

Joint statement by 59 Nongovernmental Organizations on the announcement of a temporary ceasefire in Yemen

11th April 2020

Over five years of brutal war in Yemen have left millions of Yemenis weakened by malnutrition and disease, and decimated Yemen's health system. The imminent threat of COVID-19 will exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation: 80 percent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance, the majority of whom are women and children; two-thirds of the country lacks adequate access to clean water and sanitation; millions are living on the brink of starvation; nearly 20 million people lack access to adequate healthcare; and cholera, dengue, and other preventable diseases are already rife. These factors create an environment dangerously conducive to the severe and rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus, threatening countless civilian lives.

Especially in light of this extraordinary threat, **we, the undersigned NGOs, cautiously welcome the announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of a temporary cessation of hostilities in Yemen.** We urge all parties to the conflict in Yemen to immediately halt fighting, to implement a ceasefire on the ground without delay, to release all detainees and those forcibly disappeared, and to work with the UN Special Envoy to urgently restart comprehensive and inclusive political negotiations to end the conflict.

A ceasefire alone cannot stop the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen. All parties must immediately lift restrictions and end interference with vital humanitarian operations; ensure immediate access to populations in need; facilitate the movement of humanitarian workers and goods and of commercial imports; and end blockades and other actions and policies that prevent or restrict essential commercial imports into Yemen, to maintain the humanitarian response for the millions of Yemenis who need aid to survive, and to support Yemenis' economic livelihood. Yemeni civil society must also be supported to continue their essential role in responding to the crisis. Simultaneously, the international community must ramp up funding for the full range of humanitarian programming in Yemen. Amid this global pandemic, any suspension of life-saving assistance for Yemen, or politicization of humanitarian access and funding, will leave Yemen's already vulnerable civilian population at heightened risk.

A cessation of hostilities in Yemen can only be a first step. Yemenis need a durable ceasefire, a comprehensive and inclusive political settlement to the current conflict, unencumbered access to humanitarian aid and commercial imports, and accountability for the violations all sides have committed during this war. **Yemen cannot wait any longer for an end to the conflict and humanitarian devastation that has ravaged the civilian population for over five years.**

Signed by:

1. ACAT-France (Action by Christians Against Torture)
2. Action against Hunger
3. Action Corps
4. Alliance for Peacebuilding
5. Alliance internationale pour la défense des droits et des libertés (AIDL)
6. ALQST for Human Rights
7. Avaaz
8. Bread for the World
9. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
10. CARE International
11. Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
12. Center for International Policy
13. Center for Policy Analysis in Horn of Africa
14. CIVICUS
15. Cordaid - Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development
16. Cure Violence Global
17. Danish Refugee Council
18. Dhameer for Rights and Freedoms
19. Freedom Forward
20. Friends Committee on National Legislation
21. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
22. Global Communities
23. Handicap International - Humanity & Inclusion
24. Human Rights First
25. International Civil Society Action Network
26. International Federation for Human Rights
27. International Rescue Committee
28. Islamic Relief Worldwide
29. Karuna Center for Peacebuilding
30. Médecins du Monde
31. Mercy Corps
32. Mothers of Abductees Association
33. Musaala for Human Rights Organization
34. Mwatana for Human Rights
35. Norwegian Refugee Council
36. Observatoire des armements
37. Oxfam
38. Pax Christi International
39. Peace and Building Foundation
40. Peace Direct
41. Physicians for Human Rights
42. Première Urgence Internationale
43. Project on Middle East Democracy
44. Refugees International

45. Saferworld
46. Salam for Yemen
47. Search for Common Ground
48. Solidarités International
49. STAND: The student-led movement to end mass atrocities
50. Students for Yemen
51. Tearfund
52. United Nations Association of the National Capital Area
53. Watch for Human Rights
54. Win Without War
55. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
56. Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation
57. Yemen Solidarity Network
58. Yemen Civil Alliance for Peacebuilding
59. Yemeni Alliance Committee