

URGENT ACTION

JAILED OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS FACE APPEAL TRIAL

14 opposition activists in Bahrain have been ordered to appear before a civilian court for an appeal trial. One of the activists, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, who has been on hunger strike for approaching three months, told his family on 29 April that he was forcibly fed during the past week. Amnesty International is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

On 30 April the Court of Cassation in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, ordered the 14 opposition activists to appear before a civilian court for an appeal trial. It is not known when this will take place. The activists had been sentenced by the National Safety Court of First Instance – a military court - in June 2011 to between two years and life in prison on charges including 'setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution'. On 30 April 2012 the Court of Cassation reduced the two year sentence of one of them, Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh, to six months and he was due to be released on 30 April. However, the other 13 continue to be behind bars. They are all prisoners of conscience, held for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

One of the 14 opposition activists, **Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja**, a dual Bahraini-Danish national, started a hunger strike in protest against his detention on 8 February 2012. He was transferred to the Military Hospital to receive treatment. From 23 to 29 April, his family and lawyer were not able to contact him, raising fears for his health. His family finally managed to visit him for one hour on 29 April, when he explained how he had been forcibly fed during that week via a tube placed from his nose to his stomach. This tube has now been removed, and he is drinking juice voluntarily and receiving nutrients intravenously. Despite several requests by Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja to see his lawyer, and several formal requests submitted by his lawyer to visit him, they have been denied and his lawyer has not had access to him for weeks.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urge the Bahraini authorities to grant Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja immediate access to his lawyer;
- Urge them to release all 14 opposition activists immediately and unconditionally, since they are prisoners of conscience, held solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urge them to order an immediate independent investigation into their allegations of torture, publish the results and bring anyone found responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 JUNE 2012 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

Prime Minister

Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
Office of the Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1000, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 17533033, +973 17532839

Salutation: Your Highness

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 17536343, +973 17531284
Website: <http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>

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 Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the seventh update of UA 139/11. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/023/2012/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

JAILED OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS FACE APPEAL TRIAL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 14 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 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 saw their families following 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.

An Amnesty International observer was present at one of the appeal sessions, on 6 September 2011. The observer concluded that no evidence was presented in court proving that the 14 had committed a crime and used or advocated violence. 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.

Name: 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, Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh
Gender m/f: All male

Further information on UA: 139/11 Index: MDE 11/027/2012 Issue Date: 1 May 2012