



**SAM**  
Rights & Liberties

# DISCRIMINATORY RESTRICTIONS

A HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT DOCUMENTS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROHIBITIONS IMPOSED BY THE  
HOUSHI GROUP ON WOMEN IN YEMEN DURING THE WAR PERIOD 2014 TO 2023

البيانات التمييزية  
التي تفتقر إلى  
الشفافية على المستوى  
المحلي

March 2023



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[www.samrl.org](http://www.samrl.org)  
[info@samrl.org](mailto:info@samrl.org)



## Who are we?

### **SAM for Rights and Liberties**

An independent and non-profit Yemeni human rights organization, which began its activities in January 2016 and obtained a work permit in December 2017. It seeks to defend human rights in Yemen, and to convey violations to decision-making institutions, active and influential international organizations. The organization has been subject to numerous defamation and incitement campaigns, as well as hacking its platforms by parties to the Yemeni conflict for exposing human rights violations. It has issued dozens of human rights reports and statements documenting The Outcomes of the conflict and human rights in Yemen.



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## Introduction

Yemen has been witnessing a civil war since September 2014, initiated by the Houthi group, which calls itself Ansar Allah, in alliance with former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Following the Saudi- and UAE-led military intervention in the country since late March 2015, violations have increased in the country, with serious short-term consequences for the fundamental rights of women, girls, boys, and men, particularly those suffering from multiple forms of discrimination and vulnerabilities. These rights include the right to life, survival, and development; protection from violence, injury, and abuse, including sexual violence; liberty and security of person; and the right to health, food and education. These rights are guaranteed under international human rights law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) (2019 Report of the Group of Eminent Experts, para. 617).





The Houthis have exploited many legal provisions based on customs and traditions, which grant men privileges and extended guardianship rights over women. This has turned women into a minor group for some and deprived them of their public status and the enjoyment of the basic rights guaranteed to them under the Yemeni Constitution and Islamic law, including the right to movement and travel, deliberately rearranging Yemeni society, in which Yemeni women have achieved many political rights and imposed their personality associated with independence and trust in managing public affairs in line with the orientations of the intellectual community. This deprived Yemeni woman of many achievements and took them back steps in a position characterized by inequality and discrimination based on sex and limited their roles to domestic and tribal roles opposed to the Yemeni constitution.<sup>(2)</sup>

Despite the legal and social restrictions in a patriarchal society, controlled by customs, traditions and special laws, which impose their application over time on local, tribe, and family communities, Yemeni women have been able to forge a path for empowerment and general success multiple levels, local, regional and global, and have entered areas that until recently were the preserve of men, such as the House of Representatives and public service. In January 2014, the National Dialogue Conference, led by women and men in Yemen, made recommendations to abolish many of these discriminatory customs and laws. This brought new hope to women in Yemen, but due to the conflict that erupted shortly thereafter, these measures were not enacted.<sup>(3)</sup>

Repressive measures against women have increased significantly over the past year, particularly in Houthi-controlled areas as the group imposed a policy of haram and required guardian consent for women to engage in all types of activities, including movement and travel. In compliance with this policy, Yemen Airways began requiring official approval from a guardian to reserve a seat for women on its flights, and even required a relative to accompany her until she reached her seat.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Houthis have been restricting women's movement, confiscating their freedom, and gradually limiting their rights through special religious decisions and provisions instead of state laws, which included all aspects of women's material and moral lives.

(2) (2019 Report of the Group of Eminent Experts, para. 619).

(3) (From the 2019 report of the Group of Eminent Experts, paragraph 722).

(4) (Sana'a Center for Studies Annual Report 2022)

## Context of the report

This report, issued on the International Women's Day, the eighth of each March, sheds a general light on the violations to which women in Yemen are subjected during the war period since September 2014. It focuses in particular on the behavior of the Houthi group in restricting the freedom and movement of Yemeni women, in addition to imposing many restrictions on their personal and public freedom, taking advantage of the security situation that Yemen is going through, and its control over the general scene to impose its own ideological agenda, and the absence of the rule of law, and the traditional culture of women, in addition to societal traditions, which caused a remarkable and unacceptable restriction of women's freedom that deprived them of many of their rights that they enjoyed as a human being and an active and active member. in society in violation of international conventions, the Yemeni constitution and law, which respects the dignity of the Yemeni person and guarantees his freedom of expression, assembly, and movement.

According to a letter from the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls and others to Hisham Sharaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Houthi government in Sana'a, dated December 2, 2022, «On September 21, 2014, Ansar Allah took control of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, by force.

The escalation of the conflict has led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with extensive damage to civilians, their property and vital civilian infrastructure, resulting in utter despair and extreme poverty for most of the population. Gradually and recently, Ansar Allah has seriously undermined the rights of women and girls in areas under their control, which are home to nearly 70 percent of Yemen's population.

The Houthi group's policy against Yemeni women involves serious violations of international human rights standards, as they take advantage of the dominance of weapons and their armed groups and the absence of the rule of law to impose arbitrary and illegal restrictions against Yemeni women, and to mobilize the social reality based on a patriarchal culture that elevates shame and honor at the expense of human dignity and personal freedom, and even exploit the economic situation to use women for military and security purposes against women violators, as is evident in the recruitment of the so-called « Zeinbat», which calls for intervention to promote truth, justice, reparation and ensure non-repetition

## Methodology

As part of its documentation of human rights violations, SAM relied in this report, entitled «Discriminatory Restrictions», to highlight the restrictions imposed by the Houthi group on Yemeni women since its control of the capital in September 2014 through a clear methodology for accessing and investigating information, including transparency, impartiality, impartiality, and objectivity.

In this report, the organization's team relied heavily on reliable open sources, such as reports issued by UN organizations and considered human rights reports, in addition to a number of means to obtain information and reach victims, through electronic communication with victims, and field visits to the team to document some facts and listen to them and eyewitnesses, where the organization also used the available means of communication, received many reports, obtained many televised clips of victims' stories, and transmitted some of what was broadcast by the media parties. The dispute in its statements and letters, and in all of this it has confirmed the sources, and relied on what it was assured of after examination, analysis, and matching.

The organization believes that what it found in this report does not surround reality with all its facts, but rather is revealing of the magnitude of human rights violations for the period covered by the report, as the organization tried to make its report as brief as possible to suit International Women's Day, as the report includes statistical figures of violations suffered by women during the conflict period by all parties.







## Legal reference

Yemen is a party to many international conventions such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, whose articles 2, 18, 19, 26 and 27 stipulate, in particular, the principle of non-discrimination on any protected grounds, including religion or belief, as well as the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, the right to live free from torture and other forms of ill-treatment, opinion and expression, equality before the law, as well as the right of individuals belonging to minorities.

Article 18, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights affirms that «Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This shall include his freedom to have a religion, his freedom to adopt any religion or belief of his choice, and his freedom to manifest his religion or belief through worship, observance, practice and teaching.»

The Human Rights Committee notes in the commentary to article 18 of the ICCPR, which must be interpreted precisely: restrictions are not permitted on grounds not mentioned there, even if they are permitted as restrictions on other rights protected in the Covenant, such as national security. Restrictions may be imposed only for those purposes for which they are stated, and they must be directly relevant and proportionate to the specific necessity on which they are based. Restrictions may not be imposed for discriminatory purposes or implemented in a discriminatory manner.

The Commission on Human Rights also noted that «the concept of morality derives from many social, philosophical and religious traditions, and therefore restrictions on the freedom to manifest a religion or belief for the purpose of protecting morals must be based on principles not derived exclusively from a single tradition.

