

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2012

His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa
Prime Minister
Kingdom of Bahrain
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Dear Prime Minister al-Khalifa:


We write to urge your government to release Mr. Abdulhadi al-Khawaja on urgent humanitarian grounds.

Mr. al-Khawaja has been detained for more than a year for his participation in mass protests calling for political reform in Bahrain. On April 9, 2011, masked policemen reportedly arrested Mr. al-Khawaja without a warrant and beat him so severely that he required surgery to fix his broken jaw and other facial injuries. Mr. al-Khawaja was prosecuted along with twenty other individuals by a military tribunal. A life sentence was handed down swiftly following a trial that failed to meet minimum international standards of due process, according to United Nations experts.


In December 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) called for individuals who had been subjected to military trials to be retried in civilian courts. Unfortunately, this recommendation has not yet been implemented. Mr. al-Khawaja's health continues to deteriorate and he is unlikely to survive a new trial. He began a hunger strike more than 70 days ago, on February 8, and his life is now in grave jeopardy. In light of his Danish citizenship, we strongly urge you to accept the requests of the Danish government and allow Mr. al-Khawaja to seek medical treatment in Denmark.

Mr. al-Khawaja's continued imprisonment has placed his life in jeopardy and threatens to further inflame tensions in Bahrain. We recognize that your government has made progress on some of the recommendations of the BICI report, and we encourage additional efforts to advance an inclusive political dialogue that will address issues raised by peaceful protestors and will put Bahrain on a path of long-term stability.

Sincerely,


Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator


Marco A. Rubio
United States Senator