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Yemen must accept and implement crucial recommendations

The Yemeni authorities must accept and implement crucial recommendations to put an end to and remedy gross human rights violations, said Amnesty International. On 29 January, the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review convening in Geneva will review Yemen's human rights record and progress made in implementing recommendations accepted by the country four and a half years ago.

In light of the profound challenges, the persistent efforts of the Legal Affairs Ministry and the Human Rights Ministry to improve Yemen's human rights record in numerous areas are to be acknowledged. Another positive development has been the authorities' inclusion of women and of previously excluded and underrepresented groups in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), which has produced numerous recommendations that if adequately implemented should improve the country's human rights record.

Despite these positive developments, the overall record on human rights and reform leaves much room for improvement. The authorities have yet to deliver key reforms to promote justice and accountability for recent and past crimes, and provide full reparation to victims and their families. There is no sign of the long-overdue transitional justice law; an immunity law protects officials of the previous government who are responsible for human rights violations and no progress has been made in carrying out the government's pledges to the Yemeni people and the international community to establish an independent commission of inquiry and investigate violations during the 2011 events that led to the departure of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

To the contrary, the authorities stand accused not only of lack of seriousness in carrying out thorough, independent and impartial investigations into the 2011 incidents that led to the killing of hundreds of peaceful protestors, but also of illegally blocking a court's order to investigate officials for their alleged involvement in one such incident on 18 March 2011.

The authorities have also failed to significantly reform security forces responsible for many violations, as key security agencies such as Political Security, National Security and Special Security forces (previously Central Security) are kept outside the Ministry of Interior's hierarchy and free of any oversight and accountability.

The failure of the authorities to carry out these crucial reforms has resulted in ongoing violations leading to loss of life, serious injury, destruction and damage to homes and businesses. In south Yemen, security forces continue to use unnecessary and excessive force with impunity. This has led to unlawful killings and injuries to peaceful demonstrators and others.

Amnesty International remains concerned about the Yemeni authorities' unwillingness and inability to deliver justice, accountability and reparation to the many victims of numerous cases of gross human rights violations since 2011, let alone for victims of earlier violations. It also fears that the authorities may sacrifice a meaningful transitional justice law that delivers real justice and ends decades of impunity in the name of reconciliation and consensus. Amnesty International urges the authorities not to make this mistake. Sustainable peace and meaningful reconciliation cannot be achieved without justice, truth and remedy for victims and their families.

Recommendations

In its submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review of Yemen, Amnesty International put forth 25 recommendations that it urged the Yemeni authorities to accept and implement. These recommendations target various key areas where significant improvements are needed. Since the submission, some of these recommendations have been put forth by the working groups of the NDC and are therefore expected to be implemented this current year. Amnesty International urges the authorities to accept all 25 recommendations made to it during the dialogue in the Working Group.

Of particular and immediate concern to Amnesty International is the authorities' reluctance to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The authorities must urgently accept to ratify these treaties and recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearance.

In line with the above concerns, Amnesty International urges the Yemeni authorities to repeal Law No. 1 of 2012, the immunity law that protects the former president and his government from prosecution. It also urges the authorities to immediately establish an international, independent and impartial commission of inquiry to investigate violations that took place in 2011. And it requests that the authorities pass a transitional justice law that is in line with international standards and upholds the right to truth, justice and reparation to human rights violations committed prior to 2011.

In addition to the above, Amnesty International also urges the Yemeni authorities to carry out significant security sector reform, which should include human rights training in police and security academies, and independent mechanisms of accountability and oversight within the security forces.

For more recommendations on the death penalty, the rights of women and girls, arbitrary detention and torture, and abuses in armed conflict, please see Amnesty International's submission [*Yemen: Despite significant reforms, human rights violations persist*](#)

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