



The Sentence Against Journalist "Ahmed Maher" is a Deviation from Justice and an Entrenchment of Security Measures in Dealing with Journalists

May 29, 2024

Joint Statement

The Specialized Criminal Court in Aden, the temporary capital of the internationally recognized government, issued a sentence on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, sentencing journalist "Ahmed Maher" to four years in prison on charges of spreading false information and forging documents. This comes after two years of arbitrary detention since his arrest on August 6, 2022, by the Dar Saad police in Aden. We, the undersigned organizations, consider the verdict against Maher a threat to freedom of expression, an entrenchment of security measures in dealing with journalists, and a serious deviation from the path of justice.

Maher's case has been marked by delays, postponements, and numerous legal violations. During his detention, he was subjected to physical and psychological torture and forced to make alleged confessions. He was also deprived of his rights guaranteed by the Yemeni constitution and laws, including the right to a fair and impartial trial. Additionally, the Specialized Criminal Prosecution in Aden arrested Maher's lawyer, Sami Yassin Qa'id Marsh, in November 2023 and confiscated the case files of Ahmed Maher and other cases.

Earlier this month, Maher's family reported that he was prevented from attending his scheduled session on April 30. They pointed out that the Specialized Criminal Prosecution had stripped their son of his right to defend himself and did not present evidence of his innocence in accordance with Article 349 of the Criminal Procedure Law.

We express our deep condemnation and denunciation of the verdict against journalist "Ahmed Maher" and call on the legitimate government to stop violations and arbitrary practices against journalists and activists. We also urge the authorities in Aden to promptly refer Maher's case file to the Criminal Court of Appeal to address the legal violations and expedite his unconditional release.

May 29, 2024

List of Signatory Organizations:

1. SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties
2. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
3. Abductees' Mothers Association (AMA)
4. Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations (YCMHRV)
5. Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children (CSWC)
6. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development (MDF)
7. Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation (AWSF)
8. Media Freedom Observatory
9. Musaala Organization for Human Rights
10. Watch for Human Rights (Watch4HR)

11. Qarar Foundation for Media and Development
12. Mansa Foundation for Media and Development Studies
13. Media Village for Development and Information
14. EOHM
15. Musawah Organization for Rights and Freedoms
16. Albilad Center for Studies and Media
17. Yemeni Legal Center
18. Defense Foundation for Rights and Freedom
19. Investigation Organization for Development and Human Rights
20. Siaq Organization for Youth and Development
21. YemenFuture
22. Dameer Foundation for Human Rights
23. The National Organization of Yemeni Reporters "Sada"