In its report to the Human Rights Council, the CEDAW Group explained in its criticism of the conduct of certain regimes contrary to the Convention, «Culture and religion are often invoked to justify discrimination and violent practices against women and girls, and women are often seen as objects rather than as equal participants with men in the formulation and visibility of cultural principles.

The four Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols also provide special protection for women as a civilian who does not participate in hostilities, and this protection is formed by preventing the parties to the conflict from invoking the existence of a state of armed conflict to evade their obligations under international conventions.

This was affirmed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, as the General Assembly expressed its concern at the harm and pain to which women are subjected, the violation of fundamental freedoms, and the continued violation of international humanitarian law by colonial and racist regimes and authoritarian foreign States, and affirmed that women among the civilian population in situations of emergency and armed conflict shall not be deprived of their inalienable rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The rights contained in these international conventions represent the minimum rights that may not be violated or derogated from (Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Situations of Emergency and Armed Conflict, adopted and made public by General Assembly resolution 3318 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974).

Whereas Yemen has ratified the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols I and II, which oblige civilians to respect and spare them the scourge of war and conflict, especially women and children, and subject all violations against civilians to criminal accountability, and has also signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, where the Convention affirms that discrimination against women constitutes a violation of the principles of equal rights and respect for human dignity.

International conventions and covenants also consider gender-based violence at its four levels – sexual violence, economic violence, psychological violence, harmful customs and traditions – a crime that requires accountability and requires special protection for women.

## General violations and shocking figures

During the period from the beginning of the conflict in Yemen to the end of 2022, SAM Organization recorded shocking figures on the volume of violations suffered by Yemeni women during the six years of war, as it recorded more than 5,000 cases of violations until the end of 2022, including killing, physical injuries, arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance, torture, and a ban on movement, in addition to more than 900,000 displaced women in Marib camps, committed by the parties to the conflict in Yemen, where the Houthi militia is at the forefront of violating women's rights with 70%, followed by pro-legitimacy forces with 18%, then the Transitional Council with 5%, and other parties with 7%, from deliberate killing and severe injuries against civilians and activists, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

more than

# 5000

cases of violations

The figures showed that the number of Yemeni women who were killed during this period reached 1,100 women, the largest number of whom fell in the city of «Taiz» with 500 women, followed by «Hodeidah» (200), «Aden» (42), «Lahj» (45), and «Saada» (100), while 1,500 women were injured, and Taiz also had the largest share among them with (1,600) women.

Among the total women who lost their right to life (600) women were killed as a result of exposure to fatal shrapnel, (300) others were killed as a result of direct bullet wounds, (120) women were killed as a result of being injured by shrapnel from mines, (15) women as a result of shrapnel from explosive devices, (40) women were killed as a result of various wounds, and (300) women were killed by the bombing of Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

women who were killed

# 1100

the largest number of whom fell in the city of «Taiz»

Injuries

# 2200

woman

The Houthi militia topped the list of parties responsible for violations against women, as (612) women were killed jointly with the forces of former President Saleh during the period covered by the report, and 500 women were killed alone after separating from Saleh's forces, while the Arab coalition forces and aircraft killed (245) women, and American drones killed (12) women.

While the number of injured women reached 2,200, the largest percentage of them was in Taiz city with a number of 1,600 women, and the biggest reason for women's injuries was exposure to shrapnel, as their number reached 1,100 women, and 535 others were shot. The largest number of casualties was due to attacks by the Houthi-Saleh militia, which resulted in the injury of 1,312 women, while the Houthi militia alone injured 300 others, and the Arab coalition forces injured 134 women.



## Zainabiyat is a security apparatus to impose restrictions

The Houthis imposed a certain pattern in dealing with women to impose their intellectual vision of women and their function in life, in terms of form, and the Houthis have established a women's security apparatus known as «Zainabiyat», consisting of the group's supporters of women whom the group trusts and the remnants of the security apparatus during the era of President Ali Saleh, as the device was established after the December 2 uprising called for by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. According to a team report, Zainabiyat played a major role in entrapping many women and exploiting them to work as informants or collect information for the Houthi group, and they also worked to terrorize other women by breaking into homes, searching and tampering with its contents, and beating some women, in addition to supervising female detainees inside prisons, and «um Al-Karrar» is one of the most famous Zainabiyat who supervises female detainees in the central prison in the capital, Sana'a, and practices violations against arbitrarily detained women.

The Houthis established a women's apparatus called al-Zainabiyat, which was entrusted with carrying out security tasks outside the framework of the law, and it is a secret gelatinous apparatus whose leaders are difficult to track or know its structure, in which highly trained female elements work to carry out raids and arrest women activists, and break up demonstrations and vigils, in addition to other special tasks, such as spying and entrapping opponents, monitoring opinions, and prosecuting activists in private sessions and workplaces.

According to press reports, an estimated 4,000 Zainabiyat have received combat training in Sanaa, some of whom have received training abroad, in Lebanon and Iran by experts from Hezbollah and Iran.

The Houthi militia's women's security formations consist of ten teams, bearing different names, most notably the Zainabiyat Brigades, the Women's Commission Group, the Zahra Brigades, and the Intelligence Preventive Brigades. The Zainabiyat are trained to deal with weapons such as use, dismantling and installation, in addition to dealing with explosives, installing and dismantling them, carrying out incursions and searches, and they receive training in civilian sites used by the Houthis for military purposes, including schools, educational areas, sports fields, and government universities.

Fatima says in her testimony, «The women responsible for torture are women from Zainabiyat whose names are not known and no one knows with whom they communicate, the Zainabiyat cut off all hope for the detainees to live, and during torture the prisoners are forced to confess to people from the former regime who were engaged in prostitution and hashish trade and are filmed during their confession as if they were confessing to their accomplices and then they are directed to trial based on those confessions.»<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) (Women in Yemen report five years of violation by SAM organization)



## Lists of restrictions

The Houthi group imposed many restrictions and issued many prohibitions aimed at tightening the noose on people's lives and determining the lifestyle they should practice, as a case of imposing guardianship on society, and women in particular, which are at the forefront of targets in the lists that have reached standards for the shape, color and size of the clothes they wear.

This comes in the context of the approach that the Sana'a authority represented by the Ansar Allah group (Houthis) continues to follow in restricting society, which seriously undermines the rights and freedoms of women and girls in the areas under its control, and the letter of the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights revealed many of these restrictions and prohibitions against women in particular, such as access to reproductive health services in some areas under its control, and greatly restricted women's travel without a mahram, and issued more than one circular imposing a stereotypical vision of how to dress «corresponding to of Islamic law» for women, according to their description.

In addition to preventing work, segregating the sexes in public places, and promoting discriminatory and misogynistic attitudes, it has more than once banned mixing in research and graduation ceremonies of a number of universities, and banned and expelled women from working, in addition to that a number of Ansar Allah (Houthi) speeches, through various platforms, ignited the flames of misogyny in the areas under its influence.

# انفوجرافيك يوضح اهم القيود المفروضة علي النساء في اليمن من قبل جماعة الحوثيين

## قوائم القيود



## Political Restrictions

Restrictive norms for women in Yemen are not a new phenomenon, but such policies are unprecedented as they threaten to completely exclude women from public life and reflect the hardline and conservative theocratic state approach that the Houthis seek to establish in areas under their control. The more the Brotherhood's grip on power is entrenched, the more institutionalized such repressive measures take on. The Houthis' desire to impose a certain ideological agenda is reflected in the group's efforts to enforce religious holiday celebrations, recruit women's militias to monitor other women, as well as change school curricula, set up training camps to indoctrinate young people and continue to recruit children.

