

URGENT ACTION

TEACHERS' MILITARY TRIAL RESUMES

The trial of the former president and vice-president of the Bahrain Teachers' Association (BTA) resumed before a military court on 29 August, and has been postponed until 25 September. Amnesty International believes they may be prisoners of conscience.

Jalila al-Salman and **Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb** were brought before the military National Safety Court of First Instance for the fourth time on 29 August; they denied all the charges against them. Jalila al-Salman, former BTA vice-president, had already been released on bail on 21 August while Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb is still detained. The trial will resume on 25 September.

During the 29 August trial session, judges apparently refused demands by Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb's lawyer that he should be released on bail, and apparently also refused to have new witnesses called to give evidence.

The King of Bahrain announced on 28 August that he would pardon some of the protesters on trial, but no more information has been released on names or charges. According to press statements he said, "There are those who are charged with abusing us and senior officials in Bahrain, we today announce that we forgive them."

Amnesty International has reviewed statements issued by the BTA and has also listened to speeches delivered by Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb calling on teachers and employees of the Ministry of Education to go on strike, and on parents not to take their children to school during demonstrations in Bahrain. These do not include advocacy of violence and while Amnesty International does not have full details of the evidence presented to the trial court, it considers that they appear to have been targeted solely for their leadership of the BTA and their legitimate exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. As civilians they should not be tried by a military court; trials of civilians before such courts breach their right to fair trial.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Expressing concern that Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb are being tried before a military court although they are civilians, in breach of their right to fair trial before an independent and impartial court;
- Expressing concern that they may have been targeted solely on account of their leadership of the BTA and legitimately exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, in which case they are prisoners of conscience who should be released immediately and unconditionally
- Urging the authorities to protect them from torture or other ill-treatment and to order immediately a full, impartial and independent investigation into the alleged ill-treatment of Jalila al-Salman, publish the results and bring to justice any persons found responsible.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 OCTOBER 2011 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: +973 176 64 587
Salutation: Your Majesty

Prime Minister
Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1000, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 33 033
Salutation: Your Highness

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

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the <number> update of UA XXXXX. Further information: www.amnesty.org/xxxxx

Further information on UA: 227/11 Index: MDE 11/045/2011 Issue Date: 30 August 2011

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