

URGENT ACTION

SENTENCES OF OPPOSITION FIGURES UPHELD

A military appeal court in Bahrain upheld the sentences of 14 opposition figures, all civilians, who led and participated in demonstrations in February and March on 28 September. They will now appeal before the civilian Court of Cassation.

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 five 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". Amnesty International had been informed that one of those seven tried in absentia, **'Abdel-Ghani 'Issa 'Ali Khanjar**, was arrested before the last session of the trial, however it has turned out that he is still in hiding. The defendants denied the charges.

The appeal hearing before the National Safety Court of Appeal began on 6 September, and was attended by an Amnesty International observer. Announcing its decision on 28 September, in a brief session lasting only a few minutes, the appeal court upheld all the convictions and sentences imposed on the 21 defendants on 22 June. At the trial, the military prosecution is reported to have failed to provide any substantive evidence that the accused used or advocated violence during the popular protests on February and March.

Defence lawyers will now appeal the verdict and sentences before the Court of Cassation, a civilian court. After the appeal court ruling, the authorities did not permit the defendants to talk to their relatives, possibly because the defendants began a hunger-strike on 24 September to protest against the arrest of 38 women and seven girl protesters on 23 September.

Amnesty International believes that these defendants did not receive a fair trial and that some or all of the 14 imprisoned may be prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The organization is also calling for an independent investigation into allegations that some of the defendants were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Express concern that the convictions and sentences were upheld by a military appeal 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 solely 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 9 NOVEMBER 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

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 fourth update of UA 139/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/046/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The National Safety Court of Appeal upheld on 28 September 2011 the sentences for the 14 defendants; seven were sentenced to life imprisonment. They are: **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.

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 11/052/2011 Issue Date: 28 September 2011