



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 February 2020

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-third session

24 February–20 March 2020

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

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.

[03 February 2020]

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



Violations against Human Rights Defenders in Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran

Preamble

Maat association for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) is very concerned about the situation of human rights defenders in the Republic of Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In recent years, acts of harassment and intimidation have increased, both in number and intensity, against human rights activists in Those two countries

In Yemen, since the Houthis entered the city of Sana'a, they have worked to reduce the right of freedom of expression and peaceful association they also responsible for a wide range of journalists and human rights defenders arresting. Besides cases of enforced disappearance and close many human rights organizations.

The Iranian authorities also launched a repressive campaign against human rights activists, and within two years Iranian courts issued judicial rulings which aim to obstruct their missions and to restrict human rights defenders in General. Maat Association denounces the threaten situation of Iranian human rights defenders as they subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention as well as the Iranian government targeting the families of human rights defenders to intimidate and silence them.

Targeting of civil society activists by Houthi militia

The Iranian Houthi militia which supported by Iran restrict the public space of civil society as it attacked many NGOs offices and arrested their workers and human rights activists. As well as workers in civil society organizations in Yemen are always under the risk of arbitrary detention In sometimes it reached to enforced disappearance cases which Is Practiced by Houthi in systematically manner since the Began of Yemeni crisis.

On January 28, 2019 "Awfi al-Naami" a Yemeni human rights activist, was arrested by the Houthi militia and placed in the National Security Agency, they prevented her from contacting her family until now.

The Houthi militia also continued to target international organizations and their staff mainly international human rights defenders, as the Houthi group recently expelled the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights" Al-Obaid Ahmed Al-Obaid" who is responsible for the human rights situation in Yemen, Also withdrawing his travel permit and forcing his plane to take off Minutes after landing at Sanaa International Airport, this indicate Houthis' disrespect to all international norms and the rules of the international community.

In January 2019, the Houthi militia fired toward international observers of the United Nations and members of the redeployment committee from the government side in the city of "Hodeidah" in western Yemen, knowing that coordination had already been made with the United Nations representative (referring to the leader of the UN Observer Group, General Patrick Camert), Who in turn told the team that the Houthis had promised him a ceasefire and demining . Also, in May 2019, CARE International suspended its activities in the "Hazm al-Udain" Directorate in" Ibb "Governorate after the violence attacks by Houthi gunmen towards a number of its employees, Hence the organization decided to cut Humanitarian aid in the directorate in protest of Houthi violations.

In Fact, Houthis Violations don't target only human rights defenders but also the journalists and media outlets who are subjected to arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, and Execution. There are 15 kidnapped journalists, most of whom have been kidnapped more than four years ago by Houthi, also They works systematically to detain students and human rights defenders even who are not working in the human rights field. Besides, political opposition and activists on social media as well as teachers like the case of the teacher "Asma Ahmad Al Jabri" who refused to Distribute Houthi lieutenant on students and she were arrested by the Houthis in August, 17 2019 .

In the same context, the National Organization of Journalists in Yemen "Sada" expressed in October 2019 that there are Yemeni journalists kidnapped in the Houthi prisons for five years and they suffer from deadly diseases that kept some of them from the movement also the organization stated that it received reports and information confirming that the kidnapped journalist by Houthi group since 5 years "Harith Hamid", suffered a horrific deterioration in his eyes and he suffers from a continuous headache that needs surgery for his eyes, and It also revealed that the journalist "Abd al-Khaleq Imran" suffer from Sliding of the Vertebrae, and the journalist "Issam Abu Al Ghaith" suffering from Rheumatism And it start to affect his heart and deteriorated his eyes, also the journalist "Hisham Tarmoom" became suffering from liver disease, and "Akram Alwalidi" who is suffering from diabetes and stomach ulcers, "Hisham Alywsfyu" who had Depression also " Salah Alqaeidi" suffering from weakness and malnutrition, and "Tawfiq Al-Mansouri" suffering from liver disease and his eyes is deteriorated.

Repression of human rights defenders in Iran

Throughout 2019, the Iranian authorities arbitrarily arrested thousands of individuals it charged 4 of them with corruption on the ground a crime that led to Execution, as well as the arrest of human rights defender "Amersalar Dhawi" on November 20, 2018 whose contact with his family is restricted .On June 1, 2019, his wife "Tanaz Kahlashian" announced on Twitter that he had been Accused by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on multiple charges and he was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment and 111 lashes this came after he shed light on Iranian violations through a channel he established on the application of "Telegram". Accordingly Maat calls the International community to ask The Iranian authorities to stop their continued repressive targeting of human rights lawyer and defenders.

Although the Islamic Republic of Iran received (16) recommendations in the penultimate review before universal periodic review, regarding the protection of freedom of expression for human rights defenders, it has accepted only 3 of them, and since the penultimate review in 2014 till 2019 the Iranian authorities have launching a systematic aggressive attack against human rights defenders especially women among them. Between January 2018 to March 2019, at least 30 activists were arrested within the demonstrations against the compulsory veil in Iran and they were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment due to " Encouraging debauchery and prostitution" also the lawyers who defend them face many narrows from national security which imposes harsh penalties on them.

In 2018, many activists were arrested after participating in the "White Wednesdays" campaign against the laws of forced hijab, and in July and August 2019, four women were sentenced to prison up to 24 years because of their peaceful protests, Also in March 2019, The prominent Iranian lawyer and women's rights defender "Nisreen Soutoudeh" was sentenced to 33 years and 148 lashes for defending women rights as the laws of forced hijab in Iran, as well as for her protests against the death penalty and judicial corruption. The Iranian authorities also arrest her husband "Reza Khandan" and charged him with his support For women protesting obligatory hijab also they arrest other lawyers such as "Arash Kikhsrui", "Qasim Shaalah Sa`di" , "Farrukh Frozan" , "Muhammad Najafi" , "Mustafa Daneshjo" , "Mustafa Turk Hamedani" , "Payam Dervshan" and "Zainab Taheri" , In addition to 112 women human rights defenders had been arrested during 2019.

Recommendations

Maat association for Peace, Development and Human Rights urges both the Yemeni and Iranian authorities to respect human rights and also call the international community to pressure both countries to provide more effective guarantees for human rights defenders. The Foundation recommends the following:

- The Houthi militia must release all detainees, human rights defenders and activists.
- The legitimate Yemeni government must intervene to stop the violations committed by the Houthi militia, and to ensure the protection of Yemeni defenders and other human rights defenders in Yemen.

- The Iranian authorities should immediately stop harassment practices targeting human rights defenders and other civil society Actor to continue their work freely.
- Amend constitutional articles and Iranian legal legislation with international human rights law to ensure an appropriate environment to the human rights defenders.
