

URGENT ACTION

BLOGGER, LAWYER RELEASED: TRIALS UNDERWAY

Bahraini blogger and translator Mohammad Hassan Sudayf was released on bail on 3 October. His lawyer, 'Abdul-'Aziz Moussa, had been released on bail on 21 August. Their trials are underway. Photographer Hussain Hubail is still in detention.

Mohammad Hassan Sudayf was released on bail from Dry Dock prison in the capital, Manama, on 3 October. He has been charged, along with photographer **Hussain Hubail**, with "inciting hatred against the regime", "inciting people to ignore the law", "calling for illegal gatherings" and "being a member of the 14 February media group".

The two men were arrested on 31 July. Mohammad Hassan Sudayf was arrested at his parents' house in Sitra by plainclothes security officers, without a warrant. His family visited him on 6 August and he told them he had been tortured while detained at the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID). He said he had been given electric shocks, that he had been beaten, forced to strip naked and had his clothes taken away. Hussain Hubail was arrested at Bahrain International Airport as he was due to board a flight to Dubai. He was taken to the CID building for interrogation. He told his family, when they visited him on 7 August, that he had been beaten and threats were made against his family. Hussain Hubail is detained at Dry Dock prison, where both men were transferred on 3 August.

Mohammad Hassan Sudayf's lawyer, '**Abdul-'Aziz Moussa**', was released on bail on 21 August, the day his trial began before Branch 4 of the Lower Criminal Court on a charge of "divulging details of investigations". The next hearing has been set for 30 December. 'Abdul-'Aziz Moussa was arrested on 7 August after attending a session with his client that day and later tweeting that he had seen signs of torture on his client and revealing the charges against both men, whom he named, and gave details of their interrogation.

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

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Hussain Hubail immediately and unconditionally if he is being held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to order an impartial and independent investigation into Mohammad Hassan Sudayf and Hussain Hubail's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly in line with Bahrain's international human rights obligations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 NOVEMBER 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 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 second update of UA 206/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/031/2013/en>



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The arrest of Mohammad Hassan Sudayf and Hussein Hubail took place ahead of anti-government protests that were organized in many Shi'a villages in Bahrain on 14 August. Protesters were planning to march to Manama but security forces prevented them by using teargas and, in some instances, by erecting barbed wire around the villages. At least 18 people were arrested. The *Tamarrud* (rebellion) movement, made up of youth groups, chose 14 August to organize anti-government protests to denounce government repression and call for genuine political reforms. Mainstream opposition associations were also planning a large anti-government rally, but it was cancelled due to the heavy security forces presence in Manama.

Two-and-a-half years after the popular uprising in Bahrain, and beneath the fanfare of reform, prisoners of conscience, including some arrested during the protests, remain behind bars and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are still being suppressed. In recent months, not only have prisoners of conscience not been released, but more people have been jailed simply for daring to express their views, whether via Twitter or on peaceful marches. A number of women activists have been detained too. Bahraini courts have appeared more concerned with toeing the government line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011, was charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection with the 2011 protests. At the launch of the BICI report in November 2011, the government publicly committed itself to implementing the recommendations set out in the report. The report recounted the government's response to the mass protests and documented wide-ranging human rights abuses. Among its key recommendations, the report called on the government to bring to account those responsible for human rights violations, including torture and excessive use of force, and carry out independent investigations into allegations of torture.

However, many of the government's pledges remain unfulfilled. The establishment of BICI and its report was considered to be a groundbreaking initiative, but, almost two years on, the promise of meaningful reform has been betrayed by the government's unwillingness to implement key recommendations around accountability; this includes its failure to carry out independent, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and excessive use of force, or to prosecute all those who gave the orders to commit human rights abuses. For further information see *Reform shelved, repression unleashed*, November 2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>.

On 28 July 2013 Bahrain's parliament held an extraordinary session and then submitted 22 recommendations to the king. The recommendations toughen punishments laid out in the 2006 anti-terrorism law. A few days later the king issued several decrees curtailing the right to freedom of expression further, including banning all protests, sit-ins and public gatherings in Manama indefinitely and giving the security forces additional sweeping powers.

On 9 September 2013 a joint statement by 47 countries at the UN Human Rights Council expressed serious concern about the ongoing human rights violations in Bahrain.

Names: Mohammad Hassan Sudayf, Hussein Hubail, 'Abdul-'Aziz Moussa
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 206/13 Index: MDE 11/051/2013 Issue Date: 10 October 2013