

Yemen can't wait  
*Liberation for Yemeni Women*



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# *Why the Humanitarian Crisis?*



Yemen is in the grip of a civil war, and the most victimized are women and children.

Yemen is the scene of "*the worst humanitarian crisis in the world*" according to the UN special envoy to Yemen, Ismaël Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

This humanitarian crisis has created millions of internal refugees, but the silence surrounding the conflict is striking around this conflict is striking especially in the West.



## A Brief History of Yemen

*Understanding this humanitarian crisis is impossible without looking back at this nation's history:*

Yemen is one of the oldest centers of civilization in the Middle East. In ancient times. It was part of the Kingdom of Sheba.

The monarchy (*imamate*) was abolished in 1962. The northern part of the country became the Arab Republic of Yemen (North Yemen), where a civil war lasted until 1970. The southern part of Yemen corresponds to the former British colony. After the departure of British troops, the new People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) was formed; it was oriented towards the Soviet Union.

Modern Yemen was created in 1990 through unification of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) and the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen).

### Conflict with the Houthis

In the early 2000s, the situation was instable. In 2011 the government had to deal with Islamist rebel movements, in particular the Houthi insurgency.

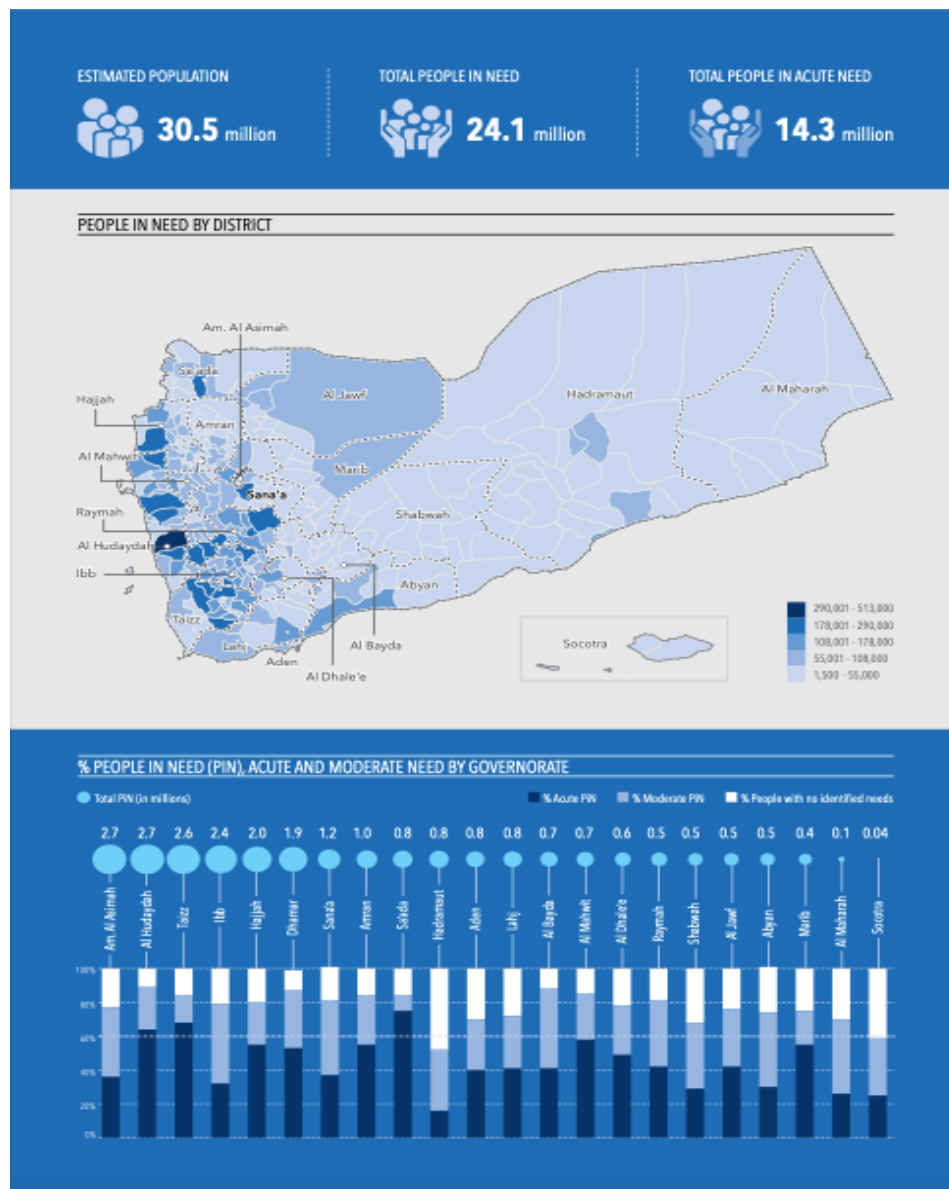
In 2011, young people sparked huge protests that resulted in a transitional regime. Extremist groups led by the Houthis rebelled and, in 2014, precipitated a coup d'état President Hadi, who had been elected in 2012. And, from there, the situation deteriorated further.



