

Ansarullah Spokesperson
Mohamed Abdelsalam
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Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,

I am deeply concerned that woman human rights defender **Fatma al-Arwali** is at risk of execution after the Huthi controlled Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Sana'a sentenced her to death on 5 December 2023, following a grossly unfair trial. Fears for her life mounted after her brother received a phone call on 18 January 2024 from an unknown number and was told that she will be executed on 21 February 2024 in Tahrir Square in Sana'a, Yemen's capital. On 21 January 2024, he visited the security and intelligence service centre in al-Siyasi neighbourhood in Sana'a, and officials denied there was an order to execute her.

On 13 August 2022, Huthi security forces arrested Fatma al-Arwali at a checkpoint in al Manshour in Ta'iz governorate. They subjected her to enforced disappearance for about eight months during which her family looked for her in every police station and prison in Sana'a, while authorities denied them any information about her fate and whereabouts. The family later informally learned that she had been held incommunicado at the security and intelligence detention centre in Chamlan in Sana'a following her arrest, where she remains held to date. Enforced disappearance is a crime under international law.

On 31 July 2023, the criminal prosecution charged Fatma al-Arwali with collaborating with the UAE and providing coordinates to disclose the locations of Huthi's armed forces and "people's committees", a charge that carries the death sentence, in addition to using a fake identity document. Her case was referred to trial by the SCC. Fatma al-Arwali has been denied her right to a fair trial. On 19 September 2023, during her first hearing, the judge refused to record the presence of her lawyer in the court record. Members of the security and intelligence service, who were present, tried to remove her lawyer from the court. The judge then told Fatma al-Arwali that there was no need for a lawyer. Fatma Al-Arwali told the judge that she was being held in cruel and inhuman conditions in a room underground. She also requested to see her children.

On 5 December 2023, the SCC convicted her of "aiding an enemy country" and sentenced her to death. While according to Yemeni law, Fatma al-Arwali is entitled to have her conviction and sentence reviewed by the High Court, concerns remain over its independence and impartiality.

We urge the Huthi de facto authorities to immediately quash the conviction and death sentence and ensure that Fatma al-Arwali receives a fair retrial before a competent, independent and impartial court without recourse to the death penalty, otherwise she must be immediately released with all charges dropped. In the meantime, we urge you to ensure that she has regular access to her family and lawyer and is held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Yours sincerely,

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Excellence,

Ci-jointe la lettre que nous avons adressé à **Ansarullah Spokesperson Mohamed Abdelsalam** concernant l'affaire Fatma al Arwali, condamnée à mort le 5 décembre 2023.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Excellence, l'expression de ma haute considération.

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