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## **Yemen: Security forces block access to hospital**

Amnesty International has received reports that security forces in Yemen refused to allow residents to take the injured to hospital after Central Security forces fired on anti-government protesters and bystanders yesterday when at least 11 people were killed.

Security forces fired on protesters from armoured vehicles, as well as attacking houses where protesters were believed to have been seeking shelter. Two men were said to have been killed in their houses during a period of intensive gunfire, both of them shot in the head.

“Events in Yemen are taking a serious turn for the worse and the Yemeni security forces are showing reckless disregard for human life,” said Philip Luther, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

“The Yemeni authorities have a duty to ensure that those injured receive medical treatment. They must on no account block access to urgently needed medical assistance, particularly when people’s lives may be at risk.”

One doctor told Amnesty International: “I went to the al-Mu’alla area to take those injured to hospital, but when I reached there, security forces refused to allow me in, and told me to go back. I showed them my ID, and told them that I was a doctor and wanted to help the injured who were bleeding in the streets. But security forces said to me: ‘Let them die!’ I had to go back.”

The death toll in recent protests calling on the Yemeni president to stand down has now reached 27, with an average of nearly three people killed every day since 16 February. Twenty-four of them have been killed in Aden, two in Sana’a and one in Ta’izz.

“The authorities must launch a prompt and independent investigation into the killings of protesters and bystanders in Yemen and reports of denial of access to medical assistance,” said Philip Luther.

“Amnesty International has repeatedly warned the Yemeni authorities to rein in their security forces. Their heavy-handed tactics against protesters must immediately cease.”