

PUBLIC

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UA 82/08 Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture

YEMEN Ahmed 'Omar bin Farid (m), writer and activist
Hassan Ba'oom (m) activist
'Ali Haitham al-Gharib (m), writer and activist
'Ali Munasser Mohamed (m), First Secretary, Socialist Party in Aden
Yahya Ghalib al-Shuaibi (m), lawyer and activist
Others, unknown number

At least 5 people, including those named above, were reportedly arrested by Yemeni security forces on 31 March and 1 April in the southern cities of Aden, al-Dhali', and Radfan. Most of them are reportedly held incommunicado, and are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. Their exact place of detention is unknown.

The reason for their arrests is unclear but reports suggest that they could be linked to protests and activism by retired soldiers from the south of Yemen who complain that they are discriminated against in employment, salaries and pensions compared to retired soldiers from the north of the country.

Most of the men named above were previously arrested in August and September 2007 for taking part in protests in Liberty Square, central Aden, and in al-Mukalla. These protests were staged by former soldiers who complained that pension payments due to them from the government had not been made or had been severely delayed.

Amnesty International is concerned that they 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 who have been detained 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 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, allege that they are subject to discrimination compared to former 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 those named above and all others detained are protected from torture or other ill-treatment, and are allowed prompt and regular access to lawyers of their choosing, their families and to 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;
- asking for details of any charges they face to be made public, and calling on the authorities to ensure that any legal proceedings against them conform to international fair trial standards;

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency General 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh
President of the Republic of Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Fax: + 967 127 4147

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

His Excellency 'Abdullah al-'Ulufi
Office of Attorney General
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Fax: + 967 137 4412

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

His Excellency Dr Rashid Muhammad al-'Alimi
Ministry of Interior
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Fax: + 967 1 332 511

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights

Her Excellency Houda 'Ali 'Abdullatif al-Baan
Ministry for Human Rights
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Faxes: + 967 1 444 838

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Dr. Ghazi Shaif Al-Aghbari
Ministry of Justice
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Fax: + 967 1 222 015

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 13 May 2008.