

PUBLIC

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Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture and other ill-treatment

YEMEN

Salah Ahmed Yahya al-Shagladi (m), chief editor of Aden Gulf Network news
Hussein al-'Agil (m), aged about 50, lecturer at Aden University

The two men named above were arrested during the last three weeks and are now held incommunicado, putting them at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. According to sources in Yemen, journalist Salah Ahmed Yahya al-Shagladi is held at the Political Security Prison in the capital, Sana'a, while lecturer Hussein al-'Agil is detained at the Criminal Investigation Unit, also in Sana'a. They appear to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression.

Salah Ahmed Yahya al-Shagladi was arrested on 18 June by National Security officers at his home in Aden. According to sources in Yemen, the officers beat him and dragged him from the house, in front of his family. They took him to Fatih Prison in Aden, and the following day he was transferred to the Political Security Prison in Sana'a. He has had no contact with his family or any legal counsel since his arrest.

Hussein al-'Agil was arrested at Aden University on 8 June, where he teaches geography. He was taken to Sabr Prison, in the southern city of Lahij. He was allowed family visits there, but on 22 June he was moved to Sana'a, where he is believed to be detained at the Criminal Investigation Unit with no contact with the outside world.

It is not clear exactly why the men were arrested, but they are said to have been targeted for their writing in support of a coalition of political groups, the Southern Movement, which the government sees as calling for the independence of the southern part of the country.

Salah Ahmed Yahya al-Shagladi had published articles in support of the Southern Movement and raising concerns about the situation in the south of Yemen. Hussein al-'Agil wrote a study on the oil resources in the south of Yemen which was said to have been published in 2009 in the Yemeni newspaper *al-Watani*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been sporadic protests in the south of Yemen for about two years. They began with protests by retired soldiers from the south, who have increasingly been complaining that they do not receive the same treatment in employment, salary and pensions as soldiers from the north of the country. Most of the retired soldiers are from the army of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), commonly known as South Yemen. Following the unification of the country in 1990, the armies of both the PDRY and the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), commonly known as North Yemen, were merged into a single army force for the new Republic of Yemen. However, after the civil war of 1994, many of the soldiers of the former PDRY were dismissed from the army. They, as well as those who remained in the new, unified army, allege that they are subject to discrimination compared to soldiers originally from the army of the YAR. The Southern Movement appears to have emerged following these protests.

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

- urging the authorities to ensure that Salah Ahmed Yahya al-Shagladi and Hussein al-'Agil are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and are allowed prompt and regular access to lawyers of their choosing, their families and any medical treatment they may require;
- pointing out that if they are held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, Amnesty International would consider them prisoners of conscience, and call for their immediate and unconditional release;
- asking for details of any charges the two men face, and urging 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
Office of the 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 the Attorney General
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen

Fax: +967 137 4412

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

His Excellency Mutaher Rashad al Masri
Ministry of the Interior
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Fax: +967 1 332 511

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Human Rights

Her Excellency Houda 'Ali 'Abdullatif al-Baan
Ministry for Human Rights
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Fax: +967 1 444 833

and 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 5 August 2009.