

PUBLIC

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UA 143/07

Fear of torture and ill-treatment/incommunicado detention/  
possible prisoner of conscience

YEMEN

**Mu'amar al-'Abdali (m), aged 34, student,  
Basam al- Humaidan (m), aged 25  
'Ali al-Humaidan (m), aged 18, his brother**

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Mu'amar al-'Abdali, Basam al-Humaidan and 'Ali al-Humaidan, all members of the Shi'a Zaidi community who live mainly in northern Yemen, are being held incommunicado at unconfirmed locations, and may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Mu'amar al-'Abdali, a student is believed to have been arrested on 27 May while he was on his way to Sana'a University to take his exams. His current whereabouts are not known and is believed to be held incommunicado. His arrest is believed to be connected to his activism on behalf of detained members of the Zaidi community. He is a possible prisoner of conscience, held solely as a result of his work on behalf of detainees from the Zaidi community.

Basam al- Humaidan was arrested by security forces on 3 June at the pharmacy where he worked in the city of Sa'da. The exact reason for his arrest is not known, but it may be because he allegedly supplied medicine to followers of Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, a Shi'a Zaidi cleric and former member of the Yemeni Parliament, who was killed in September 2004 during clashes with government forces.

Basam al-Humaidan's brother, 'Ali al-Humaidan, was arrested on 6 June in the city of Sana'a. The current whereabouts of the brothers are unconfirmed, but they are believed to be held incommunicado in one of the Political Security prisons in Sana'a and Sa'da.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Long-standing tensions between the Shi'a Zaidi community and the Yemeni government were heightened by protests by the Shi'a Zaidi community during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. During and after the invasion, members of the Zaidi community carried on the protests after Friday prayers every week outside mosques, particularly the Grand Mosque in Sana'a, during which they shouted anti-US and anti-Israeli slogans. The protests were invariably followed by arrests and detentions. In June 2004 the government called on Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, one of those leading the criticism of the US-led invasion, to hand himself over to the authorities. When he refused, tension between the two sides escalated into armed clashes. The tension erupted again in January 2007, when dozens of people were reportedly killed. The latest violence is reported to have claimed the lives of dozens of people, including members of the security forces. According to press reports, a number of civilians may have been killed during a bombardment by the military. Amnesty International is concerned if these reports are accurate, those killed may have been victims of excessive use of force, in violation of Yemen's obligations under international law. Hundreds are reported to have been detained following the violence in January 2007, but Amnesty International does not have the exact numbers of those thought to be in detention (see UA 29/07, MDE 31/001/2007, 7 February 2007).

Amnesty International has repeatedly raised its concerns regarding arrests and detentions by the Political Security Organ in Yemen, which are carried out with total disregard for the rule of law and for Yemen's international human rights obligations. Arrests are carried out without the judicial supervision required by law and those detained were invariably subjected to lengthy incommunicado detention and interrogations, during

which some detainees claim that they were tortured or ill-treated. Detainees have also been denied access to lawyers, as well as being denied the opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention before a court.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or Arabic or your own language:**

- urging that Mu'amar al-'Abdali, Basam al-Humaidan, 'Ali al-Humaidan and other members of the Shi'a Zaidi community in Yemen are not tortured or ill-treated;
- calling for them to be given access to lawyers, their families and any medical treatment they may need;
- calling on the authorities to reveal their whereabouts;
- calling for them to be released immediately and unconditionally if they are held solely for the peaceful expression of their conscientiously-held beliefs or activism;
- if the detainees have been charged with recognizably criminal offences, ask for clarification of these together with details of any trial proceedings against them;
- calling for all held in connection with the clashes between the Shi'a Zaidi community and the security forces to be charged promptly with a recognizable criminal offence and tried in accordance with international fair trial standards, or else released.

**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**

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**

**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 20 July 2007.