



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



Joint Statement on the Occasion of Universal Children's Day

For the Future of Yemen: Children Must Be Empowered to Live a Life of Dignity and Justice

Justice4Yemen Pact Coalition

November 20, 2024

On Universal Children's Day, the children of Yemen are living the worst period of their lives. While millions of their peers in different countries celebrate having gained many of their rights, Yemeni children are suffering the tragedy of war in its tenth year. Every year without reaching a sustainable political settlement, will jeopardize the future of Yemeni children. The Justice Pact for Yemen and the signatory organizations to this statement remind all parties to the conflict that this day must be an inspiring moment to protect children and preserve their rights.

The war must stop today for the sake of all our children. Parties to the conflict must engage in peace talks and work to ensure children obtain their full rights, including justice, and dignified life.

Children in Yemen have endured ten years of pain and suffering due to war. No party to the conflict can deny responsibility for this suffering. Ansar Allah (Houthis), the internationally recognized government, the Southern Transitional Council, the Joint Forces, and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula have all committed violations against Yemeni children.

In Yemen, human rights violations continued throughout 2024 against children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including indiscriminate ground attacks, drone attacks, snipers, by the landmines, sexual violence, especially the rape of girls, recruitment and use of child soldiers, and the denial of humanitarian assistance. These violations are among those designated by the United Nations as the "six grave violations against children." Reports published by the Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations, member of the Justice Pact Coalition, documented (283) cases of grave violations against children, during the period from February 2023 to September 2024, including recruitment (85) cases,



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



killing and maiming (75) cases, attacks on schools and hospitals (45) cases, abduction (24) cases, sexual violence (14) cases, and denial of humanitarian access (7) cases. The victims included internally displaced persons and marginalized group (a marginalized ethnic group in Yemen). While majority of victims (79%) were boys. Houthis group committed most of these violations at (84%), while the internationally recognized Yemeni government and the Southern Transitional Council committed (14%), and (2%) were committed by unknown parties. These numbers do not reflect the reality. According to the Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict, during the year 2023 alone, the United Nations verified (809) grave violations against (666) children. UNICEF said that in just nine years, more than 11,500 children have been killed or injured for reasons related to the conflict, including 3,900 killed and 7,600 injured.

Yemeni children face an unknown and uncertain future. Where 4.5 million children are dropped out of school. Sadly, everyone has become accustomed to this situation. In addition, attacks on educational infrastructure continue, and in October 2022, UNICEF announced the destruction or reuse of about 3,000 schools for military purposes in just seven years.

On the humanitarian front, there are still about 10 million children in dire need of humanitarian assistance, according to the latest UNICEF reports. In light of the measure implemented by the World Food Program to reduce the number of beneficiaries of food aid in recent months, the possibility of an increase in the number of children in need of food, or their exposure to severe malnutrition, is very likely in the coming months. UNICEF Representative in Yemen Peter Hawkins warned of what he described as the "future crisis" threatening Yemen. Yemeni children are suffering from a worsening malnutrition crisis, especially with the ongoing conflict and economic collapse, noting that acute malnutrition rates have exceeded 30% in some areas, while 48% of children suffer from stunting, which hinders their physical and cognitive growth. The international community and the World Food Program must devise rapid solutions to address the aid reduction crisis. Amid the humanitarian crisis, children face many challenges in reaching hospitals, and the most dangerous is the severe decline in access to life-saving vaccines. In a recent United Nations report, one in four children do not receive the recommended vaccines, and 17% of children have not received any vaccine. Most of these numbers are in areas under Houthi control, where there is an increase in the of polio cases, and preventable diseases, such as measles. This comes due to the campaigns



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



launched by the Houthis targeting polio vaccines and warning citizens of the (consequences) of the vaccines. In a related context, the World Health Organization revealed that 62,000 children under the age of five die every year, due to the deterioration of health services.

Under the pressure of millions of families' economic deficit and the large dropout of children from schools, families forced their children to work to help them. A joint study by the Central Statistical Organization and UNICEF for the years 2022-2023 indicated that the rate of child labor reached 15.9%, and the rate of children working under dangerous conditions is 23.4%.

The pain of Yemeni children continues, and violations against them have not stopped, in the absence of an international accountability mechanism that can deter the parties to the conflict from committing violations. Therefore, Yemeni civil society organizations are eagerly awaiting a peace agreement, and hope that all parties, including the Yemeni government, will participate and fulfill their responsibilities to protect children. However, for the negotiations to be effective in bringing about a lasting peace in Yemen, these talks must be inclusive of civil society, and must also include transitional justice and accountability as a key pillar.

The undersigned organizations make the following recommendations:

- The parties to the conflict, and in particular the Houthi group, must immediately cease all violations against children, including killing and maiming, recruitment, sexual violence, abduction, and obstruction of humanitarian access. They must refrain from attacks on medical and educational facilities and their use for military purposes.
- The parties to the conflict, the United Nations, and the international community must prioritize the protection of children in future peace talks, to ensure justice and accountability, and involve local civil society organizations and victims of violations in these talks.
- To combat impunity, the international community must not allow the human rights file in Yemen to be politicized. It must establish an international inquiry commission, collect evidence, and monitor all human rights violations in Yemen, including grave violations against children, to ensure accountability.
- The Yemeni government and the United Nations must develop a comprehensive plan that ensures enrollment of all children dropped out of school, including the



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



marginalized and at risk, and prioritizes the protection and rehabilitation of schools.

- The international community must assume its responsibility to confront the crisis of reducing food aid that will harm millions of Yemeni children and their families.
- The Houthi group must stop its misleading propaganda against children's vaccines, and allow medical workers to administer vaccines and launch immunization campaigns for children without hindrance.

Signatory organizations:

1. Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations – Rasd Coalition
2. Musaala Organization
3. Al-Amal Cultural and Social Women's Foundation
4. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development
5. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
6. Strategic Studies Center for Supporting Women and Children
7. Economic Studies and Media Center
8. Human Rights Watch Organization
9. Abductees' Mothers Association Organization
10. SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties
11. Human Development Foundation HDF
12. Rasd Organization for Rights and Freedoms
13. Dameer Foundation for Rights and Freedoms
14. Electronic Organization for Humanitarian Media EOHM
15. Alkarama - Geneva
16. Together We Rise Foundation for Women and Children Care



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



17. Paths to Peace Foundation PPF
18. Media Village for Development and Information
19. Experts Organization for Development
20. For You Foundation for Response and Humanitarian Development
21. Yemen Media Guide Center for Development - YMGD
22. SOS Foundation for Development