

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

ABDUL MAJID SABRA

عبد المجيد صبرة

Detained (pretrial) **Yemen**

Abdul Majid Sabra is a lawyer who has defended journalists, political activists, and others detained for exercising fundamental rights in Yemen. Houthi authorities have held him in Sana'a since 25 September 2025 without charge. His family was first allowed to visit him in January 2026. He went on hunger strike in December 2025 and again in June 2026.

HuMENA.

Prepared by HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement · 8 November 2026

Case reference HM-YE-2026-001

01

THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Abdul Majid Sabra is a lawyer who has defended journalists, political activists, and others detained for exercising fundamental rights in Yemen. Houthi authorities have held him in Sana'a since 25 September 2025 without charge. His family was first allowed to visit him in January 2026. He went on hunger strike in December 2025 and again in June 2026.

STATUS	**Detained (pretrial)**
ARRESTED	**25 Sep 2025**
COUNTRY	**Yemen**
CHARGES	**Social media posts commemorating the anniversary of the 26 September Revolution**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Release Abdul Majid Sabra immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/abdul-majid-sabra/

02

DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Criminalisation of solidarity	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 21, 22 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 5
Denial of legal counsel	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)
Enforced disappearance	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 9, 16
Inhumane detention conditions	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10 UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)
Prolonged pretrial detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)
Threats and intimidation	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

03

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

11 April 2020

OTHER ACT

Barred from verdict hearing of journalists he defended

As lawyer of the four journalists sentenced to death by the Houthi-run Specialised Criminal Court, Abdul Majid Sabra was barred from attending the verdict hearing.

25 September 2025

ARREST

Arrest at office in Sana'a

Armed Houthi forces and plainclothes operatives raided Abdul Majid Sabra's office in the Shamila district of Sana'a, presented an arrest warrant citing his social media posts about the 26 September Revolution anniversary, and took him to an undisclosed location.

25 September 2025

START OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Whereabouts unknown, family unable to reach him

Sabra’s family do not have information on his whereabouts and have since been unable to communicate with him.

10 November 2025

INTERROGATION

Questioned by security service

He was interrogated by the Houthi Security and Intelligence Service. His brother said he accepted conditions for release, including pledges to stop his human rights work and his posts, but he was not freed.

7 December 2025	HUNGER STRIKE BEGINS	**Hunger strike begins** Abdul Majid Sabra began a hunger strike in protest against his incommunicado detention. He told his family by phone on 11 December 2025. He was then held in solitary confinement at the Houthi Police Intelligence and Counterterrorism Service facility in Sana'a.
January 2026	TRANSFER BETWEEN PLACES OF DETENTION	**Moved to a Security and Intelligence Service prison** He was moved to a reformatory of the Houthi Security and Intelligence Service north west of Sana'a.
21 January 2026	REAPPEARANCE IN CUSTODY	Family visits him for the first time; his place of detention is known
11 March 2026	CONTEXT	**UN experts raise his case** The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders and other UN experts sent a joint communication about his detention.
April 2026	CONTEXT	**Amnesty calls for his release** Amnesty International called for his immediate release after seven months in detention without charge.
June 2026	CONTEXT	**Brothers threatened with arrest in reprisal** Houthi security officers threatened to detain his brothers who are active on social media, and the family was intimidated at the entrance of the security service.
16 June 2026	HUNGER STRIKE BEGINS	Begins a second, open-ended hunger strike
17 June 2026	HUNGER STRIKE ENDS	Ends the hunger strike after the security service agrees to raise his case
8 September 2026	PRETRIAL DETENTION RENEWED	**Still held without charge** He was still held without charge in a Security and Intelligence Service prison in Sana'a, nearly one year after his arrest.

04

THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Abdul Majid Sabra is a human rights lawyer based in Sana'a, Yemen. For years he has represented individuals detained by Houthi de facto authorities for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association. His clients have included journalists targeted for their reporting, political activists held for opposition activities, and others subjected to arbitrary detention in areas controlled by Ansar Allah forces.

He has used social media platforms to document cases, provide updates to families, and advocate publicly for due process and the release of those unlawfully held. His legal practice and online advocacy have made him a visible figure in Yemen's shrinking space for human rights defense.

The Arrest

On 25 September 2025, a group of armed Houthi forces and plainclothes operatives raided Abdul Majid Sabra's office in the Shamila area of Sana'a. They presented an arrest warrant and told those present that he was being detained because of social media posts he had published marking the anniversary of the 26 September Revolution, the 1962 uprising that established the Yemen Arab Republic. The men took him to an undisclosed location.

For several days after the arrest, his family received no information about his whereabouts. They were unable to communicate with him or confirm which authority was holding him. The period of enforced disappearance caused severe psychological distress to his relatives, who had no legal recourse to locate him.

Detention Conditions and Hunger Strike

On 11 December 2025, Abdul Majid Sabra was able to make a phone call to his family. He informed them that he had begun a hunger strike in protest against his arbitrary detention. At that time he was held in solitary confinement at the Houthi Police Intelligence and Counterterrorism Service facility in Sana'a. In January 2026 he was moved to a prison of the Security and Intelligence Service, and on 21 January 2026 his family was allowed to visit him for the first time. In June 2026 he went on hunger strike again for two days. As of September 2026 he was still held without charge in a Security and Intelligence Service prison in Sana'a.

The conditions of his detention raise serious concerns about his physical and psychological wellbeing. Prolonged solitary confinement is recognised as a form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, particularly when combined with the lack of access to legal counsel and the uncertainty surrounding any formal charges or judicial process.

Legal Proceedings

As of September 2026 he had not been charged, referred to the prosecution or brought before a court. His family has not been informed of any trial date or legal process. The arrest warrant cited his social media activity, but no legal basis under Yemeni or international law justifies detention for peaceful expression.

His detention appears to be directly linked to his human rights work and his exercise of freedom of expression, both of which are protected under international human rights law to which Yemen is a party.

International Response

Human rights organisations have condemned Abdul Majid Sabra's arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance. The targeting of lawyers who defend individuals detained for exercising fundamental rights represents a particularly severe form of repression, eroding the rule of law and denying due process to entire communities. His case illustrates the systematic suppression of legal advocacy and freedom of expression in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

05

SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing to demand the immediate release of Abdul Majid Sabra, human rights lawyer; defender of journalists and political activists detained by Houthi authorities, currently detained in Yemen since 25 September 2025, and an end to all reprisals tied to this case.

In brief: Abdul Majid Sabra is a lawyer who has defended journalists, political activists, and others detained for exercising fundamental rights in Yemen. Houthi authorities have held him in Sana'a since 25 September 2025 without charge. His family was first allowed to visit him in January 2026. He went on hunger strike in December 2025 and again in June 2026.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Release Abdul Majid Sabra immediately and unconditionally;
2. Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights;
3. Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

I will continue to monitor this case until Abdul Majid Sabra is free.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026