



A report document the
crime of bombing a
funeral for women -
Arhab District on
15 February 2017

Arhab Women Condolence Massacr

Entesaf Organization for Woman and Children Rights

A human rights organization that seeks to protect women and children by advocating and defending their issues, raising community awareness, and rehabilitating them psychologically and morally

- **Raising societal awareness of women's and children's rights as guaranteed by Islamic Sharia and embodied in international conventions and covenants.**
- **Advocating the issues of women and children legally and socially, in a way that guarantees them a dignified family life, as they are the basic cell of society.**
- **Monitoring all violations and attacks against women and children in war and peace, whether they were done by individuals ,governmental, non-governmental groups or hostile countries announcing these violations and attacks to public opinion.**
- **Preparing and issuing human rights reports on cases of women and children violations.**
- **Providing psychological support for women and children who are exposed to violations in peace and war.**
- **Protecting women and children from all forms of violence directed against them from family or society, and protecting them from abuse during investigation.**
- **Reducing beggary and child labour.**
- **Enhancing women participation in society**

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Entrance

Yemen is suffering from a war caused by the Saudi coalition which is deliberately violated civilians and committed the most heinous crimes against women and children without respecting human values, during this aggression thousands were killed and wounded. Since the Saudi coalition aggression have started on 26 March 2015 it persisted in its perpetration of massacres against civilians ,especially women and children, which is evident in the crime that was committed in Sheraa area of Arhab district in Sana'a governorate . When the Saudi coalition warplanes targeted a house where a funeral ceremony was taken place on Wednesday 15.2.2017 which resulted in killing and wounding a number of women and children, and the condolences turned into a sea of blood and sorrows , and killed number of women and children due to the Saudi coalition air raids that did not distinguish between legitimate military targets and the civilians .

Executive summary

The report " Arhab Women Condolence Massacre" documents the crime that was committed by the Saudi coalition aggression on Wednesday 15th February 2017 that targeted a civilians' house in a funeral ceremony . Everyone in the house were victims due to the air raid that killed or wounded women and children. This report talks about the details of the crime and the witnesses testimonies . It also talks about the legal framework for the crime according to international laws , and the United Nations position on this crime.

Methodology

This report is based on the organization's statistics regarding the details of the crime and the number of victims, as well as on interviews conducted by some media outlets with witnesses .The texts of international law, treaties and conventions were referred to in order to clarify the legal framework for the crime was committed against Al-Nakay family in Arhab District .

A brief overview of Arhab District

Arhab District is one of Sana'a Governorate District, its population is 9,038 according to 2004 statistic . It is located north Sana'a.

Details of the Saudi coalition massacre on women's condolences in Arhab district

On Wednesday afternoon 15 February 2017 the Saudi coalition aggression launched an air raid that directly targeted the house of Muhammad Hadi Al-Nakay in Shira village in Arhab district. The target happened when women from the village were participating in a women's condolences which led to a complete destruction of the house. It also resulted in the death and wounded number of women and children . According to the statistics 6 women were killed including a pregnant woman, and 8 were wounded also 4 children were injured . Paramedics said the Saudi coalition warplane continued flying over the village preventing the volunteers from rescuing the victims and retrieve the dead bodies of the women who were under the rubble of the destruction building . The local sources indicated that the efforts to retrieve the victims from the rubble of the destroyed building continued until the evening because it failed in the daylight due to the heavy flight of Saudi warplane over the area . The targeted house is for a civilian in Arhab district in which a funeral ceremonies had been taken place, and it was full with women and children who were participating in the condolences .There were no military point or a weapons store or camp or flaming fronts near this house which confirms it was a deliberate crime that targeted civilians were not related to the war, and they were not in a suspicious location or near a military gathering or a place provide any support to the military fronts.

Eyewitness testimonies

On Wednesday night , was a dark night for everyone who witnessed the crime of Arhab district. According to M.M.H one of the witnesses who was also one of resident in the house said that, “ on Wednesday afternoon dozens of women from the village gathered in the house to offer their condolences for Al-Nakay family whose one of their relatives died. While the men were offering condolences in one of their neighbors house that is far from their house for about 250 meters. During the condolences, everyone heard the sounds of planes hovering above the area in an unusual way, also the warplane flew again for about three times which raised our suspicion that it might target the funeral gathering , as it happened previously when it target a funeral gathering in the Great Hall in Sana'a and caused a horrific crime . I rushed to the house and asked the women to leave the house quickly, and after ten minutes, while I was 200 meters far from the house, my family and I heard the sound of the missile falling ,and we saw it hitting directly the room that the women were sitting in . I saw the stones of the house and fires flying in the air as a result of the violent explosion caused by the missile . We were stunned for a moment, then I moved with some people to search among the rubble to rescue the women and the children . We saw a terrible thing, there was a number of charred bodies for old women . I found my pregnant sister lying and her body was cut into pieces .Next her was her daughters Amal, Zainb, and Najda. They were still alive, but they were wounded . The plane was flying, and the rescuers separated which make it difficult for them to rescue the victims quickly . We continued searching ,and we rescue more than 18 women and children, six of them had died ,and one of the bodies remained under the rubble, the searching for the body continued and the wounded victims were sent to Sana'a hospitals . Three bodies were transferred to the hospital's refrigerator ,and two were buried ,however, Bushra's body remained under the rubble, and the searching for her body is still continue. We did not expect that the Saudi coalition warplane would target women and children . God suffices us, and He is the best agent. My sister was killed while she was six months pregnant. She was buried today with her fetus and the rest are in the hospital. Women and children are suffering from their wounds. I don't know why the women's gathering in our house was bombed. There is no military target in our area. This crime is a heinous crime.”

