

# Yemen

This past year saw appalling human rights abuses in Yemen. The regime continued to cling to power and refused to cede to popular demands for peaceful reform and democratization, as expressed by a broad popular uprising that saw civilians subjected to all manner of violent repression. The grave and systematic nature of violence waged against civilians by the government of Yemen may have amounted to crimes against humanity.

Although the uprising has, for the most part, preserved its peaceful nature in expressing its demands for the ouster of Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime, the government has persistently responded with excessive and lethal force. As of early November, more than 250 people had been killed and over 15,000 injured due to attacks on protestors by security forces, the army, militias, and government-sponsored thugs.

Instead of adopting policies that addressed the democratic aspirations of its people, the regime chose to respond to peaceful protests with repressive security measures, declaring a state of emergency after the approval of a new law that gives the authorities additional exceptional prerogatives to arrest and detain individuals and to censor the media.<sup>1</sup>

As part of their attempts to crush the revolution, the authorities used various types of collective punishment against the populace, including

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Yemen: Emergency Law Does Not Trump Basic Rights," Mar. 23, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/03/23/yemen-emergency-law-does-not-trump-basic-rights>>.

cutting off communications, random shelling that hit populated areas and hospitals, and resorting to economic restrictions to debilitate citizens' living conditions, thereby exacerbating the problem of internal displacement. Hundreds of political activists and numerous rights activists were abducted or forcibly disappeared, and many detainees were tortured in illegal detention camps run by the Central Security Forces, the Republican Guard, or the air force.

Human rights organizations and those helping to document human rights violations or to support the peaceful protests were intensely targeted, including through death threats, attempted assassinations, or arrests at airports. Artillery was used to shell the offices of one human rights organization, and their case files were burned.

The wide-scale repression extended to the media as well, in an attempt to impose an information blackout on the revolution and the violence used to crush it. A number of journalists were killed while others were harassed and physically assaulted while performing their professional duties. Numerous foreign correspondents and journalists were detained and deported, and the authorities repeatedly intervened arbitrarily to confiscate newspapers or to prohibit their distribution in various provinces. The office of al-Jazeera was shut down, and the crews of other satellite channels were attacked.

Despite the strong international condemnation of the crimes and grave abuses documented by the report of the UN mission that visited Yemen and by the UN Security Council resolution of October 21,<sup>2</sup> the regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh continued to commit further atrocities and abuses, including the brutal shelling of cities and civilian populated areas. It should be noted that the Gulf Initiative put forward by Saudi Arabia with the support of the US and the EU gave the Yemeni president, his aides, and his relatives immunity from judicial prosecution in return for Saleh's renunciation of power.<sup>3</sup>

It is doubtful that the Gulf Initiative, which entered into force after it was signed by the Yemeni vice-president and the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), will successfully end the unrest in Yemen. It calls for a period

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the High Commissioner on OHCHR's Visit to Yemen, Sep. 13, 2011, <<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/YE/YemenAssessmentMissionReport.pdf>>; and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014, Oct. 21, 2011, <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10418.doc.htm>>.

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, "Yemen Transition Tainted by 'Immunity' Deal," Nov. 24, 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/yemen-transition-tainted-%E2%80%98immunity%E2%80%99-deal-2011-11-24>>.

of partnership between the ruling party, which provided the umbrella for Saleh regime's crimes, and the traditional opposition parties. The operational provision of the initiative gives the Yemeni vice-president some of the constitutional powers enjoyed by the president, who will remain in office for 90 days, during which time early presidential elections will be held. Under this provision, the presidential elections will be no more than a show, as it requires the parties of the agreement to refrain from fielding or supporting a candidate other than the consensus candidate, who is none other than Vice-President Abed Rabbo Mansour al-Hadi.

The agreement also provides for the formation of a national consensus government with ministerial positions to be divided evenly between the ruling party and its allies on one hand and the JMP and its allies on the other. The elected president and the national consensus government will administer a two-year transitional period during which they will manage a national dialogue and form a constituent committee to draft a new constitution, under whose provisions parliamentary and presidential elections will later be held.<sup>4</sup>

In such a context, renewed clashes with the youth movement that ignited the revolution are not unlikely. Heightened military confrontations are also probable given the struggle between various centers of power competing to fill the impending power vacuum. There are increasing indications of a conflict between Saleh's oldest son, the commander of the Republican Guard, and two powerful figures in the tribal alliance: General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, who defected with the First Armored Division and announced his support for the popular revolution, and Sadeq al-Ahmar, the son of the late president of the Reform Party, who is close to a group of tribes and businessmen. Numerous clashes have been reported between the al-Ahmar tribe and government forces, and the rogue forces under General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar recently joined al-Ahmar tribal fighters to confront government forces, after their role in the early months of the revolution had been limited to protecting demonstrators.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Asharq al-Awsat, "Nass al-mubadara al-khalijiya li-hall azmat al-Yaman," Nov. 24, 2011, <<http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=651308&issueno=12049>>; and al-Masdar Online, "al-Masdar unlayn yanshur al-nass al-kamil li-l-aliya al-tanfidhiya li-l-mubadara al-khalijiya al-khassa bi-naql al-sulta fi-l-Yaman," Nov. 23, 2011, <[http://www.almasdaronline.com/index.php?page=news&news\\_id=25831](http://www.almasdaronline.com/index.php?page=news&news_id=25831)>.

<sup>5</sup> On fears of a possible civil war, see Human Rights Watch, "Yemen's Hijacked Revolution," Sep. 26, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/26/yemen-s-hijacked-revolution>>.

## **Potential crimes against humanity in the suppression of peaceful protests:**

At least 225 people were killed in attacks by security forces, militias, or pro-government thugs in the first nine months of the protests that erupted in January 2011 and spread to numerous provinces demanding democratic change and the ouster of Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime, which has clung to power for 33 years.<sup>6</sup> Dozens were also killed in the brutal shelling of some provinces, which continued even after the ruling party and the opposition JMP signed the Gulf Initiative.

