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**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.

[29 May 2023]

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



Death Cases in Houthi-Controlled Prisons

Executive Summary:

The right to life is the most fundamental human rights of all; it is the foundation underlying the rest of human rights. No human right can be preserved without respecting the right to life. Crimes of murders and arbitrary executions committed in prisons and detention centers against detainees and prisoners are a flagrant violation of this human right.

Despite the supreme value of this human right, the Houthi de facto authorities, which control the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, and other parts of Yemen, have been violating over the past years the rights of civilians under their control to life by carrying out hundreds of executions, most of which took place outside the framework of the law and the judiciary, in an arbitrary and summary manner, without taking into account the minimum humanitarian and religious standards that criminalize killing people unjustly.

The deaths of prisoners and detainees in prisons and detention centers affiliated with the Houthi group represent an arbitrary deprivation of life that is forbidden under international human rights standards and laws, and it is a critical problem and a source of concern. According to reports obtained by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association from its local partners in Yemen, the Houthi de facto authorities have been abducting and arresting dissidents and human rights defenders over the past years and detaining them in inhumane conditions. It continued to subject them to torture and other ill-treatment and to deny them necessary medical care inside its prisons and detention centers, which led to hundreds of deaths among detainees and prisoners. According to the latest statistics obtained by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association in this regard, more than 671 detainees have been killed inside Houthi controlled prisons since it took control of the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014 due to their direct liquidation, torture leading to death, medical negligence, and denial of access to medical care and the necessary treatment. Among them, 98 detainees were injected with toxic substances and died a few days after their release from prison. In light of the foregoing, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association presents in this intervention a detailed overview of conditions of detention leading to death and cases of arbitrary killing committed by the Houthi de facto authorities against detainees and detainees in its prisons:

Detention Conditions in Houthi Controlled Prisons and their Compatibility with International Standards:

Yemen is a party to international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Treatment or Punishment. Under these treaties, it is committed to upholding human rights, including the right to humane treatment of detainees and the prohibition of torture. Although the Houthi de facto authorities are obligated to implement and follow international human rights standards in prisons and detention centers under their control as a party to the Yemeni conflict and where they exercise effective control over parts of Yemen. However, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association has noticed over the past years that detention conditions in Houthi controlled prisons are harsh, inhumane, and do not meet international human rights standards. In this context, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association reviewed reliable local and international reports indicating the poor conditions of detention in Houthi controlled prisons and detention centers, where detainees and detainees inside these prisons suffer from severe overcrowding, limited ventilation, extremely high temperatures, and humidity, lack of access to natural light, and limited access to bathrooms sanitation facilities, and inadequate access to medicines, blankets, food, clean water, adequate healthcare, and adequate meals; these violate international human rights standards and the rights of these detainees to humane treatment. As a result of these inhumane conditions experienced by prisoners and detainees in Houthi controlled prisons, thousands contracted serious diseases during their arrest or imprisonment, which led to deterioration in their health, and hundreds of them died(1).

Human Rights Violations Leading to Death in Houthi Controlled Prisons:

The de facto Houthi authorities have worked in the conflict for years to kidnap civilians and dissidents and detain them in their prisons. According to reliable local statistics, since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen in September 2014, the Houthi group has kidnapped more than 16,000 civilians, of whom about 4,000 civilians are still kidnapped in Houthi controlled prisons until now(2). During the period of detention in Houthi controlled prisons, detainees in Houthi controlled prisons were subjected to human rights violations at the hands of the Houthi de facto authorities. In this context, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association has documented, over the past years, various types of human rights violations committed by the Houthi group systematically against detainees in its prisons, including violations related to degrading torture and other cruel treatment or punishment, which included sleep deprivation for prolonged periods, severe beatings with electric cables, electric shocks, cold water dosing, exposure to scorching sun and extreme cold, and denial of proper medical care and necessary medical treatment, including medication and surgical interventions; as a result, hundreds of detainees and detainees were killed due to torture and medical negligence in the prisons of the Houthi group(3).

According to local statistics obtained by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association in this context, more than 671 detainees have died inside Houthi controlled prisons since it took control of the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014 due to being liquidated or directly killed and due to being subjected to torture leading to death, medical negligence and denial of access to medical care and those who received the necessary treatment(4), the previous death cases were distributed as follows:

- 147 deaths of detainees due to direct killing inside prisons.
- 282 deaths of detainees due to negligence in prisons.
- 92 deaths of detainees due to heart attacks due to deprivation of necessary treatment.
- 52 deaths of detainees due to kidney failure and complete paralysis due to torture and medical negligence.
- 98 deaths of detainees a few days after their release from the prisons of the Houthi militia due to being injected with toxic injections before their release from detention centers.

Previous statistics indicate that the de facto Houthi authorities use torture and other forms of cruel treatment, medical neglect, and denial of medical care as a systematic means to liquidate opponents and dissidents in their prisons, which is inconsistent with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law(5).

Recommendations:

In light of the above, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association presents its recommendations to the Human Rights Council as follows:

- Establishing an independent and transparent commission of inquiry to investigate deaths in Houthi controlled prisons, identify those responsible, and bring them to justice in coordination with civil society organizations and relevant international bodies.
- Working to tighten penalties for Houthi de facto authorities who commit human rights violations in prisons, include them in international sanctions lists and activate various international mechanisms to punish those responsible for these violations.
- Urging the Houthi de facto authorities to take immediate measures to prevent torture, ill-treatment, denial of medical care, and other causes of death in prisons.
- Pressuring the Houthis to immediately release all detainees arbitrarily detained in Houthi controlled prisons.
- Ensuring the right to a fair trial for all prisoners, including the right to legal representation and the right to a speedy trial.

- Ending to all forms of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners.
 - Allowing independent monitors access to all prisons to assess conditions of detention and treatment of prisoners.
 - Holding those responsible for torture and ill-treatment practices that led to death accountable through fair and impartial trials.
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(1) 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Yemen, Us department of state, March 2023, link: <https://bit.ly/3BAzpSn>

(2) Houthi militia kidnapped 16,804 civilians in 8 years: Report, Siasat, November 2022, link: <https://bit.ly/3o3Qzow>

(3) Pulling the Trigger Houthi Militia Violations in Yemen after Eight Years of Conflict, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, April 3, 2023, link: <https://bit.ly/3pME3dj>

(4) Humanitarian report: 127 thousand Houthi violations in Yemen in 8 years, Yemen Online, December 12, 2022, link: <https://bit.ly/41FDZcN>

(5) Houthi militia kidnapped 16,804 civilians in 8 years, Previous reference.