

URGENT ACTION

VERDICT IN HUSSAIN HUBAIL'S TRIAL IMMINENT

Photographer Hussain Hubail is about to receive his verdict. He is on trial together with eight other men on charges arising from their exercise of their right to freedom of expression. He has been denied adequate medical treatment.

Hussain Hubail's trial, which began on 28 November 2013, will have its fifth hearing on 16 March: the court will hear final pleas, and is expected to announce its verdict shortly afterwards. Hussain Hubail is on trial together with eight other men, including Mohammad Hassan Sudayf, on charges that include using social media networks to incite hatred of the regime, calling on people to ignore the law and calling for illegal demonstrations.

During one of the hearings, on 27 January, he is understood to have told the court he had been tortured and threatened with rape during his interrogation. He had told his family when they visited him in prison that he had been threatened and beaten while being interrogated at the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID). Hussain Hubail has a heart condition, and fears he is not receiving adequate medical treatment. He has to wait before he receives the medicine he needs. His family said his health had deteriorated: he suffers from shortness of breath and frequently loses consciousness. He was transferred to hospital on 13 March following severe breathing difficulties, but security officers prevented his family from staying with him as he received treatment.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Hussain Hubail immediately and unconditionally if he is being held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to drop charges against the other defendants if they are being targeted solely for peacefully expressing their opinion;
- Urging them to ensure that Hussain Hubail receives adequate medical care, including any specialist treatment needed for his heart condition;
- Calling on them to order an independent investigation into Hussain Hubail's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 APRIL 2014 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 (keep trying)
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
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

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 fourth update of UA 206/13. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/054/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hussain Hubail was arrested on 31 July 2013 ahead of anti-government protests that were organized in many of Bahrain's Shi'a villages for 14 August. Protesters had been planning to march to Manama but the security forces prevented them by using teargas and, in some instances, erecting barbed wire around the villages. At least 18 people were arrested. The Tamarrud (Rebellion) movement, made up of youth groups, chose 14 August to organize anti-government protests to denounce government repression and call for genuine political reforms. Mainstream opposition associations were also planning a large anti-government rally, but it was cancelled due to the heavy presence of the security forces in Manama. One of the men facing trial with Hussain Hubail, Mohammad Hassan Sudaif, told his family that he had been given electric shocks, beaten, forced to strip naked and had his clothes taken away while detained at the CID. Mohammad Hassan Sudaif will be tried in his absence as he has since left Bahrain.

Two-and-a-half years after the popular uprising in Bahrain, and beneath the fanfare of reform, prisoners of conscience, including some arrested during the protests, remain behind bars and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are still being suppressed. In recent months, not only have prisoners of conscience not been released, but more people have been jailed simply for daring to express their views, whether via Twitter or in marches. A number of women activists have been detained too. Bahraini courts have appeared more concerned with toeing the government line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

Bahrain's parliament held an extraordinary session on 28 July 2013 and then submitted 22 recommendations to the king. The recommendations toughened punishments laid out in the 2006 anti-terrorism law. A few days later the king issued several decrees curtailing the right to freedom of expression further, including banning all protests, sit-ins and public gatherings in Manama indefinitely and giving the security forces additional sweeping powers. On 9 September 2013 a joint statement by 47 countries at the UN Human Rights Council expressed serious concern about the ongoing human rights violations in Bahrain.

On 3 March 2014 a bomb blast in al-Daih village killed three police officers, including one from the United Arab Emirates. This is the second attack in less than a month: on 14 February, a police officer died following a bomb blast in the village of al-Dair. During a Cabinet meeting on 4 March, a decision was issued to consider as terrorist groups Saraya al-Ashtar (Al-Ashtar Brigades), which reportedly claimed responsibility for the 3 March attack, Saraya al-Muqawama (Resistance Brigades) as well as the 14 February Coalition and to arrest members of any other organization or association linked to them.

Name: Hussain Hubail
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 206/13 Index: MDE 11/011/2014 Issue Date: 14 March 2014