

His Excellency,
The Minister of Foreign Affairs
Denmark

Dear Sir,

Subject: My case as a Bahraini-Dane detained in Bahrain:

Firstly, allow me to thank you and other Danish officials, specially at the Danish embassy, for your concern in my case since I was arrested in Bahrain on April 8, 2011. My gratitude is extended to every Danish citizen who heard about my case and sympathized with me, including members of the parliament, media and human rights defenders.

Secondly, I would like to stress the positive influence on me of the 12 years that I had spent in Denmark, along with my beloved wife and brave four daughters, during the period from March 1989, until June 2001 when we returned to Bahrain following a general Amnesty. At the beginning of that period I received my first professional training on human rights by the Danish Centre for Human Rights which took place at the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen. This training and other ~~other~~ forms of indirect support had important impact on my voluntary work as the director of the Bahrain Human Rights Organization (BHRO), based in Copenhagen, which played an important role in the positive developments that took place in Bahrain a decade ago. More important, living in Denmark and experiencing first hand its social and political system inspired my work for democracy and human rights

in Bahrain and the MENA region during the last 10 years, as an activist, researcher and trainer; in Bahrain as the director of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), from 2002 until 2008, and at the regional level, as the MENA regional field coordinator for Front Line, the international foundation for the protection of human rights defenders, based in Dublin, Ireland, (Aug. 2008 until Feb. 2011).

Thirdly, I have no regrets that I had to pay a price for my work to promote human rights. It is a serious business to address issues such as; corruption, inequality and discrimination in order to promote the interests of members of the ruling family, and documenting arbitrary detention and torture by the brutal National Security Apparatus. So, as much as it was unfair, it was no real surprise when I was; detained in 2004, ~~severely~~ severely beaten during peaceful protests in 2005 and 2006, subjected to; unfair trials, travel ban and continuous defamation campaigns in official and semi-official media, and eventually, as a part of the crackdown on the wide popular protests since February 14, 2011, I had been severely beaten, arbitrarily detained, held in solitary confinement and subjected to torture for more than two months, brought before a military court on charges, faked by the National Security Apparatus, such as "instigating hatred against the regime"! and "planning to overthrow it"! and eventually being sentenced to life imprisonment, a sentence which I have been serving to date.

Fourthly, it was a great comfort to hear about the mounting support for my case from the people and activists in Bahrain and from colleagues and friends on the regional and ~~the~~ international levels in addition to statements and campaigns calling for the release of myself and other activists, by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and International organizations including Human Rights Watch, Front Line, Amnesty International and Human Right First. It has also been of great comfort to get visits by Danish diplomats during court sessions and at Jaw Prison, specially by the kind Assistant to the Ambassador in ~~the~~ Saudi-Arabia, who kept me and my family informed about the concern and efforts made by Danish officials regarding my case.

Fifthly, as a recommendation from a Danish citizen, I would appreciate if my case is legally researched to examine the numerous violations I have been subjected to and the legal basis for keeping me in prison. Based on such research the Danish authorities may take more actions regarding my case. Taking in consideration the findings of the "Independent Commission for Inquiry" (ICI), formed by the King, which documented my case and used it, along with some other cases, as a base for its final observations and recommendations related to the issues; arrests, arbitrary detention, torture and unfair trial. A summary of my case was published in the final report as Case No.8 on page 426. Find also the relative general observations numbers; (1693), ~~1694~~ to (1706).

Sixthly, as a human rights defender, regardless of being a Danish citizen, I am entitled for protection by EU member states in accordance with the EU-Guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders around the world. Hence, I would suggest that the Danish authorities kindly put more efforts, in coordination with other EU-state members, to take whatever possible actions at the regional level as embassies, in Brussels institutions and at the UN in Geneva, to address my case and the cases of other detained activists, calling for the release, reparation and protection for Human rights defenders in Bahrain. Detained activists include my brother, Salah AL-Khawaja, and a Bahraini-Swedish activist, Mohammed Habib AL-Muqdad.

Finally, I thank you again and my warm greetings to all Danish citizens. I hope that the good efforts, including yours, would soon secure my release so I join my family and friends and resume my work, which this time will be as the director of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) that has recently started its work, based in Beirut.

I wish you all the best.

Yours Sincerely,

~~A Kawg~~ Abdulhadi Abdulla Alkhawaja

Bahrain - Feb. 8, 2012.

Notes:

1. Would you please submit a copy to my family.
2. I consider this as an "open" letter, so you may feel free to use it as you find convenient.