

February 20, 2022

Urgent action must be taken and pressure put on Bahraini authorities to release prominent human rights defender and dual Danish-Bahraini citizen Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja

Dear Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen,

We at Skyline International for Human appeal for your assistance to take all serious steps to free prominent human rights activist and defender, "Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja", who is a dual Bahraini-Danish citizen. Al-Khawaja has been held by Bahraini authorities in the notorious Jaw prison for more than ten years.

The human rights foundation "Skyline" stresses that the arrest of activist "Al-Khawaja" is due to his outstanding activities in defense of human rights in Bahrain. "Al-Khawaja" contributed to the establishment of the Gulf Center for Human Rights and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and worked as the protection coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa region at Front Line Defenders from 2008 to early 2011. He was also awarded the prestigious "Martin Ennals Award", which was given to lawyers and human rights defenders in 2021.

At this point, it should be noted that "Al-Khawaja" was arrested on April 9, 2011, after being accused of belonging to a group called "Bahrain 13," which included human rights and political activists who were arrested for their role in the democracy movement in Bahrain in 2011 until they were sentenced to life imprisonment. Life imprisonment on charges that they attempted to overthrow the government, which the foundation says was not proven in those trials.

The information obtained by Skyline shows that the activist "Al-Khawaja" was tortured and deprived of medical care and reading books. He was also denied contact with his family, promoting him to go on launch several hunger strikes, most recently on November 16, 2021.

This was also confirmed by the activist's daughter, "Zeinat Al-Khawaja," who said, "This strike is not the first for my father. Previously, he was on hunger strike for 110 days and was force-fed. After his last hunger strike, we were told that his body is very weak and that further hunger strikes would be life-threatening".

Skyline expresses its deep concern about the detention of "Al-Khawaja" and hundreds of prisoners in "Jaw Prison". They suffer from inadequate care and medical treatment that could have disastrous unexpected consequences. It also notes that instead of responding

to international calls to reduce prison overcrowding to reduce the risk of spreading corona among prisoners, Bahraini authorities are detaining more and more prisoners, putting them at risk of infection due to deteriorating prison conditions.

Accordingly, Skyline International Foundation for Human Rights stresses that the normalization of relations between Denmark and Bahrain is unacceptable in light of the ongoing attacks on individuals, particularly the Danish citizen "Al-Khawaja." It calls on the Danish government to put pressure on Bahrain to release its citizen. It also points out that the efforts made so far are not sufficient to protect the activist in the face of the danger that threatens his life on a daily basis

In conclusion, we at Skyline International call upon you, in your capacity as Prime Minister, to take all appropriate and necessary steps to secure the release of Danish citizen "Abdul Hadi Al-Khawaja" and to work towards reuniting him with his family and freeing him from the slow death he is suffering in Bahraini prisons.

Sincerely,

Mohammed Imad

Director of Legal Affairs and Policy

