

Human Rights Council Draft Resolution on Yemen Out of Line with Past Action on Libya and Syria International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) 27 September 2011 While Yemen is facing escalating violence and bloodshed, the draft resolution currently under consideration at the 18th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) fails to call for any measures to protect the civilian population. The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organizations in Yemen, the Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC) and Sisters' Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF) reiterate their calls to the UNHRC to adequately address the crisis in the country.

“The Council should accord the same attention to violations committed in Yemen as for those in Libya and Syria, and immediately address the crackdown in Yemen through the establishment of an international, independent and impartial Commission of Inquiry. The Council has the duty to take all necessary measures to ensure an immediate end to these grave human rights violations in Yemen, which, according to information received, could amount to international crimes,” said Souhayr Belhassen, President of FIDH. In the same vein, the last report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also called for international investigations into incidents having resulted in a heavy loss of life. This is above all due to the ongoing climate of violence in Yemen, which constitutes a strain on the government’s ability to conduct truly impartial inquiries of its own.

Over the past week, more than 150 people have died in Yemen, most of which were unarmed demonstrators. Security forces and their affiliates have been employing live ammunition and snipers against protestors gathered in several areas of Sanaa and in Taiz. On September 24, witnesses and medics reported attacks involving heavy artillery by government forces on the main opposition protest camp in Sanaa, which led to the deaths of at least 17 protesters and opposition-allied soldiers. Armed clashes have escalated between Government security forces and anti-Government armed groups since September 18.

FIDH, HRITC and SAF express their utmost concern at the ongoing hostilities in Yemen and urge all parties to refrain from using violence and to guarantee the protection of civilians. Moreover, our organisations warn against the high risk of civil war which will further impact on the dire humanitarian situation that the population is facing.

Over the past few days, Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh has announced his acceptance of the political initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and his commitment to transferring power through elections. Our organisations recall that any political solution to the Yemeni crisis should not contravene the rights of victims and their families for seeking truth, justice and reparation. Impunity for those guilty of pepertrating severe human rights violations cannot constitute an option under any circumstances.

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