



Yemen

**Report submitted to the Human Rights Committee for the
review of the fifth periodic report of Yemen**

Follow up report

20 June 2013

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1. Introduction

As per its normal practice, following the review of Yemen by the Human Rights Committee (hereon in referred to as the Committee) in March 2012, the Committee requested the State party provide information concerning a limited number of priority recommendations.¹

The Republic of Yemen is currently undergoing an important political transition, with the launch of the National Dialogue Conference in March 2013. This conference aims to discuss Yemen's major political issues following the departure of former President Saleh and should lead to the drafting of a new constitution, as well as the organisation of general elections in 2014. This major development provides a specific political context, explaining to some extent the absence of State replies to the Committee's request, as well as the will of the authorities to spare the susceptibilities of key national actors to ensure the broadest possible range of Yemeni society is represented at this National Dialogue Conference.

The Committee selected recommendations falling under Alkarama's mandate at paragraphs 7 and 8 of its Concluding Observations, concerning the creation of a National Human Rights Institution and the accountability of human rights violations following the 2011 demonstrations and the counter-terrorism policy in the South. These recommendations require urgent attention by Yemen, and the Committee accordingly requested Yemen to provide follow up information within one year, by 23 April 2013.²

In this report, following on from its alternative report submitted on 1 April 2012, Alkarama will also provide its assessment of the implementation of further recommendations falling under Alkarama's expertise by the Government of Yemen. This includes recommendation 15 (excessive use of force, arbitrary detention and torture during peaceful demonstrations), 17 (corruption of the judiciary), 18 (overcrowded detention centers), and 25 (freedom of expression).

This response has been prepared following consultation of local civil society, governmental representatives and Alkarama's mission to Yemen from 16 to 26 April 2013. Yemen has not provided its answers to the Committee until now.

2. Implementation of Recommendations

2.2 Recommendation 7 – Establishment of a National Human Rights Institution

The Committee's recommendation at paragraph 7 stated that "While noting the State party's pledge, as expressed by the delegation during the dialogue, to establish a national human rights institution within the first year of the transition period, the Committee observes that such a pledge had already been made in the State party's last periodic report, to no effect (art. 2). The State party should establish a national human rights institution, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). The Committee encourages the State party to benefit from the assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in establishing such a mechanism³".

On 23 April 2013, Alkarama met with Ms Houria Mashoor, Minister of Human Rights, in order to gather information and her views on the potential establishment of a National Human Rights Institution in full respect of the Paris Principles. The Minister of Human Rights reiterated the Yemeni Government's commitment to implementation of paragraph 7 of the Committee's recommendation.

¹ This procedure falls under the Committee's Rules of Procedure. See. See <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/400/67/PDF/G1240067.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 7 May 2013) (Rule No. 71 para. 5) for more information.

² See paragraph 29 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

³ See paragraph 7 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

At the institutional level, a ministerial committee composed by representatives of concerned ministries was designated by the Prime Minister to lead the work under the coordination of the Ministry of Human Rights. This committee was responsible for leading talks and presenting a draft law defining the Yemeni National Human Rights Institution to the Parliament. The Ministry of Human Rights is steering the project, and organised several consultation rounds in the country's main governorates to consult with civil society representatives, academics and local organisations. The draft has been presented to the National Dialogue Conference's nine committees, and is now being reviewed by the Prime Minister to be presented to the Parliament. Ms Mashoor estimates and hopes this project could be voted on by the end of this summer, but underlined the current specific political context of the country that may lead to changes in the agenda.

According to a meeting with Mr Laith Abdulaziz, human rights officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) office in Sanaa, the establishment process is ongoing, and benefits from the support of the OHCHR and the UNDP, especially in terms of capacity building and exchange of good practices.

