

Statement on the International Education Day, January 24

Education is a basic human right and is a collective responsibility considering its public benefit and effective role in resolving conflict and building peace. We commemorate this year's International Day of Education, on January 24, while our country, Yemen, is witnessing a humanitarian crisis due to the ongoing war and armed conflict in the country, which is entering its tenth year. This has taken its toll on millions of school-age children in Yemen who now carry rifles instead of school bags.

The years of war had a profound impact on the education sector in Yemen, as it is considered one of the most important sectors that suffered heavy losses, which led to the "intermittent education" due to the continued fighting and the inability of students to go to schools, as well as teachers who did not receive their salaries for the eighth year. According to civil society organizations¹ reports in Yemen, 400 attacks were documented during the past four years on schools. These attacks completely or partially destroying schools and education facilities. Nearly half of girls of primary school age are deprived of education, and two out of three women in Yemen are illiterate. Internal displacement, especially in Marib Governorate, affected thousands of students who overcrowded the governorates, depriving them of quality education, and led to severe shortage of teachers and supplies, and lack of schools to accommodate them.

The war has directly affected the right to education for many children. Nearly four million boys and girls in Yemen are out of school. Moreover, the parties to the conflict in Yemen used schools for other purposes other than education, such as weapons depots, and as military barracks or training centers.

[According to UNICEF²](#), the conflict, the ongoing disruption of the education process across the country, and the fragmentation of the already collapsed education system have had a severe impact on all 10.6 million male and female school-age children in Yemen. At least 2,916 schools were destroyed, damaged, closed, or used for military or humanitarian purposes during the first seven years of the war.

The education process was subjected to interference and influence by the conflicting parties, especially the Houthis, who tried to impose their control and influence on schools, universities and educational institutions in the cities under their control. They also carried out a massive bulldozing of the education sector and a complete change of the school curricula in a way that serves the group's thought and ideology. They also used schools for mobilization and recruitment operations and encouraged children to engage in military operations.

Education in Yemen is an urgent humanitarian and development issue, requiring urgent and sustainable intervention to save generations of children from ignorance, poverty, violence, and loss of the future. Yemen needs the combined efforts of the relevant authorities and local and international support to rebuild a comprehensive and safe educational system. The inability and division of national justice and

¹ As per data collected by the field teams of the Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations and Rasd4HR organizations. The statistics will be published in the investigative report to be issued in February 2024.

² [unicef.org/yemen/ar/التعليم](https://www.unicef.org/yemen/ar/التعليم)

accountability mechanisms has encouraged the parties to the conflict to carry out more attacks against the education sector. Justice will not be achieved unless there are criminal accountability mechanisms against all perpetrators of violations, especially in light of the continuing state of impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of violations .

We call on the international community, the sponsor of peace process in Yemen and the United Nations system to continue efforts to reform and support the education sector in Yemen. We also call on the parties to the conflict to implement and strengthen measures aimed at protecting children from recruitment into the armed forces. And work to immediately release all children currently involved in military activities and ensure their rehabilitation and integration into society.

We also urge Houthis group to refrain from ideological amendments on the school's curriculum and emphasizing on the importance of maintaining the neutrality of education and ensuring that schools remain independent and unbiased spaces.

Signatories:

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