

To: Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative / Vice-President
European Commission

Brussels, 03 December 2021

Subject: Violence against women in Yemen.

Dear Mr Borrell,

Five years after the start of the Houthi militia coup to power in Yemen, women are still the primary target and the most numerous victims in this war, having suffered grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Such violations have increased after the events of 2017, which culminated in the assassination of Ali Abdullah Saleh, former President of the General People's Congress and Aref Al-Zouka, Secretary-General of the Congress Party and the killing, arrest, and liquidation of thousands of the party leaders, members and activists.

Since then a systematic targeting of women, who were the leaders in the field of political churning, has developed among the Houthi militants. During this period, 1181 women were imprisoned, among them where human rights activists, educators and workers employed in the relief and humanitarian field. The number of detainees under the age of 18 reached more than 293 cases, in addition to male and female children who were forced to be detained with their mothers. As of today, only 321 detainees have been released.

Moreover, hundreds of women were arbitrarily arrested and subjected to various forms of violence and injustice such as kidnappings from demonstrations and homes, fabrication of criminal and immoral charges, unlawful and unjust rulings, often including death penalty and numerous cases of murder.

Exceptionally cruel are the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed towards women prisoners in the Houthi prisons, including tortures inflicted with sticks and electric wires, slapping, suffocating, and drowning in water, in addition to verbal and psychological torture consisting of insulting, degrading and fabricating immoral charges. In the several instances of detainees who committed suicide, the Houthis neither allowed medical examination nor investigation of the causes of deaths within Detention centres.

Furthermore, several survivors state that they were also exploited, forced to go to the fronts to cook for the Houthi fighters, deliver weapons, carry out terrorist and sabotage missions, and utilised for espionage purposes.

In light of the gravity and severity of the crimes and violations which are being perpetrated in Yemen on a daily basis by the Houthis criminal militias, we kindly ask the honourable Vice-President to take into account the lack of full documentation of such violations, to establish a new investigative mechanism to document Houthis crimes against women and to gather and preserve evidence of these serious human rights violations and war crimes occurring in Yemen by Houthis militias.

Best regards,

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