

URGENT ACTION

THREE BAHRAINIS EXECUTED BY FIRING SQUAD

On 15 January the Bahraini authorities executed three men by firing squad. Seven others continue to serve life sentences which were upheld by the Court of Cassation on 9 January along with the three death sentences. All ten men were convicted in February 2015 following an unfair trial in relation to the March 2014 killing of three policemen.

Ali Abdulshaheed al-Sankis, Sami Mirza Mshaima and Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad al-Samea were executed by firing squad on 15 January in Bahrain. Their death sentences had been upheld on 9 January by the Court of Cassation and were swiftly ratified by the King. The court also upheld the life sentences of seven other men and the revocation of the nationality of eight of the ten. All seven men continue to be held in Jaw prison, south of Manama.

The ten men were convicted on 26 February 2015 before the High Criminal Court of “organizing, running and financing a terrorist group (Al-Ashtar Brigade) with the aim of carrying out terrorist attacks”; “possession and planting of explosives with the intention to kill security forces and causing disorder”; and the “killing of three police officers and attempted killing of others”. The Appeal Court upheld the convictions on 31 May 2016 and on 17 October of the same year the Court of Cassation overturned them and ordered a retrial by the same Appeal Court, which subsequently upheld the sentences again on 4 December 2016. According to the statements made by some of the men, during three weeks of interrogation at the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) following their arrest in March 2014, the men had no access to their families or lawyers, and were tortured. Sami Mshaima and Abbas al-Samea later told their families that they were given electric shocks, beaten, burnt with cigarettes, deprived of sleep, sexually assaulted and forced to “confess”.

Both trials before the High Criminal Court and Appeal Court failed to meet international fair trial standards. The men only had access to their lawyers for the first time during their first court hearing on 30 April 2014, despite numerous requests by the lawyers to have access to their clients ahead of the trial. The lawyers did not have access to all the evidence available against the defendants, which prevented them from adequately defending their clients. Nor were they allowed to cross-examine prosecution witnesses. In October 2014, the lawyers withdrew from the case in protest and new lawyers, two of whom were amongst those who withdrew, were appointed by the court. They reiterated the same demands, which the court again refused. The courts’ rulings were also based on the coerced “confessions” of Abbas al-Samea, Sami Mshaima and several other defendants, which were admitted as evidence.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation of the seven other men: Ahmad Jaafar Mhamad Ali, Ali Jamil Taher Mhamad al-Samea, Taher Youssif Ahmed Mhamad al-Samie, Hussein Ahmad Rashed Khalil, Redha Mirza Mshaima, Hussein Sabah Abdulhusein and Ahmad M’touq Ibrahim, and call for a retrial that fully complies with international fair trial standards, including by declaring evidence obtained under torture as inadmissible.

No further action is requested by the UA Network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the fourth update of UA 47/15. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/5454/2017/en/

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