Although the Houthis' agenda of marginalizing women is the most extreme, the government, for its part, has done little to promote women's participation, whether in the exercise of power or even at the negotiating table aimed at establishing peace. Although women play critical roles in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts at the local and national levels,[35] they have been largely excluded from government efforts to heal internal divisions or from negotiations with the Houthis. The minimum 30 percent quota set by the Yemeni National Dialogue Congress (2013-2014) for women's representation in government institutions was also ignored. No representation of women was also absent in the Presidential Leadership Council formed in April, and the government took no measures to prioritize their representation and participation. <sup>(1)</sup>

Former Minister of Human Rights Houria Mashhour tells SAM about the integration of women in political work ( Since the second half of the nineties of the last century until 2014, there have been some relative successes in appointing women in decision-making positions, whether as ministers, undersecretaries, presidents or general managers of some government institutions, as well as ambassadors, but the war has destroyed these simple relative gains, especially in the areas controlled by the Houthis, who have greatly restricted women, such as restricting women's freedom of movement. The imposition of a male relative to accompany them and not to issue identification papers to women, including passports, identity cards and birth certificates, which are arbitrary administrative measures that have no basis in the law and even interfere with their privacy, such as imposing the shape and color of abayas, preventing mixing on the university campus, or carrying out joint activities between male and female students.

(1) (Sana'a Center Report 2022)

In the areas of the legitimate government, there are some positive steps, but they do not live up to what is hoped for as a government committed to the references of the national dialogue and the implementation of international conventions that emphasize support and respect for women's rights, especially political rights, and unfortunately women's representation was completely excluded from the last government formation in December 2020, and with the pressure of the feminist movement, some appointments were made, such as in the Consultation and Reconciliation Commission, where 5 women were appointed out of a total of 50 members of this body, as well as two women in the legal team from Between nine members and one woman on the Supreme Judicial Council, and in the economic team two women out of 17 members.

All these appointments do not live up to the required level stipulated in the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and are considered by the government as a reference in its executive and administrative procedures, nor are they consistent or commensurate with the demands and efforts of the feminist movement.

On the other hand, women have created for themselves a foothold for active participation in society through the formation of effective institutions and networks such as the Peace Path Initiative and the Women's Solidarity Network for Security and Peace, and they were able to reach regional and international platforms and above all work at the national and local levels, whether by providing humanitarian support or participating in the defense of women's rights and providing services to battered women or survivors of violence, for example, the Association of Mothers of Abductees.

These feminist organizations work tirelessly to advocate for an end to war and conflict, build peace, and provide visions that reflect the commonalities of all Yemenis without exception.

However, I do not expect an improvement in the level of representation of women at the official level in conflict situations unless the feminist movement becomes more cohesive, its pressure increases, and its agenda is imposed on decision-makers to adhere to what is required of them in national and international references, and nothing more.



## Restrictions in the name of the law

Women suffer from legal restrictions on their freedom of action, and the issuance of a travel document is one of the most important issues raised in 2022, despite the fact that the text of the law: There is no difference between male and female, as the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen, in force since 1991, recognizes the equality of women with men in the rights and duties stipulated by laws. Before that, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (formerly South Yemen) ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, and by virtue of the Yemeni Unity Agreement, all international treaties and conventions to which Yemen was committed before the establishment of unity were maintained.

However, since the establishment of the Republic of Yemen for more than three decades, the Immigration, Passports and Nationality Authority has required a woman to obtain the consent of her male guardian to grant her a travel document without any legal basis and even in a procedure that contradicts article 6 of Law No. 7 on Passports of 1990, which stipulates the following:

«Ordinary passports and travel documents shall be issued to all persons who have attained the age of sixteen who enjoy the nationality of the Republic of Yemen, while minors shall be added to the passport of one of the parents if he is travelling with him.»

In the absence of her husband outside the country, the Immigration and Passports Authority requires a woman to obtain a notarized power of attorney from her husband for one of his or her male relatives to accompany her and grant her permission in the official documents required to obtain a passport for her.

Salma, one of the women who went through this experience, told Human Rights Watch that she was only able to obtain her passport when she went to the authority with her father-in-law, who had a power of attorney authenticated by his son to allow her to obtain a travel document. Salma's



story is a model of a woman's ownership being transferred to another close man, even by proxy, as is the case with the sale and purchase of property.

In early October 2021, a group of women activists and human rights defenders launched a campaign entitled «My passport without guardianship». It is a feminist campaign that works to abolish discrimination against women in the Yemeni Passport Authority, which prohibits women from obtaining a passport without the consent of their male guardian.

In mid-March 2022, the first objectives of the «My passport without guardianship» campaign were achieved in conjunction with International Women's Day, which is represented by the issuance of a directive by the Prime Minister of the legitimate government, Ma'een Abdul Malik, to the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Legal Affairs and Human Rights to review the procedures and requirements that hinder women from obtaining a passport, applying the law, and removing all procedures that hinder women in obtaining a travel document. This was done after the members of the campaign met with the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister's decision and quick response to the implementation of the Immigration and Passports Law is the result of women's struggles and concerted advocacy efforts for decades, the latest of which was this campaign.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Al Madina Newspaper

## Displacement as a constraint

Yemeni women still constitute the largest percentage of those displaced by the war to displacement camps, as there are more than one million women, according to statistics issued by the administration of displaced persons camps. Displacement constitutes a major restriction on women's freedom and enjoyment of basic rights to a decent living, as most displaced girls are deprived of the right to education, and access to a safe and healthy childhood, while tens of thousands of families are without adequate housing and even homeless, there are more than 62,002 girls who have not been able to enroll in education, as displacement and movement are an obstacle to women's access to a decent and decent life.

## Travel is restricted except by a mahram

Since April 2022, severe Houthi restrictions have impeded Yemeni women from carrying out their jobs, especially those whose work requires them to travel. The restrictions imposed by the mahram clause also apply to Yemeni humanitarian workers who struggle to carry out fieldwork, directly affecting aid access to Yemenis in need, especially women and girls.

On August 2022, Ansar Allah's Land Transport Regulatory Authority issued a verbal directive stating that women are not allowed to travel unaccompanied (mahram) within Ansar Allah-controlled governorates to areas controlled by the Yemeni government, or even outside the country. As a result, there were reports from women in Sana'a indicating that car rental agencies were refusing to rent vehicles to women without a mahram to move from Sana'a to Aden or other governorates or to reserve seats to travel on public transport. This represents a tightening of restrictions since July 2022, when the Land Transport Regulatory Authority directed travel and car rental offices to obtain written approval for travel from the mahram, attested by the district official, but did not require the presence of the mahram as an escort (letter of a number of special rapporteurs of the Houthi group dated December 2, 2022)

Diana Semaan, Amnesty International's Acting Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa said: «The Huthi de facto authorities must immediately end the mahram condition. This restrictive clause constitutes a form of gender-based discrimination and entrenches the discrimination that women in Yemen face daily. Yemeni women urgently need to be able to move freely across the country in order to work, seek health care, and provide or receive humanitarian assistance.»

The mahram clause, which is not part of Yemeni law, is applied by the Houthis through verbal guidance. Since April, Houthi de facto authorities have increasingly insisted on a taboo clause to restrict the movement of women through areas they control in northern Yemen, including Saada, Dhamar, Hodeida, Hajjah, and Sana'a governorates.

