



رابطة أموات المختطفين  
Abductees' Mothers  
Association



SAM  
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Justice4Yemen Pact  
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



DT Institute

# POLICY PAPER

## Towards Legal, Institutional, and Community-Based Protection Frameworks for Women in Yemen's Civil Space

This paper offers a constructive assessment of the realities of hate speech, defamation, stigma, and both online and offline incitement against women in Yemen's civil sphere. It offers an analytical diagnosis grounded in current conditions and proposes a strategic and practical roadmap of solutions at the legal, institutional, and community levels.

This paper has been developed within the framework of the Supporting Peace in Yemen through Accountability, Reconciliation, and Knowledge Exchange (SPARK) project, implemented by the Abductees' Mothers Association and the SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties, in partnership with DT Institute.



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## **Abductees' Mothers Association (AMA)**

A women-led human rights organization established in April 2016, composed of female human rights defenders, as well as mothers and wives of detainees. The Association works to monitor and document cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, reporting them to relevant authorities. It aims to build a human rights memory that preserves the victims' rights to accountability and redress in the post-war phase. Furthermore, it strives to amplify the voices of victims in national and international forums and maintains continuous communication with decision-makers and local mediators to secure the release of detainees and provide psychosocial support to survivors and their families.



## **SAM for Rights and Liberties**

An independent, non-profit Yemeni human rights organization that commenced its activities in January 2016 and obtained its operating license in December 2017. The organization seeks to monitor and document human rights violations in Yemen and works to halt these abuses through advocacy in partnership with local and international organizations. It aims to foster human rights awareness through community-based development and works toward holding human rights violators in Yemen accountable in cooperation with international mechanisms and human rights bodies.



Justice4Yemen Pact  
ميثاق العدالة لليمن

## Yemen Justice Charter

A coalition of human rights organizations and civil society actors united to promote and protect human rights in Yemen. The coalition's mission is to advocate for the rights of the Yemeni people, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. The coalition is committed to addressing the systemic human rights violations Yemen has endured through years of conflict and violence. This Charter works to empower the Yemeni people to claim their rights, increase awareness regarding violations, and advocate for justice and accountability at local, national, and international levels. Guided by the principles of human dignity, equality, justice, and non-discrimination, the coalition believes that through collaboration, its members can end impunity, provide essential support and reparations to victims, and contribute to a more peaceful, just, and prosperous future for Yemen.



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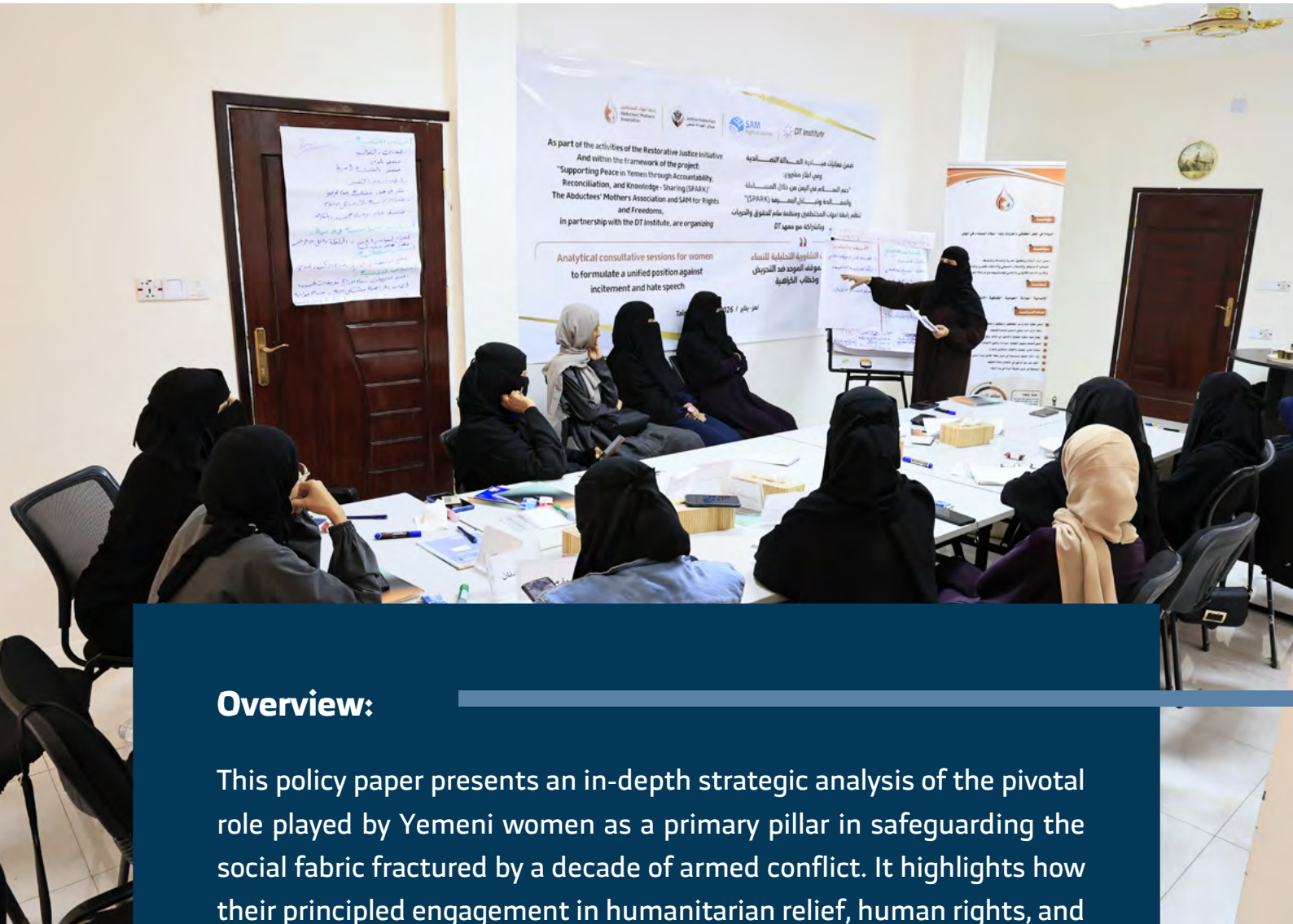
A non-profit organization committed to the principle of "Doing Development Differently." The Institute implements complex global development programs in conflict-affected, fragile, and closed environments. It funds pioneering thought-leadership initiatives that catalyze innovation and improve lives through evidence-based programming. The Institute works in partnership with communities and leaders to build more resilient, just, equitable, inclusive, and democratic societies, ensuring their long-term sustainability.

