

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAINI BLOGGER AND PHOTOGRAPHER TORTURED

Bahraini blogger and translator Mohammad Hassan Sudayf and photographer Hussain Hubail have reportedly been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Mohammad Hassan Sudayf's lawyer was arrested on 7 August for tweets saying that he had seen torture marks on his client and revealing the charges both men face.

Mohammad Hassan Sudayf and **Hussain Hubail** (previously named as Hussain Habib) were transferred on 3 August to Dry Dock prison in the Bahraini capital, Manama. Mohammad Hassan Sudayf's family visited him on 6 August and he told them that while detained at the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) he was tortured. He said that electric shocks were used on his body, that he was beaten, was forced to strip naked and had his clothes taken away. Hussain Hubail was also beaten, according to Amnesty International's information.

In the early hours of 7 August, both men were taken to the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) where they were interrogated and charged with "inciting hatred against the regime", "calling for illegal gatherings", "inciting people to ignore the law" and "being a member of the 14 February media group".

Mohammad Hassan Sudayf's lawyer, '**Abdul-'Aziz Moussa**, later tweeted that he had seen signs of torture on his client and revealed the charges against both men, whom he named, and gave details of their interrogation. 'Abdul-'Aziz Moussa was arrested a few hours after his tweets and the PPO ordered his detention for a week in relation to their content.

Over the past 10 days the King of Bahrain has issued four emergency decrees imposing increased restrictions on dissent and freedom of expression in the country in anticipation of large anti-government protests being organized by Bahraini opposition groups for 14 August.

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

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Mohammad Hassan Sudayf, Hussain Hubail and 'Abdul-'Aziz Moussa if they are being held solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- Calling for an impartial and independent investigation into the reported torture of Mohammad Hassan Sudayf and bring those responsible to account;
- Urging that the three men are protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 SEPTEMBER 2013 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: +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: +973 1723 2661
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 206/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/028/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mohammad Hassan Sudaif, was arrested from his parents' house in Sitra in the early hours of 31 July by plain-clothed security officers without an arrest warrant. He was taken to the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) in al-'Adliya in Manama. Hussain Hubail was arrested at Bahrain International Airport as he was due to board a flight to Dubai on 31 July. He was taken to the CID building for interrogation. Both men were detained incommunicado.

More than two years since the uprising in Bahrain and the fanfare of subsequent reform, prisoners of conscience (including many arrested during the protests) remain behind bars and rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly continue to be suppressed. In recent months prisoners of conscience have not only continued to be detained, but further individuals 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's line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

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 the recommendations set out in the report. 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. However, many of the government's pledges remain unfulfilled. The establishment of BICI and its report was considered to be a groundbreaking initiative, but more than 18 months on 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: *Bahrain: Reform shelved, repression unleashed* (Index: MDE 11/062/2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>).

In response to recent increase in violence and in anticipation of planned large demonstrations by the opposition, on 28 July Bahrain's parliament held an extraordinary session and submitted 22 recommendations to Shaikh Hamad Bin 'Issa Al Khalifa, the King of Bahrain; the recommendations toughen punishments laid out in the 2006 anti-terrorism law. On 29 July the King welcomed the recommendations and ordered his Prime Minister to ensure that they are urgently implemented by the government. Bahrain's constitution (Article 38) gives the King the power to issue decrees that have the force of law when parliament is in recess. In these circumstances the government prepares the draft amendments and the King ratifies them.

On 6 August two emergency decrees were issued by the King. One of the decrees makes amendments to the 1973 Law on public gatherings and demonstrations, which include the banning of demonstrations, sit-ins, marches and public gatherings in the capital Manama. The 1976 juvenile law was also amended and now stipulates that if anyone under 16 years of age takes part in a demonstration, public gathering or sit-in, his or her parents would be warned in writing by the Ministry of Interior. If six months after the warning the juvenile was found in a new demonstration his or her father could face jail, a fine or both. Amnesty International fears that these draconian measures will be used in an attempt to legitimize state violence as new protests are being planned for 14 August.

Name: Mohammad Hassan Sudaif, Hussain Hubail and 'Abdul-'Aziz Moussa

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 206/13 Index: MDE 11/031/2013 Issue Date: 9 August 2013