

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAINI OFFICER RELEASED WITH CONDITIONS

A former Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) officer detained in Bahrain since 15 February has now been released on bail after being sentenced to one year in prison. His appeal will be heard in September. Amnesty International is calling for his conviction to be annulled.

Mohamed Albuflasa, a Sunni Bahraini and former BDF officer, was detained on 15 February, the same day that he spoke from a podium during protests in Manama's Pearl Roundabout. In his speech he spoke against corruption within the government and the lack of economic opportunities for many people. He called for genuine political reforms and for co-existence between Shi'a and Sunni Bahrainis.

Mohamed Albuflasa was sentenced on 24 July to one year in prison by a military court in Manama on charges of participating in an illegal public gathering and inciting hatred towards the regime. He was released later the same day on bail and on condition that he does not travel outside Bahrain. The reason for his release is unclear but appears to be part of the authorities' current efforts to assuage international concerns about the human rights situation in the country. Mohamed Albuflasa has appealed against his sentence and the appeal should be heard in September. He explained to Amnesty International that his sentence is considered to have begun on 15 April 2011, the date when a two-month detention order issued by a military disciplinary committee in mid-March expired. He also said that he had been aware of Amnesty's calls for his release while he was detained and wanted to thank all those who sent appeals on his behalf.

Amnesty international considers him to have been a prisoner of conscience and to have been sentenced solely for peacefully expressing his views in public and therefore calls for his release to be unconditional and for his conviction to be annulled.

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

- Welcoming Mohamed Albuflasa's release but urging the authorities to annul his conviction and to remove the travel ban imposed on him, as well as any other conditions that have been attached to his release, given that Amnesty International considers he was sentenced solely for peacefully expressing his views in public;
- Urging the authorities to respect and uphold the rights to freedom expression, movement and assembly in Bahrain.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 SEPTEMBER 2011 TO:

King

Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1766 4587

Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Shaikh Khaled bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 17531284

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Social Development and Human Rights

Dr Fatima bint Mohammed Al Balooshi
Ministry of Social Development and Human Rights
PO Box 32868, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 17101955

Email: info@social.gov.bh

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. This is the first update of UA 181/11. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/034/2011/en>

Name: Mohamed Albuflasa

Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 181/11 Index: MDE 11/041/2011 Issue Date: 28 July 2011

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