2.3 Recommendation 8 – Counter-Terrorism Measures

The Committee's recommendation at paragraph 8 stated that "while the Committee appreciates the State party's need to adopt measures to combat acts of terrorism, including the formulation of appropriate legislation to punish such acts, it regrets the impact, the full scope of which remains to assess, that the multiplication of those measures has had on the enjoyment of rights enshrined in the Covenant (art. 2). The State party should compile data on the implementation of anti-terrorism legislation, and how it affects the enjoyment of rights under the Covenant. The State party should ensure that national legislation not only defines terrorist crimes in terms of their purpose but also defines the nature of those acts with sufficient precision to enable individuals to regulate their conduct accordingly and does not impose undue restrictions on the exercise of rights under the Covenant."⁴

One of the main issues faced by Alkarama during its mission to the country was the lack of reliable statistics about Yemen's counterterrorism policies, particularly concerning the implementation of the Covenant's legal obligations.

Alkarama attempted to gather data on the Yemeni military, civilian and armed groups casualties, especially in the southern provinces, as well as casualties provoked by U.S. unmanned aircraft systems conducting so-called targeted killings in the country. In this regard, meetings were organised with the local bureau of OHCHR in Sana'a, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Human Rights as well as several non-government organization (NGO) representatives.

Ambassador Al Yemani, Director of the Foreign Minister's Office, asserted the availability of official data. He informed us that official press releases were issued when terrorists were killed, mentioning their names, the date of their deaths as well as the place of the incident. When asked about the existence of compiled data, or the availability of these figures, Mr Al Yemani redirected us to Minister of Interior and Minister of Human Rights. Concerning the U.S. unmanned aircraft systems operations, he recognised United States military operations in the country, and explained these by the cooperation of the two governments in their war against terrorism.

Ms Mashoor, Minister of Human Rights, recognised that the lack of official data on casualties caused by the fighting in the south was an important issue, and confirmed and denounced U.S. operations in the country. Her Ministry was therefore not able to provide us with official figures concerning the armed violence that took place in the southern regions as well as the casualties provoked by U.S. unmanned aircraft systems.

⁴ See paragraph 8 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

Mr Laith Abdulaziz, Human Rights Officer at the OHCHR office in Sanaa, confirmed the problem of the absence of official data regarding the implementation of anti-terrorism legislation, and its effects on the enjoyment of rights under the Covenant.

Mr Barman, lawyer and representative of the National Organisation for Defending Rights and Freedom (HOOD) confirmed the extreme difficulty of obtaining official statistics on the number of victims of counter-terrorism measures in a meeting on 19 April. Mr Barman visited the Ministry of Defense in person to ask for figures on the number of government soldiers killed in the fighting in the south, including counter-terrorism operations. Despite his insistence, Minister of Defense representatives refused to provide him with any data.

It appears that the lack of official figures is the result of a deliberate policy from security apparatuses, which is concerning. In addition, Alkarama's representative in Yemen reported that some press releases contain false information, stating for example that an individual was killed when he was in fact still alive. He also remarked differences in the number of casualties reported by different media for the same attacks. Our representative also collected testimonies from families of civilian casualties killed by U.S. unmanned aircraft systems showing that normal legal procedures regarding their burial were violated. In these cases, an order was given to local authorities to refrain from issuing death certificates establishing the cause of the death as per the normal procedure. No autopsies are carried on these bodies, and it seems that particularly in the case of civilian casualties, steps are taken by official bodies to hide the causes of death on official documents. Alkarama's representative was also informed of threats made by security apparatuses to families of those killed or injured when relatives try to provide their testimonies in public meetings organised by NGOs.

2.4 Recommendation 15 – Violations against Civilians

The Committee's recommendation at paragraph 15 stated that "The Committee is concerned at reports of excessive and disproportionate use of lethal force and at reports of torture, arbitrary detention and threats against civilians involved in peaceful demonstrations for political and democratic change in 2011. The Committee notes that similar reports have also reached it in relation to unrest in the South and the North, as well as in the context of the fight against terrorism (arts.2, 6 and 7). The State party should launch a transparent and independent investigation, in accordance with international standards, into all allegations of involvement of members of its law enforcement and security forces in the killings of civilians, excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, including enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment, whether this is related to the 2011 unrest, or to the unrest in the south, the conflict in the north and the fight against Al-Qaida's presence in the territory of the State party. Furthermore, the State party should initiate criminal proceedings against the alleged perpetrators of such acts, sentence those responsible and afford victims reparation, including adequate compensation."⁵

