

# URGENT ACTION

## TEENAGER ARRESTED, RISKS TORTURE

**A Kuwaiti teenager arrested in Bahrain on 12 February 2012 is currently held in a police station in Bahrain and faces criminal charges. He said police beat him when he was arrested. He may be at risk of further torture or other ill-treatment.**

**Ali Feifel Sahad al-Ali**, an 18-year-old Kuwaiti national, was arrested on 12 February outside a family friend's house in the Shi'a village of Beni Jamra, just outside the capital, Manama. He and his family had arrived in Bahrain three days earlier to visit friends, and had intended to leave on the day he was arrested. His family claim they had been having lunch together at a friend's house; Ali Feifel Sahad al-Ali went outside the house to smoke a cigarette and was arrested on the spot. There had been skirmishes between the police and local youths in the area.

His family went to the nearby al-Budaie' police station to look for him after an officer in the street told them he had been taken there. Police officers at first refused to confirm Ali Feifel Sahad al-Ali was there, but the family persisted, and another officer said he was indeed held there and would be interrogated by a prosecutor from the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) the following day. His family were not allowed to visit him until after this questioning. He told his family he had been beaten when he was arrested, and they could still see the marks on his face and hands.

He was brought before a lower criminal court on 27 February, charged with "illegal gathering" and "vandalism". His lawyers asked that he be released on bail, but the judge refused. His next court hearing will take place on 8 March, when the defence lawyers should be able to present their case. He is still held in al- Budaie' police station.

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

- Urging the authorities to release Ali Feifel Sahad al-Ali unless he is charged with a recognizably criminal offence.
- Remind the authorities of their obligation to respect and uphold the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Urging them to protect him from torture and other ill-treatment.
- Urging them to order an independent investigation into his allegations of torture and ill-treatment

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 APRIL 2012 TO:**

King  
 Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
 Office of His Majesty the King  
 P.O. Box 555  
 Rifa'a Palace, Manama, Bahrain  
 Fax: +973 176 64 587  
**Salutation: Your Majesty**

Minister of Interior  
 Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad  
 Al Khalifa  
 Ministry of Interior  
 P.O. Box 13, Manama,  
 Bahrain  
 Fax: +973 172 32 661  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Minister of Human Rights and Social  
 Development  
 Dr Fatima bint Mohammed Al Balooshi  
 Ministry of Human Rights and Social  
 Development  
 P.O. Box 32868, Manama, Bahrain  
 Email: pr@social.gov.bh  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Although there are no recent official statistics about the makeup of the population of Bahrain, it is widely believed that the Shi'a population form roughly between 65% and 70% whereas Sunni Muslims make up the rest. The Al Khalifa ruling family, who are Sunni Muslim, have been in power for over 200 years and most of the country's wealth is controlled by them. On 14 February 2011, protesters, mainly Shi'a but also some Sunni, started large-scale anti-government protests demanding greater freedoms, social justice, political and constitutional reforms as well as an end to what they perceive as discrimination against them. The first protester to be shot by the security forces died that day.

In the months that followed the 14 February 2011 demonstrations, the country entered an acute human rights crisis: the security forces repeatedly used excessive force against peaceful protesters. Around 50 people were killed and hundreds injured. Hundreds of people were also arrested and tried before military courts, with many reporting they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention. More than 4,000 protesters were dismissed from their jobs or expelled from university for taking part in the protests.

On 23 November 2011 the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), set up by royal decree on 29 June, presented its findings to the King. The BICI's report concluded, amongst other things, that excessive force had been used against protesters, that torture was widespread and that many people were on trial or had been sentenced to prison terms for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The report made a number of recommendations, which the King promised to implement.

The authorities have taken some steps, such as putting eight policemen on trial (five of them Pakistani, one Yemeni and two Bahraini) for mistreating prisoners and killing protesters, and bringing in international human rights experts and policing experts to train the police, but are not known to have taken any serious steps to ensure accountability. Most glaringly, no action is known to have been taken so far against any high-ranking police and security forces officers or government officials for their involvement in human rights abuses. Neither have the outcomes of investigations into allegations of torture been made public. Despite the fact that several private companies announced that employees who had been dismissed for taking part in protests would be reinstated, hundreds of people have yet to be reinstated. Dozens of university students are still waiting to be allowed to resume their studies. Most worryingly, the security forces are still using excessive force against protesters routinely, and the death toll is mounting. Reports of torture and ill-treatment are continuing to reach Amnesty International.

Hundreds of people marched in the streets of Manama and several neighbouring Shi'a villages on and around 14 February 2012, the anniversary of Bahrain's protests. Police dispersed the crowds with teargas. Dozens of people were arrested for taking part in the protests, though many were released shortly afterwards. Others are held in two police stations in Manama, where they are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Name: Ali Feifel Sahad al-Ali  
Gender m/f: m

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