

acatnews

For a world without torture and the death penalty



Editorial

Dear friends of ACAT,

In partnership with the City of Esch and the National Museum of Resistance and Human Rights, ACAT Luxembourg is very much involved in a series of activities under the banner "Women's Rights = Human Rights" on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8 March. The exhibition "Pictures for Human Rights" from Regensburg will thus be shown, for the last time in Luxembourg, in Esch, in front of the National Resistance Museum. On 8 March, ACAT Luxembourg, with Syrian artist Dima Alrefai, will organise a public art event entitled "Couleurs de la vie". As part of the "Living Library" activity, a number of women will have the opportunity to make themselves heard and to relate their stories. In addition, thanks to the support of the city of Esch, we have been able to return the subject "Women/Iran" to public awareness, through the remarkable film "Seven Winters in Tehran", together with a round-table discussion on "Women/Life/Freedom" bringing together women from different countries. You can find more information in the flyer attached to this information sheet – and, as usual, on our website. We wish to thank the City of Esch and the Resistance Museum for their warm welcome and their support for all of these projects. Young ACAT will be particularly involved in March and April with the presentation of their new human rights education program (www.acat.lu / www.youngacat.lu), in parallel with the events/the exhibition in Esch and in the south of the country.

The centrepiece of this newsletter is the urgent action for Yemeni human and women's rights activist Fatma al-Arwali who was sentenced to death in December 2023 after an unfair trial and is now threatened with imminent execution. We support Amnesty International's urgent appeal on her behalf.

For more information on the terrible subject of the death penalty for women, we refer to the brochure of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (www.worldcoalition.org#WomenOnDeathRow#IgnoredNoMore).

We also request that you take part in the Good Friday 2024 activity of ACAT-Suisse (www.acat.ch) on systematic disappearances in Mexico (via the enclosed letter or online).

Finally, we cordially invite you to our Annual General Meeting, which will take place on March 23rd at 14.30 at the address 5, avenue Marie-Thérèse in Luxembourg. This will be a very good opportunity for networking and exchange.

Christina Fabian, President of ACAT Luxembourg

Journée internationale des droits des femmes 2024

DROITS DES FEMMES = DROITS HUMAINS

Dans le cadre de la Journée Internationale des Droits des Femmes et du 75^e anniversaire de la Déclaration Universelle des Droits Humains, la Ville d'Esch, le Service Égalité des Chances, le Musée National de la Résistance et des Droits Humains et ACAT Luxembourg invitent à une série d'activités autour des droits des femmes.

MUSEE NATIONAL DE LA RESISTANCE ET DES DROITS HUMAINS | acat Luxembourg | ESCH

Yemen: Woman Human Rights Defender Fatma al-Arwali at risk of execution

Fatma al-Arwali is the former head of the Yemen office of the Women's Leadership Union of the Arab League and is active in the promotion of women's rights. This 34-year-old human rights defender now faces the risk of execution after being convicted of "aiding an enemy country" and sentenced to death in December 2023 following a clearly unjust trial.

In August 2022, Fatma al-Arwali was arrested by the Huthi security forces. Following her arrest, she was subjected to a whole series of human rights violations, including enforced disappearance and secret detention, under conditions violating the prohibition of torture in all its forms. Enforced disappearance constitutes a crime under international law.

During this period, her family enquired about her in every police station and prison in Sanaa, but the authorities refused to provide any information about her fate or where she was being held. Later, the family learned from unofficial sources that after her arrest the young woman was taken in secret to the Chamlan Prison, run by the intelligence services in Sanaa and held there incommunicado. She remains there to this day.

A year later, on 31 July 2023, the prosecutor charged Fatma al-Arwali with collaboration with the United Arab Emirates and providing coordinates giving the locations of Huthi armed forces and "people's committees", a charge that carries the death sentence. She is also accused of using a fake identity document. As a result, her case was referred to the Special Criminal Court, where she was denied the right to a fair trial.

At her first hearing on 19 September 2023, the judge refused to grant her legal representation. Fatma Al-Arwali told the judge that she was being held under cruel and inhuman conditions in an underground room and requested permission to receive visits from her children.

The trial of Fatma al-Arwali was marred by violations of international standards of fair trial. Given the irreversible nature of the death penalty, international human rights norms explicitly stipulate that such proceedings must adhere scrupulously to all the relevant international standards guaranteeing the right to a fair trial. Any person arrested or detained on criminal charges must be treated in accordance with Yemen's human rights obligations, including in particular those relating to a fair trial.

