



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



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Yemen

February 23, 2024

Houthis Issue New Law on "States, Entities and Persons Hostile to the Republic of Yemen" Raising Fears of Increased Suppression of Rights.

The Justice4Yemen Pact coalition is aware that Yemen's House of Representatives, under the control of the Houthi group (Ansar Allah) in the capital Sana'a, approved on February 14, 2024, a new law called "Classifying States, Entities, and Individuals Hostile to the Yemeni Republic."¹ This new law severely undermines freedom of expression and civil work for civil organizations and individuals under the pretext of being hostile to the Yemeni Republic, and the coalition calls on the Houthis to immediately repeal this law.

The new law comes days after the United States (US) government classified the Houthis group as a "global terrorist organization" amid mutual military attacks between the two parties. The escalation in military force began when Houthis targeted commercial navigation routes in the Bab el-Mandeb strait under the pretext of preventing their access to Israel. The Houthis have used their new classification as further evidence they are under attack and must defend Yemen against foreign influence, using the conflict with the US as a smokescreen behind which to further enact their extremist agenda. This new law is the next step in a pattern of increasing persecution by the Houthi authorities aimed at smothering freedom of expression and harassing political opponents and civilians.

Tawfiq Al-Humaidi, the President of the SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties, said, "We believe that this law poses a serious threat to human rights and fundamental freedoms in Yemen. We fear that it will be used to suppress opposition and seek revenge against those who reject the project of the Houthi group, given the repressive nature of the group and the doubts surrounding the objectives of the law. The case of arbitrarily detained journalists who have been sentenced to death serves as an example of the arbitrary use of laws and the judiciary

¹ the Yemeni House of Representatives' website: [مجلس النواب اليمني \(yemenparliament.gov.ye\)](http://yemenparliament.gov.ye)

against freedom of expression. Additionally, Judge Abdulwahab Qatran remains arbitrarily detained due to his criticism of certain policies of the group in Sana'a.

The new law allows the Houthi group to classify any country, entity, or individual as enemies of Islam under the pretext of insulting Islamic symbols or being hostile to the Yemeni Republic without any clear legal regulations or standards. The law grants the group broad authority to interpret the law and use it as a weapon to target dissent and restrict freedom of expression, assembly, and association. It can also be used to justify asset seizures and arbitrary arrests, applying the law in whatever way best serves their own interest and protects their authority.

Over the past years, there has been a significant tightening of restrictions on the work of humanitarian and development organizations in areas controlled by the Houthi group. They have hindered the efforts of organizations operating in these areas through both direct and administrative barriers that have prevented organizations from providing necessary assistance and support to the needy population. There are concerns that the new law will further restrict humanitarian and development organizations under various justifications and pretexts, especially in light of the calls for workers from American and British nationalities to leave Sana'a. This is a serious indicator of the potential challenges that humanitarian and relief work may face in the coming period.

The coalition reaffirms that freedom of thought, expression, and civil participation is a fundamental right for every individual. It asserts that everyone has the right to express their opinions without fear of persecution or revenge. The Houthi group is warned against using the pretext of this law to suppress opposition and seek revenge against those who reject its project. Such actions would exacerbate the Yemeni crisis and increase human rights violations, particularly in light of the increasing number of sham trials that lack the basic standards of fair trials. It is worth noting that the Houthi courts have issued over 500 death sentences against political opponents, journalists, and humanitarian activists on fabricated charges, with the ready-made allegation of aiding the aggression.²

The Justice4Yemen Pact coalition calls on the Houthi group to immediately repeal this law and urges the international community to pressure the Houthis to respect human rights and basic freedoms in Yemen. The coalition also emphasizes that Yemen is in need of a comprehensive political solution that ends the war and achieves a just and honorable peace for all Yemenis.

² SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties :<https://samrl.org/l.php?l=e/10/A/c/1/69/71/4971>

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