



July 31, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

On the eve of Yemeni President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi's visit to the U.S., I write to highlight key human rights issues that merit serious attention in the context of the U.S.-Yemen relationship. For the U.S. to be a strong and effective advocate for human rights reforms in the country, there must be significant changes in the U.S. government's own actions with regards to Yemen and Yemeni nationals.

Amnesty International USA has several key recommendations for the Administration with regards to polices affecting Yemen and Yemeni nationals:

- **Guantánamo detentions:** It is long past time to release all Guantánamo detainees unless they are to be promptly charged and fairly tried in US federal court, without recourse to the death penalty. Now that you have lifted the moratorium on repatriation of Yemeni nationals, your administration and Congress should bring about lawful and safe detainee transfers as a matter of priority.
- **Drone strikes:** The U.S. government must declassify and disclose key information about U.S. drone strikes in Yemen, including the names and locations of individuals killed. Your administration should also ensure independent and effective investigations into any alleged unlawful killings and ensure remedy for any killings found to be unlawful.

- **Yemeni journalist Shayi’:** The U.S. government should end its opposition to the recent release of Abdul Ilah Haydar Shayi’, the Yemeni journalist who was imprisoned for over 2.5 years. The charges on which he was convicted appear to be related to his legitimate activities as a journalist. The U.S. should also encourage President Hadi to lift Shayi’s two-year travel ban. Finally, the U.S. should reveal all the information in its possession on the 2009 cluster bomb attack that Shayi’ first reported on, in which 41 local residents were killed in Yemen’s Abyan area. Photographic evidence suggests that the attack used a US-manufactured cruise missile that carried cluster munitions. A leaked US diplomatic cable later corroborated the finding that the US military carried out the attack.
- **Women’s rights:** Tomorrow’s meeting offers an important opportunity to urge President Hadi to address the severe and widespread discrimination faced by women and girls in Yemen, both in law and practice. Yemen’s Personal Status Law contains numerous discriminatory provisions that severely constrain women’s lives and put them at risk of abuse. Women who assert their right to marry a partner of their choice against the wishes of their families risk physical violence and restrictions on their freedom of movement. Lastly, the penal code also codifies and reinforces the very low status that women and girls in Yemen endure.

The above recommendations highlight opportunities to address key flaws in both U.S. and Yemeni policy that have severe consequences for human rights. By implementing these recommendations, your administration can help Yemen emerge from its recent human rights crisis. For too many years, Yemeni residents have lived under governments that violated human rights and acted with impunity. Tomorrow’s meeting with President Hadi offers an opportunity for the US to play a constructive role in helping the Yemeni government to set a new direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Jannuzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank Jannuzi
Deputy Executive Director
Amnesty International USA