As an example of these Houthi abuses, «Mona al-Rashidi (pseudonym), a journalist from Hodeidah governorate, was surprised by the harsh interrogations in front of the passengers of the mass transit bus, while returning from a training workshop in Sana'a. Al-Rashidi says that a Houthi officer from the Criminal Investigation Department stopped the bus and asked her about her mahram, «and after he knew that I was alone, he asked me to call my father to make sure that I went out with his permission,» and adds: «He took the mobile phone strongly shouting at my eighty-year-old father: I am from the criminal investigation with your daughter,» «My father almost had a stroke and did not understand what was happening!» , says Mona. For her part, journalist (FG) confirms this harassment, which she considers a continuation of curbing women's freedoms and legitimate and constitutionally guaranteed ambitions and believes that what the Houthi group is doing is a malicious and gradual step aimed at completely excluding women from public work and community participation.

«Sam» documented the story of (Wedad) who traveled from Sana'a to Aden, where (Wedad) told the «SAM» team about the restrictions imposed on her movement, «As I am a girl, travel agencies refuse to book me except with a mahram, the first time I had to take my little brother (his age does not exceed 15 years) and therefore he does not have an identity card, and here lies the difficulty at every point of the Houthis or the security belt where they used to get on the bus and ask for ID cards, and my brother does not have a card, so they drop him off and drop me off with him, and we are interrogated because he doesn't have a card, I tell them he's young and too old to get it, and they say this is just an excuse for him to go fight with ISIS and the Security Belt.» «The second time I decided to travel alone, and the only solution was that I take a car belonging to one of the companies,

however I cannot travel alone with the driver, so I left a note, that any family that intends to travel and wants to share this trip they can inform me, and unfortunately, as soon as they know that I am a girl, they refuse for fear of suspicion. The situation remained like this until there was a family whose financial situation seemed to be somewhat bad, and in order to reduce the value of the cost they agreed, and the price of a private car ranged from \$250 to \$300 depending on the type of the car.»

It was comfortable to travel by virtue of the company's relationship with the owners of the points, as we did not stop at all the points, and the Houthis used to allow us to pass by virtue of being a family, until we arrived at the Al-Habilain point, at that time they did not allow passage except for the owners of Aden or those who had a ticket. I took out my passport and my ticket for them, it was for Jordan, and because I am a lawyer, they asked me: Why are you traveling? And with whom? And what am I going to do? And who will I go to? They searched my bag of clothes, and eventually took me down to a tent with two women, who searched me thoroughly, searched my phone, and asked me to give them the price for dinner.»

## Restricting the movement of female workers in providing humanitarian aid except by a mahram

According to seven experts familiar with the humanitarian situation and a recent report on humanitarian access in Yemen by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the mahram clause became prevalent in all Houthi-controlled areas in the second quarter of 2022, making the travel of Yemeni female staff a major challenge for all humanitarian agencies and leading to the repeated cancellation of humanitarian aid delivery.

Experts told Amnesty International that humanitarian aid workers who do not have a travel relative, are increasingly unable to carry out their work. This reality has particularly limited women's and girls' access to much-needed assistance and health-care services provided only by humanitarian workers. They added that the mahram clause can lead to humanitarian aid workers leaving their positions in humanitarian organizations and thus suffering to support their families.

The Special Rapporteurs' letter on women confirmed that the Houthi group «imposed restrictions on the movement of Yemeni female staff members of UN agencies, international NGOs and national NGOs within Hajjah, Hodeidah, Amran, Saada and Sana'a governorates, among other locations.» Yemeni female employees are reportedly unable to travel for work purposes between different governorates without a mahram present while traveling. Humanitarian actors (UN agencies and national and international NGOs) are required by the SCMCHA and national security authorities to include a name of a mahram to accompany Yemeni female staff in travel authorization applications for humanitarian activities. Civil society actors reported that these restrictions were inconsistent with Yemeni cultural norms.

While the Houthi group resorts to oral directives for fear of international condemnation, which was confirmed by the letter of the special rapporteurs, «Although no official memorandum or letter was published by the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation, this demand was applied gradually and incrementally from December 2020 onwards, starting from the governorates of Saada and Hajjah, and then extending to Hodeidah and Amran. Central restrictions have also recently been imposed in Sana'a by SCMCHA's head office, with all female aid workers' travel requests across different governorates, being rejected if the mahram is not included.



Requirements are reportedly presented verbally by officials, and travel permits are denied when they are not complied with. In Hajjah and Hodeidah, humanitarian actors were verbally warned to stop applying for travel permits altogether, for aid workers without a mahram. The taboo clause is also applied at checkpoints in conflict-affected areas, with multiple arrests or harassment of aid workers reported.

On December 2019, the Houthi group in Ibb governorate - through an official decision issued by the Supreme Council for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and International Cooperation of the Presidency of the Republic - prevented the implementation of mixed training activities, stipulated the separation of women from men, prevented acquaintance between male and female trainees, and prevented the exchange of any personal information.

Activist Widad al-Badawi says that there is a great Houthi emphasis on women's work in organizations and civil society, and incitement against women working in this field, stressing that civil society in Houthi areas has become «paralyzed» as a result.

On August 14, activist Fatima Saleh Al-Arouli (35 years old) was arrested from one of the military points of the Houthi group in Al-Hawban area in Taiz governorate, based on a report by the security services of the Houthi group, and transferred to the capital, Sana'a, where she was placed in a hotel for ten days before being transferred to the Houthi intelligence prison in the capital, Sana'a.

According to the letter of the Special Rapporteurs on Women to the Houthi group, the mahram requirement prevents Yemeni women and girls, especially female-headed households, from receiving humanitarian assistance, as female staff cannot travel to field sites. In addition, the provision of assistance in the affected areas has been severely affected because it is generally considered inappropriate for male staff to provide support, such as support related to maternal health activities. There are significant concerns about the impact on women's dignity and the principles of doing no harm, which are at the heart of humanitarian action. In addition, the needs of women and girls are not considered in assessments, as it is almost culturally impossible for them to fully express their sensitive concerns to a male aid worker without feeling discomfort or embarrassment.

## Fatima is a model relief activist

«Fatima» is a social activist who was forcibly disappeared for 87 days in Houthi prisons in the coastal city of Hodeidah in western Yemen. After two months, Fatima's family learned of her place of detention, as Fatima's activity in charitable work was a crime in the eyes of the Houthi militia that requires arrest and enforced disappearance, leaving her reputation and that of her family at the mercy of speculation and gossip, and leaving her at the mercy of specialized torture and killing teams to practice these violations heinously to intimidate, loot and silence people with lethal force.

Fatima tells «SAM»: «They arrested me in front of the Red Crescent Center in the port district at half past five in the evening, where I was lured by an unknown female who claimed to represent a community of displaced people affected in one of the city's dialogues, and when I arrived I realized that this was just an ambush, as soon as I arrived I found myself in front of a crew armed with lack of modesty, weapons and lack of dignity, five armed men and two women, and they took me from the street under duress under force of arms without any reason or explanation, and did not I knew where they were taking me, and I could hear the soldiers mocking the exposed military crew.»

«At al-Rabsa police station, it was my first stop, they confiscated my phone, notebooks and pens after my dignity was confiscated in a street crowded with dogs,» she said. Fatima added: «I was insulted, threatened with beatings and waving things that I cannot disclose, and they took me to the Central Prison and put me in solitary confinement for 3 days, I did not know my fate, and all my thinking is with my mother, brothers and society how it will look at me, I was feeling anxiety and fear while I was in a room one meter by two meters wide, and a small bathroom in the same room, for three days I could not even change my clothes, only with tears that do not stop, and I pray to God to get me out and to go back to my family.»