The second witness J. A. H said: " On Wednesday 15th February 2017 at 5:00 p.m , I was at the funeral of Qanaf al-Nakay in their neighbor house in the southern , far away from Sheikh Muhammad Hadi house for about hundreds meters which gathered more than 300 women and children who came from all neighboring regions and villages to offer condolences . In that moment we heard over flights of warplanes. Some people told us that the warplane might bomb the area, and perhaps one of the mercenaries provided information to the coalition due to the problem that resulted in killing two people ,and one of Al-Nakay had a cooperative with AL-Aslah ,and they had a communication with Saudi coalition leaders . Even though we had told the women to vacate the house ,however, not everyone were able to came out the house some of the elderly women and children remained ,and we watched the flight launching a missile targeting the condolences for women . It was a humanitarian catastrophe that we have not witnessed before . Everyone was fleeing in another direction, the women who were lucky to get out were panicked when the missile fell, some of them were crying and wailing, and others were calling their children and returned to the targeted place to search for their relative .The Saudi coalition warplanes were still flying over the region which prevented the people to help the victims quickly. Every time we tried to approach the house to search among the ruins , the warplanes returned to overfly and frightened the people. They still searching for one bodies under the rubble; there are missing children, last night they found five bodies three of them were transferred to the hospital refrigerator and two bodies were buried .Furthermore, ten women and four children were seriously injured .They were taken to the hospitals in Sana'a.

The third witness S. H. S one of the victims relative said " My mother, my aunt and my cousin were killed, they were targeted by the Saudi coalition warplanes . They were among the dozens of women who came to offer their condolences , Women from neighboring areas and villages gathered to offer their condolences to the family of Qanaf al-Nakay ,More than 300 women and children, and if the majority had not left, it would have been a big disaster . He pointed with his hand to the rubble that was caused by the missile " look! How Mohammed Hadi house became, the air raids turned it into a rubble with more than 18 women and children inside it. Most of the victims were elderly women and children, and they were unable to went out the house, we were surprised by warplane air raids that lunched a missile while they were inside the house. Everyone rushed next to the destroyed house ,and to the body parts that filled the area. He pointed with his hand to the ruins of the house and to some body parts saying: This blood and body part are what remains from the women and children. We tried to help the victims, but the flight was flying intensely, and it frightened people to the point that they were fleeing from the place, and whenever we tried to approach the rubble to retrieve the victims, the flight returned with low altitude . Until now the searching is continued, and some victims are still under the rubble. They recovered five bodies and the wounded were and taken to hospitals. The condolences was not a military site, nor was it a store of weapons, but it was a place where dozens of women and children in who they were not guilty . Everyone was overwhelmed with grief and amazement due to the horror tragedy. Some children did not realize the disaster scene , they continued searching among the ruins of the house for their relatives, who might be a mother, aunt or sister .They did not lose hope .They kept searching with hope.



A woman's corpse



The destruction that caused by the raid on the Women's Condolence Council



One of the injured children

Description of the violation according to International Humanitarian Law

Targeting a civilian house in funeral ceremony in Arhab district is a war crime that is committed by the Saudi coalition warplane because the house is far from the military areas and the battle fronts. Furthermore, most of those who were in the house were women and children who came to offer their condolences. So, this represents a clear and explicit violation of the laws of war and the International Humanitarian Law, which states that warring parties must distinguish between military and civilian objectives, and refrain from attacks that are expected to cause harm to civilians. This law protects all civilians without any discrimination, especially women and children for they represent the most vulnerable groups during armed conflicts. This crime is also considered one of the grave crimes against children because many children had been affected as a result of this targeting. Moreover, the principle of distinction in International Humanitarian Law states that any direct attack on civilians or any civilian object not only is considered a violation of international humanitarian law, but also it is considered a grave violation and constitutes war crimes. In addition, the International humanitarian law prohibits any weapon that is unable to distinguish between civilians and combatants, also between civilian and military objects.

