

URGENT ACTION

IBRAHIM KARIMI'S VERDICT ON 31 MARCH

Ibrahim Karimi's trial started on 31 January on charges including "insulting the King" on his Twitter account. The verdict will be issued on 31 March. He is at risk of expulsion, as the Appeal Court separately upheld his deportation order on 8 March.

Ibrahim Karimi's trial began on 31 January, before the Fifth Lower Criminal Court in the capital, Manama. He was charged with "publicly inciting hatred and contempt against the regime", "publicly insulting the King" and "publicly insulting Saudi Arabia and its King" on his Twitter account. He has denied these charges. Ibrahim Karimi has also been charged with "possession of an electric-shock device without authorization from the Ministry of Interior". His family told Amnesty International that he had bought the electric-shock device, the size of a pen, in Dubai in 2001 for his wife to use for her own protection. The device has been illegal in Bahrain since 2008. Eight trial sessions relating to this case have taken place so far. During the last one on 17 March the court did not allow defence witnesses to be summoned, and set 31 March to issue its verdict. Ibrahim Karimi is being held in Dry Dock Prison, northeast of Manama.

In a separate case, the Appeal Court upheld Ibrahim Karimi's deportation order on 8 March. As he holds no other nationality, he is at immediate risk of deportation once his other trial has finished.

The Ministry of Interior had revoked Ibrahim Karimi's nationality on 7 November 2012, for causing "damage to state security", under Article 10 (c) of the Bahrain Citizenship Law, and rendered him stateless. Ibrahim Karimi lodged an appeal on 29 October 2014. He was arrested on 26 September 2015 in connection with messages posted on Twitter. He says he was forced to "confess".

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to drop all charges against Ibrahim Karimi that arise from his peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to investigate his allegations of torture and other ill-treatment promptly, and protect him from further such ill-treatment;
- Calling on them to rescind the decision to strip Ibrahim Karimi of his nationality, and not to proceed with his expulsion.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 MAY 2016 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

Salutation: Your Majesty

Ministry of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1723 2661
Email (via website):
www.interior.gov.bh/contact_en.aspx

Twitter: @moi_Bahrain

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khaled 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. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 215/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/2566/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ibrahim Karimi was arrested by plainclothes police officers on 26 September 2015, at his home in the village of al-Dair. According to his family, the police officers did not present an arrest warrant, searched his house and car, and took mobile phones that belonged to him and other members of his family, and a laser pointer. They then took him to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) where he was interrogated, 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. The Public Prosecution stated that the owner of the account was charged with “inciting hatred against the regime”, “publicly insulting the King”, “misuse of social media” and “illegal residency” and that when searching the owner’s home, they had found “an electric shock device”.

Ibrahim Karimi has told his family that prison officers in Dry Dock prison threatened that they would make an example of him to the other prisoners and make him disappear. During his interrogation at the CID following his arrest on 26 September 2015, Ibrahim Karimi said he was kept in solitary confinement, deprived of sleep and made to stand. He told his lawyer that his interrogators at the CID insulted him and threatened that his son would be arrested if he did not confess. He then signed the “confession”.

Ibrahim Karimi had also been appealing against an order to deport him and nine others of a group of 31 people whose nationality the Ministry of Interior revoked arbitrarily on 7 November 2012 because they had caused “damage to state security”, under Article 10 (Paragraph C) of the Bahrain 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 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.

The government forced one of the 31, Shaikh Hussain al-Najati, to leave Bahrain on 23 April 2014. On 28 October, a lower court ordered those who are still in Bahrain who only have Bahraini nationality to be deported. Their lawyers lodged an appeal the next day, and the deportation order has been halted until the court issues its verdict. Since 2012, the Ministry of Interior and the courts have arbitrarily revoked the nationality of hundreds of people.

Under the Bahrain Citizenship Law and its amendments, Article 10 stipulates that nationality can be revoked (Paragraph A) if a person engages in the military service of a foreign country; (Paragraph B) if he helps or engages in the service of an enemy country; or (Paragraph C) if he causes harm to state security. There is no further definition or detail of what could amount to “harm to state security”. This Paragraph – used to revoke the nationality of the 31 – is therefore framed too broadly, allowing for its use to punish the legitimate and peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Name: Ibrahim Karimi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 215/15 Index: MDE 11/3579/2016 Issue Date: 30 March 2016