«Every evening I am interrogated and asked to sign papers in the language of threats, and when they found out that there was no evidence against me, they said, «We will take you hostage or exchange you for prisoners.»» After that, I was transferred from solitary confinement to the prison ward, where I found (17) prisoners with their children, to live there (75) more days, I used to count the days and hours. (78) days I spent, and I could not even hear the voice of one of my family members throughout my imprisonment, I wanted an answer to one question: Why am I here? I couldn't even swallow the food, they gave us food to eat just to live, even the bathrooms were cleaned by us, we heard insults every day.»

«There were many women in prison like me, who spent many months and even years in those prisons without anyone knowing about them. Sometimes we would benefit from some organizations that distributed special tools such as shampoo, soap and clothes, even though they took the majority, but we would get a bag or a small bag with robes and soap.»

«Prison is torment, deprivation, hunger and disease, but it forces us to watch Al-Masirah TV only or listen to Abdul Malik al-Houthi's speeches,» Fatima said. They had a woman named Fairouz al-Baidani who gave a lecture every two days on the importance of fighting, defending religion and parade against «mercenaries».

The prison was shelled by an artillery shell that hit the external visiting room and they said that «mercenaries» were the ones who bombed the prison.

Fatima tells Sam with tears in her eyes, «When I got out of prison, I was shocked by the news of the death of my brother, who could not bear the news of my arrest, as he was taken to the hospital as a result of the shock, he suffered a stroke and died. My brother had been forcibly disappeared for six months, during this period and we did not know anything about him, and he suffered types of torment so that he was injected with a certain needle, and six months after his release he never tasted his well-being, and from the intensity of his fear of torture he suffered a stroke and died.»

«I want to make the voice of the rest of the women in Houthi prisons who are beaten, insulted and cursed by these human wolves to be heard, the Houthis prevent us from eating, we are beaten, we clean bathrooms and wards, we face all kinds of torture, and some face immoral harassment.»

## Restrictions within the university

The prohibitions of the Houthi militias reached education, as they not only imposed their educational curricula by force of arms but extended to gender segregation and systematic targeting of girls' schools.

In the capital, Sana'a, Sana'a University issued a decision on August 15, 2020 prohibiting mixed graduation ceremonies between male and female students, and requiring the separation of men and women in any graduation ceremony, or dividing students on any scientific research projects. The Houthi militias also prevented the presence of male and female students in one hall in private universities and specialized institutes and stipulated the separation of the sexes and the allocation of two periods of study in the morning for female students and the evening for students.

While the Houthi militia distributed delegates from its security services to all English language and computer institutes and public and private universities, monitoring male and female students, and if a male student talks to a female student, they go to them and ask them about the type of relationship between them and prevent them from continuing to talk, and the militia also distributed delegates from its Political Security Service to all large and advanced English language institutes and private and public universities, and these delegates wear civilian clothes, roam between male and female students, snoop on their private conversations, and examine the faces of some students intently.

In November 2020, the administration of the University of Science and Technology, which is under the control of the Houthi coup militia in Sana'a, issued strict decisions regarding the clothes and accessories of female students. The militia's circular addressed to university students said, «It is forbidden to wear an open, narrow, short or transparent abaya.» The circular also prohibited «showing or lifting hair or part of it» or «putting on cosmetics and using perfumes or incense,» and the Houthi circular warned university students against falling into what it considered «violations,» holding them fully responsible in the event of non-compliance with what was stated in the circular. Alsharaea. Houthi militia prevents university students from wearing cosmetics and using perfumes and incense.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) <https://alsharaeanews.com/2020/11/05/23582>

At a time when (R. Sh) - a media student at the University of Hodeidah - struggles to keep up with her academic achievement and refine her media skills, she finds herself in an unexpected conflict. At the gates of the university, armed women's police, who are known as the Zainabiyat (the women's police of the Houthis), stand, not to protect her security, but to comb her body and check her eyebrows and nails, and whether she uses powders or cosmetics, such as nail polish and lipstick.

(R) says, «The college lacks basic capabilities, as there are no chairs or tables to accommodate male and female students, but this is not important for the Houthi militia, and education is not a priority for it. It focuses its attention on keeping track of the most intimate personal privacy of girls, under the pretext of protecting virtue. Lipstick as one of the obstacles to military victory and delaying factors.

The situation in Sana'a looks even bleaker, says A.M., a faculty member at Sana'a University: «The university has received orders to prevent mixing between the sexes, in squares, restaurants, entrance gates, graduation ceremonies and projects, and there is even a female police whose task is only to prevent any meeting between female students and students, even if it is for the purpose of studying or research.»

The matter did not stop there, but the Houthis established the so-called «Alumni Club», which is «an entity created by the Houthis at Sana'a University in 2020, headed by one of the Houthi student leaders called «Ibrahim Al-Kubsi», and they gave it an independent building near the presidency of Sana'a University and has branches in all universities, and its goal is to attract graduate university students and fully control any events related to graduates in order to serve the militia's directives.

The Alumni Club issued the decision to separate male and female students in the graduation ceremonies in January 2021, and called on all preparatory committees that plan to hold their celebrations to implement the decision, and they will bear full responsibility in case of violation, and all graduation batches began to apply it for fear of punitive measures.

These general standards are for both sexes, as for female students, it is forbidden for them to wear makeup, not to show a video of the photo session, study memories and during preparations for a party, not to bring male photographers, in addition to adhering to the approved ballot specifications and not modifying them after approval, and not adding «waist ties».



## Restrictions in educational institutions

The special rapporteurs said in a letter to Hisham Sharaf in the Houthi government dated December 2, "There were reports that girls were expelled from secondary schools because they studied in the same classroom with male students and were forced to enroll in schools located in remote areas." While most educational centers implemented formal procedures to separate male and female students in classrooms, this extended to the expulsion of girls from these classes. The Houthi militia also prevented public and private schools in the capital, Sana'a, under its control, from organizing school trips for students without their prior approval.

And the terrorist Houthi militia issued new conditions that restrict female students and school students in Sana'a. A document sent by the Education Office in the Sana'a capital, which is under the control of the Houthis, revealed to all schools a decision not to take any school trips except after returning to the educational area in the Sana'a and coordinating with the militia leaders. It also drew up a list of what it called "school trip controls" and obligated school principals to abide by them.

According to the document, the Houthi militia forbade "laughing on school buses for female students, listening to songs inside or outside the bus, as well as carrying mobile phones." In the same circular, the Houthis required the school, which plans to organize a trip for students, to submit an application to the educational zone, including all the details of the trip, and gender segregation.

## Workplace restrictions

This decision is one of several Houthi decisions that violate the basic rights and public and private life of women and restrict the population and society in all respects.

Ansar Allah issued directives to prevent women from entering or working in many public places in Sana'a. Some café and restaurant owners in Sana'a have also begun to impose gender segregation, or in some cases prevent men from entering, to avoid their businesses being closed by Ansar Allah or imposing fines on them. In certain cases, they were forced to dismiss female employees, which led to serious economic consequences for these workers, and many halls and cafes stopped hosting cultural events attended by men and women in previous years.

The Houthis also instructed photo shops to prevent photographing any woman who comes to "photo shops" unless the required photo is for the face only and in cases of necessity, and to prevent the presence of any workers or technicians in photo shops that women visit, and that the workers are women only.

## Restrictions on personal freedom (Dress code as an example)

On the tenth of January last year, the Ansar Allah group (Houthis) held a meeting at the Cultural Center in Sana'a, with a number of owners of women's abaya shops in the capital, Sana'a, to determine what they called dress codes, and to notify shop owners to get rid of all types of abayas that violate the legal controls specified by them.

