

H.E. Shaikh Fawaz Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
30 Belgrave Square,  
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9 April 2020

To: ambassadorsoffice@bahrainembassy.co.uk  
Cc. Roddy.Drummond@fco.gov.uk

Your Excellency,

Further to our previous correspondence, and again in my capacity as Chair of the APPG on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf at Westminster, I write to draw your attention to the recently released joint-statement, signed by more than twenty highly-respected human rights groups, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW), which calls on the Bahraini government to immediately and unconditionally release all remaining political prisoners; prisoners who are currently being put at risk as the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic tightens across the world.

Whilst I recognise and commend the decision to release almost 1500 Bahraini prisoners in response to COVID-19 outbreak, notable however by their absence from the list of those released were many prominent rights defenders, activists and opposition leaders, among them **Nabeel Rajab, Hassan Mushaima, Dr Abduljalil Al Singace, Abdulwahab Husain, Sheikh Ali Salman, Naji Fateel, Ali Al Hajee and Abdulhadi Al Khawaja**. Also missing from the list of those recently released were opposition and religious figures including **Mohammed Hassan Jawad, Sheikh Mohammed Habib Al Muqdad, Sheikh Mirza Al Mahroos, Sheikh Abdulhadi Al Makhmour, Sheikh Saeed Al Noori, Mohammed Ali Ismael, Sheikh Abduljalil Al Muqdad and Khalil Alhalwachi**.

I was also disappointed to note that **Sayed Nizar Alwadaei** and journalist **Mahmood Al Jazeeri**, both of whom have been declared as being arbitrarily detained by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD), are also to remain in prison; this despite the WGAD explicitly calling for their release. Similarly disappointing was the decision to exclude **Zakeya Al Barboori** from the list of those released, while women on longer sentences were allowed out of prison. This suggests a political motive for her continued detention and I fully echo the statement's call for her release.

In addition, I am very concerned by persistent reports that prison authorities in Bahrain have routinely failed to provide many political prisoners with adequate medical care. **Hassan Mushaima** and **Dr Abduljalil Al Singace**, who are both older and have considerable underlying medical conditions which render them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, have accused the Bahraini government of protracted medical negligence at Jau Prison, in part for their refusal to submit to wearing shackles which contravene the Mandela Rules.

I therefore share the concerns of the signatories of the joint statement about the ability of prison authorities to provide an adequate level of medical care should coronavirus spread within Bahraini prisons and as Chair of the APPG on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf, I respectfully request that you relay to your government the calls from myself and the international community for imprisoned political leaders and all individuals detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression, opinion and assembly, to be immediately and unconditionally released.

I am sure that such a move would be widely praised as a positive move from the Bahraini authorities.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan O'Hara MP  
Argyll and Bute