

URGENT ACTION

ALI ISA AL-TAJER'S TRIAL ADJOURNED TO 3 NOVEMBER

Ali Isa al-Tajer's trial on terrorism charges began on 23 August. The judge did not respond to the allegation that his confessions were extracted under torture. He is still awaiting to be examined by medical consultants following a referral in December 2015. He remains detained and the next trial session has been set for 3 November.

On 26 July the Public Prosecution referred 138 men including **Ali Isa al-Tajer** and 52 others in their absence for trial on terrorism charges. It took the Criminal Court in Manama, the capital, two sessions on 23 August and 3 October to process all the defendants as they could not all fit in the court room at once. Ali Isa al-Tajer is facing several charges including joining an illegal terrorist organization to overthrow the government by force and funding, sheltering and providing weapons to members of this group. Ali Isa al-Tajer told the judge that he had lodged complaints with the Ombudsman of the Ministry of Interior and the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) in which he stated that his confessions were extracted under torture and that he was forced to sign them while blindfolded. The judge did not respond at all to the allegations. The next session has been scheduled for 3 November and he remains held in Dry Dock prison in Manama.

Ali Isa al-Tajer was interrogated and charged on 30 November 2015 by the Public Prosecutor, 25 days after his arrest. He denied the charges and told the prosecutor he had been tortured during interrogation. Six weeks later he was taken to the SIU, where he was examined by a forensic doctor. The Public Prosecutor said the forensic doctor had seen no signs of torture but had nevertheless referred Ali Isa al-Tajer to three different medical consultants including about a prolapsed disc in his spine and a knee injury which he says are the result from his torture. To date, he has only been taken to the Salmaniya Medical Complex to see an ear, nose and throat consultant. Despite appointments arranged by the prison authorities he is still awaiting to be taken to the other two medical consultants.

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

- Urging the authorities to promptly complete their investigation onto Ali Isa al-Tajer's torture allegations, publish the results, and bring any perpetrators responsible to justice;
- Calling on them to disregard any confessions extracted under torture in any proceeding against him;
- Calling on them to ensure that he has access to appropriate medical care and treatment including being taken to his previously arranged appointments with medical consultants.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 NOVEMBER 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: info@interior.gov.bh

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

Email (via website):

<http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>

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

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 267/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/3427/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ali Isa al-Tajer was arrested on 5 November 2015 at around 5pm at his family home in the village of al-Dair, by masked police officers in civilian clothes. They came into the house through the back door without any warning and searched Ali Isa al-Tajer's room and car, taking his mobile phone and two laptops. They did not present any search or arrest warrants, or say why they were arresting him. They told his family they were taking him to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID).

Ali Isa al-Tajer called his family about an hour later and said he was at the CID, but the number he called from was in the al-Qalaa area, where the National Security Agency (NSA) is known to be located, not al-'Adliya in Manama, where the CID is. He called them again very briefly on 11, 17 and 24 November, and said that the detaining officers had told him he would soon be released. Each time the calls appeared as coming from the al-Qalaa area.

Ali Isa al-Tajer was brought to the Public Prosecution on 30 November for interrogation. The prosecution only told one of his lawyers Mohamed al-Tajer, who is also his brother, about the interrogation less than 30 minutes before it started. Ali Isa al-Tajer was charged with "joining an illegal terrorist organization to overthrow the government by force" and "training individuals on the use of weapons for terrorist purposes". He denied the charges and told the prosecutor he had been tortured and forced to sign written confessions that he could not read as he was blindfolded.

The prosecutor rejected Ali Isa al-Tajer's lawyers' requests to speak to him before or during the interrogation, and threatened to remove one lawyer when he told his client he had the right to deny the charges. Ali Isa al-Tajer tried to describe how he was tortured but was told to stop talking and that his allegations would be handled by the Special Investigations Unit.

After the interrogation, his lawyers were allowed to meet with Ali Isa al-Tajer for five minutes, with three policemen present. He told them he had been beaten all over his body, particularly on his head and genitals, and that he had a rope tied tightly round his genitals and pulled. He said he was forced to strip and kept naked for most of the 25 days that he was interrogated in detention, threatened with electric shocks, forced to stand for long periods of time and deprived of sleep. He said he had been held in a number of different detention locations, including the NSA.

Amnesty International has been told of a number of detainees being arrested, interrogated and detained with NSA involvement. This would be a breach of Article 4 of Decree 115 of 2011, which limited the NSA's role to intelligence-gathering and uncovering activities damaging to national security, its system and institutions, in accordance with the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) recommendations.

The BICI, which was established by royal decree to investigate alleged human rights violations during the February/March 2011 protests and subsequently during the following months, presented its findings to the King of Bahrain on 23 November 2011. The BICI recommended the government to take a series of steps to address the violations that had occurred and to prevent further human rights violations, including the recommendation to limit the NSA's activities to intelligence-gathering. Five years on, impunity still prevails.

Further information on UA: 267/15 Index: MDE 11/4981/2016 Issue Date: 17 October 2016