

# URGENT ACTION

## YEMENI ACADEMIC HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Professor and political figure Youssef al-Bawab has been held in incommunicado detention in Sana'a's Political Security Office (PSO) since 2 April 2019 and is at heightened risk of being tortured. He has been detained since 20 October 2016. In April 2017, he was accused of charges that carry the death penalty. The legal proceedings against him have been seriously flawed, including enforced disappearance, excessive pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and lack of access to legal counsel and medical care. Amnesty calls on the Huthi de facto authorities to drop all charges and immediately release him as the organization believes that he is being prosecuted on trumped-up charges used to punish him for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

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

**Mohamed Abdelsalam**

Ansarullah Representative at Peace Talks

Email: [mdabdalsalam@gmail.com](mailto:mdabdalsalam@gmail.com)

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Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,

*Youssef al-Bawab, a linguistics professor at Sana'a University, has been held incommunicado since 2 April 2019 when he appeared before the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Sana'a alongside 35 other detainees; their charges include espionage for the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition, which carries a mandatory death sentence under Yemeni Criminal Law. During the trial session, Youssef al-Bawab appealed to the judge on behalf of the other detainees, highlighting how he and others have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment throughout their detention at Political Security Office (PSO) in Sana'a, including 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 allegations of torture and other ill-treatment*

*On 6 April 2019, Youssef al-Bawab was not brought to court to attend his next session. His lawyer asked about his whereabouts, medical condition and whether he was still alive or not. The court failed to answer these questions. After his arrest in 2016, Youssef al-Bawab was forcibly disappeared for three months. Eventually he was transferred to the PSO in Sana'a and his family was permitted to visit him. He only had access to legal counsel once during his initial interrogations in March 2017.*

***I urge you to drop the trumped-up charges against Youssef al-Bawab and immediately release him as he is being punished for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Pending his release, I urge you to intervene to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, granted access to adequate medical treatment and regular access to his lawyer and family.***

*Yours sincerely,*

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Youssef al-Bawab, a 45-year-old father of five, is a linguistics professor and political figure. He is being tried alongside 35 others who were all arrested between 2015 and 2016 by the Huthis and allied forces.

On 20 October 2016, Youssef al-Bawab was arbitrarily arrested as he exited 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. The enforced disappearance of Youssef continued for three months before members of his family were able to locate him at PSO and permitted to visit him. 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. 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. Throughout his detention, proceedings against Youssef al-Bawab have been seriously flawed. These irregularities have included enforced disappearance, excessive pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, incommunicado detention, allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and lack of access to legal counsel and medical care.

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.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 30 May 2019

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

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Youssef al-Bawab (he/him)

## ADDITIONAL TARGETS

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY DR YASSIN SAEED NOMAN AHMED, 57 Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2ED, 020 7584 6607 Fax 020 7589 3350 [admin@yemenembassy.co.uk](mailto:admin@yemenembassy.co.uk) Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.**