

# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVIST ARRESTED IN COURT

**Bahraini activist Zainab Al-Khawaja was arrested on 14 October after she tore up a picture of the King in court where she was appearing on two separate charges of “destroying government property”. She is a prisoner of conscience.**

Eight month pregnant **Zainab Al-Khawaja** was arrested on 14 October while appearing before the High Criminal Court of Appeal in the capital, Manama, in relation to two separate cases. During the hearing and according to witnesses, she said: "I am the daughter of a proud and free man. My mother brought me into this world free, and I will give birth to a free baby boy even if it is inside our prisons. It is my right, and my responsibility as a free person, to protest against oppression and oppressors." She then tore up a picture of the King of Bahrain and handed it to the judge who ordered her arrest. The next day Zainab Al-Khawaja appeared before the Public Prosecution who ordered her detention for seven days pending investigation under an article of Bahrain's Penal Code that criminalizes “insulting the king, the national flag or emblem”. If convicted, she could face up to seven years in prison. She is now held in 'Issa Town Detention Center for Women, south of Manama.

Zainab Al-Khawaja had been appealing against two separate convictions for “destroying government property” after she ripped up a picture of the Bahraini King while she was detained in 'Issa Town Detention Center for Women on 4 and 6 May 2012. The Lower Criminal Court had sentenced her, in her absence, to a total of four months in prison on 27 January. The High Criminal Court of Appeal set 18 November as the date when it would issue the verdict. Zainab Al-Khawaja is also facing another trial on a charge of “insulting a police officer” because she verbally defended another prisoner who had been insulted and humiliated by a prison guard on 22 June 2013, while both women were detained.

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

- Urging the authorities to release Zainab Al-Khawaja immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that she receives any medical attention she may require;
- Urging them to repeal all legislation that criminalizes the rights to freedom of expression and respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 NOVEMBER 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**  
**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**  
**Twitter: @Khaled\_Bin\_Ali**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:uan@aiusa.org) with “UA 259/14” 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

Zainab Al-Khawaja, who is eight months pregnant, is the daughter of activist and prisoner of conscience Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, who is serving a life sentence.

Zainab Al-Khawaja has been arrested and released several times since December 2011. She was last arrested on 27 February 2013 and spent nearly a year in prison serving several short sentences for an array of different charges before being released on 16 February 2014. These included “destroying government property”, “insulting a policewoman”, “illegal gathering and rioting”, and “inciting hatred against the regime”.

Zainab Al-Khawaja was previously the subject of UA 117/12 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/037/2012/en>) and UA 232/12 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/061/2012/en>).

**Name:** Zainab Al-Khawaja (f)

**Issues:** Prisoner of conscience, Freedom of expression, Health concerns

**UA:** 259/14

**Issue Date:** 15 October 2014

**Country:** Bahrain