The meeting was held in early January 2023, at the Cultural Center in the capital, Sana'a, in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Interior, the Secretary of the Capital Municipality, the Director of the Secretariat's Security, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and many officials and officers, and in the presence of many owners of shops and factories sewing and selling women's abayas, who were summoned through delegates assigned by the Capital Municipality to go down to their shops to make them sign to attend the meeting on the mentioned date, while another meeting was held for the same purpose on January 30.

These decisions showed a state of panic among young women, who expressed their condemnation of the decisions taken by the Houthi group against them, especially since Yemeni law does not impose the hijab or any of its forms, despite its reliance on Islamic law as its first legislator.

While the Houthis' decisions to limit women's clothes to loose black abayas and cover the entire body up to the eyes, provoked a lot of indignation among Yemeni women, which resulted in an electronic campaign under the hashtag #Yemeni\_Identity #الهوية\_اليمنية, through which dozens of photos of activists and women wearing colorful popular clothes were published for their areas, in a clear message to the Houthi authority, expressing that blackness was not the Yemeni dress that the Yemeni woman wears.

## Work restrictions

The Houthi movement has intensified its escalatory campaigns against freedoms in Yemeni society, especially women, who have received the lion's share of the arbitrariness of the laws of the Houthi authorities, which claim that mixing with men in work and study contradicts the culture of faith.

The latest Houthi decision banned women waitresses from working in restaurants in the group-controlled capital, Sanaa, claiming that this is considered mixing with men, even though all of them work in sections designated for families and not just men.

The Houthi campaign, which threatened to close a number of Sana'a restaurants, against the backdrop of hiring women waitresses, was accompanied by a campaign of incitement from mosque pulpits, which stressed attacking working women, and allowing them to work only in schools for girls or health facilities for women only.

Local residents told Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that the Houthi campaign also obligated restaurant owners not to allow entry to sections designated for families except for those who submit proof of marriage-by-marriage contract, in a move that observers considered a deliberate distortion of the reputation of women and questioning their morals, especially since restaurants are open places and do not have retreat.

Amnesty International said in a tweet on 29 January that the Houthi authorities' decision to prevent women from working in restaurants is shameful and discriminatory. We stand with all women in their struggle and struggle for their rights in Yemen.

Activist and media figure Fatima al-Aghbari said in statements that "the Houthis have forgotten that women are an integral part of society, and they are men's partners who work side by side with them, and they have forgotten that many families have lost their breadwinners due to the war, and therefore women have become responsible for the family, so they were forced to go out to the labor market to secure the needs of their families."

## Marriage Ceremony Restrictions

On January 27, 2015, the Houthis forced some tribal leaders and sheikhs of Amran governorate after taking control of them to meet and issue a statement that later turned into a directive to preachers of the governorate's mosques, to prevent male artists from singing at women's weddings, albeit from behind a barrier, as is customary. According to the guidance document provided to mosque preachers, the Houthis prevented the continuation of the women's wedding period after sunset prayers, after Yemenis used to keep women's weddings until midnight, in addition to preventing photography at women's weddings, and preventing the entry of mobile phones into wedding halls.

The Houthi leader appointed to the position of Governor of Sana'a, Abdul Basit Al-Hadi, directed to the directors general of directorates and heads of local councils what he described as "reducing the phenomenon of male and female artists at events and weddings through Quranic awareness of the community." The directive to the directors general of directorates and heads of local councils in Sana'a stated, "With reference to the above subject, and in confirmation of the circular of the Director General of Sana'a Governorate Security, which includes that some of the general community bring artists to their special events (weddings)."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Nashwan News Document. New directives from Houthis on singing at weddings. <https://nashwannews.com/228831>



## Café Restrictions

From time to time, Houthi elements carry out field campaigns on parks and cafes under the pretext of combating "mixing" between the sexes, some of which ended with the closure of restaurants and cafes. In this context, "Munira Samir" (a pseudonym) says that the Houthis closed a number of cafes and restaurants in Sanaa because they contain mixing between non-couples, knowing that they are "respectable cafes where colleagues and friends usually meet, and this is a crime in the eyes of the Houthis." Some of these restaurants and cafes "were later opened after media campaigns launched against the Houthis and considering their practices no different from ISIS", she said.

Houthi gunmen had raided a number of tourist hotels in Sanaa, warning their workers against holding New Year's Day 2020 celebrations. The Houthis have previously closed several restaurants and cafes, such as Bayt al-Maarifa, Coffee Corner, Second Cup and Mughmook Café.

In July 2020, women were barred from entering cafes, gardens, rest houses and parks. According to local sources, the Houthis raided at various times about 10 rest houses and cafes in Sanaa, beating their visitors with rifle butts and sealing some of them under the pretext of "preventing mixing".<sup>(1)</sup>

Restaurants in Sana'a were also required to take "marriage contract" documents from families when visiting restaurants, women were banned from receiving health services by doctors, and they even banned the use of smartphones by females in the northern districts of Hajjah.<sup>(2)</sup>

One of the victims of the ban talks to Sam, when someone decided to open a sports club for women, but the intransigence and ban forced the owner of the women's sports club in the capital, Sana'a, to close under the pretext of the lack of a legal permit, and the truth as seen by "SAM" is that there is a permit issued by the Ministry of Tourism of the Houthi group, but the supervisors of the Houthi group said they do not recognize it, and when searching for the real reason for the closure, we heard that there is a directive from the Undersecretary of the Capital Municipality, "Khaled Al-Madani", to close Centers where there are swimming pools.

(1) (Mid-May 17, 2022)

(2) (Al Ain News – January 1, 2023).

One of the club's owners says, "We lost a lot: two months' rent and the salaries of female employees, which were suspended for two months. Our center is large, around 1,000 square meters, knowing that we do not have swimming pools, and yet the club was closed."

He added, "We could not go to the judiciary because the judiciary has a long journey, and there is a proverb that says If your adversary is the judge, who will you sue?! The judicial authorities will continue their procedures for months or years, and do not forget that they are the state with one call telling him to rule such and such, and then they do not take into account the judiciary as the closure was made without orders from any judicial authority, and unfortunately we are threatened clearly and explicitly, the guard was kidnapped for 3 weeks without a judicial order. We shut down only after they explicitly told us, "Shut down or we will send a military crew and withdraw the women from the center."

"The assault of a group of men on the sanctity of women is against religion, custom and manhood. They threatened us when we started talking about our rights because the losses increased, and they sent us letters accusing us of being Istanbul's mercenaries."

## Reproductive health restrictions

The decision, revealed in a document containing a circular from the Minister of Public Health and Population in the Houthi government, Taha Al-Mutawakel, to health offices regarding "family planning methods", sparked a wave of resentment, as it made women's right to them conditional on what it called "appropriate directions and policies" for customs and traditions, and what it called "faith identity."

While the minister's directives did not detail the controls, the directives issued by the directors of the governorate's health offices to health points and mobile clinics revealed the implications that no family planning method should be disbursed except with the husband's consent to the wife's use of the method, and to ensure that they are a couple, and that the husband is with the wife during the disbursement of the "means."

