Attn: Middle East and North Africa Division

In the name of Allah

Mr. Kenneth Roth Director of Human Rights Watch

Mrs. Sarah Leah Whitson MENA Director

Kindly accept my best regards,

Thank you for your concern over the tragic situation in Sa'da governorate and other war struck governorates.

We followed your two reports with utmost concern, and they are a wonderful effort that should be commended, especially your recommendations to us in the report. In that regard, we would like to point out the following:

In your first recommendation to us you said, "Treat the civilian population under their effective control, including displaced persons, in accordance with international humanitarian law and human rights principles, including the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement"

In this regard: we confirm that we are very careful with the treatment of civilians, and we treat them humanely in a manner that protects their rights mentioned in International Humanitarian Law, and International Human Rights Law, including the UN rules regarding internal displacement, and we don't see any conflict between those roles and the teachings of our religion that we follow dedicatedly.

We also confirm being keen to neutralize civilians and spare them conflict, we also work laboriously towards supporting their protection and saving their lives, possessions and dignity. We also consider ourselves as belonging to those civilians, and we didn't carry arms but to defend ourselves and them within the legal limits. We remind you that the first war was staged by the authorities on us in 2004, and it targeted civilians in their cities and villages, with aerial and rocket fire in an indiscriminate manner. The authorities justified this destructive war with lame and untrue justifications, as they accused us of removing the flag of the republic and putting the Hezbollah flag instead, accusing us with claiming "prophecy" once and claiming being imams once, claiming we converted back from Zaidi faith to Shi'a Imami faith. Such accusations, even if hypothetically true, do not justify the government's declaration of a total war on its citizens.

We would like to inform you that we encourage our supporters to commit to a policy of self-control after each cease-fire deal, and not to get into any acts of retaliation against those who committed crimes against civilians. Our motive here is the civilians' safety, to extend the cease fire and spare ourselves the return of war, which the authorities did not commit themselves to.

And as you know, the authorities restricted all international and media organizations from entering Sa'da governorate, including your organization; so as not to have its hideous crimes against civilians revealed.

On our part, we welcome all humanitarian and rights groups, because we don't have anything to hide.

In your other recommendations you said:

Facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief for civilians in need. Publicly declare and ensure that national and international aid agencies have full and unhindered access to civilian populations unless imperative military necessity requires temporary restrictions on their movements; when access is denied, provide aid agencies with adequate explanations.

End attacks on humanitarian personnel, vehicles and supplies, and take appropriate disciplinary action against Huthi members responsible for such attacks.

In this regard, we would like to remind you that we welcomed before humanitarian organizations, and confirmed being keen that aid reaches those in need, in a neutral unselective way, under supervision of the organizations in question.

We once more fully welcome all international aid/humanitarian organizations, and think they have all the right and freedom to access damaged zones, without any interferences from any of the parties, and we declare our commitment to full cooperation with these organizations, to facilitate their missions and ensure no body from our part harms them.

As for what you said in your report about accusing us of harming aid personnel, we confirm that these accusations are not true at all, and we issued before many statements fully condemning such attacks, and demanded investigations to reveal the identity of attackers, but the government refused to do that, because it's the party behind such attacks, aiming to prevent aids from reaching people in need, in consistency with their collective punishment policy.

We confirm our innocence from these attacks, and fully commit ourselves to take disciplinary procedures against whoever is proven involved in any of those attacks.

Thank you again for your humanitarian efforts, and we hope you will be able to access Sa'da in the near future to take a closer look at what is happening on the ground.

With all due respect,

'Abdul Malik Badr al-Din al Huthi Yemen, Sa'da 29 Jumad al-Thani 1430 Hejri 22 June 2009-07-02

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