

URGENT ACTION

SICK HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER MUST BE RELEASED

The health of Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace is now in an alarming state as he enters his seventh consecutive month on hunger strike and has been deprived of his weekly video call with his family since the end of November 2021. Dr Abduljalil al-Singace, a Bahraini academic and human rights defender, has served over a decade of a life sentence in Bahrain's Jaw prison for his peaceful role in Bahrain's 2011 uprising. He must be immediately and unconditionally released, and pending that, granted immediate access to any necessary medical care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

King of Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa

Office of His Majesty the King

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Digital appeals sent to:

Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sheikh Salman bin Hamad

Contact form: <http://www.crownprince.bh/en/contact>

Twitter: @BahrainCPnews

Your Highness,

Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace is serving a life sentence for his peaceful role in Bahrain's 2011 uprising. He has been in Jaw prison for over a decade, in violation of his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. As he enters his seventh consecutive month on hunger strike, his health condition has further deteriorated with the on-duty doctor and an ambulance crew intervening and putting him on oxygen.

On 8 July 2021, he started a hunger strike to protest the confiscation by prison authorities of a book on Bahraini dialects that he spent the last four years researching and writing. Ten days later, he was transferred from prison to the Kanoo Medical Centre where he has since been detained. The same month, the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Ombudsperson declared that Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace's book could not be handed to his family until a "legal decision" was made. In November 2021, a legal decision clarified the apolitical nature of the book and yet the book has still not been returned.

At the end of November 2021, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace's weekly video calls to his family were suspended and, distressingly, he was not yet able to see his new grandson. In protest, he has been refusing to take IVs, vitamin supplements, and oral medication. Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace also suffers from medical conditions, including severe intermittent headaches, a prostate problem, arthritis in his shoulder joint, tremors, numbness, and diminished eyesight, for which he has not received adequate health care for. He has still not been informed of the outcome of an MRI scan taken in November 2021 and is still awaiting a CT scan as requested by his doctor.

We call upon your Highness to release Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace immediately and unconditionally as he is held solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. In the meantime, we urge you to ensure he receives adequate health care, in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent. We also call on you to ensure that his access to video calls to his family is reinstated and his work is immediately handed over to them.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace (60) is a Bahraini academic, blogger, and human rights defender. He was among fourteen opposition activists who were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011 during the Bahrain uprising. Most were arrested in the middle of the night by groups of security officers who raided their houses and took them to an unknown location, where they were held incommunicado for weeks. Many of the 14 activists have alleged they were tortured during their first few days of detention when they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA). None of them were allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations just after they were arrested. Some saw their lawyers during questioning by the military prosecutor ahead of the trial, while others were only allowed to see them during the first court hearing in May 2011, which was the first time any of the activists had seen their families since their arrest. On 22 June 2011, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict and sentenced them to between two years and life in prison on charges including "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". In April 2012, the case was transferred to a civilian court for an appeal trial. On 6 January 2013, the Cassation Court confirmed the verdict.

In June 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) was appointed by Royal Order to investigate and report on human rights violations committed following the anti-government protests in February and March 2011. At the launch of the BICI report in November 2011, the government publicly committed itself to implementing the recommendations set out in the report. Instead, it went onto a path of sustained repression over the past decade, disbanding opposition groups, independent media and sentencing peaceful activists to harsh sentences. The BICI report documented the torture and ill-treatment of Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, reporting that police had subjected him to nightly beatings for two months while placed in solitary confinement, targeted his disability by confiscating his crutches, making him "stand on one leg for prolonged periods", pushing his crutch "into his genitals", and "threatened him with rape and made sexually explicit comments about his wife and his daughter".

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 11 April 2022

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace (he/him)