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## **Yemen urged to halt deadly attacks on protesters**

The Yemeni authorities must end deadly night raids and other attacks on protests, Amnesty International said today, after one protester was killed and around 100 injured in the capital Sana'a late last night.

According to media reports, security forces used live rounds and tear gas against protesters camped outside Sana'a University. Protesters are demanding an end to President Ali Abdullah Saleh's 32-year rule.

"This is the second time in three weeks that protesters have been killed in late night raids by the security forces in the capital," said Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"These disturbing heavy-handed tactics used with lethal effect against protesters must stop immediately. People must be allowed to assemble and protest in peace."

Some 30 people have reportedly now been killed in Yemen during ongoing unrest which began early last month. Protesters are demanding government reform and an end to corruption and unemployment.

Yesterday's shooting followed reports of a riot by inmates at the capital's Central Prison. The inmates were reported to have called for the sacking of the director of the prison, and for a new government. At least two prisoners were killed and 60 people wounded.

Yesterday also saw protests in the southern city of Aden and in the town of 'Ataq, south-east of Sana'a.

In the central region of Ibb tens of thousands of people took to the streets to demand action over an attack on a protest camp by pro-government protesters on Sunday which reportedly killed one and injured dozens.

Yemeni soldiers were also reported to have opened fire on protesters in the northern town of Harf Sufyan on 4 March. According to information received by Amnesty International, the protesters were leaving the protest area in cars when soldiers at a military post opened fire, killing two men in the same car and wounding several others. The Yemeni Ministry of Defence has denied allegations that the military opened fire on protesters.

In the previous late night raid in Sana'a, two protesters were shot dead on 22 February when security forces, aided by men described by witnesses as "thugs", stormed a group of people who had set up a protest camp outside the university.

Yemen is one of a number of countries in the Middle East and North Africa region that have seen increasing unrest since mass protests in Egypt and Tunisia.