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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Technical assistance and capacity-building

Technical assistance provided to the National Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 60/31. It contains an overview of the technical and capacity-building assistance that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has provided to the National Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen. It covers the period from July 2025 to June 2026.

In the report, the High Commissioner provides updates on the mandate, composition, secretariat and resources of the National Commission of Inquiry, on the progress that it has achieved and on the challenges that it continues to face in implementing its mandate. He concludes with recommendations for all relevant stakeholders.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 60/31, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide substantive capacity-building and technical assistance to the Government of Yemen and all requisite technical and logistical support to the National Commission of Inquiry to enable it to continue to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen, in line with international standards. In the same resolution, the Council also requested the High Commissioner to present a report on the implementation of that technical assistance to the Council at its sixty-third session.
2. In the present report, the High Commissioner provides an update on the mandate and composition of the National Commission of Inquiry, which commenced its work in October 2015, and an overview of the technical and capacity-building assistance that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided to the National Commission between July 2025 and June 2026.
3. The report should be read in conjunction with the previous reports of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Yemen and on the technical assistance provided to the National Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen.¹
4. The report was prepared with the cooperation of the secretariat of the National Commission of Inquiry.

II. Context of arbitrary detention of United Nations personnel

5. In its resolution 60/31, the Council condemned the continued arbitrary detention by the Houthis of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and staff working for international and national non-governmental organizations and diplomatic missions in Yemen, as well as forced entry into United Nations premises, and emphasized that such actions severely hindered the delivery of humanitarian assistance and capacity-building in Yemen.
6. Over the past year, the situation of arbitrary detention by the de facto authorities of large numbers of United Nations personnel and employees of national and international non-governmental organizations by the de facto authorities has worsened, with no progress towards the resolution of an intolerable and unacceptable situation. Arbitrary detention formed part of a sustained pattern that began in November 2021 and continued through successive waves in 2023, 2024 and 2025, including between August and December 2025, bringing the total number of detained United Nations national personnel to an unprecedented number of 73. External contact with these personnel is minimal and, in some cases, entirely non-existent, with deep concerns as to their conditions of detention, mistreatment and access to adequate medical care and nutrition.
7. In the final months of 2025, the de facto authorities also raided United Nations offices and residential compounds in Sana'a and other governorates and confiscated assets, including vehicles, information technology and communications equipment. The premises and assets of the United Nations are inviolable and must be protected at all times, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. These unlawful actions continued to severely obstruct humanitarian access and impede the delivery of life-saving and critical assistance to millions of people in need.
8. In a particularly distressing development, in December 2025, the de facto authorities initiated the trial of 13 persons, including three arbitrarily detained United Nations national personnel, on "espionage" charges carrying the death penalty before the Specialized Criminal Court, an entity failing to meet international human rights standards of independence, impartiality, due process and fair trial. The proceedings that have taken place have been

¹ [A/HRC/33/38](#), [A/HRC/36/33](#), [A/HRC/39/43](#), [A/HRC/42/33](#), [A/HRC/45/57](#), [A/HRC/48/48](#), [A/HRC/51/62](#), [A/HRC/54/74](#), [A/HRC/57/74](#) and [A/HRC/60/85](#).

deeply flawed and have failed to meet minimum international standards. United Nations personnel, including those who are nationals of Yemen, enjoy immunity from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in their official capacity and must be allowed to independently perform their functions without hindrance, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. During the reporting period, the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and others have consistently and repeatedly called for the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained personnel.

III. National Commission of Inquiry

A. Mandate

9. The National Commission of Inquiry was established by Presidential Decree No. 140 of 2012,² pursuant to which it is mandated to investigate violations of international law alleged to have taken place in 2011.

10. The mandate of the National Commission of Inquiry was revised pursuant to Presidential Decrees No. 13 of 2015, No. 66 and No. 97 of 2016,³ No. 50 of 2017⁴ and No. 30 of 2019⁵ to include the investigation of all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law alleged to have taken place since 2011, the investigation of individual and group complaints received and the identification of alleged perpetrators. The Commission is empowered to subpoena and hear the testimony of any person and to obtain relevant documents and other evidence. On 8 July 2025, Presidential Decree No. 20 of 2025 was issued, extending the mandate of the Commission for three years, effective from 23 August 2025. During the reporting period, there were no changes to the Commission's mandate.