In light of the abuses documented by rights reports and the UN mission, the repression and the atrocities that accompanied it likely constitute crimes against humanity and a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. Excessive and lethal force was used against peaceful assemblies of thousands of unarmed demonstrators, the wounded were pursued and hospitals raided, and medical care needed to save the lives of the injured was impeded. Abductions, involuntary disappearance, and extrajudicial killings were reported, including by snipers on rooftops and the attempted assassinations of activists. Various forms of collective punishment were also evidenced, including communication cuts, the interruption of electricity and the destruction of some major electricity networks,<sup>7</sup> and economic "punishment" such as withholding or freezing civil servants' wages, as was the case when teachers staged a sit-in, on the grounds of their participation in anti-regime protests. These sanctions also included suspending the pensions of numerous retired military personnel in the south, who had been released from service and forced into involuntary retirement.<sup>8</sup>

As of July 2011, 15,000 people had been injured due to the repression of peaceful protests,<sup>9</sup> among them more than 1,100 injured by live ammunition.<sup>10</sup> More than 200 people had been forcibly disappeared.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the High Commissioner on OHCHR's Visit to Yemen; United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014; and BBC Arabic, "Inqita' al-tayyar al-kahraba'i fi San'a' natijat 'amal takhribi," Apr. 14, 2011,

<[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/04/110414\\_yemen\\_sana\\_sabotage.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/04/110414_yemen_sana_sabotage.shtml)>.

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Gulf Cooperation Council: Revoke Immunity Promise to Saleh," May 12, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/12/gulf-cooperation-council-revoke-immunity-promise-saleh>>.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Tagheer, "al-Lajna al-qanuniya bi-sahat al-taghyir tusallim bi'that al-umam al-muttahida taqrir 'an intihak huqq al-insan fi-l-Yaman," July 3, 2011, <<http://184.107.208.115//news31092.html>>.

The authorities prohibited citizens from conducting funeral processions for the dead in order to limit the opportunities for demonstrations. They also pursued the injured, arrested them inside hospitals, and threw them into detention camps. Prominent leader of the Southern Movement Hassan Ahmad Baoum was arrested while receiving treatment in a hospital in Aden; he was first taken to a military hospital and later to an undisclosed location. Political activist Nasser Ali al-Qadi was arrested in the same hospital after being shot during the dispersal of a protest on February 11, 2011.<sup>12</sup> Medics and ambulances were denied access to save the wounded,<sup>13</sup> and some ambulances were shelled while trying to reach the injured. Security forces also occupied several hospitals and used some to target demonstrators with snipers.<sup>14</sup> Victims' bodies were even abducted and moved to undisclosed locations.<sup>15</sup>

In this context, children were subjected to grave attacks. Dozens were conscripted as armed soldiers to confront demonstrators,<sup>16</sup> and the use of excessive force in shelling assemblies led to the death of at least 26 children in the first three months of the protests. More than 800 children have been injured.<sup>17</sup>

Several brutal massacres were also perpetrated. Hurriya (Freedom) Square in Taiz witnessed one of the gravest of these atrocities on May 30, when Republican Guards and thugs stormed the square using live ammunition, tear gas, and hand grenades against demonstrators. Bulldozers

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid; and Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “Taqrir hawl al-intihakat al-jasima bi-haqq al-mu’tasimin silmiyan fi-l-jumhuriya al-Yamaniya,” June 23, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=34124>>.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Tagheer, “al-Lajna al-qanuniya bi-sahat al-taghyir tusallim ba’that al-umam al-muttahida taqrir ‘an intihak huqq al-insan fi-l-Yaman.”

<sup>12</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, “al-Taqrir al-dawri li-l-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan li-shahr Fabrayir 2011,” Mar. 18, 2011, <<http://sohr-aden.org/?p=1601#more-1601>>.

<sup>13</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “‘Adin 25 Fabrayir 2011 al-jum’ a al-dami,” Feb. 26, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=25115>>.

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Yemen: Protestor Killings Show Perils of Immunity Deal,” Sep. 20, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/20/yemen-protester-killings-show-perils-immunity-deal>>.

<sup>15</sup> Alkarama, “al-Yaman: al-qam’ ya’khudh manhan jadidan bi-ikhtitaf juthath al-qatla wa ta’dhib al-jarha,” Apr. 29, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/xIvL4>>.

<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Yemen: Stop Using Children in Armed Forces,” Apr. 14, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/14/yemen-stop-using-children-armed-forces>>.

<sup>17</sup> BBC Arabic, “Da’wa li-zabt al-nafs wa hiwar wa khilafat fi majlis al-amn bi-sha’n al-Yaman,” Apr. 20, 2011,

<[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/04/110420\\_yemen\\_unsc\\_demos.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/04/110420_yemen_unsc_demos.shtml)>; and UNICEF, “Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake on Situation of Children in the Middle East and North Africa,” Apr. 20, 2011, <[http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_58332.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_58332.html)>.

were used to raze the tents in the square, which were subsequently burned, with no regard for the presence of the disabled and elderly who were trapped inside and burned as a result. Some 57 people were killed and 1,000 injured in the massacre.<sup>18</sup>

Shortly before this, Taghyir (Change) Square in the capital of Sana'a was the target of a no less brutal massacre when security forces and pro-Saleh militias opened fire on demonstrators after the prayer on Friday, March 18, killing 41 people. The death toll later rose to 53 when 12 of those injured died of their wounds.<sup>19</sup>

The acts of lethal repression abated temporarily after unidentified groups shelled the presidential palace in an attempt to kill the Yemeni president. After the president was moved to Saudi Arabia for treatment, it was expected that Yemen would begin arrangements for a transfer of power that would meet the demands of the people for peaceful democratic change, but Saleh's return to Yemen after his convalescence frustrated these hopes. Saleh believed that the Gulf Initiative, sponsored by Saudi Arabia with the support of the EU and the US, gave him the green light to defy his people and continue the crackdown, as the initiative gave him, his aides, and his children immunity from accountability for these crimes.<sup>20</sup> With the return of Saleh, the atrocities against his opponents resumed, as illustrated particularly in the massacre seen in Taghyir (Change) Square in Sana'a which started on September 18 and lasted for three days. More than 85 people were killed in this incident by security forces' ammunition, snipers, and heavy weaponry, including anti-aircraft artillery and mortars.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> IRIN, "al-Yaman firar al-madaniyin min al-'unf fi-l-janub," June 1, 2011, <<http://arabic.irinnews.org/ReportArabic.aspx?SID=2660>>; BBC Arabic, "al-Yaman: mazid min al-qatla fi muzaharat Ta'iz wa ishtibakat San'a'," May 31, 2011, <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/05/110531\\_yemen\\_taiz\\_new.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/05/110531_yemen_taiz_new.shtml)>; and al-Jazeera, "al-Yaman: dima' wa nar bayn Ta'iz wa Zinjibar," May 30, 2011, <<http://aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/0C1193BF-AC6C-4F2F-9FB6-A1D5E5737209.htm>>.

