

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 11/19/95

27 September 1995

Further information on UA 171/95 (MDE 11/15/95, 14 July 1995) - Death in custody / Arbitrary arrests / Fear of torture

BAHRAINSa'id 'Abd al-Rasul al-Iskafi

Amnesty International has received new information regarding the death in custody of Sa'id 'Abd al-Rasul al-Iskafi. Sa'id al-Iskafi, a 16-year-old boy secondary school student from al-Sanabes, died ten days (not two days as originally reported) after his arrest. He was summoned for interrogation by *Mabahith Amn al-Dawla* (State Security Intelligence) on 29 June in connection with his alleged participation in recent protests in Bahrain. He was reportedly suspected of having sprayed graffiti on walls near his home. On 8 July, his family was told to collect the body from the Military Hospital.

Initial reports received by Amnesty International indicated that Sa'id al-Iskafi's body bore traces of torture. The organisation subsequently received photographs of the victim's body, taken shortly after his death, and submitted them for examination by an expert forensic pathologist at Guy's Hospital in the United Kingdom. His report refers to a "number of areas of apparent injury and abnormalities resulting from injury seen in the photographs." He concluded that "the appearances indicate that the deceased has been subjected to ill-treatment of a sustained and very painful nature."

Amnesty International informed the Bahrain Government of the forensic pathologist's opinion on this case, and requested to be informed of the findings of any official investigations into Sa'id al-Iskafi's death. No response has been received from the government to date. According to information received, the family was told by officials that a Yemeni policeman was responsible for his death and that he had since been expelled from Bahrain. No independent investigation into his death is known to have been carried out to date.

Torture is prohibited by Bahrain's Constitution, and national legislation prohibits, and provides penalties for, a range of offences deemed to constitute an abuse of office or authority by public officials. Further Article 208 of the Penal Code states that public officials who use torture, force, or threat against a defendant shall be imprisoned; the sentence is life imprisonment should the use of torture lead to death.

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

- expressing grave concern about the death in custody of Sa'id al-Iskafi;
- calling on the Bahraini government to conduct a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation into his death; the investigation should be independent of those allegedly responsible and the methods and findings of this investigation should be made public immediately;
- reiterating that those found responsible for the death of Sa'id al-Iskafi should be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

The Amir
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 Qaser BN; 8500 Qaser BN
Telegrams: His Highness the Amir, al-Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 668884
Salutation: Your Highness

Minister of Interior

His Excellency
Shaikh Muhammad bin Khalifa Al Khalifa
Minister of Interior
P.O. Box 13
al-Manama, Bahrain

Telexes: 9572 PSMKT BN; 7889 PMPO BN
Telegrams: Minister of Interior, al-Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 276765
Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister

His Excellency
Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1000
al-Manama, Bahrain

Telexes: 9336 PROM BN; 7889 PMPO BN
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 8 December 1995.