

URGENT ACTION

HASSAN BA'OOM RELEASED

Hassan Ba'oom, leader of a political opposition group in southern Yemen, was released without charge along with his son Fawaz Ba'oom on 7 December 2011. They had been detained incommunicado since 20 February 2011.

Hassan Ba'oom, who is in his seventies, was arrested along with his son Fawaz Ba'oom by security forces at a hospital in Aden on 20 February 2011. He was receiving treatment for a broken leg. He is a leader of the opposition coalition Southern Movement and chairman of a faction called the Supreme National Council for the Liberation of the South. According to local press, he had recently called for a "day of rage" against the Yemeni government to be held in southern provinces.

He was released on 7 December 2011, after almost 10 months detained incommunicado, but the authorities seem to have placed restrictions on his freedom of movement in particular preventing him from travelling to Aden where he was based. Following his release he lived in a hotel room in Sana'a until 17 January 2012 when he was allowed to travel to King Faisal Hospital in Riyadh to undergo surgery on his injured leg.

Hassan Ba'oom had previously been arrested on 9 November 2010 while he was in a car on his way from Aden to al-Dali', both cities in southern Yemen. He was released in January 2011 after being held incommunicado for some of his period of detention. Before this he was detained for two months in 2007 and six months in 2008 in connection with protests by retired soldiers from the south of Yemen against alleged discrimination in employment, salaries and pensions.

Protests have been taking place in Aden and other places in southern Yemen since 2007 against perceived discrimination by the government against southerners and, increasingly, in favour of the secession of the south of the country. However, following demonstrations in the capital and other cities in early 2011 calling for the president to stand down, protesters in Aden also began calling for regime change.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the second update of UA 247/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE31/005/2011/en>

