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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, 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.

[20 August 2023]

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



A Slow Death for the Yemeni People

Eight years have passed since the Saudi-led Coalition countries launched their war on Yemen, and during this time, the international community has shown a strangely indifferent attitude, while the UN and other humanitarian and political organizations have been absent in providing international legitimacy. Despite this, reports issued by UN political and humanitarian organizations present irrefutable facts regarding the flagrant violations and crimes committed against Yemen and its people. These reports highlight the persistent nature of the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen, describing it as the worst in the world. They confirm that the Saudi-led coalition is responsible for this disaster, either directly by causing the deaths of thousands of civilians, especially children and women, or indirectly through the war and blockade that targets essential facilities relied upon by the citizens on a daily basis, such as health and nutrition centers, farms, food stores, water and sanitation, and more. Furthermore, the blockade is being used as a means of starving civilians, resulting in millions of casualties, predominantly among children and women.

In October 2022, the UN-brokered truce in Yemen came to an end, and despite this, the Saudi-led coalition remained uncompromising. They continued to enter Yemeni ports to loot oil derivatives, deliberately depositing the revenues into the Saudi National Bank instead of the CBY, where it should benefit the Yemeni people and public sector employees. The national forces responded by defending their wealth and territorial waters, confronting and targeting any ship approaching Yemeni ports, particularly in Abyan and Shabwa governorates. Throughout all this, the United Nations maintained a deafening silence, seemingly ignoring the terms of the truce agreement, and allowing the coalition and their mercenaries to persistently attack and harm civilians and civilian objects for over eight years.

The Yemeni economy has suffered greatly during these eight years, primarily due to deliberate targeting of economic facilities (industrial, commercial, oil, agricultural, and fisheries) by the coalition countries. This aggression was coupled with a full blockade, non-payment of salaries to public sector employees, and arbitrary restrictions on the entry of essential and life-saving materials to the Port of Hodeidah. These actions have led to a significant increase in the prices of basic commodities, further exacerbating the economic deterioration in Yemen.

The Salary Issue

Another year has passed, and the salary crisis is now entering its ninth year, with continuous interruptions of civil servants' salaries. Since the management of the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) was moved from the capital Sana'a to Aden in August 2016, salaries have been subjected to political, partisan, and regional considerations by the aggression coalition countries and their mercenaries. This has severely affected 1.2 million public sector employees and their families, exacerbating their living conditions and disrupting the functioning of many public institutions across the northern and southern governorates.

The non-payment of staff salaries has resulted in a decline in public services, particularly in the service sectors.

Despite the UN-declared truce agreement that came into effect on April 2, 2022, the salary issue remains unresolved, making living conditions increasingly difficult, reducing job opportunities, and increasing the unemployment rate.

Male and female teachers continue to endure very difficult economic and living conditions due to the ongoing interruption of their salaries.

The negotiation agenda regarding salary interruptions faced significant pressure during the consultations in the first three months of the truce. The disbursement of salaries and the resolution of the current crisis were central to the discussions held in Muscat, Oman, between the Sana'a de facto authorities and the Yemen Government in July 2022.

The Group-of-Five Committee (Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, & the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) announced their collection of all revenues in Yemen, indicating that the payment of salaries to Yemeni employees is controlled and hindered by the aggression coalition countries led by the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The third UN-mediated truce in Yemen came to an end on October 2, 2022, with the aggression coalition rejecting the implementation of demands, including the payment of Yemeni civil-servant salaries.

The Sana'a de facto authorities emphasized that the first priority in the new negotiations should be the disbursement of salaries to all public sector employees in all governorates, without exception and on a regular basis, using oil and gas revenues according to the 2014 budget. They also called for the lifting of the blockade imposed on ports and airports.

Oil and Gas

The coalition countries persist in their unjust blockade and commit acts of maritime piracy, aiming to hinder the access of import and oil derivative ships to the Port of Hodeidah. Despite completing all verification and inspection procedures through the UN Verification and Inspection Mission in Djibouti (UNVIM) and obtaining UN permits confirming compliance with stipulated conditions, these ships still face obstacles. Additionally, the Saudi-led coalition consistently disregards the declared truce. Consequently, food prices in Yemen increase dramatically, leaving millions of Yemenis unable to access food and exacerbating human suffering significantly.

Data from the CBY branch in Aden confirms that during the first half of 2022, crude oil and gas revenues increased by \$187.6 million, a rate of 34%, reaching \$739.3 million compared to \$551.7 million during the same period in 2021. This increase was due to the high global energy demand during the Ukrainian war. However, these oil and gas revenues are being plundered and directed to Saudi and Emirati banks, instead of being utilized to recover the Yemeni economy and alleviate famine and humanitarian disasters.

Economic Challenges in Yemen

The Yemeni government of Aden has issued a decision to raise the customs exchange rate by 50% for all imported goods, increasing it from 500 to 750 YER per 1 US dollar at all land, sea, and air ports. This decision also includes raising the prices of oil derivatives and domestic gas. This surprising step, with the blessings of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, comes at a time when the country is facing an unjust blockade, destroyed infrastructure, lack of services, and non-payment of civil servant salaries due to the war waged by the aggression coalition. As a result, citizens, especially in the southern regions under the occupation of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, are burdened with higher living costs.

The rise of the customs exchange rate to 750 YER for 1 US dollar by the aggression coalition's mercenaries has led to negative repercussions on various economic sectors throughout Yemen. The prices of basic commodities experience almost daily fluctuations and changes, resulting in severe catastrophic effects and human suffering for millions of Yemenis in both northern and southern governorates. Some of the major consequences include:

Rising prices of essential commodities, including food, medicine, and oil and gas derivatives, making it difficult for millions of citizens to access these goods.

A significant decrease in purchasing power.

High inflation rate.

Unstable exchange rates, particularly in the southern regions.

A sense of pessimism among citizens.

The devaluation of the Yemeni currency.

Increased smuggling activities and import-related corruption practices, especially in the southern regions.

Continuous suffering for consumers due to frequent price shocks.

Health Sector

Over the past eight years, the health sector in Yemen has experienced a severe collapse due to the systematic destruction of hospitals and healthcare centers by the Saudi-led coalition in various governorates of the country. More than 60% of hospitals are at risk of shutting down their services due to the comprehensive blockade imposed on Yemen through land, sea, and air, preventing the entry of essential medical supplies and medicines. Additionally, the deliberate prevention of ships from docking at the port of Hodeidah has further exacerbated the situation, causing most hospitals to suspend their medical services. Urgently needed oil derivatives are required to operate life-saving medical devices for millions of patients.

Yemen has faced the largest humanitarian disaster for over eight years, a result of the Saudi-led coalition's war on the country. During this time, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reduced its health assistance, including the supply of medicines and medical supplies. Financial incentives to dozens of doctors have been interrupted, and support for health centers that were previously assisted by the WHO has been suspended. The World Food Program (WFP) has also announced a reduction in food assistance to millions of Yemenis, especially those who are internally displaced and affected by the war.

Eight years have passed since the military attacks carried out by the coalition countries led by the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and their mercenaries on Yemen. Throughout this period, grave violations and serious crimes against civilians and civil, cultural, and religious objects have been committed. The coalition countries have intensified their bombardments on civilians and civilian objects, despite truce agreements supervised and monitored by the United Nations. However, the United Nations has not pointed to the Saudi-led coalition countries and their mercenaries as the party violating the terms of a series of agreements during the year 2022.

Insan For Human Rights and Peace, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.