

URGENT ACTION

JAILED OPPOSITION LEADER IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Prisoner of conscience, Hassan Mshaima, one of 11 jailed Bahraini opposition leaders, continues to be denied adequate healthcare in detention. Over the past two months he was admitted to hospital due to the serious deterioration of his health that required emergency treatment.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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 King of Bahrain
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Your Highness,

The health of opposition leader, **Hassan Mshaima**, 72, has alarmingly deteriorated over the past two months. He is a diabetic and former cancer patient, and suffers from other chronic illnesses, including from his heart. On 19 October 2020, the Jaw Prison authorities transferred him to the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) hospital as he was suffering from extremely high blood pressure and difficulty in breathing. He was told that he needed to be seen by a specialist for his diabetes and his high blood pressure, but no appointment was made. His health further deteriorated, and he was again rushed to hospital on 10 November 2020, but was returned to prison about six hours later. Hassan Mshaima told his son that the doctors suspected that he had suffered a stroke. On 15 November he was seen by a cardiologist who prescribed him medication.

On 13 November 2020, the Ministry of Interior stated that he was receiving all his rights, including full healthcare. However, as a former cancer patient, Hassan Mshaima requires regular check-ups such as Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans every six months. His last PET was in October 2019. Nor has he been seen by an endocrinologist for his diabetes for over four years.

Hassan Mshaima was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2011 after an unfair trial for leading widespread peaceful anti-government protests. In the same case, 12 other opposition activists received sentences ranging from five years to life imprisonment. Two of them have since been released.

We call upon your Highness to release Hassan Mshaima immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience convicted solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly and due to his advanced age and health issues that put him at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. In the meantime, we urge you to provide him with access to adequate healthcare, including prescribed medication and regular check-ups.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hassan Mshaima is the secretary general of the of al-Haq Movement, which is an unauthorized Shi'a political opposition group. Hassan Mshaima was arrested on 17 March 2011. He is among fourteen opposition activists who were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011 during the Bahrain uprising. Most were arrested in the middle of the night by groups of security officers who raided their houses and took them to an unknown location, where they were held incommunicado for weeks. Many of the 14 have alleged they were tortured during their first few days of detention when they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA). None of the 14 was allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations just after they were arrested. Some saw their lawyers during questioning by the military prosecutor ahead of the trial, while others were only allowed to see them during the first court hearing in May 2011, which was the first time any of the activists had seen their families since their arrest. On 22 June, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict and sentenced them to between two years and life in prison on charges including "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution".

Seven of the 14 activists were sentenced to life imprisonment: Hassan Mshaima, Abdelwahab Hussain, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Dr Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad, Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad and Saeed Mirza al-Nuri. Four people, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad Ali Ridha Ismail, Abdullah al-Mahroos and Abdul-Hadi Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, were sentenced to 15 years in prison. Two people, Ebrahim Sharif and Salah Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja were given five-year prison terms while Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh received a prison sentence of two years.

On 28 September 2011, in a session that lasted only a few minutes, the National Safety Court of Appeal, a military appeal court, upheld all the convictions and sentences imposed on the 14 opposition activists. On 30 April 2012, the Court of Cassation in Manama ordered them to appear before a civilian court for an appeal trial; on the same day it reduced Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh's two-year sentence to six months. He was immediately released as he had already served his sentence. However, the other 13 remained behind bars in Jaw prison. Their appeal before a civilian court of appeal started on 22 May 2012. The High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld their convictions and sentences on 4 September 2012, and on 6 January 2013, the cassation Court confirmed verdict. Ebrahim Sharif was released on 19 June 2015 under a royal pardon and Salah al-Khawaja was released from prison on 19 March 2016, after completing his five-year prison sentence.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 4 February 2021.
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Hassan Mshaima (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/7743/2018/en/>