

PUBLIC

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Torture/p

YEMEN Mohamed Omar Haji, Somali national, aged 27

Mohamed Omar Haji has been put on trial for converting to Christianity from Islam, which carries the death penalty. He has allegedly been tortured to force him to recant. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience.

The Yemeni authorities may deport him to any country, where he could face human rights violations.

Mohamed Omar Haji has been arrested several times since January 2000 for converting to Christianity. Police allegedly beat and threatened to kill him to force him to recant during interrogation at al-Tawahi police station in Aden.

He has since been brought before a court in Aden at least twice, charged with apostasy (turning away from Islam), which is punishable by death unless the offender declares before the court that he has returned to Islam. The trial is continuing. If he is sentenced to death, under Yemeni law he will go through a lengthy appeal process and face a long time in prison.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Mohamed Omar Haji whom Amnesty International believes to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely on account of his religious beliefs;
- reminding the government that punishing people for their religious beliefs is a gross violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Yemen is a state party (Article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2);
- reminding the government of their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees not to forcibly return anyone to a country where they would be at risk of human rights violations;
- calling for a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the allegations that Mohamed Omar Haji has been tortured, and that anyone found guilty of torture be brought to justice;
- seeking assurances that he is being treated humanely and is given regular access to family members, lawyers and doctors.

APPEALS TO:

President

General 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh
President of the Republic of Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Telegrams: President 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh, Sana'a, Yemen

Telexes: 2422 RIASAH YE

Faxes: +967 1 274 147

Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister

Dr 'Abd al-Karim al-Iryani
Prime Minister of the Republic of Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Faxes: + 967 1 282 669
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior
Hussain Muhammad 'Arab
Ministry of Interior
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Sana'a, Yemen
Faxes: + 967 1 251 529 / 251 566
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice
Isma'il Ahmad Al-Wazir
Ministry of Justice
Sana'a, The Republic of Yemen

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Sana'a, Yemen
Faxes: + 967 1 252 138
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 22 August 2000.