

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAIN HEARING MOVES TO CRIMINAL COURT

The appeal case of 21 prominent opposition figures convicted on 22 June in Bahrain has been postponed until 11 September, when it will be heard before an ordinary criminal court, rather than a military court.

On 22 June, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict in the trial of 21 Bahrain opposition activists. Seven of them were convicted in absentia, one receiving the death sentence and six others 15-year prison sentences. Of the 14 defendants present in court, seven were sentenced to life imprisonment: **Hassan Mshaima**, **Abdelwahab Hussain**, **Abdulhadi al-Khawaja**, **Dr Abdel-Jalil al-Singace**, **Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad**, **Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad** and **Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri**. Four, **Mohammad Hassan Jawwad**, **Mohammad Ali Ridha Isma'il**, **Abdullah al-Mahroos** and **Abdul-Hadi Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher**, were sentenced to 15 years in prison. Two, **Ebrahim Sharif** and **Salah Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja**, brother of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, were given five-year prison terms, and one, **Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh**, received a prison sentence of two years.

After the hearing some of the defendants claimed that they had been beaten in prison. At least two of them had alleged in previous hearings that they had been subjected to torture and threats in prison.

On 29 June, the National Safety Court of Appeal decided to adjourn the appeal until 11 September. On the same day, the King of Bahrain issued a decree ordering that all trial cases before military courts should be transferred to ordinary civilian courts with immediate effect, meaning that the appeal case of the 21 opposition figures will now be heard by an ordinary criminal court. The National Safety Court ceased to exist after that decision.

Please write immediately in Arabic or English:

- Welcoming the King's decision to refer cases to ordinary courts but expressing concern about the death sentence and generally lengthy prison sentences issued by the military court after what appears to have been a patently unfair and politically motivated trial;
- Expressing concern that many or all of the defendants may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for legitimately exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association, and calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience being held in Bahrain;
- Urging the authorities to immediately set up an independent investigation into the allegations of torture or other ill-treatment by some of the defendants, to make its results public, and bring to justice anyone responsible.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 SEPTEMBER 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: +973 176 64 587
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: +973 175 33 033
Salutation: Your Highness

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khlaifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs,
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 31 284
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 139/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/026/2011/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/036/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Name: 21 prominent opposition figures. Of which, fourteen named:

1. Hassan Mshaima'
2. 'Abdelwahab Hussain
3. 'Abdulhadi al-Khawaja
4. Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace
5. Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad
6. Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad
7. Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri
8. Mohammad Hassan Jawwad
9. Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il
10. Abdullah al-Mahroos
11. 'Abdul-Hadi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher
12. Ebrahim Sharif
13. Salah 'Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja
14. Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh

Gender m/f: All male

Further information on UA: 139/11 Index: MDE 11/037/2011 Issue Date: 8 July 2011

