

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RELEASED AND EXPELLED

On 30 October, Bahraini prisoner of conscience, Ibrahim Karimi was released from Jaw prison, in the Bahraini capital, Manama. He served over two years in prison on charges including ‘publicly insulting the King’. On 31 October, Ibrahim Karimi was expelled to Iraq following the Ministry of Interior’s decision in November 2012 to arbitrarily revoke his nationality.

Prisoner of conscience **Ibrahim Karimi** completed his two year and one month prison sentence in Jaw prison, south-eastern Bahrain, on 30 October. He was transferred on the same day to the Nationality and Passports and Residence Affairs detention centre and given the choice to be deported to either Lebanon or Iraq as visas on arrival, rather than in advance, can be obtained for entry into both countries. Ibrahim Karimi was deported to Iraq the next day.

On 26 September 2015, police officers in plain clothes had arrested Ibrahim Karimi at his home in the village of al-Dair. He was interrogated at the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID), without a lawyer present, about comments posted on a Twitter account (FreejKarimi) criticizing the Saudi Arabian authorities as “unqualified” over how they had dealt with a stampede in September that caused the deaths of hundreds of people during Hajj, the Muslim religious pilgrimage to Mecca. He denied being the owner of that account.

On 31 March 2016, the Fifth Lower Criminal Court in Manama convicted Ibrahim Karimi of “publicly inciting hatred and contempt against the regime”, “publicly insulting the King” and “publicly insulting Saudi Arabia and its King” on a Twitter account (FreejKarimi) and sentenced him to two years’ imprisonment and a fine of 2,000 Bahraini Dinar (BD) (approximately USD\$5,300). Ibrahim Karimi said he was forced to “confess” to the charges he later denied in court. Amnesty International considers that his conviction and sentence on these charges relate solely to the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Ibrahim Karimi was also sentenced to one month's imprisonment and fined 100 BD (approximately USD\$265) for “possession of an electric-shock device without authorization from the Ministry of Interior”. The Appeal Court upheld the verdicts in December 2016.

On 8 March 2016, Ibrahim Karimi lost another appeal against an order to deport him and nine others of a group of 31 people whose nationality was arbitrarily revoked by the Ministry of Interior on 7 November 2012 on grounds they had caused “damage to state security”, under Article 10 (Paragraph C) of the Bahrain Citizenship Law. The 31 people included activists living abroad, a lawyer, a number of people active in politics within Bahrain, a number of Shi’a clerics and others with no political or religious affiliation. Most of those living in Bahrain, including Ibrahim Karimi, did not have another nationality and were effectively rendered stateless. The 31 people were never officially notified of this decision, and learned about it from the media the day it was announced.

No further action is requested by the UA Network. Amnesty International will continue to monitor Ibrahim Karimi’s case. Many thanks to all who sent appeals

This is the third update of UA 215/15. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/3860/2016/en/

Further information on UA: 215/15 Index: MDE 11/7378/2017 Bahrain Issue date: 03 November 2017

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