



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

Teachers in the Houthi-Controlled Areas “Victims Without Rights”



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Preamble

Quality education cannot continue without qualified teachers who enjoy the rights and guarantees that enable them to teach generations. However, Yemen is one of the countries worst affected by armed conflict that continued for 9 years, and where teachers lack all the rights granted under international agreements and national laws. **Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights** noted that the Houthis, since they assumed power in a number of governorates over which they imposed their control by force of arms, have continued to commit violations against everything related to education, at the forefront of which are the violations committed by the Houthis against teachers. The group replaced many school principals and teachers with others loyal to them, with similar ideas, in a step that cannot be against the Houthis' desire to make this education distinctly sectarian. These steps contradict what is stipulated in international human rights treaties, especially those dealing with the right to education, which demand the need to respect the right of the teacher, and the need to use unbiased curricula and educational materials. The group also sought to change the Yemeni identity through "education", by changing the educational curricula, pushing towards a sectarian discourse in the school curricula, and converting many schools into military prisons and combat barracks.

Sniper operations, direct extrajudicial killings, assassinations, and targeting of homes and neighborhoods with shells, missiles, and marches also resulted in the killing and wounding of thousands of teachers, and the Houthi group executed dozens of teachers. The most prominent recent violation is withholding the salaries of workers in the Yemeni education sector, which prompted the Southern Teachers Union to Call for a teachers strike until the regular disbursement of workers' salaries on time in all governorates, and raising these salaries in line with the living situation, and by no less than 3 times, as a result of the collapse of the national currency, besides the increase in demonstrations and short protests in Sana'a by teachers, employees and academics of community colleges and technical institutes, in a context of deliberate neglect by the Houthi group and concerned state officials.

Maat takes advantage of International Teachers' Day, which the UN celebrates on October 5 of each year, to focus on the arbitrary practices and violations facing teachers in northern Yemen, specifically in the areas under the control of the Houthi group, to identify the challenges facing teachers in these areas, which is in line with what was expressed by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) when it called for celebrating this day. The report attempts to provide an accurate description of the daily violations facing teachers in the areas of the Houthi group, which makes them unable to carry out their educational profession, which affects the emergence of more uneducated generations in Yemen.

First: General Framework of the Problem of Workers in the Education Sector in Yemen

The UN Children and Motherhood Fund indicates that out of 10.6 million school-age students in Yemen, 5.8 million have had their education disrupted, including 2.5 million girls¹. This was caused by several factors, including the closure that followed the spread of the coronavirus epidemic in Yemen, besides the increase in tuition fees imposed by the Ministry of Education of the Houthi militia, which rose by about 33%, which led to children withdrawing from education due to their limited ability to cover education expenses². The use of educational facilities for military purposes by all parties also led to these educational facilities being out of operation. The attacks on schools also exacerbated the withdrawal of some children from the educational process, as the number of attacks on schools in the period from 2018 until the end of 2022 reached about 142 schools that were in operation. The shortage of teachers led to a further deterioration of education in northern Yemen, as the Teachers Union warned that about 60% of the total workers in the educational sector had not received their salaries regularly for 4 years, and hundreds of teachers were dismissed and replaced by figures affiliated with the Houthi group. These arbitrary practices against workers in Yemen led a

¹ التعليم، يونيسيف اليمن، على الرابط التالي [: https://uni.cf/3VSikeX](https://uni.cf/3VSikeX)

² Yemen, education system at risk due to conflict, Interco's, <https://bit.ly/3B7HG0i>

large number of them to seek other jobs, such as working as cleaners or porters, but their wages remained low and did not cover their daily expenses.

In a related context, the Ministry of Education in North Yemen runs an educational system for a population four times the size of its counterpart in the South³. However, the curricula in North Yemen have witnessed a radical change in a way that perpetuates sectarianism. Maat has reviewed reports confirming that the Ministry has replaced national anthems with what is known as “Al-Zawamil,” which is a culture that follows the Houthi group and is devoted to violence against others from other sects. This culture also strengthened the presence of the group’s leaders in school curricula, and these practices prompted some parents in the north to stop sending their children to school. Teachers in areas controlled by the militia also faced acts of killing, assassinations, and kidnapping. According to the Teachers Union, about 1,600 teachers and educators were killed in areas controlled by the Houthis, during the period since October 2014. The Houthi militia also practiced arbitrary arrest and assassination of teachers and educators, and the group arbitrarily arrested hundreds of other teachers.