11. The National Commission of Inquiry submits a periodic report to the Chair of the Presidential Leadership Council, which transmits it to other government entities, including the Supreme Judicial Council. The National Commission issued its thirteenth periodic report in September 2025.⁶

B. Composition

12. The National Commission of Inquiry consists of nine commissioners (the chairperson and eight members of the commission). Eight posts are currently filled by five men and three women.⁷ Four of the current commissioners are judges, two are lawyers and two are university professors. One commissioner post is currently vacant.⁸ The terms of the current commissioners were extended for three years by Presidential Decree No. 20 of 2025, with effect from 23 August 2025.

² See <https://www.nciye.org/reports/SecondReport/SecondReport-en.pdf>, para. 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See <https://www.nciye.org/reports/FourthReport/FourthReport-en.pdf>, pp. 5, 12 and 15.

⁵ See <https://www.nciye.org/reports/EighthReport/Eighthreport-en.pdf>, para. 3.

⁶ See <https://www.nciye.org/en/?p=2154>.

⁷ The members are Nasser Qasem al-Awdhali, Gehad Abdulrasool al-Dengi, Ahmed Saeed al-Maflehi (Chairperson), Hussein Omer al-Mashdaly, Hezam Mohammed Ali, Dheya Khaled Omar Muhirez, Mohammed Hussein Tolyan and Sabah Ahmed al-Wani. Decree No. 30 of 2019 requires that at least four of the nine commissioners be women.

⁸ On 9 February, a woman commissioner (Eshrak Fadhl Thabit Al-Maqtri) was appointed as the Minister of Legal Affairs in the Cabinet of the newly formed Government, leaving the position vacant.

C. Secretariat

13. The secretariat of the National Commission of Inquiry is based in Aden and is headed by the Secretary-General. It has two sub-offices, in Taiz and Marib. The secretariat comprises 31 staff members, 11 of whom are women. Its staff perform a range of functions, including database management, data entry, communications, information technology support and administration.

14. The investigation team consists of nine assistant investigators, all of whom are men. In decree No. 30 of 2019, the Commission are called upon to consider having women constitute not less than 30 per cent of the assistant investigators.⁹ OHCHR continues to encourage the Commission to sustain efforts to recruit women in line with the decree. The assistant investigators are supported by a team of 40 field monitors and 15 volunteers (15 of the 55 monitors and volunteers are women). The team is deployed across the country's governorates, with priority for deployment to a particular governorate given to individuals from that governorate. Volunteers do not have employment contracts but receive reimbursement for their expenses.

15. Assistant investigators supervise the work of field monitors and volunteers and report to commissioners, who review and sign off on each case file. The Chair of the National Commission of Inquiry then provides final approval before the case file is transferred to the Office of the Attorney General. Field monitors are deployed in all governorates except Al-Mahrah and Socotra, which are covered by volunteers.

D. Resources

16. International standards require that commissions of inquiry be provided with transparent and sustainable funding to safeguard their independence and enable the effective implementation of their mandates. Article 6 of Presidential Decree No. 140 of 2012, concerning the budget of the National Commission of Inquiry, provides that adequate funding for the Commission is to be provided by the Government of Yemen and that the Commission is to be entitled to receive funding from international donors for the purpose of carrying out its functions, subject to oversight and audit by competent bodies in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.¹⁰ As in previous years, the Commission did not publish information on its funding during the reporting period. The Commission informed OHCHR that it is fully funded by the Government of Yemen and does not receive financial support from other countries or organizations.

17. Despite the efforts of OHCHR, the liquidity situation affecting the regular budget of the United Nations regrettably reduced the implementation of activities funded thereunder, including activities mandated under Human Rights Council resolution 60/31 to provide technical support to the National Commission of Inquiry.

E. Context, progress achieved and challenges facing the National Commission of Inquiry

18. Yemen continued to face multiple and overlapping crises during the reporting period, including a deteriorating humanitarian situation, a stalled peace process, sustained hostilities along internal front lines, with continued military skirmishes, and the impact of regional instability. Entrenched human rights concerns, including the absence of accountability for violations and abuses committed by all parties, continued to be among the root causes of instability and undermine prospects for sustainable peace. While a ceasefire between the United States of America and the de facto authorities, brokered by Oman, entered into effect on 6 May 2025, hostilities between the de facto authorities and Israel continued to be reported until October 2025, when the Gaza ceasefire entered into effect. In February 2026, the

⁹ See <https://www.nciye.org/reports/EighthReport/Eighthreport-en.pdf>, para. 3.

