

**Mrs. President of the Forum, ladies and gentlemen, I am Iman Hamid, President of INSAF Center for Defending Freedoms & Minorities**

**Given the ongoing conflict, the position of minorities in Yemen is growing more serious and complicated.**

**The Houthis, in particular, an armed group that since September 2014 has taken over Sanaa, the Yemeni capital, and sizable portions of northern, central, and western Yemen, have practiced discriminatory and violent policies against weak or disadvantaged Yemeni groups, like the rest of the Yemeni Jews (a few hundred) and Baha'is, in addition to other vulnerable Yemeni (and non-Yemeni) groups, such as dark-skinned people or those displaced to Yemen from neighbouring African countries.**

**Similarly, non-Houthi parties to the war in Yemen do not express any compassion for the suffering of these people unless it is tied to anti-Houthi propaganda. Some religious and sectarian groups, such as Ismailis and Sufis, have experienced violence and assassinations of some figures who represent these groups, and restrictions have been placed on their cultural and social activities in other regions in Yemen.**

**Even though some groups of other religions, such as Christianity, are growing, their situation is the most difficult when it comes to issue of minorities in Yemen, because such groups are unable to express themselves because the Islamic legislator, particularly in our country, views anyone who practises a different religion than Islam as an apostate who must be put to death. The temptation to demand their death would therefore increase if these people revealed their new religions, and the presence of religious extremist groups in Yemen would make them a target for their violators.**

**The Jewish community is the target of severe violations and ethnic and religious cleansing by Houthis; at least 10 families were forced to flee their homes in 2020 and 2021. Few people were left,**

including the Libyan detainee Salem Marhabi, who has been battling for his life since his detention in March 2016 despite requests for his release by the Public Prosecution in 2019. INSAF Center's lawyer, Abdelbaset Ghazi, says, "despite the judgments and successive orders directed to the security and intelligence apparatus to release a Libyan, he has not been released and is still held in custody."

Last but not least, through this Forum, INSAF Center for Defending Freedoms & Minorities calls to put pressure on the Houthi militias to release Libyan Salem Marhabi and ensure his safety. The Center presents the following set of recommendations:

- 1- Urging the conflicting parties, particularly the Houthi group, to stop the recruitment of vulnerable minority children
- 2- Enshrining human rights values and promoting human rights concepts in educational curricula and the media, and establishing legislative frameworks that restrict hate speech and incitement
- 3- Exerting international pressure on all authorities regarding the protection of minorities and their rights; we have experience in the pressure campaign that was a significant factor in the Houthi's decision to free Baha'is following the imposition of two death sentences.
- 4- It is important to protect minority rights advocates and we need to encourage them to continue this crucial work.
- 5- If Yemeni minority' rights are upheld and guaranteed, the remaining Yemeni groups' rights will also be upheld and guaranteed.