



MENA Rights Group



THE OBSERVATORY for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders



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

3 April 2024

Your Majesties,

We, the undersigned, call your immediate attention to the deteriorating health of award-winning academic, blogger, and human rights defender Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace, who marks 1,000 days on a liquids-only hunger strike on April 3, 2024. We urge you to take action to immediately release Al-Singace, who is wrongfully detained, and ensure that he receives the healthcare he urgently needs.

Al-Singace began his hunger strike on July 8, 2021, in response to prison authorities' confiscation of his manuscript on Bahraini dialects of Arabic that he spent four years researching and writing. During his hunger strike, he has been sustaining himself only on multivitamin liquid supplements, tea with milk and sugar, water, and salts.

Al-Singace, who has a disability, has been wrongfully detained since his arrest in 2011 solely for exercising his human rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. He has reportedly been subject to torture during his time in detention.¹

Since July 2021, according to [UN experts](#), "Mr Al-Singace has been held in a state of isolation likely amounting to solitary confinement" within his room at Kanoo Medical Centre, where he has said that he has been prohibited from going outside, having exposure to direct sunlight, and receiving the adequate physiotherapy required for his disability. According to his family, he has also been deprived of necessary examinations and medical information, including results from MRI scans of his shoulder and head from October 2021. He has been denied treatment for several medical issues, including inflamed joints, impaired vision, enlarged prostate, and tremors.

Authorities continue to deny him medical items that doctors requested, including slippers to prevent slipping in the bathroom and a hot water bottle to relieve pain in his joints. Authorities have also limited his access to information by banning English and Arabic newspapers and restricting accessible TV channels. On January 21, 2024, Al-Singace's family told the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy that they were subjected to

¹ The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) adopted an [opinion](#) on Dr. Al-Singace's case during its ninety-sixth session on 27 March - 5 April 2023. The WGAD "considers that the source has presented a credible prima facie case that Mr. Al-Singace suffered torture and ill-treatment", and that his arrest was unlawful, and finds that he was "subjected to enforced disappearance".

harsh measures during visitations, which Al-Singace believes constituted a deliberate attempt to pressure him into declining visitations altogether.

On April 17, 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Gerard Quinn [said](#) that “as a human rights defender with a disability in detention, Al-Singace faces additional risks. He should be given frequent medical check-ups, afforded reasonable accommodation for his disability, with assistive technologies and other specialized care and considerations. But the Bahraini authorities have not always allowed him this.”

We echo the “concern at the continuation of the violations perpetrated against Al-Singace” [raised](#) by a group of three UN special rapporteurs in September 2023, who also noted their previous communications regarding Al-Singace’s case, sent on [December 30, 2021](#) and [November 15, 2021](#).

We follow up on our July 11, 2023 [call](#) for your intervention and urge you to release Al-Singace immediately and unconditionally. In the meantime, we urge you to ensure that he is held in conditions that meet international standards, receives his medication without delay, has access to adequate healthcare in compliance with medical ethics, and that his arbitrarily confiscated research is immediately transferred to his family members.

Sincerely,

1. Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)
2. ALQST for Human Rights
3. Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHBR)
4. ARTICLE 19
5. Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR)
6. BRISMES (British Society Middle East Studies) Campaigns
7. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
8. Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
9. Democracy for Arab World Now (DAWN)
10. English PEN
11. Fair Square
12. Femena
13. FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
14. Freedom House
15. Front Line Defenders
16. Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
17. Human Rights First
18. Human Rights Watch (HRW)
19. Index on Censorship
20. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
21. MENA Rights Group
22. Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)
23. PEN America
24. PEN International
25. Rafto Foundation for Human Rights
26. Redress
27. Scholars at Risk
28. World organisation against torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders