

URGENT ACTION

CHARGE DROPPED, EBRAHIM SHARIF REMAINS FREE

Bahraini political activist Ebrahim Sharif's one year prison sentence was upheld on 7 November by the Appeal Court. He remains free having already completed one year in prison on 11 July. On 13 November, the Prosecution brought a new charge against him which was then dropped on 23 November.

Former prisoner of conscience **Ebrahim Sharif** had his one year prison sentence upheld by the Appeal Court in the capital, Manama, on 7 November. Ebrahim Sharif was arrested on 12 July 2015 after he made a speech at a public gathering in which he spoke about the need for change in Bahrain, highlighting the political opposition's commitment to non-violence and urging the government to introduce key economic reforms to avoid further bankruptcy. Amnesty International has seen the speech and can confirm that, in it, he did not advocate violence. On 24 February, the High Criminal Court in Manama convicted him of "incitement to hatred and contempt of the regime" but acquitted him of "incitement to overthrow the regime by force and illegal means" and sentenced him to one year in prison. The prosecution appealed against the sentence imposed for "incitement to hatred and contempt of the regime" and the acquittal of the second charge of "incitement to overthrow the regime by force and illegal means". He was released from Jaw prison, south-eastern Bahrain, on 11 July, after serving his sentence.

On 13 November, the Public Prosecution brought a new case against Ebrahim Sharif, charging him with "incitement to hatred and contempt of the regime" over an interview published by the Associated Press two days earlier in relation to the visit of the UK's Prince Charles to the country. In this interview, he allegedly spoke of his fears that the visit would be used to 'whitewash' an ongoing crackdown on dissent in Bahrain. He added that Bahrain's opposition was both "flexible and realistic", wanting only power-sharing with the country's monarchy. However, he said those demands had been greeted with travel bans and other harassment by the authorities. This new charge was later dropped on 23 November.

On 17 November, Ebrahim Sharif was summoned for interrogation by the Ministry of the Interior over a visit he received two days earlier from a staff member of the British Embassy during which they discussed the developments in his case. He was released without charge.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor Ebrahim Sharif's situation.

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

This is the fifth update of UA 168/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/4547/2016/en/>

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