Regarding the use of lethal force, Alkarama is extremely concerned by the extrajudicial killings led by both the Yemeni and United States government on so called "high profile" armed militants, as well as the numerous civilians reportedly killed in these attacks. Alkarama is particularly concerned about the absence of any public legal proceeding justifying the inclusion of potential targets on U.S. and Yemeni government "kill lists". Alkarama submitted a communication to Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on 10 May 2013 concerning the extrajudicial execution of twelve unarmed civilians in Al Bayda district on 2 September 2012, as well as a report on this issue to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism.

On 2 September 2012, a Toyota Land Cruiser pickup transporting 14 people was destroyed by two missiles, instantly killing eleven people, including one woman and two children. Three other people were severely injured, and one of the injured victims died some months later in a hospital in Cairo, Egypt where he had gone to seek treatment for his injuries. The victims of the attack were all civilians

⁵ See paragraph 15 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

residing in Al Sabul village, where they were working as farmers. All the victims were killed as they were returning home from Rada' market where they usually sell their agricultural products. Mr Nasser Mabkhout Muhamad Al Sabuly, who was driving the pickup, reported to Alkarama's representative in Yemen that he observed two aircrafts flying over his car and that one of them began to fly low and approached the car. As the plane came closer, a first rocket was fired towards the front of the pickup, turning it upside down and starting a fire. A few minutes later, a second rocket was fired at the car, presumably to make sure all the passengers in the car were killed. Eleven passengers died instantaneously, and a twelfth one died from his injuries several months later. Two people, Sultan Ahmad Muhamad Sarhan and Nasser Mabkhout Muhamad Al Sabuly, are still alive, and still suffer from severe burns. The Yemeni government initially announced that the victims of the attack were al-Qaeda militants and that a Yemeni plane had carried out the attack.⁶ However, Yemeni officials later admitted that an American aircraft had fired the two missiles that hit the car. They also recognised that all the victims were civilians. U.S. officials acknowledged their responsibility for the attack for the first time in December 2012.⁷ Following the attack, a governmental delegation was sent to the region, with the stated aim of providing financial compensation to the victims. The three people wounded in the attack confirmed that they were provided with an amount of 5'000 USD which did not represent a sufficient amount of money to cover their medical expenses. They have not received any additional compensation since then. Other victims' relatives reported to Alkarama's representative that they had not received any financial compensation. On 12 September 2012, the Yemeni National Organisation for Defending Rights and Freedom (HOOD) officially seized the General Prosecutor to ask for the opening of an official inquiry into the United States' unmanned aircraft systems flights over in the country. They have not been informed of any action taken by the Prosecution to date.

Regarding arbitrary detention, Alkarama was present for the release on 18 April 2013 of six young men detained without regular legal proceedings for the past two years for their involvement in the peaceful demonstrations of 2011. While Alkarama welcomes this release, we remain concerned by the widespread phenomenon of arbitrary detention in Yemen, and especially the ongoing detention of 70 other young protesters arrested for their involvement in the peaceful demonstrations of 2011⁸ and still detained without having been judged.

Moreover, the National Organisation for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD) registered 382 cases of arbitrary detention by governmental or nongovernmental groups in 2012.⁹ The organisation received complaints concerning the following governmental and nongovernmental actors:

- 82 complaints concerning people arrested by the Political Security and the National Security services in 2012, including allegations of torture
- 115 complaints concerning people arrested by the Ministry of Interior (Police) in 2012
- 69 complaints concerning people arrested by the Army in 2012
- 41 complaints concerning people arrested by Ansar Allah (Houthi) in 2012
- 75 complaints concerning people arrested by Ansar Al Charia (Al Qaeda) in 2012.

Several local sources also reported cases of arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings committed by nongovernmental actors, such as Ansar Allah (Houthi) in the north as well as Ansar al Charia (linked to Al Qaeda) in the south.

