her nephew (Abdullah Al-Masbah 17 years old) and they were released only after a month and a half of detention, torture, and abuse that even her children were not safe from.

Hanan Ahmed Al-Haidari, Secretary-General of Women Journalists Without Chains, who was arrested on November 24, 2018, and her infant child (Median Sami Al-Sharhbi, seven months) and her sister (Faten Ahmed Al-Haidari). They were imprisoned in the Political Security prison in Sana'a by Houthis, where they faced torture for the 45-day detention period.

Nora Al-Jarawi, head of the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, was arrested within the march of December 7, 2017. According to Al-Jarawi's testimonial, the women were taken to buses affiliated to the Houthi group, and they were distributed to several sections, including the sections of Alwehda in Asr, the 45th Street, and the Al-Safiya. The number of detainees has reached 77, of whom 11 are still missing. Noura Al-Jarawi's detention lasted for two days until the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Sanaa intervened to release all the detained women.

Kefaya Daile Mohsen, an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Media Department, member of the General Federation of Trade Unions and responsible for the media committee of the Security Guards Corporation, got released with a commercial guarantee after being arrested on December 7, 2017, because she participated in marches against the Houthis, later on, she was forced to write a pledge not to go out with any anti-Houthi marches. Despite her commitment, arbitrary measures were taken against Kefaya and suspended her from work. Kefaya was summoned to the National Security by the militias by a person named (Abu Imad), and the charges were fabricated against her. Hussein Al-Azzi threatened Kefaya and accused her of intelligence.

Amat Ahmed, a government employee with the rank of undersecretary, was arrested on December 7, 2017, tortured and electrocuted in the heart and hands and transferred to the hospital, after which she was dismissed from work and taken all of her dues. She was placed under house arrest and was also threatened and deactivated all of her accounts on social media sites. Houthi Preventive and Political Security investigated Amat again on August 21, 2018, and opened a file for her in their records.

Amat Allah Hassan Abdul-Mughni, head of the Yemeni Children's Government in Sana'a, was arrested more than once and placed under house arrest in Sana'a, Hajjah, and Wab by the Houthis because of her work in the children's government and her high school result was suspended.

Fawzia Hizam is a survivor of Houthi prisons. Fawzia stated that she was taken from her home in the middle of the night to the Houthi Political Bureau and remained in detention for 11 months and was physically tortured by burning and electrocution, and among the detainees were women who were taken to the supervisors in the detention facility to be purified (i.e., rape), Hizam confirmed that she was a witness of two women committing suicide in detention, one of whom committed suicide after the session, which they called "purification," a euphemism for criminal rapes.

Bardis Muhammad Ali Taher Al-Sayaghi, a married housewife with three children, is a poet who was asked by the Houthi group to write a poem for them, so she refused, so she had to pay an arrest for hours.

In mid-August 2018, the Houthi group arrested her husband from in front of the house, and after a while, she was informed of his death. Bardis did not accept the death of her husband, she continued looking for him in all prisons, and communicated with Houthi officials to ask for her husband's body at least, after arguing with them, Houthis broke into her house and violated his sanctity on the pretext that it contained weapons. Bardis resorted to the judiciary and demanded the trial of the (Sunni) police officers and the supervisor Ahmad Al-Saqqaf who assaulted her house. After three months in the courts, they pressed the court, froze the case. Bardis was kidnapped and beaten, she tried to leave Sana'a and flee to Marib and stayed there for five months with her children, but she suffered more. Then, Khalil Al-Qurashi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Local Administration (affiliated with the Houthis), Abu Hussein, the cultural supervisor and supervisor Abu Hussein Haq Al-Hatrash, affiliated with the ministry, contacted Bardis to persuade her to return to Sanaa and promised to bring the supervisors who assaulted her to trial, and that her husband is still alive, but detained for Houthis. Bardis returned to Sanaa, hoping for her husband's return and looking forward to suing on those who assaulted her. Bardis arrived in the Arhab area on Sunday evening, May 28, 2019, and a Houthi point in the Arhab area north of Sanaa stopped her for three hours until the operations were notified that she was allowed to enter Sana'a, Bardis said: I arrived in Sanaa and waited for my husband who they promised his release, but they watched me for two months, and I was asked to the investigation. After several attempts to escape, they arrested me on August 2, 2019, at four in the morning after they raided my house with five soldier crews and two buses with armed women (Zinabia) on board.

