

# URGENT ACTION



UANetwork Office AIUSA 600 Pennsylvania Ave SE, Washington DC 20003 T. 202.544.0200 F. 202.675.8566 E. uan@aiusa.org amnestyusa.org/urgent/

*Note: Please write on behalf of these persons even though you may not have received the original UA when issued on May 12, 2011. Thanks!*

June 23 2011

Further information on UA 139/11 (12 May 2011) - Legal concern/Unfair trial/Prisoners of conscience

**BAHRAIN** 14 opposition figures who led and participated in the demonstrations:

'Abdulahadi al-Khawaja (m)  
Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad (m)  
Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad (m)  
Abdullah al-Mahroos (m)  
Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh (m)  
Salah 'Abdullah Hubail (m)  
Mohammad Hassan Jawwad (m)  
Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il (m)

*Prisoner of conscience:*

Hassan Mshaima' (m)  
Dr Abdel-Jalil al-Singace (m)  
'Abdel-Wahab Hussain (m)  
Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri(m)  
Ebrahim Sharif (m)  
'Abdul-Hadi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher (m)

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14 opposition figures who led and participated in the demonstrations in February and March in Bahrain have been given very harsh prison terms on broadly-drawn terrorism charges, including seven life sentences. Their trial, before a military court, was unfair and politically motivated.

On 22 June, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict in the trial of 21 Bahrain opposition activists. Seven of them were tried in absentia. Among the 14 defendants present in court, seven were sentenced to life imprisonment. They are: Hassan Mshaima', 'Abdelwahab Hussain, 'Abdulahadi 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 'Abdulahadi al-Khawaja, were given five-year prison terms while Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh received a prison sentence of two years.

The session lasted for about an hour, during which the president of the court, who is a military judge, announced the verdict. The charges against the 14 included "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". Foreign observers representing a few Western embassies attended the session. Defense lawyers have up to two weeks to appeal against the verdict before the National Safety Court of Appeal, also a military court.

The trial did not meet international standards for fair trial and both the trial and the verdict seem to be politically motivated. Amnesty International is not aware of any evidence that the accused used or advocated violence. They were allowed only very restricted access to their lawyers, who were not allowed to be present when the defendants were questioned by the Military Prosecutor or interrogated by National Security Agency officials while held in pre-trial detention. Many of the defendants may be prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly; if so, they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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***Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.***

Following their arrests the detainees were held incommunicado and denied access to their families; some, including Ebrahim Sharif and 'Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, are alleged to have been tortured in detention.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The 14 defendants have also been accused of "insulting the army; inciting hatred; disseminating false information; and taking part in rallies without notifying the authorities". Amnesty International has previously called for the immediate release of some of the 14 defendants as the organization considered them to be prisoners of conscience: Hassan Mshaima', Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, 'Abdel-Wahab Hussain, Sa'eed al-Nuri, Ebrahim Sharif, 'Abdel-Hadi al-Mukhodher and Hassan al-Haddad.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:**

- Express concern at the harsh sentences issued by the military court after what appears to have been a patently unfair and politically-motivated trial;
- Express concern that many or all of the defendants may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned on account of their legitimate exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and association, and call for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience being held in Bahrain;
- Urge the authorities to immediately set up an independent investigation into the alleged torture or other ill-treatment of some of the defendants, to make its results public, and bring to justice anyone responsible for torture.

## **APPEALS 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 17664587  
**Salutation:** Your Majesty

### ***Prime Minister***

Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
P.O. Box 1000, al-Manama,  
BAHRAIN  
**Fax:** 011 973 17533033  
**Salutation:** Your Highness

### ***Commander-in-Chief of the BDF***

Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa  
Bahrain Defense Force  
Riffa Road,  
BAHRAIN  
**E-mail:** dgcbdf@gmail.com  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

## **COPIES TO:**

Ambassador Houda Ezra Ebrahim Nonoo  
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
3502 International Drive. NW  
Washington DC 20008  
**Phone:** 202 342 1111  
**Fax:** 1 202 362 2192  
**Email:** ambsecretary@bahrainembassy.org

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**

**Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 3 August 2011.**