

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International Tunisia holds a conference on the human rights situation in Bahrain

Amnesty International Tunisia is organizing a one day conference on the human rights situation in Bahrain to take place on 4 August 2012 in Tunis, at the Ibn Rachiq Cultural Centre.

The aim of the conference is to raise awareness within Tunisia about the current human rights situation in Bahrain and steps the Tunisian authorities could be taking to press the Bahraini government to uphold human rights and guarantee justice to the victims of human rights violations.

A number of Bahraini human rights activists are among the planned speakers at the conference. An invitation to participate in the conference has been extended to the Ambassador of Bahrain in Tunis who regrettably will not be able to attend the event. The conference will focus on human rights issues rather than the broader political situation in the country.

Bahrain has been engulfed in a human rights crisis since 2011, after thousands of protesters went to the streets demanding more freedoms and rights. The protests were suppressed with excessive use of force and scores of people were arrested and tortured in prison. In November 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), created by Royal Decree, issued its report confirming that the government had committed gross human rights violations, and used excessive force and torture. The King promised accountability. To date, the government has implemented some reforms, although progress is very slow and protesters continue to be suppressed with excessive force, prisoners of conscience remain behind bars and investigations into allegations of torture have not been made public.

In June 2012, the human rights records of both Bahrain and Tunisia were reviewed during the 13th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council. The Bahraini government received 176 recommendations from the UPR Working Group and it is currently considering which of them to accept ahead of the next UPR session in September.