

# URGENT ACTION

## FEMALE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST DETAINED

**Maryam Al-Khawaja, co-director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights and daughter of prisoner of conscience Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja was arrested on 30 August on arrival at Bahrain International Airport. She is a prisoner of conscience held in connection with her human rights work.**

Dual Danish and Bahraini national, **Maryam Al-Khawaja**, was arrested in the early hours of 30 August upon arrival at Bahrain International Airport in Manama, the capital, after she was searched by police officers and apparently refused to hand in her mobile phone. She was initially told that there was a court case against her. The same night Maryam Al-Khawaja was interrogated by the Public Prosecutor, in the presence of her lawyer, in connection with this airport incident. Maryam refused to answer the questions from the Public Prosecutor because she was not allowed to speak to her lawyer before or during the interrogation. She was charged with "assaulting police officers while performing their duties" and was detained for seven days pending investigation. The Public Prosecution publically stated that a medical report on a police officer was available. Maryam Al-Khawaja denied all charges. She is now held at the 'Issa Town detention centre for women, south of Manama, and is due to appear before the Public Prosecution on 6 September.

On 4 September the Public Prosecution replied to a letter sent by Amnesty International which sought clarification on the reasons for the arrest and current legal status of Maryam Al-Khawaja. Their response said that Maryam Al-Khawaja had arrived at Bahrain airport holding a Danish passport without a visa. It added that she humiliated and assaulted police officers when she was told she needed a visa. The response did not provide any details of the injuries or a copy of the medical report it requested. Amnesty International believes that Maryam Al-Khawaja is being targeted for relentlessly exposing the human rights violations taking place in Bahrain since 2011 and that the charge of assaulting police officers appears unreasonable.

Maryam Al-Khawaja had flown to Bahrain to visit her father, prisoner of conscience Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, who is held in Jaw Prison and has been on hunger strike since 25 August in protest of his arbitrary arrest and detention.

**Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Maryam Al-Khawaja as she is a prisoner of conscience targeted for her long-term peaceful activism;
- Urging them to protect her in the meantime from torture and other ill-treatment.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 OCTOBER 2014 TO:**

King

Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
P.O. Box 555  
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama, Bahrain  
Fax: +973 1766 4587 (keep trying)  
**Salutation: Your Majesty**

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa  
Ministry of Interior  
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain  
Fax: +973 1723 2661  
Twitter: @moi\_Bahrain  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs  
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa  
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs  
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain  
Fax: +973 1753 1284  
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh  
Twitter: @Khaled\_Bin\_Ali

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Maryam Al-Khawaja is the co-director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights and daughter of prominent activist and prisoner of conscience Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, one of the 13 opposition activists. Since the beginning of the uprising in Bahrain in 2011 she has been highlighting human rights violations in the country and vigorously campaigning for the release of her father and others. She is a dual Danish and Bahraini citizen and has been living abroad for several years.

During the detention of Nabeel Rajab, the director of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Maryam Al-Khawaja took the role of Acting Director of the organization. Between 1 and 23 November 2013 BCHR organized a campaign called "End Impunity in Bahrain". During the campaign the BCHR published the names of people it deemed were responsible for, or involved in, ongoing human rights violations in the country.

Maryam Al-Khawaja's father, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, started a hunger strike on 25 August in protest of his arbitrary arrest and detention. Amnesty International has adopted him as a prisoner of conscience and has called for his immediate and unconditional release after he was sentenced to life in prison during an unfair trial in connection with his role in the 2011 anti-government protests in Bahrain. The organization believes he is imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded in May 2012 that Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja's detention was arbitrary and called for his immediate release. Please see UA 166/14, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/023/2014/en>.

Maryam Al-Khawaja's sister, Zainab Al-Khawaja, was arrested on several occasions between 2011 and 2014 and served a series of short prison sentences for an array of charges. They included "destroying government property", "insulting a police officer", "illegal gathering", "rioting" and "inciting hatred against the regime". Amnesty International adopted her as a prisoner of conscience as the organization believed that she had only been imprisoned for expressing her right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Name: Maryam Al-Khawaja

Gender m/f: f

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