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Interview with Al Hiwar TV station about wrongful imprisonment of Yemeni Baha'i

BIC Brussels (03.04.2015) - Interview of Rachel Bayani, Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the European Institutions with the Al Hiwar TV Channel, about the case of a Yemeni Bahá'í, Mr. Hamed bin Haydara, wrongfully imprisoned since December 2013 for his beliefs.

Mr. bin Haydara was arrested at his workplace in Balhaf (Shabwa Province) on 3 December 2013 and taken into custody in Sana'a at the prison of the National Security Agency. No reason was given for his arrest and he has only been formally charged more than a year later.

The charges include being a spy for Israel and converting Muslims to the Bahá'í Faith. The charges are baseless and nonsensical and come after over a year of mistreatment, including solitary confinement, various forms of torture as well as intense psychological abuse, during which, privately, the authorities have repeatedly admitted their religious motives for the imprisonment.

Mr. bin Haydara's trial, which has been postponed on several occasions, is now scheduled for the 5th April.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ZbHZNRzsYZ8

Baseless indictment of Yemeni Baha'i after 14 months of harsh imprisonment

Baha'i World News Service (16.01.2015) - In a betrayal of justice, authorities in Yemen have indicted Hamed Kamal bin Haydara, a Yemeni national, of being a spy for Israel and converting Muslims to the Baha'i Faith.

These charges come at the start of the second year of his imprisonment. Throughout this time, Mr. bin Haydara has been held without charge and has endured various forms of torture as well as intense psychological abuse.

Mr. bin Haydara's wife, Elham, [told Reuters News Agency](#) that her husband had been subjected to severe torture during his imprisonment in order to extract a confession, which the authorities have failed to get. As a result, Mr. bin Haydara is now suffering from chronic health conditions.

"The charges against Mr. bin Haydara are baseless and nonsensical and come after over a year of mistreatment, including solitary confinement, during which, privately, the authorities have repeatedly admitted their religious motives for the imprisonment," said Bani Dugal, principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

"Mr. bin Haydara is a well-respected and sincere family man who has not broken any laws. [Baha'is do not proselytize as a matter of principle](#), and all native Yemenis who have joined the Baha'i Faith have done so of their own conviction," Ms. Dugal added.

"The accusation of spying for Israel is a grotesque distortion of reality," said Ms. Dugal. "The historical circumstances that led to the establishment of the administrative and spiritual center of the Baha'i Faith occurred well before the existence of the State of Israel."

"Obedience and loyalty to one's government is a central principle in Baha'i teachings and the notion that Baha'is would engage in espionage is utterly absurd," said Ms. Dugal.

"Baha'is have been part of Yemen for decades and are known throughout the Arab region, indeed the world, for their peaceful nature and attitude of selfless service to society."

Ms. Dugal added: "The Baha'i International Community condemns this unlawful action against Mr. bin Haydara and calls for his immediate release. The charges are entirely fabricated and are without a shred of evidence."

These comments come amid accusations by the authorities that Mr. bin Haydara is not a Yemeni national and has forged his name to enter the country.

Mr. bin Haydara was in fact born on Socotra Island in Yemen and has lived in the country as a citizen. His father, a physician, moved to Yemen from Iran in the 1940s and was granted Yemeni citizenship by the Mahra Sultan of Qishn and Socotra, in recognition of his sterling service to the poor in society. Citizenship was naturally and rightfully passed down to his son. The Sultan gave Mr. bin Haydara's father his Yemeni name as an honor and in recognition of his respect for his adopted country.

"Mr. bin Haydara is a devoted husband, a father of three young girls, and loyal citizen of Yemen," Ms. Dugal continued. "But perhaps the most ironic and telling element of this indictment is that the authorities have condemned Mr. bin Haydara for 'demonstrating high moral standards', through which he has won the confidence of his fellow citizens."