# *A catastrophic humanitarian situation*

## Famine

Yemen has 30.5 million inhabitants, and 24.1 million are in a pre-famine situation, with 14.3 million suffering from food insecurity



## **Overcrowded camps, Breeding grounds for epidemics**

Yemen's health system has collapsed. The few hospitals that accept patients are barely able to function. They lack resources: 50% of health facilities have been destroyed by the conflict, and hospitals lack the bare medical essentials to fight epidemics.



## **An education system adrift**

According to UNICEF, two million Yemeni children are out of school, including nearly half a million who have dropped out since the conflict escalated in March 2015.

Teachers' salaries have not been paid since that time and 20% of schools can no longer be used.





## **Terrorism strikes the population daily**

The current conflict benefits only terrorist and extremist groups, such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which have established lasting footholds in the south and east of the country.

Such terrorist groups are increasing instability in a strategic region of the world. Located at the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen and Djibouti jointly control the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb. One of the key passages for international trade, it explains the interest of foreign powers in the conflict.



# *Yemen, one of the worst places in the world for a woman*



Yemen ranks last in the Global Gender Gap Index compiled by the World Economic Forum.

**The gravity of this conflict has increased gender-based violence against women and girls who then become increasingly vulnerable and suffer numerous abuses.** "This is the worst and darkest time for Yemeni women," said Rasha Jarhum, a human rights defender.

A recent Associated Press investigation reveals that **hundreds of women have been kidnapped by rebels and are being held in secret prisons.**

**The testimonies of women are heart-wrenching:**

*"My three children and I were blocked at a checkpoint by the Houthis. They held us without food or water in the heat of the day. We begged them to let us through, but they refused. They insulted us and threatened to rape us. Panicked, we started to cry ... When they were done with us, they left us in the street in the middle of the night in an isolated area ... We were scared, and the children were terrified. "*

*"God is my witness, I am broken inside. It's not normal, I don't feel like a human being. I cannot breathe normally like other human beings. "*

# *Testimonies from former detainees in Houthi prisons*

Yemeni human rights organizations observed crimes against humanity in several detention centers run by Houthi forces. They were perpetrated against Yemeni civilians, and in particular against women.

The scale of torture and barbarism has resulted in a systematic violation of international law. There are thousands of heartbreaking stories that epitomize the ongoing cruelty directed against women in Yemen.

## **Urgent action is needed to free women from these prisons.**

Some of the testimonies obtained by human rights organizations in Yemen reflect the immense suffering of a whole people, and in particular of the women who cry out to be released every day.

Names are deleted to protect women in danger of murderous retribution for testifying.

### **W. fled Yemen to Egypt after being released from a Houthi-run prison.**

*"I was at a gas station in Hadda when the Houthis surrounded the station with a number of military vehicles and kidnapped me. They put me in a room measuring two meters by one, located underground. They call it the "compressor". I stayed there for four months. I was subjected to cruel torture. They pulled out my nails, scratched me with sharp instruments, sprayed me with frozen water, sometimes tied me up and used electric shocks on me. I wanted to die to end the pain and the desperate cries of other women who were being tortured to death. "*

### **Zaynab, 24, was arrested at her home in the city of Sana'a:**

*"I was the only pregnant woman among the detainees, yet I was beaten with an electric cable, and I received electric shocks from morning to night. I vomited blood during the interrogation, but they didn't stop. The prison was a time of fear, suffering, hunger and horror. My suffering as a mother was unbearable, that of having my daughter inside me, without my being able to protect her, and I still cry every night. "*

