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## **Bahrain: Amnesty International urges the unconditional release of four prisoners of conscience.**

On the fifth anniversary of their detention without charge or trial, Amnesty International today urged the Bahraini Government to release four prisoners of conscience.

"These four individuals have been imprisoned for five years without charge or trial for their non-violent political and religious activities and their detention must end," Amnesty International said.

The four detainees, 'Abd al-Wahab Hussain, Sayyid Ibrahim 'Adnan al-'Alawi, al-Shaikh Hassan Sultan and Hassan Msheima', all prominent Shi'a Muslim figures, were arrested on 21 and 22 January 1996. They were among a number of well-known Bahraini Shi'a figures arrested at the same time. Their arrest followed mass protests against the closure, by security forces, of a number of mosques where they and others had been peacefully calling on the government to restore the parliament which was dissolved since 1975.

The four detainees have reportedly been put under pressure to sign statements apologizing for their past political activities and committing themselves not to be involved in any political or social activities in the future before they could be released. However, they have reportedly refused to sign such statements.

Other Bahraini nationals, including al-Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri, who were arrested at the same time and held without charge or trial, have been released over the last 18 months. Amnesty International has welcomed their release and the release of more than 900 political prisoners and detainees in Bahrain after being pardoned by the Amir, Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa, who assumed power in March 1999 following the death of his father.

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