<sup>19</sup> Alkarama, "al-Yaman: al-karama tunashid al-mujtama' al-dawli tahammul mas'uliyatihi fi himayat al-madaniyin min nizam 'Ali Salih," Mar. 19, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/P73ce>>; and al-Tagheer, "al-Lajna al-qanuniya bi-sahat al-taghyir tusallim ba'that al-umam al-muttahida taqrir 'an intihak huqq al-insan fi-l-Yaman."

<sup>20</sup> Amnesty International, "Yemen: No Immunity for Serious Violations under President Saleh," Oct. 17, 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/yemen-no-immunity-serious-violations-under-president-saleh-2011-10-17>>; and Human Rights Watch, "Yemen: Protestor Killings Show Perils of Immunity Deal."

<sup>21</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Shaqa'iq yudin majazir San'a' wa yubdi khashiyatahu min tasmin musbaq 'ala irtikab jara'im didd al-insaniya," Sep. 19, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=39662>>; and Reuters, "Inhiyar hudna hashsha fi-l-Yaman bi-fi'l al-qadha'if wa rasas al-qannasa," Sep. 21, 2011, <<http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE78K12J20110921>>.

On November 11, security and army forces randomly shelled residential areas of the city of Taiz, killing at least ten people, among them three women and one child. The shelling was accompanied by arbitrary arrests of numerous citizens, particularly among the residents of the Sharab and Samia districts, who were then taken to undisclosed locations.<sup>22</sup> It was reported that inhabited areas in the province of Taiz were subjected to repeated shelling, resulting in at least 35 documented deaths between late October and November 25.<sup>23</sup>

Even after the signing of the Gulf Initiative, the killing did not stop. Security forces used live ammunition to disperse a peaceful demonstration protesting the signing of the initiative in Taghyir Square in Sana'a on November 24, killing six demonstrators.<sup>24</sup>

The continued bloody confrontations over the course of the year led to a significant decline in the population's living conditions, particularly as a result of the acute shortage of water and fuel supplies, the increasing displacement of the population from areas witnessing clashes, the spread of illness such as cholera, the severe food shortage, and the steep price hikes in food that outstripped the purchasing power of broad swathes of the citizenry. It is estimated that some 350,000 people have been displaced since the uprising began.<sup>25</sup>

The popular uprising united the Yemeni people around the goal of ousting the Saleh regime, and geographic conflicts waned, as did calls for southern secession. Nevertheless, the Saleh regime did not hesitate to target its political enemies in the south. A leader of the opposition Socialist Party, Ahmed Shamlan, was targeted in an assassination attempt in June in the

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<sup>22</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "Istihdaf al-madaniyin fi Ta'iz tahaddin li-hay'at al-dawliya wa istihana bi-qararatiha wa muwafaqatiha," Nov. 12, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=43057>>.

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Yemen: Spate of Killings Defy UN Order," Nov. 25, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/25/yemen-spate-killings-defy-un-order>>.

<sup>24</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "Taqrir al-marsad al-Yamani li-huquq al-insan-YOHR al-khass bi-l-intihakat al-lat'i ta'arrad laha al-madaniyun wa-l-musharikun fi-l-fa'"aliyat wa-l-i'tisamat al-silmiya khilal al-fatra min 22 Uktubir hatta 24 Nufimbir 2011," Nov. 26, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=43831>>.

<sup>25</sup> AlterNet, "Yemen Facing Humanitarian Crisis-UNICEF," June 7, 2011, <<http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/interview-yemen-facing-humanitarian-catastrophe-unicef/>>; OCHA, "Yemen Humanitarian Emergency Situation Report no. 6," Aug. 3, 2011, <[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/fullreport\\_77.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/fullreport_77.pdf)>; al-Hadath-Yemen, "Mu'anat nazihi Abyan tatazayad fi Ramadan," Aug. 6, 2011, <<http://www.alhadath-yemen.com/news14080.html>>; and BBC Arabic, "Dhu'r bayn sukkun al-mudun al-Yamaniya li-itlaq al-nar fi-l-hawa' wa makhawif min al-kulira," June 8, 2011, <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/06/110608\\_yemen\\_latest.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/06/110608_yemen_latest.shtml)>.

district of al-Sayani in the province of Ibb, where armed men opened fire on him, injuring him and killing one of his companions.<sup>26</sup>

Several political activists in the south were also prosecuted. The chair of the Southern Movement's National Council in the district of Dhala was tried on charges of insulting the president and disturbing the general peace. Eleven southern activists, among them leader Abduh al-Maatari, are facing charges of calling for unlicensed marches that resulted in riots and violence.<sup>27</sup> Ali Naji al-Maqra was accused of participating in marches, chanting anti-regime slogans, and carrying out bombings in the provinces of Dhala and Lahij.<sup>28</sup> Shalal Ali Shaea was brought before the exceptional Specialized Criminal Court on charges of participating in an armed gang, advocating secession, and spreading a culture of hate.<sup>29</sup>

### **Crackdown on human rights defenders:**

Human rights organizations were targeted with various types of harassment and threats because of their active participation in supporting the goals of the Yemeni revolution for democratic change, their ongoing professional role in exposing crimes against Yemenis' human rights committed by the Yemeni regime, and their cooperation with international mechanisms to stop these violations and hold those responsible to account.

Prominent rights advocate and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman, who heads Reporters Without Borders, was abducted by an armed group, some of them in military uniform and some in civilian clothing, on a public road on January 22, 2011 while returning home with her husband; her mobile phone and laptop computer were also confiscated.<sup>30</sup> She was detained until January 24. According to the website of the Yemeni Ministry of Defense, Karman's arrest was based on allegations including "organizing unlicensed assemblies and marches," "inciting acts of chaos and riots," and "undermining the general social peace." Karman staged a sit-in inside the

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<sup>26</sup> al-Tagheer, "Muhalat ightiyal ahad qiyadat al-mu'arida fi Ibb wa maqtal ahad murafiqihi," June 9, 2011, <<http://www.al-tagheer.com/news30347.html>>.

<sup>27</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, "al-Taqrir al-dawri li-l-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan li-shahr Fabrayir 2011."

<sup>28</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, "al-Taqrir al-dawri li-l-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan li-shahr Abril 2011," <<http://sohr-aden.org/?p=1653>>.

<sup>29</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, "al-Taqrir al-dawri li-l-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan li-shahr Fabrayir 2011."