⁶ Sudarsan Raghavan, *When U.S. drones kill civilians, Yemen's government tries to conceal it*, Washington Post, 25 December 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/when-us-drones-kill-civilians-yemens-government-tries-to-conceal-it/2012/12/24/bd4d7ac2-486d-11e2-8af9-9b50cb4605a7_story.html, (accessed 3 May 2013). See also AFP, *Yemen probes civilian deaths in apparent US drone strike*, 4 September 2012, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5q-lcy97e1q00-ocw0WVO2B1-J2AQ?docId=CNG.addf2dcbfe9b931ff7fc97a6c01cf101.6d1> (accessed 3 May 2013).

⁷ Sudarsan Raghavan, *When U.S. drones kill civilians, Yemen's government tries to conceal it*, Washington Post, 25 December 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/when-us-drones-kill-civilians-yemens-government-tries-to-conceal-it/2012/12/24/bd4d7ac2-486d-11e2-8af9-9b50cb4605a7_story.html, (accessed 3 May 2013).

⁸ Samar Qaed, *Uncharged and abducted, Yemeni revolutionaries' whereabouts unknown*, Yemen Times, 15 April 2013, <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1668/report/2234/Uncharged-and-abducted-Yemeni-revolutionaries%E2%80%99-whereabouts-unknown.htm> (accessed 13 May 2013).

⁹ National Organisation for Defending Rights and Freedom, Annual Report 2012, Sana'a, April 2013, p.26.

2.5 Recommendation 17 – Reform of the Judiciary

The Committee's recommendation at paragraph 17 stated that "The Committee is concerned about the state of the judiciary, which suffers from endemic corruption. The Committee is also concerned about the existence of ad hoc judicial bodies, such as the Specialized Criminal Court, which are inconsistent with the guarantees provided in article 14 of the Covenant (arts. 2 and 14 and 26). The State party should engage in a full and complete reform of its judiciary to ensure its independence and functioning. The State party should increase efforts to combat corruption by investigating promptly and thoroughly all incidents of suspected corruption. If corruption is established, the officials concerned should face criminal and not only disciplinary sanctions. The State party should also focus on the training of judges and prosecutors. Moreover, all ad hoc judicial bodies, such as the Specialized Criminal Court, should be abolished, so as to ensure that all accused, irrespective of their status, are afforded the guarantees enshrined in article 14 of the Covenant."¹⁰

Following an interview with Khaled Al Maouri, a lawyer, corruption of the judiciary is remains an obstacle to the effective implementation of Yemeni obligations under the Covenant. As example, Mr Al Maouri submitted two requests in the name of HOOD to the Public Prosecution to investigate the 2009 Majala U.S. airstrike (which killed 14 women and 21 children, all civilians) and the aforementioned 2012 airstrike of Ould Rabee in Al Bayda Governorate which provoked dozens of civilian casualties. No inquiry has been launched to date, and Mr Al Maouri has not been informed of any legal steps taken on this matter. There are strong suspicions that the absence of inquiry is the result of political pressure from security apparatuses or from the United States on the judiciary. The Specialised Criminal Court, well known for its disregard of international standards regarding the independence of justice, is still used by both Political Security and National Security to imprison people involved in peaceful demonstrations as well as journalists, on vague accusations, in complete violation of their fundamental rights.

The case of Ms **Raja'a Al-Hakami** is another example of the malfunction and corruption of the judicial system in Yemen. Raja Al-Hakami was arrested end of October 2010 and was first sentenced to two years in prison by an Ibb district court after killing a man who tried to rape her after breaking into her room. Despite acting in self-defense, Ms Al-Hakami was sentenced to the death penalty after an appeal from the family of the murdered assailant, which is known to be influent with local authorities in the province of Ibb, which would explain why the ruling was favorable to his family. Ms Al-Hakami is still detained to date, waiting her appeal to be examined by the Supreme Court.

