

Ensure the Right to a Fair and Speedy Trial for Detained Journalist Ahmed Maher in Aden - Yemen

Date: August 2023 ,06

We, the undersigned human rights and civil society organizations, and members of the Justice&Yemen Pact Coalition, a collective of human rights organizations and civil society actors committed to promoting and protecting human rights in Yemen, issue this joint advocacy statement on the first anniversary of journalist Ahmad Maher's detention to express our grave concern regarding his prolonged detention and unfair treatment by the justice system. We call upon the relevant authorities to respect Ahmed Maher's right to a fair and speedy trial, in accordance with international human rights standards, and put an end to the pattern of postponements that have characterized his trial thus far.

Ahmed Maher, a journalist reporting on national developments with a focus on southern Yemen, was arrested under concerning circumstances on August ,6 2022, and is currently on trial at Aden's Specialized Criminal Court. Maher's trial appears to be driven by politics, and the investigation into him was riddled with irregularities and apparent breaches of international and Yemeni law. His ongoing detention and mistreatment, coupled with repeated trial postponements, raise significant questions about his access to justice and due process. As a coalition committed to advocating for justice and accountability in Yemen, we firmly uphold the principle that every individual, regardless of their profession, is entitled to a fair and speedy trial.

We hereby make the following recommendations to address this urgent matter:

A. To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):

Conduct a comprehensive investigation into the implications of the findings related to Ahmed Maher's case considering international law.

Determine an appropriate course of action for accountability and redress if any human rights violations are confirmed.

B. To the UN Agencies Working in Aden:

Prioritize respect for Yemeni and international law regarding due process and the treatment of detainees in all discussions with Aden authorities concerning governance and security.

· Advocate for Ahmed Maher's right to a fair trial, consistent with international human rights standards.



C. To the supreme judicial council:

Respect Ahmed Maher's right to a fair and speedy trial by immediately putting an end to the pattern of postponements that have characterized his trial thus far.

Ensure all legal proceedings are conducted transparently and in accordance with international legal norms.

D. To the Bir Ahmed Prison Administration:

Transport Ahmed Maher to court for scheduled trial sessions promptly and in adherence to his right to a speedy trial.

Provide Ahmed Maher with appropriate medical treatment for any injuries sustained during his detention.

E. To the Aden executive authorities :

Conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the circumstances surrounding Ahmed Maher's arrest and detention, as requested by President Rashad al-Alimi.

Take necessary measures to hold accountable any justice sector officials found to have acted improperly or illegally during Ahmed Maher's investigation, arrest, interrogation, or detention.

Publicly clarify the exact nature of the criminal charges against Ahmed Maher, ensuring transparency and due process.

As a state party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), conduct a comprehensive review of all practices, protocols, procedures, and methods of interrogation and detention to prevent instances of torture, in compliance with Article II of the CAT.

We urge the relevant authorities to immediately ensure Ahmed Maher's right to a fair and speedy trial. Our coalition stands united in our commitment to upholding human rights, accountability, and justice for all individuals in Yemen. As part of this commitment, we reaffirm our dedication to protecting journalists and media workers and safeguarding press freedom. We firmly believe that journalists and media workers should not be subjected to surveillance or targeted for simply conducting their essential work.

We condemn the unacceptable and perilous environment in which journalists and media professionals have to operate in Yemen, risking their safety and lives to inform the public. Considering these challenges, we reiterate our call for the release of all detained journalists and take decisive action to put an end to the prevailing climate of impunity. Together, let us continue our unwavering efforts to defend human rights and freedom of the press in Yemen, advocating for a just and safe environment where journalists can conduct their vital work without fear or obstruction.

Signed :

1. Justice4Yemen Pact
2. Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC)
3. Yemeni Media Freedom Observatory (YMFO)
4. Free Media Center for Investigative Journalism
5. SAM Organization for Rights and Freedoms
6. Rights Radar for Human Rights
7. Association of Abductees Mothers
8. TO BE Foundation for Rights & Freedoms
9. The Electronic Foundation for Humanitarian Media
10. Dameer Foundation for Human Rights
11. Mansa Foundation for Media and Development Studies
12. The Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations
(Rasd Coalition)
13. Media Sac for Media and Development
14. Media village for development and Information
15. Mirrors Media for Development Center (MDC)
16. Qarar foundation for Media and Development
17. Al-Amal Women's and Sociocultural Foundation
18. Center for Strategic Studies to Support Women and Children
19. Marib Dam Foundation for Social Development
20. Musaala Organization for Human Rights
21. Yeni Yemen Media Foundation
22. Musawah Organization for Rights and Freedoms
23. Monitoring Journalist Network
24. Wujoh Foundation for Media and Development
25. Sawasia Organization for Human Rights
26. Rescue foundaton for development
27. Yemen Data Journalists Network