

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca

UA 51/19, **UPDATE 1**, AI Index: MDE 31/0709/2019 of 16 July 2019
The original index number is MDE 31/0224/2019 of 18 April 2019.

YEMEN

30 OPPOSITION FIGURES SENTENCED TO DEATH

On 9 July 2019, the Huthi-run Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) of Sana'a sentenced to death 30 academics and political figures based on trumped-up charges which include espionage for the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition. The 30 men will appeal their sentence. Six other people also on trial were acquitted. Amnesty calls on the Huthi de facto authorities to quash the death sentences of all 30 men and release them immediately as they are being punished for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Amongst those who received death sentences is **Youssef al-Bawab**, a 45-year-old father of five, linguistics professor and political figure, who was arbitrarily arrested in late 2016. He and 35 others were charged in April 2017 with several offences carrying the death penalty. Throughout his detention, proceedings against him and others in the same case were seriously flawed. He endured enforced disappearance, excessive pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, incommunicado detention, claims of torture and other ill-treatment and lack of access to legal counsel and medical care.

During one of the trial sessions on 2 April 2019, Youssef al-Bawab stated how he and others had been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment throughout their detention at the Political Security Office in Sana'a. The mistreatment included beatings, being hung from the ceilings and tied up using iron chains. The court did not respond to Youssef's statement and the judge failed to order an investigation into these claims.

Please send an email or tweet to Ansarullah's representative.

- * Call on him to ensure that the death sentences against Youssef al-Bawab and the 29 other men are quashed.
- * Urge their immediate release as they are being punished solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- * While arrangements for their release are made, seek effective safeguards against torture and other ill-treatment as well as access to adequate medical treatment and regular visits from their lawyer and family.

Write to

Mohamed Abdelsalam
Ansarullah Representative at UN-led peace talks
Email: mdabdalsalam@gmail.com
Twitter: @abdusalamsalah
Salutation: Dear Mr. Abdelsalam

Additional information

On 20 October 2016, Youssef al-Bawab was arbitrarily arrested as he was leaving his local mosque in Sana'a. Later that night, the Huthi de facto authorities raided his house, where his wife and five children live, and confiscated his belongings, including his personal computer and 150 academic documents. During the first three months, the family was unable to obtain any official information as to his whereabouts. They only found out that Political SO was detaining him three months later, through unofficial channels. He was interrogated for the first time in March 2017 in the presence of his lawyer, the only time he was permitted to have legal counsel prior to the trial. He was then charged on 8 April 2017, alongside 35 others, with several offences, including assisting the Saudi Arabia-led coalition with intelligence regarding military objectives and organizing assassinations. Most of these charges carry the death penalty.

All parties to the conflict, including Huthi forces, the Yemeni government, the Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE)-led coalition and UAE-backed Yemeni forces have engaged in arbitrary detention practices. In areas they controlled, 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 leaders, members or supporters of the political party al-Islah. The internationally recognized Yemeni government harassed, threatened and arbitrarily detained human rights defenders and other activists. Meanwhile, UAE-backed Yemeni forces in southern Yemen conducted a [campaign of arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances](#). In May 2018, Amnesty International published a report detailing 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.