

YEMEN

RELEASE ARBITRARILY DETAINED JOURNALIST



Journalist Younis Abdelsalam has been arbitrarily detained without charge by the Huthi de facto authorities for almost a year. He was falsely accused of communicating with foreign entities. Following his arrest, he was subjected to enforced disappearance for several weeks and then held incommunicado for at least three months. Amnesty International urges the Huthi de facto authorities to immediately release Younis Abdelsalam. Pending his release, they must ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that he has access to legal representation, his family, and adequate healthcare.

The 28-year-old, has been arbitrarily detained by the Huthi de facto authorities since 4 August 2021 in Sanaa, Yemen. He was held for one night in an underground cell in an unofficial detention centre next to Sanaa international airport before he was transferred to a Huthi-run security and intelligence detention centre in Sanaa. Younis Abdelsalam was subjected to enforced disappearance for several weeks. He was also held in solitary confinement for 80 days and in incommunicado detention for at least three months.

To date, he has not been charged nor has he appeared before a judge. His lawyer has not been allowed to visit him or speak to him since his arrest. According to his brother, Younis Abdelsalam was detained for peacefully opposing the authorities. He is accused of communicating with foreign entities but has not been formally charged.

On 19 January 2022, his lawyer submitted a request to the Specialized Criminal Prosecution to release Younis Abdelsalam on the basis that his detention is arbitrary. A month later, the family paid bail to the security and intelligence apparatus for the release of Younis Abdelsalam but were informed that his case will be transferred to the public prosecutor instead.

Amnesty International reviewed a medical report which mentions that Younis Abdelsalam suffers from a mental health condition that requires regular medical follow up and treatment. He has been denied adequate healthcare throughout his detention. According to his brother who recently visited him, Younis Abdelsalam's mental health has deteriorated due to his detention conditions.

Write to the Ansarullah Spokesperson urging the Huthi authorities to:

- immediately release Younis Abdelsalam unless he is charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in accordance with international standards
- pending his release, they must ensure he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that he has access to legal representation, regular family contact, and adequate healthcare

Write to:

Ansarullah Spokesperson

Mohamed Abdelsalam

Email: mdabdalsalam@gmail.com

Twitter: @abdusalamsalah

Salutation: Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam:

Additional information

All parties to the conflict, including Huthi forces, the Yemeni government, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-led coalition and UAE-backed Yemeni forces have carried out arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, harassment, torture and other ill-treatment, and unfair trials.

In areas they control, [Huthi forces arbitrarily arrested and detained critics](#) and opponents as well as journalists, human rights defenders and members of the Baha'i community, subjecting scores to unfair trials, [incommunicado detention and enforced disappearance](#). The majority of those targeted have been members or supporters of the political party, al-Islah.

In May 2021, Amnesty International published a report, '[Released and Exiled: Torture, unfair trials and forcible exile of Yemenis under Huthi rule](#)' - an in-depth investigation into the experiences of a minority of non-fighters, including journalists, political opponents and Baha'i religious minority members, who were released as part of political deals in 2020 after being unlawfully detained and tortured for up to seven years. Upon their release, the Baha'is were forced into exile, with the United Nations (UN) facilitating their departure; eight other detainees were banished to other parts of the country. Conditions in Huthi-run prisons and detention centres, including mass overcrowding of detention cells, inadequate access to health care, sufficient food, clean water and sanitation, caused Covid-19 to spread, exposing detainees to substantial health risks. All parties failed to take measures to protect detainees and curb the spread of the virus in prisons and detention centers through the provision of masks or other hygiene products.

The internationally recognized Yemeni government has also harassed, threatened and arbitrarily detained human rights defenders and other activists. UAE-backed Yemeni forces in southern Yemen [conducted a campaign of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances](#). In May 2018, Amnesty International detailed the cases of 51 men held in a network of secret prisons by UAE and Yemeni forces operating outside the command of Yemen's government, including individuals detained between March 2016 and May 2018.