

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED ACTIVISTS AT RISK IN BAHRAIN

Scores of activists were arrested on 14 February 2012 at a protest to mark the first anniversary of the beginning of the unrest in Bahrain. Dozens remain in detention and are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Several were badly beaten during their arrest.

Amin Jaffar Swar (22), **Mutaher Saeed Taher Ahmed** (18) and **Mohammed Makky** (22) were arrested on 14 February 2012 from their car, in the Seif district in Manama, Bahrain's capital. They were driving towards the GCC roundabout (also known as Pearl Roundabout), the heart of the demonstration. According to witnesses, the three men were beaten with batons by the police during their arrest, first inside and then outside their car. The police also smashed the windows of the car. A policeman reportedly kicked Amin Jaffar Swar several times while he was lying on the floor. The three men were taken to al-Ma'aridh police station in Manama where they are currently held. An official from the Public Prosecution Office questioned them on 15 February in the police station in presence of a lawyer. According to the lawyer, marks of beatings were visible on their faces and legs.

Hundreds of people were driving and marching along the highway to join the protest but the police fired large amounts of teargas at the crowd to break it up. **Naji Fateel**, a human rights activist working for the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, **Hassen Jaber**, a blogger and **Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan**, another activist, were among those who were caught in the teargas and then arrested. Hassan Jaber and Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan were taken to al-Nu'aim police station and questioned there by an official of the Public Prosecutor's Office and charged with 'illegal gathering'. They were later transferred to the Dry Dock Prison in Manama, where they are currently held. Naji Fateel was sent also to al-Nu'aim police station but then transferred to a clinic within the Ministry of Interior where he was questioned by a representative from the Public Prosecution Office. His lawyer was not present during the interrogation but another lawyer who was in the same clinic representing others agreed to attend his questioning. He was also charged with 'illegal gathering'. According to his lawyer between his arrest and interrogation he was forced to stand up for many hours and deprived from sleep. He has been given a 15 day arrest order and his family has not been allowed to visit him.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to protect Amin Jaffar Swar, Mutaher Saeed Taher Ahmed, Mohammed Makky, Naji Fateel, Hassen Jaber, Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan and all others currently held in connection with the 14 February anniversary from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging the authorities to carry out an independent investigation into their allegations of torture and ill-treatment;
- Urging the authorities to release them and anyone else held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging the authorities to allow them immediate access to their families and lawyers and adequate medical care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 MARCH 2012 TO:

His Majesty the 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

Hundreds of people marched in the streets of Manama, the capital of Bahrain, and several neighbouring Shia villages on and around the anniversary of Bahrain's protests, on 14 February 2012. The crowds were dispersed by tear gas. Dozens of people were arrested for participating in the protests although many were released shortly after. Others are currently held in two police stations in Manama and are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

One year ago, on 14 February 2011, the majority of Bahraini people began protests demanding greater civil and political rights; the same day the first demonstrator was killed by security forces. Over the course of the following months the country entered an acute human rights crisis: excessive force was repeatedly used by security forces against peaceful protesters and around 50 people were killed and hundreds others 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 having participated 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 of Bahrain. 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.

Despite some steps being taken, such as the opening of the trial of eight policemen, five of them Pakistani, one Yemeni and two Bahrainis for mistreating prisoners and killing protesters, and bringing in international human rights experts and policing experts to train the police, Amnesty International is not aware of any serious steps taken to ensure accountability. Most glaringly, no action is known to have been taken so far against any high-ranking security officers or government officials for their involvement in human rights abuses. Neither have any outcome of investigations into alleged torture been made public. Despite the fact that several private companies announced the reinstatement of employees who had been dismissed because of their participation in protests, hundreds of people have yet to be reinstated. Dozens of university students are still waiting to be allowed to resume their studies. Most worryingly, excessive force continues to be used against protesters on almost a daily basis and the death toll mounts. Reports of torture and ill-treatment continue to reach Amnesty International.

Name: Dozens of detained activists in Bahrain, including Amin Jaffar Swar, Mutaher Saeed Taher Ahmed, Mohammed Makky, Naji Fatee, Hassen Jaber and Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan

Gender m/f: The wider group of activists contains both men and women, but those named in this UA are all male.

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