



## JOINT LETTER: DETENTION IN YEMEN

### **Ansar Allah**

Abdelmalik Badr El-Din Al-Houthi, Leader of Ansar Allah  
Mahdi Mashat, President of the Supreme Political Council  
Mohammad Ali Al-Houthi, Member of the Supreme Political Council  
Abdelkarim Amir Al-Din Al-Houthi, Sanaa minister of interior  
Abdelhakim Al-Khiwani, Sanaa intelligence and security apparatus director  
Abdelaziz bin Habtoor, Sanaa prime minister  
Jalal Al-Royshan, Sanaa deputy prime minister for defense and security affairs  
Hisham Sharaf, Sanaa minister of foreign affairs  
Hussein Al-Azzi, Sanaa vice minister of foreign affairs

### **Government of Yemen**

Abd Rabuh Mansour Hadi, President  
Lt. General Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, Vice President  
Moeen Abdelmalik Saeed, Prime Minister  
Ahmad Al-Maysari, Minister of Interior  
Major General Mohammed Ali Al-Maqdishi, Minister of Defense  
Abdullah Al-Hadhrami, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Abduh Al-Hothaifi, PSO director  
Major General Sultan Al-Arada, Marib governor  
Mohammed Saleh bin Eido, Shabwa governor  
Major General Faraj Al-Bahsani, Hadramawt governor

### **Southern Transitional Council**

Major General Aidroos Al-Zubaidi, Southern Transitional Council president  
Hani bin Breik, Southern Transitional Council vice president  
Major General Shallal al-Shaye, security chief, Aden

### **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Minister of Defense  
Adel bin Ahmad Al-Jubeir, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs  
Prince Lieutenant General Fahad bin Turki bin Abdalazeez, Coalition Commander

### **United Arab Emirates**

Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces

Dr. Anwar Mohammad Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

***Copied to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen***

We write to you on Human Rights Day to call on you to take meaningful steps to end detention-related abuse in Yemen.

Steps taken in recent weeks by both the [Ansar Allah armed group \(Houthis\)](#) and [the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](#) to unilaterally release hundreds of detainees were positive. There remains an urgent need to address rampant, ongoing detention-related abuse that continues to affect tens of thousands of Yemenis across the country. The impact of detention-related abuse goes beyond the person detained – it impacts their family members, their loved ones and wider society. In addition to ending the suffering of victims and their families, ending and redressing detention-related abuses also would contribute towards reaching a just and sustainable resolution of the conflict in Yemen.

We specifically write to ask you to build on recent positive steps by using your authority and influence to help ensure the release of all those arbitrarily detained, an end to enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, the improvement of conditions of detention, including the facilitation of family visits, and full cooperation with efforts to ensure that individuals reasonably suspected of responsibility for war crimes and serious human rights violations, including torture and hostage-taking, are prosecuted in fair trials that preclude the death penalty.

As you are aware, thousands of civilian detainees are currently held in various formal and informal detention facilities. They include human rights defenders, activists, peaceful protestors, [journalists](#), [migrants](#), fishermen, members of the Baha'i community, humanitarian workers and those deemed to be critics or opponents of the authorities. Arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment in Yemen by parties to the conflict, including the Houthi armed group, the Government of Yemen (GoY), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia (KSA), and local forces backed by members of the coalition have been extensively documented by various local and international organizations, including the UN-mandated Group of Eminent Experts (GEE). Accountability and redress for these abuses remains lacking.

In their most recent [report](#), the GEE found that parties to the conflict continued to detain individuals arbitrarily. They documented incommunicado detention, solitary confinement for long periods, frequent transfers between facilities and the use of secret facilities, which often keep detainees [out of the reach of their families](#), as well as legal protection and judicial oversight.<sup>1</sup>

One year ago, Houthi armed group and the Yemeni government held consultations in Sweden to discuss an executive mechanism to activate a prisoner exchange agreement, providing hope to many families that their loved ones would be able to return to them. They [subsequently met to discuss](#) implementation, but, as progress stalled, relatives of the thousands of detainees lost hope that the Sweden consultations would lead to the release of their loved ones. Wider implementation of the agreement has yet to materialise. While the recent unilateral release of prisoners – mostly fighters – by both the Houthis and KSA, may help build confidence between the parties, more extensive and comprehensive steps must be taken to address rampant detention-related rights abuse, regardless of the state of political talks.

To that end, we call on you to use your influence and good offices to help bring about an end to ill-treatment, torture, arbitrary detention and forced disappearances by all parties to the conflict. We urge you to help secure the release of those arbitrarily detained, human rights defenders,

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<sup>1</sup> pp.11-12

journalists and peaceful activists; and that anyone deprived of their liberty is granted regular access to their families and lawyers; and that international monitors are allowed immediate access to all detention facilities, unofficial and official.

**Signed**

Mwatana for Human Rights

Amnesty International

Human Rights Watch

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Dhameer for Rights and Freedoms – Yemen

Afaq Forum for Change – Yemen

Yemeni Archive

Peace and Building Foundation – Yemen

Musa'ala for Human Rights – Yemen

Sisters' Arab Forum for Human Rights – Yemen

Mothers of Abductees' Association – Yemen

Watch for Human Rights – Yemen

Civil Alliance for Peace – Yemen

Wogood for Human Security – Yemen

Adala Association – Morocco

Syrian Network for Human Rights – Syria

Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research – Syria