

# URGENT ACTION

## JAILED ACTIVIST NEEDS SPECIALISED MEDICAL CARE

**Prisoner of conscience 'Abdelwahab Hussain, one of the 13 jailed prominent Bahraini opposition activists, needs urgent access to specialised medical treatment. His health condition has deteriorated and his family's last scheduled visit to the prison was cancelled without explanation.**

'Abdelwahab Hussain, aged 59, the co-founder and official spokesman of al-Wafa' Islamic Movement, an unauthorised opposition political association, is serving a life sentence in Jaw Prison, which is around 30km south of the capital, Manama. On or around 1 November, his family received a call from the prison authorities cancelling without further explanation their visit to the prison scheduled for 5 November. According to his family, he suffers from chronic paresthesia (tingling and numbness) affecting his nerves and has difficulty moving, he has a low haemoglobin count leading to constant dizziness. He has been receiving treatment at the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) Hospital including a failed cataract surgery in October 2013, but his condition needs further treatment in a specialised hospital or a medical centre in Bahrain.

In recent months a growing number of political prisoners and detainees suffering from ill-health have received medical treatment in the prison clinic which appears to be inadequate. In some case prisoners were taken to the BDF Hospital or the Salmaniya Medical Complex for treatment, however they were returned to prison immediately without completing the treatment in hospital..

'Abdelwahab Hussain was sentenced to life imprisonment in June 2011 by the National Safety Court (a military court). His sentence, and those of the other 12, were upheld by the High Criminal Court of Appeal on 4 September 2012. The 13 were charged with, among other things, setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution. The Court of Cassation upheld the sentences on 7 January 2013. See Additional background information for a list of all 13 prisoners' names.

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

- √ Urging the Bahraini authorities to provide 'Abdelwahab Hussain urgent specialised medical care;
- √ Calling on them to grant him immediate and regular access to his family;
- √ Urging them to release all 13 opposition activists immediately and unconditionally, since they are prisoners of conscience, convicted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 DECEMBER 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 (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. This is the 14th update of UA 139/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/052/2013/en>.

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

'Abdelwahab Hussain, is married with five children. He was imprisoned twice in the 1990s, first for six months in 1995, and then for over five years between 1996 and 2001, for being one of the leaders of anti-government protests in the 1990s. He was one of the leading members of al-Wefaq Society, the largest Shi'a political association in Bahrain. He left the society to establish another Shi'a opposition political association, al-Wafa', which was not authorised by the government and calls for a boycott of the political process in Bahrain.

Two-and-a-half years after the popular uprising in Bahrain, and beneath the fanfare of reform, 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. In recent months, not only have prisoners of conscience not been released, but 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 line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

Fourteen prominent opposition activists were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011. Most were arrested in the middle of the night by groups of security officers who raided their houses and took them to an unknown location, where they were held incommunicado for weeks. Many of the 14 have alleged they were tortured during their first few days of detention when they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA). None of the 14 was allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations just after they were arrested. Some saw their lawyers during questioning by the military prosecutor ahead of the trial, while others were only allowed to see them during the first court hearing in May 2011, which was the first time any of the activists had seen their families since their arrest.

On 22 June 2011, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict and sentenced them to between two years and life in prison on charges including "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". Seven of the 14 activists were sentenced to life imprisonment: Hassan Mshaima', 'Abdelwahab Hussain, 'Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad, Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad and Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri. Four people, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il, Abdullah al-Mahroos and 'Abdul-Hadi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, were sentenced to 15 years in prison. Two people, Ebrahim Sharif and Salah 'Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja, brother of 'Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, were given five-year prison terms while Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh received a prison sentence of two years. On 28 September 2011, in a session that lasted only a few minutes, the National Safety Court of Appeal, a military appeal court, upheld all the convictions and sentences imposed on the 14 opposition activists. On 30 April 2012, the Court of Cassation in Manama ordered them to appear before a civilian court for an appeal trial; on the same day it reduced Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh's two-year sentence to six months. He was immediately released as he had already served his sentence. However, the other 13 remained behind bars in Jaw prison. Their appeal before a civilian court of appeal started on 22 May 2012.

For more information on this case and others see the reports *Flawed Reforms: Bahrain fails to achieve Justice for protesters* (Index: MDE 11/014/2012) April 2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/014/2012/en>, and *Reform shelved, repression unleashed* (Index: MDE 11/062/2012), November 2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>.

Names: 'Abdelwahab Hussain, Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Hassan Mshaima', 'Abdelwahab Hussain, 'Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad, Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad, Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il, Abdullah al-Mahroos, 'Abdul-Hadi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, Ebrahim Sharif, Salah 'Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja  
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 139/11 Index: MDE 11/055/2013 Issue Date: 7 November 2013