



26 October 2017

Joint NGO letter to: **Canada, Denmark, European Union External Action (EEAS), France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States**

We write to **ask you to urgently raise, both publicly and privately, the case of Sayed Nazar Alwadaei, Hajar Mansoor Hasan and Mahmood Marzooq Mansoor with the Government of Bahrain** ahead of the verdict in their criminal trial on 30 October 2017. These three individuals are relatives of Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, a Bahraini human rights defender based in the United Kingdom, and his wife Duaa Alwadaei. Mr Alwadaei has been targeted by the Bahrain authorities for his human rights activism on numerous occasions and has been granted refugee status in the UK. We believe that Mr Alwadaei's relatives are being prosecuted solely as a reprisal against him and the trial forms part of a pattern of harassment against his family.

On 26 October 2016, Mr Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei took part in a protest in London against King Hamad of Bahrain's visit to the UK Prime Minister. Hours later on the same day, his wife, Duaa Alwadaei, was detained along with her two-year-old son at Bahrain International Airport by Bahraini security forces. She was interrogated over seven hours and she was told she would not be allowed to leave Bahrain. During the interrogations, government officers reportedly made threats against her, her family and Mr Alwadaei's family and she was told to deliver the threats as "a message to her husband."<sup>1</sup> Following international pressure and the intervention of the US embassy, on 1 November 2016 Mrs Alwadaei was able to leave Bahrain.

However, in March 2017, while Mr Alwadaei was attending the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Mrs Alwadaei's brother Sayed Nazar Alwadaei, her cousin Mahmood Marzooq Mansoor and her mother Hajar Mansoor Hassan were arrested in Bahrain.<sup>2</sup> They all claim that they were subjected to ill-treatment, torture and extensively interrogated, including in relation to Mr Alwadaei's life and work in the United Kingdom, without the presence of their lawyers. Mrs Hassan reportedly required hospitalisation on the first day of her detention. They were forced to sign confessions and were charged under Bahrain's anti-terrorism law. If found guilty on 30 October, they face upwards of three years in prison each.

<sup>1</sup> See Human Rights Watch, 'Bahrain: Activist's Family Targeted. Retribution Appears Linked to Human Rights Work,' available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/06/bahrain-activists-family-targeted/>;

<sup>2</sup> See Amnesty International, 'Bahrain: Halt the Targeting of Critic Living Abroad Through the Harassment of His Family in Bahrain', available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/6486/2017/en/>

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The treatment of the Alwadaei family has been the subject of international criticism. Six UN human rights experts raised “grave concerns” over the family’s allegations of torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary arrest and the apparent aim of the Government of Bahrain to “intimidate and impair Mr Alwadaei’s human rights activities”, including his participation at the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>3</sup>

**We therefore urge your government to request Bahrain to immediately release Mr and Mrs Alwadaei’s relatives ahead of their 30 October trial and drop all charges against them, and undertake prompt, impartial, independent and effective investigations into their allegations of torture and other ill-treatment. The findings of the investigation must be made public and anyone suspected of criminal responsibility must be brought to justice in fair proceedings. As this case is a part of a pattern of abuse and harassment against human rights defenders and their families in Bahrain, we urge you to call on Bahrain to cease all harassment of human rights defenders and their families.**

Yours Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

Amnesty International

Article 19

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR)

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

CIVICUS

English PEN

European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)

European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR)

Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)

Index on Censorship

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REPRIEVE

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<sup>3</sup> Communication to the Government of Bahrain by the Vice Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, on the situation of human rights defenders, and on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=23029>