

Benita Ferrero-Waldner
Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy
European Commission

Brussels, 22 October 2008
Our ref. B819

Dear Ms Ferrero-Waldner,

EU-Yemen Troika meeting: concerns about the human rights situation in Yemen

In view of the EU-Yemen Troika meeting that will take place on 29 October, Amnesty International would like to draw your attention to the human rights situation in Yemen, in particular regarding discrimination against women and against members of the Baha'í community, and use of death penalty. We urge you to raise these concerns during the meeting with your Yemeni counterparts.

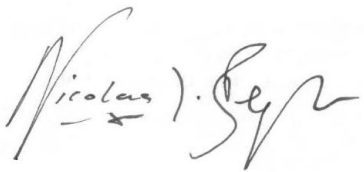
Women in Yemen continue to face discrimination caused by both state and non-state actors, including sexual violence and trafficking. Such abuses are particularly severe in rural areas, where 80 per cent of women live. Indeed, girls have less access to education than boys, and women are particularly vulnerable to economic hardships. Amnesty International urges the Troika to raise these issues during the meeting and to call upon the Yemeni authorities to implement the recommendations issued by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and to bring their legislation in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Cases of women who are victims of discrimination are included in the document attached to this letter.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the forcible return of members of the Baha'í faith to Iran and Iraq, where they would be at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. The cases of four individuals in this situation are included in the attached text. We urge the EU Troika to raise these concerns with the Yemeni authorities and to call for their commitment to stop forcible returns of Baha'ís, and to thus abide by their international obligations.

Amnesty International continues to receive regular cases of individuals sentenced to death despite their being minors at the time of the alleged offense, or mentally ill. We call upon the EU to urge the Yemeni authorities to apply a moratorium on the death penalty as requested by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2007, and to ensure that minors are not sentenced to death, as this is contrary to both international law and Yemeni law. Amnesty International urges the EU Troika to raise not only the general practice of the death penalty, but also the individual cases mentioned in the attached document.

We hope that the information included in this letter and in the attached document will enable you to raise these concerns with your Yemeni counterparts and we look forward to hearing from you as to the outcome of the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicolas Beger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small mark under the first 's'.

Nicolas Beger
Director,
Amnesty International EU Office

Attached: Yemen: individual cases of human rights violations

