



**Middle  
East  
Studies  
Association**  
of North America, Inc.

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WASHINGTON DC

20 September 2011

Your Excellency Dr. Majid bin Ali Al-Naimi  
Minister of Education  
President, Board of Trustees of the University of Bahrain  
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Dear Dr. Naimi,

On behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA), we are disheartened that we must write yet again to protest the ongoing abuses against faculty, staff, and students at Bahraini educational institutions, as well as Bahraini students studying abroad.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa - the preeminent organization in the field. The Association publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has nearly 3000 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

As a committee of MESA charged with monitoring infringements on academic freedom, on two earlier occasions we have expressed serious concern over the ongoing assaults, arrests, and dismissals of individuals connected to academic institutions in Bahrain. In particular, we have highlighted the arrest and mistreatment of Professor Masoud Jahromi, the suspension of over 600 students, the dismissal of dozens of faculty members, and the revocation of scholarships of a number of Bahraini students living abroad. Most recently, we have learned that 78 individuals from the Ministry of Education and 19 faculty members at the University of Bahrain have been dismissed for reasons unrelated to their professional responsibilities. We have also learned that although King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has authorized the return of 389 suspended students to the University of Bahrain, these students have not been allowed to resume their studies, and are uncertain about the exact date of their official reinstatement. Additionally, over 38 students are still awaiting trial.

Such actions constitute colossal infringements against academic freedom in deed and spirit. Not only do they contravene international human rights laws and standards, including Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they also betray Article 7 of the Bahraini Constitution which states, "The State guarantees the inviolability of the places of learning." In your 10th of September, 2011 speech on occasion of the beginning of the new school year, Your Excellency, you reaffirmed, "...education is the master key to fight the battle of life, and has been a trend since the beginning of the modern renaissance in Bahrain in the thought of our wise leadership and citizens, positioning our country among the vanguards of countries

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who give education much attention.” These continued offenses are an affront to the very principles you profess, and severely undermine Bahrain’s international standing.

We call on the government of Bahrain to reconsider these policies. We ask that you immediately reinstate all faculty, students, and staff who have been dismissed from academic institutions in Bahrain, and that the students be allowed to resume their studies without delay. We also ask that Professor Jahromi’s pending trial be addressed in accordance with international legal standards, and that these continued abuses be halted immediately.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suad Joseph".

Suad Joseph  
MESA President  
Professor of Anthropology and Women’s Studies  
University of California Davis

cc:

Dr. Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, President of the University of Bahrain  
Dr. Abdullah Yousif Al-Hawaj, President of Ahlia University  
Her Excellency Houda Ezra Ebrahim Nonoo, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United States  
His Excellency Sheikh Khalifa Bin Ali Al-Khalifah, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Kingdom  
Dr. Yousif Al-Bastaki, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, Finance and Information Technology of the University of Bahrain  
Prof. M. Cherif Bassiouni, Distinguished Research Professor of Law, De Paul University School of Law