

URGENT ACTION

BAHRAINI STUDENT IN DETENTION ALLEGES TORTURE

Bahraini student Ali Mohamed Hakeem al-Arab was arrested on 9 February and taken to the Criminal Investigations Directorate where he alleges he was tortured and forced to “confess”. He has been denied access to a lawyer. Upon transfer to Dry Dock Prison on 7 March, he said he was repeatedly beaten on both legs. He remains at risk of further torture and other ill-treatment.

Bahraini student **Ali Mohamed Hakeem al-Arab** (Ali al-Arab), 23, was arrested on 9 February. His family did not hear from him until 11 February when he called them and said he was at the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID). He was allowed to make five more phone calls to his family but he did not have access to a lawyer during the 26 days of his detention at the CID. On 7 March, he was moved to Dry Dock Prison, where he remains held.

While at the CID, Ali al-Arab alleges to have been tortured during his 26 days of interrogation, including having his toenails pulled off, given electric-shocks and beaten. He says that an officer from the Public Prosecution Office came to where he was being held and forced him to sign a “confession” while blindfolded. He says he was kept on his own in a room where officers would come to interrogate and beat him.

According to Amnesty International’s information, when Ali al-Arab arrived at Dry Dock prison on 7 March he was taken to the prison’s administration office and told to kiss the boot of an officer. When he refused, he was repeatedly beaten on both legs. Due to the pain in his legs, he had difficulty standing and was only able to pray while sitting down. Later that day, he was seen being taken in a wheelchair to the prison clinic. Witnesses have also reported seeing Ali al-Arab’s toenails growing back from the nail root.

The Ministry of Interior issued a statement on 9 February identifying Ali al-Arab as “the main suspect” in the killing of a police officer on 29 January, after being “found to be in possession of two Kalashnikov rifles and three firearms”, and for his “involvement in supporting the Jau Prison escapees”, referring to the escape of several prisoners- including his cousin, Ahmed Mohammad Saleh al-Arab, on 1 January.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language calling on the Bahraini authorities to:

- Order a prompt, impartial, independent and effective investigation into Ali al-Arab’s torture allegations – including an examination by a medical expert acting in accordance with professional independence – and bring anyone suspected of responsibility to justice in proceedings that respect international fair trial standards;
- Ensure he has access to any medical care he requires and is not subjected to further torture or other ill-treatment;
- Grant Ali al-Arab immediate access to his lawyer and adequate facilities to prepare a defence, including access to all evidence held by the prosecution.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 MAY 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 (keep trying)
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
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ali al-Arab was arrested on 9 February, with his cousin, [Ahmed Mohammad Saleh al-Arab](#), a Bahraini nursing student who had escaped with several prisoners from Jaw prison- around 30km south of Manama, on 1 January 2017, which resulted in the killing of a policeman. He had been serving numerous prison sentences, which were handed down after unfair trials, including those based on forced “confessions”.

Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrests and detentions, and torture and other ill-treatment, of detainees in Bahrain, particularly while held at the CID- where detainees allege they are forced to sign “confessions” for use as evidence against them or to implicate others at trial. Documented methods include beatings, forcing detainees to remain standing for long periods, sleep deprivation and keeping detainees naked.

The right of access to a lawyer is a fundamental safeguard against torture and other ill-treatment, and is essential for a fair trial under international human rights standards. It is important to enable detainees to challenge their detention at an early stage and serves as an important safeguard against torture and other ill-treatment, coerced “confessions”, enforced disappearance and other human rights violations.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011, was charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection with the 2011 protests. At the launch of the BICI report on 23 November 2011, the government publicly committed itself to implementing the recommendations set out in the report. The report recounted the government’s response to the mass protests and documented wide-ranging human rights abuses. Among its key recommendations, the report called on the government to bring to account those responsible for human rights violations, including torture and excessive use of force, and carry out independent investigations into allegations of torture.

Following the BICI report, the Bahraini government in 2012 created various human rights institutions to investigate alleged human rights violations and ensure accountability, in particular the Ombudsman of the Ministry of Interior and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) within the PPO. The Ombudsman and the SIU have the authority and resources to conduct prompt and effective investigations into alleged human rights violations by state agents, acting in response to complaints or at their own volition. The Ombudsman’s office has generally been effective in referring complaints of torture and other serious human rights violations for investigation by the SIU. However, in some cases it failed to take prompt action to protect detainees from torture and other ill-treatment, or to effectively investigate their allegations. See also Amnesty International’s November 2016 report *Window-dressing or pioneers of change? An assessment of Bahrain’s human rights oversight bodies* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/5080/2016/en/>).

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

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