

URGENT ACTION

THREE BAHRAIN PROTESTERS RELEASED

Three protesters arrested on 14 February 2012 in Bahrain, are among many who have been released on bail. They were arrested during a protest to mark the first anniversary of the beginning of the unrest in Bahrain. Activists Naji Fateel and Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan and blogger Hassen Jaber are among others who remain in detention.

Amin Jaffar Swar (aged 22), **Mutaher Saeed Taher Ahmed** (aged 18) and **Mohammed Makky** (aged 22) were arrested on 14 February 2012 in their car, in the Seif district of Manama. They were driving towards the GCC roundabout (also known as Pearl Roundabout), at the heart of the anniversary demonstration. They told Amnesty International that police officers beat them during their arrest with a baton on the head and back and some of the officers also kicked them while they were lying on the floor. The three men said they were also beaten with a baton on the neck and back hours before their interrogation started when they were taken to a tent within one of the police compounds in Manama. After their questioning they were taken to Dry Dock Prison in Manama. They were formally charged with "illegal gathering". Mutaher Saeed Taher Ahmed was released on bail on 21 February after paying 200 Bahrain Dinars (around 530 USD). Amin Jaffar Swar and Mohammed Makky were released on bail on 29 February after paying the same amount. Their charges have not been dropped and they might still face trial.

Naji Fateel, Hassen Jaber and Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan were also arrested on 14 February 2012, after being caught in teargas fired by police to break up crowds of people marching towards the Pearl Roundabout. Hassan Jaber and Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan were transferred to the Dry Dock prison in Manama after their arrest. Naji Fateel was first sent to a clinic within the Ministry of Interior, where he was questioned by an official of the Public Prosecutor's Office, and then sent to Dry Dock Prison, where the three currently remain. All three were charged with "illegal gathering". On 1 March the Public Prosecution Office extended their arrest for another 30 days pending investigation. The three are now allowed to receive family visits and have had some access to a lawyer.

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

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to release Naji Fateel, Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan and Hassen Jaber immediately and unconditionally, if they are held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging the authorities to drop the charges against Amin Jaffar Swar, Mutaher Saeed Taher Ahmed and Mohammed Makky if they are only facing charges for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging the authorities to carry out an independent investigation into the allegations that some of the six men were torture or otherwise ill-treated.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 APRIL 2012 TO:

His Majesty the King
 Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
 Office of His Majesty the King
 P.O. Box 555
 Rifa'a Palace, Manama,
 Bahrain
 Fax: +973 176 64 587
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior
 Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad
 Al Khalifa
 Ministry of Interior
 P.O. Box 13, Manama,
 Bahrain
 Fax: +973 172 32 661
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Human Rights and Social Development
 Dr Fatima bint Mohammed Al Balooshi
 Ministry of Human Rights and Social Development
 P.O. Box 32868, Manama,
 Bahrain
 Email: pr@social.gov.bh
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 53/12. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/011/2012/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hundreds of people marched in the streets of Manama, the capital of Bahrain, and several neighbouring Shia villages on and around the anniversary of Bahrain's protests, on 14 February 2012. The crowds were dispersed by tear gas. Dozens of people were arrested for participating in the protests although many were released shortly after.

One year ago, on 14 February 2011, the majority of Bahraini people began protests demanding greater civil and political rights. On the same day, the first demonstrator was killed by security forces. Over the course of the following months the country entered an acute human rights crisis: excessive force was repeatedly used by security forces against peaceful protesters and around 50 people were killed and hundreds others injured. Hundreds of people were also arrested and tried before military courts, with many reporting they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention. More than 4,000 protesters were dismissed from their jobs or expelled from university for having participated in the protests.

On 23 November 2011 the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), set up by royal decree on 29 June, presented its findings to the King of Bahrain. The BICI's report concluded, amongst other things, that excessive force had been used against protesters, that torture was widespread and that many people were on trial or had been sentenced to prison terms for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The report made a number of recommendations which the King promised to implement.

Name: Amin Jaffar Swar, Mutaheer Saeed Taher Ahmed, Mohammed Makky, Naji Fateel, Hassen Jaber and Abdullah Abdulkarim al-Fardan
Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 53/12 Index: MDE 11/016/2012 Issue Date: 7 March 2012