

Dear ladies and gentlemen:

We at Mwatana for Human Rights are honored to receive Aachen Peace Award 2022 which was made possible by Misereor's nomination. It is an opportunity to recall the humanitarian and human rights tragedy experienced by a country as neglected and forgotten as Yemen. All parties to the conflict are committing serious violations of international law, some of which amount to war crimes.

Mwatana works on documenting human rights violations and abuses, and providing legal support to victims of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture. It is not easy to do this in a risky environment controlled by the parties to the conflict. A number of team members of Mwatana have been subjected to threats, detention, enforced disappearances, and travel bans.

Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian-Russian war have been additional factors in the international community's disregard for the suffering of Yemen and its people. We also see double standards when looking at the humanitarian crisis in the two countries and ways to address it. We stand with victims in Ukraine and everywhere in their right to accountability and redress. At the same time, we see the hypocrisy of the international community with different standards when it comes to its perception of different conflicts around the world.

Last October the Human Rights Council ended the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen (GEE), the international instrument accessible to Yemenis at the time, instead of encouraging accountability in Yemen after eight years of war. As the Human Rights Council session draws near, we call on States active in the Yemeni file, especially Germany and the member states of the Human Rights Council, to establish an international criminally focused mechanism that documents violations, collects and preserves evidence, and works to build files for criminal prosecution. Also, we call The Security Council to refer the situation in Yemen to the International Criminal Court (ICC). To ensure that perpetrators of international crimes are brought to justice and to protect victims' rights to justice (including reparations).

In another country, other than Yemen, and in order to be here with you, it will only require that I take the path of the embassy to apply for a visa, book a flight, and then travel to my destination. However, as a Yemeni, the arrangements were very different and more difficult than one may think.

Once again, we appreciate this tribute to our work, and we aim to bring this urgent humanitarian issue to the fore, to be addressed, and allow civilians to enjoy a quiet period after the war years.