

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 31/02/93
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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Middle East
Date: 9 March 1993

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Mansur Muhammad Ahmad Rajih
Yemen**

Keywords

Theme: POC / ill-health / hunger strike

Summary

On 2 February 1993, Mansur Rajih was taken to al-Thawra Hospital in the city of Ta'iz from Ta'iz Central Prison. He had refused food between 29 December 1992 and 3 January 1993 and on admission to hospital was noted to be suffering weakness related to malnutrition. He was diagnosed as suffering from emphysema. After three days in hospital, he was returned to his prison cell against the strong advice of the doctor in charge. Mansur Rajih has been held on a trumped-up charge of murder for almost ten years. Amnesty International is urging that he be released unconditionally and that he be guaranteed access to appropriate medical care.

Recommended Actions

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written in Arabic, English, otherwise your own language, should be sent to the addresses below:

- expressing concern at the conviction and death sentence passed on Mansur Muhammad Ahmad Rajih as a result of the exercise of his legitimate rights to self expression
- noting that he has recently been on hunger strike and was admitted to hospital, apparently with emphysema and other problems
- stating your concern that he had been returned to prison in the face of medical advice that he remain for continued treatment in hospital
- urging that he be given access to whatever medical care he requires

Addresses

See over.

Please write to one or more of the following addresses:

Addresses

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

His Excellency
'Ali Salim al-Bidh
Vice-President of the Presidential Council
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

His Excellency
Colonel Ghalib Mutaheer al-Qamish
Minister of Interior and Security
Ministry of Interior and Security
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Copies

Please send copies of your letters to one or more of the following addresses:

His Excellency
Dr 'Abdul-Karim 'Ali al-Iryani
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

His Excellency
Isma'il Ahmad al-Wazir
Minister of Legal Affairs
Ministry of Legal Affairs
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

His Excellency
'Abdul-Wasi' Sallam
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

The Secretary General
General Union of Doctors
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

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MEDICAL CONCERN

**Mansur Muhammad Ahmad Rajih
YEMEN**

On 2 February 1993, Mansur Rajih was taken to al-Thawra Hospital from the Central Prison in the city of Ta'iz, southwest Yemen. He had refused food between 29 December 1992 and 3 January 1993 and in February was admitted to hospital complaining of chest, stomach and back pains. On examination he was noted to have muscle weakness, "probably" a result of malnutrition. He was diagnosed as suffering from the respiratory disease emphysema. After three days in hospital, he was returned to his prison cell against the strong advice of the doctor in charge. Amnesty International does not have details of the treatment he is currently receiving but understands that provision of medical care in Yemeni prisons is generally inadequate.

Mansur Rajih is under sentence of death as a result of an unfair trial and despite evidence that the murder charge on which he was convicted was trumped-up. He is regarded by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience and the organization is urging his immediate release and is seeking guarantees that he will be given access to proper medical care.

Background

Mansur Muhammad Ahmad Rajih, a writer and poet, was born in 1958 in the village of Humayrim in the Province of Ta'iz in the former Yemen Arab Republic. He completed his high school degree in Yemen but left to pursue higher education, initially in agriculture at the University of Aleppo, Syria, from 1978 to 1980. In 1980 he attended the Lebanese University in Beirut, Lebanon, to study for a degree in Business Administration. He returned to Yemen in January 1983.

Mansur Rajih had been politically active for most of his adult life. During his stay in Syria he was the President of the Yemeni Student Association, and when he attended the Lebanese University in Beirut, he became the Secretary General of the Organization of Arab Students. He was also a member of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the principal opposition group in the former YAR.

Upon his return to Yemen in January 1983, Mansur Rajih was arrested by *al-Amn al-Watani* (National Security) and taken to the *al-Amn al-Watani* Interrogation Centre in the city of Ta'iz where he was held incommunicado for six months. During this time, he was continually blindfolded and subjected to various forms of torture. He was freed for only eight days in June 1983 before he was arrested again. This time, his father and uncle were also arrested, and the three were charged with the murder of a man from their village. The trial of Mansur Rajih and his two family members was riddled with irregularities, and powerful evidence in their defence was

ignored or ruled inadmissible. He was sentenced to death in 1984 and the sentence was upheld on appeal in 1986. His death sentence is currently pending ratification by the Presidential Council of the Republic of Yemen, nearly ten years after his first arrest.

Amnesty International is urging the government of the Republic of Yemen to release Mansur Rajih unconditionally and to ensure that he receives whatever medical care he requires.



Mansur Muhammad Ahmad Rajih

Note: For further details regarding the unfair conviction of Mansur Rajih for murder see *Yemen. Mansur Rajih: Prisoner of conscience under sentence of death*. AI Index: MDE 31/03/92, May 1992.