## **Support Peace in Yemen through Accountability, Reconciliation, and Knowledge exchange (SPARK)**

This paper was authored and published as part of the Support Peace in Yemen through Accountability, Reconciliation, and Knowledge exchange (SPARK) program. SPARK is an academic and applied framework designed to transition the concepts of Transitional Justice from theoretical discourse into community-based practice.

The project is built on strengthening local awareness and capacity to activate mechanisms for restorative justice, accountability, and reparations (redress). Its ultimate goal is to achieve a sustainable peace rooted in truth, equity, and inclusive participation. It emphasizes that justice is not merely a legal track, but a socio-cultural process that contributes to repairing the national fabric, restoring public trust, and reconstructing collective memory through acknowledgment, apology, accountability, and reconciliation.

The Justice for Yemen Pact (J4Y) The SPARK program includes the Justice for Yemen Pact (J4Y), a coalition of ten local organizations dedicated to promoting transitional justice concepts in Yemen. The coalition works by raising awareness, implementing diverse training and advocacy activities, and activating the role of local communities and political actors in supporting reconciliation and restorative justice pathways. This is intended to empower these stakeholders to participate effectively in the broader transitional justice process.



## Overview:

This policy paper presents an in-depth strategic analysis of the pivotal role played by Yemeni women as a primary pillar in safeguarding the social fabric fractured by a decade of armed conflict. It highlights how their principled engagement in humanitarian relief, human rights, and peacebuilding has been met with a covert and systematic campaign aimed at “engineering silence” and enforcing exclusion. The paper examines hate speech and incitement across the governorates of Taiz, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhalea, Shabwa, and Al-Mahra, framing it as systematic structural violence driven by value-based framing, a mechanism that links women’s civic engagement to moral deviance and Westernization to justify harm and increase the social and political cost of defending them.

Field data reveal a severe reality: 62.1% of women in Yemen have experienced online violence, with more than 15,000 cases of cyber extortion recorded in less than three years, an average exceeding 535 cases per month. Additionally, 98% of women human rights defenders, peace activists, and civil society workers reported violations, including defamation and incitement, leading to consequences ranging from forced withdrawal to suicide attempts, as illustrated by the case of activist Sarah Alwan in Taiz, who fled under intense pressure and abandonment.

This structural imbalance stems from the intersection of legislative gaps and institutional fragility. The judiciary remains constrained by the outdated 1994 Penal Code, which lacks clear definitions of cybercrimes and enables reverse legal adaptation, allowing victims to be reclassified as perpetrators through misuse of Article 273 on indecent acts or Article 259 on blasphemy. The crisis is compounded by limited technological capacity and a shortage of trained female personnel within security institutions, as well as weak oversight by the Ministry of Endowments over platforms used for excommunication rhetoric. Civil society organizations also lack enforced internal protection policies, leaving female activists exposed to incitement networks and coordinated online harassment. These conditions contribute to a broader breakdown in human rights protection and peacebuilding, as the moral targeting of women defenders weakens protective structures, fragments social cohesion, and removes local mediators and peacebuilders, undermining national reconciliation and escalating minor disputes into protracted armed conflicts.

The paper adopts a firm position that women's participation in civic space is an authentic expression of national, religious, and moral duty, and a continuation of their historical role in protecting the nation. It rejects the use of religion or tradition as a cover for repression or as a tool for replicating ideological intimidation practiced by the Houthi group in areas under its control. The strategic vision is grounded in rejecting the misuse of social norms as tools of digital repression, while affirming women's right to equal participation in decision-making. It draws on the principles of restorative justice, community

partnership, and do no harm. The paper asserts that the safety of active women is a key measure of restoring the civil state and rule of law, calling for a shift from reactive defense to “proactive protection” through an integrated system targeting legislative, institutional, cultural, and religious drivers of violence, and transforming community leaders into active guarantors of protection.

The paper proposes a comprehensive roadmap based on three parallel tracks. The societal and normative track focuses on cultural reframing, quiet backchannel mediation, and building partnerships and dialogue platforms with religious, community, and tribal leaders to produce unified value-based messages that counter moral framing, establish a societal code of conduct criminalizing defamation against women, and restore women’s legitimacy. The institutional and organizational track addresses both formal and civil dimensions.

Formally, it emphasizes strengthening security and criminal investigation bodies through advanced technologies and establishing specialized police units led by women to ensure gender-sensitive responses. It calls for targeted support to cybercrime units and prosecution offices, expanding their mandates to monitor organized political incitement, and activating oversight roles of the Ministries of Social Affairs, Information, and Endowments to enforce protection policies, monitor inciting discourse, and promote corrective media and religious messaging.

Within civil society, it stresses unifying rights-based narratives, building institutional solidarity, enforcing internal protection and digital security policies, and adopting a standardized model for documenting violations. It also includes establishing secure reporting channels, activating local early warning systems, providing psychological and legal support services, launching proactive advocacy campaigns that highlight successful female models and increase the political cost for perpetrators, and strengthening women’s capacities through digital security and privacy protection programs to enable resilience without withdrawal.

This paper is grounded in the premise that the targeting of women active in public life is not a byproduct of war, but a deliberate political and social strategy aimed at engineering silence by eroding women's symbolic capital and excluding them from a space that should serve as a foundation for human rights, peacebuilding, and citizenship. This systematic erosion deliberately targets the most active and capable actors in repairing the social fabric, namely, women human rights defenders and local change-makers, in order to weaken the critical mass capable of driving social transformation.

The legal track focuses on addressing legislative gaps by enacting a comprehensive cybercrime law that criminalizes hate speech and cyber extortion with deterrent penalties and reforming the Penal Code to prevent victims from being reclassified as offenders. It also calls for amending the Press and Endowments laws to strengthen penalties for defamation and criminalize incitement through religious platforms. This track includes adopting a national strategy to combat gender-based violence, institutionalizing protection mechanisms for witnesses and whistleblowers to ensure confidentiality and security and issuing guidelines to distinguish between legitimate criticism and hate speech.

It further emphasizes treating such crimes as violations of public rights that cannot be settled through customary reconciliation, and activating civil compensation claims to increase the economic cost on perpetrators. At the international level, the paper highlights the importance of ratifying the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to enable cross-border cooperation, track perpetrators behind anonymous accounts, and ensure a legal environment that protects women from impunity.

