

URGENT ACTION

DEATH SENTENCE FOR FLARE FATALITY

A Bahraini man under sentence of death has lodged his final appeal and could be at risk of execution. He was sentenced to death in February 2014 and lost his first appeal in August.

Death row prisoner **Maher Abbas Ahmad** (also known as Maher al-Khabbaz) is waiting for a decision from the Court of Cassation to know whether he is to be executed. He was sentenced to death on 19 February 2014 for the premeditated murder of a police officer with explosive materials while he was at a gathering in Sahla, on the outskirts of the capital, Manama, on 14 February 2013. The High Criminal Court of Appeal rejected his appeal on 31 August. Eight men tried with him had their sentences reduced on appeal to between five and 10 years in prison.

Maher Abbas Ahmad's lawyer complained that the court had accepted as the main evidence against him his "confession" which he said he had made under torture, the statements of some co-defendants who said they had "confessed" under duress, and testimonies of police officers called as witnesses. According to court documents, judges argued they would accept the defendants' "confessions" because they believed the confessions were true and the defendants had sustained their injuries, detailed in forensic reports, when they resisted arrest.

Maher Abbas Ahmad told his lawyer that he had been tortured during the first few days he was detained, while he was being interrogated and this had included being beaten and threatened. During one hearing he told the judge he had been tortured, but no investigation is known to have been launched into Maher Abbas Ahmad's allegations of torture. The case will now go before the Court of Cassation for a final decision. If this appeal fails, the death sentence will pass to the King for final ratification.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Expressing grave concern that Maher Abbas Ahmad's death sentence has been confirmed;
- Acknowledging the Bahraini government's responsibility to protect the public and bring to justice those who commit crimes, but insisting that this should always be done in accordance with international law and Bahrain's international human rights obligations;
- Calling on the authorities to order a retrial where no evidence obtained under torture is used in court;
- Urging His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa to commute the death sentence imposed on Maher Abbas Ahmad immediately.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 NOVEMBER 2014 TO:

<p>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 Salutation: Your Majesty</p>	<p>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 1753 3033 Salutation: Your Highness</p>	<p>Minister of Justice Shaikh Khaled bin Ali al-Khalifa Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs P. O. Box 450, Manama, Bahrain Fax: 011 973 17531284 Salutation: Your Excellency</p>
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Also send copies to:

H.E. Ambassador Shaikh Abdullah Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain
3502 International Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 362 2192 | Email: ambsecretary@bahrainembassy.org

Please let us know if you took action so that we can track our impact. Send a short email to uan@aiusa.org with "UA 252/14" in the subject line and include in the body of the email the number of letters and/or emails you sent. Thank you for taking action! Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Network Office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment are recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other international human rights instruments and many national constitutions. Amnesty International believes that the death penalty always violates these rights.

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2007 calling for a moratorium on executions. This means that a large majority of UN member states from all regions of the world are in favor of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

Bahrain has applied capital punishment only a few times in the past few years. A Bangladeshi national, Russell Mezan, was the last person executed in Bahrain, by firing squad in July 2010. However, since 2011, at least six people have been sentenced to death, although some of the death sentences were quashed on appeal.

Maher Abbas Ahmad was tried with another eight men. Two of them were sentenced to five and six years in prison while the other six were sentenced to life in prison but had this reduced on appeal to 10 years.

Name: Maher Abbas Ahmad (m)

Issues: Death penalty, Torture, Legal concerns

UA: 252/14

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