

Crown Prince and Prime Minister

Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Court of the Crown Prince

P.O Box 29091

Riffa – Bahrain

Email (via contact form): <http://www.crownprince.bh/en/contact>

Twitter: @bahrainCPnews @BahrainPMO

Your Highness,

Bahraini-Danish human rights defender **Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja** (62), who has been arbitrarily imprisoned for over 12 years solely for exercising his rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression during the 2011 popular uprising in Bahrain, began a hunger strike on 9 August and is only drinking water. He is protesting against his continued arbitrary detention and his denial of adequate medical care.

Two days later, on 11 August, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja experienced strong cardiac arrhythmia and was taken to the prison clinic from where he was transferred to the Bahrain Defence Force hospital emergency service before being admitted to the intensive care unit. He was too weak to oppose being treated intravenously. A couple of hours later, his heartbeat stabilized and he was transferred back to his prison cell where he immediately resumed his hunger strike. Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja's family said that he sounded very weak in a phone call on 14 August and that he was having difficulty raising his arms and had to lie down most of the time.

Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja began his hunger strike after the latest denial of adequate medical care by the prison authorities. Although he experienced cardiac arrhythmia on 28 February, it was not until 1 June that he had an appointment at the prison clinic with a cardiologist from the Salmaniya hospital. The cardiologist did not have access to his medical file nor the necessary equipment to conduct a proper examination, and stated that Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja needed an X-ray and specialized medical monitoring in hospital for several days, which the prison authorities refused to grant.

We call upon your Highness to release Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. In the meantime, and due to his serious health condition, we urge you to ensure he has timely access to adequate health care, consistent with international human rights standards, and that he is protected from further torture and other ill-treatment.

Yours sincerely,