

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

BHR 009 / 1211 / OBS 136

Death threats

Bahrain

December 7, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Bahrain**.

Description of the situation :

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the death threats made by a former official from the State Security Services against Mr. **Mohammed Al-Maskati**, President of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR), Mr. **Nabeel Rajab**, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and FIDH Deputy Secretary General, and Mr. **Yousef Al-Mahafdha**, a member of BCHR.

According to the information received, on December 5, 2011, Mr. Adel Fleifel, a former official from the State Security Services who is close to the Prime Minister, threatened by twit Messrs. Mohammed Al-Maskati, Nabeel Rajab and Yousef Al-Mahafdha. Mr. Adel Fleifel wrote to Messrs. Al-Maskati and Al-Mahafdha: "do not think that because now I'm not in the Ministry of Interior, I will shut up about you". He then added "Maskati and Nabeel Rajab your future death and hell". Addressing to the three human rights defenders, he finally wrote "Will not be silent about you"¹.

Mr. Fleifel is known for his participation in grave human rights violations and for inciting to hatred against the Shia community in Bahrain. He allegedly participated in acts of torture against the opposition in the nineties and called for the repression by the military of the February 14 protest movement. Last week, during Shia celebration Maharam, on December 2 and 3, 2011, Mr. Adel Fleifel publicly called for attacks against the Shia population. On several occasions, including recently, Messrs. Mohammed Al-Maskati, Nabeel Rajab and Yousef Al-Mahafdha denounced the role played by Mr. Adel Fleifel in the above-mentioned human rights violations. The three human rights defenders will file a complaint at the police.

The Observatory condemns the above-mentioned death threats, which merely seem to aim at intimidating Messrs. Mohammed Al-Maskati, Nabeel Rajab and Yousef Al-Mahafdha for their human rights activities. Furthermore, the Observatory is deeply concerned that this campaign is fuelling, among the public opinion, hostility towards human rights defenders and organisations monitoring human rights violations.

Furthermore, other members of BYHRS have also been harassed recently. On December 2, Mr. **Yousef Abdul Rasool**, a member of the Board of Directors of BYHRS, was subjected to harassment and interrogated by security forces in Bahrain International Airport as he was returning from a human rights training session organised in Beirut with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In October and November 2011, the authorities attempted to arrest Mr. **Ahmed Abbas**, a member of the BYSHR, in relation to the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in the village of Nuwaidrat. Mr. Ahmed Abbas has since then been forced to remain in hiding to continue his human rights work.

The Observatory condemns these acts of harassment, which seem to merely aim at sanctioning Messrs. Yousef Abdul Rasool and Ahmed Abbas for their human rights activities

¹ See https://twitter.com/ADEL_FELAIFIL.

and preventing them from carrying out such activities. The Observatory recalls that several human rights defenders remain in arbitrary detention or subjected to judicial harassment and calls for the release of all human rights defenders arbitrarily detained and the end of judicial harassment.

Actions requested:

Please write to the authorities of Bahrain urging them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Messrs. Mohammed Al-Maskati, Nabeel Rajab, Yousef Al-Mahafdha, Yousef Abdul Rasool and Ahmed Abbas, and all human rights defenders in Bahrain;
- ii. Make a public statement to recognise the positive role of human rights defenders and call death threats and slandering campaigns to an halt;
- iii. Order an immediate, effective, thorough and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law;
- iv. Put an end to all acts of harassment - including at the judicial level - against Messrs. Mohammed Al-Maskati, Nabeel Rajab, Yousef Al-Mahafdha, Yousef Abdul Rasool and Ahmed Abbas, as well as all human rights defenders in Bahrain;
- v. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, in particular its Article 1, which provides that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels", Article 11, which states that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to the lawful exercise of his or her occupation or profession", Article 12(1) that provides "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms", as well as Article 12.2, which provides that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually or in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration";
- vi. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Bahrain.

Addresses:

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The Observatory
for the Protection
of Human Rights Defenders

Paris-Geneva, December 7, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

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