NEWSLETTER
May 2019

The International Organisation for Least Developed Countries (IOLDCs) - Organisation Internationale pour les Pays les Moins Avancés (OIPMA)
www.ioldcs.org
OPEN LETTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL:
PAVING THE WAY FOR PEACE IN YEMEN

The war that has been going on in Yemen for five years is mainly due to the spread of extremism, terrorism, fanaticism, growing hatred and lack of tolerance, which has been the product of countless economic, political and social causes. Likewise, illiteracy has paved the way for political Islam to preach intolerance and hatred, provided the basis for the spread of terrorism, being the starting point for violent extremist groups who pose a major threat to security and stability for the enjoyment of human rights in this country. This has led to the armed conflict situation that we are witnessing today in Yemen. Generally religious beliefs bring hope to societies, contributing to tolerance, peace and reconciliation values. However, when this is misused, as in the case of Yemen, it becomes a source of tension and conflict, being the current main engine of terrorism in this country.

The current spread of extremism and intolerance motivated by political Islam has become the tool to promote violence and brainwashing among students and young people with extremist religious views in private schools, mosques, social media and charities to create chaos, spread terrorism, erupt civil and sectarian strife in Yemen.

The devastating effects of intolerance in Yemen are the result of the emergence of the two tendencies in the North, which have been historically in conflict to rule the executive power in this area. Nonetheless, although the conflict going on among them, these parties have now unified their forces in order to take over the power in the South of Yemen, where the Southerners are struggling to restore their severing state as it was before 1990.

On the one hand, the two groups from the North are the Houthi militias and the Muslim Brotherhood (represented by the Islah party in Yemen, which is the decision-maker in the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen). These two groups are considered the most disastrous because they have adopted extremist ideas, intolerance and hatred in Yemen. Their rejection of tolerance and reconciliation values are promoting the continuation of the conflict, which already started before the war in this country. They use sectarian religious discourse to mobilize the population.

In addition, the southern people represented by the Southern Transitional Council are struggling for the restoration of their independence. Earlier last week, the former governor of Aden and the current president of the Southern Transitional Council, Major General Aidarus Al Zubaidi, announced the mobilization of the southerners and established a joint mission for all the southern military sectors to prepare for the liberation of Hadramout Valley from the military zone, belonging to the Islah party which is considered as a safe heaven for Al-Qaeda.

It is worth noting that the unification of the country of 1990 was defeated after 4 years when President Ali Salem al-Beidh came into power. He declared the withdrawal of the unity agreement on May 21st, 1994, based on the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969. Nowadays, the situation indicates that the starting point for a comprehensive solution is to restore the country as it was before 1990.
On the other hand, both the legitimate government forces and the Houthis, believe that the declaration of restoring the southern state would cause loss of economic and executive power gains. Moreover, there is a growing tendency to occupy the south, which has started with the recent attack on Dhali. This shows a change of the dynamics of the conflict which rather than being amongst the northern parties to the conflict, it is now among the latter against the south. The indicators confirmed the involvement of both parties, the Houthis and the Islah party, cooperating to take over the south. This is happening as a result of the logistic information provided by the Islah party to the Houthis militias.

In this regard, it is vital to consider the statement made by Mr. Griffiths on 15th May 2019 at the Security Council meeting 8525th on the situation in the Middle East (Yemen), where he stated that a comprehensive peaceful agreement would only be possible if it includes a broad range of voices and enhancing the southerner’s participation. In fact, the Southern Transitional Council have already entered into dialogue with him, expressing its willingness to cooperate in further negotiations.

However, a recent letter was sent by President Hadi to the United Nations Secretary-General to stop the mandate of the Special Envoy for Yemen, which shows his hostility against the comprehensive solution. In this regard, Mr. Guterres, publicly declared his confidence on the Special Envoy, Mr. Griffith.

OIPMA, therefore, recommends the Secretary-General’s envoy to Yemen to take the next steps for a comprehensive solution:

1. **Firstly:** To identify the Lords of Wars and perpetrators of the conflict of Yemen, which should be presented to the Security Council for a referral to the International Criminal Court from both sides, the Houthis militias and the legitimate government.