In a nutshell, the paper affirms that adopting a restorative justice approach to protecting women in civic space is not only a human rights demand but an essential condition for achieving sustainable peace in Yemen. Addressing the systematic nature of repression, where political interests intersect with extremist religious discourse, requires structural transformation, beginning



## Introduction:

### Yemen's Civic Space and the Challenges of Women's Resilience in an Era of Digital Transformation and Structural Conflict

The contemporary concept of civic space is undergoing dramatic transformations worldwide, as the geography of influence has expanded beyond traditional physical arenas and closed halls into cyber domains that have become the primary battleground for human rights. In the exceptional Yemeni context, burdened by a protracted armed conflict spanning a decade, civic space is being redefined not merely as a platform for participation, but as an existential arena of contestation between forces of modernization and narratives of traditional repression, where the targeting of women emerges as a central strategy of anti-rights actors.

with a unified national narrative that recognizes women's civic role as consistent with Islamic and human values. Preserving civic space depends on ensuring a safe environment for women's free and dignified participation and criminalizing ideological and digital incitement against them. Without this, peace and stability in Yemen and the region will remain out of reach. Protecting women remains the clearest test of commitment to a democratic and pluralistic future that safeguards the dignity of all citizens.

A deeper understanding of the current crisis requires careful recognition of the evolving nature of repression. While threats in the past were primarily physical and tangible, digital technologies have enabled new forms of soft violence whose impact transcends geographical and temporal boundaries. What we are witnessing today is a phenomenon of moral assassination, a tactic that transforms social media platforms from tools of networking and advocacy into arenas for issuing symbolic death sentences and dismantling the identities of women activists. This form of violence, internationally recognized as digital gender-based violence (DGBV), is structural in nature, targeting not only women's political views but their social and political legitimacy through intersecting technological, cultural, and moral dimensions. In a conservative social context, the cost of civic participation becomes exceedingly high, as threats extend beyond the individual to affect family reputation and social cohesion, producing what is known as a chilling effect that drives self-censorship and forced withdrawal from public life.

This context also reflects what may be termed the sociology of contemporary incitement, whereby anti-rights actors employ value framing to legitimize their attacks. This mechanism reframes personal assaults within the language of religion, custom, and tradition, allowing perpetrators to present themselves as defenders of social values, while portraying active women as agents of Westernization or threats to social order. This systematic distortion of public consciousness aims to isolate women and strip them of societal solidarity, rendering their defense, in some views, a form of deviation from accepted norms. The complex interplay between digital tools and traditional narratives thus produces a hostile environment that deprives Yemeni society of its

female capacities, capacities that, despite repression, have demonstrated exceptional ability in leading local mediation, managing humanitarian crises, and safeguarding human rights amid state fragility and institutional erosion.

From a legal and institutional perspective, Yemen's civic space faces a severe protection vacuum, driven by stagnant national legislation that lacks operational definitions of gender-based hate speech and organized digital harassment. While perpetrators continue to advance technologically and refine methods of manipulation and extortion, the Yemeni legal framework remains constrained by outdated provisions. This legislative gap, combined with weak law enforcement institutions and entrenched cultural biases, has transformed judicial and security bodies from mechanisms of protection into arenas of institutional violence. Victims often find themselves recast as perpetrators when reporting digital crimes due to reverse legal adaptation or are pressured into customary settlements that undermine justice and reinforce impunity. This structural dysfunction not only endangers women, but signals a broader collapse of the justice system, undermining the rule of law and the state's capacity to protect its citizens in the digital age.

The protection of women in civic space, therefore, extends beyond a narrow human rights concern to become a matter of strategic security and societal stability. In Yemen, women constitute a critical mass that has prevented the total collapse of social services and local networks throughout the years of conflict. Targeting this group directly undermines the community's capacity for recovery and sustainable peacebuilding. This paper adopts a non-traditional approach that moves beyond documenting violations to analyzing and deconstructing the architecture of violence through a three-dimensional framework: comprehensive legislative reform, institutional capacity-building to ensure gender responsiveness, and the cultivation of societal awareness that rejects narratives of defamation, incitement, and stigmatization. The objective is not only to safeguard women's participation, but to protect civic space itself from devolving into a lawless arena that erodes rights and freedoms and entrenches exclusionary models threatening Yemen's democratic and pluralistic future.

Geographically and politically, the phenomenon manifests across several Yemeni governorates, Taiz, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhalea, Shabwa, and Al-Mahra, each reflecting varied expressions of the same underlying dynamics, where digital violence intersects with local and political rivalries. The multiplicity of authorities and shifting military control has not altered the persistent reality that women's bodies and reputations remain primary arenas for settling political disputes. This instrumentalization of gender underscores a profound fragility in commitments to human rights values. It highlights the urgent need for national and international coordination platforms capable of transcending political divisions to provide protection. Yemeni women, who have broken barriers of silence and taken leading roles in peace dialogues, deserve a protection system commensurate with their sacrifices, one that recognizes women's security as an integral component of comprehensive human security.

The existing gap between constitutional guarantees, international agreements such as CEDAW and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and repressive practices on the ground creates a condition of legal disorder exploited by organized networks of incitement. Accordingly, this paper not only diagnoses the problem but also calls for a shift in perspective through the proposal of a new social and rights-based contract that restores recognition of women's civic engagement as an essential partner in protection and decision-making. This contract is grounded in cross-sectoral solidarity among religious leaders, media actors, legal institutions, and civil society to build a resilient front against hate speech, defamation, and incitement.



### **Methodology of the Research:**

This paper is grounded in a rigorous, field-based, and participatory mixed-methods approach, carefully designed to balance in-depth qualitative analysis with supporting quantitative data, while accounting for the complexities of the Yemeni context and its political, tribal, and cultural intersections to ensure high levels of reliability and contextual relevance. The methodology primarily draws on primary sources, notably the analysis of outputs from a series of analytical consultative sessions, both in-person and virtual, conducted under the Peace Dialogue initiative and the Supporting Peace in Yemen through Accountability, Reconciliation, and Knowledge Exchange (SPARK) project, implemented by the Abductees' Mothers Association and the SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties in partnership with DT Institute.

These sessions brought together more than 60 participants, including women leaders, lawyers, academics, human rights defenders, and peacebuilders from six Yemeni governorates, Taiz, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhalea, Shabwa, and Al-Mahra, enabling a nuanced understanding of geographic variations and the nature of gender-specific threats, and contributing to the development of a unified participatory position that identifies priority protection measures.

In parallel with the group sessions, the paper's knowledge base was further strengthened through in-depth interviews with 15 participants from the same categories and governorates to capture direct lived experiences. This was complemented by a systematic and intensive analysis of digital content, including a sample of posts on Facebook, the X platform, and local sources, using structured coding frameworks to examine the language of violence and patterns of targeting in line with the standards of the Rabat Plan of Action for assessing thresholds of incitement. The methodology also included a comprehensive analytical review of national legal and policy frameworks, such as the Penal Code, Civil Law, and Press Law, and their alignment with international instruments, including CEDAW and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to identify structural gaps that perpetuate impunity. This methodological triangulation, combining digital evidence, firsthand testimonies, and legal analysis, ensures that the proposed solutions are evidence-based, practical, and responsive to the structural roots and complex drivers of violence in Yemen's civic space.



