

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IMPRISONED

Six health professionals – whose jail sentences were upheld by the Court of Cassation in Manama, the capital of Bahrain – were arrested on 2 October. They are prisoners of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

On 2 October, six health professionals – **'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri, Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim, Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif, Sa'eed Mothaher Habib Al Samahiji, Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab and Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far** – were arrested the day after the Court of Cassation in Manama upheld their convictions and sentences. 'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri was arrested at about 5:30am at his home. The other five were also arrested in subsequent raids at their homes. The five men have been taken to al-Jaw Prison while Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far has been taken to the women's detention centre in 'Issa Town.

In June, the High Criminal Court of Appeal in Manama upheld the conviction of nine of 20 health professionals tried on charges relating to their role in demonstrations in February and March 2011, but reduced their sentences of between five and 15 years' imprisonment to between one month and five years' imprisonment. 'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri's prison sentence was reduced to five years; Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim's to three years; Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif and Sa'eed Mothaher Habib Al Samahiji's to one year; Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab to six months; and Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far's to two months. Sentences for **Bassim Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif, Nader Mohammed Hassan Dewani and Abdulkhaleq 'Ali Hussain al-'Oraibi** were reduced to one month. 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. Most of the six alleged they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated during their initial detention in 2011.

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

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to release the six health professionals (please name them) immediately and unconditionally, as they are detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly and as such are prisoners of conscience;
- Urging the Bahraini authorities to overturn the health professionals' convictions and drop all charges against them relating to their role in pro-reform demonstrations in February and March 2011;
- Urging the authorities to make public the findings of any investigation carried out into the health professionals' allegations of torture and to ensure that anyone found responsible for abuses is brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 NOVEMBER 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, 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 1284
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 ninth update of UA 296/11. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/057/2012/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IMPRISONED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri and Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim were both convicted 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 were convicted of "kidnapping for a terrorist purpose", "illegal gathering and participating in unlicensed marches" and "instigating hatred against another sect". Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab, Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far, Bassim Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif, Nader Mohammed Hassan Dewani and Abdulkhaleq 'Ali Hussain al-'Oraibi were convicted of "illegal gathering and unlicensed marches". According to Amnesty International's research findings, none of the health professionals had 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.

Hundreds of cases were covered in the November 2011 report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), into abuses since February 2011, 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, over 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. The government also accepted more than 140 out of the 176 recommendations stemming from the Universal Periodic Review before the Human Rights Council in Geneva in September 2012, including measures aimed at releasing prisoners of conscience, bolstering fair trial guarantees and investigating human rights violations committed during and after last year's massive pro-reform protests. Amnesty International believes these recent arrests are yet one more indication of the Bahraini government's failure to take meaningful steps to implement these recommendations.

Names: 'Ali 'Esa Mansoor al-'Ekri (m), Ebrahim 'Abdullah Ebrahim (m), Ghassan Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif (m), Sa'eed Mothaher Habib Al Samahiji (m), Mahmood Asghar 'Abdulwahab (m), Dhia Ibrahim Ja'far (f), Bassim Ahmed 'Ali Dhaif (m), Nader Mohammed Hassan Dewani (m), Abdulkhaleq 'Ali Hussain al-'Oraibi (m), 'Ali Hassan al-Sadadi (m), Qassim Mohammad 'Omran (m)

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 296/11 Index: MDE 11/058/2012 Issue Date: 2 October 2012