

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/bahrain-detained-journalists-and-bloggers-30-01-2014,45809.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Bahrain

Spate of hearings

Detained journalists and bloggers appear in court

30 January 2014

Reporters Without Borders reiterates its condemnation of the arbitrary behaviour of the Bahraini judicial system, which has postponed the trials of several detained news and information providers in the past two weeks.

The judicial authorities must abandon all the trumped-up charges they have brought against journalists just because they covered anti-government street protests, the media freedom organization said.

Reporters Without Borders also calls on the authorities to systematically order independent investigations whenever torture and mistreatment in detention is alleged. Failure to investigate violates article 12 of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

RWB and nine other human rights groups [wrote to Frank La Rue](#), the UN special rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, and Juan Méndez, the UN special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, on 15 December asking them to investigate the arrests, detention and torture of three Bahraini journalists.

Arrested for covering recent protests, the three journalists – reporter **Mohamed Hassan**, freelance photographer **Hussain Hubail** and freelance cameraman **Qassim Zain AlDeen** – all say they were tortured. Hassan has been released but Hubail and Deen are still held.

In the latest act of judicial foot-dragging, a judge yesterday postponed the well-known photographer **Ahmed Humeidan**'s trial until 26 March, when a verdict is supposed to be issued. He has been [held since December 2012](#) on a charge of attacking a police station in Sitra in April 2012, although he was not even there at the time.

His trial began last February but the prosecution kept on postponing hearings because it had difficulty producing witnesses. [His lawyer has repeatedly but unsuccessfully](#) requested an independent investigation into his client's allegations of torture. His requests to the prison authorities to let his client be examined by a doctor have also been unsuccessful.

On 27 January, the trial of the freelance [photographer](#) Hussain Hubail and the [blogger](#) **Jassim Al-Nuaimi** were postponed until 16 February for the final defence statements.

Winner of the independent newspaper [Al-Wasat's prize in May 2013](#) for a photo of protesters in a cloud of teargas, Hubail was [arrested on 31 July](#) and was charged on 21 August with "managing (electronic) accounts calling for the government's overthrow," "promoting and inciting hatred against the government," "inciting others to disobey the law," and calling for illegal demonstrations.

He was also charged with "contributing to the Twitter account of the 14 February media network." During the 27 January hearing, he accused a certain Lt. Fawaz Al-Sameem of torturing him and threatening him and the women in his family with rape.

Nuaimi, who was a very active blogger during the uprising, was arrested at his home by masked plainclothesmen on 31 July 2013 on charges of using social media to incite anti-government hatred and call for illegal demonstrations.

After being held for several days at the General Directorate of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), he was transferred to Dry Dock prison on 3 August, only to be transferred back to the CID and then taken before a prosecutor. He says he was tortured and forced to sign a confession.

During the 27 January hearing, Nuaimi testified that he was not in Bahrain when the offending messages were posted and that he had sold his computer before they were posted, so he could not have been responsible.

According to information received by Reporters Without Borders, Hubail and Nuaimi reported that Red Cross representatives examined them earlier this month in connection with their claims of mistreatment.

Abdullah Salman Al-Jerdabi, a photographer who was arrested on 13 September 2013, was sentenced on 22 January to six months in prison on charges of participating in an illegal demonstration and misuse of social networks.

The freelance cameraman **Qassim Zain AlDeen**, who was [arrested at his home on 2 August 2013](#) in the run-up to the "Tamarod" demonstrations in mid-August, was sentenced in December to three months in prison on a charge of participating in an illegal demonstration.

He was sentenced to an additional six months in prison on 15 January on another charge of participating in an illegal demonstration and a charge of "vandalism." He is due to be tried on 16 February on a charge of "vandalism" inside the prison where he is being held.
