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BAHRAIN HUNGER-STRIKING ACADEMIC DENIED MEDICATION

Unjustly jailed Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, who has been on a hunger strike for a year, since 8 July 2021, announced on 29 June that he would also stop taking salts, in protest at the Bahraini authorities' withholding some of his medication, increasing concerns over the deterioration of his already poor health. Abduljalil al-Singace, a Bahraini academic and human rights defender, has served over 11 years of a life sentence in Bahrain's Jaw prison for his peaceful role in Bahrain's 2011 uprising. He must be immediately and unconditionally released, and pending that, granted immediate access to any necessary healthcare.

Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace (60) is serving a life sentence for his peaceful role in Bahrain's 2011 uprising. He has been imprisoned for over 11 years, solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. On 29 June, Abduljalil al-Singace, who has been on hunger strike since 8 July 2021, announced that he would also stop taking salts – which stabilize his health while abstaining from food – to protest the authorities' failure to promptly grant him his prescribed medication, including eye drops and analgesic creams for joint and muscle pain, which he needs daily.

A year ago, Abduljalil al-Singace began his hunger strike, consuming only liquids, to protest the prison authorities' confiscation of his book on Bahraini dialects that he spent four years researching and writing. On 18 July 2021, authorities transferred him from Jaw prison to the Kanoo Medical Centre, where he remains held. The same month, the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Ombudsperson declared that his book could not be handed to his family until a "legal decision" was made. In November 2021, a legal decision clarified the apolitical nature of the book and yet the book has still not been returned. In March 2022, the Ombudsperson's representative visited Abduljalil al-Singace and asked him to edit and resubmit the book for the authorities to review, warning of "legal consequences" if it is published without authorization.

Abduljalil al-Singace suffers from multiple medical conditions, including severe intermittent headaches, a prostate problem, arthritis in his shoulder joint, tremors, numbness, and diminished eyesight. In January 2022, his neurologist requested a CT scan but the authorities are refusing Abduljalil al-Singace's request for it be performed at the Salmaniya Medical Complex, run by the Ministry of Health, and insist for it to be conducted at the King Hamad Military Hospital. Abduljalil al-Singace does not believe that he would receive adequate and timely healthcare at King Hamad Military Hospital given that he has yet to be informed of the result of an MRI scan of his shoulder taken there in October 2021.

Write to the King urging him to:

- release Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace immediately and unconditionally
- in the meantime, ensure he receives his medication without delay and has access to adequate healthcare, in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent, and is protected from further torture and other ill-treatment
- ensure that his work is immediately handed over to his family.

Write to:

King of Bahrain,
Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Fax: 011 973 1766 4587

Digital appeals sent to:

Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sheikh Salman bin Hamad
Contact form: <http://www.crownprince.bh/en/contact>
Twitter: @BahrainCPnews
Salutation: Your Highness:

And Copy:

His Excellency Shaikh Abdulla Rashed Abdulla Alkhalifa
Ambassador
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain
3502 International Drive North West
Washington, D.C., DC 20008
USA
Fax: 1 202 362 2192

Additional information

Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace is a Bahraini academic, blogger, and human rights defender. He was among 14 opposition activists who were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011 during the Bahrain uprising. 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 activists 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 them were allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations following their arrests. 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 2011, Bahrain's National Safety Court, a military court, announced its verdict and sentenced them to between two years and life in prison after convicting them of multiple charges including "setting up terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution". In April 2012, the case was transferred to a civilian court for an appeal trial. On 6 January 2013, the Cassation Court confirmed the verdict.

In June 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) was appointed by Royal Order to investigate and report on human rights violations committed following the anti-government protests in February and March 2011. At the launch of the BICI report in November 2011, the government publicly committed to implement the recommendations set out in the report. Instead, it went onto a path of sustained repression over the past decade, disbanding opposition groups and independent media and sentencing peaceful activists to long prison terms. The BICI report documented the torture and other ill-treatment of Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, reporting that police had subjected him to nightly beatings for two months while placed in solitary confinement, targeted his disability by confiscating his crutches, making him “stand on one leg for prolonged periods”, pushing his crutch “into his genitals”, and “threatened him with rape and made sexually explicit comments about his wife and his daughter”.