Bardis complemented: They blindfolded my eyes and took me to an unknown location and assaulted me by beating everywhere in my body. A day after, they transferred me to solitary confinement in (Al-Zaghta) I was interrogated, beaten, and tied my hand to the stairs from ten o'clock to four in the morning every day to force me to confess to many charges, including intelligence and treason against the nation. They used to give me only a meal a day which was never enough and forced me to drink blue coffee that tastes strange which causes lack of memory and feel my body no more, after two months of solitary confinement, they took me to a prison full of female prisoners. The suffering of Bardis and her children increased, and her medical and financial condition deteriorated, but she did not despair. She sued her kidnapping and assault case, attached a medical report to that, and submitted it to court, but no avail. Bardis was released after she wrote a pledge that she would not leave Sana'a, and she was still looking for a hand to reach justice to get her rights.

Abduction of women from travel lines

Houthi militias intend to harass and kidnap women on travel routes, especially in the Dhamar governorate crossroads alike with terrorist groups and bandits, as members of the Houthi group arrest the women and compel them to give up all their belongings and jewellery, in addition to paying high amounts in exchange for their release without any legal justification.

One of the survivors – asked not to mention her name – recounted that she was traveling with three children when the Houthi forces stopped her at a checkpoint, and they detained them, without food or water, during the scorching weather, she said: “I begged them to let us pass, but they refused. They insulted and threatened us with rape. We were panicking and started crying. They left us in the street at night in the middle of nowhere when they have done with us, we were afraid, and the children were in terror.”

The suffering of mothers in detention with their children

The Houthis violated all child rights treaties, conventions and the two international private covenants, and the Geneva Conventions for Human Rights, where dozens of children cases were recorded who were detained with their mothers, all in detention conditions contrary to international covenants and laws and subjected to physical and verbal abuse among children who were arrested with their imprisoned mothers for political issues and their participation in anti-Houthi marches, the following names:

- ✖ Mai Hassan Al-Badani, six years
- ✖ Hamad Hassan Al-Badani, six years
- ✖ Angie Hassan Al-Badani two years

They were held together with their mother, Wafa Muhammad Ali al-Shabibi, for 45 days, and the militia practiced the most heinous torture and violence against them.

The child Median Sami Al-Sharahbi, seven months old, was detained with his mother Hanan Ahmed Al-Haidari, Secretary-General of Women Journalists Without Chains, and he was deprived of appropriate food and sanitary ware such as baby diapers, sterile and disinfectant items.

Osama Al-Omari, 14, was held with his mother for three days.

Salah Muhammad al-Komani, who was held with his mother for three weeks. There are other cases documented that are difficult to list in the report. Still, they were recorded as violations in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Sana'a. This violates all the conventions related to childhood and its internationally annexed protocols, which prohibit placing children in prison.



Monitor Houthi confessions of detaining women and encouraging the

Houthi leaders have acknowledged in their pages on the social networking site (Facebook) the existence of these secret detention centres in the capital, Sana'a, in which dozens of women lie, as well as the security services of the militias receiving many reports and complaints from citizens stating that their female relatives were kidnapped by the Houthi supervisors.

Here we cite some of the shreds of evidence through the confessions of the Houthi militia leaders, according to the acknowledgment of one of the Houthi leaders Hussein al-Imad on his Facebook page (that the Houthis are arresting women, where he said the leader met with a group of distinguished media and gave them great advice and wished that he would also meet with a constellation of a criminal investigation led by Abu Saqr Sultan Zaben, who sell and buy prisoners and ask for 5 million riyals in exchange for one prisoner release.

Another evidence comes undoubtedly through the statement of the Mufti Al-Houthi, who urged "on the necessity of deterrent punishment for those who talk about the crime of kidnapping women." During the Friday sermon at a mosque in Mujahid Street, in the centre of the capital, Sanaa, Mufti al-Houthi claimed that "the arrested women were running networks to corrupt the morals of the nation's young men and women." The Houthis also produced a video shown on their official channel, Al Masirah TV, in the name of Red Lines, in which the Houthi group admitted that there are hundreds of women detained in their prisons, taking pride of what they had done under the name of arresting women's prostitution networks and the trial of 64 women. The video reveals shocking facts about the detention of women. It confirms that what was presented by the reports is only a drop in the ocean of the daily crimes committed by the revolutionaries, such as forced disappearance, extortion, and violation of honour and property.

