

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

YEM 001 / 0111 / OBS 011

Death threats

Yemen

January 27, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Yemen**.

Description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about death threats against the journalist and human rights defender, Ms. **Tawakkol Karman**, President of Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC), who supports the social protest movement which started mid-January.

According to the information received, on January 26, 2011, a relative of Ms. Tawakkol Karman received a phone call from the authorities at the highest level and the person calling gave the order to maintain Ms. Tawakkol Karman under control and order her not to leave the house. The person added, quoting a Hadith¹ that the one who disobeys has to be killed.

On January 22, 2011, Ms. Tawakkol Karman was arrested by three police officers who did not display any arrest warrant. She was interrogated and kept in detention to respond to accusations of "undermining the public social peace" by organising several protests outside the university campus in Sana'a the week before. On January 23, 2011, a demonstration was organised to protest against the arrest of Ms. Karman. During this protest, 18 other opposition activists and several human rights defenders, were arrested. Ms. Karman was released 36 hours later.

These acts of intimidation and harassment take place in the context of a wave of protests for political reform in Yemen since early January for those Ms. Karman has been one of the leading figures.

The Observatory expresses its deepest concern about the above-mentioned acts of harassment, which seem to merely aim at sanctioning her human rights activities.

Actions requested:

The Observatory urges the authorities of Yemen to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Karman Tawakkol and her family;
- ii. Put an end to any kind of harassment against Ms. Karman Tawakkol as well as against all human rights defenders in Yemen and ensure in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their work without hindrances;
- iii. Conform in any circumstances with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular:

¹ Oral communication of the prophet Mahomet.

- its Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”;
- its article 5(a), which states that “for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels, to meet peacefully”;
- its article 6 which provides that “Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others (a) To know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect in domestic legislative, judicial or administrative systems; (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters”;
- and its article 12.2 which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;

iv. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Yemen.

Addresses:

- General Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen, Sana’a, Yemen. Fax: + 967 127 4147
- His Excellency Dr Ghazi Shaif al-Aghbari, Ministry of Justice, Sana’a, Republic of Yemen, Fax: +967 1 222 015
- His Excellency Dr. Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign affairs, Sana’a, Republic of Yemen, Fax: + 967-1-536 952
- Her Excellency Houda ‘Ali ‘Abdullatif al-Baan, Ministry for Human Rights, Sana’a, Republic of Yemen, Fax: +967 1 444 833
- Ambassador Monsieur Ibrahim Saied Mohamed Al-Adoofi, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations in Geneva, 19 Chemin du Jonc, 1216 Cointrin, Switzerland, Tel: +41 22 799 05 10. Fax: +41 22 798 04 65, E-mail: mission.yemen@ties.itu.int
- Ambassador Abdulwhab Mohamed ALSHAWKANI, Embassy of the Republic of Yemen in Brussels 114 av. F.D. Roosevelt, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium. Tel: + 32 2.646.52.90, Fax: + 32 2.646.29.11, Email : yemen@skynet.be

Please also write to diplomatic representations of Yemen in your respective countries.

Paris-Geneva, January 27, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- E-mail: Appeals@fidh-omct.org



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for the Protection
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