Yemeni doctor Dr. Zikra Al-Nuzaili, a senior public health specialist, explained to a media agency that "the decision issued by the Health Bureau regarding the conditions is a worrying and serious issue, in which women's right to choose is undermined," noting that "no one in the Ministry of Health in Sana'a appreciates the consequences of health policies and important decisions or understands what the priorities of maternal health and society as a whole mean." She added that the conditions set out in the Ministry of Health's decisions "are nothing but implicit accusations to society that it is unruly and to women that they are minors and abandoned".<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Daraj Media - February 3, 2021

## Movement restrictions (arbitrary arrest and detention)

In a statement to "Al-Arabiya Net", many women mentioned the restrictions imposed by the Houthi group on them, from stopping at checkpoints when they move to work from one place to another within the governorate, searching phones, laptops and work papers, and threatening arrest if they do not leave these organizations because they "promote vice"! They also confirmed that their homes were searched by the "Zainabiyat," women's teams affiliated with the Houthis. They revealed that most of them were subjected to physical violence, psychological intimidation, insults, extortion, and threats of arrest or the arrest of their relatives. They added that the severity of these abuses increased as the militia issued directives to prevent women from traveling without a male guardian escort or written permission.

Journalist and community activist Abeer Mohsen said that Yemeni women live in a state of intimidation, persecution, and direct targeting, accompanied by campaigns on social media to distort the image of women working in this field.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Al-Arabiya Net - May 18

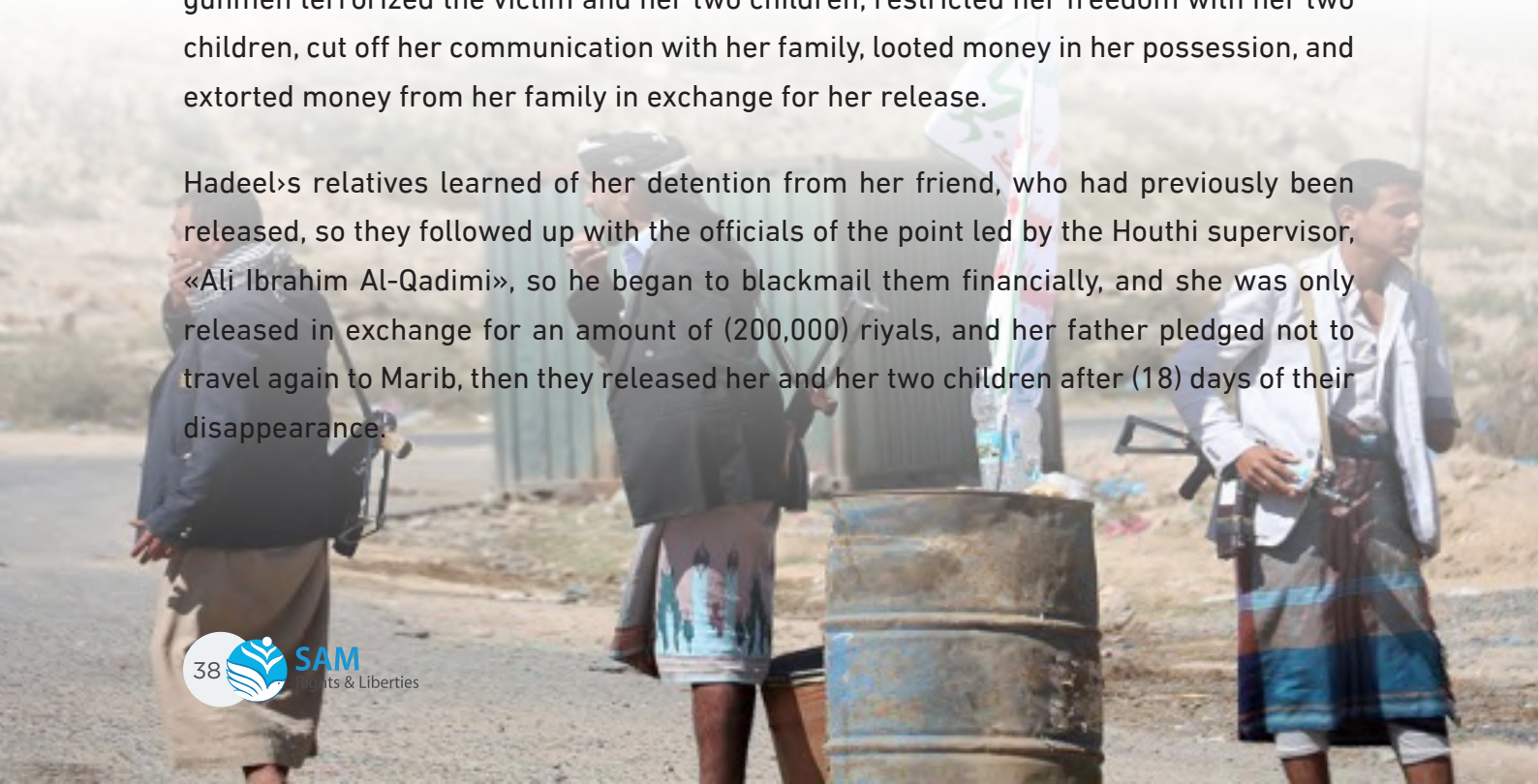
## Al-Kaden checkpoint

Mrs. «Hadeel Fatini» – a pseudonym – and her two children, along with «Sawsan Fouad» and other women were subjected to detention and enforced disappearance, as «Sam» met the husband of the first in the city of Marib, and communicated with the second through a secret means of communication and the organization investigated the incident and collected details of what happened to them.

«Hadeel» and her two children, «Al-Baraa and Osama» and her friend «Sawsan», were returning from Marib governorate to the city of Hodeidah after a visit to her husband (who works as a soldier with the government forces) and when the bus that takes them to the outskirts of Hodeidah governorate arrived, they passed «Al-Kaden» point at the entrance to the city of Al-Dahi, where the gunmen of the Ansar Allah checkpoint ordered to search the bus, so they were disembarked with the two children with the justification that they came from Marib governorate and they were transferred to a detention room in a house near the point. «Hadeel» was able to make a secret call with her husband in Marib at dawn on the day of her detention, corresponding to November 21, 2018, and told him what happened, but those forces learned about her and confiscated the phone and hid them from their relatives who kept looking for them, and when the point officials knew that Hadeel was the wife of one of the fighters with the government forces in Marib, they tightened the order to hide her.

«They detained me in a room in a house for seven days and released me while my friend Hadeel remained for 18 days,» Sawsan said. The victim's relative, «Hadeel», said that the gunmen terrorized the victim and her two children, restricted her freedom with her two children, cut off her communication with her family, looted money in her possession, and extorted money from her family in exchange for her release.

Hadeel's relatives learned of her detention from her friend, who had previously been released, so they followed up with the officials of the point led by the Houthi supervisor, «Ali Ibrahim Al-Qadimi», so he began to blackmail them financially, and she was only released in exchange for an amount of (200,000) riyals, and her father pledged not to travel again to Marib, then they released her and her two children after (18) days of their disappearance.



## Continuous detention

There are still hundreds of women arbitrarily detained in the prisons of the Houthi group, and according to the testimonies of survivors documented by «SAM», dozens of women are subjected to systematic torture, by the so-called Zainabiyat apparatus and members of the intelligence of the Houthi group, as some women are detained with their children in inappropriate and inhumane conditions.

Lawyer «Abdul Majeed Sabra» wrote on his personal page on «Facebook» that «the detainee Asma Al-Omeisy will come out of the prison only if she is dead due to the lack of health care and the treatment she is subjected to in prison, and the constant threat from the prison official (um Al-Karrar Al-Maruni), to the detainees that they will not get out of prison except as dead bodies, in addition to being insulted and cursed by the prison official.»

