

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/bahrain-bahraini-blogger-still-missing-a-21-06-2012,42840.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Bahrain

Depressing anniversary

Bahraini blogger still missing a year after trial of activists and government opponents

21 June 2012

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On 2 June last year in a trial marred by irregularities, harsh penalties were handed down by a military court on 21 suspects prosecuted for membership of terrorist organizations and attempting to overthrow the government. Eight of them, including the blogger and human rights activist **Abduljalil Al-Singace**, received [life sentences](#). The other 13 were given between two and 15 years' imprisonment,

They included the missing blogger **Ali Abdulemam**, who was [tried in absentia](#) and received a 15-year sentence. His family have had no news of him for months and asked the authorities today in a [video recording](#) to provide them with any information they have about him and to drop the charges brought against him.

Reporters Without Borders demands the immediate release of those arrested for their beliefs and for their work in circulating information, in particular Abduljalil Al-Singace. The press freedom organization also shares the deep concern of Ali Abdulemam's family and seeks clarification about his fate.

On 30 April, Bahrain's judicial authorities ordered a new trial before a civilian court, which opened on 8 May in the Court of Appeal. For the first time, the accused were able to speak about the torture they had suffered. The last session was on 19 June and the next is scheduled for 26 June.

Three of the activists, Al-Singace, **Abdulhadi Alkhawaja** and **Hasan Mushaima**, decided after testifying that they would not to appear at any further sessions. They did not believe in the impartiality of the system and demanded that they be released immediately, saying they had been targeted because of their activism.

The three provided the court with the names of agents they said had tortured them after they were arrested. They demanded that these officers be removed from the list of witnesses called by the prosecution to testify against them.

In addition, the court has refused to free eight other activists whose release had been requested by their lawyers. Al-Singace's counsel has also refused to attend hearings of the court at his client's request. The court has asked that another lawyer be appointed.

Al-Singace, head of the Al Haq pro-democracy and civil liberties movement, was arrested on 16 March this year. He had been detained previously in 2009 for allegedly trying to destabilize the government because he used his blog (<http://alsingace.katib.org>) to draw attention to discrimination against Bahrain's Shiite population and the deplorable state of civil liberties in the country.

Abdulemam is regarded by fellow Bahrainis as one of his country's Internet pioneers and is an active member of [Bahrain Online](#), a pro-democracy forum that gets more than 100,000 visitors a day despite being blocked within Bahrain. A contributor to the international bloggers network Global Voices, he has taken part in many international conferences at which he has denounced human rights violations in Bahrain.

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