2. **Secondly:** Make arrangements to enable the Southern Transitional Council to complete the reconstruction of the institutions of the devastated South State and a declaration of the Southern Federal State, especially since the people of the South, led by the Southern Transitional Council, has proven to eliminate extremism and terrorism, thanks to the alliance with the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

In order to consolidate the values of peace and respect, countering extremism and hate, the Southerners could benefit from the experience of the United Arab Emirates. The country, which has already helped in capacity-building for the South, has become a model at the regional and international level after many practical measures taken for the elimination of ideological intolerance, cultural and religious hate.

The UAE has declared the year 2019 as the year of tolerance, and issued an Antidiscrimination Act, setting up centers to combat extremism, terrorism, appointing a Minister for Tolerance, as well as launching institutions and programs to combat intolerance and hatred. It has, furthermore, promoted and signed the "document of fraternity for world peace and living together " with Dr. Ahmed al-Tayeb, Sheikh of Al-Azhar and the Pope Francis in Abu Dhabi last February 2019 with the presence of worldwide religious leaders.
3. **Thirdly**: Achieving the first step would enable a negotiation among the north parties which have not participated in the conflict and are willing to find a solution to it. As such, the United Nations should facilitate the negotiations with stakeholders (women, civil society, NGOs) to reach an agreement and accept a transitional period, forming a federal government with all the groups existing in the North, as the former Yemen Arab Republic before 1990.

Lastly, in order to guarantee long-lasting peace among the north and the south, it is vital to change the form of government. This should be preceded by a negotiation among all the two states, the north and the south, in order to maintain peace and stability in the region. Moreover, rethinking the form of the government would be an adequate measure to ensure stability and development for both states.
Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) aims to address the structural drivers of violence through collaboration between development, peace building or governance. Lately, there has been an increase in policy and programming, putting an emphasis on women empowerment and gender equality. Focusing on the linkage of women, peace and security as well as preventing and countering violent extremism, the presentation highlighted the existing gaps in research. Accordingly, to date, there are no studies that assess the validity of the criticism against preventing and/or countering violent extremism nor studies on the impact that CVE policy and programming has on women, women’s right and civil society.

The current panorama is, however, that women are effective and essential security agents against violent extremism informal security and social society and there is a positive contribution of gender equality and women empowerment when preventing violent extremism. In fact, gender inequality is one of the strongest indicators of violent extremism. Moreover, when women are agents of counter violent extremism, there are more benefits but also a contribution to female empowerment and gender equality.

How do women count in the policy and practice of countering violent extremism?
1. Women as effective agents: increase of women’s participation.
2. Women in the military services, security sector. Developed in Afghanistan, for instance.

However, there are no studies on the potential negative impacts of this on women. Women are working within their communities to provide psycho-social help as peace builders and activists. They are perceived as social agents at the centre of soft power because of their different emotional understanding and a greater willingness to achieve peace. Nonetheless, civil society has pointed out some challenges in the CVE agenda, for instance, funding and difficulties to get donations; hard-security issues and distortion of the root causes of violent extremism.
Often, the forgotten side of mobility, the increasing number of forced displacements is something to be worried about. In 2018, the IDMC accounted for a total of 28 million new displacements recorded in 148 countries and territories. Of these, 10.8 million new conflict displacements were recorded in 42 countries and 17.2 million new disaster displacements in 146 countries. As of the end of 2018, 41.3 million people were recorded as displaced due to conflict and violence in 55 countries monitored by IDMC.

From the PDD, Atle Solberg showed good practices of national standards, policies and plans adopted to deal with environmentally forced mobility. For instance, a law from 2016 of Guatemala or the Peruvian 2013 legislation which includes humanitarian visa based on natural disasters. Cross-border mobility is often poorly protected, especially when it comes to environmental reasons. However, adapting national provisions to deal with cross-border migration is a good step towards the inclusion of climate or/and environmental migrants into the asylum and refugee provisions.

From the IDMC, it was presented the outcomes of this year's IDMC report which has focused on urban displacement. The report, divided into 3 sections, talks firstly, about the Global Displacement Landscape, presenting the new global figures for the year of 2018. Data, contextual analysis and urban perspectives are presented in regional overviews and country spotlights. Secondly, it develops the challenges of internal displacement data that may become opportunities if well addressed. Furthermore, it discusses why monitoring internal displacement systematically and independently matters. It identifies the main gaps in current practice and points to solutions for the future. Lastly, it highlights the risk, impacts and solutions of urban internal displacement, unpacking the main characteristics, risks, impacts and challenges related to urban internal displacement around the world. It presents opportunities and new approaches to dealing with them.
The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) is a biennial multi-stakeholder forum established by the UN General Assembly to review progress, share knowledge and discuss the latest developments and trends in reducing disaster risk. The GPDRR is a critical component of the monitoring and implementation process of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). The outcomes of the Global Platform inform the deliberations of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the UN 2019 Climate Summit from a disaster risk reduction perspective. These efforts contribute towards the successful achievement of a risk-informed 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.