## **Hate Speech, Defamation, Stigmatization, and Incitement Against Women in Civic Space: A Strategy of Exclusion, Not Isolated Incidents**

Analytical and field-based evidence from the governorates of Taiz, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhalea, Shabwa, and Al-Mahra confirms that campaigns of hate, incitement, and defamation targeting women in Yemen's civic space have moved beyond spontaneous individual behavior or random reactions to become a form of systematic structural violence and a highly dangerous repressive strategy.

This pattern of violence is increasingly organized and coercive, intensively targeting women human rights defenders, peacebuilding activists, and workers in humanitarian and rights-based organizations, with the central objective of forcibly excluding women from the public sphere. By eroding both the symbolic and practical legitimacy of these women, inciting actors seek to empty the space of influential female voices that serve as essential safeguards for human rights and peace processes amid armed conflict.

At the core of this problem lies a highly manipulative mechanism known as value-based framing, through which perpetrators exploit and distort religion, traditions, and social norms to launch gendered defamation campaigns. Women's civic engagement is deliberately associated with concepts such as moral deviance, deviation from religious teachings, Westernization, treason, and family disintegration, accusations designed to fabricate moral and symbolic legitimacy for harming women. This strategic manipulation raises the social and political cost of any rational response or uncalculated solidarity with victims, shifting the issue from a matter of opinion into a highly sensitive domain tied to "honor and reputation." As a result, violations become socially tolerated or even justified in the eyes of some groups, making resistance both difficult and highly sensitive.

Tools of incitement have evolved from traditional criticism into high-impact digital waves operating within cyberspace. These campaigns often begin on open platforms such as Facebook and the X platform to shape misleading narratives and spread disinformation, before escalating into closed channels such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and private messaging. Recent field statistics reveal the scale of the crisis: more than 62% of women in Yemen have experienced online violence, with over 15,000 cases of cyber extortion recorded in less than three years, an average exceeding 535 cases per month. WhatsApp is the most widely used communication platform at 83%, with 57% of women experiencing abuse and harassment via social media, 55% subjected to insults and defamatory language, 30% facing financial or sexual extortion, and 26% receiving direct threats of killing or rape.<sup>(1)</sup> In the same context, 98% of women

(1) Digital violence against Yemeni women leaders: a field study. <https://secdev-foundation.org/publication/dvaw-research-yemen-leaders/>

participating in consultative sessions and in-depth interviews, working within the civil society sector, reported experiencing some form of violence resulting from hate speech, incitement, and defamation, and their consequences<sup>(1)</sup>.

This violence extends beyond digital spaces into tangible repressive practices that threaten the daily lives of women human rights defenders. Reports document the translation of inciting rhetoric into physical assaults and restrictions on movement. In just five districts of Taiz governorate, more than 93 real-world violations against women activists were recorded between 2020 and mid-2025, including extortion, detention, and house arrest aimed at silencing rights-based voices. The consequences reach tragic levels, including social isolation and forced marriage as a means of averting scandal.<sup>(2)</sup> In documented cases, cyber extortion and social abandonment have led to actual suicide attempts, as in the case of activist Sarah Alwan in Taiz. Instances of moral assassination and defamation targeting prominent figures have also emerged, such as the case of Dr. Ulfat Al-Duba'i, who faced incitement campaigns accusing her of supporting homosexuality and undermining religion in an effort to marginalize her public role.

Incitement also extends to entire women-led organizations, with unregulated religious platforms used to disseminate narratives portraying women's civic engagement as morally corrupt, religiously deviant, or Westernized. The situation is further exacerbated by the continued institutionalization of repression and erosion of civic space by the Houthis, with more than 63 employees of international organizations and dozens of civilian workers reportedly detained, creating a contagion environment whose effects have spread into government-controlled areas through negative emulation by non-state actors.<sup>(3)</sup> The problem takes on varying forms depending on local contexts: in Taiz, civic space faces severe restrictions alongside repeated

(1) Reports on analytical consultation sessions and in-depth interviews.

(2) A map of violations against female activists online and in reality in five districts of Taiz Governorate – as part of the project to protect civil and women's spaces and promote women's participation in the peace process, implemented by the Abductees' Mother Association with funding from the Peace Support Facility (PSF), funded by the United Nations Development Programme.

(3) <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%84-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85-32-%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86>

campaigns of hate and defamation; in Al-Dhalea, threats escalate to potential killings based on rumors; in Shabwa, Lahj, and Abyan, digital intimidation is carried out through anonymous pages publishing names and accusations; while in Al-Mahra, the issue manifests as implicit social rejection imposing strict limitations on women's participation.

The actors driving these campaigns form a complex network reflecting an "informal alliance" between political interests and traditional religious and tribal forces that perceive women's advancement as a threat to their influence, while simultaneously viewing women as the most vulnerable targets for violence under distorted religious and social justifications. These actors include organized electronic trolling networks and fake accounts, certain mosque preachers and extremist religious groups operating outside the oversight of the Ministry of Endowments, and social media influencers who use their platforms to incite hostility. Statistics indicate that 60% of perpetrators are male, followed by unidentified actors at 46%, while some official entities are occasionally implicated through passive complicity, reinforcing a culture of impunity.<sup>(1)</sup>

This multidimensional violence exploits the fragility of the current context to systematically remove women leaders from civic space, thereby fueling cycles of internal violence, deepening social mistrust, and transforming minor disputes into armed confrontations and retaliatory violence that threaten social cohesion.

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(1) Digital violence against Yemeni women leaders: a field study. <https://secdev-foundation.org/publication/dvaw-research-yemen-leaders/>



## Structural Roots and Underlying Drivers: Intersections of Legislative Gaps, Institutional Fragility, and Social Context

Understanding the phenomenon of incitement, defamation, and hate speech against women human rights defenders and civil society activists in Yemen requires recognizing that it is not incidental or the result of isolated individual behavior. Analytical reports from consultative sessions, in-depth interviews, and legal and institutional reviews demonstrate that it constitutes a complex system of violence sustained by legislative gaps, institutional weakness, a layered cultural legacy, and interconnected structural drivers. Deconstructing this system requires examining its root causes across multiple levels.<sup>(1), (2)</sup>

(1) Reports on analytical consultation sessions and in-depth interviews.

