

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Yemen: Threats against Jewish community

Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of members of the Jewish community in north-western Yemen following the killing of one member of the community and anonymous serious threats to others to leave Yemen or face death.

In the light of this, Amnesty International has today written to the Yemeni Minister of the interior seeking information about measures being taken by the Yemeni authorities to afford appropriate protection to members of the community

Masha Yaish bin Yahya, brother of the Chief Rabbi of Yemen, Yahya Yaish bin Yahya, was murdered on 11 December 2008 in the town of Rayda in the Governorate of 'Amran. The murder followed reports that the Jewish community had received threats warning them that they would be killed if they did not convert to Islam or leave the country. Other members of the community are said to have had petrol bombs thrown at their homes at night, which, although they are not known to have caused loss of life or injury, have generated fear and anxiety among those targeted.

A former pilot in the Yemeni armed forces is reported to have been arrested in connection with the murder.

Amnesty International calls on the Yemeni authorities to identify and bring to justice anyone responsible for the murder of Masha Yaish bin Yahya and other attacks and threats against members of the Jewish community. Any such proceedings should be conducted in accordance with international human rights standards and without resort to the death penalty.

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