The last speaker, Shahidul Haque, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh explained with the eyes of the country the Rohingya crisis they are facing. Showing high empathy for this community, he explained the initiatives that his country has taken in order to protect the Rohingyas. For instance, creating safe humanitarian zones for Rohingyas in Rakhine State and holding perpetrators accountable as Bangladesh has ratified the Rome Statute for which the ICC would have the jurisdiction to act. He also mentioned the Country’s expectations from the International Community to hold the Myanmar authorities accountable for their actions, to address the root causes of this long-standing genocide and to persuade Myanmar to take visible actions.
Each of the three official days focused on, respectively: taking stock of progress made since the last Global Platform; risk-informed public and private investments, including investments in infrastructure, and innovative investment modalities; and action on climate and disaster risk, including integrated national policies, strategies and planning, innovative financial and social instruments, and early warning awareness raising, disaster preparedness and community resilience.

From this year’s edition, we would particularly like to highlight the attention given in speeches and side events to **vulnerable communities** and their inclusion in DRR and NAPs. **Intersectionality** is a vital ingredient when reducing disasters and adapting to such aftermaths.

Moreover, it has been showed that including community’s knowledge and priorities either through consultation or through its representation by civil society organizations is vital to ensure an inclusive, empowered and sustainable prevention and adaptation. As we know, disabled people, women, indigenous communities, the elderly and children are particularly endangered and greater impacted by disasters.

RRR and NAPs cannot be developed with a **one-size-fits-all** solution but rather a comprehensive and complete mechanism that considers the challenges for each one but also the opportunities that their inclusion may suppose. When doing so, human rights must be the catalyst.
NEWS FROM THE FRONT LINES

IOLDCS HAS UNITED FORCES WITH THE CIVIL NETWORK FOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH IS COMPOSED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

- HAQ ORGANIZATION FOR RIGHTS, FREEDOM & DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS.
- (4K) FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
- SOCOTRA CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
- AL-MAIRABA FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN WORKS.
- SAH FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
- HOREYIA FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
- YAFE'A NEWS FOUNDATION FOR MEDIA.
- AL-MUSTKABL FOUNDATION FOR SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING PEACE.
- DALEA FOUNDATION FOR MEDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS.
- ADEN GULF FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES.
- TAKA'A FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.
- THE DEMOCRATIC YOUTH FOUNDATION

IOLDCs-OIPMA is in partnership with the Civil Network for Media Development & Human Rights. Thanks to its work on the ground, the Civil Network is following up the course of events in province of Dalea, Yemen, where innocent civilians are suffering horrifying violent events by the Houthi militias, who are responsible for killing, bombing villages and towns with heavy weapons and ballistic missiles, destroying homes where especially women, children and the elderly live in. For instance, on Monday and Tuesday 12th and 13th May 2019, the Houthis bombed the villages of Serafi, Wabeh, Shieb Alasood and Thihiiran village (north Dalea). A Yemeni source said that Muslim Brotherhood leaders justified this as using the devil against the Houthis. But gradually, it has turned out into a process of localization of al-Qaeda subjects and a resurgence in the city.

Moreover, civilians in Qataba city and the surrounding villages were also attacked by the Houthis with missiles. In Toursa, Alazarek (south-west Dalea), an elderly citizen, Zahra Hamid, was killed on Sunday, 12th May 2019 alongside other. The Network, supported by IOLDCs, condemns these criminal acts, perpetrated by the Houthi militias, contrary to international humanitarian law, human rights law, and the international treaties and conventions applicable to Yemen. We call upon the International Community and Stakeholders to step in to put an end to this internationalized armed conflict that Yemen and its citizens have been witnessing and suffering. No more innocent blood may be lost.

Originally published by The International Organisation for LDCs (IOLDCs)
Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA)
April, 2019
Maison Internationale de l'Environnement (MIE 2)
Chemin de Balexert 9
1219 Châtelaine
Geneva - Switzerland
www.ioldcs.org
info@ioldcs.org
Tel: + 41 22 303 05 02