



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 48th SESSION

Interactive dialogue on the report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen – 14 September 2021

Mr. Kamel Jendoubi - Chairperson of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen:

- Report "A nation abandoned: A call to humanity to end Yemen's suffering": [A/HRC/48/20](#)

Before beginning, Mr. Jendoubi raised the **issue of resourcing**, deploring that the Group of Experts was left without the requisite **human and material resources** to function for over half of its mandate. In addition, for a third year in a row, **the Group was not granted permission to visit Yemen or coalition countries**, despite being the only international UN mechanism focused on human rights in Yemen.

The Group continues to witness all parties to the conflict continuing to commit **serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law**. There is a lack of political will to change. If the parties wished to **stop these violations** they could. If they desired to **hold persons to account**, they could. If they were truly **committed to respect the human rights** of persons in Yemen, they would.

Since March 2015, it is estimated that over **23 000 airstrikes have been launched by the coalition, killing or injuring over 18 000 civilians**. The Group is concerned that the coalition are failing to abide by principles of **distinction, proportionality and precautions** in attack in carrying out these airstrikes. The Group remains concerned that parties to the conflict, particularly the **Houthis**, fail to take **precautions to protect the civilian population** and may be shelling areas in an indiscriminate fashion.

Two-thirds of the population in Yemen are in need of humanitarian assistance for their very survival. Actions of parties to the conflict are creating and/or exacerbating this crisis. This includes the way in which **blockades are impeding food supplies**, humanitarian access and timely aid delivery.

Individuals continue to be subject to **arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, ill-treatment, denial of fair trial rights and murder**. The lives of internally displaced persons and migrants are also at risk. **Gender-based and sexual violence** continues to be committed. **Children** continue to be **recruited into armed forces** and used in hostilities, while their access to education is compromised due to the military use of schools, rendering these facilities liable to attack. Many of the violations identified may amount to **international crimes** and continue to be committed in **total impunity**.

The Group sincerely hopes that a **resolution is unanimously adopted to renew its mandate**, preferably for a period longer than one year, and accompanied with the requisite resources.

Dr. Ardi Imseis – Member of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen:

The Group of Experts maintains its 5 core recommendations made last year:

- 1) UN Security Council should refer the situation in Yemen to the **International Criminal Court**.
- 2) UN Security Council must expand its **list of individuals subjected to sanctions** (Res. 21/40).
- 3) An **international criminal justice investigation mechanism for Yemen** must be established.
- 4) Third States must **investigate war crimes committed** when they can and have jurisdiction.
- 5) Yemeni authorities should **establish tribunals to judge war crimes** and other violations.

Ms Melissa Parke – Member of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen:

Messages and testimonies from victims of the war in Yemen:

"I am a Yemeni man, father to six children. A week ago, 2 airstrikes hit my house and the one of my brother next door in the middle of the night. It killed everyone except two of my daughters. Standing



around the ruins of my home, I tell the UN people that I don't know why we were targeted. We are not part of any political or military group, and there are no military facilities nearby. We are just ordinary Yemeni people trying to survive in a war, we have no role in and control over".

"I'm a member of the armed forces, I'm 14 years old. There was a recruitment, me and my cousin joined in order to earn some money for my family who is starving. We are about to be sent to the frontline".

"I'm a mother yearning for news of my son. He is a human rights worker, he was snatched-off the street last year by armed men and hasn't been seen since. I haven't been able know why he was taken".

Delegation of Yemen – Speaking as the country concerned:

The Group of Experts **lacks professionalism and is biased**. Its report presented is based on false information. The government of Yemen is **against the renewal of the mandate of the Group**. Moreover, there is already an **existing mechanism** established to identify evidence: the **National Commission of Inquiry of Yemen**.

Yemen does not need **erroneous reports** such as the one presented today. It needs **technical assistance**, a question which is discussed under the **Item 10** of the Council.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

27 States took the floor during the interactive dialogue. The main point of divergence between delegations was about the **renewal of the mandate of the Group of Experts on Yemen**.

The majority of States was against the renewal of the mandate of the Group, saying that the only reliable body for investigation in Yemen was the **existing National Commission of Inquiry of Yemen**. (Egypt *on behalf of the Group of Arab States*, Bahrain *on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council*, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, China, Libya, Mauritania, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco, Kuwait, Jordan, Cameroon). Some States also deplored that the **report of the Group of Experts was unreliable**.

On the other hand, a number of States expressed their **support for the work and the renewal of the mandate** of the Group of Experts, considered as the **only international mechanism** working on human rights in Yemen (European Union, Ireland *on behalf of Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg and Netherlands*, Iceland *on behalf of Nordic-Baltic countries*, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France, United States).

States deplored the **human rights violations** perpetrated in Yemen, including **torture, ill-treatment, recruitment of child soldiers, sexual and gender-based violence, attacks against civilians, airstrikes, use of famine as a weapon of war**. Liechtenstein and United Kingdom specifically underlined the dire **situation of children in Yemen**.

Other states called for the **urgent need of an open and unhindered access to humanitarian aid** in Yemen (European Union, Switzerland, France, Uganda, Iran, Pakistan).

States that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (27 delegations)

Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States, European Union, Ireland on behalf of Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg and Netherlands, Bahrain on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Iceland on behalf of Nordic-Baltic countries, Liechtenstein, United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, France, Egypt, Venezuela, Iraq, United States, Saudi Arabia, China, Libya, Mauritania, Bahrain, United Kingdom, Sudan, Morocco, Kuwait, Jordan, Uganda, Cameroon, Iran, Pakistan.



10 NGOs took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue:

Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Baha'i International Community, Iraqi Development Organization, International Institute for Rights and Development, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Defence for Children International, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Zero Pauvre Afrique, OIPMA, Partners For Transparency

Civil society urged the **coalition to lift the blockade it imposes on Yemen** for many years, including the flight ban. The blockade **causes shortage of food and humanitarian aid** and put the **lives of millions of children** at risk.

Several NGOs expressed their **support for the work of the Group of Experts** and called for the **renewal of its mandate** (International Institute for Rights and Development, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Defence for children international, Cairo institute for Human Rights Studies)

The Cairo institute for Human Rights Studies and the International Institute for Rights and Development stated that the **situation in Yemen should be referred to the International Criminal Court.**

The Baha'i international community deplored the **situation of the Yemeni Baha'i population**, who are persecuted by Houthis.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom deplored that **women were not meaningfully included in the Yemeni peace process**, and that third States should **stop transferring arms to parties to the conflict.**

Watch the full Interactive Dialogue with the Group of Experts on Yemen: [HERE \(UN Web.TV\)](#)