According to the Articles (47,27) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Article (46) of the Regulations of the Fourth Hague Convention and the Additional Protocol (48) affirm that the conflict parties should all the time distinguish between civilian population and combatants, also between civilian and military objects. ”



Local and international positions and condemnations

Jamie McGoldrick the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen talked in a press statement about killing women and children in air strikes in Sana'a saying: "I am deeply sad for the tragedy of the condolences massacre that targeted women and children at a citizen house by air strikes in Arhab district Sana'a Governorate . The official health sources reported that women and a young girl were killed and at least 15 other were injured, some of them are suffering from a serious injuries that may increase the number of deaths . This is not the first time to have targeted a condolences by air strikes, nor is it the first time that women and children have been killed in civilian gatherings such as hospitals, schools and private homes . The war tactics of the warring parties are causing harm to civilians in Yemen, as we witnessed in the tragic incident yesterday in Arhab district which women and children lost their lives ." Civil society organizations in Yemen have condemned the heinous brutal massacre that was committed by the Saudi-UAE coalition by targeting a women's condolences in Shira'a village in Arhab district- Sana'a governorate that resulted in killing women and children. In a statement signed by a number of civil society organizations stated that what the Saudi coalition aggression had committed against the condolences of Al-Nakay family in Sheraa village in Arhab district was one of the most dangerous crimes according to the rules and provisions of International Criminal Law. On Wednesday 15th February 2017 the Saudi coalition aggression targeted the women condolences of Al-Nakay family directly and deliberately, which resulted in a horrific and brutal massacre in which a number of women and children were killed and injured . The organizations affirm that this crime and the preceded massacres that targeted funerals and weddings are the most heinous crimes that are prohibited and criminalized by all humanitarian and moral rules whether in the heavenly laws or the legislation of the earth . The organizations demanded the United Nations and all its organs to work quickly to a maintain international peace and to protect the Yemeni people through its principles and rules of the United Nations Charter and the relevant international conventions ,also to stop the Saudi coalition aggression ,and to end the unjust siege .It also called the United Nations and the Security Council to take quick action in forming an independent international commission to investigate the facts from the real sites and scenes of crimes, and to investigate closely all violations and crimes committed by the Saudi coalition against Yemeni people . Furthermore , the organizations call on all people in the whole world and the international community to confront the intransigence Saudi coalition in perpetrating daily massacres in all governorates of Yemen, and the grave crimes and the violations against Yemenis, and the deliberate siege of land, sea and air on Yemen. The United Nations remained silent as usual which gave the Saudi coalition the full right to continue its crimes against the Yemeni people.

Victims' names

killed victims in the crime of targeting women's condolences in Arhab district on 15th February 2017

N	Name	kind	Age
1	Bushra Amer Dawas	Child	15
2	Raysa Musleh Al-Nakay	Female	75
3	Governor Ali Rajeh Hammad	Female	48
4	Khazna Muhammed Hadi Al-Nakay	Female	27
5	Fatima Murshid Astan	Female	67
6	Nouria Hizam Ahmed Al-Arashani	Female	45



A wounded women who her left eye and was removed

Wounded victims in the crime of targeting women's condolences in Arhab district 15th February 2017

N	Name	Kind	Age
1	Amal Mujahid Muhammed	Child	1.5
2	Zainab Gibran Al-Shaabi	Child	2
3	Roa'a Ammar Al-Qudsi	Child	3
4	Batoul Jaber Al Jabri	Child	7
5	Shariya Ali Farag Al-Qarmani	Female	65
6	Dowlah Ali Abdullah Al-Dhamari	Female	60
7	Thahibah Ali Abdullah Al-Dhamari	Female	50
8	Mahdiya Ali Rajeh Muhammad	Female	45
9	Fattah Ali Murshid Astan	Female	38
10	Najda Muhammed Hadi Al-Nakay	Female	30
11	Lebanon Dawas Al-Nakay	Female	30
12	Sahra'a Mohamed Sayed Astan	Female	20

Recommendations

- ❖ **The unjust aggression on Yemen should be stopped .**
- ❖ **We demand the international organizations and the United Nations to put pressure on the Saudi coalition to stop the crimes that are committed against civilians, especially women and children .**
- ❖ **We demand the United Nations to cancel its decision to delete the Saudi coalition from the list of killing and maiming children, as they continue to commit horrific massacres against women and children since the beginning of the aggression till these days.**
- ❖ **We demand all human rights, legal and media organizations to monitor and document all violations and crimes committed against civilians, especially women and children, and reveal these crimes to the public opinion to bring the perpetrators to justice.**
- ❖ **We demand to comprise an independent committee in this crime and all crimes and violations that have been occurred since 26 March 2015 the beginning of the aggression ,and bring the leadership of the Saudi coalition aggression and the perpetrators of these crimes and massacres to the trial.**



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