Ansarullah Spokesperson

Mohamed Abdelsalam

Email: mdabdalsalam@gmail.com

X/Twitter: @abdusalamsalah

2024

Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,

As a member/sympathizer of ACAT-Switzerland, I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the situation of women’s rights defender Fatma al-Arwali, who is at risk of execution. The Huthi controlled Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Sana’a sentenced her to death on 5 December 2023, following a grossly unfair trial.

On 13 August 2022, Huthi security forces arrested Fatma al-Arwali. They subjected her to enforced disappearance for about eight months. The family later informally learned that she had been held incommunicado at the security and intelligence detention centre in Chamlan in Sana’a, where she remains imprisoned 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. Fatma al-Arwali has been denied her right to a fair trial. On 19 September 2023, during her first hearing, the judge refused to note the presence of her lawyer in the court record. Members of the security and intelligence service tried to remove her lawyer from court. Fatma Al-Arwali stated in court that she was being held underground in cruel and inhuman conditions. This is a violation of the Convention against Torture, to which Yemen is a state party. She also requested to see her children. On 5 December 2023, the SCC convicted Fatma al-Arwali of “aiding an enemy country” and sentenced her to death. According to Yemeni law, she is entitled to have her conviction and sentence reviewed by the High Court.

Yemen is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), article 14 of which states that everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal.

Therefore, we urge the Huthi de facto authorities to:

* quash the conviction and death sentence of Fatma al-Arwali;
* ensure that she receives a fair retrial before a competent, independent and impartial court without recourse to the death penalty;
* ensure that she has regular access to her family and lawyer;
* ensure that she is held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Yours sincerely,

Copy to: H.E. Hussein Taher Ahmed Al-Ashwal, Consulate General of Yemen in Geneva, Chemin du Jonc 19, 1216 Cointrin.