

URGENT ACTION

THREE SENTENCED TO DEATH AFTER UNFAIR TRIAL

Three Bahraini men have been sentenced to death after an unfair trial, and another seven to life imprisonment in relation to the killing of three policemen. They have each had their nationality revoked.

Ali Abdulshaheed al-Sankis, Sami Mirza Mshaima' and Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad al-Samea were sentenced to death on 26 February by the High Criminal Court in the capital, Manama. They had been convicted of charges that included "organizing, running and financing a terrorist group (Al-Ashtar Brigade) with the aim of carrying terrorist attacks"; "possession and planting of explosives with the intent to kill security forces and causing disorder"; "killing of three police officers and attempted killing of others". Another seven men were sentenced to life in prison. The court also ordered that all 10 men should have their nationality revoked.

They had been arrested around 3 March 2014 after their houses were raided by masked security officers. During three weeks of interrogation at the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) they did not have access to their families or lawyers and they said they had been tortured. Sami Mshaima' and Abbas al-Samea later told their families the torture had included being given electric shocks, beaten, burnt with cigarettes, being deprived of sleep, and sexually assaulted.

The men only had access to their lawyers for the first time during their first court hearing on 30 April despite repeated requests to do so by the lawyers ahead of trial. During their first hearing their lawyers requested they be examined by a forensic doctor but the request was rejected. Their lawyers did not have access to the full evidence against them and were not allowed to cross-examine prosecution witnesses. The defendants were not allowed to speak in court. Their lawyers withdrew from the case in protest and new lawyers, two of whom had represented them before, were appointed by the court.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urging the authorities not to execute Ali Abdulshaheed al-Sankis, Sami Mirza Mshaima' and Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad al-Samea and immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- Urging them to order a full retrial of the individuals, ensuring internationally recognized standards for fair trial are complied with, without recourse to the death penalty;
- Acknowledging the Bahraini government's responsibility to protect the public and bring to justice those who commit crimes, but insisting that this should always be done in accordance with international law and Bahrain's international human rights obligations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 APRIL 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
Salutation: Your Majesty

Prime Minister

Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1000, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 3033
Salutation: Your Highness

Minister of Justice

Shaikh Khaled bin Ali al-Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic
Affairs
P. O. Box 450, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Salutation: Your Excellency

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.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

After a bomb blast killed three policemen in the village al-Daih on 3 March 2014, the security forces raided a number of homes and arrested at least 25 people, including the 10 that were sentenced on 26 February. Many of those who were arrested and later released said they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. One of them, Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad al-Samea, a schoolteacher, said he had been in school at the time of the bombing and had presented a letter from the school corroborating this.

The 10 men's trial began on 30 April 2014. Ali Abdulshaheed al-Sankis, Sami Mirza Mshaima' and Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad al-Samea were sentenced to death; Ahmad Jaafar Mhamad 'Ali, 'Ali Jamil Taher Mhamad al-Samea, Taher Youssif Ahmed Mhamad al-Samie, Hussein Ahmad Rashed Khalil, Redha Mirza Mshaima', Hussein Sabah Abdulhussein and Ahmad M'touq Ibrahim were sentenced to life in prison.

Their lawyers complained that during the first two hearings they were not given access to all the evidence available against the defendants, which prevented them from adequately defending their clients. Nor were they allowed to cross-examine the prosecution witnesses. They withdrew from the case in October 2014 in protest. The Ministry of Justice appointed two lawyers from those who had previously withdrawn from the case. They have reiterated the same demands as were made by the lawyers who withdrew in October, which the court again refused.

Bahrain has applied the death penalty only a few times in the past few years. A Bangladeshi national, Jassim Abdulmanan, was the last person executed in Bahrain in 2010. However, since 2011, at least 11 people have been sentenced to death, although some of the death sentences were quashed on appeal.

In December 2014, a record number of countries - 117 of the UN's 193 member states- voted in favour of the 5th UN General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment are recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international human rights instruments. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime, the guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the offender or the method used by the state to carry out the execution. The death penalty violates the right to life as proclaimed in the UDHR. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Names: Ali Abdulshaheed al-Sankis, Sami Mirza Mshaima', Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad al-Samea, Ahmad Jaafar Mhamad 'Ali, 'Ali Jamil Taher Mhamad al-Samea, Taher Youssif Ahmed Mhamad al-Samie, Hussein Ahmad Rashed Khalil, Redha Mirza Mshaima', Hussein Sabah Abdulhussein and Ahmad M'touq Ibrahim

Gender m/f: m

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