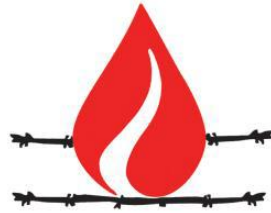


# **Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)**

## **UPR Submission**

**32<sup>nd</sup> session of UPR Working Group (Jan.2019)**

### **Yemen**



**سازمان دفاع از قربانیان خشونت**  
Organization for Defending Victims  
of Violence

**[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)**

**About ODVV**

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC. ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a member of the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centers in the Middle East and North Africa and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). ODVV has cooperated with international organizations in a variety of issues and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. ODVV is focused on promoting human rights, supporting victims of violence, empowering Iranian civil society, and offering human rights consultations to the Iranian institutions and organizations. ODVV is actively involved in running various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Other activities include:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva;
- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Unilateral Coercive Measures (Economic Sanctions), Racism, Racial Discrimination, Islamophobia and Xenophobia;
- Publishing *Defenders Quarterly* (in English), human rights news and developments *Weekly* (in Farsi), updating ODVV websites in English, Farsi and Arabic;
- Internship for Iranian and international students.

4. ODVV is submitting the following report on the human rights situation of Yemen, in order to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation.

## **A) Scope of international obligations**

## **Fundamental principles of international and humanitarian law**

5. Mansour Hadi and the Saudi-led coalition have violated fundamental principles of international humanitarian law by embarking one of the most catastrophic wars in the recent decades that its repercussions have directly targeted civilians all over the country. Attacks on civilian targets, airstrikes on roads, bridges, closure of airports and siege of ports and prevention of humanitarian aid, are all instances of the violation of international humanitarian law in Yemen.

6. The behavior of Yemeni officials is in conflict with the League of Nations 16 December 1924 Declaration, on the protection of children under the title of the “Geneva Declaration, and also the Declaration on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1959), the UN General Assembly declaration of 14 December 1974 regarding the protection of women and children during crises and armed conflicts and article 77 of the Geneva Conventions Additional Protocol of 1974 with regards to particular respect towards children against any form of disrespectful attacks. Also resolutions (23)2444 of 19 December 1968, (24)2597 of 16 December 1969, (25)2674 and (25)2675 of 9 December 1970 on respect for human rights and on basic principles for the protection of civilian populations in armed conflicts are violated by Yemeni government and its coalition. The resolutions and enforceable documents prohibit any form of aggression against civilians during conflict among states, however, the Saudi military continues its onslaught of attacks against this impoverished Middle East country.

## **B) Implementation of international human rights obligations**

### **Right to life, liberty and security of the person**

#### **1) Blocking and Impeding Humanitarian Access**

7. The blockade of Yemen and the barricade of the supply routes of various governorates by Mansour Hadi’s forces in cooperation with the Saudi government have prevented the civilians in these regions from accessing food and medicine. According to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) ongoing fighting in Yemen made 22 million people being in need of aid and protection; three-quarters of the entire population of the country. And around 8.4 million people are severely food insecure and at risk of starvation.

8. On June 2018 UNICEF Executive Director, Henrietta Fore, said that the new assault on key Yemeni port of Hodeida embarked by Yemeni forces and the coalition air strikes would endanger 300,000 children and ‘choke off’ aid for millions more. They warned this new attacks by the Yemeni forces would deepen one of the world’s worst malnutrition crises apart. Millions of children throughout Yemen depend on the humanitarian and commercial goods that have been coming through that port every day for their very survival.<sup>1</sup>

## **2) The right to life**

9. The blockade imposed by the Yemeni officials and the Saudi led coalition has put the Yemeni civilians under a daily struggle for survival. The conflict that escalated in March 2015 in Yemen has left more than 22 million people - 75 per cent of the population - in need of humanitarian aid, the greatest number in any country in the world. More than 60 per cent of the population (17.8 million people) are without enough to eat. Over 8.4 million of these people are one step away from famine. About 16 million Yemenis do not have access to safe water sources, with rural areas most affected. The economy has been shattered, food prices are on the rise and essential services like health and education are collapsing. Many people have lost their jobs and cannot afford basic items.<sup>2</sup>

## **3) The right to clean water and sanitation**

10. The Yemen government has cooperated with coalition forces in diverting fuel tankers routes, closing critical ports and preventing goods from entering seaports. Fuel needed to power generators to hospitals and pump water to civilian residences has also been blocked.<sup>3</sup> Because of blocking the access to fuel has been critical for water pumping, and drinking water had shrunk further, leading to even more cases of acute watery diarrhea and cholera, both of which had been deadly for small children in these years.<sup>4</sup>

11. The lack of access to clean water is accelerating expansion of epidemic diseases. Since the end of April 2017, Yemen has been experiencing its worst recorded outbreak of suspected

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/06/1012032>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oxfam.org/en/crisis-yemen/daily-life-struggle-survival-yemen>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/yemen>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/06/1012032>

cholera in a single year. By mid-August, more than 500,000 cases were recorded. More than two years of war have devastated large parts of Yemen's infrastructure and left the majority of the population lacking basic services such as clean water. Levels of food insecurity and malnutrition are high, and make people even more vulnerable and susceptible to disease. The eastern governorates which are more vulnerable to the blockade are suffering from high levels of food insecurity, and therefore, are extremely affected by cholera.<sup>5</sup> Some 3.6 million people have been connected to disinfected water supply networks in 12 governorates. Over 17 million people in all governorates were reached with cholera prevention messages.<sup>6</sup>

### **C) Recommendations**

12. As a nongovernmental organization, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls upon the Yemeni officials to refrain itself from taking measures that result in the killing of civilians in Yemen and to contribute to peace and reconciliation process in Yemen.

13. ODVV deems the commitment and responsibility of a government towards its people as one of the most important principles of good governance and believes that by joining the attacks against the Yemeni civilian population, health centers, hospitals and ports, not only the forces loyal to Hadi failed to meet their commitments under the international law but they have played a crucial role in the crimes committed against the people of Yemen.

14. ODVV deems the first step towards improvement of human conditions in Yemen is to halt military strikes in the country and the next step is the all-out efforts of the international community to create peace and reconciliation among all parties in conflict in Yemen. Therefore, ODVV calls on all parties to the conflict to make efforts to remain committed to continue peace talks.

15. The ODVV calls for the removal of the siege of people of Yemen and invites all parties to stop the blockade in Yemen, so that people who need the highest levels of humanitarian assistance to be free of this "man-made" human catastrophe.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/yemen-crisis>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unocha.org/story/yemen-fastest-growing-cholera-epidemic-ever-recorded-brings-number-cases-895000>