

URGENT ACTION

CHILD MOVED FROM ADULT PRISON IN BAHRAIN

Sixteen-year-old Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi was transferred from an adult prison to a juvenile detention centre and his family have been allowed to visit him. However, he remains held without charge and it appears that his lawyer has yet to visit him.

Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi was transferred from Dry Dock prison, north eastern Bahrain, to a juvenile detention centre on the morning of 20 December 2012, where his family were able to visit him. According to information received by Amnesty International, following his arrest Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi was kept in a police vehicle for up to six hours, while the police officers carried out their rounds. Later, during his interrogation at the Dry Dock prison, he was reportedly hit by the interrogating officers. Although he is now held in a juvenile detention centre, Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi remains detained without charge. He is due to appear before the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) on 26 December, but the exact reason for his arrest remains unclear.

Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi was arrested from his house in Sitra after it was raided on 11 December by riot police, who allegedly did not show an arrest warrant. During the raid, the riot police apparently broke the main door and took money and other items from the house. His family informed Amnesty International that the riot police asked for an electricity bill (as proof of residence) and while the family were looking for it in another room, Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi was taken without their knowledge. The boy was able to call his family two days after his arrest, informing them he was being held at Dry Dock prison. The day after his arrest he had been taken to the PPO without his lawyer or family.

Under international law, anyone under the age of 18 is a child and children suspected of a criminal offence should be treated according to the rules of the juvenile justice system.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to disclose the reason for Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi’s arrest and to release him unless he is charged with a recognisable criminal offence;
- Urging the authorities to protect him from torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 JANUARY 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
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 Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email via website:
<http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali
Salutation: Your Excellency

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 first update of UA 362/12. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/070/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An increasing number of children aged between 15 and 17 have been held in adult prisons and detention centres in Bahrain in the past few months. The total may be as high as 80, according to lawyers and Bahraini human rights groups.

Many of these children were arrested during demonstrations and have been accused of “illegal gathering” and rioting, and in some cases appear to have been punished solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly. Some of them have alleged they were beaten during arrest or on the way to police stations. In some cases, they did not have access to their families or lawyers during the first hours of detention and were forced to sign “confessions”. In other cases, they were formally charged with criminal offences under the Penal Code, tried in the regular (as opposed to juvenile) justice system, convicted and sentenced to prison terms.

Under international law, anyone under the age of 18 is a child; and children suspected of a criminal offence should be treated according to the rules of juvenile justice. Principles of juvenile justice include: detention or imprisonment only as a measure of last resort – under regular review and for the shortest appropriate time and a commitment to the use of alternatives to detention whenever possible; prohibition of solitary confinement; separation of children in detention facilities from adult detainees; no life imprisonment without the possibility of release in connection with offences committed while under 18; and attention to the particular needs of children in custody and an emphasis on reformation and social rehabilitation of child prisoners.

However, in contradiction with international law, children suspected of criminal offences in Bahrain have been treated as adults.

The human rights situation in Bahrain has markedly deteriorated in recent months, with repressive practices increasingly entrenched and government disregard for the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) becoming more flagrant. The BICI was set up to investigate widespread human rights violations during the 2011 uprising.

The BICI, appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011, included five renowned international legal and human rights experts, charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection to 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 to 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 a year on, the promise of meaningful reform has been betrayed by the government’s unwillingness to implement key recommendations around accountability, including its failure to carry out independent, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and excessive use of force and to prosecute all those who gave the orders to commit human rights abuses. For further information see: *Bahrain: Reform shelved, repression unleashed* (Index: MDE 11/062/2012), <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>).

Name: Mohammad Mohammad ‘Abdulnabi ‘Abdulwasi
Gender m/f: m

Further Information on UA: 362/12 Index: MDE 11/072/2012