

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

BHR 005 / 0511 / OBS 073

Judicial harassment / Incommunicado detention

Bahrain

May 5, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Bahrain**.

Brief description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the judicial harassment against 47 medical staff and the incommunicado detention of Dr. **Ahmed Jamal**, Dr. **Raja Hassa Khadim** and Dr. **Nidal Khalifa**, three doctors, for treating peaceful demonstrators injured during the crackdown on demonstrations in Bahrain.

According to the information received, on May 3, 2011, 24 doctors and 23 nurses were charged by the Military Public Prosecution of "refusal to extend assistance to a person in need", "embezzlement of public funds", "assault that resulted in death", "unauthorized possession of weapons and ammunition", "refusal to perform duties and putting people's lives and health at risk", "illegal detention", "abuse of authority to suspend and stall laws and regulations", "attempt to occupy buildings by force", "incitement to the forceful overthrow of a political regime", "incitement to the hatred of a regime", "incitement to the hatred of a segment of society", "dissemination of false news and malicious rumours that could harm public interest" and "participation in unauthorized rallies and meetings". They will be tried before a military court but, as of issuing this Urgent Appeal, no date for an hearing had been set. No further information could be obtained whether the 47 are currently in incommunicado detention or in hiding.

Furthermore, according to the information received, between May 2 and 4, Dr. Ahmed Jamal, former President of the Bahrain Medical Society (BMS), Dr. Raja Hassa Khadim, President of the Bahrain Dental Society, and Dr. Nidal Khalifa, President of the Arab Association for the Skin Diseases and former Head of the Dermatology Unit in Salmanya Hospital, were arrested by the security forces and have been held incommunicado since then.

Moreover, the Observatory recalls that on April 4, 2011, Ms. **Rulla El Saffar**, President of the Bahrain Nursing Society (BNS), was summoned by phone to the Adlia Criminal Investigation Building and taken away by security forces to an unknown location. She remains detained incommunicado since then and may be one of the 47 under charges. On April 11, 2011, Dr. **Nabeel Tamman**, an Ear/Nose/Throat (ENT) specialist, member of Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS) and the former President of the Medical Committee, was also arrested, taken by security forces to an unknown location and then released on April 13 reportedly without charge. In addition, on April 6, 2011, the Social Development Minister had issued an edict suspending the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Medical Society (BMS), and the Ministry of Health suspended 30 doctors and nurses whose cases was referred to an "investigation committee" created by the Ministry, which mandate is to investigate the medical personnel who treated injured victims of demonstrations¹.

The Observatory condemns the judicial harassment against the medical staff who provided medical assistance to injured demonstrators, which seems to merely aim at sanctioning the legitimate exercise of their profession. More generally, the Observatory is deeply concerned about the arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions and acts of intimidation against all

¹ See Observatory Urgent Appeal BHR 002 / 0411 / OBS 061, issued on April 14, 2011.

people who provided help to the victims of the repression of peaceful protest movements in the country.

Actions requested:

The Observatory urges the authorities of Bahrain to:

- i. Guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the above-mentioned human rights defenders, as well as of all human rights defenders in Bahrain;
- ii. Immediately disclose the whereabouts of Ms. Rulla El Saffar, Dr. Ahmad Jamal, Dr. Raja Hassa Kadhim and Dr. Nidal Khalifa and all human rights defenders in Bahrain, ensure their access to their lawyers and families and release them immediately and unconditionally as their detention seems at merely sanctioning their legitimate human rights activities;
- iii. Put an end to any acts of harassment, including at the judicial and administrative level, against the above-mentioned human rights defenders, as well as against all human rights defenders in Bahrain;
- iv. Conform in any circumstances with the provisions of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular :
 - its Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”;
 - its Article 10, which provides that “No one shall participate, by act or by failure to act where required, in violating human rights and fundamental freedoms and no one shall be subjected to punishment or adverse action of any kind for refusing to do so”;
 - and its Article 12.2, which states that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”.
- v. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Bahrain.

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Please also write to diplomatic representations of Bahrain in your respective countries.

Paris-Geneva, May 5, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.



The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

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