

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST DETAINED FOR POSTING ON TWITTER

Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji, a Bahraini activist, was arrested on 3 January for posting on Twitter and is being held for interrogation. He is a prisoner of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Bahraini activist **Dr Sa'eed Muthafer Habib al-Samahiji** was arrested from his home in 'Issa town, around 15km south of Manama, the capital, at around 2:30am on 3 January. His home was searched and his electronic devices were confiscated. At 5am on the same day, Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji called his family and told them he was being held at the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) before the line was cut. On 4 January, he called his family again and said that he had been taken to Dry Dock prison in Manama. While his family were visiting him in prison on 5 January, Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji told them he had been informed that he is being held for interrogation in relation to disseminating information about the execution of the prominent Saudi Shi'a cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr by the Saudi Arabian government and insulting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Twitter. Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji has not had access to his lawyer since his arrest.

On 4 January, the Public Prosecution published a statement regarding the seven-day detention of a person accused of "misusing electronic networks to insult a brother nation and inciting unpermitted demonstrations which had led to demonstrations accompanied by violent acts". This statement follows the Ministry of Interior's announcement on its website on 2 January that articles 168 and 215 of Bahrain's Penal Code would apply when taking legal action against anyone attempting to use the recent verdicts in Saudi Arabia to heighten sectarian tensions or to incite violence and that anyone doing so "would face imprisonment for not more than two years and/ or a fine of up to BD200" (approx. US\$530).

Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji became a prisoner of conscience when he was previously arrested and prosecuted for making a short speech at a funeral he attended. He was released on 1 July 2015 after serving one year in prison for "publicly insulting the King of Bahrain".

Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji's family told Amnesty International that they are concerned for his health. He still suffers from injuries sustained during a previous arrest in 2011 as a result of torture and other ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji immediately and unconditionally, as he is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to grant him immediate access to his lawyer and any medical attention he may require;
- Urging them to repeal laws that criminalize the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression, in line with Bahrain's obligations under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 FEBRUARY 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

Ministry of Interior
Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1723 2661
Email via website:
www.interior.gov.bh/contact_en.aspx
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Ministry 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 (via website):
<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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Sa'eed Mothaher Habib al-Samahiji, an ophthalmologist, was previously arrested after he gave a short speech that was filmed in September 2013 at the funeral of 22-year-old demonstrator Sadeq Sabt. Sadeq Sabt died in Salmaniya Medical Complex a month after being run over by a police car during a demonstration on 30 July 2013. Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji was convicted under articles 92/2 and 214 of Bahrain's Penal Code for "publicly insulting the King of Bahrain" and sentenced in December 2013 to one year in prison and a 200 Bahraini Dinars (approx. US\$530) bail to stop the immediate implementation of the sentence pending the appeal. In April 2014 the High Court of Appeal upheld his sentence. On 1 July 2014 he was arrested to serve his sentence in Jaw prison, around 30 km south of Manama.

Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji was one of a group of health professionals from the Salmaniya Medical Complex who were arrested in early 2011 for having been vocal in giving interviews to foreign journalists and accusing the government of abuses against protesters. All were held incommunicado for several weeks. Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment "kidnapping for a terrorist purpose", "illegal gathering and participating in unlicensed marches" and "instigating hatred against another sect", which was upheld by Bahrain's Court of Cassation in Manama on 1 October 2012. He was released on 24 April 2013

He told Amnesty International that during his arrest in 2011 he had been beaten on the head, legs and kidney area and he still had problems due to this torture and other ill-treatment.

After reviewing legal documents and evidence, Amnesty International had found no evidence Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji or any of the health professionals arrested had used or advocated violence in their role in 2011 pro-reform demonstrations. The organization considered them prisoners of conscience, jailed only for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Name: Dr Sa'eed Mothaher Habib al-Samahiji

Gender m/f: m

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