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Bahrain: Amnesty International concerned that new legislation allows impunity for human rights offences

Amnesty International has written to His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa, requesting information about the arrest of 'Adel Jassem Fleifel, former colonel in the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) and any court proceedings against him.

The letter also expressed concern that a new decree effectively grants impunity for any human rights violations committed before February 2001.

Decree No. 56 for 2002 issued by His Majesty on 23 October 2002 states that the courts or tribunals in Bahrain will not consider any case brought by any individual accused of crimes before the amnesty decree 10/2001 (of February 2001). In the letter Amnesty International pointed out that under International Law the Kingdom of Bahrain is obliged to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations, including acts of torture, whether they are civilians or military and regardless of their rank.

"There should be no amnesties, pardons or similar measures for persons who have committed such crimes if such measures would prevent the emergence of truth, final judicial determination of guilt or innocence and reparation for victims and their families."

"Ending impunity for torture and other human rights violations is an essential step towards promoting the rule of law by sending a clear message that such violations will not be tolerated under any circumstances, regardless of when they were committed and by whom," the organisation said.

The full text of the letter is available on request from the Amnesty International Press Office: +44 7814 5554.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

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