

Yemen: Protecting the Press is an Indispensable Gateway to Building Sustainable Peace

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, May 3, 2026, the undersigned organizations express their profound concern regarding the continuous deterioration of press freedom in Yemen. This decline occurs within the context of a prolonged armed conflict, fragmented centers of power, and the absence of an effective rule of law. Together, these factors have created one of the most dangerous and complex environments for journalism globally, where journalists and media workers face grave risks to their lives, freedom, and professional integrity, according to a new report by the Yemeni Media Freedoms Observatory (Marsadak).

Local and international organizations have documented a steady escalation of violations against media professionals over recent years. These include killing, injury, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and unfair trials, alongside extensive restrictions on freedom of movement and access to information.

[Reporters Without Borders \(RSF\)](#) continues to rank Yemen among the worst countries globally on the Press Freedom Index, citing a hostile environment that stifles independent media and undermines pluralism.

Furthermore, data from the [Committee to Protect Journalists \(CPJ\)](#) confirms that impunity for crimes against journalists remains a prominent feature in Yemen; perpetrators are rarely held accountable, which encourages recidivism and entrenches a climate of fear and self-censorship. [UNESCO](#) data indicates that the majority of journalist killings in conflict zones, including Yemen, remain unpunished, posing a direct threat to freedom of expression and the rule of law. These violations constitute a clear breach of Yemen's obligations under international law, including Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil Rights and Political Rights.

In the same vein, Yemeni media institutions and outlets face structural and complex challenges. Beyond direct violations, security and administrative restrictions impede daily operations, including the requirement of prior permits for coverage and movement, restricted access to information sources, editorial interference, and political or economic pressures, including threats of closure. These institutions also suffer from a lack of resources, collapsing infrastructure, and the interruption of basic services, threatening their continuity.

Yemeni female journalists face systematic targeting and compounded restrictions that affect both their professional roles and social standing. They are subjected to incitement campaigns, defamation, threats, and blackmail, in addition to arbitrary travel bans and searches at checkpoints. The impact of these violations extends to their families, causing significant psychological and humanitarian harm. This has forced some to cease activity, scale back their work, or use pseudonyms, reflecting the shrinking safe spaces for women in journalism.

The digital sphere in Yemen is also witnessing an alarming rise in violations, including the blocking of news websites, censorship of electronic content, and the targeting of journalists for their opinions on social media platforms. Restricting access to online information and monitoring digital communications represent modern forms of repression that hinder the development of independent journalism.

This year's theme, [“Shaping a Future at Peace,”](#) emphasizes the essential role of the press in supporting peace processes by reporting facts, enhancing transparency, holding parties accountable, and combating disinformation. The press is not merely a news outlet; it is a tool for preventing escalation, exposing violations, and fostering accountability, core elements of any sustainable peace process. Sustainable peace in Yemen is unimaginable without a free and independent media that guarantees the public’s right to know and builds trust through dialogue.

The undersigned organizations emphasize that continued impunity and increasing restrictions are major obstacles to any democratic transition. We also stress the importance of journalists and media outlets adhering to professional and ethical standards, including accuracy, independence, and the avoidance of hate speech and incitement, particularly in conflict settings.

The undersigned organizations call upon all stakeholders, including the IRG of Yemen, the de facto authorities (the Houthi group "Ansar Allah"), and the international community, to take immediate and concrete actions:

- **Commitment to Protection:** All parties in Yemen must respect press freedom, ensure the safety of journalists, and cease all forms of violations against them and media institutions.
- **Lifting Restrictions:** Remove unjustified security and administrative barriers, including the prior-permit system, and guarantee freedom of movement and access to information.
- **Accountability:** Launch independent and transparent investigations into all crimes committed against journalists and hold those responsible accountable according to international standards to end impunity.

- **Legal Reform:** Create a legal and institutional environment supportive of media work that aligns with international human rights standards and ensures the non-criminalization of journalism.
- **Protecting Women Journalists:** Stop incitement and defamation campaigns against women journalists and hold perpetrators accountable. Provide a safe working environment free from gender-based discrimination and targeting.
- **Digital Freedom:** Lift the ban on news websites, end censorship of electronic content, and remove technical barriers to information published by independent media.
- **Digital Privacy:** Guarantee freedom of access to the internet and protect the privacy and security of journalists' digital communications.
- **Institutional Support:** Support the continuity and independence of media institutions and outlets to enable them to serve society and promote peace.
- **International Advocacy:** Call on the international community and the United Nations to intensify efforts to protect journalists in Yemen and support freedom of expression initiatives as a fundamental entry point for sustainable peace.

Protecting press freedom is a primary guarantee for achieving justice, enhancing accountability, and building a just peace. The undersigned organizations affirm that no peace in Yemen will be genuine or lasting unless it guarantees a safe and independent environment for journalism.

World Press Freedom Day

May 3, 2026

Signatories:

1. Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)
2. Yemeni Media Freedom Observatory (YMFO)
3. Media village for development and Information
4. Press House – YE
5. The Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations (Rasd Coalition)
6. Abductees' Mothers Association
7. Watch for Human Rights (Watch4HR)
8. SAM Organization for Rights and Freedoms

9. American Center for Justice (ACJ)
10. The National Organization of Yemeni Reporters (Sada)
11. Rights Radar for Human Rights
12. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
13. Musaala Organization for Human Rights
14. Center of my Right for Support the Rights and Freedoms
15. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development (MDF)
16. Alkarama for human rights
17. Defense Foundation for Rights and Freedom
18. Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children (CSWC)
19. Yemen Future for Culutre and Media Development
20. Media Sac for Media and Development
21. Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation
22. Dameer Foundation For Human Rights
23. Yeni Yemen Media Foundation
24. Yemeni Journalists Association – Istanbul
25. Mansa Foundation for Media And Development Studies
26. Rescue foundaton for development
27. League of Women for Peace
28. Sawasia Organization For Human Rights
29. Monitoring Journalist Network
30. Abjad Center for Studies and Development
31. Albelaad center for studies and media
32. Civil Voices platform
33. Musawah Organization For Rights and Freedoms