¹⁰ See <https://www.yemen-nic.info/sectors/politics/trans/law13.php>.

United States and Israel launched strikes against Iran (Islamic Republic of).¹¹ This was followed by several missile and drone attacks by the de facto authorities against Israel in March 2026.¹²

19. In December 2025, fissures among the different political components of the Government of Yemen escalated into armed confrontations between the government forces and the Southern Transitional Council, including in the transitional capital of Aden. However, by 7 January 2026, government forces had reportedly regained control of the situation.

20. In January 2026, the President of the Presidential Leadership Council issued a number of decrees aimed at consolidating authority and control, including decrees related to the restructuring of military and security forces and the closure of all illegal detention facilities in areas under government control. According to the Government, these measures were implemented to varying degrees. The restoration of control by the Government of Yemen was followed by the appointment of a new Cabinet in February 2026,¹³ comprising 34 ministers, including three women. In February, March and April 2026, several incidents involving the alleged excessive use of force by government security forces were reported in Mukalla, Shabwah and Aden governorates.

21. During the reporting period, the human rights situation in areas under the control of the de facto authorities remained of grave concern. Civic space remained severely restricted, independent media outlets were shut down, political dissent was suppressed and educators, journalists, activists, women and persons belonging to minorities faced increasing intimidation, arbitrary arrest, politically motivated prosecution and enforced disappearance.

22. The National Commission of Inquiry continued its efforts to engage with the de facto authorities and formally requested the appointment of a liaison officer to facilitate communication and cooperation. No response was received as at the time of reporting. During the reporting period, the Commission continued to face significant challenges in carrying out its work in areas under the control of the de facto authorities, including restrictions on movement, security risks and communication difficulties. In response, the Commission sought to preserve access to victims, witnesses and other sources of information through multiple reporting channels, including a hotline through a messaging application, email and a mobile application. The Commission maintained regular engagement with the Government of Yemen, including with ministries and relevant departments. While this engagement remained generally constructive, the Commission's work was at times hindered at the local level by complex security and political dynamics.

23. During the reporting period, the Commission conducted 53 field visits in areas under the control of the Government of Yemen and visited 33 detention facilities. It was, however, unable to visit detention facilities in areas under the control of the de facto authorities, owing to security constraints and the continued refusal of the de facto authorities to cooperate with, or recognize, the Commission's work. The Commission did not refer any new cases to the Office of the Attorney General during the reporting period, while work continued on the preparation of case files. Cases previously referred by the Commission remained under consideration by the relevant judicial authorities.

24. During the reporting period, the Commission held six public hearing sessions for victims and their families in different governorates during its field visits. The Commission continued to develop and improve channels to facilitate engagement by the public, victims and witnesses. Complaints and information may be submitted through the Commission's official website, including its complaints portal, by email, a hotline through a messaging application and a mobile application, as well as through direct visits to its offices in Aden, Taiz and Marib or through field monitors deployed in the governorates. In parallel, OHCHR continued its efforts to raise awareness among civil society organizations of the

¹¹ See <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/statement-by-prime-minister-netanyahu-28-feb-2026>; and <https://media.defense.gov/2026/Mar/06/2003894889/-1/-1/1/Operation-Epic-Fury-Fact-Sheet-First-7-Days.PDF>.

¹² See <https://www.saba.ye/en/news3673456.htm>.

¹³ See <https://www.sabanew.net/story/en/142007>; and <https://www.sabanew.net/story/en/141997>.

Commission's mandate and activities, with a view to promoting a shared understanding of its role and encouraging more effective engagement with its work.

IV. Technical assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

25. Pursuant to the relevant Human Rights Council resolutions,¹⁴ OHCHR has continued to strengthen the capacity of the National Commission of Inquiry to conduct objective and impartial investigations, monitoring and reporting. In implementing the mandate given by the Council, OHCHR remains guided by the principles of independence, impartiality, objectivity, credibility and professionalism.

26. Despite constraints stemming from the continued liquidity crisis in relation to the regular budget of the United Nations, OHCHR implemented a number of capacity-building activities, including training, the facilitation of meetings and the provision of materials to commissioners, investigators, field monitors and the secretariat of the National Commission of Inquiry. These activities were aimed at strengthening the Commission's capacity to carry out its mandate more effectively and in accordance with international standards and to contribute to the promotion of accountability, justice and sustainable peace.