(2) The Legal and Institutional Context of Digital Violence Against Women in Yemen: A Field Study. [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://secdev-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Yemen-DVAW-2024-legal-AR.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwit6oiQ0Y6TAxX8SKQEHUe2Im0QFnoECCcQAO&usq=AOwVaw3mdyM8Yj\\_Z5c9Izw4b2nFb](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://secdev-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Yemen-DVAW-2024-legal-AR.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwit6oiQ0Y6TAxX8SKQEHUe2Im0QFnoECCcQAO&usq=AOwVaw3mdyM8Yj_Z5c9Izw4b2nFb)

At the core lies the legislative gap and deficiencies within the national legal framework, which reinforce a culture of impunity and provide perpetrators with a safe space to persist in violations against women in civic life. Although the Yemeni Constitution guarantees equality (Article 41), protection of dignity and personal security (Article 48), and the confidentiality of communications (Article 53), procedural laws remain outdated and technologically inadequate to enforce these guarantees in the digital age. Judicial and security institutions rely heavily on the Penal Code No. (12) of 1994, which lacks precise definitions of digital violence, hate speech, or cyber extortion, forcing courts to interpret complex digital crimes through traditional provisions such as defamation (Article 291), threats (Article 254), or privacy violations (Articles 255–256). These provisions impose weak penalties, often limited to imprisonment of up to three years or minimal fines, that are wholly disproportionate to the psychological and social harm inflicted by organized defamation campaigns.

The legal framework is further undermined by constitutional contradictions stemming from the 1994 amendments, which replaced Article (27) of the 1991 Constitution, prohibiting gender-based discrimination, with Article (31), which subjects women's rights to traditional jurisprudential interpretations. This vague constitutional language has enabled the use of loosely defined laws against women, providing quasi-legal cover for inciting actors and extremist groups who claim that women's civic engagement violates religion and social norms. One of the most critical manifestations of this gap is reverse legal adaptation, whereby Article (273) on indecent acts is used to prosecute women whose phones have been hacked or whose private images have been leaked, effectively transforming victims into defendants and discouraging reporting due to fear of legal and social repercussions.

Similar deficiencies exist in the Press and Publications Law of 1990, which imposes negligible penalties, such as fines not exceeding 10,000 Yemeni riyals or up to one year of imprisonment, failing to deter media institutions or influential figures engaged in organized campaigns of character assassination. Likewise, the Endowments and Guidance Law No. (40) of 1991 lacks explicit provisions criminalizing hate speech or incitement against women through

religious platforms, relying instead on vague references to moderation, thereby leaving space for unregulated incitement under the guise of moral defense. Yemen's inability to accede to key international instruments such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime further limits the capacity for cross-border cooperation with technology companies to track perpetrators operating behind anonymous accounts.

The second structural driver lies in acute institutional weakness within law enforcement and protection systems, which often lack both technological tools and qualified personnel. Criminal investigation departments suffer from a severe shortage of advanced software needed to trace digital evidence and identify perpetrators who use international numbers and anonymous accounts. This gap is compounded by a critical lack of female investigators and trained personnel capable of engaging with victims of digital violence in a gender-sensitive manner, exposing complainants to additional institutional violence, including dismissal of their claims or blame directed at them for their online presence. Judicial institutions also tend to favor customary settlements and forced reconciliations in cases of violence and incitement, particularly when perpetrators hold influence, effectively undermining victims' rights and reinforcing impunity. Although the Cybercrime Unit established in Aden in 2024 introduced electronic reporting platforms and received 165 complaints within a short period, it remains structurally underdeveloped and unable to address systematic incitement or large-scale political defamation campaigns.

Weak oversight by the Ministry of Endowments over unregulated mosques further allows the dissemination of extremist rhetoric targeting women activists for political purposes. Educational institutions reinforce traditional gender roles without integrating awareness of hate speech risks, while media outlets sometimes amplify incitement by providing platforms to extremist voices. This institutional gap extends to civil society organizations themselves, many of which lack internal protection policies and digital security protocols. It may adopt passive neutrality or withdraw support from targeted female staff to safeguard institutional reputation or funding.

Another contributing factor is the weakness of advocacy efforts and the absence of sustained promotion of positive female role models. Civil society organizations, particularly women-led groups, often lack the capacity to design and implement proactive advocacy campaigns capable of countering hate speech and dismantling negative stereotypes about women in public life. Most efforts remain focused on documenting violations rather than constructing alternative narratives that highlight successful and inspiring examples of women's leadership in development, peacebuilding, and human rights. This absence leaves the field open to incitement narratives that frame women's civic engagement as Westernization, moral corruption, or a threat to family cohesion, widening the gap between women's achievements and public perception shaped by defamation campaigns.

At the societal level, cultural structures and traditions provide the primary environment that legitimizes hate speech and amplifies its destructive impact. A dominant patriarchal culture often perceives women's participation in public life as a threat to traditional authority, normalizing verbal and symbolic violence against them. The culture of shame and social stigma plays a central role, as reputational sensitivity is weaponized to deter women; a single online rumor can generate intense familial and social pressure, forcing withdrawal from public engagement to avoid dishonor. Value framing through religious narratives is one of the most dangerous drivers, as incitement is wrapped in moral and religious language, transforming acts of defamation into perceived defenses of social values, thereby increasing the social cost of any rational response.

Additional contextual factors further exacerbate the crisis. The prolonged conflict has eroded the rule of law, fragmented value systems, and normalized violence, turning women into instruments of political pressure and arenas for proxy conflict. Activists affiliated with opposing political actors are targeted as a means of symbolic retaliation.

The spread of negative emulation, whereby tactics of repression and civic space erosion from Houthi-controlled areas are replicated in government-controlled regions, reinforces a hostile environment for women's rights work. Digital disorder, including the anonymity afforded by online platforms, lowers the cost of incitement and facilitates coordinated campaigns without accountability. Moreover, the politicization of funding and allegations of foreign agendas are used to delegitimize civil society work, framing it as external interference aimed at undermining social cohesion. This complex interaction between legal deficiencies, institutional fragility, and socio-political drivers underscores the need for comprehensive structural reform across all levels to ensure effective and sustainable protection for women in Yemen.



## Catastrophic Impacts on Women Civic Activists, Society, the Human Rights System, and Peacebuilding Efforts:

Hate speech, incitement, and defamation targeting women in civil society are not merely passing remarks or temporary online disputes; they constitute a “weapon of mass destruction” against the social fabric and a systematic tool of repression that imposes profound human, institutional, and societal costs. These impacts extend far beyond personal harm, striking at the core of civil society’s structure and its capacity to endure, while reshaping the public sphere into an environment hostile to pluralism. Based on analytical reports from consultative sessions and in-depth interviews, these effects can be documented across multiple, overlapping layers. Participants from all targeted governorates consistently affirmed that women active in civil society, particularly human rights defenders, peacebuilders, and leaders, bear the heaviest and most severe burden of these campaigns, with consequences spanning complex psychological, security, professional, and social dimensions.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Reports on analytical consultation sessions and in-depth interviews.

