

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE ON TRIAL DENIED BAIL AGAIN

Prisoner of conscience Ebrahim Sharif's trial resumed on 12 November. The request to release him on bail was rejected and his trial has been adjourned to 15 December.

The trial of **Ebrahim Sharif** resumed on 12 November before the High Criminal Court in Manama, the capital of Bahrain. During the hearing, the third session of the trial, his lawyers cross-examined a prosecution witness about their claims regarding Ebrahim Sharif's July speech. The court rejected requests by his defence lawyers to release him on bail and set the next hearing for 15 December to hear the defence witnesses.

Since his arrest, Ebrahim Sharif's lawyers have been able to visit him in al-Hala police station, north of Manama, where he is currently detained, but have been unable to discuss his case in private. Ebrahim Sharif was only allowed to receive a copy of his casefile from his lawyers after officers from the police station and the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) had examined them. The right to confidential communication with a lawyer is an important element of the right to a fair trial.

Ebrahim Sharif has been charged with "incitement to hatred and contempt of the regime" and "incitement to overthrow the regime by force and illegal means", under Articles 165 and 160 of Bahrain's Penal Code. He has denied all charges against him. If convicted, he could face up to 13 years in prison.

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

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Ebrahim Sharif immediately and unconditionally and to drop the charges against him, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to uphold the right to freedom of expression and repeal laws that criminalize the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 DECEMBER 2015 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
 Email: info@interior.gov.bh
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
 Shaikh Khaled bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
 Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
 P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
 Fax: +973 1753 1284
 Email:
<http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>
 Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

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 second update of UA 168/15. Further information:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/2336/2015/en/>

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE ON TRIAL DENIED BAIL AGAIN

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ebrahim Sharif is the former Secretary General of the National Democratic Action Society (*Wa'ad*), a secular political opposition party in Bahrain which includes people from both Shi'a and Sunni communities. He was arrested at his home on 12 July at 2.30am and taken to the CID where he was questioned about a speech he had made at a public gathering on 10 July and remanded in custody for 48 hours. In his speech, Ebrahim Sharif spoke about the need for change in Bahrain, highlighted the political opposition's commitment to non-violence and urged the government to introduce key economic reforms to avoid further bankruptcy.

He was brought to the Public Prosecution for interrogation on 13 July on charges of "incitement to hatred and contempt of the regime" and "incitement to overthrow the regime by force and illegal means", which Ebrahim Sharif has denied. The prosecution ordered him to remain in custody until his first hearing on 24 August.

Ebrahim Sharif's lawyers were not provided with a full copy of the casefile before the trial opened on 24 August, despite sending an application requesting it. During August's hearing, the judge accepted the application and granted the defence lawyers' access to the casefile. The Public Prosecution demanded the toughest penalty against Ebrahim Sharif and his lawyers' request to release him on bail was denied. He was allowed to read a five-minute statement in which he reaffirmed his commitment to non-violence and highlighted that the role of the opposition is to criticize and pinpoint the wrongdoings for the government to fix and reform. He also said that the situation in Bahrain can only be solved through a peaceful political solution.

During the second hearing on 12 October, the judge told Ebrahim Sharif's lawyers that he had not received their application which they filed on 1 October requesting to cross-examine the prosecution witness, and adjourned the trial to 12 November.

After an unfair trial, Ebrahim Sharif was jailed for five years in 2011 for leading widespread peaceful anti-government protests, alongside 12 other leading opposition activists who were jailed for between five years and life imprisonment,. He was released on 19 June 2015 under a royal pardon. The other 12 opposition activists are currently serving their sentences in Jaw prison.

Name: Ebrahim Sharif

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 168/15 Index: MDE 11/2883/2015 Issue Date: 17 November 2015