Violations against teachers continued in 2022 and 2023 to the extent that the Teachers’ Club in areas under the control of the Houthi group announced a comprehensive strike in a statement issued on July 20, 2023, and called on teachers to participate there, on the background of deteriorating humanitarian conditions and an increase in the rate of hunger among Yemeni teachers, with an almost complete interruption of their wages for eight years. Since October 2016, Yemeni teachers in Houthi-controlled areas have been suffering from a hunger crisis and the interruption of salaries, after a decision taken by former President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi to transfer the Central Bank to Aden instead of Sanaa in September 2016. As a result, the Houthi group stopped paying salaries on a monthly basis and instead spent half of the salaries on religious occasions. The prevention of disbursing salaries was followed by campaigns of intimidation and arrests, the most prominent of which was recently the arrest of the Secretary-General of the Teachers Club on Saturday, August 5, 2023, Mr. Mohsen Al-Dar, his fate is unknown until now, and he is considered a forcibly disappeared person.

³ CONFLICT AND COHERENCE, Page 10, <https://bit.ly/3UwPiQW>

Second: Thousands of Teachers are Left Lagging Behind

One of the fundamental principles of the 2023 Agenda is that no one should be left behind. Education for sustainable development is recognized as a significant element of SDG 4, centered on the quality of education, and as a key enabler for all other sustainable development goals. However, the Houthi group seeks to impede the achievement of the sustainable development goals, in particular the right to quality, equitable, and inclusive education, by destroying the educational process in the Republic of Yemen, a country where the United Nations has said that the conflict of almost nine years has impeded more than 8 million children's access to education. In addition, the Houthis changed the curriculum and added sectarian discourse to the curriculum, arbitrary dismissal of thousands of teachers, prohibition of paying their salaries, and arrests and intimidation campaigns against teachers. According to a credible rights report, the Houthi group committed some 49 thousand Houthi violations in the education sector in seven years, from 24 October 2014 to 30 December 2021. The Houthis detonated 25 schools and converted 22 schools into military prisons, combat barracks, and 74 schools as warehouses of military bases and mechanisms in several governorates under their control⁴.

In a related context, according to reliable Yemeni sources, the Houthi movement has replaced teachers for the last two years with some 36 thousand of its members, in addition to charging students in public schools an annual fee of USD 15 per student, which has caused thousands of students to be deprived of education⁵. In this regard, the issuance by the Houthi community of the "Code of Functional Conduct," which forcibly subjects right-wing society to the values of the terrorist group, obliges public officials - including teachers - to abide by the behavioral and professional norms emanating from the ideas of the sectarian group; that undermines the functioning of the educational process with democracy and imposes the authority and ideas of the Houthi group on teachers and educators. The Code of Conduct also promotes minds institutionally received for children and young people through the educational institution. Besides changing the curriculum to spread sectarian and misconception ideas to the minds

⁴ 49 ألف انتهاك حوثي في قطاع التعليم خلال 7 سنوات، الوطن، 28 مايو 2022. <https://cutt.us/4wn8E>
⁵ عشرات الآلاف من عناصر الحوثيين يحلون بدلاً عن المعلمين، الشرق الأوسط، 26 أغسطس 2023. <https://cutt.us/NWwi6>

of students, workers, and teachers of Yemeni educational institutions, Yemen's educational process loses the ideal environmental conditions for students to receive their education in isolation from political influences from attracting and maximizing sectarian ideas, this directly undermines children's right to education and thus hampers the achievement of sustainable development goals, especially the right to quality education⁶.

Third: Abusive Practices against Teachers in Houthi-Controlled Areas

The Houthi community continues to use intimidation and intimidation against teachers who are required to pay their salaries, as well as psychological and physical torture and arrests. Many Yemeni laborers, including Mr. Mohsen Aldar, Secretary-General of the Teachers' Club, were arrested on Saturday, August 5, 2023, which is currently unaccounted for and may be considered enforced disappearance. According to a reliable report, from 24 October 2014 to 30 December 2021, according to the Yemeni Teachers' Union, since their coup d'état against the legitimate government in Yemen in September 2014, the Houthi group has killed nearly 1,600 teachers, including 14 teachers who died under torture. 2700 education teachers suffered various injuries due to indiscriminate shelling of Houthi artillery shells and live shots and sniping. More than 600 teachers were subjected to arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance of more than 36 teachers. The governorate of Hodeida is one of the foremost provinces where teachers have been subjected to such violations, with more than 130 teachers subjected to arbitrary detention. In addition, 2,500 teachers were subjected to various types of abuse, cruel labor, and physical abuse⁷. Between October 2019 and the end of 2022, more than 60 teachers were tortured. The Houthis have also imposed house arrest on 35 teachers, brought 23 others to political trials, and sentenced them to death.

