

TO: HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
FROM: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

APPEAL FOR ACTION

RE: HEALTH PROFESSIONALS HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Over 30 health professionals, including doctors and nurses, have been arrested in Bahrain since mid-March 2011. They are currently held under military custody and have not been allowed visits by family or lawyers.

Twenty-two physicians and many others, including nurses and staff from the Ministry of Health, have been arrested since mid-March. They are believed to be held under military custody. None of the doctors or nurses has been allowed visits by family or lawyers since their detention. Some of the doctors have been able to phone their families in the past few days. The list of doctors arrested since mid-March includes: Dr Ali al- Ekri, Dr. Mahmood Ashgar, Dr Nada Dhaif, Dr Ghassan Dhaif, Dr Basim Dhaif, Dr Nader Dewani, Dr Abdulhalek al Oraibi, Dr Jalila al Aali, Dr Nehad al Sherawi, Dr Kholoud al Sayaad, Dr Zahra al Sammak, Dr. Nabeel Hameed, Dr Arif Rajab, Dr Abdul Shaheed Fadhel, Dr Sadeq Jaffer, Dr Kulood al Durazi, Dr Nayera Sarhan, Dr Saeed Al Samahji, Dr Sadeq Abdullah and Dr Fatima Haji.

The latest person to be detained was Huda al Tajir, working at the Ministry of Health. She was detained on 18 April, apparently while the security forces were raiding the Ministry of Health. She managed to contact her family on the same night to inform them that she was being held at the police Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Her family and lawyers have not been allowed visits since she was detained.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY:

- Explaining that you are a health professional concerned about human rights;
- Urging the authorities to ensure immediate protection for all health workers attending victims of violence and full protection of the right to all appropriate medical care of those suffering injuries;
- Ensure that detainees are either charged with recognizable criminal offences and tried with full international standards of fair trial and without recourse to the death penalty or released;
- Ensure that all detainees are granted access to lawyers of their own choosing, their relatives and any medical treatment that they may require, and that their places of detention are immediately disclosed;
- Urging that doctors, nurses, paramedics and other health and medical workers are able to carry out without discrimination their professional responsibilities to provide emergency and other medical care to those who have sustained injuries, and to document and report on their injuries, without interference or fear of reprisal.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31/03/2011 TO:

Minister of Social Development,
Health and Human Rights
Dr. Fatima bint Mohammed Al
Balooshi
Ministry of Social Development
PO Box 32868, Isa Town,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 17101955
Salutation: Your Excellency

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

Commander-in-Chief of the
Bahrain Defence Force
Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin
Ahmed Al Khalifa
Bahrain Defence Force
Riffa Road
Bahrain
e-mail: dgcbdf@gmail.com
Fax: +973 17663923
Salutation: Your Excellency

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



IF YOU RECEIVE NO REPLY WITHIN SIX WEEKS OF SENDING YOUR LETTER, PLEASE SEND A FOLLOW-UP LETTER SEEKING A RESPONSE. PLEASE SEND COPIES OF ANY LETTERS YOU RECEIVE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, ATTENTION OF THE HEALTH TEAM, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 0DW OR E-MAIL: health@amnesty.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Protests continued in Bahrain in March and they were suppressed with the dismantling of the Pearl Roundabout and the attack on Salmaniya Medical Complex on 17 March. In the days before 17 March, several attacks on protesters were reported to have taken place in villages outside the capital Manama. Witnesses told Amnesty International that soldiers and other security forces had fired tear gas at people close to the entrance to the Sitra Medical Centre and at the Salmaniya Medical Complex, where some protesters, including injured people receiving medical treatment, were also said to have been arrested and taken away. Security forces were also alleged to have encircled Salmaniya hospital and prevented injured protesters from gaining access to medical care there. Other sources, however, allege that some medical staff refused to treat Asian workers who had been injured while the government maintains that its forces took control of the Salamaniya Medical Complex because it was being used as a base by protesters, many of whom had set up camp in the hospital's car park but who were able to enter and leave the medical wards at will.

It is clear, despite the conflicting reports, that neither the security forces nor some opposition protesters respected widely known principles protecting emergency medical care services and vehicles and that both sides at times flouted the medical neutrality of the Salmaniya Medical Complex..

After taking control of the Pearl Roundabout, the Financial Harbour and Salmaniya Medical Complex the security forces launched a clearly planned and orchestrated crackdown on Shi'a political and community leaders and activists who had been prominent in leading the protests and who had spoken out publicly criticizing members of the royal family and calling for a change of government during public protests. More than 500 people have been detained; most are held without charge or trial at locations that have not been disclosed, and are denied contact with and access to their families and lawyers.

