

URGENT ACTION

ZAINAB AL-KHAWAJA'S SENTENCES UPHELD ON APPEAL

Zainab Al-Khawaja's one-year sentence for speaking out in defence of another prisoner while she was in prison in June 2013, and her four-month sentence for ripping up photos of the King of Bahrain in May 2012 have been upheld on appeal. She has been sentenced to a total of three years and one month and is at risk of immediate rearrest.

Activist **Zainab Al-Khawaja's** one-year sentence for "insulting a public official" and four-month sentence for "destroying public property" were upheld on 3 December by the High Criminal Court of Appeal in the capital, Manama. Neither she nor her lawyers were present during the hearing. Zainab Al-Khawaja's lawyers had withdrawn from her case during the appeal hearing for another case on 21 October at their client's request, as she did not recognize the legitimacy of the court. If imprisoned, Zainab Al-Khawaja will be a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression.

She was sentenced on 9 December 2014 to one year in prison for "insulting a public official" after verbally defending a fellow prisoner who was insulted and humiliated by a prison guard on 22 June 2013 in 'Issa Town detention centre for women. That day, she was sentenced to two two-month sentences for two charges of "destroying government property" when she ripped up framed pictures of the King belonging to the Ministry of Interior while detained at a police station in 'Issa Town, south-west of Manama, on 4 and 6 May 2012. Zainab Al-Khawaja was also sentenced to three years' imprisonment, reduced on appeal on 21 October to one year and a 3,000 Bahraini Dinar (BD) (approximately US\$8,000) fine for "insulting the King", after she ripped up a photo of him in court in October 2014. If she does not pay the fine, her sentence will be extended by 18 months. She is also appealing against a nine-month sentence on 2 February 2016 for "entering a restricted area" and "insulting a public official" when she tried to visit her father in Jaw prison in August 2014, when he was on hunger strike.

Zainab Al-Khawaja's family have told Amnesty International that if she is imprisoned she intends to keep her one-year-old baby son with her while she serves her sentence.

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

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to quash all of Zainab Al-Khawaja's convictions, which arise solely from her peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to repeal all legislation that criminalizes the right to freedom of expression, and respect and protect this right.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 JANUARY 2016 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

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 Khaled 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 fourth update of UA 306/14. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/mde11/2728/2015/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zainab Al-Khawaja has been arrested and released several times since December 2011 on an array of charges including "destroying government property", "insulting a policewoman", "illegal gathering and rioting" and "inciting hatred against the regime". To date, she has spent almost 18 months in prison.

She was last arrested on 14 October 2014 for tearing up a picture of the King while appearing before a Lower Criminal Court in relation to two separate cases. During the hearing, according to witnesses, she took out a picture of the King of Bahrain from her handbag, tore it up and handed it to the judge, who ordered her arrest. She was released on 19 November following a court order and sentenced on 4 December to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 BD (approximately US\$8,000).

Zainab Al-Khawaja was also sentenced to nine months' imprisonment on 2 June 2015, for "insulting a public official" and "entering a prohibited area" when she sought to visit her father, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, in Jaw prison on 28 August 2014, when she was seven months pregnant. She was not present in court and paid bail of 500 BD (US\$1,300) pending her appeal hearing. Her father, a prisoner of conscience, was then on hunger strike. She told Amnesty International she had heard that he had collapsed in his prison cell and she was trying to visit him to find out how he was, as her family and his lawyer had called the prison but got no response. She said she had walked through the main prison gate towards the visitors' building. She said she saw no signs showing it was a restricted area and the prison guards did not try to stop her. At the visitors' entrance, she was stopped by the prison guards who asked why she was there. She explained that she wanted to make sure her father was alive and well, but the guards told her she had no right to do so and started filming her. The guards were joined by the head of the prison and a female police officer, who ordered them to arrest Zainab Al-Khawaja. She said she told the officers that she was seven months pregnant, but they said they would take no responsibility for what happened to her or her unborn child. She said she was then held down on the ground, handcuffed and transferred to Riffa police station where she was told she had been charged with "entering a prohibited area", "not cooperating with police orders" and "insulting a public official". She was released later that day.

Name: Zainab Al-Khawaja
Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 306/14 Index: MDE 11/3011/2015 Issue Date: 7 December 2015