

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAINI OFFICER DETAINED BEYOND SENTENCE

A former Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) officer continues to be detained in Bahrain despite completing his prison sentence and without him or his lawyer being informed of any new charges against him. He has been denied family visits and he is currently believed to be on hunger strike to protest his continued detention. He may be a prisoner of conscience.

Mohamed Albuflasa, 36, a Sunni Bahraini and former BDF officer who later worked in the office of the Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, was detained on 15 February 2011, the same day that he spoke from a podium during protests in Manama's Pearl Roundabout. In his speech he spoke against corruption within the government and the lack of economic opportunities for many people. He called for genuine political reforms and for co-existence between Shi'a and Sunni Bahrainis.

A military court tried him without the presence of a lawyer and in around mid-March sentenced him to a two-month prison term. On 15 April, a military prosecutor ordered that his detention be extended for 45 days until 1 June. However, Mohamed Albuflasa has been kept in detention since that date and his lawyer has been unable to obtain any information on whether there is a legal basis for this and, if so, what new charges, if any, have been brought against him and whether they will lead to new trial proceedings. He has submitted written complaints to the director of the military judiciary about the continued detention, as well as requesting a copy of the case file, including the charges and the trial verdict, in the original case, but has received no reply.

Mohamed Albuflasa's family have been denied access to him since he was arrested. His lawyer has only been allowed to visit him on one occasion in mid-May, three months after his arrest and two months after he was sentenced. Amnesty International has received reports that he was ill-treated after his lawyer visited him. He is now said to be on hunger strike to protest his continued detention after the completion of the sentence. Amnesty International is concerned that Mohamed Albuflasa is being kept in detention merely for having voiced his political concerns in public and, if this is the case, would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or Arabic:

- Expressing concern that Mohamed Albuflasa continues to be detained despite completing his prison sentence and without him or his lawyer being informed of any new charges against him, and requesting information on the legal basis for his continued detention;
- Calling on the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is being held merely for having voiced his political views in public;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that Mohamed Albuflasa is protected from torture or other ill-treatment and is allowed prompt and regular access to his lawyer and family.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JULY 2011 TO:

King

Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1766 4587

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Shaikh Khaled bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 17531284

Salutation: Your Excellency

Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain

Defence Force

Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa

Bahrain Defence Force
Riffa Road, Manama, Bahrain

e-mail: dgcbedf@gmail.com

Fax: +973 17663923

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the date above.

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