

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAINI ACTIVIST ARRESTED AND CHARGED

Bahraini banker Mohammad Sanad al-Makina was arrested on 9 August at Bahrain International Airport when leaving for a holiday with members of his family. He faces several charges including “inciting hatred against the regime”. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Mohammad Sanad al-Makina, aged 27, is a banker and a member of a Bahraini political association, the National Democratic Rally. He and 13 members of his family were prevented from boarding a flight to Sri Lanka on 9 August at about 4.30pm. They were released after about an hour, except for Mohammad Sanad al-Makina. The authorities confiscated both his mobile phones, as well as a laptop computer, tablet computer and camera in his possession.

Mohammad Sanad al-Makina was able to phone his family the next evening, and told them he was at the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) and would be taken to the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) the following day. He appeared before the PPO on 11 August and was interrogated for two hours, with his lawyer present. The PPO charged him with “calling for the country’s political system to be changed by force”, “inciting hatred against the regime”, “inciting people to ignore the law” and “calling for illegal gatherings” and ordered that he be detained for 45 days pending investigation. He was later transferred to Dry Dock prison in the capital, Manama, where his father tried to visit him on 12 August but was denied access to his son because it was a public holiday in Bahrain, for the Muslim festival of Eid al-Fitr.

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

- Expressing concern that Mohammad Sanad al-Makina is a prisoner of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and urging the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally;
- Urging them to protect Mohammad Sanad al-Makina from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 SEPTEMBER 2013 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
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 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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More than two years since the uprising in Bahrain and the subsequent fanfare of reform, prisoners of conscience (including many arrested during the protests) remain behind bars and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are still being suppressed. In recent months 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 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 the recommendations set out in the report. 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. However, many of the government's pledges remain unfulfilled. The establishment of BICI and its report was considered to be a groundbreaking initiative, but after more than 18 months 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: *Bahrain: Reform shelved, repression unleashed* (<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>).

In response to a recent increase in violence, and in anticipation of planned large demonstrations by the opposition, Bahrain's parliament held an extraordinary session on 28 July at which it submitted 22 recommendations to the King, Shaikh Hamad Bin 'Issa Al Khalifa; the recommendations toughen punishments laid out in the 2006 anti-terrorism law. The King welcomed the recommendations the next day, and ordered the prime minister to ensure that they were urgently implemented by the government. Bahrain's constitution (Article 38) gives the King the power to issue decrees that have the force of law when parliament is in recess. In these circumstances the government prepares the draft amendments and the King ratifies them.

The King issued two emergency decrees on 6 August. One of them amends the 1973 Law on Public Gatherings and Demonstrations, to ban demonstrations, sit-ins, marches and public gatherings in the capital, Manama. The 1976 juvenile law was also amended and now stipulates that if anyone under 16 years of age takes part in a demonstration, public gathering or sit-in, his or her parents will be warned in writing by the Ministry of Interior. If six months after the warning the juvenile is found in a new demonstration his or her father could face jail, a fine or both. Amnesty International fears that these draconian measures will be used in an attempt to legitimize state violence as new protests are being planned for 14 August.

Name: Mohammad Sanad al-Makina

Gender m/f: m

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