

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER DESCRIBES TORTURE TO COURT

Former president of the Bahrain Teachers' Association (BTA) Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb has provided a detailed account in court of his torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb's, appeal hearing resumed on 2 April 2012. They are the former vice-president and president of the BTA. Two previous hearings had taken place on 9 January and 19 February 2012. During the 2 April hearing, Mahdi Isa Mahdi Adu Dheeb told the court for the first time since his trial started how he had been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Methods included beatings while he was suspended from his arms and legs, tied behind his back. He told the court that he had been tortured in different locations, including Gurein prison, during the several weeks he spent in solitary confinement. He also said he was beaten by a nurse inside the ambulance that was taking him to Salmaniya Medical complex to be treated for injuries caused by the torture that happened at the beginning of his detention last year.

In previous sessions Mahdi Isa Mahdi Adu Dheeb had been referred for examination by a forensic medical body made up of staff members of Gulf University, Ministry of Health and a forensic doctor from the Public Prosecution. His lawyer challenged the impartiality of this body but the judge rejected the complaint. However, the people that should form this body have not been appointed yet and Mahdi Isa Mahdi Adu Dheeb's examination has not yet taken place. His lawyer asked the judge to release him on bail but this request was rejected and the trial has been postponed until 2 May.

Amnesty International believes that neither Mahdi Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb nor Jalila al Salman used or advocated violence during the protests of February and March 2011 and the Bahraini authorities have presented no such evidence during the trial. Amnesty International considers Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb to be prisoners of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Urge the Bahraini authorities to release Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urge them to drop all the charges against Jalila al Salman immediately, since she is on trial only for peacefully exercising her legitimate rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Urge them to order an immediate independent and impartial investigation into their allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, publish the results and bring anyone found responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 MAY 2012 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
Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al- Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 36 343

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the eighth update of UA 227/11 Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/057/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 29 March 2011, Jalila al-Salman's house in the capital, Manama, was raided by more than 40 security officials. She was then reportedly taken to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) in Manama and ill-treated and verbally abused. She remained there for eight days until she was transferred to a women's detention centre in 'Issa Town, in the outskirts of Manama, where she was kept in solitary confinement for 18 days. She was then transferred to a cell with other women within the same facility. Jalila al-Salman was released on bail on 21 August after more than five months in detention. On 25 September the National Safety Court of First Instance, a military court, sentenced her to three years in prison. Her appeal before a civilian court of appeal started on 11 December.

Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb was detained on 6 April 2011 after a raid on his uncle's house. Both he and his uncle were arrested; his uncle was released 72 days later. Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb's family did not know where he was for 24 days. He spent 64 days in solitary confinement, during which he says he was tortured. His family and lawyer were only allowed to see him during the first session of his trial on 7 June 2011. Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb has remained in prison since his arrest. He was sentenced with Jalila al-Salman on 25 September by the National Safety court of First Instance to 10 years in prison. His appeal before a civilian court of appeal started on 11 December.

Both were convicted of using their positions at the Bahrain's Teachers' Association (BTA) to call for a strike by teachers, halting the educational process, inciting hatred of the regime, attempting to overthrow the ruling system by force, possessing pamphlets and disseminating fabricated stories and information, among other charges.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) was established by Royal Decree on 29 June to investigate abuses during the March/February protests and other abuses in the following months. The full report was published on 23 November. Hundreds of cases were covered in the report, including beatings of protesters by security forces, mass arbitrary arrests of mainly Shi'a opposition activists and widespread torture, with five deaths resulting from torture in custody. In all, at least 46 people have died in connection with the protests, including five security personnel. The report urged the Bahraini government to establish immediately an independent body made up of representatives of civil society, the opposition and the government; to oversee the implementation of the BICI's recommendations; to usher in legislative reforms to ensure laws are in line with international human rights standards; and to bring to account those responsible for abuses.

Name: Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb and Jalila al-Salman

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 227/11 Index: MDE 11/021/2012 Issue Date: 3 April 2012