

Nurses, doctors, pharmacists Arrested, tortured, jailed for giving care SEND A MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO BAHRAIN MEDICS

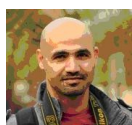


In February 2011, inspired by the wave of revolutionary uprisings sweeping the Arab world, tens of thousands took to the streets of Bahrain to demand democracy from the repressive monarchy. Dozens were killed in the brutal crackdown that followed, thousands arrested, and hundreds tortured and sentenced to long jail terms. Healthworkers who went to help the injured were beaten by the police, and on 16 March 2011, the security forces stormed Salmaniyya Hospital, where many of the wounded had been treated.

This campaign highlights the cases of seven Bahraini healthworkers who have all been imprisoned, and many tortured, over the past two years. MENA Solidarity Network is working with activists from the Bahraini Australia Youth Movement who have won the backing of the Australian Nurses Federation (ANF) for a campaign in solidarity with jailed Bahraini healthworkers. Hundreds of ANF members have already sent messages of support to their colleagues in Bahrain (go to www.anf.org.au for more details). Read more on the back of this leaflet about how healthworkers in Britain can get involved in this campaign. Go to www.menasolidaritynetwork.com/bahrain2013 to read the jailed healthworkers' full stories.

Ibrahim al Demistani is a nurse, Secretary – General of the Bahraini Nursing Society.

Arrested on 17th March 2011 for “hiding and harbouring a fugitive”, subjected to torture and forced to sign false statements. Serving a three year jail sentence.



Hassan Matooq is an emergency department nurse at the Salmaniyya Medical Complex, a volunteer with the Bahrain Nursing Society and a Ph.D student. Convicted of taking unapproved photographs and “fabricating reality”. Tortured and jailed for three years.

Haleema Al Sabagh is a nurse assistant who transported medical supplies from Salmaniyya Medical Complex to treat injured protesters off-site. Arrested in January 2012 and sentenced to one year in prison for stealing property.



Ahmed Ali Almushatat is a pharmacist who worked at North Muharram health center. During the uprisings he transferred medication to health centres treating injured protesters. Tortured and jailed for two years.

Dr Ali Al-Ekri is a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon who was trained in Ireland and has worked at Salmaniyya Medical Complex for the last 20 years. On March 17th 2011 he was abducted and tortured. Sentenced to 15 years in prison, reduced to five on appeal.



Dr Ghassan Dhaif is a maxillofacial surgeon who trained in Scotland and Ireland and then worked as a Senior Consultant at the Salmaniya Medical Complex. Treated protesters with facial wounds, sentenced to 15 years in prison, served one year after sentence reduced on appeal.

Dr Saeed Al Samahiji is a consultant ophthalmologist who worked in the Salmaniya Medical Complex. Sentenced to ten years imprisonment, served one year after sentence reduced on appeal.



Bahraini doctor's message of solidarity for NHS demo

"You can win what you are fighting for"



Dr Mahmoud al-Farhan worked in the Accident and Emergency department at Salmaniyya Hospital in Bahrain. He fled Bahrain in the wake of the brutal crackdown against protesters in 2011, having seen dozens of his colleagues arrested and sentenced to long jail terms (see over for more details). He wrote this message for healthworkers and campaigners marching on 18 May 2013 against privatisation and cuts to the NHS in London:

"I have a message for my colleagues in the UK: just fight for your rights and for the best health service you can. Health is the main issue for any community, along with education. These services empower society. When people have a good health service and a good education they can build their future. We've faced hard times in Bahrain recently. But despite the arrests and jail sentences, we're still fighting for our health service, even though the government is targeting medics and humiliating us.

I believe that doctors and healthworkers here in Britain can win what they are fighting for through peaceful protest, and by continuing to organise and demand their rights and the rights of society itself."

What you can do in solidarity with Bahraini healthworkers:

Pass this resolution through your union branch

- This union condemns the imprisonment of Ibrahim al Demistani, Hassan Matooq, Ahmed Ali Almushatat, Haleema Al Sabagh, Dr Ali Al-Ekri, Dr Ghassan Dhaif and Dr Saeed Al Samahiji, and resolves to write to the Bahraini authorities calling for the immediate release of those still in jail, the reinstatement to their jobs of those who have been release, and for the release and reinstatement of all other political prisoners in Bahrain.
- This union further condemns the British government's continued willingness to sell arms to Bahraini authorities despite the ongoing repression there. Since 14 February 2011, the British government has approved at least £16m of export licenses for military equipment to the Bahrain, including small arms ammunition, body armour and training hand grenades. We call on the British government to stop the export of military equipment to Bahrain.
- This union resolves to circulate details of the campaign for the arrested medics to our members and encourages them to take part.
- This union further resolves to send this resolution to our region / annual conference calling on the union to mobilise a national campaign to highlight the repression against healthworkers, other trade unionists and activists in Bahrain since 2011.

Show your solidarity by sending a message. You can email menasolidarity@gmail.com or print out a sign from our website <http://menasolidaritynetwork.com/bahrain2013> and take a photograph of yourself and your colleagues so that we can post on Facebook (www.facebook.com/menasolidarity) and Twitter (@menasolidarity) to show people in Bahrain support from healthworkers internationally for their struggle.

Put up leaflets and posters about the campaign around your workplace. If possible, make links with colleagues in the same departments and wards where the arrested Bahraini medics worked. If you aren't a healthworker yourself, why not speak to union reps at your local hospital about the campaign?



Union members at UCLH send a solidarity message