

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE DENIED MEDICATION

Hassan Mshaima, one of 11 jailed prominent Bahraini opposition activists, is being denied adequate healthcare in detention. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Hassan Mshaima, aged 70, a diabetic and former cancer patient, phoned his family on 16 January from Jaw prison, where he is detained, to inform them that his blood sugar had risen to a dangerously high level and that he had not been receiving one of his two prescribed diabetes medications. At the beginning of January, Hassan Mshaima wrote to the prison authorities requesting that his family be allowed to buy him his two diabetes medications for the prison authorities to hand them to him. The prison authorities denied his request stating instead that they would provide the medication without the involvement of his family. Hassan Mshaima was later given one of his medications but not the other.

Since August 2017, Hassan Mshaima's diabetes medication has been given to him sporadically. In October 2017, he was denied all medication and a fellow prisoner, who also suffers from diabetes and uses the same medication, shared his with him. In order for Hassan Mshaima to receive his prescription, prison authorities insist that he would have to go to the prison clinic shackled and in prison uniform, which he refuses to do. This practice, aimed at degrading and humiliating prisoners, is contrary to Rule 47 of the Mandela Rules, which states that restraint instruments should only be used as a precaution against escape or to prevent prisoners from injuring themselves or others. Hassan Mshaima suffers from multiple health issues, including heart problems, and as a former cancer patient he requires regular check-ups such as Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans every six months. His last PET was in September 2016.

Hassan Mshaima was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2011 after an unfair trial for leading widespread peaceful anti-government protests. In the same case, 12 other opposition activists received sentences ranging from five years to life imprisonment. Two of them have since been released.

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

- Urging them to release Hassan Mshaima, and the remaining 10 opposition activists, immediately and unconditionally as they are prisoners of conscience, convicted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Pending his release, urging the authorities to provide Hassan Mshaima access to adequate healthcare, including prescribed medication and regular check-ups, unhindered by unnecessary and degrading prison practices.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 01 MARCH 2018 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

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1723 2661
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
E-form: <http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/>
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 thirteenth update of UA 139/11. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE11/019/2013/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 1 March 2017, the prison authorities have shackled prisoners in Building 7 of Jaw prison, housing political prisoners, whenever they leave their cells, including for medical visits. This has led the detainees to refuse to attend medical appointments in protest at what they perceive as degrading treatment, resulting in the authorities cutting visiting hours and the time for phone calls with their relatives. The change of practice in the prison followed the escape of 10 prisoners from another part of Jaw Prison on 1 January 2017. For further information, see the joint Public Statement: *Bahrain: End Degrading Treatment of Activists*, 2 May 2017: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/6159/2017/en/>.

Fourteen prominent opposition activists were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011. Most were arrested in the middle of the night by groups of security officers who raided their houses and took them to an unknown location, where they were held incommunicado for weeks. Many of the 14 have alleged they were tortured during their first few days of detention when they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA). None of the 14 was allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations just after they were arrested. Some saw their lawyers during questioning by the military prosecutor ahead of the trial, while others were only allowed to see them during the first court hearing in May 2011, which was the first time any of the activists had seen their families since their arrest. On 22 June, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict and sentenced them to between two years and life in prison on charges including "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". Seven of the 14 activists were sentenced to life imprisonment: Hassan Mshaima, Abdelwahab Hussain, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Dr Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad, Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad and Saeed Mirza al-Nuri. Four people, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad Ali Ridha Ismail, Abdullah al-Mahroos and Abdul-Hadi Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, were sentenced to 15 years in prison. Two people, Ebrahim Sharif and Salah Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja were given five-year prison terms while Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh received a prison sentence of two years. On 28 September 2011, in a session that lasted only a few minutes, the National Safety Court of Appeal, a military appeal court, upheld all the convictions and sentences imposed on the 14 opposition activists. On 30 April 2012, the Court of Cassation in Manama ordered them to appear before a civilian court for an appeal trial; on the same day it reduced Al-Hur Yousef al-Somaikh's two-year sentence to six months. He was immediately released as he had already served his sentence. However, the other 13 remained behind bars in Jaw prison. Their appeal before a civilian court of appeal started on 22 May 2012. The High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld their sentences on 4 September 2012, and on 6 January 2013, the cassation Court also upheld the appeal verdict. Ebrahim Sharif was released on 19 June 2015 under a royal pardon and Salah al-Khawaja was released from prison on 19 March 2016, after completing his five-year prison sentence.