



Justice4Yemen Pact
ميثاق العدالة لليمن



Enforced Disappearance in Yemen: Truth and Justice Denied

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Enforced disappearance in Yemen constitutes one of the gravest human rights violations and a serious breach of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Parties to the conflict continue to use it systematically as a means of subjugating society, silencing critical voices, and intimidating civilians in disregard of the rule of law and amid a pervasive lack of judicial accountability.

Since the outbreak and escalation of the conflict in 2014, local and international human rights organizations have documented thousands of cases of enforced disappearances. However, the reported figures are unlikely to reflect the true scale of the practice, due to deliberate efforts to conceal such cases and the fear experienced by victims' families, which often prevents them from reporting the disappearance of their loved ones.

Recent developments on the ground in 2026, and the resulting decline in the influence of military formations affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council, have brought to light new information about cases of enforced disappearance and the locations where victims were held. In this context, [the National Commission for the Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights conducted](#) field visits earlier this year to several sites that had reportedly been used as secret detention centers to arbitrarily detain opponents and subject them to enforced disappearance.



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[The Abductees' Mothers Association warned](#) that closing these secret detention centers without independent judicial oversight and without enabling victims and their families to access the truth poses a serious threat to victims' rights. It cautioned that doing so could facilitate the concealment of evidence of torture and enforced disappearance and allows perpetrators to evade accountability.

[The Abductees' Mothers Association has documented](#) the names of several secret detention sites, where civilians were forcibly disappeared and subjected to severe forms of torture. In cooperation with the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the Association published a report featuring harrowing testimonies about the conditions endured by detainees in "Waddah Hall" in Aden, a secret detention center used to forcibly disappear and torture civilians. According to the testimonies documented in the report, some of those disappeared died as a result of torture.

The case of the politician and Senior Islah Party Leader, Mohammed Qahtan, exemplifies one of the most severe forms of enforced disappearance in Yemen. After more than ten years of enforced disappearance, deprivation of legal safeguards, and prevention of communication with the outside world, the Houthi (Ansar Allah) group handed over his incomplete bodily remains (missing his head, rib cage, and major body parts) to his family in July 2026, amid pressure to close the case.

[A number of Yemeni human rights organizations have called](#) for an independent international investigation into the death of the Mohammed Qahtan.

On the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Justice4 Yemen Pact Coalition stands in full solidarity with the thousands of victims and their families, who continue to endure the pain of missing loved ones and the suffering of endless waiting. On this occasion, we call on the international sponsors of the peace talks in Yemen to place



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the issue of enforced disappearance at the forefront of the priorities of any political settlement. We also stress the need for transitional justice processes to provide for the establishment of a specialized national commission to determine their fate and address their situation and that of their families. Such processes should also provide for the establishment of an independent international investigation commission mandated to document crimes, preserve evidence, and ensure that perpetrators do not escape accountability within any future frameworks for accountability and justice.

In this joint statement, we also set out a number of recommendations based on our responsibility toward victims and their families:

- To the parties to the conflict: Immediately cease enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention; urgently disclose the fate of all disappeared persons and release them; and comply with **International human rights standards** for the treatment of detainees.
- To the Yemeni Government: Fully accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; harmonize national legislation accordingly; establish an independent national commission to search for victims, hold violators accountable, and support families; and coordinate with relevant partners.
- To the United Nations and the international community: Exert genuine pressure on the parties to the conflict to disclose the fate of disappeared persons and fulfill their international obligations.
- To the Human Rights Council: Establish an independent international investigative mechanism to investigate violations committed by all local and regional parties, with a particular focus on enforced disappearance.
- To international and local actors: Strengthen the protection of civil society organizations and human rights activists, particularly those working in areas under Houthi control.



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Signatory Organizations:

1. Abductees' Mothers Association (AMA)
2. Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation (AWSF)
3. Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children (CSWC)
4. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
5. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development (MDF)
6. Musaala Organization for Human Rights
7. SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties
8. Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)
9. Yemeni Media Freedom Observatory (YMFO)
10. Watch for Human Rights (Watch4HR)
11. Marta Mendes (transitional justice researcher and practitioner)