

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 31/010/2005

UA 173/05

Fear for safety/ Incommunicado detention/ Medical concern

23 June 2005

YEMEN

Ibrahim al-Saiani (m), aged 14

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that 14 year-old Ibrahim al-Saiani has been held in incommunicado detention since May and maybe at risk of torture and ill-treatment. He reportedly has injuries which require medical treatment.

Ibrahim al-Saiani was reportedly arrested on 8 May after the security forces stormed his family home in the capital Sana'a. He is believed to be held in the Political Security (*al- Amn al- Seyasi*) prison in Sana'a and may be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for being part of the Zaidi community, whose other members have recently clashed with the authorities.

Though he was reportedly not directly involved, Ibrahim al Saiani was reportedly injured by shrapnel during the clashes in Sa'da, north of Yemen, between government forces and followers of Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, a cleric from the Zaidi community. His right arm is said to have been amputated, a piece of shrapnel is lodged in his skull, and he has an injury to his right leg. He is said to be completely dependant on his family to carry out daily activities.

A number of non-governmental organizations and his family are reported to have urged the President of Yemen, 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh to intervene in his case.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tension between the government and cleric Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, from the Zaidi community, has been growing since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Hundreds of his followers have been detained every week for shouting anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans after Friday prayers. The recent clashes began after the government asked Badr al-Din al-Huthi to hand himself to the security forces, and he refused.

The exact number of people killed or detained by the security forces since last year is not known. On 3 July 2004 the Minister of Interior reportedly told parliament that 118 people had been killed. Other sources have reported that the number of dead, among them women and children, could be as high as 500. Most of the killings are said to have resulted from the security forces' use of heavy weaponry, including helicopter gun ships. A helicopter gunship is reported to have attacked civilian targets, killing a number of people. Amnesty International fears that many or most of those killed may have died as a result of extrajudicial executions, or use of excessive force by the security forces.

Mass arrests are reported to have been carried out by security forces in Sa'da and other parts of the country particularly Sana'a. Those targeted for arrest included suspected followers of Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi as well as religious persons who expressed their opposition to the continuing clashes in Sa'da. Some are said to have been released after short term detention, but those who continue to be held are reported to be detained incommunicado and may be at risk of torture. (see UA 219/04, MDE 31/002/2004, 9 July 2004)

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or your own language:

- calling on Yemeni authorities to ensure that Ibrahim al-Saiani, is given immediate access to medical treatment, his family, lawyers and is not subjected to torture or ill-treated;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release if he is held solely for the peaceful expression of his conscientiously held beliefs or for being a member of the Zaidi community;

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency General 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh

President of the Republic of Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Faxes: + 967 127 4147
Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister
'Abd al-Qader Bajamal
Prime Minister of the Republic of Yemen
Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Faxes: +967 1 274 662
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior
Rashid Muhammad al-'Alimi
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Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights
Amat al Aeem al Suswah
Ministry for Human Rights
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Faxes: +967 1 419 700
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COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Yemen accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 August 2005.