

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER RELEASED IN BAHRAIN

A prominent defence lawyer arrested in Bahrain on 15 April was released on 7 August. The charges against him have not been dropped and he has reported being tortured in prison.

Mohammed al-Tajer, a prominent Bahraini defence lawyer, was arrested at his house in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, on the night of 15 April. He was arrested without an arrest warrant by a group of over 20 masked security officers who then took him to an unknown location. On 12 June, he was brought before the National Safety Court of First Instance, a military court, and formally charged with offences that included spreading rumours and malicious news and incitement of hatred towards the regime. He pleaded not guilty. His trial was then referred to a civilian court.

On 7 August Mohammed al-Tajer was released from prison. He told Amnesty International that his current legal status is unclear and he thinks the charges against him have not been dropped. He was required to sign papers as a condition of his release stating he would appear in court and be available for interrogation at any time, and that he would not undertake any activity against the country. Photographs of the upper part of his body and his legs were taken and a doctor signed papers stating that he was in good health at the time of his release. Mohammed al-Tajer said he had been beaten, deprived of sleep and forced to stand up for long hours during the first three weeks of his detention. He also reported that his bank account has been frozen and that all the items taken from his office by security officials, including computers, laptops and databases, have not been returned. His wife has been dismissed from her job.

Following his arrest, Amnesty International considered Mohammed al-Tajer to be a prisoner of conscience detained solely on account of his work as a well-known human rights lawyer and his public criticism of the government's violent suppression of recent protests.

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

- Welcoming Mohammed al-Tajer's release but urging the authorities to clarify his legal status and to remove any conditions that have been attached to his release, as well as any other limitations currently imposed on his liberty, freedom of movement, expression, association and assembly;
- Urging the authorities to drop any charges against him arising from his legitimate exercise of freedom of expression or work as a human rights lawyer;
- Urging the authorities to immediately set up a full, independent and impartial investigation into his allegations of torture or other ill-treatment, to make its results public and to bring to justice anyone responsible;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 SEPTEMBER 2011 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 1766 4587
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khaled bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Social Development and Human Rights
Dr. Fatima bint Mohammed Al Balooshi
Ministry of Social Development and Human Rights
PO Box 32868, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1710 1955
Email: info@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. This is the second update of UA 116/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/032/2011/en>

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Name: Mohammed al-Tajer

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 116/11 Index: MDE 11/042/2011 Issue Date: 9 August 2011

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