<sup>30</sup> Al-Masdar Online, "Ikhtitaf al-nashita al-huquqiya Tawakkul Karman bi-San'a'," Jan. 22, 2011, <[http://almasdaronline.com/index.php?page=news&article-section=1&news\\_id=15334](http://almasdaronline.com/index.php?page=news&article-section=1&news_id=15334)>.

Public Prosecution office after her release order, demanding the release of dozens of people who had been arrested during demonstrations and acts of solidarity with her. The public prosecutor later released them.<sup>31</sup> Among them was Ali al-Dailami, the executive director of the Yemeni Organization for the Defense of Rights and Democratic Freedoms (YODRDF), and rights activist Khaled al-Anesi, both of whom accompanied a group of students from Sana'a University to the public prosecutor's office to file a complaint regarding Karman's abduction.<sup>32</sup> According to Karman, after her release she received death threats via a telephone call from the president to her brother, asking him to control her and keep her confined to her house and citing as a threat the prophetic *hadith*, "Kill him who breaks the bonds of obedience."<sup>33</sup>

On February 28, 2011, prominent rights advocate Mohammed Sadeq al-Udaini, the founder and executive director of the Center for Training and Protection of Journalists' Freedoms (CTPJF), received a torrent of insults, curses, and death threats over the telephone, including explicit statements that putting an end to his writings, his anti-regime stances, and his work on human rights abuses would require no more than a bullet to the head. The CTPJF stated that it would consider the president and the national and political security apparatus responsible for any acts against the life of al-Udaini or the members of this family.<sup>34</sup>

Well-known rights activist Amal al-Basha, the president of the Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF), received threats from an unknown person over the telephone warning her not to leave her house lest she face an "unfortunate" incident. The threat came after her attempts to publicize Yemen's rights violations by providing information on the human rights situation in the country to the UN Security Council.<sup>35</sup> Within two weeks of

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Hayat, "al-Ifraj 'an al-nashita al-Yamaniya al-mu'arida Tawakkul Karman," Jan. 24, 2011, <<http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/227075>>.

<sup>32</sup> Hurriyat, "I'tiqal 'Ali al-Daylami al-mudir al-tanfidhi li-l-munazzama al-Yamaniya li-l-difa' 'an al-huquq wa-l-hurriyat al-dimuqratiya," Jan. 23, 2011, <<http://www.hurryat.org/?p=1221>>; and National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedom, "Athna' tawajjuhihim li-maktab al-na'ib al-'amm al-amn ya'taqil muhamun wa sahafiyun wa yahtajiz kamaratay al-jazira wa-l-'Arabiya wa yamma' al-tasvir," Jan. 27, 2011, <[http://www.hoodonline.org/news\\_details.php?lang=arabic&sid=2769](http://www.hoodonline.org/news_details.php?lang=arabic&sid=2769)>.

<sup>33</sup> Women Journalists Without Chains, "Balagh hawl al-tahdid bi-qatl Tawakkul Karman wa-l-talab minha al-baq'a rahn al-iqama al-jabriya," Jan. 26, 2011, <[http://womenpress.org/news\\_details.php?lang=arabic&sid=1954](http://womenpress.org/news_details.php?lang=arabic&sid=1954)>.

<sup>34</sup> Center of Training and Protection of Journalists' Freedoms, "Markaz al-hurriyat al-sahafiya CTPJF yudin jarimat tahdid mu'assisih wa ra'isihi al-tanfidhi," Mar. 2, 2011, <<http://www.ctpjf.org/ara/news.php?recordID=164>>.

<sup>35</sup> Amnesty International, "Yemeni Activist at Risk as Death Toll Mounts," Apr. 20, 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/yemeni-activist-threatened-death-toll-mounts-2011-04-20>>.

receiving the threat, al-Basha was stopped by the national security apparatus at the Sana'a airport and her passport held for one hour. She was on her way to Kuwait at the time to take part in a conference.<sup>36</sup>

On November 26, al-Basha was again stopped in the Sana'a airport upon her return from Cairo and questioned for two hours by members of the national security apparatus on charges of ripping up a photo of the president and his son in the airport before leaving for Cairo on November 16. Members of National Security threatened her with prosecution and a six-month prison sentence for ripping up the president's photo.<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that Anis Ahmed Abu Said al-Asadi, a staff member at SAF, was killed when security forces opened fire on thousands of protestors in Sana'a on April 20.<sup>38</sup>

On July 7, rights activist Ahmed Hashem, a member of the YODRDF, narrowly escaped an assassination attempt as he left the organization's office. Two masked men on a motorcycle drove by and one of them shot at him but missed. The incident took place only meters from a weapons checkpoint run by Central Security. The organization considered the incident a threat aimed at intimidating it, especially as it came only a few days after organization officials met with members of the UNHCHR fact-finding mission, during which the organization submitted a complete file documenting the violations against various occupied squares in several provinces.<sup>39</sup>

On July 18, a large fire broke out that consumed the most extensive archive of human rights files in Yemen, belonging to the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedom (HOOD). The fire broke out in the office of the Allaw law firm, located in the same building as HOOD, which offers legal aid to victims of human rights abuses through Allaw. The fire destroyed more than 5,000 files on human rights cases and a law library containing more than 6,000 printed volumes. Allaw and HOOD ruled out an electrical fire, as the electricity was shut off in the office when the fire ignited. Rights organizations believe the sole beneficiary of the fire to be the Yemeni regime, which may have targeted the office to obliterate information related to human rights crimes for which it should be held

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<sup>36</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Shaq'a'iq yudin ihtijaz Amal al-Basha wa musadarat jawaz safariha min qibl al-amn al-qawmi fi matar San'a'," May 4, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=30453>>.

<sup>37</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Shaq'a'iq yudin ihtijaz al-amn al-qawmi li-l-Basha fi matar San'a'," Nov. 27, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=43931>>.

<sup>38</sup> Amnesty International, "Yemeni Activist at Risk as Death Toll Mounts."

