

UK Watchdog Investigating Detention and Questioning of Yemeni Human Rights Activist at Gatwick

By [Reprise](#)

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A [Government watchdog](#) is looking into the [case of a Yemeni activist](#) who was detained by UK border officials under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act to be questioned on his work on [drones](#) and human rights.

[David Anderson QC](#), the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, is already conducting an inquiry into the use of Schedule 7, following the detention at Heathrow earlier this year of [David Miranda](#), the partner of Guardian journalist [Glenn Greenwald](#).

Earlier today, Mr Anderson met with [Baraa Shiban, Reprise's Yemen Coordinator](#), to discuss his [detention at Gatwick on Monday night](#). While detained, Mr Shiban was questioned about his work on human rights and specifically the covert US drone campaign in Yemen. When he asked why his views on human rights were relevant, he was threatened with detention for the full nine hours available under the Act.

Mr Shibaan says he was also told by the official that "Your organization [Reprise] has obviously been causing a lot of problems to your country. The relations between your government and the UK are vital for us." Reprise is a human rights charity which has been working to secure legal redress on behalf of [civilian victims of the US' covert drone campaign in Yemen](#) – in which Britain is known to be complicit through the [provision of air bases and communications infrastructure in the UK](#), linking the US with its Djibouti drone base from which it carries out strikes in Yemen.

Mr Shibaan is also a member of Yemen's [National Dialogue](#) – the body which is mapping out Yemen's post-Arab Spring future – and was on his way to a seminar at respected think tank Chatham House when he was detained. He has previously [given testimony](#) on the effects of the drone campaign to a US Congressional hearing.

[On Twitter today, Mr Anderson said](#): "I had the pleasure of meeting Baara Shiban this morning. He told me about his #Schedule7 stop at Gatwick."

Commenting after the meeting, Baraa Shiban said: "I am grateful to David Anderson for taking the time to meet me and discuss my detention. I am still baffled as to why in the UK it is considered acceptable to detain and question someone because they work for a human rights charity about their political opinions. I hope Mr Anderson will press the Government to account for this misuse of terrorism powers to harass and intimidate those whose views the UK and US find inconvenient."

Notes

1. For further information, please contact Donald Campbell in Reprieve's press office: +44 (0) 207 553 8166 / donald.campbell@reprieve.org.uk

2. Independent Reviewer David Anderson's tweet regarding his meeting with Baraa Shibaan can be found here: <https://twitter.com/terrorwatchdog/status/383167522591084544>

3. Further information on Mr Shibaan's detention can be found here:

http://www.reprieve.org.uk/press/2013_09_24_Yemen_drone_activist_detained/

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