

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER TORTURED IN DETENTION

'Abdulhadi Alkhwaja, a prominent human rights defender, has allegedly been tortured in detention and had to undergo surgery as a result of the injuries sustained. He is now being held in an unknown location in Bahrain. Two members of parliament were detained on 1 May and may also be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

'Abdulhadi Alkhwaja, a prominent human rights defender and former Protection Co-ordinator for Front Line, an international NGO that works with human rights defenders, was arrested on 9 April. His arrest was in connection with the anti-government protests in February and March 2011. He was arrested in his daughter's house. According to his family, he was beaten during the arrest, taken away barefoot and not allowed to take his medication with him. He has not been permitted family visits, although his family reportedly spoke with him on the phone on 20 April.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, when 'Abdulhadi Alkhwaja was admitted to the Bahrain Defence Force military hospital in al-Riffa', central Bahrain, around the end of April, he had cracks on his jaw and skull and black marks on his arms, allegedly caused by torture. He was reportedly admitted for six days and had several operations on his head and face. He was hastily returned to prison where he was said to have been tortured again.

The arrests of political opposition figures have continued in April and May. Those arrested include **Matar Ibrahim Matar** and **Jawad Fairouz**, who were detained on 1 May. Both men were members of parliament for al-Wefaq, the largest Shi'a party in Bahrain, who resigned together with most other members of al-Wefaq in protest at the government's crackdown on the protests. On 4 May the Secretary General of the Islamic Action Society, Sheikh Mohamed Ali al-Mahfoodh, was also detained. The whereabouts of the three men remain unknown and Amnesty International fears they might be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or Arabic:

- Express concern about the detention of 'Abdulhadi Alkhwaja, Matar Ibrahim Matar, Jawad Fairouz and Sheikh Mohamed Ali al-Mahfoodh and urge the authorities to release them immediately unless they are charged with a recognizable criminal offence and tried in full conformity with international fair trial standards;
- Urge the authorities to protect Abdulhadi Alkhwaja, Matar Ibrahim Matar, Jawad Fairouz, Sheikh Mohamed Ali al-Mahfoodh and all other detainees from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urge the authorities to immediately set up an independent investigation into the alleged torture or other ill-treatment of Abdulhadi Alkhwaja. to make its results public and to bring to justice anyone responsible;
- Urge the authorities to respect and uphold the rights to freedom expression, movement and assembly in Bahrain, including the right to peaceful protest.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JUNE 2011 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 17664587

Salutation: Your Majesty

Prime Minister

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

Salutation: Your Highness

Commander-in-Chief of the BDF

Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed
Al Khalifa
Bahrain Defence Force
Riffa Road, Bahrain
E-mail: dgcbdf@gmail.com
Fax: +971 17663923

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 79/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/017/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 4 May, Bahrain's parliament voted to extend a repressive state of emergency amid continued arrests of dissidents. Around 47 doctors and nurses, some detained for weeks, are facing trial in a military court after they were charged on 3 May for their role in treating anti-government protesters. On 5 May, some of the doctors were released but others continue to be detained.

The overwhelming majority of those detained since March 2011 are Shi'a Muslims who were active during the protests. Their whereabouts mostly remain unknown.

Some detainees have reportedly been tortured or otherwise ill-treated following arrest and at least four people have died in suspicious circumstances.

The dismissal of government employees who are known to have participated in protests continues unabated.

There have also been reports of several Shi'a mosques being destroyed by the security forces, allegedly because they did not have building permits.

This has increased suspicions that the whole of the majority Shi'a population of Bahrain is being punished for the February-March protests, which called for reforms and, in some cases, regime change.

Further information on UA: 79/11 Index: MDE 11/024/2011 Issue Date: 06 May 2011