<sup>39</sup> Hurryat, "al-Munazzama al-Yamaniya tudin istimrar al-hamla al-sharisa diddiha wa istihdaf 'udwiha Hashim," July 7, 2011, <<http://www.hurryat.org/?p=1268>>.

accountable. The fire occurred after HOOD gave the UN mission information about the Yemeni regime's crimes in June. On September 19, HOOD was forced to evacuate its offices after they came under heavy artillery and machine gun fire, which severely damaged the building.<sup>40</sup>

Two field workers with the same organization were beaten by government forces this past year. In June, the Air Defense Forces abducted journalist Yahia al-Thalaya, the head of one of HOOD's field teams, and held him for ten days before he was released. This incident occurred after al-Thalaya revealed that air force camps were being used as illegal detention centers.<sup>41</sup>

The office of the Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights was also looted and its contents taken to an undisclosed location by security forces and armed men subordinate to the regime, who had occupied the building where the offices had been located until September, converting them into military barracks. Staff and activists with the observatory were threatened that they would be targeted by the forces occupying the building.<sup>42</sup>

On October 23, rights activist Ammar Abdullah al-Saqqaf was abducted by the security apparatus while on his way to Taghyir (Change) Square in Sana'a; he was taken to an undisclosed location.<sup>43</sup> On October 26, rights activist Murad al-Gharati, the president of Tamkin for Development, was detained by the Republican Guard from his car, because he had in his possession pamphlets about the Yemeni "Revolution of Change" that allegedly constituted incitement against the regime. He was taken to the Republican Guard headquarters where his personal computer, cell phones, and documents belonging to the organization were confiscated and he was questioned for four hours before being released.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Alkarama, "al-Yaman: hariq ghamid yaltahim akbar arshif huquqi yuwaththiq jara'im al-nizam," June 18, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/LjUfi>>; and Human Rights Information and Training Center, "Markaz al-ma'lumat wa-l-ta'hil li-huquq al-insan yudin bi-shidda istihdaf maqarr munazzamat Hud bi-San'a'," Sep. 22, 2011, <<http://hritc.net/index.php?action=showNews&id=234>>.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Tagheer, "Hud tutalib bi-l-ifraj 'an al-sahafi Yahya al-Thalaya," June 22, 2011, <<http://www.al-tagheer.com/news.php?id=30726>>.

<sup>42</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Marsad al-Yamani li-huquq al-insan (YOHR) yukhatib al-mujtama' al-dawli bi-sha'n iqtiham maqarrihi wa musadarat muhtawayatihi," Nov. 14, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=43141>>.

<sup>43</sup> Hurryat, "Istinkar li-ikhtifat al-nashit al-huquqi 'Ammar 'Abdullah al-Saqqaf," Oct. 28, 2011, <<http://www.hurryat.org/?p=1274>>.

<sup>44</sup> Hurryat, "al-Munazzama al-Yamaniya tastankir ihtijaz al-nashit Murad al-Gharati ra'is mu'assasat tamkin," Oct. 31, 2011, <<http://www.hurryat.org/?p=1272>>.

## **Massive violations of freedom of expression and opinion:**

The past year saw an expanded war against freedom of the press and all forms of media with the goal of covering up crimes committed by the Yemeni authorities while crushing the uprising. Several photographers and journalists were killed while carrying out the duties of their professions, and journalists, correspondents, and satellite channel crews were physically assaulted, abducted, and arbitrarily arrested. The offices of newspapers and satellite channels were raided, and newspapers were confiscated, banned from being distributed in several provinces, or burned. Journalists also continued to be prosecuted on trumped-up charges.

Four journalists and correspondents were killed. On March 18, photojournalist Jamal al-Sharabi was killed when security forces opened fire on a demonstration in front of Sana'a University. On September 24, Hassan al-Wadhab, a cameraman with the Hurra channel, died in a hospital in Sana'a five days after he was shot by a sniper as he was covering the protests.<sup>45</sup> On October 4, photojournalist Abdel Hakim al-Nour died during a military offensive in the province of Taiz. The following day, journalist Abdel Majid al-Samawi died of wounds sustained after being shot by a sniper on September 25.<sup>46</sup>

In the district of Dhala, police forces opened fire on the home of journalist Ahmed Harmal on January 18, 2011, as a warning to stop criticizing the government.<sup>47</sup>

On April 16, military personnel attacked a group of female activists and journalists, beating them and opening fire to intimidate them while they were taking part in a march in Sana'a. Among the journalists were Arwa Abdur Othman, Hoda al-Attas, Widad al-Badawi, and Sara Jamal.<sup>48</sup> The same day, the Republican Guard summoned opposition journalist Ahmed al-Mohammedi for questioning; he is still missing and his fate is unknown. Two days earlier, two officers with the Republican Guard contacted al-

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<sup>45</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Sniper Fire Claims Life of Yemeni Cameraman,” Sep. 26, 2011, <<http://www.cpj.org/2011/09/sniper-fire-claims-life-of-yemeni-cameraman.php>>.

<sup>46</sup> Reporters Without Borders, “Two More Journalists Killed in Saleh Regime Violence,” Oct. 5, 2011, <[http://en.rsf.org/yemen-two-more-journalists-killed-in-05-10-2011\\_41128.html](http://en.rsf.org/yemen-two-more-journalists-killed-in-05-10-2011_41128.html)>.

<sup>47</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, “al-Taqrir al-dawri li-shahr Yanayir 2011 al-sadir ‘an al-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan,” Feb. 7, 2011, <[http://ia700407.us.archive.org/31/items/report\\_109/2011.pdf](http://ia700407.us.archive.org/31/items/report_109/2011.pdf)>.

<sup>48</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Shaqiq yudin al-i’tida’ ‘ala-l-nashitat wa-l-sahafiyat wa yubdi istighraba min hamlat al-tadil al-lati a’qabatha,” Apr. 19, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=29478>>.

Mohammedi and threatened to have him dismissed from his position at the news station.<sup>49</sup>

On May 25, Kamal Mohammed Naji al-Mohafadi, a cameraman with the opposition Suhail satellite channel, was kidnapped while covering clashes between the government and the forces of Sheikh Sadeq al-Ahmar.<sup>50</sup> On June 8, well-known journalist Abdul Karim al-Khaiwani faced an attempted abduction.<sup>51</sup> On August 12, military forces arrested Ahmed Firas, who works with the Suhail channel, after he was abducted near the Sana'a international airport. His wife, mother, and children were also abducted and taken to the Dailami air force base. His relatives were later released, and he was referred to the Interior Ministry's criminal investigations agency.<sup>52</sup>

Many journalists were also subjected to attacks by security forces. On February 13, 2011, journalist Khalil al-Barh was detained for 30 minutes in a car belonging to the security apparatus in Sana'a. His camera was confiscated and only returned to him after its memory card was erased. The same day, Khaled al-Mahdi, a Reuters photographer, was attacked in a street of the capital. His camera was broken, and a camera belonging to Associated Press photographer Hani al-Ansi was confiscated. The next day, men armed with clubs and knives attacked Majid al-Shueibi, a correspondent for the Marib News Agency, while he was covering student demonstrations in Sana'a.<sup>53</sup> A group of Yemeni journalists was beaten by security forces, pro-government mobs, and security personnel in civilian clothing; during the assault, media content was confiscated.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Summoned by Yemeni Authorities, Journalist Is Now Missing," Apr. 18, 2011, <<http://cpj.org/2011/04/summoned-by-yemeni-authorities-journalist-is-now-m.php>>.

