

## Joint Statement

### Red Hand Day - International Day against the Use of Children as Soldiers

On the International Day against the Use of Children as Soldiers, the undersigned organizations express their deep concern about the continued recruitment and use of children in military operations in Yemen, especially by the Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, the internationally recognized Yemeni government, and the Southern Transitional Council.

The Houthis have recruited thousands of children throughout the conflict. According to the UN Group of Experts [report](#), from January 2020 to May 2021, nearly 2,000 children recruited by the Houthis lost their lives in fighting. Despite a [pledge](#) to stop this practice in April 2022, the Houthis continue to recruit children, using propaganda and military training, particularly through summer camps. In 2023, the Houthis themselves [claimed](#) to have included more than one million Yemeni children in their summer camps, which have been widely reported to be used for recruitment purposes. More recently, [YCMHRV](#) has documented an increase in child recruitment since the Houthis began their Red Sea attacks in November 2023, as the Houthis exploited the war in Gaza and the Yemenis' sympathy with the Palestinian cause to mobilize and recruit children.

Yemeni civil society organizations including [Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations \(YCMHRV\)](#) and [Watch for Human Rights \(Watch4Hr\)](#), documented the recruitment of 209 children by parties to the conflict from April 4, 2022, to December 31, 2023, alone, though there were likely hundreds more children who were recruited during this period. The Houthis were responsible for the most documented cases—196 children, while the Yemeni government recruited six children, and other forces recruited seven children.

Within this context, we call on the international community to stand with the children of Yemen to demand an end to the recruitment of child soldiers, and to demand that those responsible for these violations are held accountable.

The undersigned organizations call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to:

- Fulfil their national and international obligations toward child protection, by immediately ending the recruitment and use of children in military operations; protecting, demobilizing, and reintegrating former child soldiers into their communities; and accelerating the implementation of plans signed with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment of children by all parties.
- End the use of schools and educational facilities for recruitment and mobilization purposes, including ending the use of school activities to indoctrinate children and incite them or expose them to violent extremist ideas.
- Ensure the accountability for all those involved in violations against children, by holding them to account through fair trials, and providing justice and adequate reparation to victims.

On Red Hand Day, we stand united in our commitment to end the use of child soldiers and protect the rights of all Yemeni children. We urge the international community to join us in these efforts and hold accountable those responsible for the violations targeting the children of Yemen.

### **The signing organizations:**

The Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations (YCMHRV).  
Human Rights Watch (HRW)  
Watch for Human Rights  
Abductees' Mothers Association (AMA)  
Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation (AWS)  
Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children (CSWC)  
Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism  
Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development (MDF)  
Musaala Organization  
SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties  
Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)