

**To: Mr. Hans Grundberg
UN Special Envoy for Yemen
Brussels, 1st February 2022**

Global call to take urgent stand for journalists and journalism in Yemen

Dear Mr. Grundberg,

We are writing to you on behalf of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the world's largest journalists' organization representing 190 national journalists' unions and over 600,000 media professionals around the world.

The IFJ is recognized representative of journalists within the UN and its specialized agencies and we have associate membership in UNESCO. We also have similar status within regional intergovernmental organizations and mechanisms. We are reaching out to you with an urgent request to intervene in saving the lives of our four colleagues in Yemen who are currently on death row. According to the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS), they are facing imminent danger of being executed.

Abdulakhleq Amran, Akram Al-Waleedi, Hareth Humaid and Tawifq Al-Mansoori were arrested by Ansar Allah security forces, together with five other journalists, in June 2015 from the Palace of Dreams Hotel in Sana. The media they were working for had moved its offices to the hotel to have access to communications and utilities. While their other five colleagues were released in a prisoner of war exchange deal in October 2020, they have been subjected to physical and psychological torture and deprived of their basic rights guaranteed by international law.

Our colleagues were convicted in April 2020 by the State Security Court in Sana of treason and 'aiding the enemy'. In reality, their only crime was doing their job as journalists.

Following their conviction, The IFJ wrote to Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN on 15th April to express our pain and anguish and urged him to stand by journalists and stand up for journalism in Yemen.

Mr Guterres assured us in his response on 20th June 2020 that he *"personally, and the United Nations system, as a whole, including my Special Envoy for Yemen, will continue to call on all parties to guarantee freedom of expression and access to information, to protect the essential role of independent media, and to advocate for the release of those wrongly imprisoned, in line with their obligations under human rights law."*

Sadly, since April 2020, the YJS, our affiliate in Yemen, has documented over 200 serious attacks on journalists and the media in the country including killings, injuries, detention, threats and the closing and confiscation of media houses. All parties involved in the conflict have continued their appalling disregard for the lives and safety of journalists working in the country.

We understand the immensity of the challenges facing the UN, and particularly your office, in trying to pacify the Yemen conflict. The current military escalation and huge losses of civilian lives is only one aspect of these challenges. We call on you to do your utmost to secure the safety and freedom of our four colleagues who are currently held by Ansar Allah and all other journalists currently in jail in Yemen.

The excruciating period of time waiting on death row our colleagues have been enduring is causing deep pain and anguish to their colleagues, journalists and media workers all over the world. All are reaching out to you to act swiftly to put pressure on Ansaar Allah to release them.

While we are urging you to intervene in this case, we recognise that all parties involved in the Yemen conflict have shown complete disregard for their obligations under international law, including UN security resolutions, on the treatment of journalists and media in conflict zones. They have done that with apparent impunity!

We remain ready to provide your office with any additional information you may need and are ready to act on any follow up or initiative you may lead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony BELLANGER". The signature is written in a cursive style with some capital letters.

Anthony Bellanger

IFJ General Secretary

Copy to:
Mr. Timothy A. Lenderking
US Special Envoy for Yemen

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