



General Assembly

Distr.: General
13 February 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fourth session

11 September–13 October 2023

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.

[21 August 2023]

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



Human Rights Violations by the Houthi Militia in Yemen

First: Extrajudicial and Summary Executions:

The Houthi militia in Yemen continued to issue death sentences in the first eight months of 2023, and the judicial bodies controlled by the Houthis to legitimize their policies continued to issue unfair and harsh death sentences against civilians, through formal trials lacking the minimum standards of fair trial. This constitutes a violation of the right to life provided for in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and for fair trial guarantees stipulated in international human rights law(1). On July 19, 2023, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association reviewed testimonies stating that the Houthi militia carried out 19 extrajudicial executions for people who were arbitrarily detained in al-Safraa prison in Wadi Madhab in al-Musayna'a(2). In March 2023, militia-affiliated gunmen executed a young man called "F.S." in Ibb governorate by shooting him with eight bullets and mutilating his body, for participating in the funeral of a detainee who died in the prisons of the Houthi militia(3). On February 14, 2023, the Central Military Court in Sana'a sentenced 30 military officers to death in absentia and seized their property, under the pretext of high treason, aiding the enemy and facilitating entry into the territory of the Yemen(4). In January 2023, the Houthi militia issued orders to execute six civilians in Al-Mahweet Governorate, after unfair accusations without providing any guarantees for a fair trial(5). Execution of death sentences by arbitrary and summary procedures contradicts the prohibition called for by some UN bodies not to resort to execution unless as a measure of last resort and for the most serious crimes and in cases where fair trial standards are respected. The executions by the Houthi judicial authority were, however, carried out in summary and expeditious procedures that do not respect the guarantees of a fair trial or the litigation procedures stipulated in international human rights conventions.

Second: Arbitrary Detention, Enforced Disappearance and Torture:

The Houthi militia continued to adopt an approach based on arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of individuals within militia-controlled areas in order to terrify these individuals. These practices were followed by various forms of torture, and statistics indicate that 15,000 civilians were detained by the Houthi militia, of whom about 480 died, according to a local Yemeni organization. Among the recent examples, on August 12, 2023, the Bar Association in the militia-controlled areas reported that the lawyer "A.A." was kidnapped by gunmen affiliated with a leader in the militia in cooperation with the security forces in Sana'a, and he was taken to Alaya Prison in Qamishli, due to a judicial dispute with a leader in the Houthi militia(6). The detained lawyer has reportedly denied communication with his family and was not informed of the charges against him, which are clear violations of Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. On August 10, 2023, the Specialized Court of First Instance in the Sana'a Municipality held the first sessions in the trial of 47, including 31 persons, who had been arbitrarily detained in the building of the Security and Intelligence Service in Sana'a, which is affiliated with the Houthi militia. According to the lawyer of the detainees, they have been subjected to grave human rights violations and were denied communication with their families and held incommunicado(7). On August 8, the Sana'a Teachers Union secretary, called "M.A.," was arbitrarily detained after objecting to imposing taxes on the teachers' fund, which are spent on other areas that do not include the disbursement of teachers' incentives. This step was taken by the militia in the context of the arbitrary measures it has taken recently against teachers in the areas under its control, as the militia has previously arrested the secretary of the Teachers Union branch in Al-Mahweet governorate as well and a number of educators in the governorate after objecting to policies aimed at imposing more taxes on teachers. and stop paying their salaries(8).

Practicing arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance on a large scale led to widespread torture in the prisons of the militia. It should be noted that according to Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association resources, there are 60 secret prisons in the areas controlled by the Houthi militia.