27. In July 2025, OHCHR procured and handed over information technology equipment to the National Commission of Inquiry, including two colour multifunction photocopiers, six colour laser printers, six external hard drives, 10 desktop computers and 10 desktop monitors. The equipment strengthened the Commission's capacity for data storage, management, analysis and reporting, helped to reduce operational bottlenecks and supported the production of timelier and higher-quality output.

28. OHCHR supported the National Commission of Inquiry in organizing a workshop for civil society actors in Aden from 24 to 26 August 2025. The workshop brought together 23 civil society actors, including 11 women and 12 men, from 10 governorates and was focused on the protection of economic, social and cultural rights. The workshop contributed to strengthening participants' understanding of applicable international and domestic standards and provided space to identify patterns of violations of the rights to food, work, education and housing, as well as the gendered dimensions of such violations. Participants also developed practical recommendations to strengthen monitoring, documentation and advocacy on economic, social and cultural rights.

29. OHCHR supported the National Commission of Inquiry in organizing a two-day workshop on fair trial standards from 9 to 10 August 2025. The workshop brought together 20 participants, including seven women, from the Commission (six assistant investigators, all male), criminal justice institutions (10 prosecutors and judges, including three women) and civil society (all women). The workshop examined fair trial guarantees and assessed the feasibility of establishing a human rights court. It concluded with recommendations aimed at strengthening evidence-collection protocols, fostering conditions for impartial and effective adjudication and helping to address accountability gaps.

30. OHCHR facilitated a four-day consultation for 40 field monitors, including 11 women, in Aden from 3 to 6 September 2025. The consultation included the final review of the thirteenth annual public report of the National Commission of Inquiry, launched on 4 September 2025,¹⁵ and discussions on comments received following the report's publication, field monitoring work, operational challenges, capacity needs and the broader human rights context.

31. OHCHR facilitated a five-day workshop on topics, including transitional justice, open-source and artificial intelligence-assisted investigations, mental health issues of human rights workers and related concepts for field monitors and other staff of the National Commission of Inquiry and civil society representatives, held in Aden from 14 to

¹⁴ Human Rights Council resolutions 36/31, 39/16, 39/21, 42/21, 42/31, 45/15, 45/26, 48/21, 51/39, 54/29, 57/37 and 60/31.

¹⁵ See <https://www.nciye.org/en/?p=2154>.

18 December 2025. OHCHR trainers and external experts strengthened the capacity of 47 staff from the Commission and 16 civil society representatives, including 20 women.

32. In September 2025, OHCHR facilitated the participation of the National Commission of Inquiry in the sixtieth session of the Human Rights Council,¹⁶ with the aim of strengthening the commissioners' engagement with international stakeholders and the broader United Nations human rights system.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

33. The National Commission of Inquiry, despite structural, financial and external challenges, remains one of the few mechanisms working to document violations and abuses in Yemen. It remains essential that the Commission conduct effective investigations, including the collection of evidence according to the required standards, and ensure that its findings are backed by comprehensive legal analyses grounded in international law.

34. Despite the persisting United Nations regular budget liquidity challenges, OHCHR remains committed to providing technical assistance and advice to the National Commission of Inquiry, even if at a reduced level. OHCHR welcomes the progress made by the Commission, such as the regular field visits made throughout Yemen, the consultations held with civil society groups and the regular reporting on different types of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.

35. With a view to strengthening the effectiveness and impact of the National Commission of Inquiry, the High Commissioner makes the recommendations set out below.

36. All parties to the conflict should:

(a) Cooperate fully with the National Commission of Inquiry so that it can safely, independently and effectively fulfil its mandate, notably by granting it access to all areas of Yemen, including all places of deprivation of liberty, and by providing it with all relevant information that it may request, including information related to the identity of alleged perpetrators;

(b) Implement all the recommendations made in the previous reports of the High Commissioner and the reports of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts to the Human Rights Council and in the reports of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2140 (2014), to effectively pursue accountability for human rights abuses and violations of international human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.

