

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE'S DETENTION EXTENDED

The detention of Bahraini human rights activist Hussain Jawad was extended by 30 days by the Public Prosecutor on 10 December following investigation of new charges against him including "insulting the king" and "criticizing a national institution".

Hussain Jawad, aged 26, who is the chairman of the European-Bahraini Organization for Human Rights (EBOHR), was taken to al-Noaim Police Station, north-west of the capital Manama, for questioning on 8 December where he was denied access to his lawyer. He was then informed that he would be investigated on new charges including "insulting the king" and "criticizing a national institution". The charges relate to a speech he gave at a sit-in that took place on 13 November during the Shi'a festival of 'Ashura. Hussain Jawad's lawyer has not received any documents regarding these new charges, which saw the Public Prosecutor extend his detention by 30 days on 10 December.

On 2 December, Hussain Jawad's wife was denied a family visit to the Dry Dock Prison in Manama for wearing a t-shirt with his picture on it and calling for his release. In protest, he began a hunger strike which he ended on 11 December. Since his arrest, Hussain Jawad has been documenting cases of other prisoners detained with him and the conditions in which they are held. He has written several letters to the prison authorities to complain about the poor prison conditions, such as a broken toilet in his cell resulting in raw sewage and insects coming into it.

Hussain Jawad was arrested on 24 November on the charge of "inciting hatred against the regime" in relation to another speech he gave at a rally in Manama on 13 November. During this speech he called for the Bahraini people to demand their rights, peacefully and without fear, and he also harshly criticized the authorities. Amnesty International has reviewed a video of the speech and does not believe it contained any incitement to violence. The organization considers Hussain Jawad a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

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

- √ Expressing concern that Hussain Jawad is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, and urging the Bahraini authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally;
- √ Expressing concern about his prison conditions;
- √ Urging the authorities to protect him from torture and other ill-treatment and to ensure that he is granted family visits and access to a lawyer of his own choosing.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 JANUARY 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 check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 318/13. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/056/2013/en.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hussain Jawad is the son of Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, who is serving a 15-year sentence in Jaw Prison as one of 13 jailed opposition activists. Hussain was arrested on 24 November while at the al-Wusta Police Station south of the capital, Manama, where he was filing a complaint against a Bahraini daily newspaper and an organization with close links to the authorities for defamation. They had published the photos and the names of 18 Bahraini human rights defenders and political activists and alleged among other things that they were responsible for "human rights violations" and "terrorist attacks" in the country and called for their punishment. Their actions came in apparent response to a campaign organized by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) and called "End Impunity in Bahrain", which ran from 1 to 23 November. 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.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011, was charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection with the 2011 protests. At the launch of the BICI report in November 2011, the government publicly committed itself to implementing its recommendations. The report recounted the government's response to the mass protests and documented wide-ranging human rights abuses. Among its key recommendations, the report called on the government to bring to account those responsible for human rights violations, including torture and excessive use of force, and carry out independent investigations into allegations of torture.

On the second anniversary of the BICI report, the government has failed to implement the report's key recommendations. Prisoners of conscience, including some arrested during the protests, remain behind bars and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly continue to be suppressed and more people have been jailed simply for daring to express their views, whether via Twitter or on peaceful marches. Bahraini courts have appeared more concerned with toeing the government's line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

The establishment of BICI and its report was considered to be a groundbreaking initiative, but the promise of meaningful reform has been betrayed by the government's unwillingness to implement key recommendations around accountability; this includes its failure to carry out independent, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and excessive use of force, and to prosecute all those who gave the orders to commit human rights abuses. For further information see the report *Reform shelved, repression unleashed* (Index: MDE 11/062/2012), November 2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>.

Bahrain's parliament held an extraordinary session on 28 July 2013 and then submitted 22 recommendations to the King, Shaikh Hamad Bin 'Issa Al Khalifa. The recommendations toughen punishments laid out in the 2006 anti-terrorism law. A few days later the King issued several decrees further curtailing the right to freedom of expression, including banning all protests, sit-ins and public gatherings in Manama indefinitely and giving the security forces additional sweeping powers.

A joint statement signed by 47 countries at the UN Human Rights Council on 9 September expressed serious concern about the ongoing human rights violations in Bahrain.

Name: Hussain Jawad
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 318/13 Index: MDE 11/058/2013 Issue Date: 13 December 2013