

**Urgent Action Office** 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 [urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)  
First UA: 8/24 Index: MDE 31/7631/2024 Yemen of February 1, 2024

## **YEMEN**

### **WOMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AT RISK OF EXECUTION**

Fatma al-Arwali, a 34-year-old advocate for human rights, is facing the death penalty in Yemen. She was convicted by the Huthi-controlled Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Sana'a for allegedly "aiding an enemy country." Her conviction on December 5, 2023, followed a trial marred by significant irregularities, including the denial of her right to legal representation. Fatma has been subjected to numerous human rights abuses by the Huthi's security forces since her arrest in August 2022, including enforced disappearance, incommunicado detention, and torture.

#### **Urge the Huthi de facto authorities to:**

- Immediately quash the conviction and death sentence
- Ensure that Fatma al-Arwali receives a fair retrial before a competent, independent and impartial court without recourse to the death penalty, otherwise she must be immediately released with all charges dropped.
- In the meantime, ensure that she has regular access to her family and lawyer and is held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

#### **Write to:**

Ansarullah Spokesperson

Mohamed Abdelsalam

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*Salutation: Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,*

#### **And copy:**

His Excellency Jamal Abdullah Yahya AL-SALLAL

Ambassador

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### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Fatma al-Arwali was the former head of the Yemen office of the Women Leadership Union of the Arab League and was active in promoting women's rights.

Fatma al-Arwali's death sentence was marred by fair trial violations. In view of the irreversible nature of the death penalty, the proceedings in capital cases must scrupulously observe all relevant international standards protecting the right to a fair trial. Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal

charge must be treated in full compliance with Yemen's human rights obligations including rights to a fair trial. These include the rights to choose one's own lawyer; to access effective legal assistance from the time of arrest and throughout the pre-trial and trial proceedings; to be brought promptly before an ordinary civilian judge; to challenge the lawfulness of detention before an independent, impartial tribunal; to be presumed innocent; to remain silent and not to be compelled to incriminate oneself or to confess guilt; to obtain full access to relevant evidence; to not be detained on vague charges; to examine and cross-examine witnesses; to receive a fair, public hearing before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal; and to be provided with a public, reasoned judgment.

Since 2015, Amnesty International has documented the cases of over 60 individuals, who have been brought before the Sana'a-based SCC, including journalists, human rights defenders, political opponents, and members of religious minorities who were subjected to unfair trials on spurious or trumped-up charges by this court. Virtually all of them have been tried on spying charges, which are punishable by death under Yemeni law.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Amnesty International has consistently called on all states that retain the death penalty to establish an official moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty.

***Please take action until March 28, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***