

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: MDE 31/008/2014

19 June 2014

Lack of investigation into human rights violations entrenches impunity

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Yemen

Amnesty International welcomes the Yemeni authorities' engagement with the Universal Periodic Review and their initial acceptance of 166 recommendations, including to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.¹ The organization urges the authorities to implement these two accepted recommendations as a matter of urgency and also to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.²

While Amnesty International appreciates efforts made by the authorities to protect and promote human rights in Yemen despite challenging conditions, it is extremely concerned at the ongoing violations and abuses in the armed conflicts targeting civilians in the north, and in the south and southeast of the country. The massacre of dozens of peaceful mourners, including children, in al-Sanah in al-Dale' on 27 December 2013, allegedly by the army's 33rd armoured brigade, has to date not been adequately investigated, and no one has been brought to justice. Amnesty International continues to receive reports that the same armoured brigade persists to use indiscriminate and disproportionate force, and urges the authorities to hold those responsible to account, while ensuring adequate human rights training for all law enforcement officials.³

The failure by the government to uphold justice and to hold perpetrators to account may encourage more violations and entrench impunity. In line with recommendations made to Yemen during the review, Amnesty International reiterates its call to revoke the immunity law of 2012, to form without any further delay an independent commission of inquiry into the 2011 human rights violations, and to enact a transitional justice law that is in line with international standards and that restores justice and accountability to victims and their families who suffered decades of gross human rights violations.⁴

Amnesty International regrets the reluctance by the authorities to establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty.⁵ The death penalty continues to be imposed after unfair trials and on alleged juvenile offenders whose ages are disputed. The organization urges the authorities to share the experience of the committee of experts in forensic medicine in examining such cases and to provide comprehensive information on the use of the death penalty in Yemen.

¹ A/HRC/26/8, paragraphs 115.1-115.8 (Botswana, Republic of Korea, France, Switzerland, Slovakia, Uruguay, Latvia, Australia), and 115.11 (Argentina).

² Ibid., paragraphs 117.1 (Denmark) and 117.5 (Tunisia).

³ Ibid., paragraphs 115.8 (Australia), 115.77 (Czech Republic), and 115.80 (Mexico).

⁴ Ibid., paragraphs 115.8 (Australia), 115.34 (Portugal), 115.79 (UK), 115.81 (Maldives), 115.82-115.85 (Thailand, Netherlands, Mauritania, and Nicaragua).

⁵ Ibid., paragraphs 117.7-117.8 (Uruguay, Australia), 117.10-117.24 (Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Switzerland, Montenegro, Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland, UK, Mexico, Argentina, Poland, Norway, and France).

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Yemen on 19 June 2014 during its 26th session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Yemen: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE31/016/2013/en/5919fb29-58af-49b0-9135-2988eac0f97c/mde310162013en.pdf>

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