Women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, and leaders carry the harshest burden of these campaigns, which target intertwined psychological, security, professional, and social dimensions, often resulting in chronic psychological and emotional breakdowns due to sustained reputational destruction and attacks on personal honor. Activists experience acute symptoms including anxiety, depression, persistent insomnia, constant fear and suspicion, social isolation, and withdrawal from civic and humanitarian engagement. In extreme cases, these pressures have driven some women to contemplate or attempt suicide in response to overwhelming social pressure and institutional and societal abandonment. This psychological collapse is reinforced by a strategy of moral assassination, whereby personal and professional reputations are systematically damaged to deter participation in public life. Inciting actors deploy language targeting honor and reputation and increasingly use advanced tools such as artificial intelligence and fabricated images to intensify attacks and coerce women into withdrawing from civic space.

These pressures compel many women to adopt forced self-censorship over their opinions and movements, a phenomenon described as soft suppression, which deprives society of critical voices. Some resort to pseudonyms or anonymous accounts in search of a limited sense of safety and freedom in digital spaces. The impact extends beyond symbolic harm to direct security threats and physical violence affecting personal safety on the ground. Women human rights defenders have received threats of killing and rape, and documented cases indicate that online incitement has escalated into severe physical violence, including killings triggered by rumors originating in digital spaces. Women also face institutional violations and professional marginalization, including deliberate exclusion from decision-making positions, and in some cases are forced to resign under pressure due to the absence of protection protocols within their organizations.

At the broader societal level, this phenomenon creates an environment of collective intimidation that affects women and girls across Yemen. It reinforces patriarchal perceptions and entrenched stereotypes that restrict women's roles and confine them to predefined social functions, while normalizing

everyday violence as an accepted norm. Fear of social stigma leads families to impose tighter restrictions on women, preventing them from exercising basic rights such as access to education, employment, and public services. In some cases, consequences extend beyond individuals to entire families, which may be forced into displacement or internal migration to other cities to escape the shame associated with the defamation of a female family member. This, in turn, results in the loss of social support networks and livelihoods and imposes forced social isolation on women. Cyber defamation and extortion also contribute to rising divorce rates and increased domestic violence, and in some cases force girls into early or coerced marriages as a means of avoiding stigma and preserving family honor. The phenomenon further deepens the generational divide between young women and traditional social structures, raising the risk of “drying out of civic space” and the depletion of female leadership talent across governorates.

At the level of civil society organizations, incitement leads to a state of operational paralysis, where organizations are forced to suspend programs or relocate activities to closed environments to protect their staff from targeting. Many adopt strict risk-avoidance policies that limit the visibility and participation of female employees, thereby reducing the dynamism of civic work. Waves of misinformation and accusations against organizations erode public trust and credibility, making community mobilization more difficult and widening the gap between institutions and beneficiaries. As a result, staff energy is increasingly diverted toward rebuilding trust rather than delivering services. Sustained attacks also generate professional exhaustion and high staff turnover, while fostering a culture of anticipatory self-censorship that prevents organizations from implementing sensitive programs related to women’s rights and gender issues, due to fear of confrontation with extremist actors and inciters. The shrinking of transparent civic space and the privatization of dialogue within closed circles reduce opportunities for constructive engagement and weaken moderate voices, contributing to the formation of polarized echo chambers.

These consequences collectively poison the broader social fabric and undermine the foundations of the human rights system. Hate speech fractures social cohesion, fuels exclusionary narratives, and weakens interpersonal and community bonds, resulting in a marked deterioration of collective psychological well-being. Institutional and societal silence in response to these violations normalizes violence and entrenches harmful customary practices, reinforcing impunity and strengthening the dominance of informal tribal mechanisms as substitutes for the rule of law, thereby encouraging further escalation by perpetrators.

The cumulative outcome is a decline in human rights indicators and the increasing emigration of women's and civil society capacities in search of safety, which significantly hampers development and recovery processes. Most critically, these dynamics undermine peacebuilding efforts by stripping civic space of its safety valves and local mediators who play a vital role in conflict transformation. Their withdrawal increases the cost of dialogue and weakens peaceful resolution mechanisms, while defamation and delegitimization transform minor political disagreements into existential and armed conflicts that are difficult to contain. Ultimately, this weakens national reconciliation efforts and excludes women from decision-making spaces, stripping peace processes of their inclusiveness and substance and reducing negotiated settlements to fragile pauses in conflict that threaten long-term social stability.



## **Value-based Pillars and Strategic Vision: Towards Restorative Justice and Community Partnership Guaranteeing Women's Protection in Civic Space**

Women's engagement in civil society, particularly in the fields of human rights and peacebuilding, is an expression of national duty and a necessary societal imperative for achieving peace and justice. This work is in no way an act of rebellion against Islamic values, a departure from authentic traditions and customs, or a violation of national laws.

We, Yemeni women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, and women leaders from the governorates of Taiz, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhalea, Shabwa, and Al-Mahra, affirm with one voice that our presence in civic space is neither a luxury nor an expression of cultural alienation or external influence, but rather a living embodiment of authentic national and Islamic values that call for reconciliation among people and the preservation of human dignity. We are not outsiders to our society; we are its daughters, its mothers, and its safeguards, having worked throughout years of conflict to repair what wars have destroyed and to support the most vulnerable groups. Our civic engagement is a natural continuation of Yemeni women's historical and pioneering roles in preserving social cohesion and civil peace, and it constitutes a religious, moral, national, and humanitarian duty equal in importance to any other form of national contribution. The systematic campaigns targeting us through defamation, incitement, moral accusations, and the use of religious platforms and digital spaces for moral assassination do not target individuals alone; they constitute a direct assault on the cohesion of Yemeni society and a violation of the sanctity of honor protected by religious teachings, social norms, and legal principles.

We firmly and unequivocally reject the use of religion or social customs as a cover for repression or as a means of replicating instruments of ideological and physical intimidation, including those practiced by the Houthi group. We also affirm that silencing women's voices and attempting to socially and politically marginalize them serves only the enemies of peace, empties society of its peacebuilding tools, and fuels cycles of violence that transform simple disagreements into existential conflicts and armed confrontations.

Based on our deep commitment to restorative justice and the principle of do no harm, we extend our hand toward a genuine and inclusive partnership with religious, tribal, and community leaders in order to collectively move from a space of mistrust and confrontation to a space of integration and mutual protection. We call for the establishment of a legal, institutional, and community-based protective framework that recognizes women human

rights defenders and civil activists as assets to society rather than adversaries. Our strength lies in our unity. Our position today is a collective stance rejecting defamation and stigmatization and calling for a safe civic and digital environment that protects women and criminalizes incitement against them, enabling them to continue their role in building a just and inclusive peace that preserves Yemen's stability and upholds women's dignity and leadership.

