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Public Statement

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Yemen: Harassment of journalists must stop

Amnesty International is concerned at the continuing harassment of journalists by Yemeni security forces. Journalists critical of the government are being increasingly targeted and face abuses, including arbitrary arrest, beatings or confiscation of documents and computers. Such targeting by the security forces ostensibly aim to silence journalists and prevent them from reporting.

On 23 August, Jamal Amer, chief editor of *al-Wassat* newspaper, was arrested by security forces from outside his home in Sana'a and taken to an unknown destination where he was beaten and threatened with death. The attack on Jamal Amer followed articles published by *al-Wassat* newspaper criticizing government officials and accusing them of corruption.

One day later, the office of Ahmed al-Hajj, an Associated Press journalist, was reportedly raided by six members of the security forces, who confiscated his files and two computers. The office's security guard, Mohammed Abdel Badir, a Somali national, was reportedly arrested and is believed to be detained at the Political Security prison in Sana'a.

On 25 August, security forces also reportedly raided the offices of journalist Sami Ghalib, a journalist at *al-Nidaa* newspaper, and seized files and computers.

Women Reporters without Borders reportedly had its licence revoked after it published reports regarding demonstrations on 20 July, in which dozens of people were killed.

AI calls on the government of Yemen to put an end to harassment, intimidation and other abuses against journalists, and to ensure respect of the right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Yemen is a state party.

Amnesty International also urges the Yemeni authorities to promptly carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the abuses against these and possibly other individuals and bring to justice anyone found responsible for any such violations.