

Disregarding the Warnings of the UN Security Council, Yemen Continues its Murderous Repression

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

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The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member and partner organisations in Yemen - the Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC), Sisters' Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF), and the Yemeni Human Rights Network (YHRN) - alert the international community to Yemen's continued repression of protest movements and murder of civilians, despite the strong warnings of the UN Security Council.

On 11 November 2011, 16 people, including women and children, were killed in an artillery shelling launched by the Yemeni army on both Freedom Square - the epicentre of the anti-government protest movement - in the southern city of Taiz, and on a number of residential neighbourhoods. Yemeni officials justified these violent attacks by claiming that armed opposition fighters were entrenched in several buildings. Two people were also allegedly killed the next day in another shelling attack by government forces.

These recent events follow a series of government shellings on Taiz, attacks which have occurred after the 21 October 2011 adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution that demanded the Yemeni authorities to "end attacks against civilians and civilian targets by security forces". The Resolution, backed by all 15 council members, strongly condemned the deadly government attacks on the demonstrators since the protests began in February of this year.

Further, these events have arisen while a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) political agreement on the transfer of power in Yemen is under consideration. This agreement provides for the immunity of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his relatives from the crimes they committed in order to repress protest movements. "The immunity provision unfortunately translates into a fertile ground for the continuation of systematic and grave human rights violations in Yemen by governmental forces", said Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President.

"The killings illustrate, needless to say, the Yemeni authorities' shameful disregard for the fate of their people, but also their defiance of the UN's resolution", she added.

FIDH, HRITC, SAF, and YHRN call on the international community to upgrade its condemnation of the Yemeni authorities and deploy immediate measures to prevent further crimes. Specifically, FIDH, HRITC, SAF, and YHRN call on the international community :

- to mandate an international and independent commission of inquiry to investigate the human rights violations committed in Yemen and to hold those responsible accountable;
- to adopt sanctions, such as travel bans and the freezing of assets, that can be targeted at those individuals responsible for the crackdown against the anti-government protestors which began 9 months ago, in particular against those who hold high-level positions in the government, Yemeni army, and security forces.

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