The philosophical foundation of this position is grounded in an integrated theory of change based on the principles of restorative justice and do no harm, with full awareness of the complexity of the Yemeni context and its religious, tribal, and political intersections. This approach adopts a strategy of cultural and value-based reframing, whereby the protection of women human rights defenders is not presented as a Western or externally imposed agenda that may provoke societal resistance, but rather as an extension of authentic Yemeni values, the sanctity of honor, the preservation of social harmony, and the prevention of discord.

This strategic framing seeks to strip inciting actors of the moral and religious justification they exploit, transforming the targeting of women from a socially tolerated behavior into a socially and morally rejected act. Violence against women in civic space is sustained not only by material force or technical loopholes, but primarily by social acceptance and silence. Therefore, meaningful change cannot be achieved through confrontation alone, but through addressing the cultural and religious drivers that are used to legitimize such violence.

Through constructive dialogue, deconstructing stereotypes, and reframing narratives from within the society's own value system, this approach aims to transform community leaders, including religious figures, tribal elders, and opinion leaders, from a state of silence or passive complicity into active guarantors of protection. Once this protective partnership is established, hate speech, defamation, and stigmatization will lose their social legitimacy, and the political and social cost of violations against women will significantly increase, ensuring the sustainability of a safe and inclusive civic space.



## **Strategic Conclusion: Restorative Justice as an Existential Choice for Comprehensive Peacebuilding**

It is now evident that hate speech, incitement, defamation, and stigmatization targeting women active in Yemen's civic space cannot be reduced to mere misuse of technology, isolated online offenses, or individual acts in digital or physical environments. Rather, they constitute a systematic apparatus of repression and a complex form of structural violence in which political and institutional interests intersect with entrenched patriarchal cultural norms. Digital platforms, religious discourse, and traditional social forums are simultaneously instrumentalized as arenas for carrying out moral assassinations aimed at the forced exclusion of women human rights defenders and peacebuilders from public life.

In-depth contextual analysis demonstrates that this phenomenon is sustained by a dangerous structural combination of a severe legislative vacuum and acute institutional weakness. Outdated legal frameworks that fail to recognize cybercrimes, alongside vague legal provisions such as Article 273 (indecent acts) and Article 259 (blasphemy), have not only failed to protect women but have enabled discriminatory interpretations and reverse legal adaptation, whereby victims are transformed into defendants. This legislative gap has paralyzed law enforcement and judicial institutions, already lacking gender sensitivity and technical capacity, pushing them toward coercive customary settlements that reinforce a culture of impunity.

A central danger of this incitement lies in its adaptability through value framing, whereby perpetrators appropriate religious discourse and social norms related to honor and reputation to weaponize them against women. Accusations of Westernization, moral deviance, and social rebellion are used to delegitimize women's civic engagement and intimidate both individuals and their families. This significantly increases the social cost of any rational defense or solidarity, turning support for women activists into a high-risk social act. The result is widespread self-censorship, forced withdrawal of women leaders from civic life, and institutional paralysis within civil society organizations, which increasingly adopt risk-avoidance strategies that undermine human rights advocacy and development work.

Beyond professional and psychological harm, which in some cases has driven women to extreme despair and suicide attempts, this form of violence represents a long-term strategic threat to social cohesion and peacebuilding in Yemen. Women constitute a critical pillar in local mediation and conflict transformation mechanisms; their exclusion through intimidation and moral assassination removes essential safety valves from society, leaving it vulnerable to polarization, family fragmentation, and escalating cycles of retaliatory violence.

Accordingly, continued reliance on fragmented responses, isolated security measures, or denial-based approaches is no longer viable. The only effective path forward lies in a structural transformation grounded in restorative justice, alongside the construction of a unified national narrative that recognizes women's civic engagement as both consistent with Islamic and human values and essential for national stability. This must be accompanied by urgent legal reforms to close legislative gaps, establish comprehensive cybercrime legislation, and restructure judicial and security institutions, including specialized cybercrime units, to ensure effective, gender-sensitive deterrence.

Ultimately, this is not merely a struggle for the rights of a specific group; it is a decisive battle to preserve Yemen's civic space as a whole. Without a safe environment that guarantees women's free and dignified participation and criminalizes digital and ideological violence against them, sustainable peace in Yemen will remain an unattainable goal.



## Roadmap:

Strategic and Operational Measures for Building an Integrated Protection System to Strengthen Women's Active Presence in Civic Space and Public Affairs

Based on a comprehensive structural analysis of the nature of both digital and real-world threats, and in order to deconstruct the deep-rooted drivers of hate speech, defamation, stigmatization, and incitement against women working in civic space, this paper presents to decision-makers, civil society organizations, community leaders, and international donors a comprehensive strategic and operational roadmap. These recommendations are designed to establish an integrated “legal, institutional, and community-based protection framework” that combines deterrent legal measures, effective institutional practices, and culturally sensitive social interventions, while clearly distributing roles among all stakeholders, according to the following pathways:

The current situation requires the adoption of comprehensive criminal legislation through the drafting and enactment of a dedicated and independent cybercrime law that aligns with contemporary digital realities. This law should include precise and clear definitions of digital violence against women, gender-based hate speech, cyber extortion, online harassment, defamation, and public incitement, moving beyond the outdated and vague provisions of the 1994 Penal Code. It should establish deterrent penalties proportional to the psychological, social, and economic harm inflicted on victims and their families.

A comprehensive review of the current Penal Code is also necessary, particularly of Articles 192 and 193, to activate provisions related to public incitement via electronic platforms and digital groups. At the same time, binding directives should be issued by the Supreme Judicial Council and the Public Prosecutor to strictly regulate the application of Article 273 (indecent acts) and Article 259 (blasphemy), ensuring that they are not used in reverse legal interpretation against women human rights defenders or to criminalize victims whose data or devices have been hacked.

The Press and Publications Law No. 25 of 1990 should be amended to align with developments in digital publishing, with significantly strengthened penalties under Article 104 to ensure real deterrence against defamation. In parallel, the Endowments and Guidance Law No. 40 of 1991 and its executive regulations should be revised to include explicit provisions criminalizing the use of religious platforms for incitement or takfir (excommunication) against women, including sanctions that may reach revocation of preaching licenses.

It is also necessary to activate civil compensation mechanisms by encouraging the Public Prosecution to treat defamation and incitement as offenses affecting public order and social peace, and by enabling women defenders to pursue civil lawsuits for financial compensation based on Articles 304, 305, 333, and 352 of Civil Law No. 14 of 2002. This approach aims to increase the economic cost of incitement and achieve effective material deterrence.

The government must adopt a comprehensive national strategy to combat gender-based violence that links protection, prevention, and accountability, and obliges all state institutions to integrate policies for protecting women and female activists into their annual plans. This should include the institutionalization of protection mechanisms for witnesses and whistleblowers in digital crimes, ensuring full confidentiality and physical protection from potential retaliation.

