

URGENT ACTION

16 BAHÁ'IS FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED IN YEMEN

On 25 May 2023, armed Huthi forces stormed a peaceful gathering of Baha'is in Sana'a, Yemen. They detained and forcibly disappeared 17 individuals, among them five women. One individual has since been released but the other 16 remain in Huthi custody and their fate and whereabouts remain unknown. The Baha'is are a religious minority in Yemen that have faced ongoing persecution in violation of their right to freedom of religion and belief at the hands of the Huthi de facto authorities. The 16 forcibly disappeared Baha'is are at risk of further violations at the hands of Huthi authorities, including torture and other ill-treatment. They must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Spokesperson for the Huthi de facto authorities

Mohamed Abdelsalam

Email: mdabdalsalam@gmail.com

Twitter: @abdusalamsalah

Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,

*I am alarmed to learn that **16 Baha'i individuals**, among them five women, have been forcibly disappeared by the Huthi de facto authorities following a raid on a peaceful gathering on 25 May 2023. This is an egregious violation of international human rights law and another escalation in the Huthi de facto authorities' ongoing and flagrant persecution of the Baha'i minority- a religious minority in Yemen- in violation of their right to freedom of religion and belief.*

Days after the arrest of the Baha'is, the general prosecutor denied a request for their release submitted by a lawyer. To date, the authorities have failed to provide any information on where the Baha'is are being held and no lawyer has been able to communicate with them.

I am concerned that the 16 Baha'i individuals in custody are at risk of further violations, including torture and other-ill treatment, forced confessions, and unfair trials on spurious and trumped-up charges that may carry the death penalty. These violations have all been documented as tools of repression used by the Huthi de facto authorities to crack down on individuals they perceive as opponents, including members of the Baha'i community. Since their arrest, the Huthi authorities have incited violence and discrimination against this religious minority, which puts further individuals at risk of grave human rights violations.

I call on the Huthi de facto authorities to urgently disclose the fate and whereabouts of the 16 Baha'i detainees in their custody and to immediately and unconditionally release them. I also call on you to end all forms of discrimination and persecution of the Baha'i minority and all others who are targeted solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of religion and belief.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2015, Amnesty International has documented the situation of 82 members of the Baha'i community in Yemen who have been detained by the Huthi de facto authorities and subjected to enforced disappearance, torture, incommunicado detention and denied the right to a fair trial.

Five Baha'is arrested in [2016](#) were held without charge or trial and without any means to challenge their detention for over two years, until they were charged in September 2018 with various serious offences including espionage for foreign states, some of which can carry the death penalty. Their trial was part of a mass trial involving 24 Baha'is in total – the other 19 were charged in absentia, including the teenage daughter of another Baha'i detainee. The Huthi de facto authorities ordered the release of all Baha'i prisoners in 2020 on the condition of their exile from the country. However, the charges against the 24 Baha'is have not been lifted.

A Baha'i prisoner of conscience, Hamid Haydara, was released in 2020 after his initial arrest in 2013. He was sentenced to death in 2018, and then pardoned in 2020. Amnesty International raised its concerns with the de facto Huthi authorities regarding the basis for his detention, as well as the [deeply-flawed legal proceedings in his case](#), including prolonged pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, torture and other ill-treatment, and lack of access to counsel during his interrogations.

All parties to the conflict, including the Huthi forces, the Yemeni government, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-led coalition and UAE-backed Yemeni forces have carried out violations of international human rights law, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, and unfair trials.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 8 August 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: 16 Baha'i individuals (All)