

URGENT ACTION

STATELESS LAWYER DEPORTED

Bahraini lawyer, Taimoor Karimi, was deported from Bahrain to Iraq on 26 June after his expulsion sentence was upheld by the Appeal Court on 23 May. He had been stripped of his nationality in 2012 and effectively rendered stateless.

Bahraini lawyer, **Taimoor Karimi**, was deported by the Bahraini authorities on the night of 26 June. He was summoned by the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs office of the Department of Immigration, and went with his belongings, suspecting that his deportation sentence would be carried out. He was told that he would be deported to Iraq and was given a choice of two destinations to go to, of which he chose Najaf, in central Iraq. He was immediately taken to the airport by the authorities where he waited for five hours before boarding his flight.

Taimoor Karimi was among a group of 31 people who had their nationality revoked on 7 November 2012 by the Ministry of Interior for “harming” state security under Article 10 (Paragraph C) of the Bahraini Citizenship Law. The 31 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 known political or religious affiliation. They were never officially notified of this decision, and only learned about it from the media the day it was announced. Most of those living in Bahrain, including Taimoor Karimi, do not have another nationality and have been effectively rendered stateless. On 28 October 2014, a Court of First Instance sentenced them to be expelled and ordered them to pay a 100 Bahraini Dinar fine (about US\$ 265). A number of the 31 appealed the sentence. Taimoor Karimi’s expulsion sentence was upheld by the Appeal Court in Manama on 23 May. So far at least 280 people have had their nationality arbitrarily revoked in Bahrain since 2012.

The right to a nationality, which must not be deprived arbitrarily, is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Bahrain is a state party. The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness also prohibits, bar a very small number of tightly drawn exceptions, any loss of nationality which results in statelessness. Subsequently, the obligation to avoid statelessness has been recognized as a norm of customary international law. International human rights law and standards also prohibit arbitrary deportation and the exiling of persons from their own country.

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

This is the first update of UA 124/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/4091/2016/en/>

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