

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST BACK IN DETENTION

Bahraini activist Nader Abdulemam was arrested on 18 February and taken to Jaw prison to serve the remaining four and a half months of a prison sentence handed down to him for participating in and calling on people to join an illegal march in Manama in 2013. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Bahraini activist, **Nader Abdulemam**, was arrested by three policemen in civilian clothing at around 5 pm on 18 February at his work place in a shopping centre in the capital, Manama. The policemen told him to come with them but did not say where to or for what reason and no arrest warrant was shown. The arrest came after the Court of Appeal's decision on 17 January to uphold the six-month prison sentence Nader Abdulemam received on 28 April 2016 for "participating in an illegal gathering" and comments he posted on Twitter. The comments in question called on people to join a peaceful, but considered illegal by the authorities, protest in Manama, in January 2013. He spent one and a half months in detention in January 2013 before being released, pending trial. He has been taken to Jaw prison, about 30km south of Manama, to serve the remaining four and a half months of his sentence. He is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Nader Abdulemam had previously served four and a half months in prison between August 2014 and January 2015 for another case related to his freedom of expression. He was sentenced to six months in prison on 22 October 2014 for "publicly insulting a religious figure of worship" after posting comments on Twitter about Khalid bin al-Waleed, a companion of the prophet Muhammad and a highly esteemed figure among Sunni Muslims. His sentence was reduced to four months on 16 January 2015.

Nader Abdulemam is a teacher but after he was sentenced in 2014, he was dismissed from school and has not been re-instated.

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

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Nader Abdulemam immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging them to uphold the right to freedom of expression and assembly and repeal laws that criminalize the peaceful exercise of such rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2017 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: <http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/>
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. His Excellency Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8QB, Tel: 0207 201 9170, Fax 020 7201 9183, Email: information@bahrainembassy.co.uk or through the online contact form at <http://www.bahrainembassy.co.uk/>
Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nader Abdulemam was arrested on 27 August 2014 after being summoned to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID), where he was questioned about comments he had posted on Twitter, which were interpreted as derogatory towards Khalid bin al-Waleed. He was charged under articles 92/3 and 310/2 of the Bahraini Penal Code which criminalize “publicly insulting a religious figure of worship”. He was sentenced to six months in prison by the Third Lower Criminal Court on 22 October 2014. A Court of Appeal reduced his sentence to four months on 16 January 2015. He was released on the same day, as he had already served that amount of time in prison. In a separate case, Nader Abdulemam was fined 1,000 Bahraini Dinar (BD) (around 2,650 US Dollars) on 19 May 2015 for “running an association without official permission” in relation to an NGO which he founded. He was also fined 500BD (around 1,325 US Dollars) for publishing news in the NGO’s name.

Amnesty International has expressed concern to the Bahraini government for many years regarding laws that prohibit the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression and assembly. Article 310 of the Bahraini Penal Code carries a penalty of up to a year in prison and a fine of up to 100 BD (around 265 US Dollars) for “publicly insulting a symbol or person considered sacred to members of a particular religious sect”. Laws which prohibit criticism or ridicule of a religion or belief system are incompatible with the right to freedom of expression, which is protected under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Bahrain is a state party.

Gatherings and political rallies in Bahrain are regulated by the Law on Public Meetings, Processions and Gatherings (Law 18 of 1973), a law that is overly restrictive on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

In August 2013, the government amended Article 11 of the Law on Public Gatherings by decree to ban indefinitely all public assemblies in Manama except demonstrations in front of international organizations, which require written permission from the Head of Public Security or his Deputy before they can go ahead. The decree also requires written permission from the Head of Public Security or his Deputy for all other demonstrations outside of Manama at any time and the use of vehicles in demonstrations. Demonstrations are also banned near hospitals, airports, commercial compounds and any other areas with security aspects, provided that these are defined by the Minister of Interior in advance. These amendments restrict not only the space and time available to people to peacefully demonstrate and voice their concerns but also their ability to exercise their rights, in breach of what is permissible under Article 21 of the ICCPR. Several people have been sentenced under the decree as well as under Article 214 of the Penal Code which, together with Articles 215 and 216, criminalizes “offending the King, the national flag or emblem, a foreign country or international organization, the National Assembly or other constitutional institutions, the army, law courts, government authorities or government agencies”. These Articles violate the right to freedom of expression since they impose restrictions that are not permissible under international law and criminalize the exercise of human rights.