

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/bahrain-bahrain-urged-to-release-12-21-08-2014,46828.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Bahrain

Image problem

Bahrain urged to release 12 detained news providers

21 August 2014

Twelve news and information providers are currently detained in Bahrain. Many of them are photographers or cameramen, who have been repeatedly targeted by the authorities since the start of the unrest in Bahrain in 2011 because their visual coverage of the protests and the government's crackdown threaten the kingdom's image.

As a Manama court prepares to rule on internationally-renowned photographer **Ahmed Humeidan's** appeal on 25 August, Reporters Without Borders has prepared the following overview of these 12 detainees. The youngest is 15. Eight are photographers or video reporters and four are online activists. Eight have been given prison sentences ranging from three months to life.

RWB calls for their release and withdrawal of all charges or the quashing of the convictions of those already sentenced.

The Bahraini authorities arbitrarily arrest news providers and peaceful civil society activists in an attempt to suppress dissent. Bahrain is ranked 163rd out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).



8 photographers and video reporters

Ammar Abdel Rasoul Ali, arrested on 24 July 2014

Firas Al-Saffar (a minor), arrested on 1 June 2014

Sayed Ahmed Al-Mousawi, arrested on 10 February 2014

Mansoor Al-Jamri, arrested on 9 January 2014 and sentenced to six months in prison on 17 October 2012

Jaffar Marhoon, arrested on 26 December 2013 and sentenced to successively to three months, six months and one year in prison

Qassim Zain Al-Deen, arrested on 2 August 2013, sentenced to six months in prison on 15 January 2014 and awaiting another trial

Hussain Hubail, arrested on 31 July 2013 and sentenced to five years in prison on 28 April 2014

Ahmed Humeidan, arrested on 29 December 2012 and sentenced to ten years in prison on 26 March 2014

Ammar Abdel Rasoul Ali



Firas Al-Saffar





ARRESTED
on 24 July 2014



ARRESTED
on 1 June 2014

Sayed Ahmed Al-Mousawi

Mansoor Al-Jamri



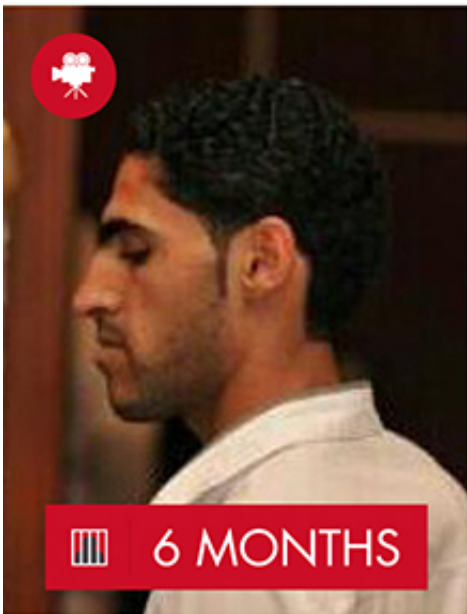
ARRESTED
on 10 February 2014



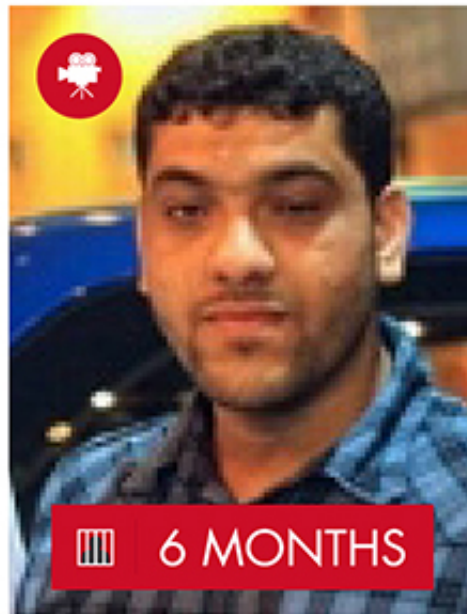
6 MONTHS

Jaffar Marhoon

Qassim Zain AlDeen



6 MONTHS



6 MONTHS

Hussain Hubail

Ahmed Humeidan





- **[Ammar Abdel Rasoul Ali](#)**, a freelance photographer who has won many awards including one in the 2014 IPA International Digital Photography Competition, was [arrested](#) by plainclothes men at his home in the village of Eker on 24 July after a search of his apartment in which two cameras and a mobile phone were seized.

He told his wife that he was threatened, insulted and tortured during the 72 hours he was interrogated at the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) and that he was asked questions about his activities as a photographer. His lawyer, Saeed Sarhan, said he is to be tried for “attacking the security forces” and “illegal assembly,” charges he denies. He is currently held in El-Hod El-Gaf (Dry Dock) prison under a 45-day detention order “for the purposes of investigation.”

