

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAINI PRISONER DENIED MEDICAL TREATMENT

Hassan Mshaima', one of the 13 jailed prominent Bahraini opposition activists, told his family that he has been denied urgent medical treatment. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Hassan Mshaima', a diabetic and former cancer patient, phoned his family from Jaw prison and complained to them that he had had a severe pain in his right ear and a smelly discharge from it for more than a week but that the prison authorities had denied him specialized treatment outside prison because he refuses to wear the prison uniform.

Hassan Mshaima', aged 65, suffers from multiple health conditions and needs regular hospital check-ups. In February the prison doctor said he needed an examination by a specialist in a hospital and would probably need surgery. The prison authorities have been refusing to take him to a hospital unless he wears the prison uniform. In 2011 he was punched and kicked, including on his right ear, by police officers in a military court during the trial of the 13 prisoners of conscience. He had an operation on the ear in 2012.

Until about two weeks ago all 13 opposition activists had been refusing to wear the prison uniform, saying it is only worn by criminals and to wear the uniform would be to admit criminality. Since mid-March they had been denied family visits: every time families went to the prison they were told they could not visit because the prisoners were "refusing prison instructions". About two weeks ago, 11 out of the 13 started to wear the prison uniform reportedly under pressure from their families. Hassan Mshaima' and Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace still refuse to wear it.

The High Criminal Court of Appeal in the capital, Manama, issued its verdict on 4 September 2012, upholding the 13 defendants' sentences of between five years and life in prison on charges including "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". The Court of Cassation upheld the sentences on 7 January 2013. See "Additional Information" for a list of all 13 prisoners' names.

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

- Urging the authorities to provide Hassan Mshaima' with medical care for his right ear and access to regular check-ups in specialized hospitals;
- Urging them to release all 13 opposition activists immediately and unconditionally, since they are prisoners of conscience, convicted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 09 SEPTEMBER 2013 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 (keep trying)

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
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the twelfth update of UA 139/11. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/019/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An Amnesty International delegation visited Jaw prison on 24 January and met Hassan Mshaima'. He complained about the medical treatment he was receiving, which he said was inadequate. Hassan Mshaima', who fears that his cancer may have returned, has not been given any test results, though he insisted on receiving them. He said, "It is harassment as when I go to hospital for the treatment that lasts up to six hours, my face is covered and I cannot see the doctor or the medical staff." For further information see the report "*Freedom has a price: Two years after Bahrain's uprising*" (<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/005/2013/en>).

Fourteen prominent opposition activists were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011. 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 Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri. Four people, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il, 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, brother of 'Abdulhadi 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.

On 14 July 2012 the Appeal Court ordered the press not to report any information relating to the case of the 13 opposition activists and stated that its future hearings into the case would take place behind closed doors. The final verdict on the case was due to be announced on 14 August 2012 but the session was further postponed until 4 September. Dr Ghanim Alnajjar, an internationally recognized human rights expert who observed the court proceedings on behalf of Amnesty International, said, "The decision to postpone the final verdict is unjustified, and is tantamount to a denial of justice." Amnesty International sent Ahmad Nashmi al-Dhaferi, a Kuwaiti lawyer, to observe the court hearing on 4 September 2012. For more information on this case and others see the report *Flawed Reforms: Bahrain fails to achieve Justice for protesters* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/014/2012/en>).

Names: Hassan Mshaima', 'Abdelwahab Hussain, 'Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad, Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad, Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il, Abdullah al-Mahroos, 'Abdul-Hadi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, Ebrahim Sharif, Salah 'Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja
Gender m/f: All male

Further information on UA: 139/11 Index: MDE 11/025/2013 Issue Date: 29 July 2013