### **Ghada, 20, arrested at her home in Sana'a:**

*"I was subjected to physical and psychological torture. They used horrific methods like forbidding me to wear clothes or use blankets in the dead of winter. I and other women were also held in solitary confinement.*



*To say the least, life in Houthi prisons is worthless. Every day we were tortured until we passed out if we were lucky, otherwise we would have died. There were many inmates who had been abducted from markets, parks and public places, ordinary people who were horrified ... I was miraculously released. "*

#### **X. from Al-Hodeidah Governorate**

*X. was kidnapped following communications via WhatsApp and Facebook. She was questioned while she was blindfolded. They beat her with rifle butts, batons, and an electric taser. They kicked her, put needles in her navel for a week. Since then, the right side of her body has been paralyzed.*

#### **Fawzia, former head of the penitentiary section**

*"After the Houthi coup against the legitimate government, I remained in my post, but my prerogatives were removed as the Houthi forces do what they want: ban feeding the prisoners, stop medical treatment, and practice torture.*

*There were several methods of torture: For example: tying prisoners' hands to the ceiling and forcing them to stand on a hot oven until their wrists broke. Detainees, but also children were deprived of food. I helped the inmates though my life was in danger, and finally I had to flee."*

#### **Saleh, 32 years old from d'Ibb Governorate**

*"Masked gunmen from Houthi security got out of their cars and beat me with a rifle. During the interrogation, I discovered that I was abducted following tweets that criticized the authorities in Sana'a.*

*During the interrogation, I was subjected to harsh methods of torture. They sprayed me with water in order to shock me with devices. I was kicked and cursed at me with obscene words. Then they took off pieces of my skin, they used a sharp instrument with which they punctured my stomach and my back. They pulled out one of my fingernails. I begged them to kill me. I heard other women screaming under torture. I was going crazy in that tomb-like detention center. "*

There are many more testimonies about rape and torture in the prisons. They speak to the excessive use of violence which violates all declarations of human rights.

**The world must condemn the abuses committed in Houthi prisons.  
We call for immediate release of the women and children trapped in this hell.**

# The campaign “*Liberation of Yemeni Women*”



Yemen is experiencing the “worst humanitarian crisis of our time” according to the United Nations.

Millions of men, women and children are facing famine.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed, hundreds of thousands are injured, and over 3.5 million Yemenis are "internally displaced".

Our “*Liberation of Yemeni Women*” campaign focuses on the release of women imprisoned in Sana Central Prison and throughout the country

We have no wish to intervene in the conflict. **The Campaign is apolitical.**

We are appealing to global public opinion to insist that the Houthis, who control these prisons, to act with a minimum of humanity. We call on them to release all women and children imprisoned there.

Organized by the “**International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue**” ([www.icdd.info](http://www.icdd.info)), “**German-Yemen Forum for Right and Liberties**” ([www.facebook.com/GYemenF.de/](https://www.facebook.com/GYemenF.de/)) and the “**Human Rights Association**” ([info@h-r-a.org](mailto:info@h-r-a.org)), the *Campaign for the Liberation of Yemeni Women* will proceed as follows:

- We will contact and work with all organizations willing to help the Yemeni women and children
- We will appeal to all foundations, organizations and associations that are ready to support this cause.

With the help of these foundations, organizations and associations, we will:

- Alert the world to the plight of these prisoners
- Launch a press campaign for their release
- Organize international exhibitions
- Present our petitions to the appropriate individuals and organizations.
- Present evidence of what these women and children are suffering to the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, members of parliaments in Europe, the United States and Russia
- Contact various governments to help in the release of these women and children
- Organize webinars to explain the reality of the situation. Present testimonies of women who have already been released

Finally, will negotiate with those who control the prisons in Yemen in order to free these women and children.

**If you want to join our campaign and help Yemen's women and their children, please contact us quickly. Every day that passes is another day of torture for them.**

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# Yemen can't wait

## Liberation for Yemeni Women



التحالف اليمني لرصد  
انتهاكات حقوق الإنسان  
Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring  
Human Rights Violations



رابطة أمهات المختطفين  
Abductees Mothers Association