

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
OHCHR - UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **Title:**
Yemen must stop persecution of Bahá'í community, urges un expert on freedom of religion
- **Publication date:**
22 May 2017
- **ecoi.net summary:** According to UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, Bahá'í community in Sana'a is subjected to persecution; whereabouts of 2 Bahá'ís arrested at a security checkpoint at Hudiedah unknown [ID 341591]
- **Countries:**
Yemen
- **Original link** [http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/9BCA406F62831B9AC12581280030121C?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/9BCA406F62831B9AC12581280030121C?OpenDocument)

Recommended citation:

OHCHR - UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Yemen must stop persecution of Bahá'í community, urges un expert on freedom of religion, 22 May 2017 (available at ecoi.net)
http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/341591/472186_en.html (accessed 13 October 2017)



Yemen must stop persecution of Bahá'í community, urges un expert on freedom of religion

22 May 2017

(Issued as received) - GENEVA (22 May 2017) – “The recent escalation in the persistent pattern of persecution of the Bahá'í community in Sana'a mirrors the persecution suffered by the Bahá'ís living in Iran,” said today the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed. “Many Yemeni Bahá'í families in Sana'a have left their homes and live in constant fear,” he warned.

“The harassment against the Bahá'ís, as religious minorities, seems to persist, if not worsen amounting to religious persecution in Yemen,” the human rights expert said. “It is unacceptable for anyone, including persons belonging to religious minorities, to be targeted or discriminated based on religion or belief.”

Mr. Shaheed's warning comes after the Public Prosecutor reportedly summoned on 17 April 2017 at least thirty Yemeni Bahá'ís by phone to appear in court. At the same time, the authorities in Sana'a issued arrest orders of at least twenty-five Bahá'ís, pressuring them to recant their faith.

In addition, two Yemeni Bahá'ís, Walid Ayyash and Mahmood Humaid, were reportedly arrested by political security officers at a check point near the city border of Hudiedah. Their whereabouts are unknown since their arrests.

“The new wave of court summons and arrest orders appears to be an act of intimidation pressuring the Yemeni Bahá'ís to recant their faith,” the Special Rapporteur said. “The Yemeni authorities, including the de facto authorities in Sana'a, have failed to respond to [the call made by my predecessor](#) and other UN independent experts last year.”

“The Houthi de facto authorities in Sana'a must stop summoning or arresting the Bahá'ís and immediately release all Bahá'ís arbitrarily detained,” he stressed. “They must also start an inquiry into the disappearances of Mr. Ayyash and Mr. Humaid, and provide details of the investigation.”

The expert furthermore recalled the case of Hamid Kamali Bin Haydara, arrested in 2013, and remains incarcerated in the National Security Prison for ‘compromising the independence of the Republic of Yemen’, including spreading the Bahá'í faith in the Republic of Yemen. His trial has been postponed on numerous occasions up till 1 August 2017. The expert also urged for the release of two other Bahá'ís, Kaiwan Mohamed Ali Qadri and Pazhohesh Sana'i who remain detained since their arrests.

The Special Rapporteur reminded the Yemeni Official Government and the de facto authorities in Sana'a that the right to freedom of conscience, thought, religion or belief is a non-derogable right under any circumstance. To this end, he further reminded both official and de facto authorities of the right of persons not to be arbitrarily detained for exercising religious freedom or for belonging to a religious minority.

Mr. Ahmed Shaheed (the Maldives) was appointed as [Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief](#) by the UN Human Rights Council in 2016. Mr. Shaheed is a Visiting Professor at Essex University, UK; a former member of the Maldivian presidential Commission Investigating Corruption; and a foreign policy advisor to the President of the Maldives. He was Foreign Minister of the Maldives from 2005 to 2007 and from 2008 to 2010. He led the country's efforts to sign and ratify all nine international human rights Conventions and to implement them in law and practice. Mr. Shaheed is the former Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran.

Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

Check the [Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief](#)

UN Human Rights, country page: [Yemen](#)

You can access this press release [online](#)

For use of the information media; not an official record

HR17/163E

published on  European Country of origin Information Network