

TO: HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
FROM: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

APPEAL FOR ACTION

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS REFERRED TO AN ORDINARY CIVILIAN COURT IN BAHRAIN

The trial of 48 health professionals, all possible prisoners of conscience, accused of felonies and misdemeanours has been transferred to an ordinary civilian court in Bahrain. Many have been released on bail.

The case of the 48 health professionals, who include paramedics, nurses and doctors and are mostly from al-Salmaniya Medical Complex, will continue to be heard, but before an ordinary civilian court, rather than a military court. The 48 health staff were previously split into two groups, one accused of felonies (20 health workers) and the other group accused of misdemeanours (28 health workers).

During the trial session on 13 June at least two medical doctors told the court that they had been tortured and that they were forced to sign confessions while blindfolded.

On 28 June, 20 medical workers were released on bail; others had previously been released on bail in the previous weeks. However, 14 out of the 48 remain in detention. Among them are nine doctors, **Ali Esa Mansoor Al Ekri, Nader Mohammed Hassan Dewani, Ahmed Abdulaziz Omran Hassan, Mahmood Asghar Abdulwahab, Abdulkhaleq Ali Hussain Al Oraibi, Ghassan Ahmed Ali Dhaif, Bassim Ahmed Ali Dhaif, Najah Khalil Ebrahim Hassan and Saeed Mothaher Habib Al Samahiji**; one nurse, **Ebrahim Abdullah Ebrahim**; one paramedic, **Sayed Marhoon Majid Al Wedaei**; one laboratory technician, **Mohammed Faeq Ali Al Shehab**; and **Hassan Mohammed Saeed Nasser** (profession undefined). **Rula Jassim Mohammed Al Saffar**, the head of the Nursing Society, is the only female still detained.

On 29 June, the King of Bahrain issued a royal decree by which all ongoing military court cases in connection with the protests in February and March will be transferred to ordinary civilian courts. The decision covered the case of the 48 medical workers as it was being heard before a military court. The date of the next hearing before the ordinary civilian court has not been fixed yet.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY:

- Explaining that you are a health professional concerned about human rights;
- Urging the authorities to carry out an immediate and independent investigation into the allegations of torture and other ill-treatment against some of the 48 health professionals, as well as against other detainees in Bahrain, to make the results public, and to bring to justice any officials responsible for the torture or other ill-treatment of detainees;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that confessions obtained under torture are not submitted or used as evidence in the trial of the 48 health professionals or any other trials in Bahrain and that the 48 health professionals and other detainees are permitted immediate and regular access to lawyers of their own choosing, their relatives and any medical treatment that they may require;
- Expressing concern that, despite the serious charges brought against them, the 48 health professionals appear to have been detained and brought to trial solely because of their peaceful efforts to provide medical assistance to people injured by government security forces during popular protests in February and March, in which case they would be prisoners of conscience and should be immediately and unconditionally released.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 AUGUST 2011 TO:

Minister of Social Development, Health and Human Rights

Dr Fatima bint Mohammed Al Balooshi
Ministry of Social Development
P.O. Box 32868, Isa Town, Bahrain
Fax: +973 17101955
Salutation: Your Excellency

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 17664587
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khlaifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs,
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 31 284
Salutation: Your Excellency

IF YOU RECEIVE NO REPLY WITHIN SIX WEEKS OF SENDING YOUR LETTER, PLEASE SEND A FOLLOW-UP LETTER SEEKING A RESPONSE.
PLEASE SEND COPIES OF ANY LETTERS YOU RECEIVE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, ATTENTION OF THE HEALTH TEAM, 1
EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 0DW OR E-MAIL: health@amnesty.org