In a related context, and against the backdrop of the general strike by Yemeni teachers, in August 2023, the Houthi group carried out large-scale raids and abductions in the governorates of Mehwit, Rameh, Abb and other governorates, threatening to dismiss them once and for all and replace them with

⁶ Between the Lines: Understanding the Houthi Employment Code of Conduct, Washington Institute, 15 Jan 2023. <https://cutt.us/JnmX4>
⁷ نقابة المعلمين اليمنيين: مقتل أكثر من 1500 تربيوي بأيدي الحوثيين، المدينة، 5 أكتوبر 2020، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3815QQW>

others, in addition, officials of trade unions' committees had been threatened, called to educational departments for investigation, and accused of working for other hostile parties; according to reliable sources in Ibb governorate, a Houthi leader expelled the principal of the "Zahra Girls" School in the Jabal district of Ibb governorate to force female teachers to strike in the school for three weeks. The Houthi leader also insulted the school's striking teachers and threatened to dismiss and replace them if they did not return to teach. In addition, gunmen from the Houthi group broke into the "Ennahda School" in the directorate of Bani Saad in Mahwit governorate to break up the teachers' strike. The strike leadership was abducted in the school, and others were threatened with dismissal for incitement. The teachers who participated in the strike were also shot and beaten⁸.

In a related context, following the general strike of Yemeni teachers, in August 2023, the Houthi group launched accusations of "treason" and "enemy service" against salary claimants by the group's leadership. Five armed men beat a journalist, and one of the deputies demanding payment of salaries to Yemeni teachers was threatened with death. Four others were also threatened with punishment as claims to pay employees, workers, teachers, and educators in Houthi-controlled areas escalated⁹. In addition, in September 2023, the Houthi intelligence group withheld monthly bonus vouchers (equivalent to \$50) distributed by the Teacher Support Fund, requiring resignation from the Teachers' Club membership to obtain them, as well as threatening to arrest anyone who continues to strike and prosecute him as cooperating with the legitimate government¹⁰. All past practices have been conducted in a climate of lack of accountability and under the guidance of the group's government leaders, which presents imminent risks for teachers in particular and the education sector in Yemen in general.

⁸ حرب الحوثيين على التعليم.. نهب رواتب المعلمين وتجريف التعليم، أخبار اليوم، 14 أغسطس 2023، <https://cutt.us/y4Imn>

⁹ حملة إرهاب حوثية تستهدف المؤيدين لإضراب المعلمين، الامناء نت، 27 أغسطس 2023، <https://cutt.us/jfBV2>

¹⁰ مخابرات الحوثيين تدخل على خط المواجهة مع المعلمين، الشرق الأوسط، 5 سبتمبر 2023، <https://cutt.us/ib9P4>

Violation of Teachers' Right to Peaceful Assembly

Preventing an employee from receiving his salary and enjoying a decent living with his family violates Yemen's laws and international instruments signed by Yemen. Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states: " A worker's right to just conditions of work and fair remuneration guarantee a decent living; Restricting trade union work and preventing the exercise of the right to strike is a violation of human rights. Article 8 of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights affirms that " The exercise of this right may not be subject to any restrictions other than those prescribed by law, but since the announcement by Yemeni teachers of more than 200 thousand teachers to engage in a full-scale strike in all areas of Houthi control at the end of July 2023, Because of hunger and the salary crisis for almost eight years¹¹ .The Houthi group continued to threaten and kidnap many of the leadership of the teachers' club, in addition to denouncing and cheating against all teachers claiming their salaries and taking part in the strike. It launched various information campaigns to incite them. The group also dismissed many of them and replaced them with other Houthi volunteers¹².

