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Written statement* submitted by Human Rights Information and Training Center, 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.

[01 February 2021]

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



On oral update of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen

Introduction

The human rights situation in Yemen has worsened during the past six years due to the bloody armed conflict and violence against civilians and accompanied by a humanitarian crisis that is the largest in the world. 80% of the total population in Yemen in 2020 require humanitarian aid and food as opposed to only 34% in 2006 based on the indicators of the World Bank.

This deterioration in the humanitarian situation was accompanied by widespread violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law committed by the parties of the conflicting in Yemen.

The degree of those violations varied between one party and the other. Therefore, the Houthi militia, classified according to the United States of America State Department as a terrorist organization, is in the front-line to commit most of them directly. The militia has committed violations of international human rights law concerning the deprivation of life, such as unlawful execution, death under torture and assassinations of various means, as well as suicide attacks, in addition to violations of human rights, such as detention, forced disappearance, and violations of freedom of opinion against journalists, rights defenders and minorities such as Jews, as well as the related to the targeting of children by depriving them of life or education, their recruitment into the conflict and plunder of humanitarian aid for the population.

The human rights and humanitarian situation in Taiz governorate

Taiz is the most embodiment of the Yemeni tragedy, as it is the city that suffers from the most dangerous and enforced siege imposed by the Houthi militia for the sixth year in a row, and it is also the largest blockade in Yemen, in contrast to the siege imposed on ports and airports as a result of the coup war launched by the Houthis against state institutions.

The political arena in Taiz is also a model of political and administrative fragmentation, which enhances the suffering of people and puts their lives in real danger. A daily scene walking around the most populated and most suffering province in Yemen.

Taiz, which is located in the southwest of Yemen, with its important geographical location in the country that suffers war and chaos, is a victim of Yemeni geography, just as Yemen is all a victim of geography in the region. Taiz which is the gate to Bab al-Mandab, a polarized strait of regional conflict and international concern, and it is adjacent to the capital, Aden, and forms its security and geographic depth.

The governorate of Taiz continues to suffer from the continued targeting of civilians and their properties directly by the Houthi militia, as the scene, repeated almost daily, of the bombing and military targeting of some notables, public and private properties and agricultural lands.

In addition to the perpetration of extrajudicial killings, assassinations, arrests and other violations committed by several different parties, led by the Houthi militia.

During the year 2020, the Houthi militia carried out hundreds of bombing operations against civilians and their property, directly targeting all aspects of life in Taiz and several other districts and rural areas.

The Houthi militia has also continued to impose collective sanctions and restrictions on the city for nearly six years in a row, by closing the entrances to the city and preventing the passage of goods, food, medicine, and citizens, including patients, to receive the necessary treatment for them in hospitals outside the city, which pushed them to take bumpy roads that doubled their suffering.

As a result of the imposed siege, Taiz governorate suffers from food insecurity, high poverty and unemployment, in addition to multiple crises related to the shortage of safe drinking water, crises in the health and education sector and other vital sectors, as well as electricity cuts, which affected various other vital sectors.

In the areas liberated from the Houthi militia, acts of noise, firing of bullets, and multiple clashes by militants outside the state's framework and members of the government army affiliated with multiple partisan or regional factions or unknown armed men have been repeated, which exacerbated the rates of deterioration in humanitarian conditions, and escalated acts of looting, violence and clashes that occurred. It resulted in the deaths of many civilians and the wounding of others and caused damage to some private and public properties as a result of the use of firearms.

The year 2020 witnessed an escalation in raids of homes and villages, arrest campaigns and kidnappings that affected dozens of civilians by various violating parties, which followed coercive policies against detainees and kidnappers to undermine their dignity through the policy of physical and psychological torture in various prisons and detention centers.

Besides, a series of violations against journalists and writers were practiced, summon campaigns were carried out according to political positions by the security services, and many restrictions were imposed on rights and freedoms.

The spread of the Coronavirus crisis and the accompanying emergency measures left a very complex and difficult humanitarian situation, which exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the governorate of Taiz, especially in light of the practice of various types of violations in light of the siege imposed by the Houthi militia for about 6 years in an act of choking the city. In addition to collective punishments that led to a dramatic increase in poverty and unemployment rates and the spread of various diseases.

In the year 2020, Al-Thawra Hospital was bombed more than once, as well as the Central Laboratory, Al-Amal Hospital for Cancer Patients, Al-Safwa Hospital, and Leprosy Hospital in Al-Nour, west of Taiz.

Besides, wounded in the bombing some workers in the health sector, including three doctors.

The intensification of the battles in the contact areas from time to time between government forces and the Houthi militia contributed to the deterioration of the health sector, especially with the departure of a large number of medical personnel, specialists and consultants, from the governorate to the regions of neighboring countries or neighboring governorates to Taiz.

The health sector in Taiz faces a scarcity in providing medicines and medical supplies in working government hospitals, especially with the spread of epidemics and fevers such as malaria, dengue (chikungunya), yellow fever and the outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), which was accompanied by the refusal of several private and government hospitals to receive cases of fever or suspected of having Corona, and 18 people have died of Covid, according to official statements.

Moreover, because of the blockade, many medical equipment was destroyed in the early stages of the war, due to the lack of spare parts and the scarcity of resources, so the main hospitals in Taiz did not possess most of the modern medical equipment.

For example, there is no government hospital in Taiz that owns a computed tomography or magnetic resonance imaging device, but it is found in some private hospitals with very old specifications and at a high cost.

Taiz Governorate lacks ventilators; especially with the outbreak of the Coronavirus, where Taiz only has 11 ventilators.

This deterioration in the health sector contributed to the suffering of nearly four million people crammed into the governorate.

Assassinations

Our field team documented 79 assassinations and attempted assassinations of officers and soldiers in the army and government security, in which 23 soldiers and security officers were killed, as armed men outside the authority assassinated 17 of them and 4 others were killed in clashes with other members of the army belonging to multiple factions. Unidentified armed men assassinated a soldier, while the other soldier was assassinated by the Houthis.

44 soldiers and security and army officers were wounded, 29 of them by armed men outside the framework of the state, 9 others by the Houthi militia, while 4 soldiers were wounded by unidentified gunmen and 2 by members of the army belonging to multiple factions.

While 10 other soldiers and officers survived an assassination attempt, eight of them survived an assassination attempt by unidentified gunmen and two by armed men outside the framework of the state.

Mass massacres

Our field team documented 8 massacres that took place during the year 2020, committed by the Houthi militia, by the direct bombing of densely populated residential neighborhoods, which resulted in the killing of 28 civilians, including 8 children and 8 women, and the wounding of 33 civilians, including 7 women and 5 children.

These massacres concentrated in January and March, with 3 massacres each and two in April, which were the most violent ones in terms of the number of victims, the majority of whom were women and children. These massacres caused permanent disability and loss of limbs for several injured.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that action must be taken and that more efforts have to be made to release detainees, as well as to limit arrests and enforced disappearances.
2. We urge the effective presence of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen (GEE), and work impartially with all parties.

Center of My Right for Support the Rights and Freedoms, Regional Network for Human Rights Activists, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.