

URGENT ACTION

CANADIAN NATIONAL IMPRISONED IN BAHRAIN

Canadian national Naser Bader al-Raas has been imprisoned in Bahrain for taking part in protests in March 2011. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Naser Bader al-Raas, a Canadian national of Kuwaiti origin, was sent to prison after attending an appeal hearing against a five-year prison sentence, handed down on 25 October 2011. He had been sentenced, together with another 12 defendants, to five years in prison for inciting hatred towards the regime, participating in illegal gatherings and giving false information to the media. He went into hiding after the verdict was announced.

On 24 January 2012, the High Criminal Court of Appeal in Manama, Bahrain's capital, acquitted the rest of the group of all charges but Naser Bader al-Raas lost his right to appeal because he was not present in court. His lawyer petitioned the Court for a review of this decision. On 1 February he was arrested in court after appearing before the High Criminal Court of Appeal, that was going to reconsider his sentence. He is currently held in Jaw prison in Manama. He has a heart condition and has had several operations in the past. His lawyer told Amnesty International that he is concerned about Naser Bader al-Raas's health as he needs medication and regular check-ups. The High Criminal Court of Appeal has postponed the hearing to re-consider his sentence until 16 February.

Naser Bader al-Raas was arrested at Bahrain International Airport on 20 March 2011 when he was leaving the country. He had arrived on 6 March for a family visit. During his stay in Bahrain, he had taken part in demonstrations. After his arrest, his family and friends did not know his whereabouts for one month, during which time he was held in solitary confinement. He later claimed he had been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in detention, including by being beaten with sticks, being forced to stand for long hours and being verbally abused. He was later released without explanation on 20 April and his passport was confiscated. Amnesty International considers that Naser Bader al-Raas has been sentenced for exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly, and that he is a prisoner of conscience, who should be immediately and unconditionally released.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to immediately drop all charges against Naser Bader al-Raas and release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience sentenced for exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging the authorities to conduct an immediate investigation into his allegations of torture, make the results public and bring to justice anyone found responsible for his torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 FEBRUARY 2012 TO:

His Majesty the King

Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 176 64 587

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad
Al Khalifa
Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 172 32 661

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights and Social Development

Dr Fatima bint Mohammed Al Balooshi
Ministry of Human Rights and Social Development
P.O. Box 32868, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 171 04 977

E-mail: pr@social.gov.bh

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

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 24/12. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/003/2012/en

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Name: Naser Bader al-Raas

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 24/12 Index: MDE 11/005/2012 Issue Date: 1 February 2012