

# URGENT ACTION

## RELEASE JOURNALISTS AT RISK OF EXECUTION

On 29 May, the appeal session for four Yemeni journalists sentenced to death, namely, Akram al-Walidi, Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hareth Hamid, and Tawfiq al-Mansouri, will take place before the Huthi-run Specialized Criminal Appeals Division in Sana'a, the Yemeni capital. Since their arrest in 2015, the Huthi de facto authorities have detained the journalists, holding them without charge or trial for over four years and subjecting them to various human rights abuses, including enforced disappearance, intermittent incommunicado detention and solitary confinement, beatings, and denial of access to medical care. Amnesty International calls on the Huthi de facto authorities to quash the death sentences – issued following a grossly unfair trial - and order the immediate release of the four journalists.

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

**Ansarullah Spokesperson**

Mohamed Abdelsalam

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Dear Mohamed Abdelsalam,

The appeal hearing regarding the case of four Yemeni journalists, **Akram al-Walidi, Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hareth Hamid, and Tawfiq al-Mansouri**, will be held on 29 May before the Specialized Criminal Appeals Division in Sana'a, Yemen. The Specialized Criminal Court sentenced the journalists to death in April 2020 following a grossly unfair trial; a verdict that the defendants have since been appealing.

The de facto Huthi forces raided Qasr al-Ahlam hotel in Sana'a on 9 June 2015 and arrested the four journalists. They were detained without charge or trial until December 2018 when they were charged with a series of offences, including "spying for Saudi Arabia", which carries the death penalty, as well as "creating several websites on the internet and on social media"; and "broadcasting rumours, fake news and statements in support of the enemy Saudi Arabia and its allies against the Republic of Yemen." On 11 April 2020, they were sentenced to death by the Specialized Criminal Court in Sana'a following a grossly unfair trial in which their lawyer was barred from attending nearly all court sessions, and without informing their lawyers and families of the death sentence.

In October 2020, the four journalists were transferred to the Exchange House prison, in the Central Security Camp in Sana'a, expecting to be released as part of a prisoner exchange deal. Despite the Prosecutor General's order, dated 30 October 2020, to release them, they continue to be detained and denied visits from their families and lawyers. According to his family, the authorities have barred them from bringing Tawfiq Al-Mansouri any medication despite pressing health concerns, and since 2020 he has been denied transfer to a hospital for treatment. Denial of medical treatment to the seriously ill is considered an act of cruelty amounting to torture and other ill-treatment under international law.

**We urge the Huthi de facto authorities to quash the death sentences of Akram al-Walidi, Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hareth Hamid, and Tawfiq al-Mansouri and order their immediate and unconditional release. Pending their overdue release, the authorities must ensure the journalists are provided with urgent medical care and granted access to their families and lawyers.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The four journalists, Akram al-Walidi, Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hareth Hamid, and Tawfiq al-Mansouri, were detained among a group of 10 journalists in 2015. Huthi forces raided Qasr al-Ahlam hotel in Sana'a on 9 June 2015 and arrested the four journalists among a group of nine, along with Hasan Anab, Haytham al-Shihab, Hisham al-Yousefi, and Essam Balgheeth. According to an eyewitness, on 28 August 2015 the 10<sup>th</sup> journalist, Salah al-Qaedi was arrested at his home. The remaining six journalists have since been released.

During their detention, the four journalists have been subjected to a range of grave human rights abuses as well as violations of their right to a fair trial. Since 2015, they were arbitrarily detained for over four years without charge or trial, subjected to forcible disappearances, intermittent incommunicado detention and solitary confinement, beatings, and denied visits from their families and lawyers. Despite suffering from serious illnesses, the journalists continue to be denied access to medical treatment. Moreover, it is Amnesty International's understanding that they are additionally being subjected to severe beatings and other harsh treatment, as well as denied access to medical treatment despite urgent health-related concerns.

All parties to the conflict in Yemen, including the Huthi forces, the Yemeni government, the Saudi-led coalition, and UAE-backed Yemeni forces have carried out serious human rights violations and abuses, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, harassment, torture and other ill-treatment, and unfair trials.

In areas under Huthi control, journalists, human rights defenders, and members of the Baha'i community have been subjected to [arbitrary arrest, detention](#), as well as [incommunicado detention and enforced disappearance](#). Amnesty International published a report in May 2021 titled '[Yemen: Released and exiled: Torture, unfair trials and forcible exiles of Yemenis under Huthi rule](#)' which investigates human rights violations committed by Huthi forces and documents the lived experiences of civilians released as part of political deals in 2020. Detainees in Huthi prisons are subjected to brutal and inhumane conditions inside Huthi prisons and face severe overcrowding, insufficient food and clean drinking water, and poor sanitation.

According to [Reporters Without Borders](#), 14 journalists are currently detained in Yemen on the basis of their work, and two journalists have been killed in 2022.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment.

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

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 22 July 2022**

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

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Akram al-Walidi, Abdelkhaleq Amran, Hareth Hamid and Tawfiq al-Mansouri  
(All he/him/his)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde31/2139/2020/en/>