

UA 346/00

Incommuni**BAHRAIN**Jasim Hussain 'Ali, aged 41

A university lecturer, who has provided written analysis to a business information service about the political and human rights situation in Bahrain, has not been heard of since he was detained by the security forces on 1 November. He is believed to be held incommunicado and there are fears that he may be tortured or ill-treated.

Jasim Hussain 'Ali, a senior lecturer in business administration/economics at Bahrain University and a father of two, was arrested by the Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) at his home in Hamad Town, south of the capital Manama. He is reportedly held at the SIS headquarters in al-Qal'a, but when his family asked for permission to visit him, they were apparently refused.

The exact reasons for his arrest are not known, but may be related to the fact that since 1997 he has provided written analysis about the human rights, political and economic situation in Bahrain to the Economist Intelligence Unit, a business information provider which is part of the Economist Group.

In September, Jasim Hussain 'Ali was apparently interrogated by the authorities at Bahrain airport when returning from abroad, and had a computer disk confiscated. Since then, the SIS has reportedly searched his house several times, confiscating more computer disks and questioning him about his links with the Economist Intelligence Unit.

On 6 November Amnesty International wrote to the Bahraini authorities seeking clarification of the reasons for the arrest and detention of Jasim Hussain 'Ali. No response has been received so far.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Political prisoners are often held incommunicado, and risk being tortured or ill-treated during the initial period following their arrest in an attempt to extract confessions. They may be detained for months or years without charge or trial under the provisions of the 1974 Decree Law on Security Measures, which allows for a maximum administrative detention of three years.

A number of detainees have died in custody since December 1994, when widespread anti-government protests erupted. No investigations are known to have been carried out into reports of torture or deaths in custody, although the names of certain SIS employees have featured regularly in the testimonies of former political detainees. However, reports of systematic torture have decreased in recent years, and positive steps have been taken by the authorities in the field of human rights. In March 1998 Bahrain ratified the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and in October 1999 a Human Rights Committee was set up to monitor human rights.

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

- seeking assurances that Jasim Hussain 'Ali will not be tortured or ill-treated, and calling for him to be given access to family, lawyers of his own choosing and medical care if necessary;
- asking the authorities to clarify why Jasim Hussain 'Ali was arrested and to confirm where he is held;

- calling for his immediate and unconditional release if he is being held solely for the peaceful expression of his beliefs.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness

Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Office of His Highness the Amir
P. O. Box 555
The Amiri Court, Rifa'a Palace, Bahrain
Faxes:+973 668884
Salutation:Your Highness

His Excellency

Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1000, Manama, Bahrain
Telegrams: Prime Minister, al-Manama, Bahrain
Telexes: 9336 PROM BN or 7889 PMPO BN
Faxes: + 973 533033
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency

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

COPIES 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 21 December 2000.