

URGENT ACTION

NINE MEDICS: COURT DECISION DUE ON 1 OCTOBER

Bahrain's Court of Cassation announced on 30 July that it would deliver its decision in the case of the medics who have challenged a Court of Appeals ruling on 1 October. Six of the medics could be sent back to prison at any time.

On 30 July 2012 the Court of Cassation in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, postponed its final decision on the case of nine health professionals until 1 October. The court rejected a request made by the defence to suspend the implementation of the prison sentences imposed on the medical workers. The nine are currently not in detention, but six of them, who have not completed their sentences, risk being sent back to prison before 1 October. They are: 'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri, Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim, Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif, Sa'eed Mothafer Habib Al Samahiji, Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab and Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far.

In June, an appeal court had upheld the convictions against the nine for their role in demonstrations in February and March 2011, but reduced their sentences from between five and 15 years' imprisonment to between one month and five years in prison. If jailed, they would be prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Two others, **Ali Hassan al-Sadadi** and **Qassim Mohammad 'Omran**, had their appeals rejected because they had not been present in court during the appeal process, so their 15-year sentences, imposed by a military court, still stand. Another nine were acquitted of all charges.

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

- Expressing concern that, if jailed, the health professionals would be prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging the authorities to quash the health professionals' convictions and overturn their sentences;
- Urging them to publish the results of any independent investigation into their allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and bring anyone responsible for abuses to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 SEPTEMBER 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 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 seventh update of UA 296/11. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/041/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 14 June, the High Criminal Court of Appeal in Manama upheld the conviction of nine of the 20 health professionals who have been on trial, 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. All had been sentenced to between five and 15 years' imprisonment. **'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri's** sentence was reduced to five years' 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 Mothaher 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 imposed on **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". According to Amnesty International's research findings, none of the medics used or advocated violence, but were targeted for denouncing the excessive force used against protesters last year to international media.

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; however, he 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.

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)

Further information on UA: 296/11 Index: MDE 11/045/2012 Issue Date: 31 July 2012