<sup>50</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Attacks on Journalists and Media in Iraq and Yemen, Two Bloggers Freed in Saudi Arabia," June 1, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/saudi-arabia-attacks-on-journalists-and-media-01-06-2011,40389.html>>.

<sup>51</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Yaman: al-shabaka al-'Arabiya tudin istimrar musadarat al-suhuf wa-l-i'tada' 'ala-l-sahafiyyin, muhawalat ikhtitaf 'Abd al-Karim al-Khaywani wa-l-i'tida' 'ala murasilay qanat al-hurra," June 11, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=33260>>; and Reporters Without Borders, "Abdul Karim al-Khaiwani Threatened," June 8, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/+abdul-karim-al-khaiwani-threatened+.html>>.

<sup>52</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Yemeni Government Forces Arrest Cameraman," Aug. 22, 2011, <<http://cpj.org/2011/08/yemeni-government-forces-arrest-cameraman.php>>; and Alkarama, "al-Yaman: al-karama tusharik fi masira samita tutalib bi-itlaq sahafiyyin mu'taqalin," Aug. 24, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/Nkpl4>>.

<sup>53</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "I'tida'at 'ala sahafiyyin yughattun tazahurat didd al-hukuma," Feb. 19, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=24419>>.

<sup>54</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Yemen: Security Forces Assaulting Activists," Feb. 14, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/14/yemen-security-forces-assaulting-activists>>.

The bureau chief of al-Arabiya channel in Yemen was also attacked along with one of the channel's cameramen,<sup>55</sup> as were a correspondent with the Iranian al-Alam and a cameraman with Qatari television.<sup>56</sup> The authorities in the province of Taiz detained Waddah al-Yemen Abd al-Qader, a journalist with *Hadith al-Medina*, and a correspondent with the British *Guardian* was attacked in Sana'a by a group of men who tried to confiscate the camera in his possession.<sup>57</sup>

Numerous newspaper reporters came under similar attack, including correspondents for the Emirati *al-Shuruq* and the independent *al-Ghad*. Journalist Muhi al-Din Jarma was brutally beaten while in the street covering events and while in the ambulance as he was being transported to the hospital. Wajdi al-Salimi, an editor with *Hadith al-Medina*, was beaten, as was Hamoud Hazza, a journalist with the Saba News Agency. Three security personnel in civilian clothing and driving a police car raided the office of the Journalists Syndicate in Sana'a on the morning of February 26, 2011, insulting and threatening the journalists present.<sup>58</sup> The day before, security forces in the Aden province physically assaulted a cameraman with the opposition al-Sahil channel, while journalists Marzouq Yassin, Abdel Rahman Anis, Bassem al-Shaabi, and Fares Jalal were arrested while covering a demonstration.<sup>59</sup>

Violations escalated against media outlets broadcasting content exposing the crackdown on the uprising, with the Qatari al-Jazeera bearing the brunt of these violations. On January 21, Fadl Mubarak, a correspondent with the channel in southern Yemen, was threatened with arrest while covering events of the popular movement in Aden on January 18-20, 2011.<sup>60</sup> On January 23, security forces in Sana'a confiscated al-Jazeera's cameras,<sup>61</sup> while the channel's crew was prevented from filming a sit-in on February 26

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<sup>55</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Journalists Targeted in Bahrain, Yemen, and Libya," Feb. 18, 2011, <<http://cpj.org/2011/02/journalists-targeted-in-bahrain-yemen-and-libya.php>>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Center of Training and Protection of Journalists' Freedoms, "Markaz al-ta'hil wa himayat al-hurriyat al-sahafiya CTPJF yarsud akthar min 50 jarimat i'tida' wa istihdaf li-l-sahafiyin fi-l-Yaman khilal aqall min usbu'," Feb. 20, 2011,

<<http://www.ctpjf.org/ara/news.php?recordID=163>>.

<sup>59</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Forced Being Used to Restrict Media Coverage of Street Protests," Mar. 1, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/middle-east-north-africa-forced-being-used-to-restrict-01-03-2011,39655.html>>.

<sup>60</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, "al-Taqrir al-dawri li-shahr Yanayir 2011 al-sadir 'an al-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan."

<sup>61</sup> National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, "Athna' tawajjuhihim li-maktab al-na'ib al-'amm al-amn ya'taqil muhamun wa sahafiyun wa yahtajiz kamaratay al-jazira wa-l-'Arabiya wa yamma' al-tasvir."

in Taghyir (Change) Square in Sana'a. The Yemeni authorities asked al-Jazeera correspondents Abdulhaq Sadah and Ahmed Zaidan, who were dispatched to cover the Yemeni revolution, to leave the country immediately,<sup>62</sup> and both were deported soon after.<sup>63</sup> On March 17, members of the ruling party confiscated the camera of the al-Jazeera crew in the Taiz province, while Hamdi al-Bokari, the channel's correspondent, was covering the assaults on demonstrators.<sup>64</sup> On March 22, the al-Jazeera offices were stormed by some 20 armed men in civilian clothing, led by police officers.<sup>65</sup>

BBC correspondent Abdullah Gharab and photographer Zein al-Saqqaaf were attacked on August 27 while covering events in Yemen. Armed men attempted to break and confiscate their cameras before expelling them from the filming location.<sup>66</sup>

On the morning of March 15, 2011, security authorities deported seven journalists working for several foreign periodicals, among them Oliver Holmes, a British journalist working for the *Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine; Haley Sweetland Edwards, an American journalist with the *Los Angeles Times*; Joshua Maricich, an American photographer; Portia Walker, a British journalist working with the *Washington Post* and the *Telegraph*; Patrick Symmes, an American journalist working with *Outside* magazine; and Marco Di Lauro, an Italian photographer. Authorities at the Sana'a airport also detained Robert Worth, a journalist with the *New York Times*, for more than 12 hours before denying him entry to Yemen.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Forced Being Used to Restrict Media Coverage of Street Protests."