Unethical and systematic ways of arresting and abducting women

The Houthi militia practiced illegal ways in their kidnappings, such as defamation, stigmatization using as a means of blackmailing the women's families, or as a means of making money and exchanging them for cash and gold.

The accusations of prostitution and intelligence were fabricated, and the militia intentionally recorded confessions of the kidnapped women under pressure and broadcast their crimes confession in the media, all of this without legal justifications and in violation of all customs and traditions of Yemeni society and legal obligations.

The broadcast of the documentary film, which was produced by the security media of the Houthi militia¹⁵, showed several kidnapped women in their prisons, and they accused the women with many immoral crimes for the political purposes of them and to be used against the Houthis opponents. "The most prominent accusations addressed against women, according to the film, were the women controlling of organized criminal cells linked to the enemy states as the Houthis call them meaning the Arab coalition to destroy the Yemeni society, trafficking of human, sex, drug dealing and robbery. According to the Houthi leadership appeared in the film who claimed that the Criminal Investigation Department arrested some organized women prostitution networks that were run by humanitarian and human rights organizations as well as figures associated with the Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime, the documentary also showed many kidnapped women making statements confessing that they were guilty and that they engaged in prostitution and other illegal acts. As well as pictures of detainees in the criminal investigation prison. This film can be considered as evidence and confession by the militia of their performance of detaining women, the existence of secret prisons and that most of the detainees are human rights, political, media, and civil activists, no woman was safe from Houthis crimes.

This also confirms that the fabricated charges are ready without any legal guarantees before any trials without the presence of any legal support or completing the legal procedures during the registration of confessions.



15- Red Lines Documentary; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYAeKjZFGpw>



Torture and Ill-treatment (testimonies of survivors)

Torture under international law is a form of ill-treatment, and it is always illegal. It has been prohibited internationally for decades following Article 172 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

Torture occurs when a person, in his official capacity, causes psychological or physical pain or severe suffering for another person for a specific purpose. Sometimes the authorities torture a person to extract a crime confession, or to get information.

Sometimes torture is used as a punishment to spread fear in society. The ways of torture differ. It can be physical, such as beating and electric shocks. It can be sexual, such as rape or sexual affront. Or it could be psychological, such as sleep deprivation or prolonged solitary confinement¹⁶.

The Houthi militia is characterized by extreme violence against women, and women have been subjected to violations by the militia, including enforced disappearance, arrest, murder, rape, insults, dismissal from jobs, and defamation. The silence of the international organizations concerned and the lack of serious action to stop these practices encouraged the Houthi militia to continue violating the humanity of the women victims.

Ahlam (a nickname), a survivor of Al Houthi prisons, tells her experience that she was held in different places, including a jail behind the criminal investigation and a villa in Taiz Street in Sanaa. She added, "I was released after two months of disappearance in exchange for the large sum paid by my family for Houthi leaders."

Our sources have documented women loud screaming under torture and interrogation by the guards of the criminal investigation; the screams reach some of the surrounding neighbourhoods during the night.

A surviving witness who requested not to mention her name; (I was arrested on March 6, 2019, I was tortured with electric shock, cold water, my hair was cut, and my toenails were taken off.

One day I woke up at Hospital 48 in intensive care. They took me to the central prison and treated there too. I got released from detention on January 20, 2020, I was I hearing the screams of the detained women, and there was a woman who did not tolerate torture, so she was paralyzed.)

Huge numbers in the Houthi prisons are not only women but also young men, but no one knows where these secret prisons are, and these prisons are in Sana'a, also in Saada; some women have been sent to Saada prisons, and we do not know what their fate will be, and some women have disappeared since December 7, 2017, which the families have not been able to reach.

Maha Saeed “nickname,” a Yemeni woman, who was arrested by the Houthi coup group for more than 70 days, in a secret prison near the Political Security building south of the capital. During the interview with the team, Maha recounted how she had stayed with the other 20 women in one tiny cell, and how they had been tortured by militia members who were assaulting and beating them. She explained that while she was in the cell, she regularly heard prison guards torturing female prisoners in other rooms in the evening, what was overheard to their conversation that there were some cases died under torture, where they said that they had done and were discussing how to move the bodies.

