

URGENT ACTION

30 OPPOSITION FIGURES SENTENCED TO DEATH

On 9 July 2019, the Huthi-run Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) of Sana'a sentenced 30 academics and political figures to death based on trumped-up charges – including espionage for the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition. Among them is Youssef al-Bawab, a 45-year-old father of five, linguistics professor and political figure, who was arbitrarily arrested in late 2016. Amnesty calls on the Huthi de facto authorities to quash the death sentences of Youssef al-Bawab and the 29 other men and release them immediately, as they are being punished for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

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

Mohamed Abdelsalam

Ansarullah Representative at UN-led peace talks

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Dear Mr. Abdelsalam,

On 9 July 2019, the Huthi-run Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) of Sana'a sentenced 30 academics and political figures to death. The 30 men will appeal their sentence. Six other people who were also on trial were acquitted.

Among those sentenced to death is Youssef al-Bawab, a 45-year-old father of five, linguistics professor and political figure, who was arbitrarily arrested in late 2016. He was charged in April 2017, alongside 35 others, with several offences carrying the death penalty. Throughout his detention, proceedings against him, and others in the same case, were seriously flawed; including enforced disappearance, excessive pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, incommunicado detention, claims of torture and other ill-treatment, and lack of access to legal counsel and medical care.

During one of the trial sessions on 2 April 2019, Youssef al-Bawab stated that he and others had been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment throughout their detention at the 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 these claims.

I urge you to ensure that the death sentences against Youssef al-Bawab, and the 29 other men, is quashed and that they are immediately released; as they are being punished solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression. In the meantime, I urge you to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, granted access to adequate medical treatment and regular access to their 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 was being tried alongside 35 others who were all arbitrarily arrested between 2015 and 2016 by the Huthis and allied forces.

On 20 October 2016, Youssef al-Bawab was arbitrarily arrested as he was leaving his local mosque in Sana'a. Later that night, the Huthi de facto authorities raided his house, where his wife and five children live – confiscating his belongings, including his personal computer and 150 academic documents. His family were unable to obtain any official information regarding his whereabouts for the first three months of his detention. They only found out that PSO was detaining him three months later, through unofficial channels. He was interrogated for the first time in March 2017 in the presence of his lawyer – this was the only time he was permitted to have legal counsel prior to the trial.

Youssef al-Bawab 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 organising assassinations; most of these charges carry the death penalty. Throughout his detention, proceedings against Youssef al-Bawab were seriously flawed. Irregularities included enforced disappearance, excessive pre-trial detention, undue delays in his trial, incommunicado detention, claims 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 recognised Yemeni government has 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: 8 January 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), 29 men (they/them)*

[PREVIOUS UA](#)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS: Embassy of the Republic of Yemen, 57 Cromwell Rd, South Kensington, London, SW7 2ED