

JOINT STATEMENT BY HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUPS

Saudi and UAE-led Coalition Should Immediately Release Human Rights Defenders Radhya Almutawakel and Abdulrasheed Alfaqih

June 18, 2018

The undersigned human rights and civil liberties organizations urge the Saudi and UAE-led coalition to immediately and unconditionally release Radhya Almutawakel and Abdulrasheed Alfaqih, two prominent Yemeni human rights defenders with Mwatana Organization for Human Rights who were detained in Yemen today.

Authorities working at government-controlled Seiyun city airport detained the advocates on June 18, 2018, as they were preparing to travel abroad to an event at the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue in Oslo. Their detention follows the brief detention of Alfaqih by authorities loyal to Yemeni President Hadi on June 14, 2018.

[Mwatana](#) is a globally recognized Yemeni civil society organization, which impartially [investigates violations](#) by all parties to the war in Yemen. In 2017, Almutawakel was invited to [brief](#) the UN Security Council, where she explained how the war was impacting Yemeni civilians. That same year, she [spoke](#) about the impact of arms on the conflict in Yemen at a High-Level Panel at the opening of the Arms Trade Treaty Conference of States Parties. Both Almutawakel and Alfaqih were [awarded](#) the Global Advocate Award at Columbia Law School's Human Rights Institute, and were practitioners-in-residence there in 2017.

The detention of Almutawakel and Alfaqih comes at a time when millions of Yemenis are suffering from the devastating consequences of violations committed by the Saudi-led coalition during its military campaign in Yemen, widespread abuses by the Houthis and armed groups including al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and the likely impact of the UAE-orchestrated offensive on the port of Hodeidah, critical for the supply of humanitarian aid to the country. The work of Radhya Almutawakel, Abdulrasheed Alfaqih, and other human rights defenders to document the rights violations in Yemen is therefore all the more vital to ensure that the global community remains informed of the rights situation in one of the most underreported conflicts in the world.

The undersigned groups call on the Saudi and UAE-led Coalition authorities to immediately free Radhya Almutawakel and Abdulrasheed Alfaqih, that there be no further threats to their security, and to cease the hindering of the essential work of human rights advocates in Yemen.

Amnesty International
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)

Center for Constitutional Rights
Control Arms Coalition
European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law
Human Rights Clinic (Columbia Law School)
Human Rights Watch
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
PAX
Physicians for Human Rights
Reprieve
Rights Watch UK
Win Without War
Yemen Peace Project