On this basis, the Houthi militia continued to practice various types of abuse, cruel treatment and practices, which amount to torture, and contradict the provisions of the Convention Against Torture and the rest of the basic human rights conventions that the unrecognized foreign minister of the Houthi militia acknowledged(9). For example, in August 2023, a Yemeni citizen named "A.A" was tortured to death inside a prison of the Houthi militia in the Al-Mashnah district of Ibb governorate, and the Houthi militia refuses to give his family his remains unless they drop the case charged against them(10). On July 15, 2023, an officer called "F.A." in the Yemeni government's National Army forces reportedly died due to torture in the prison of the Houthi militia in Sana'a(11). Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association reviewed reports verifying that the killed officer was subjected to different types of torture including prolonged sleep deprivation, severe beatings, slapping and kicking, prolonged exposure to the sun, and electric shocks. It is worth noting that these incidents are not followed by the opening of transparent investigations to hold the perpetrators accountable, which makes these practices a recurring pattern. In the same context, on January 4, 2023, in a rare confession, the spokesperson of the Houthi-affiliated Ministry of Interior, which is not recognized internationally, said that the security forces in the Sahar area in Saada governorate in northern Yemen kidnapped a citizen named (A.Y.) and tortured him to death. Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association examined the circulated video documenting the incident and found traces of torture on the victim's body. However, the investigations opened by the militia in this incident did not lead to redress for the victim or his family(12).

Third: Continuation of Siege on Taiz:

More than 3020 days have passed since the siege imposed by the Houthi militia on the city of Taiz in Yemen, which is the third largest governorate in Yemen with a population of more than four million. According to testimonies verified by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, the siege imposed on the city hindered the enjoyment of some basic human rights. For example, the eight-minute-long travel became eight hours after the blockade, which impedes the enjoyment of the right to freedom of movement. The blockade imposed on the city also affected the arrival of patients to health centers and hospitals, which is a clear violation of the right to health, in addition to the increase in food prices by more than 32% due to high transportation costs. Fuel prices have also surged according to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and the proportion of water supply to the city has decreased by 41%. The siege affected more than 4 thousand university students, hindering their arrival at the university. Alternative, less-prepared methods led to the death of 374 and the injury of 966 people in traffic accidents. It is worth noting that international humanitarian law, especially Article 13 of the Second Optional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, prohibits the imposition of sieges on civilians, in the context of non-international armed conflicts.

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association Recommends the Following:

- Immediately stop issuing death sentences and provide necessary guarantees for fair trials based on international human rights standards;
- Stopping all violations against teachers and educators in militia-controlled areas and immediately releasing all arbitrarily detained teachers;
- Opening impartial and transparent investigations into the deaths in the prisons of the Houthi militia and ensuring fair compensation for the families of the victims;
- Establishing an independent mechanism to monitor and document violations committed by the Houthi militia on a daily basis in prisons under its supervision;
- Putting pressure on the Houthi militia to lift the siege on the city of Taiz in order to ensure the enjoyment of basic human rights.

- (1) Houthi court sentences Yemeni minister, 29 officers to death in absentia, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2251216/middle-east>
- (2) The presentation of Chief of the Yemeni Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violations and Torture, <https://tinyurl.com/3zhwdjyu>
- (3) The Houthi militia executes a young man and mutilates his body, Akhbar Al -Youm, <https://tinyurl.com/3fkwpdcw>
- (4) Ibid, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2251216/middle-east>
- (5) Human Rights Ministry condemns militias' decisions to execute 6 of the sons of Al-Mahewu, <https://www.mofa-ye.org/Pages/21659/>
- (6) Event "Death inside Houthi prisons, <https://tinyurl.com/52amukdm>
- (7) Bar Association accuses "Houthi officials" in Sana'a of kidnapping a lawyer and imprisoning him in Sana'a <https://ydn.news/?p=11482>
- (8) The National Prisoners Authority denounces the torture and trial of dozens of kidnappers and forcibly disappeared in Sana'a, <https://www.yenshab1.info/locales/86814>
- (9) Houthis Impose More Taxes on Teachers, <https://tinyurl.com/4wkr7sd3>
- (10) Pulling the Trigger Houthi Militia Violations in Yemen after Eight Years of Conflict, <https://tinyurl.com/2dnd8x86>
- (11) He was severely beaten... The death of a kidnapped in the prisons of the Houthi militia in the city of "Ibb", <https://yemenshabab.net/locales/86898>
- (12) The death of a "prisoner" officer under torture in a Houthi prison in Sana'a, <https://tinyurl.com/bdxxcer6>