

# URGENT ACTION

## EIGHT ACTIVISTS DETAINED IN BAHRAIN

**Eight prominent opposition activists have been detained in Bahrain following the use of grossly excessive force by Bahraini security forces, backed by Saudi Arabian troops, against anti-government protestors. Six people were killed on 16 March and hundreds injured. Amnesty International believes the eight detainees are prisoners of conscience and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release. They are also at risk of torture.**

**Hassan Mshaima', Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, 'Abdel-Wahab Hussain, Sa'eed al-Nuri, Ibrahim Sharif, 'Abdel-Hadi al-Mukhodher and Hassan al-Haddad**, were arrested in the early hours of 17 March. **Dr 'Ali al-'Ekri** was arrested later in the day. The authorities have not revealed where they are being held and Amnesty International fears for their safety. Four of the eight were among opposition activists detained in 2010, some of whom alleged that they were tortured and otherwise ill-treated in detention. According to reports, the eight were arrested by a joint force of Bahraini and Saudi Arabian security forces who did not produce arrest warrants. A relative of Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace told Amnesty International that security forces smashed the outside door of his house, stormed in and took him forcibly from his bedroom without giving any reason and without saying where they were taking him and acted aggressively towards his wife and daughter when they protested. They also took his laptop computer and his mobile phone.

The arrests follow rising tension and violence in Bahrain. On 15 March two protestors were killed in Sitra in clashes with the security forces, who also attacked protestors at the entrance to Sitra's medical centre and prevented injured people from accessing treatment. Next day, 16 March, six people, including two security officials, were killed in clashes between Bahraini and Saudi Arabian security forces and protestors. One eye-witness told Amnesty International that he saw 10 protestors being wounded in al-Qadim neighbourhood by security forces using live ammunition. Meanwhile, security forces have been deployed in many parts of Manama, especially in predominantly Shi'a neighbourhoods and villages close to the capital. On 16 March they were reported to be encircling Manama's main al-Salmuniya hospital, blocking access to people in need of medical assistance and preventing some 100 medical staff from leaving the hospital.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic and English:

- Express concern that the eight activists - Hassan Mshaima', Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, 'Abdel-Wahab Hussain, Sa'eed al-Nuri, Ibrahim Sharif, 'Abdel-Hadi al-Mukhodher, Hassan al-Haddad and Dr 'Ali al-'Ekri – are prisoners of conscience detained for their legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and other human rights;
- Urge the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally and to protect them from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Urge the authorities to set up an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the deaths of protestors killed since 14 February and to ensure that those responsible for excessive use of force are brought to justice
- Urge the authorities to respect and uphold the rights to freedom expression, movement and assembly in Bahrain, including the right to peaceful protest.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 APRIL 2011 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 17664587**  
Salutation: Your Majesty

#### Prime Minister

Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
P.O. Box 1000, al-Manama, Bahrain  
**Fax: +973 17533033**  
**Salutation: Your Highness**

#### Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad Al Khalifa  
Minister of Interior  
Ministry of Interior  
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain  
**Fax: +973 17232661**  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hassan Mshaima' is the leader of al-Haq Movement, a Shi'a opposition group. He lived in exile in the UK until about three weeks ago when he returned to Bahrain following a general amnesty issued by Bahrain's head of state, King Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa. Four of the eight detainees - Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, prominent in al-Haq, Sa'eed al-Nuri, 'Abdel Hadi al-Mukhodher and Hassan al-Haddad - were all previously detained from August 2010 until the end of February 2011 when they were released following the same amnesty. Dr 'Ali al-'Ekri, is a medical doctor in al-Salmaniya and one of the organizers of recent popular protests; Ibrahim Sharif, is secretary general of the National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad), a secularist political opposition association; and 'Abdel-Wahab Hussain is President of al-Wafa' Islamic Movement.

Bahrain has been gripped by popular protests inspired by those in Tunisia and Egypt since 14 February 2011, when there was a 'Day of Rage', held on the 10th anniversary of the endorsement of Bahrain's National Action Charter, a programme of reforms. Protesters have largely been drawn from the majority Shi'a community who comprise some 70 percent of the population but complain they are discriminated against and marginalized by the ruling Sunni minority. They have been calling for a new constitution, an elected government and greater freedoms and opportunities. Seven protestors were killed by security forces in February and hundreds injured, many by rubber bullets and riot police using shotguns. There was then a temporary hiatus after the government proposed a national dialogue involving opposition activists and political associations but this broke down earlier this week after Saudi Arabia sent in one thousand troops to buttress the government and 500 police arrived from the United Arab Emirates. Bahraini security forces, backed by these foreign forces, then launched a brutal crackdown which resulted in clashes between security forces and demonstrators and further deaths and injuries. The King declared a three month state of emergency and much of Bahrain has been placed under a virtual curfew. At least two government ministers, five members of the Shura Council, an advisor to the King, and many judges in the Shari'a (al-Ja'fariya) courts, who are all Bahraini Shi'a Muslims, have resigned in protest at the use of excessive force by the Bahraini authorities.

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