

PUBLIC

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11 April 2008

Further Information on UA 82/08 (MDE 31/001/2008, 01 April 2008) – Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture/Medical concern

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
An unknown number of others

Since 2 April dozens of people protesting against being turned down for recruitment into the army have been arrested or injured by police dispersing their recent demonstrations in various cities in the south of Yemen . The place of detention of those arrested is unknown, but they are believed to be held incommunicado and may be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the five named above were moved to the capital, Sana’a, but their place of detention has not been disclosed. They have not been allowed family visits.

The more recent protests have been underway since 2 April in the southern cities of Aden, al-Dhali’, Abyan and Lahaj. These protests were against the discrimination faced by people from the south when looking for jobs and also the arrest of the five men named above on 31 March and 1 April. The security forces dispersed the protestors using teargas, water cannons and live ammunition. There appears to have been excessive use of force, in violation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, as well as other international standards. According to the Yemeni press, several members of the security forces were also injured, but Amnesty International does not have the details of how they were injured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Until 1990, Yemen was divided into the southern People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) and the northern Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). After reunification, the armies of the two former countries were merged, but following the civil war of 1994, many soldiers of the former PDRY were dismissed. They, and former PDRY soldiers who were allowed to remain in the army, say that they face discrimination. Activists from the former PDRY have increasingly been voicing their concern at this discrimination and the lack of employment opportunity for those from the former PDRY

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials state: "In any event, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life" (Principle 9) and "exceptional circumstances such as internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked to justify any departure from these basic principles" (Principle 8).

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

- expressing concern at reports that the security forces used live ammunition to disperse protests in Aden and other southern cities, injuring scores of people, and calling for a prompt and independent investigation;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the security forces adhere strictly to the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the five men (naming them) 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 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

His Excellency 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 23 May 2008.