2.6 Recommendation 18 – Arbitrary Detention and Conditions in Places of Detention

The Committee's recommendation at paragraph 18 stated that "The Committee is concerned that the absence of an independent and effective judiciary has an impact on the dysfunctions in the prison system. The Committee is particularly concerned about overcrowding of detention centres, the absence of oversight mechanisms to monitor places of detention and the absence of an overview on the number of persons deprived of their liberty. The Committee is also concerned about reports of women being detained after serving their sentence (arts. 2, 3, 9, 10 and 26). The State party should ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty have their detention reviewed by a judge in compliance with article 9 of the Covenant. Judges and prosecutors should monitor all places of deprivation of liberty and ensure that no one is illegally detained therein. The State party should release women who have served their sentence and provide them with adequate shelters when warranted."¹¹

¹⁰ See paragraph 17 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

¹¹ See paragraph 18 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

The situation in the Yemeni prisons remain very concerning. Testimonies of former detainees describe very poor detention conditions, ill-treatment, corruption and discrimination between inmates.

Alkarama is particularly concerned by events that took place in Ibb central prison in 2012. Reports attested that several riots took place in protest of the poor detention conditions, discrimination regarding visitation right, detainees beaten by guards and corruption. Three inmates were shot with live ammunition by guards in October 2012 following a protest. At the beginning of December, two inmates cut their ears and a third one cut his fingers, again in protest of their poor detention conditions. On 22 December, eight inmates died after Abdulkareem Rashid Al-Ba'dani, a prisoner accused of murdering a person and sentenced to death, caused a blaze by setting his mattress and clothes on fire in protest of this ill-treatment. The eight inmates died suffocated to death.

Manaf Hamood Al-Salahi, Director of International Reports at the Ministry of Human Rights informed us that since 2012 the Ministry had been carrying visits to places of detention, and confirmed the very poor and alarming detention conditions. The Ministry of Human Rights organised a visit to Ibb prison from 5 to 9 December 2012 to report on the events that were taking place there. They conducted a series of interviews with some inmates, with the former and the current director of the prison as well as with members of the General Prosecution and formulated precise recommendations to the concerned ministries in order to open investigations into violations and to improve coordination between ministries. However, no concrete steps to implement these recommendations have been taken to date.

2.7 Recommendation 25 – Freedom of Opinion, Expression and Assembly

The Committee's recommendation at paragraph 25 stated that "The Committee is concerned about the serious infringements imposed on the freedom of expression of peaceful demonstrators in the context of the 2011 unrest. The Committee is particularly concerned about threats to journalists' freedom of press and expression, including massive arrests, illegal detention, threats to their physical integrity and extrajudicial killings. The Committee is concerned about the use of the Specialized Criminal Court to try journalists along with political detainees and those accused of terrorism. The Committee is also concerned about the creation of the Specialized Press and Publications Court to review all pending cases related to the implementation of the Press and Publication Law of 1990 which seriously infringes the freedom of press (arts. 2, 9, 6, 7, 14 and 19). The State party should release all journalists detained as a consequence of the 2011 unrest. Moreover, in the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative aiming, inter alia, at launching important legal and political reforms, the State party should guarantee the freedom of expression and freedom of press as set out in article 19 of the Covenant and further elaborated in the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011) on freedom of opinion and expression. The State party should also conduct full and thorough investigations into the allegations of torture, ill-treatment, threats and extra judicial killings affecting journalists and those who exercised their freedom of expression, initiate criminal proceedings against those responsible and provide the victims or their families with appropriate reparation, including compensation. The State party should also abolish the Specialized Press and Publications Court."¹²

According to Women Journalists without Chains, an NGO founded in 2005 by 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner Tawakkol Karman, journalists were subjected to various violations from obligations arising from the Covenant in 2012.¹³ The organisation recorded:

- 60 cases of attacks against journalists in the course of their work
- 34 cases of threats
- 9 cases of defamation
- 7 detentions
- 5 assassination attempts

¹² See paragraph 25 of the Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Review of Yemen (CCPR/C/YEM/CO/5) available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/CCPR.C.YEM.CO.5.doc> (accessed 7 May 2013).

