



**Middle  
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21 September 2021

Sheikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
P.O. Box 555  
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama, Bahrain  
Fax: +973 1766 4587

Your Majesty,

We write to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our deep concern at reports of a further deterioration in the health of Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, a Bahraini citizen your government has imprisoned for a decade for his participation in peaceful political protest in 2011. We have written five letters to you since 2013, most recently in [September 2019](#), about the conditions of Dr. Al-Singace's detention and his lack of access to medical care, among other issues. As such, we are gravely alarmed to hear that Dr. Al-Singace commenced a new hunger strike in July to protest the degrading conditions of his imprisonment as well as the imposition of additional restrictions under the guise of the Coronavirus pandemic.

MESA was founded in 1966 to support 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 2800 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.

Dr. Al-Singace was arrested on 17 March 2011 after he participated in peaceful protests in support of political reform in Bahrain. Subsequently, he was tried before a military court and sentenced to life imprisonment on a charge of attempting to overthrow the government. Prior to his detention, Dr. Al-Singace was a Professor of Engineering at the University of Bahrain, a board member of the Bahrain Academic Society, and a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineering. During his sixteen-year tenure, he published regularly in academic journals. In our letters to you ([21 November 2013](#), [21 January 2014](#), [1 May 2015](#), [1 March 2017](#), and most recently [26 September 2019](#)), we have reiterated to you our belief that Dr. Al-Singace is a prisoner of conscience targeted because his views do not accord with your government's position on the right to peaceful protest.

Our letters to you have drawn attention repeatedly to the deterioration of Dr. Al-Singace's health and his mistreatment by prison authorities. Our 2013 letter notified you of reports that Dr. Al-Singace had been forced to stand for long periods of time without use of his cane or wheelchair. Our 2015 letter informed you that Dr. Al-Singace had gone on hunger strike in protest at the conditions of his incarceration. Our 2017 letter noted that Dr. Al-Singace's eardrums had ruptured, reportedly due to beatings he suffered in prison. Our 2019 letter alerted you to a report by the Gulf Centre for Human Rights that the authorities in Jaw Prison had deprived Dr. Al-Singace of medical treatment for his conditions, which included chest pain, numbness in his fingers, spinal problems caused by his maltreatment, and sickle cell disease worsened by the

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type and quality of food provided to him in prison. Now, we write to you for the sixth time to inform you of reports that Dr. Al-Singace has again gone on hunger strike in protest at the deteriorating conditions of his unjust incarceration.

Dr. Al-Singace went on hunger strike on 8 July and was reportedly transferred from Jaw Prison to a Ministry of Interior medical facility on 18 July to be given intravenous fluids. According to members of his family, Dr. Al-Singace acted in protest at the repeated denial by prison officers of his requests for medical supplies, including rubber stoppers for his crutches without which he has fallen repeatedly. Dr. Al-Singace also acted in protest at Covid-19 restrictions that limited the number of people he could contact by telephone to five, and to the confiscation in April by prison officers of notebooks containing the manuscript of a book on Arabic dialects that Dr. Al-Singace spent four years working on; contacts of Dr. Al-Singace told the Gulf Centre for Human Rights that the confiscation of his notebooks left him distraught.

Your Majesty, on 30 July 2021, sixteen rights groups issued a [statement](#) that called on your government to immediately release Dr. Al-Singace. Signatories included Amnesty International, PEN International, and Scholars at Risk as well as the Gulf Centre for Human Rights and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy. We are dismayed that your government appears to have taken no subsequent action to release Dr. Al-Singace or address any of the concerns related to the conditions of his imprisonment or the confiscation of his manuscript. We are also concerned that the latest reports about Dr. Al-Singace's condition are entirely consistent with the reports of his mistreatment that prompted our five earlier letters to you.

We reiterate our call on your government to provide Dr. Al-Singace the medical care he requires and ensure that he is no longer subjected to degrading, humiliating, and inhumane treatment. In addition, we urge you to release all those who have been jailed merely because they voiced a dissenting opinion and ensure that Bahrain upholds international standards of freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

Sincerely,



Dina Rizk Khoury  
MESA President  
Professor, George Washington University



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurie Brand'.

Laurie Brand

Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom

Professor Emerita, University of Southern California

cc:

His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa

His Excellency Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa

His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani

His Excellency Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Khalifa