

Minister of Interior Mahmoud Tawfiq

Ministry of Interior

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Dear Minister,

I write to express my concern about the arbitrary detention of **Abdul-Baqi Saeed Abdo**, a 54-year-old Yemeni asylum seeker held in Al-Qanater 1 prison, north of Cairo, and at risk of deportation. Security forces arrested Abdul-Baqi Saeed Abdo from his home on 21 December 2021, and forcibly disappeared him for two weeks, during which time the authorities refused to provide his family with any information about his fate and whereabouts. He was subsequently brought in front of the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP), where a prosecutor ordered his pre-trial detention pending investigations on charges of "joining a terrorist group with knowledge of its purposes" and "defamation of the Islamic religion". These charges are in connection to his conversion to Christianity, about which he regularly posted on his social media platforms since fleeing from Yemen to Egypt in 2014. Since his arrest in December 2021, his pretrial detention has been extended without providing him with an opportunity to meaningfully challenge the lawfulness of his detention.

In July 2022, the Egyptian authorities issued a deportation order for Abdul-Baqi Saeed Abdo. If forcibly returned to Yemen, he would be at risk of arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and death including through the imposition of the death penalty or killing by armed groups or non-state agents. According to [Article 259](#) of the Yemeni Republican Decree for Law No. 12 for 1994, Concerning Crimes and Penalties, "Anyone who turns back from or denounces the religion of Islam, is punished by the death penalty after being questioned for repentance three times and after giving him a respite of thirty days. Apostasy in public by speech or acts is considered contradictory to the principles of Islam and its pillars in intention and determination. If the intention or determination is not established and the guilty shows repentance, there will be no punishment". Given these provisions, and previous threats faced while in Yemen, Amnesty International's assessment is that his life would be at risk should he be deported to Yemen.

I urge you to immediately release Abdul-Baqi Saeed Abdo as his detention is linked solely to the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression, conscience and belief, and to halt any plans to deport him to Yemen, where he would be at real risk of persecution. Pending his release, he should be held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners, and granted immediate access to his family, lawyers and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Yours sincerely,