



BIRD
BAHRAIN INSTITUTE FOR
RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



POMED
PROJECT
ON MIDDLE EAST
DEMOCRACY



The
Freedom
Initiative



DAWN
D E M O C R A C Y
F O R T H E A R A B
W O R L D N O W



Humar
Rights
First



Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors



FAIR / SQUARE



International Service
for Human Rights



King of Bahrain, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa,
Crown Prince and Prime Minister, HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

11 December 2023

Subject: Deteriorating health of imprisoned opposition leader Hassan Mushaima

Your Majesties,

We, the undersigned, are writing to you urgently regarding Mr. Hassan Mushaima, a 75-year-old Bahraini political activist who is imprisoned for exercising his right to freedom of association and expression. Mr. Mushaima is currently serving a life sentence in Bahrain and his family fears that he is nearing end-stage kidney failure. He requires urgent medical treatment that he is currently not receiving, despite being held at Kanoo Health Center, a medical facility. Additionally, Mr. Mushaima has been denied access to his medical records after he learned that he has severe kidney damage. In light of the serious threat to Mr. Mushaima's health and wellbeing, we respectfully urge you to secure his immediate and unconditional release, and, in the meantime, ensure he receives proper medical care and access to his medical records.

Serious health decline

On 30 November 2023, Mr. Mushaima's doctor, working for the Ministry of Health at Kanoo Health Center, indicated that his kidneys are significantly damaged and that he might soon need dialysis. According to his family, when Mr. Mushaima insisted on knowing the details of the damage, the doctor told him that they could not disclose this information without permission from the Interior Ministry.

His family is highly concerned about his declining health and the lack of information he has been provided about his diagnosis and health crisis.

This concern is heightened by the fact that Mr. Mushaima also has multiple chronic medical conditions, including gout, diabetes, and fluctuating blood pressure. Despite these serious medical conditions, he has faced systematic medical negligence during detention and authorities have prevented him from accessing adequate treatment for years.

Most recently, he was forced to wait for months to be seen by a nephrologist, was denied access to a dentist for tooth pain, and was also denied treatment for hearing loss in his right ear. He has also not been referred to a neurologist to check tremors in his hands. Mr. Mushaima is in remission from lymphoma cancer, but over the last two years, prison authorities have denied him access to the regular cancer screenings and other specialized medical care that he requires.

Alarmingly, on 15 November 2023, Mr. Mushaima's diabetes medications were changed due to the adverse effects on his kidneys, and his new medications are causing him to have unstable blood sugar levels, according to his doctor. In a telephone call on 6 December 2023, Mr. Mushaima told the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy that despite his unstable blood sugar levels, he has not been provided with an insulin pump or another medical device to regulate his insulin levels. Mr. Mushaima and his family are deeply concerned about his worsening health as a result of authorities' denial of needed medical care.

Mr. Mushaima was imprisoned solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and he should never have been behind bars. As Mr. Mushaima's health deteriorates, it is now more imperative that he be released immediately and unconditionally. In the meantime, he should be provided with adequate medical treatment.

Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

Amnesty International

ARTICLE 19

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

CIVICUS

Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)

European Centre for human rights and Democracy (ECDHR)

FairSquare

Freedom House

Human Rights First

Human Rights Watch

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)

REDRESS

The Freedom Initiative

The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights

Background

Hassan Mushaima is a leading Bahraini opposition figure, a founding member of the dissolved political party, Al-Wefaq, and the former leader of Al-Haq Movement for Liberty and Democracy, a political organization, in Bahrain. In 2011, he was [arrested](#) for his role in the pro-democracy uprisings in Bahrain and was sentenced to life imprisonment in a mass trial alongside other leading opposition figures and human rights defenders.

Mr. Mushaima has been a victim of what has been described by [Human Rights Watch](#) as a “highly functional injustice system”, which used physical and psychological torture at the hands of authorities and gross violations of his right to a fair trial. The harrowing torture that Mr. Mushaima was subjected to resulted in severe health complications, requiring numerous surgeries.

Amnesty International [considers](#) Mr. Mushaima to be a “prisoner of conscience”, and calls for his release have been echoed by [UN experts](#) as well as UK and [European Union](#) members of parliament. His case was most recently [highlighted](#) in the UN Secretary-General Report on Reprisals, which was presented at the 54th Human Rights Council Session.

Since July 2021, he has been held at Kanoo Medical Centre, where he has been subjected to prolonged solitary confinement, which amounts to torture under international law, and denied access to sunlight. He has [described](#) being detained in his room as “worse” than solitary confinement as he has been kept in complete isolation, with the exception of family visits.