Furthermore, it is essential to ratify relevant international instruments, foremost among them the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001), the United Nations Draft Convention on Cybercrime (2024), and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, to enable national institutions to engage in cross-border cooperation with technology companies and trace perpetrators operating behind anonymous accounts.

In the institutional track directed at official authorities, immediate action must be taken to develop criminal investigation departments and equip them with advanced digital forensic technologies and tools. This should be accompanied by specialized training of officers and investigators on tracking the sources of rumors and identifying fake accounts. In parallel, it is necessary to recruit and train a sufficient number of female investigators within cybercrime units to ensure a safe and gender-sensitive response environment that protects victims' privacy and avoids institutional violence or victim-blaming practices.

Urgent financial, technical, and logistical support should be provided to the Cybercrime Unit and the Press Prosecution Office, with an expansion of their geographic and operational mandates to include monitoring and prosecuting systematic political and gender-based incitement campaigns, rather than limiting their role to individual extortion cases.

Clear operational guidelines must be issued to security authorities and prosecution offices to precisely distinguish between legitimate criticism and hate speech, defamation, and incitement that warrant legal action. High-level directives should prohibit the closure of extortion and incitement cases through customary reconciliation or coercive community settlements, and

these crimes must be treated as offenses against public rights that are not subject to compromise.

At the regulatory level, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and its local offices must transition from a purely administrative role to an active protection mandate. This should include making it a binding requirement for civil society organizations to adopt internal protection policies and digital safety protocols for female staff as a condition for licensing or renewal, alongside enforcing accountability mechanisms for institutions that abandon their female personnel when they are subjected to extortion or defamation. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation should integrate protection issues into national development priorities and direct donor funding toward resilience and safety programs for women leaders, while closing financial gaps related to emergency response and rapid assistance for women human rights defenders.

The Ministry of Information must activate its role by adopting a counter-narrative media strategy that highlights the contributions of Yemeni women and exposes the destructive impact of defamation on social cohesion. This includes adopting a binding professional code of conduct for all government-affiliated media outlets that prohibits hosting inciters or promoting takfir and accusations of treason, as well as establishing a specialized unit to monitor and analyze inciting media content and refer violators to competent authorities.

The National Women's Committee and the Yemeni Women's Union should be empowered through adequate operational budgets and qualified human resources, transforming them from statement-issuing bodies into active institutions that provide immediate legal and psychological support to female activists, and form a national advocacy front to hold perpetrators of defamation campaigns accountable.

Regarding the Ministry of Endowments and Guidance, it should enforce oversight over unregulated mosques and establish specialized monitoring units for religious discourse to document incitement or takfir against women, ensuring legal accountability for offending preachers. It should also produce an alternative religious discourse that promotes tolerance and affirms women's

dignity and right to public participation, alongside training female preachers to provide moderate and rights-supportive religious interpretations.

The institutional track also extends to the Ministry of Education and universities, which are required to revise curricula to eliminate gender stereotypes and integrate human rights education, media literacy, and digital awareness, in order to foster a generation equipped with critical thinking skills to resist misinformation and defamation campaigns. Civil society and women's organizations should focus on unifying the human rights narrative and building strong institutional solidarity that overcomes fragmented efforts and redefines human rights work as a national, religious, and ethical duty. It calls for the formation of coalitions capable of advocating for targeted women activists and providing them with moral and societal protection.

Organizations should adopt strict internal protection policies, including digital safety protocols, and criminalize any arbitrary administrative action against staff members targeted under the pretext of protecting institutional reputation. A standardized incident reporting model should be adopted to document violations and link them to rapid response and referral mechanisms. Early warning systems should be activated to detect high-risk digital patterns, alongside rapid response teams to intervene in the first hours of defamation campaigns in order to contain escalation.

Legal and psychosocial support clinics should be established in cooperation with bar associations and mental health professionals. Strategically, civil society organizations must shift toward "value-based communication" of women's achievements, using both traditional and new media platforms to highlight success stories and reposition women as essential partners in development rather than adversaries to be excluded.

Intensive digital safety and privacy training programs should be implemented for journalists and leading activists, including data encryption techniques, account protection, and proactive personal data screening to reduce vulnerability to incitement campaigns. In regulating the online environment,

formal partnerships and rapid communication channels should be established between civil society coalitions and global platforms, granting Yemeni actors “trusted reporter” status. These platforms should be provided with locally relevant terminology and contextual indicators of incitement to improve automated detection and removal of high-risk content. National awareness campaigns on media and digital literacy should also be launched, targeting influencers, journalists, and the general public to strengthen critical thinking and responsible digital behavior.

Cross-sectoral awareness initiatives should be implemented jointly by ministries of human rights, legal affairs, communications, social affairs, education, and information, promoting dialogue that rejects incitement and strengthens public awareness of the importance of respecting women and the dangers of spreading rumors. Religious and community leadership track requires the development of a community code of conduct grounded in restorative justice principles, bringing together women leaders, moderate religious scholars, and tribal figures in safe dialogue spaces and roundtables. The aim is to dismantle passive stability and build agreements that explicitly criminalize the use of religious platforms or social councils to incite against women human rights defenders and civic actors.

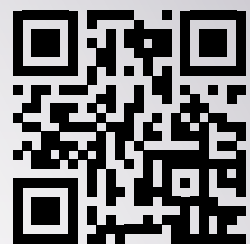
Efforts should also focus on producing religious, media, and social messaging rooted in the higher objectives of Islamic law, particularly the protection of life, dignity, and honor, affirming the humanity and rights of women. These messages should be disseminated through mosques and media channels during periods of heightened tension to neutralize “value framing” used in attacks. The symbolic influence of tribal leaders should be leveraged to form informal mediation committees that work discreetly to contain incitement and defamation crises before escalation, preventing ideological disputes from becoming public moral trials that destroy activists’ lives and undermine social cohesion.

Donors and international partners must allocate flexible emergency funding mechanisms to cover urgent protection measures for at-risk women human rights defenders, including safe shelter, legal aid, psychosocial support, and advanced digital security tools. International funding should also prioritize long-term investment in national infrastructure, particularly strengthening cybercrime units, financing multi-stakeholder coordination platforms, and supporting legal and psychosocial clinics. Core funding for civil society organizations is essential to ensure sustainable internal governance and effective protection systems.

Finally, long-term investment should support localized dialogue initiatives that bring together women leaders, religious figures, and tribal leaders to build sustainable understandings that protect civic space. It should also fund local teams producing alternative media content and non-confrontational narratives that reflect the complexity of Yemen's cultural and social context and strengthen resilience against incitement and disinformation.



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