

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 31/017/2007
04 September 2007

**Further Information on UA 198/07 (MDE 31/009/2007, 3 August 2007) and follow-up (MDE 31/014/2007, 13 August 2007) -
Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture/Medical concern**

YEMEN

Brigadier Nasser al-Nouba (m), aged in his 50s

Nasser al-'Awlaqi (m), aged about 40

'Abbas al-'Assal (m), aged 42

New names:

Ahmed 'Omar bin Farid (m)

Ahmed al-Qama'a (m)

Hassan Ba'oom (m)

Fadi Ba'oom (m), son of Hassan Ba'oom

Mohsin al-Yazidi (m)

Brigadier Nasser al-Nouba, Ahmed 'Omar bin Farid and Ahmed al-Qama'a were arrested on 2 September after taking part in a protest by retired soldiers in Liberty Square, in central Aden, on 1 September. Hassan Ba'oom, his son Fadi Ba'oom, and Mohsin al-Yazidi were arrested on 1 September following a related protest in the city of al-Mukalla in south-east Yemen. According to information received by Amnesty International, Hassan Ba'oom was beaten during his arrest, though there is no further news on his health. The men are held incommunicado and are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

The protests in Aden and al-Mukalla were staged by former soldiers, who were complaining that their pension payments had not been made, or had been severely delayed. Brigadier Nasser al-Nouba, Ahmed 'Omar bin Farid and Ahmed al-Qama'a were among scores of people arrested on 2 August after taking part in a similar protest. They and most other detainees were released without charge after a few days in detention. Nasser al-'Awlaqi and 'Abbas al-'Assal are thought to remain held incommunicado without charge after their arrest in August.

Amnesty International is concerned that the eight men may be prisoners of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most of the retired soldiers are from the army of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). Following the unification of the country in 1990, the armies of the PDRY (South Yemen) and the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) (North Yemen), were merged into a single army force for the new Republic of Yemen. However, following the civil war of 1994, many of the soldiers of the former PDRY were dismissed from the army. These, as well as those who remained in the current army, complained of being subjected to discrimination when compared to soldiers originally from the North.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to ensure that all those detained in connection with the protests by retired soldiers in August and September are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and given regular access to lawyers of their choosing, their families and any medical treatment they may require;
- calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally if they are held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly;
- expressing concern at reports that Hassan Ba'oom was subjected to beatings during arrest, and calling for a prompt and independent investigation into the incident.

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency General 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh

President of the Republic of Yemen

Sana'a

Republic of Yemen

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Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

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COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Yemen accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 October 2007.*****