According to the testimonies provided by the human rights activists to our team that when Abd al-Aziz al-Baghdadi, the former appointed public attorney general appointed by the Houthis, assigned a special committee to inspect female prisoners, the committee submitted a report in which it clarified: the complaints made by several female prisoners, who spoke that they were subjected to all kinds of physical torture, including beaten with sticks and electric wires, slapping, suffocating and drowning in water, in addition to verbal suffering of insulting, degrading, slapping and psychological torture, to confess to things they did not do.

One of the witnesses - refused to mention her name – pointed that she and other detainees in (basement) and secret prisons of the Houthi militia were subjected to violations and attacks supervised by Houthi leaders, who were involved in criminality during her detention, and said that they assaulted her with electric sticks and shaved her head.

This is one of the methods used by the Houthis at checkpoints, including shaving the head, especially for new brides traveling between governorates to meet their husbands¹⁷. Reports of local and international human rights organizations confirm that thousands of citizens who left the Houthi-controlled areas to work, to receive salaries, or to visit relatives, were exposed to violations and risks at checkpoints, including harassment of women and the arrest of men.

Fawzia Hizam is a survivor of Houthi prisons. Fawzia stated that she was taken from her home in the middle of the night to the Houthi Political Bureau and remained in detention for 11 months and was physically tortured by burning and electrocution, and among the detainees were women who were taken to the supervisors in the detention facility to be purified (i.e., rape).

17- Yemen: one of the worst places in the world to be a woman; <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/latest/campaigns/2019/12/yemen-one-of-the-worst-places-in-the-world-to-be-a-woman/> For English version, check; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/12/yemen-one-of-the-worst-places-in-the-world-to-be-a-woman/>



Specialized Bodies for Violations against Women

Zinabiyat, a female gang formation

The Houthi militia has formed a women's irregular militia known as "zinabiyat." This feminist militia differs from the regular feminist formations such as the women's police and female soldiers in terms of its organizational nature and its legal reference; these gangs are not affiliated with any of the state's regular organs, but rather a group of women who are attracted by the group through ideological motives where the essential female supervisors are women leaders of the group or the wives of their leaders, lower rank for women belonging intellectually and denominationally to the group, finally reaching the women who are being recruited by exploiting their economic needs and living conditions, subject to intensive lessons and courses in the group's ideology.

The other side of this difference from other regular formations is in terms of the tasks that they perform and the extent of commitment to legal procedures, as they carry out illegal actions against women and without legal authorization; rather, it operates under the Houthi militia leaders. These tasks include raiding, and sweeping houses, screening, and kidnapping women handing them over to investigators, carrying out brutal acts against women from torture and beating, and contributing to the distribution of female prisoners to rape sessions they were calling "purification." These women's militias are accused of participating in all kidnappings, disappearances, and torture of women.

The report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen presented to the Security Council on January 27, 2020, clearly indicated this formation, and what was mentioned in the report on the composition and functions of this feminist militia (most of them are drawn from Hashemite families, an intelligence service directed towards women, and the responsibilities of Zinabiyat include screening women and sweeping houses, teaching women the group ideas, and maintaining order in women's prisons, the team documented violations committed by Zinabiyat, including arbitrary arrest and detention of women, looting, sexual assault, beatings, torture, and facilitating rape in secret detention centers).



Houthi intelligence and security services specializing in the torture of women

The report's investigation team concluded that, according to searches, investigations, and listening to the testimonies of the survivors, the security and intelligence services of the Houthi militia are directly responsible for the violations of women, which is stated in the report of the Committee of Experts, which confirmed that the investigations lead to the existence of a network specialized in the torture and detention of women activists led by the Director of Criminal Investigation Department In Sanaa (Sultan Zaben) who supervises and runs an extensive network of political repression of women under the guise of fighting prostitution, and the existence of a link between the Ministry of Interior, the Public Prosecution, and the legal authorities under the authority of the Houthi militia to be involved in arrests and detentions¹⁸.

