

EXTERNAL

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Fear of Torture / Legal Concerns

11 June 1996

BAHRAIN 'Ali Ahmad Kadhemi al-Muttaqawi
Jassim Hassan Mansour al-Khayat
Hussein Ahmad al-Mudhifa
Hussein Yousif Ibrahim
'Ali Ahmad Kazem 'Abd 'Ali
'Abbas 'Ali Ahmad Habil
and at least 28 others

The six men named above are among a group of at least 34 people who are reported to have "confessed" their involvement in an Iranian-backed plot to overthrow the Bahraini Government. Amnesty International is concerned that the "confessions" may have been extracted under pressure, as a result of torture or ill-treatment. The men are being held in incommunicado detention, and Amnesty International has documented cases in which many such detainees have been tortured in order to extract "confessions" from them. Amnesty International fears that the detainees will remain at risk of torture or ill-treatment as long as they are held without access to lawyers or relatives.

The "confessions" were reportedly made before an investigating judge in May 1996, and extracts were broadcast on Bahraini television on 5 June. Amnesty International fears that the "confessions", aired to the public before a trial, will prejudice the outcome of a trial by influencing a presumption of innocence of an unconvicted prisoner until proven guilty and will undermine the possibility of the detainees receiving a fair trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 56 people have been arrested to date in connection with the alleged plot and for their membership of a group called *Hezbollah Bahrain*. On 3 June 1996, the Bahraini authorities accused Iran of being behind the plot to destabilise the government, and of fomenting 18 months of anti-government unrest, in which at least 22 people have been killed, some in circumstances suggesting that they were extrajudicially executed.

Renewed unrest erupted in November 1995 following a few months of calm after heavy disturbances between December 1994 and April 1995. Most of the detainees recently arrested have been held in incommunicado detention, and there have been several reports of torture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing serious concern that the recent televised "confessions" by 34 people may have been extracted under pressure, as a result of torture or ill-treatment;
- seeking assurances that the 34 detainees (naming some) are being humanely treated, and urging that they be allowed access to family members, a lawyer and an independent doctor, if necessary;
- referring to rule 84 (2) of the Standard Minimum Rule for the Treatment of Prisoners, which states: "unconvicted prisoners are presumed to be innocent and should be treated as such" and expressing concern that the televised "confessions" may seriously undermine the possibilities of them receiving a fair trial;
- calling for fair trial for the prisoners in accordance with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness
Shaikh 'Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Office of His Highness the Amir
P.O.Box 555
The Amiri Court, Rifa'a Palace, Bahrain
Telexes: 8666 Qasar BN; 8500 Qasar BN
Telegrams: His Highness the Amir, al-Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 668884
Salutation:Your Highness

His Excellency
Shaikh Muhammad Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa
Minister of Interior
P.O. Box 13, Al-Manama, Bahrain
Telexes: 9572 PSMKT BN or 8333 ALAMAN BN
Telegrams: Minister of Interior, al-Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 276765 or 290526
Salutation:Your Excellency

His Excellency
Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1000, al-Manama, Bahrain
Telexes: 9336 PROM BN or 7889 PMPO BN
Faxes: +973 533033
Salutation:Your Excellency

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Bahrain accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 August 1996.