



Fédération internationale de l'Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la Torture
International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture
Federación Internacional de la Acción de los Cristianos para la Abolición de la Tortura

Appeal of the month December 2011

BAHRAIN

Autopsy of an aborted revolution

Appeal proposed by ACAT France

Please find attached:

- **a presentation of the situation for your personal information**
- **a letter to be signed (also in Word format in a separate file).**

BAHRAIN

Autopsy of a failed revolution

For more than 10 months, Bahrain has been shaken by strikes and demonstrations calling for freedoms to be respected and for the introduction of democracy. From the outset, the security services and the army responded with considerable violence, resulting in the deaths of more than 40 people; hundreds more were arrested. Although clashes are now less frequent, the regime continues to carry out brutal repression.

Subjugation by violence

Hundreds of people suspected of having taken part in demonstrations or supporting demonstrators have been arrested and subjected to physical abuse or even torture. The repression has particularly targeted members of the political opposition and human rights activists, but it has also cracked down on trade unionists, teachers, students, writers, journalists and ordinary demonstrators. The victims include many women and girls.

Several members of the armed forces and police who have shown solidarity with the demonstrators or have hesitated to use repressive measures against them have been tortured, some of them to death.

The repression has reached as far as hospitals and other medical facilities, where the security forces have used violence against patients who were wounded in the demonstrations. Dozens of doctors and nurses have been arrested and tortured because they had treated demonstrators.

In addition, thousands of students, doctors, teachers, police officers and soldiers, among other workers, have been suspended or fired

and have been told by the authorities that they will only get their jobs back if they sign an oath of allegiance to the King.

Large-scale judicial repression

On 15 March, the King decreed a state of emergency. On this basis the National Security Court was set up, a special hybrid court made up of military and civilian judges, which then found dozens of civilians guilty of offences such as 'participating in an illegal assembly', 'inciting hatred of the regime' or 'disseminating false rumours'.

Despite the lifting of the state of emergency on 1 June, trials before the National Security Court continued for several months. The civilian courts have now taken over and have already imposed heavy sentences on people with links to the protest movement.

Tortured and condemned for their opinions

On 28 September 2011, the Appeal Court of Bahrain's National Security Court upheld the judgment of 22 June by the court of first instance against 21 Bahraini members of the political opposition and human rights activists, who were given prison sentences varying from two years to life, because of their participation in the protest movement. They were accused of trying to overthrow the monarchy, insulting the army, forming a terrorist group and being in contact with a foreign terrorist organisation.

Fourteen of those accused were arrested in April, at night and without a warrant being produced, and were held in secret, at least for the first ten days. Many of them suffered torture during their arrest and detention.

His Majesty Sheikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
PO Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

..., ... December 2011

Your Majesty,

Following information I have received from the International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT), a non-governmental organisation with Consultative Status with the United Nations, I am writing to express my concern at the repression that has been carried out for the past ten months against people demonstrating their opposition to the Bahraini regime.

Hundreds of people suspected of having taken part in demonstrations or supported demonstrators have been arrested and subjected to physical abuse or even torture by members of the security services and armed forces. Dozens of civilians have been found guilty by the National Security Court or by civilian courts and given heavy sentences because of their opposition to the government.

All these attacks against human rights constitute serious violations of the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture, which Bahrain has ratified.

In view of these circumstances, I urge you

- to put an end immediately to the use of violence against people who are expressing criticism of the Bahraini regime;
- to release people who have been arrested because of their opinions and drop the court cases against them;
- to conduct enquiries into acts of torture and mistreatment carried out since the start of the protest movement and bring the perpetrators to justice.

I trust that you will respond favourably to this appeal.

Yours faithfully,

First name, surname

Address

Signature