

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST DETAINED IN BAHRAIN

Bahraini human rights activist, Naji Fateel, was arrested on 2 May 2013 at his home by plain clothed police officers. His whereabouts are unknown. He is a prisoner of conscience who should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Naji Fateel, 39, is a board member of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR) a blogger and prolific tweeter, reporting on human rights violations. During marches and protests in villages he has given speeches about human rights and encouraged people to document and monitor violations.

Naji Fateel was arrested without warrant at dawn at his home in the village of Bani Jamra, northwestern Bahrain. The house was raided by 12 plain clothed police officers who searched the house and took away with them his daughter's laptop, his camera and phones. The family home was surrounded by riot police during the raid. No reason for his arrest was given. Naji Fateel's lawyer requested information from the Public Prosecutor's Office about his client, but was told that they had no information about him and were not aware of any charges against him.

Naji Fateel has been arrested and tortured several times. He suffers from back injuries sustained during torture in 2007 and walks aided with a stick. On 14 February 2012 - the first anniversary of mass protests in Bahrain – he was arrested after being caught in teargas fired by police to break up crowds of people marching towards Pearl Roundabout, where protestors intended to gather. He was released on bail on 17 April 2012.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern that Naji Fateel is a prisoner of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising his work as a human rights defender and urging the Bahraini authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally;
- Urging the authorities to disclose his whereabouts and protect him from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Urging the authorities to grant him immediate access to his family and lawyer.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 JUNE 2013 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 1766 4587
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1723 2661
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST DETAINED IN BAHRAIN

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2011 Naji Fateel has been harassed and intimidated and has received death threats (please see this news story: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/bahraini-activists-receive-threats-after-anonymous-death-call-2011-03-11> and previous Urgent Actions: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/016/2012/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/011/2012/en>).

Among the recommendations accepted by Bahrain in the Universal Periodic Review of 2012 are those calling on the government to abandon restrictions on human rights defenders. Since then, however, human rights defenders and other activists in Bahrain have continued to be harassed, arrested and even imprisoned for their human rights activities.

Two years after the uprising in Bahrain, and beneath the fanfare of subsequent reform, prisoners of conscience, including some arrested during the protests, remain behind bars and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly continue to be suppressed. In recent months, not only have prisoners of conscience not been released, but more people have been jailed simply for daring to express their views, whether via Twitter or on peaceful marches. Bahraini courts have appeared more concerned with toeing the government's line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011, was charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection with the 2011 protests. At the launch of the BICI report in November 2011, the government publicly committed itself to implementing the recommendations set out in the report. The report recounted the government's response to the mass protests and documented wide-ranging human rights abuses. Among its key recommendations, the report called on the government to bring to account those responsible for human rights violations, including torture and excessive use of force, and carry out independent investigations into allegations of torture. However, many of the government's pledges remain unfulfilled. The establishment of BICI and its report was considered to be a groundbreaking initiative, but, more than a year on, the promise of meaningful reform has been betrayed by the government's unwillingness to implement key recommendations around accountability; this includes its failure to carry out independent, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and excessive use of force, and to prosecute all those who gave the orders to commit human rights abuses. For further information see: Bahrain: Reform shelved, repression unleashed (Index: MDE 11/062/2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>).

Name: Naji Fateel

Gender m/f: m

UA 114/13 Index: MDE 11/013/2013 Issue Date: 3 May 2013