On 5 December 2023, the Special Criminal Court sentenced the human rights defender to death for "aiding an enemy country" following a patently unjust trial. On 18 January 2024, her brother received a call from an unknown number informing him that Fatma al-Arwali would be executed on 21 February 2024, at Tahrir Square in Sanaa, the capital city. On 21 January 2024, he visited the headquarters of the intelligence services in the al-Siyasi district of Sanaa, where he was told that there was no execution order against his sister.

We request:

- An immediate halt to the execution
- The revocation of the death sentence
- The transfer of the case to an independent and impartial court for the reopening of the proceedings



Yemeni human rights defender Fatma al-Arwali
(undated photo) © private

"Al-Arwali has been in detention for over a year, held in horrible conditions in an underground room and denied visits from her family. Her case is yet another stark reminder of how the Huthis have instrumentalized the Specialized Criminal Court as a tool of repression making a mockery of justice."

**Grazia Careccia, Amnesty International's
Deputy Regional Director for the Middle East
and North Africa**

Sources:

<https://www.amnesty.org>

<https://www.amnesty.at/mitmachen/actions/jemen-menschenrechtsaktivistin-fatma-al-arwali-droht-hinrichtung/>

ACAT Luxembourg strongly supports Amnesty International's Urgent Appeal (1 February 2024, index number MDE 31/7631/2024). Please send the Amnesty appeal letter to the Yemeni embassy and by email to the relevant authority in Yemen as soon as possible.

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,

The petition with the letter addressed to the Consul is to be sent to:

CONSULAT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU YÉMEN

66 Route de Luxembourg
L-6916
Roodt-sur-Syre (Rued-Sir)

The letter has to be franked at 1,00 €.

Please, send the petition via email to:
Ansarullah Spokesperson
Mohamed Abdelsalam

Email: mdabdalsalam@gmail.com
X/Twitter: [@abdusalamsalah](https://twitter.com/abdusalamsalah)

The petition is located on www.acat.lu

Additional information and newsletters in French and German are available on the website www.acat.lu

Les disparitions forcées systématiques au Mexique

Selon les chiffres officiels, 28 213 personnes ont été portées disparues au Mexique en 2023. Les familles à la recherche d'un proche sont confrontées à des autorités totalement dépassées. Les fonctionnaires étant souvent eux-mêmes impliqués dans des cas de disparition forcée, ils ne font guère d'efforts pour améliorer la situation. Seuls les proches et la société civile peuvent amener de petits progrès.

Apport spirituel

Ils avaient le pouvoir
à l'époque,
autour de la Méditerranée
et ils ont arrêté,
l'homme doux,
qu'ils ont mis à l'écart.
Car il prêchait l'amour
et un égal droit à la vie
pour tous.
Et puis ils l'ont cloué sur la croix,
estimant qu'alors,
ils étaient débarrassés de lui
pour toujours.

Mais ils se trompaient.
Il est revenu,
et il est vivant
jusqu'à ce jour,
alors qu'eux depuis longtemps
ne sont plus.
De leur puissance d'antan
ne témoignent plus que ruines,
et tessons dans les musées.

Hélas, il y en a encore aujourd'hui,
des gens qui sont au pouvoir
et pensent valoir davantage
et être meilleurs que les autres,
avoir plus de droits.
Et ainsi, eux aussi font
ce qu'ils veulent
sans aucun égard,
poussés par la peur
que leur pouvoir puisse être menacé.
Ils font tout simplement disparaître les
gens,
pensant le problème résolu,
leur pouvoir consolidé.

Mais ils se trompent,
comme ceux de l'époque.
Il y a aujourd'hui beaucoup de gens qui le
savent,
le véritable pouvoir est autre.

Et le roi véritable dira:
Amen, je vous le dis:
ce que vous avez fait
à l'un de ces plus petits, qui sont mes
frères,
ou à l'une de ces plus petites, qui sont
mes sœurs,
c'est à moi que vous l'avez fait.

*Markus Vöggtli, pasteur et membre du
Comité de l'ACAT-Suisse*



Photo credit: Centro de Derechos Humanos Paso del Norte

For more information about Good Friday campaign of
ACAT Swiss: www.acat.ch

You can find the petition with our Newsletter

Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture

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Association reconnue d'utilité publique. Dons déductibles fiscalement. Merci de préciser Don ACAT

L'ACAT-Luxembourg est affiliée à la Fédération Internationale de l'ACAT (FIACAT) ayant statut consultatif auprès des Nations unies et du Conseil de l'Europe. Les ACAT informent, sensibilisent l'opinion publique. Elles appellent leurs quelque 30.000 adhérents dans 25 pays à l'action, à la réflexion et à la prière.