In this context, the Houthi group continued to carry out campaigns to raid and kidnap several leaders of the Yemeni laboratory club that called for the teachers' strike in late July 2023. In early August 2023, the Houthi group escalated the campaigns of prosecution, arrests, and threats against the laborers and teachers involved in the all-out strike until their salaries were paid. The Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Yemeni Teachers' Club "Abu Zeid al-Kamim" was arrested by the Houthi group in Sana 'a, along with the abduction of the Secretary-General of the club "Mohsen al-Dar." In addition, many club members were summoned to arbitrarily investigate due to their call for strike action and peaceful assembly. As recently as August 2023, a group commander abducted three teachers and assaulted others in the directorate of Atma in Dhamar governorate. The Houthi group also raided several teachers' homes in the directorate of Atma west of Dhamar arbitrarily arrested three teachers, and transferred them to the directorate's security prison .According to reliable

¹¹ معلمو اليمن: شهر على الإضراب.. والحلول في "مصيدة" المفاوضات، الغد، 20 أغسطس 2023. <https://cutt.us/ifmFX>

¹² إتاوات حوثية باسم المعلمين، خيوط، 17 سبتمبر 2023. <https://cutt.us/E9MJQ>

sources, the Houthi group attacked seven other teachers in the same directorate, using the aftermath of rifles during the attack, some of whom were taken to nearby hospitals in an attempt by the Houthi group to stop the continuation of the Yemeni teachers' strike¹³.

In a continuous context of Houthi violations against teachers involved in the mass strike in areas under the control of the Houthi community, The official of the teachers' club in Mahwit governorate, west of Sana'a, Nasser al-Qa'qa, was detained on the grounds of demanding the salaries of teachers working in Al-Mahwit governorate schools, in an attempt to intimidate participants in the club's strike and discourage them from calling for the continuation of the strike¹⁴. The Houthi leaders directed the sale of the property and houses of the participants in the strike and diverted them in favor of the Teachers' Support Fund to scuttle the teachers' strike. According to local sources, the Houthi group in Atma district, Dhamar governorate, attacked the teachers involved by striking, beating seven teachers with rifles, and subjecting them to injuries; after they were taken to nearby hospitals. The Houthi group also abducted three teachers from their homes after assaulting them and took them to the Directorate's prison¹⁵.

In addition, the Houthi community has resorted to threatening teachers who have demanded their salaries and who are involved in the teachers' all-out strike by bringing them to trial. Tens of thousands of sectarian elements were replaced by teachers who had been dismissed in the group's areas of control to scuttle the strike and divide teachers. Houthi leaders and mosque preachers also conducted campaigns to demonize and vilify them against teachers demanding salary payments, accusing them of employment and Islamophobia. The Houthi group expressed that it was disbursing monthly incentives to teachers (\$50 per month), after threatening to prevent them from those who commit to time and refusing to participate in the strike called by the Yemeni Teachers' Club¹⁶. The practices carried out by the Houthi group to stop peaceful gatherings of teachers in the group's areas of control are clearly in contravention of Article 20 of the Universal

¹³ استغلال حوثي لإضراب المعلمين.. فرض جبايات وتشديد عقوبات، نيوز يمن، 21 أغسطس 2023. <https://cutt.us/DrPOJ>

¹⁴ اسرار | بالاسماء والتفاصيل .. قيادات كبيرة في المليشيات بصنعاء تسارع في حذف الفضائح والأدلة قبل توقيع اتفاق الرياض.. شاهد، أسرار سياسية، 20 سبتمبر 2023. <https://cutt.us/6biBn>

¹⁵ الحوثيون يعتدون على المعلمين المشاركين في الإضراب بدمار ونقل عدد منهم إلى المستشفيات، برس بي، 20 أغسطس 2023. <https://cutt.us/mPgDC>

¹⁶ تصعيد جديد بين المعلمين المضربين عن العمل ومليشيا الحوثي، عدن تايم، 1 سبتمبر 2023. <https://www.aden-tm.net/news/257817>

Declaration of Human Rights and Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Fundamental Rights. Both documents guaranteed the right to peaceful assembly of all persons, which the group did not commit itself to despite the commitments it had made regarding the applicability of the treaties signed by the Yemeni Government to the group's administration.

Fifth: Recommendations

- Put pressure on the Houthi movement to respond to the recommendations of the international community and international, regional, and local NGOs to respond promptly to the demands of Yemeni teachers.
- Immediately stop restricting trade union work, prevent the exercise of the right to strike or peaceful assembly, and allow teachers and workers in the education sector to exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression and their right to strike and peaceful assembly.
- The need to stop intimidating teachers and workers in the educational sector in the areas of the Houthi movement's control, stop arrests against them, and release those who are detained against the backdrop of strikes and peaceful protests.
- Pressure on the Houthi group to stop targeting teachers in areas under the control of the Houthi terrorist group.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) must press the Houthi movement to ensure non-discrimination in education.
- The need to include international sanctions for the revival of Badr al-Din al-Houthi, Minister of Education of the non-internationally recognized Government of Sana'a.