Letter to the Permanent Representatives of Members and Observers of the United Nations Human Rights Council

RE: Resolution on Yemen at the 30th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Geneva, 25 September 2015,

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge your delegation to support the establishment by the UN Human Rights Council during its 30th session of an independent, international mechanism to document violations committed by all parties to the armed conflict in Yemen since September 2014, in line with the key recommendation made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in a report released on 11 September, 2015.

In this regard, we urge your delegation to support the goals and objectives of the draft resolution tabled under Item 2 by the Netherlands,¹ and in particular its request for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to dispatch a UN mission to report on the human rights situation in Yemen with a view to establishing the facts and circumstances surrounding any violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed. We strongly believe that such a mechanism would send a clear message to all parties that they should respect their international legal obligations to protect civilians and other non-combatants.

We are aware that Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Arab Group, and Yemen have also tabled a draft resolution on the same situation under Item 10.² Regrettably, this draft resolution lacks any reference to an international mechanism to document abuses. A resolution without a robust follow-up mechanism to monitor the current situation in Yemen is wholly inadequate.

Since the Council adopted its last resolution on Yemen on 25 September, 2014, warring parties have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. The Saudi-led coalition has conducted indiscriminate and disproportionate airstrikes that have killed and wounded scores of civilians and destroyed numerous civilian objects. Coalition member have failed in their duty, under international law, to effectively investigate suspected violations. Houthi and allied forces as well as anti-Houthis armed groups have also repeatedly

¹ Draft resolution A/HRC30/L.4, Situation of human rights in Yemen, Netherlands.
² A/HRC30/L.1, Technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights, Saudi Arabia (on behalf of the Group of Arab States) and Yemen.
violated international humanitarian law including by launching rockets indiscriminately into civilian populated areas in southern Yemen and across the border in Saudi Arabia, mistreating persons in custody, and recruiting children for their forces.

In this context, we strongly believe that an independent, international mechanism that would document abuses by all sides would firmly signal to the parties their obligations to abide by international law and potentially deter further abuses. If the United Nations main political human rights body does not act in the face of ongoing abuses by the parties in Yemen, it is failing in its responsibility to help protect the Yemeni people from harm.

Yours faithfully,

- African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)
- Amnesty International
- Arab Network for Human Rights Information
- Asian Legal Resource Centre
- Arab Organisation for Human Rights – Libya
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
- CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- Committee for the Respect of Liberties and Human Rights in Tunisia
- Forum for Economic and Social Rights – Tunisia
- Human Rights Watch
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- International Service for Human Rights
- War Child UK