

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Yemen: Amnesty International calls on President Saleh to end illegal detention of Yemenis "disappeared" by the USA

As President 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh began a visit to Washington to meet US President George W. Bush, Amnesty International called on the Yemeni President to make clear that his country will no longer hold its nationals in indefinite detention without trial on behalf or at the behest of US authorities. Currently, the Yemeni authorities continue to hold four of their own nationals without charge or trial, apparently on the instructions of the US government, three of whom were formerly "disappeared" and held in secret US-run interrogation centres for periods over one year before being handed to Yemeni custody.

The organization also urged President Saleh to insist that any Yemeni nationals who may currently be "disappeared" and detained secretly by US officials, or persons acting on their behalf, or held at Guantánamo Bay, should immediately be brought within the ambit of the law and be treated in accordance with international human rights standards

The four men currently being detained in Yemen on US instructions are:

Muhammad Abdullah Salah al-Assad, who "disappeared" after he was detained in Tanzania in December 2003, and was returned to Yemen in May 2005;

Salah Nasser Salim 'Ali, who "disappeared" in Jordan in September 2003 after he was first detained in Indonesian in August 2003, and he was returned to Yemen in May 2005;

Muhammed Faraj Ahmed Bashmilah, who "disappeared" after he was detained in Jordan in October 2003, and he was returned to Yemen in May 2005; and

Walid Muhammad Shahir Muhammad al-Qadasi, who was detained by US authorities at Guantánamo Bay since 2002 to April 2004, when he was returned to Yemen, where more than a year and a half later he remains detained without charge or trial at Ta'iz central prison.

Yemeni officials told Amnesty International representatives in October 2005 that they were "awaiting files" on the four men from the US authorities before deciding whether they would be charged or released. According to Yemeni officials, the men would be released immediately if the US authorities request their release.

Amnesty International is concerned at the continuing uncertainty regarding their status and that they have not yet had access to legal counsel or been brought before a judge and that the Yemeni authorities have yet to bring any charges against them and is detaining them outside the rule of law.

Amnesty International continues to urge President 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh to intervene and ensure that the four men should either be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences and brought to trial without further delay in accordance with international fair trial standards or be released immediately and unconditionally, as required by international human rights law and standards binding upon Yemen.

For more information, please see:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR511772005?open&of=ENG-USA>