

URGENT ACTION

10 YEMENI JOURNALISTS FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

Ten Yemeni journalists have been forcibly disappeared since 23 May after they were moved from al-Habra pre-trial detention facility in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, to an unknown location. They have been arbitrarily detained since 9 June 2015.

Journalists **Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hisham Tarmoom, Tawfiq al-Mansouri, Hareth Hamid, Hasan Annab, Akram al-Walidi, Haytham al-Shihab, Hisham al-Yousefi, Essam Balgheeth** and **Salah al-Qaedi** were moved on 23 May from al-Habra pre-trial detention facility in the capital, Sana'a, to an unknown location. The de facto authorities have since refused to provide information about their location. They have been arbitrarily detained by the Huthi armed group in different locations since 9 June 2015 and are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

On 23 May, the families of all ten detained journalists went to visit their relatives in al-Habra. On arrival, prison guards told the families that the journalists were no longer in there but refused to reveal their whereabouts. The families have not heard from any of the 10 journalists since they were on hunger strike in al-Habra in the weeks before they were moved. On 9 May, the journalists started a hunger strike in protest of their continuing detention without charge or trial. Relatives of Abdelkhaleq Amran and Hareth Hamid said that the two men were seriously ill following their hunger strike but prison authorities refused to transfer them to a hospital as per their families' demand.

On 16 March, nine of the journalists, excluding Salah al-Qaedi, were moved from al-Thawra pre-trial detention facility in Sana'a, where they had been detained since mid-September 2015, to al-Habra. The nine had been arrested on 9 June 2015 when a hotel room they were working in was raided by some 30 armed men in plain clothes who said they were members of Ansarullah, Huthi political wing. Salah al-Qaedi had been detained in al-Habra since mid-October 2015. He was first arrested at his home on 28 August 2015. The journalists work for a variety of news outlets; some of which that oppose the Huthi armed group, while others are aligned to the al-Islah opposition political party.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the de facto Huthi authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts of the ten journalists;
- Urging them to ensure that they are protected from torture or other ill-treatment and given, without delay, regular access to their families, lawyers and any adequate medical treatment they may require;
- Urging them to release the ten journalists, unless they are promptly transferred to proper judicial authorities and charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JULY 2016 TO:

Amir Eldin al-Huthi
Ministry of Human Rights
Off Sixty Road
Sana'a
Email: amirtahahishm2015@gmail.com

Head of Mohammed al-Huthi's Office
Ahmad al-Razihi
Presidential Palace
Sana'a
Email: shabab17fb@gmail.com

And copies to:
Head of NGO relations at Mohammed al-Huthi's Office
Abu Hassan
Presidential Palace
Sana'a
Email: e.m.eciwas3@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Dr. Yassin Saeed Noman Ahmed, 57 Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2ED, Fax 020 7589 3350
Email <https://www.yemenembassy.co.uk/contact-us.html>

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 27/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE31/3352/2016/en/>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hisham Tarmoom, Tawfiq al-Mansouri, Hareth Humid, Hasan Annab, Akram al-Walidi, Haytham al-Shihab, Hisham al-Yousefi and Essam Balgheeth were working in a room hired out in Qasr al-Ahlam Hotel on al-Sitteen Street, Sana'a, when several armed men entered the room at 4am on 9 June 2015. The armed men were dressed in a mixture of civilian and military clothing, and some had slogans on their weapons that are associated with the Huthi armed group and its political wing, Ansarullah. The journalists were initially divided and taken to two separate locations in Sana'a – al-Ahmar and al-Hasaba police stations – where some were allowed a brief phone call to their family. After two days, some of the men were transferred to the counter-terrorism department of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), where they were held for a month. From mid-July to mid-September 2015 all nine journalists were held incommunicado in unknown locations; the families only learnt that they had been transferred to al-Thawra pre-trial detention facility in Sana'a from released prisoners who had been held with them. Al-Thawra pre-trial detention facility is under the jurisdiction of the Huthi-aligned Ministry of Interior.

Salah al-Qaedi was detained at his home in Sana'a by members of Huthi forces in the late afternoon of 28 August 2015. Salah al-Qaedi's family told Amnesty International that he has been tortured during his detention. There are no formal charges against him but his family suspect he is being detained because he worked for the al-Islah aligned Suhayl Channel, which has been vocal in condemning the Huthis' violations since they took over Sana'a in September 2014 and are perceived as supportive of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition's air strikes. The channel was raided in September 2014 by the Huthi forces and eventually shut down in March 2015.

The Huthis, mostly members of the northern Zaidi Shi'a minority, took over some army and security positions in Sana'a in September 2014. By the third week of January 2015 they had attacked military positions, the presidential compounds and government buildings. This led to President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government resigning and the Huthis becoming the de facto administration of the capital and other parts of Yemen. Since then, the Huthis have maintained their hold on Sana'a and some parts of the country.

There has been a surge in arbitrary arrests, detentions and enforced disappearances by the Huthi armed group and allied forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh since the beginning of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition's aerial campaign in March 2015. Hundreds of activists, human rights defenders and people of various political backgrounds perceived as opponents by the Huthis have been arbitrarily arrested, detained and, in some cases, tortured and otherwise ill-treated. Some have been forcibly disappeared. The majority of those targeted have been leaders, members or supporters of the political party al-Islah. Most of these arrests have taken place in the cities of Sana'a, Ibb, Hodeidah and Ta'iz.

Name: Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hisham Tarmoom, Tawfiq al-Mansouri, Hareth Hamid, Hasan Annab, Akram al-Walidi, Haytham al-Shihab, Hisham al-Yousefi, Essam Balgheeth and Salah al-Qaedi

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