

# URGENT ACTION

## RELEASE FIVE ARBITRARILY DETAINED BAHA'IS

On 25 May, armed Huthi forces stormed a peaceful gathering of Baha'is in Sana'a, Yemen, arbitrarily detaining 17 members of the Baha'i community, including five women and human rights and humanitarian workers. Since then, 12 individuals have been released following international pressure. However, five remain arbitrarily detained by the Huthi security and intelligence services and are denied their right to legal counsel. They are at risk of further violations at the hands of the Huthi authorities, including torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International calls on the Huthi de facto authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the remaining five Baha'i detainees as they are detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

Spokesperson for the Huthi de facto authorities

Mohamed Abdelsalam

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Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,

*I am concerned that five Baha'i individuals, including human rights and humanitarian workers, remain arbitrarily detained by the Huthi de facto authorities following a raid on 25 May 2023 on a peaceful gathering of the Baha'i community – a religious minority in Yemen – in violation of their rights to freedom of religion and belief and from arbitrary arrest. All five detainees continue to be deprived of their right to legal counsel after nearly 10 months in unjust imprisonment.*

*According to their lawyer, the Baha'is are being held in a Huthi-run security and intelligence detention centre in Sana'a governorate. Among the detainees includes **Abdul'elah Muhammad al-Boni**, a 30-year-old father of two and a humanitarian worker, and **Abdullah al-Olofi**, a 45-year-old father of four and a human rights activist.*

*While I welcome the release of 12 Baha'i individuals, they should have never been detained. I am concerned that the remaining Baha'i individuals in custody are at risk of further violations, including torture and other-ill treatment. Amnesty International has documented the cases of dozens of journalists, human rights defenders, activists, academics, members of the Baha'i religious minority and others perceived as opponents or critics of the Huthis who were subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearance and unfair trials with recourse to the death penalty by the Huthi de facto authorities. All were targeted for peacefully exercising their human rights including their rights to freedom of expression, association and belief.*

*Since their arrest, the Huthi de facto authorities have incited violence and discrimination against this religious minority, which puts further individuals at risk of grave human rights violations.*

***I therefore call on the Huthi de facto authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all five Baha'i detainees in their custody. I also call on the authorities to end all forms of discrimination and persecution of the Baha'i minority and all others who are targeted solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights including to freedom of religion and belief.***

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 25 May, armed Huthi forces stormed a peaceful gathering of Baha'is in Sana'a, Yemen, briefly enforcedly disappearing and arbitrarily detaining 17 members of the Baha'i community, including five women and human rights and humanitarian workers.

Since 2015, Amnesty International has [documented](#) the situation of 82 members of the Baha'i community in Yemen who have been detained by the Huthi de facto authorities and subjected to enforced disappearance, torture, incommunicado detention or denied the right to a fair trial.

Five Baha'is arrested in [2016](#) were held without charge or trial without any means to challenge their detention for over two years, until they were charged in September 2018 with various serious offences including espionage for foreign states, some of which can carry the death penalty. Their trial was part of a mass trial involving 24 Baha'is in total – the other 19 were charged in absentia, including the teenage daughter of a Baha'i detainee. The Huthi de facto authorities ordered the release of all Baha'i prisoners in 2020 [on the condition of their exile](#) from the country. However, their charges against the 24 Baha'is have not been lifted.

A Baha'i prisoner of conscience, Hamid Haydara, was released in 2020 after his initial arrest in 2013. He was sentenced to death in 2018, and then pardoned in 2020. Amnesty International raised its concerns with the Huthi de facto authorities regarding the basis for his detention, as well as the [deeply flawed legal proceedings in his case](#), including prolonged pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, torture and other ill-treatment and lack of access to counsel during his interrogations.

All parties to the armed conflict taking place in Yemen, including the Huthi forces, the international recognized government, the Southern Transitional Council, the Saudi-led coalition and UAE-backed Yemeni forces have committed crimes under international human rights law and humanitarian law, including wilful killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment and unfair trials.

On 17 October 2023, the UN Human Rights Council passed a [resolution](#) calling on the Huthi de facto authorities to “remove the obstacles that prevent access by relief and humanitarian aid, to release kidnapped humanitarian workers and to end violence and discrimination against women and targeting based on religion or belief.”

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic and English.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 10 May 2024.**

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Abdullah Al-Olofi, Abdul'elah Muhammad Al-Boni and Hassan Tariq Thabet (All he/his/him).

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde31/7159/2023/en/>