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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA), a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 May 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The impact of extremism and terrorism on the situation of women in Yemen

Since 2006 Yemen has ranked last in the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index, and in 2017 the country was listed the worst place in the world to be a woman. Because of a deeply ingrained patriarchy, many women and girls cannot access their family's finances, make decisions for the household, or even move about freely. They have limited access to education, livelihoods and women's health services.

With the escalation of the armed conflict and humanitarian crisis, the situation has worsened for women. While the entire population of Republic of Yemen is affected, the conditions for Yemeni women and girls are particularly deteriorating as the conflict drags on, in a climate of intolerance, extremism and terrorism. Especially, a general pattern of the marginalization of women from political participation and leadership in decision-making forum and regression for women's rights appears. There are complex and vary actors the North South, urban and rural between different tribes and generations.

In the North:

The Houthi militia in the north adopts a strict interpretation of Islam, which impacts women's rights, and the Houthi has intensified violence against women in the North. The conflict worsened the situation—with assaults and abuses targeting women increasing 63 percent, according to the United Nations.

Some three million women and girls in Yemen are at risk of gender-based violence. There is, however, no legislation that specifically protects them. Women in Yemen are facing an "unprecedented" pattern of abuse in Houthi held areas, the severity of the five-year conflict has increased gender based violence as women and girls become the most vulnerable to exploitation. Perpetrators are allowed to act with impunity, and survivors of sexual violence and abuse have limited access to specialized health care and counseling. Because humanitarian organizations responding to the crisis are focusing on providing lifesaving aid, many are not prioritizing survivors' needs.

Besides, 1.1 million pregnant women and new mothers are acutely malnourished. Approximately six million women of childbearing age lack access to basic reproductive health care. Even giving birth puts a woman at "extreme risk," according to the United Nations.

The conflict also has reversed two decades of progress on increasing girls' access to education. More than 36 percent of girls are missing out on school. A proposed law setting 18 as the minimum age for marriage and for girls to remain in school has been abandoned.

During the last six years, there are hundreds of cases of arrests and detentions by the Houthis against Yemeni women, as well as foreign women working in the humanitarian, media, and human rights fields and an investigation. The detained women were subjected to all kinds of physical torture, including beatings with sticks and electric wires, slapping, suffocating and waterboarding, in addition to verbal insults and demeaning and psychological torture to confess to things they did not do." Hundreds of women are abducted by Houthi's militias and held in secret prisons. Several human rights report shed light on the Houthi militias' violations against women in Yemen in the six years, including arrest and enforced disappearance of more than 1180 women during the mentioned period and their exposure to killing, torture and rape. Reports also revealed suicide attempts by the detained girls in the central prison in Sanaa, stressing that Houthis did not allow medical examinations and the launch of probes into causes of deaths inside the detention centres.

In the South:

Previously, southern women were involved in decision-making. As example, in the beginning of the 1970s, the a woman became the first deputy minister. We also witness the

first women as television presenter, radio presenter, dean of a university, editor-in-chief of a newspaper, judge, or the first woman to become a captain of a civil plane. However, since 1994 women's right women's right have been reversed.

During the past thirty years, women have been subjected to restrictions on their rights and freedoms as a result of extremism and terrorism, with an unprecedented expansion of jihadist ideologies, and the armed conflict, especially with the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Yemeni Government.

Since 2017, the international anti-terrorism coalition, carried out by the Southern Transitional Council, the United Arab Emirate and the United States of America, within the framework of the United Nations (UN) counter-terrorism' strategy, pathed the way for the empowerment of women's right in the South.

While we noticed some efforts regarding women empowerment and the involvement of women in decision making, the restrictions against women are still reflected in laws and legislation related to criminal justice, economics, education, as well as health and professional care, based on extremist religious beliefs. The situation of women remains closely related to the armed conflict situation and the spread of extremist ideologies. Besides, women vulnerability includes the lack of medical care and the consequences of economic crisis, which has particularly been exacerbated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recommendations:

1. IOLDCs urges the Human Rights Council to take measure to address the issue of the spread of extremism, terrorism, and the armed conflict in Yemen, as a mean of protecting and promoting of women's rights in Yemen. It includes putting pressure on the Yemeni government to exclude Al-Qaeda militants from their national army.
2. IOLDCs affirms the need to put pressure on the Houthis and the Islah Party (Muslim Brotherhood) to stop gross violations against women and girls, including the recruitment of children in the armed conflict.
3. IOLDCs stresses the importance of resolving the armed conflict in Yemen in order to empower women and path the way for the promotion and protection of women rights, including the inclusion of women in political affairs and decision making.
4. IOLDCs requests the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies to monitor and promote the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreement.
5. IOLDCs recommends the Human Rights mechanisms to foster tolerance in every sphere of the society and especially to advocate for the elimination of intolerance and to foster gender equality in school curriculum.