

URGENT ACTION

"PROTESTER" JAILED AFTER UNFAIR TRIAL

A Bahraini businessman sentenced to three years in prison by a military court in June after he was convicted of participating in protests, is still awaiting a date for his appeal. Amnesty International believes he could be a prisoner of conscience.

Ghazi Ebrahim Farhan, 31, was arrested on 12 April by plainclothes police officers in his office car park in the capital, Manama. He was arrested without a warrant, blindfolded and taken to a police station in al-Rifa'a Town, in Manama. He was held incommunicado for 48 hours during which he is reported to have been interrogated, tortured and otherwise ill-treated, including by being beaten, forced to remain standing for long periods and suspended by his limbs, causing him severe pain. He was then transferred to the "Dry Dock" prison in Manama.

He was charged by the Military Prosecution with "participating in a public gathering involving more than five people" and "publicising false information and lies through the internet with a view to destabilising the country." He denied these charges and denied to interrogators that he had participated in public demonstrations held at the Pearl Roundabout in Manama or a march by protestors to al-Rifa'a, though he said he had been in his car near the Pearl Roundabout. He was tried before the National Safety Court of First Instance, a military court. The trial began on 30 May and concluded on 21 June. He was convicted on all charges, although it appears that the only evidence against him that was presented to the court was a "confession" that he alleges he was forced to make under torture. He was not allowed to consult a lawyer until his trial started.

Ghazi Ebrahim Farhan's lawyer lodged an appeal but no date has yet been set for this. Meanwhile, Ghazi Ebrahim Farhan continues to be held at Jaw prison in Manama where he has very limited access to his family. On 29 June, the King decreed that all cases linked to the February-March 2011 protests would be transferred to ordinary civilian courts; he then issued a further decree on 18 August (Decree 28/20011) ordering that the National Safety Court of First Instance continue to deal with felony (serious criminal) cases, while misdemeanor (less serious) cases would be referred to the civilian courts. Ghazi Ebrahim Farhan's appeal is expected to be heard by a civilian court.

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

- Expressing concern that Ghazi Ebrahim Farhan appears to be a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely on account of his legitimate exercise of his human rights, in which case he should be released immediately and unconditionally.
- Expressing concern that, although a civilian, he was tried by a military court in breach of his right to fair trial before an independent and impartial court;
- Urging the Bahraini authorities to conduct an immediate independent investigation into his alleged torture and other ill-treatment and bring to justice any officials found responsible.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 OCTOBER 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
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
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs,
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 insert local diplomatic addresses below:

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Scores of health workers, opposition and human rights activists, teachers and others are still facing military trials in Bahrain. Months have passed since scores of people demonstrated in Pearl Roundabout in February and March 2011, but the human rights situation in Bahrain is still very grim. Hundreds of people suspected of being connected with the anti-government protests are detained amid serious allegations of torture; scores of them have received unfair trials before military courts; and at least 2,500 others have been suspended or fired from their jobs.

Fifteen opposition figures who led and participated in the demonstrations in February and March were sentenced on 22 June to very harsh prison terms, including seven life sentences, on broadly worded terrorism charges. Their final verdict will be given on 28 September.

Name: Ghazi Ebrahim Farhan

Gender m/f: m

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