

URGENT ACTION

NINE BAHRAINI MEDICS HAVE CONVICTIONS UPHeld

On 14 June 2012, the High Criminal Court of Appeal in Bahrain announced their verdict in the case of 20 health professionals. Nine had their convictions upheld and four of these have been given arrest orders. If imprisoned, they would be prisoners of conscience. Nine have been cleared.

On 14 June, the High Criminal Court of Appeal in Manama upheld the conviction of nine of the 20 health professionals, on charges relating to their role in demonstrations in February and March 2011, but reduced their sentences to between one month and five years' imprisonment. Previously, all had been sentenced to between five and 15 years imprisonment. **Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri's** sentence was reduced to five year-imprisonment and **Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim's** sentence was reduced to three years, both on charges of 'illegal gathering and participating in unlicensed marches' and 'calling for the overthrow the regime by force'; **Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif** and **Sa'eed Mothaheer Habib Al Samahiji's** sentences were reduced to one year in prison for 'kidnapping for a terrorist purpose', 'illegal gathering and participating in unlicensed marches' and 'instigating hatred against another sect'. The sentence against **Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab** was reduced to six months in prison, **Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far's** sentence was reduced to two months in prison, and sentences for **Bassim Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif**, **Nader Mohammed Hassan Dewani** and **Abdulkhaleq 'Ali Hussain al-'Oraibi** were reduced to one month in prison, all five on charges of participation in 'illegal gathering and unlicensed marches'.

Nine other health professionals were cleared of all charges and two others, **Ali Hassan al-Sadadi** and **Qassim Mohammad 'Omran** had their appeal rejected because they were not present during the whole appeal process, so their 15-year sentences imposed by a military court still stand until they challenge them before an appeal court.

The Court issued arrest orders against the four medics sentenced to longer prison sentences as all the others have already spent in detention the amount of time they have been sentenced to serve. No investigation into their allegations of torture is known to have been made public and no one has been brought to justice for such abuses.

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

- Expressing concern that if jailed, Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri, Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim, Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif and Sa'eed Mothaheer Habib Al Samahiji would be prisoners of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Quash the convictions and sentences against the health professionals;
- Urging the Bahraini authorities to make public the results of any independent investigation into their allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and bring anyone found responsible for abuses to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JULY 2012 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 bin Abdullah Al
Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 6343
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 sixth update of UA 296/11. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/031/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The nine health professionals acquitted of all charges are: Zahra Mahdi al-Sammak, Fatima Salman Hassan Haji, Roula Jassim Mohammed al-Saffar, Nada Sa'eed 'Abdelnabi Dhaif, Najah Khalil Ibrahim Hassan, Hassan Mohammed Sa'eed Nasser, Ahmed 'Abdulaziz Omran Hassan, Sayed Marhoon Majid al-Wedaei and Mohammed Faeq 'Ali Al Shehab.

On 14 June 2012, the High Criminal Court of Appeal dropped the most serious charges: 'occupation of a public building (Salmaniya Medical Complex)' and 'possession of unlicensed weapons' and upheld convictions on nine for charges including 'calling for the overthrow of the regime by force', 'illegal gathering' and 'instigating hatred against another sect'.

The 20 are among 48 health professionals from the Salmaniya Medical Complex who were arrested in March and April 2011. Some of them had given interviews to foreign journalists and accused the government of human rights violations against protesters. All were held incommunicado for several weeks. In most cases their families did not know their whereabouts for most of this time and were only allowed to see them during the first session of their trial before the National Safety Court of First Instance, a military court, which started on 6 June 2011. The 48 were split into two groups on 13 June: 20 of them were accused of felonies while the rest were accused of misdemeanours. Many of them went on hunger strike in protest at their detention and trial and were gradually released on bail in August and September 2011. On 29 June 2011, the King decreed that all cases linked to the February-March 2011 protests would be transferred to ordinary civilian courts; he then issued a further decree on 18 August 2011 (Decree 28/20011) ordering that the National Safety Court of First Instance continue to deal with felony cases, while misdemeanour cases would be referred to civilian courts. In early October 2011, trials before military courts stopped and since then all trials have been heard before civilian courts. On 29 September 2011, the National Safety Court of First Instance sentenced the 20 health professionals to between five and 15 years in prison. All of them were released on bail.

On 23 October 2011, their appeal hearing started before a civilian court and three charges were dropped: "spreading false news in detriment to public security", "public instigation of hate against the system of government" and "instigating public employees in Salmaniya Hospital to violate laws and refrain from performing their work duties".

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) was established by royal decree on 29 June 2011 to investigate abuses during the February-March protests and other abuses in the following months. The full report was published on 23 November 2011. Hundreds of cases were covered in the BICI report on the protests, including beatings of protesters by the security forces, mass arbitrary arrests of mainly Shi'a opposition activists and widespread torture, with five deaths resulting from torture in custody. In all, at least 60 people have died in connection with the protests since February 2011 until now, including five security forces personnel. The report urged the government to immediately establish an independent body made up of representatives of civil society, the opposition and the government; to oversee the implementation of the BICI's recommendations; to usher in legislative reforms to ensure laws are in line with international human rights standards; and to bring to account those responsible for abuses.

Names: 'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri (m), Nader Mohammed Hassan Dewani (m), Ahmed 'Abdulaziz Omran Hassan (m), Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab (m), 'Abdulkhaleq 'Ali Hussain al-'Oraibi (m), Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif (m), Bassim Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif (m), Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim (m), Sayed Marhoon Majid al-Wedaei (m); Roula Jassim Mohammed al-Saffar (f), Nada Sa'eed 'Abdelnabi Dhaif (f), 'Ali Hassan al-Sadadi (m), Qassim Mohammad 'Omran (m), Hassan Mohammed Sa'eed Nasser (m), Sa'eed Mothaher Habib Al Samahiji (m), Fatima Salman Hassan Haji (f), Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far (f), Najah Khalil Ibrahim Hassan (f), Zahra Mahdi al-Sammak (f) and Mohammed Faeq 'Ali Al Shehab (m)
Gender m/f: both, see above

Further information on UA: 296/11 Index: MDE 11/041/2012 Issue Date: 15 June 2012