- **Firas Al-Saffar** is a 15-year-old boy who has been held for nearly three months. He was [arrested on 1 June](#), as he was about to go to school, and was taken to Manama’s Al-Hura police station. Reporters Without Borders has been told he is to be prosecuted for filming unauthorized demonstrations. A court ordered him held in pre-trial detention for another 45 days on 17 July.
- **Sayed Ahmed Al-Mousawi**, a freelance photographer who has received [many international awards](#), was [arrested on 10 February](#) for giving SIM cards to demonstrators and taking photos of demonstrations. His detention was extended for 45 days on 27 July. He has been [awarded](#) more international prizes for his photography since his arrest.
- **Mansoor Al-Jamri**, a social network activist who photographed events in his village, Bani Jamra, was arrested on 9 January 2014, interrogated at CID headquarters and then taken to Dry Dock prison. He was transferred to Jaw prison to serve a six-month sentence (passed on 17 October 2012) for illegal assembly. He should be released on 2 September but is still facing charges of “attacking security forces” and “harbouring a wanted person.” He was not allowed to attend his grandmother’s funeral at the start of August 2014.
- Cameraman **Jaffar Marhoon**, 25, was [arrested](#) in a hair-dressing salon on 26 December 2013, interrogated by the CID for three days and then taken to Dry Dock prison. Prior to his arrest, he was given three jail sentences: three months for illegal assembly, six months for illegal assembly and one year for illegal assembly and vandalism. He is also charged with involvement in a homemade bomb attack on 17 December 2013 in Dimistan. His detention for the purposes of the investigation into this case was extended by 45 days on 20 August.
- Freelance cameraman **Qassim Zain Al-Deen** was [arrested](#) at his home on 2 August 2013 and was sentenced in December 2013 to three months in prison for illegal assembly. He was sentenced to an additional six months in prison on 15 January on another charge of illegal assembly and a charge of “vandalism.” He is now being prosecuted on another charge of “vandalism” in connection with unrest inside Dry Dock prison on 16 August 2013. The next hearing has been set for 24 September.

On 15 December 2013, Reporters Without Borders and nine other human rights organizations [asked Frank La Rue](#), the UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and Juan Méndez, the UN special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to investigate the detention and torture of Al-Deen and two other Bahraini news and information providers. They [reiterated this request](#) during the UN Human Rights Council’s 26th session.

- **Hussain Hubail**, a well-known freelance photographer working for various news media including *Agence France-Presse* and *Voice of America*, was arrested as he was about to board an international flight at Manama airport on 31 July 2013 and was interrogated for four days at CID headquarters without being allowed to contact his lawyer or family. He was then taken to Dry Dock prison.

Charged three weeks later with “membership of the 14 February media network,” “calling for and participating in illegal demonstrations,” “inciting hatred against the government” and “maintaining relations with government opponents in exile,” he was [sentenced to five years](#) in prison on 28 April 2014. He said he was mistreated and tortured while in pre-trial detention – claims that have never been the subject of an international investigation. A court began hearing his appeal on 22 June. A second hearing was held on 20 August and a third has been set for 21 September.

In May 2013, the independent newspaper *Al-Wasat* [awarded](#) Hubail a prize for a photo of demonstrators in a cloud of teargas.

He is one of the three news and information providers [named in the letter](#) that ten human rights organizations sent to UN special rapporteurs Frank La Rue and Juan Méndez in December 2013.

In mid-March, Hubail was treated for several days for respiratory problems and chest pains in Salmaniya prison hospital. After his conviction, he was transferred to Jaw prison, where he has not received appropriate medical treatment. On 11 August, his family launched a campaign, #SaveHussain, to demand access to proper care for Hubail, and [released a video](#).

- **Ahmed Humeidan**, 26, an internationally renowned photographer held since 29 December 2012, was [sentenced to ten years](#) in prison on 26 March for allegedly attacking a police station in Sitra on 8 April 2012. A court is due to rule on his appeal on 25 August. He told his family and his lawyer he was subjected to psychological torture and death threats following his arrest. His lawyer has repeatedly requested an independent investigation into these claims. He has also asked the prison authorities to let his client be examined by a doctor. Humeidan was awarded the Washington-based [National Press Club's press freedom prize](#) on 30 July.

4 online activists

Takrooz, arrested on 17 June 2014

Ali Al-Mearaj, arrested on 6 January 2014 and sentenced to 30 months in prison on 8 April 2014

Jassim Al-Nuaimi, arrested on 31 July 2013 and sentenced to five years in prison on 28 April 2014

Abdeljalil Al-Singace, arrested in March 2011 and sentenced to life imprisonment on 4 September 2012

- The blogger [Takrooz](#) was arrested at Manama airport on his return to Bahrain on 17 June on charges of "inciting hatred against the regime" and "using expressions that incite sectarianism" on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. The detained blogger, who has not been named, denied being the owner or user of the offending Twitter account but acknowledged being the owner of the email address to which it was registered. His detention was [extended](#) for another 45 days on 31 July.
- Blogger [Ali Al-Mearaj](#), 36, was [arrested on 6 January 2014](#) and was sentenced to 30 months in prison on 8 April on charges of "misusing information technology" and insulting the king. A court was supposed to have heard his appeal on 5 May but the hearing was postponed and has been postponed again three more times (on 13 May, 14 June and 10 July). It is now set for 3 September.
- Masked plainclothesmen [arrested](#) cyber-activist **Jassim Al-Nuaimi** at his home on 31 July 2013 on charges of inciting anti-government hatred and calling for illegal demonstrations in messages posted on social media. He was transferred to Dry Dock prison on 3 August 2013 and then taken before a prosecutor. He said he was tortured and forced to sign a confession. During a hearing on 27 January 2014, 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. He was [sentenced to five years](#) in prison on 28 April. A court began hearing his appeal on 22 June. A second hearing was held on 20 August and a third has been set for 21 September.
- Detained since March 2011, **Abdeljalil Al-Singace**, a blogger and member of the Al-Haq Movement's human rights bureau, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a military court in June 2011. He was one of 21 opposition leaders and activists convicted of membership of terrorist organizations and trying to overthrow the government. A high court of appeal [upheld his sentence](#) on 4 September 2012. The appeal that he and 12 other human rights activists submitted to the Court of Cassation was rejected on 7 January 2013.

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 102.3 kb)
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Takrooz



Ali Al-Mearaj



Jassim Al-Nuaimi



Abdeljalil Al-Singace