According to the report of the Human Trafficking Organization, which obtained information from criminal investigation workers confirms that two people named Ahmed Matar and Hassan Petran were responsible for the investigation and torture, while the rest were under fake names.

18- The report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen to the Security Council; https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2020_70.pdf





Targeting Women Activists, Civilians, and Women Human Rights Defenders (facts and victims)

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders defending the human rights of women is defined as the defenders of women's rights and gender issues. The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders recognizes the critical role of the human rights defenders, including female human rights defenders. It defines the relevant rights of all of the defenders and the states' obligations.

Women defenders are at risk like any human rights defender, but as women, they are explicitly targeted with gender threats or gender-based violence. The reasons for targeting women human rights defenders are multifaceted and complex and depend on the specific context in which she operates. From the society perspective, the work of women human rights defenders is considered a challenge to traditional perceptions of the family and gender roles in the society, which can lead the general population and the authorities to creep over them. For this reason, women human rights defenders are stigmatized and ostracized by community leaders, religious groups, families, and communities that are considered to be a threat to religion, honour or culture through their work.

In addition to the risk of the women defenders of gender rights work of making them more vulnerable to attack and threat than their male counterparts, their families are also threatened to stop their daughters from continuing their work. Effective protection mechanisms must be undertaken for women defenders. Although the primary responsibility for protecting threatened women defenders rely on the state, the international community also has a responsibility to support and defend them¹⁹.



Means of Protection: a Strategy to Protect Women Survivors from Houthi Prisons

The suffering of the detention survivors does not end with their release. Still, it remains present in the conscience of those who lived this experience as well as its physical and psychological effects, not to mention the social and societal pressures that the survivor faces, which affect her present and future. It is not possible for the detention survivor to naturally re-engage in life, especially if the detention was along with torture, fabrication of charges, and defamation of reputation as the Houthi group does with the prisoners. Therefore, the tragedy of the detainee does not end with her release, and here comes the need to intervene, provide psychological support, and take measures to protect the survivor, and invest her energies in positive actions that make her feel her presence, importance, and support her sense of psychological security. For this cruel reality and the survivors' need for psychological and professional rehabilitation, protection centres for women survivors from the Houthi prisons must be established to contain former detainees and provide them with assistance.

It is possible to support the establishment of a specialized hosting centre to meet the different needs of violence survivors in Yemen to ensure privacy and confidentiality for them, provide comprehensive services appropriate to their needs so that women and their children have a safe space that guarantees more secrecy and allows them to benefit from more social and economic activities within an integrated system based on Human rights and women's empowerment, moreover, ensure their recovery and independence to enhance the access of Yemeni women and girls violence survivors to better care and support in light of the ongoing war and conflict. Supporting a centre for hosting and mentoring women is part of empowering women and providing them with safe spaces, and providing various means of support for an open and equipped hosting centre to reach all women exposed to violence in Yemen.

Since the Houthi militia coup to power in September 2014, women have been subjected to repression, violence, and hostilities, which affect arrested women who are subjected to torture, a violation against honour due to their activities or those of their relatives. Even survivors who got released also struggle to integrate into a society that prefers to bear them the responsibility for the violations committed.



Recommendations

To the Houthi group

- 1- The release of all women held in official and secret prisons, police stations, a criminal investigation, and political security in Sana'a and Dhamar.
- 2- Stop arresting more women.
- 3- Disclose the whereabouts of women arrested and forcibly disappeared and release them immediately.
- 4- Enabling human rights, feminist organizations, and human rights activists to visit the detainees and provide them with legal aid.
- 5- End all gender-based violence against women, including its targeting of women, and all exploitation and violations of their rights.
- 6- To stop the exploitation, extortion, and terror of the detainees' families.
- 7- Stop the rape and sexual exploitation of women prisoners, and immediately refrain from threatening to fabricate unethical charges.

To the legitimate government

- 1- Implementing psychological and physical rehabilitation programs for violation of women victims, especially the survivors of the Houthi militia prisons.
- 2- Working to amend some laws that protect women's rights, dignity, right to life, and equality.
- 3- Bear attention to displaced and refugee women, taking gender into account when providing humanitarian assistance, and actively involving women in managing the affairs of camps for the 4- displaced.
- 5- Release all women prisoners in their prisons, especially women prisoners in non-criminal cases, and monitor prisons by specialized committees.

