

RELEASE IN FULL

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Subject: Yemen activists arrested, students protest (Reuters)

SANAA (Reuters) - Yemen arrested 19 anti-government activists on January 23, including a prominent woman who led student rallies against the president last week, in a clampdown which sparked a new wave of protests in the capital. Tawakul Karman, a journalist and member of the Islamist party Islah who organised the protests through text messages and emails, was taken into custody by police on her way home early on January 23 and charged with unlawfully organising demonstrations, her husband told Reuters.

Later in the day, police in Sanaa arrested 18 other activists, including the heads of two of Yemen's largest human rights organisations, as they left a meeting to discuss Karman's arrest. The arrests sparked a spontaneous protest of several hundred at Sanaa University on January 23. The demonstrators, chanting "release the prisoners" and holding pictures of Karman, tried to march to the General Prosecution Office, which a security source said had ordered her arrest. But roughly 50 riot police carrying batons beat them back. Police also beat up two TV cameramen filming the protests and confiscated their cameras, a Reuters witness said. One was briefly arrested. "I have no accurate information about her whereabouts," Karman's husband Mohamed Ismail al-Nehmi said by phone. "Maybe at the central prison, maybe somewhere else, I don't know.

"In a speech aired on state television on January 23, Saleh reiterated an offer of dialogue with opposition groups and said it was wrong to link Yemen to the events in Tunisia. In an apparent move to calm discontent, Saleh also announced plans to raise the salaries of government employees and military personnel by \$47 to \$234 a month -- a good bonus for poorly paid soldiers and civil servants in the Arab world's poorest country.

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