

URGENT ACTION

STUDENTS AT RISK OF TORTURE

At least 12 students in Yemen are being held incommunicado. They are at risk of being tortured or suffering other ill-treatment. They appear to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of assembly.

According to activists in Yemen the students are said to have been preparing for their exams at different locations, mainly in the homes of some of them, in the southern city of 'Aden when they were arrested by security forces on 4 July. At least 12 students are believed to be detained at al-Mansoura Police Station in 'Aden, with no contact with the outside world. The names of 12 students are known: Ghassan 'Olaib, 'Arif al-Nasri, Nabeel al-Hamshi, Akram al-Hamshi, 'Ali Fadhil al-'Essa'i, Naif Fadhil al-'Essa'i, Mu'taz Fadhil al-'Essa'i, Faris Qassim Ashid, Fadi al-Hamshi, Sami al-Qutaibi, Mohamed al-Sharafi and Majed al-Sharif. They are aged between 15 and 23. Reports indicate that at least two other students are also being detained incommunicado there, but that their names are unknown.

It is not clear why the students were arrested, but sources in Yemen have stated they may have been suspected of gathering to discuss their participation in protests that were being planned for 7 July, to mark the end of the civil war in 1994.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic or your own language:

- urging the authorities to ensure that the students are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and are allowed prompt and regular access to lawyers of their choosing, their families and any medical treatment they may require;
- calling on the authorities to disclose any charges that have been brought against them and to ensure that any legal proceedings against them conform to international fair trial standards;
- expressing concern that they may be held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of assembly and noting that, if this is the case, Amnesty International would consider them prisoners of conscience and call for their immediate and unconditional release.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 August 2009 TO:

President
'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh
Office of the President of the Republic of
Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Fax: +967 127 4147
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior
Mutaher Rashad al Masri
Ministry of the Interior
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Fax: +967 1 332 511
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Minister of Human Rights
Houda 'Ali 'Abdullatif al-Baan
Ministry for Human Rights
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Fax: +967 1 444 833
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There have been sporadic protests in the south of Yemen for about two years. The protests began with demonstrations by retired soldiers from the south, who have been claiming that they do not receive the same treatment in employment, salary and pensions as soldiers from the north of the country. Most of the retired soldiers are from the army of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), commonly known as South Yemen. Following the unification of the country in 1990, the armies of both the PDRY and the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), commonly known as North Yemen, were merged into a single army for the new Republic of Yemen.

After the civil war of 1994, many of the soldiers of the former PDRY were dismissed from the army. They, as well as those who remained in the new, unified army, allege that they are subject to discrimination compared to soldiers originally from the army of the YAR. The Southern Movement, a coalition of political groups which the government sees as calling for the independence of the southern part of the country, appears to have emerged following these protests.

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