<sup>63</sup> Center of Training and Protection of Journalists' Freedoms, "Markaz al-hurriyat al-sahafiya CTPJF yarsud akthar min 168 jarimat i'tida' wa istihdaf li-l-sahafiyyin fi-l-Yaman khilal aqall min shahrayn," Apr. 12, 2011, <<http://ctpjf.org/ara/news.php?recordID=171>>.

<sup>64</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "More Harassment of Journalists Covering Pro-Democracy Demonstrations, One Killed in Yemen," Mar. 19, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/arabie-saoudite-more-harassment-of-journalists-19-03-2011,39826.html>>.

<sup>65</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "al-Jazeera Raided in Sana'a; Attacks in Libya, Syria, Bahrain," Mar. 22, 2011, <<http://www.cpj.org/2011/03/al-jazeera-raided-in-sanaa-attacks-in-libya-syria.php>>.

<sup>66</sup> BBC Arabic, "Fariq Bi Bi Si fi-l-Yaman yata'arrad li-i'tida'," Aug. 27, 2011, <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/08/110827\\_bbc\\_yemen\\_attack.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2011/08/110827_bbc_yemen_attack.shtml)>.

<sup>67</sup> Center of Training and Protection of Journalists' Freedoms, "Markaz al-hurriyat al-sahafiya CTPJF yarsud akthar min 168 jarimat i'tida' wa istihdaf li-l-sahafiyyin fi-l-Yaman khilal aqall min shahrayn."

On June 25, New Zealander reporter Glen Johnson, who works with the *New York Times* and *Le Monde*, was arrested;<sup>68</sup> he was deported to the UAE on July 6.<sup>69</sup> On April 12, British journalist Leila Johnson was arrested.<sup>70</sup>

On April 25, security forces surrounded the home of journalist Mohammed al-Lozy for several hours after he published an article on events in Yemen. The same day, Republican Guard forces arrested the editor-in-chief of *al-Shahed*, Abd al-Aziz al-Mejidi; he was also denied entry to the province of Taiz, and an issue of the newspaper was confiscated.<sup>71</sup> On June 14, a group of armed men under orders from the Yemeni government raided the office of *al-Adwa* in the capital, where they attacked the staff, tampered with the contents of the office, and confiscated equipment. The paper's website was hacked the same day.<sup>72</sup>

On August 29, the security apparatus at the Sana'a airport detained Egyptian Islamist preacher Wagdi Ghoneim and his wife, confiscating all their communications devices and deporting them to Qatar the next day.<sup>73</sup> The same day, journalist Mohammed Saleh al-Bakhiti, a member of the National Dialogue Committee, was arrested as he was leaving the country from the Sana'a airport.<sup>74</sup>

The authorities also continued to impede the distribution of some newspapers. In March 2011, copies of *Akhbar al-Youm* slated for distribution in the provinces of Aden, Dhala, Lahij, and Abyan were sequestered in the Sana'a airport. The authorities also banned the distribution

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<sup>68</sup> Al-Sahwah, “Mudir al-ma’had al-dawli li-l-sahafa yad’u li-sur’at itlaqih wa-l-samah li-l-murasilin al-ajanih bi-dukhul al-Yaman,” June 28, 2011, <<http://www.alsahwa-yemen.net/arabic/subjects/1/2011/6/28/10951.htm>>.

<sup>69</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Quwa al-amniya tastahdif al-i’lamiyin fi Suriya wa-l-Urdun wa-l-Yaman,” July 17, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=35917>>.

<sup>70</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, “al-Taqrir al-dawri li-l-marsad al-janubi li-huqq al-insan (sahir) li-shahr Abril,” May 14, 2011, <<http://sohr-aden.org/?p=1653>>.

<sup>71</sup> International Freedom of Expression Exchange, “Musadarat al-suhuf bi-l-jumla wast fawda a’mal al-‘unf wa hamalat al-tashhir didd al-sahafiyin,” Apr. 28, 2011, <[http://www.ifex.org/bahrain/2011/04/28/smear\\_campaigns/ar](http://www.ifex.org/bahrain/2011/04/28/smear_campaigns/ar/)>.

<sup>72</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Yaman: al-shabaka al-‘Arabiya tastankir iqtiham sahifat al-adwa’ wa ikhtiraq mawqa’ihha al-ilakruni,” June 16, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=33639>>.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Tagheer, “al-Shaykh Ghunaym: al-amn al-Yamani i’taqalni laylat al-‘id wa ahanatni bi-shakl mukhzin,” Aug. 31, 2011, <<http://al-tagheer.com/news32680.html>>; and al-Fath News, “I’tiqal al-shaykh Wajdi Ghunaym,” Aug. 29, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/6jHX>>.

<sup>74</sup> Yemenat, “Dimn musalsal i’tiqal al-sahafiyin wa-l-i’lamiyin al-amn al-qawmi ya’taqil al-ustadh Muhammad Salih al-Bakhiti,” Aug. 29, 2011, <<http://www.yemenat.net/master33/story15169.htm>>.

of *al-Umana*, issued in the province of Aden.<sup>75</sup> In late April, several newspapers were unable to be distributed in Aden, Taiz, and Sana'a, either because they had been confiscated or their distributors detained. Several issues of *al-Qadiya*, *al-Yaqin*, *al-Sharia*, and *al-Ula*, all opposition newspapers, were confiscated, and the distributor of *October* was attacked while moving copies of the paper to Taiz. The distributor of *al-Ula* was also detained.<sup>76</sup> On July 13, copies of the independent *al-Ula* were confiscated in Taiz. Prior to that, 11,000 copies of *Akhbar al-Youm* were confiscated while on route to Taiz and Ibb.<sup>77</sup>

On May 24, 2011, government forces attacked the office of the al-Sahwah Internet site and the office of the Saba News Agency. The next day, security forces opened fire on the office of the Suhail channel because of its coverage of events in Yemen.<sup>78</sup>

Security forces confiscated copies of the independent *Ahdath al-Medina* for the second time on August 7 to prevent its distribution in Taiz, Ibb, Aden, Dhamar, and al-Hadida.<sup>79</sup> In mid-August, Yemeni security forces also confiscated copies of *al-Umana* and *al-Thawri*, both independent papers, at government security checkpoints, burning the papers and assaulting the distributors.<sup>80</sup>

On February 26, Masdar Online, an independent online news site, was blocked by the authorities after it provided broad coverage of protests in Aden, Sana'a, and other provinces, accompanying its stories with recordings.<sup>81</sup> Aden Online, another news site run by journalist Abdel Raqib

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<sup>75</sup> Reporters Without Borders, “More Harassment of Journalists Covering Pro-Democracy Demonstrations, One Killed in Yemen.”