He added, «(Asmaa Al-Omeisy)s) health condition is very, very bad, as she suffers from a number of diseases, including diseases specific to women, such as lupus erythematosus, according to her conversation with me, as well as cysts that need an operation to remove them, as shown in the reports and notes below this publication, and her blood rate reached (6), which is a very low percentage and dangerous for her life. I mentioned this to the specialized Appellate Criminal Division in its session held on 12/6/2021, and that percentage is still the same as it is now, as Asma told me about that.

The lawyer concluded his post by saying, «(Asma) did not want to appeal the verdict a second time after she despaired of the judges and hoped to release her due to her very deteriorating health condition, especially since she spent more than two-thirds of the period in prison and in order to remedy her health condition with treatment.»



## Suad and suppression of Houthi

SAM heard other testimonies in which the Houthis used abduction and torture on a large scale against activists or civilians for unknown reasons. «I was with a large number of abducted women, some of whom were taken from the streets, others were lured by phone to receive a food basket, some of them were kidnapped from their homes after breaking into their homes and looting all their belongings, and others were taken to detention from public parks, restaurants and cafes,» said «Souad,» who spent her detention period in a Houthi prison. She adds: «The period of detention ranges from nine months to a year or years more,» stressing that «the eyes of the abductees are covered by the Zainabiyat squad before taking them to villas in Sana'a, and the villas were called the headquarters, where large numbers of abductees were collected in the basement of the villa. Abductees are subjected to systematic torture of various kinds, and they are not allowed to go to the bathroom. They were also summoned in the middle of the night for interrogation, tortured in deserted places, where electric shocks were used with them by two people with their hands tied with ropes, and their mouths closed with a rope pulled up after water was sprayed on them.»

## Prostitution .. Ready charge

SAM documented the detention of a large number of women in the capital, Sana'a, where SAM keeps the names of more than 30 names, which is part of a larger number of women who were arrested in secret prisons belonging to one of the prominent security leaders of the Houthi militia, SAM was unable to know the location of the illegal secret detainee.

The arrests of women have increased since the beginning of 2018, and some voices rejecting these crimes have begun to appear, including voices from within the Houthi militia itself, so a propaganda film was produced that was shown on the Houthi militia's Al-Masirah channel, with the aim of silencing voices objecting to the policy of arresting and torturing women.

It is believed that the detainees were subjected to extortion and psychological torture before being distributed to a number of public prosecutions on charges of «practicing prostitution», as recorded in the various indictments, some of which SAM obtained, and according to the opinions of activists and lawyers contacted by «SAM», they question the validity of the allegations, and do not deny the existence of individual cases, not a collective phenomenon, which suddenly emerged in a close time as portrayed by the media of the «Houthi militia», on the lips of security officials, scientists and judges.

Detained women, and some relatives of women who were arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared, told SAM that most of the women detained in the prisons of the «Houthi militia» were never charged during a long period of detention, as they were held incommunicado for months, some of whom exceeded Sunnis, and they were denied contact with their families or a lawyer to defend them, and they were not brought before the courts.

Former detainees said that the «Houthi militia» is practicing political revenge against them, because of their demonstrations against the Houthis after killing their ally, President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and most of the women are apparently charged with malicious charges, such as prostitution, adultery, hashish trade and drug use, and they range in age from 16 years to their fifties. The organization tried to communicate with some of these female detainees, but they refused to speak out of fear, and told the organization's monitors that they confessed under pressure, and they were flogged a hundred lashes, and they made a written pledge not to «talk to any organization or media.»

According to testimonies documented by SAM Organization, many of the detained women live in severe psychological conditions, especially after their release from detention, where some of the families of the detainees were forced to pay large sums of money, exceeding the financial ability of their families to release them, and some women were destroyed by arbitrary detention. Enforced disappearance affected their family life and their social future as women, as some husbands divorced their wives because of their disappearance in prisons, and others were subjected to divorce because their mothers were accused of working within sex trade networks.



## A model's dream ends with prison

The case of «Intisar Al-Hammadi,» a 19-year-old Yemeni woman of an Ethiopian mother who works for several local designers, began when she began posting pictures of herself wearing traditional Yemeni clothes or leather jackets on her Facebook and Instagram accounts, which are followed by a few thousand people.

Al-Hammadi was arrested on February 20, 2021, while she was on her way with two female colleagues and a friend to a photo session. Her lawyer, Khaled Kamal, said in statements to news websites that the arrest took place «without a warrant» and «without any charges being brought against her.»

«So far, as her lawyer, I don't know what the charges are,» the lawyer added, but pointed to «attempts to defame her,» including rumours about her involvement in prostitution and drugs. According to the lawyer, the investigation into the case was opened on April 21st, and the young woman answered questions related to «prostitution and debauchery». He said prosecutors were «trying to describe the case as an outrageous act,» arguing that she had highlighted «two strands of her hair or that she did not wear the hijab» in public. « He added, «They are trying to accuse her of any accusation because of her work, which the Houthis oppose, who told her, «Where do you have the audacity to be a model in a Muslim country?»

Intisar al-Hammadi was first sentenced to five years in prison in November 2021, according to Saba news agency, the mouthpiece for the Houthi government in Sana'a, on charges of committing a «scandalous act.»

According to her lawyer, Khaled al-Kamal, said she was physically and verbally assaulted in detention in February, and that she signed documents while blindfolded.

This has led to the deterioration of her health condition, as she is banned from visiting and exerting great pressure against her mother, according to the information received by «Sam», in order not to continue to address her case by the media, and she remains absent and no one knows the details of the inhumane violations that are happening to her.

As for «Intisar Al-Hammadi», the reality of her ambition has turned into a very painful human tragedy and a bitter life behind bars in which the group exerts a lot of psychological pressure on her through psychological torture and deprivation of many of her rights.

The Houthi group shaved her head as a kind of humiliating method for a girl at the mercy of security investigators affiliated with the Houthi group, in addition to psychologically abusing her, which for a girl like «Intisar Al-Hammadi» means breaking life and unbearable psychological harm, which she did not imagine living one day.

For its part, SAM highlighted that the Court of Appeal in the capital, Sana'a, issued on Sunday, February 12, a verdict against the artist «Intisar Al-Hammadi» and «Yusra Al-Nashiri», and the judge upheld the initial sentence of five years in prison, under the pretext of committing indecent acts.

According to testimonies received by SAM, the verdict came as a shock to Intisar al-Hammadi and her family, as the judge threatened to add another five years to the verdict when she objected.

## Recommendations

- SAM calls on the Houthi group to stop the arbitrary restrictions it has placed to stop its practices that violate the rules of international law against women immediately without any conditions.
- The legitimate Government calls for the integration of women into political life and granting them their right to political and economic leadership positions.
- SAM calls on the legitimate government to review discriminatory laws against women, which contradict the conventions signed by the Republic of Yemen and limit women's ability to contribute to important lives.
- SAM calls on civil society to adapt its efforts and activities to break the restrictions on women
- The organization calls for the release of all Yemeni women detainees and stresses that arrest and detention must be carried out in accordance with judicial orders.
- SAM calls on the parties to the conflict in Yemen, and the international community, led by the United Nations, to work to improve the living, health and psychological conditions of released women, and to provide legal protection from any potential dangers that threaten their lives and stability.
- SAM stresses on improving the situation of displaced women and providing them with a decent life in all fields such as decent housing, health, and education.
- The need to find a peaceful solution in line with the peace efforts made by international organizations and work to establish a civil democratic system that guarantees Yemeni citizens political pluralism and the protection of basic rights.









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## **Discriminatory restrictions**

A human rights report documents the most important prohibitions imposed by the Houthi group on women in Yemen during the war period 12014 to 2023