To the international community

- 1- Pressuring Houthi militias to release the detained and forcibly disappeared women immediately and unconditionally, and to stop all violations committed against women.
- 2- Including Houthi militia in the list of terrorist organizations for its involvement in crimes and grave violations against women and children.
- 3- Opening an investigation by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women on the Houthi militia leaders' crimes against women.
- 4- Including and discussing the women violations in the agenda of the United Nations consultations with the Houthi militia.
- 5- Providing the necessary protection for women and children from the risks of military operations.
- 6- Implementing an urgent financial and moral support program for women survivors from Al Houthi prisons, which includes psychological support and protection for them, especially since some of them were subject to ostracization from their relatives after the Houthis' accusations.

General recommendations

- 1- Activating the role of women by participating in political and public life under the principle of the quota that was adopted with the outputs of the national dialogue, by no less than a third.
- 2- Activating the role of women in all peace industry negotiations and consultations, in compliance with Resolution 1325, under the quota established in the outcomes of the national dialogue, as a minimum.
- 3- Adopting projects and plans for the economic empowerment of women in a way that contributes to their financial independence and supports their role in public life and their political participation.



Conclusion

We, the work team, hope at this moment in which you conclude reading the report that it is the beginning of your attempts to help the remaining prisoners to recover them from torture and gain their freedom, and to give the assistance for those who are still urgently in need., but if you have a prior background of this file, we hope that you complete the resumption of your efforts as an individual and as an organization not to stop here.

Every effort we made in this report was not aimed at monitoring cases only, and if this was an essential factor to guide and follow the perpetrators so that they did not escape punishment and their crimes did not drop by the statute of limitations, but at the same time we aim to complete efforts, in each letter we wrote. The number we monitored, these were not just numbers, At every moment, we used to listen to the voices of the detainees' groaning and their torture in prisons, to the gaze of humiliation, brokenness, and helplessness in the eyes of their relatives, and the need and craving of their children.

We were and still are in direct contact with the torments of the survivors and their deep physical and psychological wounds that still need to be dressed, and their social and financial conditions that need support.

In the Coalition of Women for Peace in Yemen, the 8th March Yemeni Union Women, and the Yemeni Organization for Combating Human Trafficking we sincerely thank all of the testimonies of the victims, their families, and eyewitnesses, and to all who have contributed information and enriched the report throughout the material collection, monitoring, preparation and review, and to all organizations concerned with Yemeni women's and international affairs.

To all the working group of observers and analysts, at the top of this long list, Professor Nora Al-Jarawi, the political activist, who passed through the condition of arrest and escaped from it, and she bore the burden of carrying this heavy file and communicating the voices of women despite all the difficulties and challenges that faced them, let-downs and injustice, but kept the issue in mind. She was the reference, mentor, and guide for all this effort.



تقرير أممي يكشف "زينيةات" الحوثي.. قمع ومهام مربعة

كشف فريق لجنة خبراء الأمم المتحدة في تقريره الدوري عن اليمن، جانب "مظلم" من مهام "الزينيةات"، وهي شبكة استخباراتية تتبع لميليشيا الحوثي. وقال الفريق إن هذه الشبكة تشارك في قمع النساء اللواتي يعارضن الحوثيين بوسائل مختلفة، منها العنف الجنسي.

في تفاصيل القصة، كشف تقرير الخبراء الأمميين النهائي السنوي بشأن اليمن أن الفريق حدد شبكة الحوثيين المتورطة في قمع النساء اللاتي يعارضن الميليشيات، بما في ذلك من خلال استخدام العنف الجنسي، موضحاً أن هذه الجماعة مشكلة برئاسة سلطان زابن، مدير إدارة البحث الجنائي في صنعاء.

الأمم المتحدة

تدين قيادي حوثي بتعذيب النساء

انتهاكات وحشية
للمختطفات عقاباً على
نشاطهن السياسي

فريق أممي
وثق تعذيب مختطفات
في صنعاء

المتهم
سلطان زابن
مدير البحث الجنائي
في صنعاء

قضايا الشرف
سلاح الميليشيات لكسر
إرادة الناشطات

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اعتداء جنسي

تعذيب

ضرب

اختطاف

الشكل الأول الانتماءات المحددة لسلطان زابن