¹³ Women Journalists Without Chains, Annual Report 2012, Sana'a, 2013, p.4. (The report is available on the following link <http://www.womenpress.org/articles.php?id=315>, accessed 14 May 2013).

- 4 unfair dismissals
- 3 detentions of journalists due to their work
- 2 disappearances

Amongst these cases, Alkarama is concerned by the ongoing detention of Abdulelah Haider Shaye, journalist sentenced to five years imprisonment after an unfair trial by the Specialised Criminal Court for alleged links with Al Qaeda. Alkarama submitted an urgent appeal to Special Rapporteur on Torture on 20 August 2010 on his behalf. Mr Shaye documented the 2009 Majala airstrike and drew public attention on the number of civilian casualties of the attack (14 women and 21 children). Although the attack was claimed to have been led by Yemeni forces, Mr Shaye also proved the implication of U.S. military elements by collecting tomawakh cruise missiles fragments.

The implication of U.S. military forces was later proved in a Wikileaks cable.¹⁴ It is likely that the main reason for Mr Shaye's detention is for having effectively documented violations committed by Yemeni and U.S. forces in the south of Yemen during counterterrorism measures.

More recently, Alkarama was informed of the assassination of the journalist Wajdi Abdo Muhamad Al Al-Subaihi, aged 30, known under the name of Wajdi Al Shaby, on 21 February 2013 in the city of Aden. Mr Al-Subaihi was killed by gunmen who burst into his home, and assassinated him and a friend named Daoud Al-Samaty in front of his wife and three children. The next day, the Defense Ministry declared that al-Subaihi had been working as a media spokesperson for Al Qaeda, and that the authorities had killed him. However, ten hours later, the Ministry issued a correction stating that the journalist did not work for Al Qaeda, and that the Ministry did not know who had killed the two men. No inquiry has been launched since this killing took place.

Mr Wadah Yahya Muhamad Al Qadhi, a 30-year-old journalist, was beaten by security forces as he was trying to document the crash of a military plane close to the capital Sana'a. On 13 May 2013, a military plane crashed near the village of Beit Bouss, close to the capital. Mr Al Qadhi decided to visit the place to document the crash and to gather testimonies from local inhabitants. Approximately two hours after the crash, as Mr Al Qadhi was interviewing people, various security forces arrived there and began to beat Mr Al Qadhi and the people he was interviewing, as well as other journalists present at the time. The security forces began to shoot into the air to disperse the crowd, and as Mr Al Qadhi tried to record the violent dispersion of the crowd by security forces, he was again beaten and his camera was broken by a security agent.

3. Conclusion

Numerous violations of the Covenant have continued since the review of the Republic of Yemen by the Committee in 2012. However, after more than thirty years of reign by former President Ali Abdallah Saleh, and with an ongoing political transition process, some governmental bodies are taking concrete steps to improve the general human rights situation, as well as the implementation of Yemen's obligations under the Covenant. The efforts by the Ministry of Human Rights in this regard are a positive step for the enhanced implementation of the Covenant in the country.

However, several powerful State apparatuses have not changed their approach in addressing the country's main challenges. Torture, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings remain widespread in the country. The high number of airstrikes led by Yemeni and U.S. forces in 2012, provoking numerous extrajudicial killings represents one of Alkarama's main concerns about the country today. This policy of targeted killings, which is a clear violation of article 6 of the Covenant, has disastrous effects on the implementation of the Covenant as well as reducing security in the country. This policy raises anger and erodes the trust of the local population in the Yemeni Government and the United States of America.

¹⁴ Wikileaks, REF ID O9SANAA2251, 21 December 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/O9SANAA2251.html> (accessed 13 May 2013).

The launch of the National Dialogue Conference and the ongoing political transition process, even with all its uncertainties, therefore represents a major opportunity for Yemeni society to address the challenges it currently faces, as well as the aforementioned violations. Bringing together a wide range of Yemeni society, this body should be able to review the policies that led to past violations, and the dialogue process should therefore be followed closely to ensure it also addresses implementation of the Covenant.