

# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVISTS' APPEAL HEARD BY MILITARY COURT

**The appeal of 15 opposition leaders who led and participated in demonstrations in Bahrain in February and March was heard on 6 September before a military court. The verdict will be given on 28 September.**

On 22 June, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict in the trial of 21 Bahrain opposition activists. Seven of them were tried in absentia. Among the 14 defendants present in court, seven were sentenced to life imprisonment, four were sentenced to 15 years in prison, two were given 5 years in prison and one received a two-year prison sentence. The charges against the 14 included "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". One of those seven tried in absentia, 'Abdel-Ghani 'Issa 'Ali Khanjar, was arrested after the trial concluded and is now in prison. The defendants denied the charges.

On 6 September the appeal case for the group of 21 took place before the National Safety Court of Appeal – a military court - in Bahrain. An Amnesty International observer was present at the appeal session. Observers from the Swedish, Danish and UK embassies in Bahrain were also present. During the appeal, defence lawyers asked the presiding judge to hear each defendant's testimony about abuses they say were committed against them during their arrest and under interrogation, when in detention. They also urged the court to withhold its verdict until after the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) has reported its findings and recommendations, due at the end of October, and to request that evidence of torture obtained by the BICI should be laid before the court. Further, they asked the court to allow them to challenge before the constitutional court the legality of the Royal decrees that provide for civilians to be tried before the National Safety Court

Amnesty International is not aware of any evidence that the accused used or advocated violence and Amnesty International is concerned that this trial of civilians is being held before a military court. Many of the defendants may be prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly; if so, they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

### **Please write immediately in English or Arabic:**

- Express concern at that the appeal was heard by a military court after what appears to have been an unfair and politically-motivated trial
- Express concern that many or all of the defendants may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned on account of their legitimate exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and association, and call for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience being held in Bahrain
- Urge the authorities to immediately set up an independent investigation into the alleged torture or other ill-treatment of some of the defendants, to make its results public, and bring to justice anyone responsible for torture.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 OCTOBER 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: +973 176 64 587// +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: +973 175 33 033

**Salutation: Your Highness**

#### Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khlaifa  
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs,  
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa  
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain  
Fax: +973 175 31 284

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/037/2011/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 22 June, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict in the trial of 21 Bahrain opposition activists. Seven of them were tried in absentia. Among the 14 defendants present in court, seven were sentenced to life imprisonment.

They are: **Hassan Mshaima** , **'Abdelwahab Hussain**, **'Abdulhadi al-Khawaja**, **Dr ' Abdel-Jalil al-Singace**, **Mohammad Habib al-Mi qdad** , **Abdel-Jalil al-Mi qdad** and **Sa 'eed Mirza al-Nuri**. Four people, **Mohammad Hassan Jawwad** , **Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il** , **Abdullah al-Mahroos** and **' Abdul -H adi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher**, were sentenced to 15 years in prison. Two people, **Ebrahim Shar if** 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.

Name: Hassan Mshaima' , 'Abdelwahab Hussain, 'Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Dr ' Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Mohammad Habib al-Mi qdad , Abdel-Jalil al-Mi qdad, Sa 'eed Mirza al-Nuri, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad , Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il , Abdullah al-Mahroos, ' Abdul -H adi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, Ebrahim Shar if, Salah 'Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja, Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh, Abdel-Ghani 'Issa 'Ali Khanjar. 'Abdel-Ghani 'Issa 'Ali Khanjar

Gender m/f: all male

Further information on UA: 139/11 Index: MDE 11/046/2011 Issue Date: 6 September 2011