<sup>76</sup> International Freedom of Expression Exchange, “Musadarat al-suhuf bi-l-jumla wast fawda a’mal al-unf wa hamalat al-tashhir didd al-sahafiyin.”

<sup>77</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Quwa al-amniya tastahdif al-i’lamiyin fi Suriya wa-l-Urdun wa-l-Yaman.”

<sup>78</sup> Reporters Without Borders, “Attacks on Journalists and Media in Iraq and Yemen, Two Bloggers Freed in Saudi Arabia.”

<sup>79</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Yaman: al-shabaka al-‘Arabiya tudin musadarat sahifat ahfad al-madina,” Aug. 19, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=37277>>.

<sup>80</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Yaman: amn al-diktatur al-Yamani ‘Ali ‘Abdullah Salih yusadir sahifatay al-thawri wa-l-umana”, Aug. 27, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=38317>>; Aden Online, “Musadarat sahifat al-umana’ al-janubiya wa man’aha min dukhul Ta’iz,” Aug. 25, 2011, <<http://aden-online.com/news/878.htm>>; and al-Masdar Online, “Niqabat al-sahafiyin tudin musadara wa ihraq sahifat al-thawri min qibl al-haras al-jumhuri bi-San’a”, Aug. 18, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/HAcNg>>.

<sup>81</sup> Reporters Without Borders, “Forced Being Used to Restrict Media Coverage of Street Protests.”

al-Hadiani, was also blocked on July 12.<sup>82</sup> In September, the authorities blocked access to the independent news site Yemen Nation to web users in Yemen,<sup>83</sup> and the Ministry of Communications blocked the website of al-Tajdid News.<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, exceptional trials of journalists continued, based on their alleged memberships in terrorist networks and armed groups. Journalist Abdul Elah Haidar Shaya, a researcher specialized in al-Qaeda and Islamist studies, was sentenced to five years in prison on January 18, 2011 as well as two years of house arrest after the completion of his sentence. The ruling, issued by the Specialized Criminal Court, which is considered an exceptional State Security court, also sentenced Abd al-Karim al-Shami to two years in prison on charges of membership in an armed group. The case began on August 16, 2010 when a security force arrested Shaya and al-Shami, illegally detaining them for more than one month, during which time they were tortured and then brought to trial on terrorism-related charges.<sup>85</sup>

### **Torture, abduction, and arbitrary detention:**

Torture and abuses against detainees increased last year, just as abductions and involuntary disappearances became even more widespread, especially in light of increased arbitrary arrests and imprisonment in illegal detention centers not subject to judicial oversight.

As of October 2011, Yemeni rights groups had received more than 1,240 complaints of abduction, only 80 of which had been released. There are numerous abductees being held in detention in the military intelligence prison, while the others are distributed between the criminal investigations

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<sup>82</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Quwa al-amniya tastahdif al-i’lamiyin fi Suriya wa-l-Urdun wa-l-Yaman.”

<sup>83</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Yaman: hurriyat al-ra’i wa-l-ta’bir ma zalat tu’ani min alat al-qam’ al-amniya,” Sep. 26, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=40081>>; and al-Tagheer, “Hajb mawqa’ Yaman nayshun al-ikhbari al-mustaqqil dun ibda’ al-asbab,” Sep. 25, 2011, <<http://www.al-tagheer.com/news33389.html>>.

<sup>84</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Yaman: al-sultat tulahiq mawaqi’ al-internat wa takbit al-hurriyat al-sahafiya,” Sep. 28, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=40255>>; and Ray News, “al-Ittisalat tahjub mawqa’ al-tajdid niyuz,” Sep. 26, 2011, <<http://www.raynews.net/index.php?action=showNews&id=5596>>.

<sup>85</sup> Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Yaman: darba muji’ a jadida li-hurriyat al-sahafa al-shabaka al-‘Arabiya tudin al-hukm al-sadir min mahkama istithna’iya bi-sajn al-sahafi ‘Abd al-Ilah Sha’i 5 sanawat,” Jan. 19, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=22575>>.

prison in Sana'a and illegal or secret detention facilities, primarily camps run by the Republican Guard, the air force, or the Central Security Forces.<sup>86</sup>

Testimonies of victims who have been released exposed grave abuses experienced by demonstrators after their abduction by security forces or militias loyal to the Yemeni president. These abuses include the denial of food, water, and medicine for over one week, sleep deprivation, holding detainees blindfolded with their hands cuffed from behind, beatings and death threats, placing detainees in dark rooms with snakes, burns with wax and electroshocks, prohibiting religious practices, and spraying detainees with human excrement. Soldiers also reportedly stood on victims' chests with the goal of humiliating them and tried to force abductees to repeat slogans insulting military or religious leaders who had announced their support of the peaceful protests.<sup>87</sup>

In police stations, abductees and wounded demonstrators were forced to wear the official uniform of the First Armored Division, which defected and announced its support for the revolution, while giving false confessions about helping these rogue forces kill demonstrators. These confessions were then broadcast over official television channels.<sup>88</sup>

It is thought that there have been deaths under torture in prisons and detention facilities, among them Hamdi Tawfiq, a soldier who died in January 2011 in the political investigations prison in Khor Maksar,<sup>89</sup> and political activist Muti Naji al-Naqib, who died under torture after he was arrested in February 2011 in the city of Zinjibar.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Alkarama, “al-Yaman: al-karama tunashshit ma’ munazzamat mahaliya li-kashf jara’im al-ta’dhib wa-l-ikhtitaf,” Oct. 19, 2011, <[http://ar.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4272:2011-10-19-06-31-52&catid=164:2009-03-08-12-08-04&Itemid=140](http://ar.alkarama.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4272:2011-10-19-06-31-52&catid=164:2009-03-08-12-08-04&Itemid=140)>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, “al-Taqrir al-dawri li-shahr Yanayir 2011 al-sadir ‘an al-marsad al-janubi li-huquq al-insan.”

<sup>90</sup> Southern Observatory for Human Rights, “al-Taqrir al-dawri li-l-marsad al-janubi li-huquq al-insan li-shahr Abril 2011.”

