

URGENT ACTION

FEMALE ACTIVIST DETAINED

Seddiqa al-Basri, a 27-year-old mother of two, has been detained since 14 August. Three other women and a girl were detained with her but released shortly after. Seddiqa al-Basri is a possible prisoner of conscience and is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

On 14 August, at around 3pm, **Seddiqa al-Basri**, together with three other women and a 14-year-old girl, were arrested as they tried to join an anti-government demonstration in Sayf Junction in the capital, Manama. Seddiqa al-Basri was driving the car the women were travelling in when police stopped her. The women were removed from the car by force and taken away in a police vehicle to the capital's al-Hurra police station. There they were interrogated by the police for several hours. At around 1am on 15 August the three women, Tayyiba Derwish 'Issa, Sharifa Sayyid Sa'eed Mahdi and one other whose name has not been disclosed – and the 14-year-old girl, 'Adhra' Mohammad, were released. Around the same time, Seddiqa al-Basri was transferred to a women's detention centre in 'Issa Town, south-west of Manama.

On 15 August, Seddiqa al-Basri was presented to the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) and was interrogated with her lawyer present. Her lawyer had requested permission to be present at the police station when Seddiqa al-Basri and the four others were being interrogated by the police, but the request was rejected by the PPO. She was charged (at the PPO) with "attempting to run over two police women", which she has denied. Seddiqa al-Basri had already been imprisoned for six months this year, from 28 January till 17 July, after she had been found guilty of "hurting a policeman's feelings" and "public gathering". At her initial interrogation for this previous incident she was reportedly tortured.

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

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to release Seddiqa al-Basri immediately and unconditionally if she is held solely for exercising her rights to freedom of association and assembly;
- Urging them to protect Seddiqa al-Basri from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 SEPTEMBER 2013 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 1766 4587

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1723 2661
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali
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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Anti-government protests were organized in many Shi'a villages in Bahrain on 14 August. Protesters were planning to march to Manama but security forces prevented them by using tear gas and, in some instances, by erecting barbed wire around the villages. At least 18 people were arrested. The Tamarrod (rebellion) movement, made up of youth groups, chose 14 August to organize anti-government protests to denounce government repression and call for genuine political reforms. Mainstream opposition associations were also planning a large anti-government rally, but this was cancelled because of the heavily intimidating security presence in Manama.

More than two years since the uprising in Bahrain and the subsequent fanfare of reform, prisoners of conscience (including many arrested during the protests) remain behind bars and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are still being suppressed. In recent months more people have been jailed simply for daring to express their views, whether via Twitter or on peaceful marches. Bahraini courts have appeared more concerned with toeing the government's line than offering effective remedy to Bahrainis and upholding the rule of law.

In response to a recent increase in violence, and in anticipation of planned large demonstrations by the opposition, Bahrain's parliament held an extraordinary session on 28 July at which it submitted 22 recommendations to the King, Shaikh Hamad Bin 'Issa Al Khalifa; the recommendations toughen punishments laid out in the 2006 anti-terrorism law. The King welcomed the recommendations the next day, and ordered the prime minister to ensure that they were urgently implemented by the government. Bahrain's constitution (Article 38) gives the King the power to issue decrees that have the force of law when parliament is in recess. In these circumstances the government prepares the draft amendments and the King ratifies them.

The King issued two emergency decrees on 6 August 2013. One of them amends the 1973 Law on Public Gatherings and Demonstrations, to ban demonstrations, sit-ins, marches and public gatherings in the capital, Manama. The 1976 juvenile law was also amended and now stipulates that if anyone under 16 years of age takes part in a demonstration, public gathering or sit-in, his or her parents will be warned in writing by the Ministry of Interior. If six months after the warning the juvenile is found in a new demonstration his or her father could face jail, a fine or both. Amnesty International fears that these draconian measures will be used, as was the case on 14 August, to crack down on anti-government protests.

Name: Seddiqa al-Basri
Gender m/f: F

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