

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST ON TRIAL FOR 'INSULTING' ISLAMIC FIGURE

Bahraini activist Nader Abdulemam is being tried for "insulting" a figure of worship. Amnesty International believes he is being targeted for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Nader Abdulemam, aged 41, was arrested on 27 August after he was summoned to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID), where he was questioned about comments he had posted on Twitter which were interpreted as derogatory towards Khalid bin al-Waleed, a companion of the prophet Muhammad and a renowned Islamic commander. He was charged under articles 92/3 and 310/2 of the Bahraini Penal Code which criminalize "publicly insulting a religious figure of worship". The first hearing before the court started on 9 September, with the second due on 28 September. Nader Abdulemam is being detained in Dry Dock prison, northeast of the capital, Manama.

Article 310 of the Bahraini Penal Code carries a penalty of up to a year in prison and a fine of up to 100 Bahraini Dinars (US\$265) for "publicly insulting a symbol or person considered sacred to members of a particular religious sect". Laws which prohibit criticism or ridicule of a religion or belief system are incompatible with the right to freedom of expression, which is protected under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bahrain is a state party.

Nader Abdulemam is also awaiting several trials on different charges for "illegal gathering" because he took part in a demonstration in Manama. The government introduced new decrees in 2013 banning demonstrations in the capital.

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

- Urging the authorities to drop the charge against Nader Abdulemam of "insulting a figure of worship", as it arises solely from his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to release him immediately, as he appears to have been detained only on charges that are contrary to the right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 NOVEMBER 2014 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 (keep trying)

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 bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email: minister@justice.gov.bh
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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has expressed concern to the Bahraini government for many years regarding laws that prohibit the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Several people have been sentenced under Article 214 of the Penal Code which, together with Articles 215 and 216, criminalizes "offending the King, the national flag or emblem, a foreign country or international organization, the National Assembly or other constitutional institutions, the army, law courts, government authorities or government agencies". These Articles violate the right to freedom of expression since they impose restrictions that are not permissible under international law and criminalize the exercise of human rights.

Name: Nader Abdulemam

Gender m/f: m

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