37. The Government of Yemen should:

(a) Consider strengthening the mandate of the National Commission of Inquiry to ensure that it can effectively fulfil its role as an independent and transparent mechanism and propose measures to fully ensure the rights of victims, including truth, justice and reparations, and to contribute to the prevention of further violations and abuses;

(b) Provide the National Commission of Inquiry with sufficient financial resources to hire all its staff on proper contracts, expand its outreach efforts and increase its accessibility, including by opening sub-offices throughout Yemen;

(c) Consider publishing the budget of the National Commission of Inquiry;

¹⁶ See <https://www.nciye.org/en/?p=2173>.

(d) Take adequate and effective measures to protect victims and witnesses who cooperate with the National Commission of Inquiry from any form of intimidation or reprisal, including by establishing a witness protection mechanism and providing safe spaces where they can have the privacy to speak with the commissioners and investigative staff of the Commission;

(e) Provide the Office of the Attorney General with sufficient financial resources to enable it to carry out its investigations and prosecutions with regard to cases referred to it by the National Commission of Inquiry and procure the information technology infrastructure required for its work to handle and preserve the confidentiality of the case files received;

(f) Ensure the realization of the rights of victims to truth, justice and reparation, including through the initiation of a public debate on the development of a broader transitional justice framework that defines how the cases documented by the National Commission of Inquiry should be brought to justice and contribute to the prevention of the recurrence of serious human rights violations, building on the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the conference held in Aden in December 2022;

(g) Ratify international human rights treaties and the optional protocols thereto.

38. The Attorney General of Yemen should:

(a) Act systematically, promptly and effectively upon the reports and cases received from the National Commission of Inquiry, irrespective of the alleged perpetrators;

(b) Ensure prompt, impartial and effective investigation into and prosecution of all cases of human rights violations and abuses and of violations of international humanitarian law, in line with international standards, and determine clear, objective and transparent criteria for the prioritization of cases while the armed conflict is still under way;

(c) Ensure that all trials, whether in civilian or military courts, are held in line with international norms and fair trial standards, and cooperate in particular with the Supreme Judicial Council and the Judicial Inspectorate to maintain the highest standards;

(d) Ensure unfettered access by the staff of the National Commission of Inquiry to all places of deprivation of liberty, allowing confidential meetings with all detained persons, and pay attention to the recommendations related to detainees and conditions of detention in the reports of the Commission.

39. The Supreme Judicial Council should:

(a) Give due consideration to the proposal submitted in 2017 by the National Commission of Inquiry to establish a specialized court with nationwide jurisdiction regarding conflict-related gross human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law and contribute to reflections on how such a court could best assist in the realization of victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation and in an overall transitional justice process that contributes to the prevention of future violations and to reconciliation within communities;

(b) Ensure that all cases transmitted by the National Commission of Inquiry and brought before a court are processed and prosecuted, when circumstances allow, and also ensure the safety of victims and witnesses and that the highest standards of integrity and independence are respected, thereby ensuring that the judicial process serves as an effective deterrent and as an effective avenue for justice for victims.

40. The international community should:

(a) Strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the National Commission of Inquiry by supporting capacity-building for and development of technical expertise of its staff;

(b) Promote the role of accountability and transitional justice in the peace process in Yemen and support the role of civil society, in particular representatives of vulnerable groups, in advocating for accountability and justice;

(c) Press for the immediate and unconditional release of arbitrarily detained United Nations personnel and employees of other organizations.

41. The National Commission of Inquiry should:

(a) Continue to develop its capacity to thoroughly investigate all alleged human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, in accordance with international norms and standards and the principles of objectivity, transparency and impartiality;

(b) Take all feasible measures to protect victims and witnesses who contact the commissioners and other staff, with special attention given to women, children, persons with disabilities and members of other vulnerable groups, including non-Yemenis; this may involve contributing to the development of temporary measures pending the adoption of a witness protection law once parliament resumes its work;

(c) Continue to strengthen its engagement with civil society, including in the areas of transitional justice and accountability, and establish a permanent mechanism to interact with human rights defenders;

(d) Develop and implement a more effective communications strategy to enhance its visibility throughout Yemen and disseminate information about its mandate and role;

(e) Preserve its integrity and independence through strict adherence to norms and standards of international law, including by ensuring that its staff do not have multiple employment and potential conflicts of interest;

(f) Establish more sub-offices throughout Yemen to facilitate access and the reporting of cases.

(g) Take concrete steps to implement the provision contained in Decree No. 30 of 2019 regarding women representation among the assistant investigators.
