



The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC, 20500

July 11, 2022

**Dear President Biden,**

There is no doubt that when your administration revoked the designation of Ansarallah or the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), the intentions were to help alleviate the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. Unfortunately, in the year and a half since that action was taken, the Houthis have not moderated their actions or engaged in a productive dialogue. Furthermore, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has not been relieved.

The undersigned 35 NGOs represent more than one million Yemeni citizens and refugees who can attest to a deteriorating humanitarian crisis that should be traced to the enhanced credibility the Houthis received when their designation was rescinded and their ability to freely navigate international financial systems was re-established.

It is well documented that years after the Houthis were delisted as an FTO, the number of Houthi militia violations against Yemeni people and attacks against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia had doubled. In the past period, the Houthis conducted nearly drone or missile attacks on Saudi airports and airfields.

But what is not as widely appreciated is the catastrophic devastation that the Houthis have inflicted throughout Yemen itself.

### **Humanitarian Crisis**

There is a high number of civilian casualties in Yemen since Ansarallah (Houthi movement) was delisted as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

The violence of the Houthi group increased after it was removed from the list of terrorist organizations, as the group's crimes varied between siege of cities, bombing civilians, booby traps roads and schools, sniping civilians, child recruitment, displacement of civilians from their homes, humanitarian aid theft, Employee payroll theft, bombing neighboring countries and arrest of journalists and opponents of the Houthi organization, nearly half of these incidents affected women and children.

Four Yemeni journalists held by the Houthis since 2015 are at risk of execution at any time. These death sentences show the systematic criminal nature of the Houthi group against journalists.

After February 2021, the same month where the Houthis were delisted as an FTO, many Governorates not under Houthi control saw a major escalation in hostilities. Nearly 100,000 people in those governorates were displaced since that time because of Houthi shelling to neighborhood's areas.

Specifically in Marib and Taiz cities, the Houthis indiscriminately target civilian sites with a variety of weapons, including missiles, drones, and landmines. Cities can find themselves besieged by the Houthi, and used as leverage in negotiations with the Yemeni government. Frequently, the Houthis will also target displacement camps, forcing repeated cycles of displacement and human suffering.

September 2021 the city of Sana'a and the world witnessed extrajudicial executions of civilians by the Houthi group, where one of the accused was a minor and paralyzed due to his injury as a result of Houthi torture .

January and February of 2022 were especially traumatic years, with escalations of hostilities reaching an all-time high since 2019. Houthi attacks not only focused on sites of interest in Yemen, but expanded to civilians and their properties in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The Houthis have been exacerbating food shortages as well. As of June 2022, over 19 million people are expected to be highly food insecure, a 9% increase from the first half of 2022.

Despite the fact that Yemen has garnered the most financial support for any humanitarian crisis in history, at \$20 billion since 2015, the toll of death, displacement, and hunger have all increased because of the Houthi group's theft of humanitarian aid and control over it.

### **Mines**

Barely six months after the Houthis were delisted as a terror group, a Saudi team collected 2,679 mines in one week alone, up from 4,589 mines collected in February of 2022, and only 4% of the total number of mines collected. Over 5.3 million people are affected by Houthi landmines, most of whom are concentrated in Yemen specially the areas that not under Houthi control. 527 children—a significant underrepresentation—were injured or killed by “Explosive Remnants of War” in 2021. The number of casualties by landmine and other explosives is consistently increasing, not only because of their prevalence, but because first responders lack access to affected civilians.

### **Children soldiers**

Since 2015, over 10,000 Yemeni child soldiers were killed on a battlefield they were forced to enter. Despite the fact that the Houthis signed an April agreement with the UN to end child soldiering, video evidence of a child soldiering training session in Sana'a was released just last period.

The Houthi group has recruited more than 35,000 children since 2014, and used schools, mosques, and summer camps to indoctrinate at least 60,000 children, train them and send them to the fronts for its wars on behalf of the Iranian regime. Child soldiers—many of whom are as young as 10—are recruited through a variety of coercive measures. Houthis use various forms of leverage, such as detaining family members or withholding humanitarian aid, in order to pressure the recruitment of Yemeni children.

## **Women's rights**

As we consistently see in other conflict zones, women are often the first victims of gross human rights violators. Millions of women and girls have been raped, murdered, abducted, and detained since the outset of the war. More than 4 million Yemeni women and girls, more than 10% of the population, are in need of relief from gender-based violence. About 1,400 women—including human rights activists, educators, and humanitarian relief workers—have been detained.

There is an organized behavior and methodology targeting women, all of which support violations of the basic rights of Yemeni women regarding life and dignity. First and foremost, Houthi militias utilize rape and sexual abuse as a reward for their soldiers, and are therefore encouraged to increase the pool of detained women. Furthermore, 25% of all displaced families in Yemen are headed by a woman; by detaining women the Houthis are able to engage in ransom or coerce the will of an entire household. The Houthis employ false charges—often prostitution or espionage—in order to detain, embarrass, and delegitimize women, especially political dissidents. Detained women are psychologically pressured, sexually abused, and tortured into adhering to the requests of the Houthi. In one case, the Houthis only promised release to a detainee if she either accepted the false charges of prostitution or agreed to spy on senior Houthi officials. This helps demonstrate that the Houthis detain women not only to reward soldiers, coerce households, and eliminate political dissidents, but also in order to advance militia goals.

The Houthis have responded to your Administration's offer of compassion and conciliation with disdain. They have refused to take advantage of the opportunity that your Administration provided and allow for the alleviation of the pain and suffering of the Yemeni people. After a year and 5 months, it is empirically evident that this policy and approach towards the Houthis has failed at curbing Houthi behavior and improving the humanitarian crisis. It is therefore time to reconsider the Houthi designation as an FTO.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

On behalf of the following Yemeni organizations

1. The Yemeni Coalition of Independent Women
2. Arab Initiative for Education and Development
3. Swedish Forum For Rights and Development
4. The Washington Outsider
5. 8th March Yemeni Union Women
6. The Civil Network for Development, Media and Human Rights Protection – Aden
7. True Foundation for Human Rights
8. Al-Manara Center for Development and Human Rights

9. Aden Gulf Foundation for Human Development
10. Al Dhale Foundation for Media and Documentation of Human Rights Violations
11. The National Foundation for the Protection of Women and Children
12. Al-Dhale Foundation for Justice and Equity
13. Media Foundation for Rights and Freedoms
14. 4K Foundation for Human Rights
15. Socotra Center for Human Rights
16. Al-Mahra Humanitarian Foundation
17. Energy Foundation for Humanitarian Development
18. Shabwa Foundation for Democratic Youth
19. The European Association for The Defense of Minorities
20. Arab-African Group for Human Rights (with consultative membership at the United Nations / Switzerland)
21. Gulf European Center for Human Rights (UK)
22. Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society (Kingdom of Bahrain)
23. Frontline Human Rights Organization (UK)
24. Wifaq Organization for Peace and Human Rights (Switzerland)
25. The International Observatory for Human Rights (Belgium)
26. Arab Coalition for the Arab Court of Human Rights (Kingdom of Bahrain)
27. Arab Observatory for Trade Union Rights and Freedoms (Greece)
28. International Human Rights Information Network (UK)
29. Independent Human Rights Group (Bahrain)
30. Manama Center for Human Rights (Kingdom of Bahrain)
31. Gulf European Association for Social Miedi(Kingdom of Bahrain)
32. The European Association for The Defense of Minorities
33. IMPAC
34. Progetto Donna
35. Postversa Asbl