

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED JOURNALISTS NEED URGENT MEDICAL CARE

Journalist Abdelkhaleq Amran is in urgent need of medical attention after being tortured or otherwise ill-treated, according to his family. Nine other journalists arbitrarily detained with him also require medical attention.

According to his family, **Abdelkhaleq Amran**, one of a group of 10 journalists arbitrarily detained in Yemen since June 2015, is in urgent need of medical attention after they believe he was tortured two weeks ago. Other detainees held in cells next to Abdelkhaleq Amran's in the Political Security Office (PSO) in Sana'a, the capital, told his family that they heard him screaming from inside his cell on 30 November. His family say that since then a spinal injury from which he already suffered has worsened and he is now unable to walk properly unaided, yet he has been denied any medical treatment or medication.

Journalists **Hisham Tarmoom, Tawfiq al-Mansouri, Hareth Hamid, Hasan Annab, Akram al-Walidi, Haytham al-Shihab, Hisham al-Yousefi, Essam Balgheeth** and **Salah al-Qaedi** are also currently detained with Abdelkhaleq Amran in PSO. According to information provided to Amnesty International, they are suffering from a range of medical issues, including stomach, colon, back and teeth pain, as well as haemorrhoids, for which they have been refused treatment or medication. Officials in PSO have also prevented the families from bringing their detained relatives medication or even blankets and warm clothes for the winter when they visit.

In September, the families of all 10 journalists were allowed to visit their relatives for the first time since they were forcibly disappeared in May after being moved from al-Habra pre-trial detention facility in Sana'a to PSO, without the knowledge of their families. The families of other detainees told Abdelkhaleq Amran's family that for nearly the whole duration of his incommunicado detention in PSO, Abdelkhaleq Amran had been held in solitary confinement and they would hear screams from his cell on a daily basis. At that time, the de facto Huthi authorities refused to provide information to the families about the journalists' new location.

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

- Urging the de facto Huthi authorities to ensure that the 10 journalists are protected from torture or other ill-treatment and given, without delay, regular access to their families, lawyers and any 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, in line with international law and standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 JANUARY 2017 TO:

Ansarullah Representative at Peace

Talks

Mohamed Abdelsalam

Email: mdabdalsalam@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Sir

Director of the Human Rights

Department at Ansarullah Office

Abdulmalik al-Ajari

Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/1n1y4Mn>

Salutation: Dear Sir

Director of the Office of the Presidency

Mahmod Abdulqader al-Jounid

Fax: +967 1 274147

Email: mahmodaljounid@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Sir

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Dr. Yassin Saeed Noman Ahmed, 57 Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2ED, 020 7584 6607, Fax 020 7589 3350, <https://www.yemenembassy.co.uk/contact-us.html>

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 27/16.

Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde31/4270/2016/en/

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The ten journalists work for a variety of news outlets; some of which oppose the Huthi armed group, while others are aligned to the al-Islah opposition political party.

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 arrested 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.

On 16 March 2016, 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. Salah al-Qaedi had been detained in al-Habra since mid-October 2015

On 23 May 2016, the families of all 10 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 journalists were forcibly disappeared on this day after being moved from al-Habra pre-trial detention facility in Sana'a to PSO, without the knowledge of their families. 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.

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.

Further information on UA: 27/16 Index: MDE 31/5331/2016 Issue Date: 14 December 2016