

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 27/96

Fear of forcible exile

15 February 1996

BAHRAIN Salah Abdalla Ahmed al-Khawaja

Salah Abdalla Ahmed al-Khawaja, a Bahraini national, is reported to be at risk of being forcibly exiled from his country. It is believed that he is currently being held at Jaw prison in Manama.

On 22 January 1996, nine days after his release at the end of a seven-year prison term for political activity, Salah al-Khawaja was summoned to the Security and Intelligence Service (SIS). His wife drove him to the SIS headquarters in Manama, and has not heard from him since. A senior SIS officer acknowledged to the family that Salah al-Khawaja was being held but refused to give more details. Amnesty International has since received reports that Salah al-Khawaja has been transferred to Jaw prison, which is the prison where he served his sentence.

Saleh al-Khawaja was released on 13 January 1996 after completing a seven-year prison sentence for political opposition activities. During the last year of his sentence, he was reportedly told that he would be forcibly exiled upon release. On the day of his release, the SIS ordered him to appear at their headquarters in Manama in a few days, without giving a reason. He was then summoned on 22 January.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Forcible exile of Bahraini nationals suspected of political opposition activities remains one of Amnesty International's concerns in the country. While dozens of Bahraini nationals have been permitted to return to Bahrain after living abroad for many years, scores more have been denied this right and remain victims of forcible exile apparently for exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression.

According to information received by Amnesty International, people forcibly exiled from Bahrain are frequently given no reason for the measures taken against them and are denied the opportunity to appeal the decision to expel them or challenge its legality through the courts. Such practice is contrary to international human rights standards and to Article 17 (c) of Bahrain's Constitution, which forbids the expulsion or prevention of Bahraini citizens from returning to Bahrain.

For further information on forcible exile, please refer to *Bahrain: Banned from Bahrain: Forcible exiles of Bahraini nationals* (MDE 11/04/93, 16 December 1993).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English/Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that Salah Abdalla Ahmed al-Khawaja is at risk of being forcibly exiled and calling for this to be halted;
- calling for an end to forcible exile of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners and urging that all victims of this measure be permitted to return to their country, in accordance with international human rights standards and Bahrain's own constitution.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness
Al-Shaikh 'Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Office of His Highness the Amir
P.O. Box 555
The Amiri Court
Rifa'a Palace
Rifa'a, Bahrain
Telexes: 8666 Qasar, BN 8500 Qasar BN
Telegrams: His Highness the Amir, Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 668884
Salutation: Your Highness

His Excellency
Al-Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa
Minister of Interior
P.O. Box 13
Manama, Bahrain
Telexes: 9572 PSMKT BN or 8333 ALAMAN Bn
Telegrams: Minister of Interior, Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 276765 or 290526
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

His Excellency
Al-Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister of Bahrain
P.O. Box 1000
Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 533033

and to diplomatic representatives of Bahrain accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 March 1996.