



## BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

### OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Sixty Men, Women, and Children Arrested at Baha'i gathering in Yemen**

WASHINGTON – On August 10, **armed soldiers raided a multi-day youth event and arrested and detained 60 men, women and children.** The event was organized by the Yemeni Baha'i community and sponsored by the Nida Foundation for Human Development, and was held at the Jud Organization building in Sana'a. It featured a nonreligious, nonpolitical program focused on moral and educational efforts to serve the Yemeni community. Roughly half of the attendees were Baha'is.

The soldiers who carried out the raid were with the National Security Agency, and the attendees at the event **described the raid as befitting of an attack on the headquarters of a militant group** about to undertake a coup. Of the 60 people arrested and detained, 38 were men and 22 were women; several of them were **children between the ages of 10 to 15.** The **detainees, including the children, reported harsh treatment.**

Later that evening, girls under 18 years old were released. On the following day, August 11, all but three of the remaining women were released on bail; two men were also released. On August 16, 11 more individuals were released. As of today, **23 men and three women are still in prison.**

This incident signals an escalation in the targeting of Baha'is in Yemen. Prior to the raid, a single Baha'i, Mr. Hamed bin Haydara, was the only Baha'i in detention in Yemen. He has been imprisoned since December of 2013, subjected to torture and abuse in prison, and denied any semblance of due process or a fair trial.

Several individuals and groups have already spoken out against the arrests and detention of these 60 people last week, including Arwa Uthman, a human rights activist and the former Minister of Culture; Abdul-Bari Taher, a journalist; the Secularists for Peace Movement; and the Quranis.

**Concern for the 26 remaining detainees is high.** They were targeted for no other reason than their religion, and they continue to be held without charge. Past experience, including that of Mr. bin Haydara, suggests that, if these individuals are not quickly released, they **will be subject to a protracted and baseless court case and the ever-present threat of abusive treatment** in the National Security Agency prison.

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