

URGENT ACTION

AHMAD MSHAIMA' TELLS FAMILY OF BEATING

Prisoner of conscience Ahmad Mshaima has told his family he was beaten following a prison strike on 10 March and again in the first week of May. He may be at risk of further torture and other ill-treatment.

Ahmad Mshaima' is serving a one-year prison sentence handed down in December 2014 for reading a poem considered offensive to the King of Bahrain. After a prison strike in Jaw prison on 10 March, his family were only able to see him on 5 May. During the visit, he told them that he had been blindfolded and beaten on his back and knees two days earlier, because he had told other prisoners not to ask to go to the toilet while a guard who humiliated them was on duty. He also told his family that on 10 March he and other prisoners had been beaten and then not allowed to go to the toilet for three days. His family said that during the visit he complained about hearing loss in one ear and feeling pain all over his body. He and other prisoners have been sleeping in a tent in one of the prison's courtyards since 10 March.

Amnesty International wrote to the Ombudsman of the Ministry of Interior on 21 April, raising concerns about the lack of contact between Ahmad Mshaima' and his family and asking about the state of his health. Amnesty International also raised concerns about reports of torture and other ill-treatment of inmates in Jaw prison and asked what steps the Ombudsman had taken to investigate such allegations. No response has been received so far.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urging the authorities to ensure Ahmad Mshaima' is not subjected to further torture or other ill-treatment and to launch an investigation into his allegations;
- Urging them to release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for his legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to publish the results of an investigation said to have been launched by the Ombudsman of the Ministry of Interior into the allegations of torture and other ill-treatment of prisoners in Jaw Prison.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 JUNE 2015 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

Email: info@interior.gov.bh

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:

<http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>

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 fifth update of UA 5/14. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE11/0010/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmad Mshaima' was arrested on 28 December 2013 and charged with "illegal gathering with an intent to commit crimes and disturb public security" following protests on 14 February that year to mark the second anniversary of the start of the uprising. He denied the charge but his trial started before the Lower Criminal Court in Manama on 13 March 2014 and is continuing. He was released on bail on 25 June 2014 and rearrested on 13 November in connection with new charges brought against him of "publicly insulting the King of Bahrain" when he read a poem during a religious ceremony. He was sentenced in December 2014 to one year in prison, upheld on appeal in February 2015. Bahraini law punishes with up to seven years in prison publicly insulting the king of Bahrain.

After his arrest he told his family, while visiting him in prison, that he had been tortured during interrogation immediately following arrest. He said he had been beaten, kicked in the legs, forced to insult his father and his religion, and coerced into signing incriminating documents.

Following a prison strike on 10 March 2015, prisoners in Jaw prison reported incidents of torture and other ill-treatment and family visits for many of them were suspended. Other prisoners have reported being forced to sleep in tents in a courtyard in the prison.

Name: Ahmad Mshaima'

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 5/14 Index: MDE 11/1636/2015 Issue Date: 12 May 2015