

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST FREED ON BAIL TO AWAIT UNFAIR TRIAL

Bahraini human rights activist Hussain Jawad was released on bail on 9 January, but is still facing trial on charges that relate solely to his exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Hussain Jawad, Chairman of the European-Bahraini organization for Human Rights (EBOHR), was released from Dry Dock prison on bail of 100 Bahraini Dinars (US\$265) on 9 January 2014, 46 days after his arrest. He was charged with, among other things, "inciting hatred against the regime". He is now facing trial but no dates have yet been scheduled.

Hussain Jawad was arrested on 24 November in relation to a speech he had given at a rally in the capital, Manama, on 13 November. The next day he appeared before the Public Prosecutor who ordered his detention for 15 days pending investigation and his transfer to Dry Dock Prison in Manama. During this speech he called on the Bahraini people to demand their rights, peacefully and without fear, and he also vehemently criticized the authorities. Amnesty International has reviewed a video of the speech and does not believe it contained any incitement to violence. On 8 December he was taken to al-No'aim Police Station, north-west of Manama, for questioning and was denied access to his lawyer. He was then told that he would be investigated on new charges including "insulting the king" and "criticizing a national institution". The charges relate to another speech he gave at a sit-in that also 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. He was never interrogated by the Prosecution about the new charges.

During his detention Hussain Jawad documented at least 800 cases of other prisoners detained with him in Dry Dock prison and the conditions in which they were held. He thanked Amnesty International for its support, saying: "Whenever my wife visited me and told me about Amnesty's stand in relation to my case, my morale was lifted."

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

- Calling on the authorities to drop the charges against Hussain Jawad since they are related solely to the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly and ensure that all human rights organizations and human rights defenders are able to carry out their work without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 FEBRUARY 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: 011 973 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: 011 973 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: 011 973 1753 1284
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Houda Ezra Ebrahim Nonoo, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain
3502 International Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 362 2192 | Email: ambsecretary@bahrainembassy.org

Please send appeals immediately. Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after

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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 Jawad 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 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.

Over two years have passed since the BICI report and 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 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, after 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. 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.

Issues: Freedom of expression

Name: Hussain Jawad

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 318/13

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