



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

## TO EI MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Brussels, 9 November 2012

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## URGENT ACTION APPEAL – BAHRAIN

### **Free Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi Abu Dheeb**

Dear colleagues,

### President

Susan Hopgood

### General Secretary

Fred van Leeuwen

Education International (EI) calls on its member organisations to urge the Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release and drop all charges against Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi Abu Dheeb, Vice President and President of the Bahrain Teacher Association (BTA). EI also invites you to inform your national Government and the Bahraini diplomatic representations in your country.

Mrs Jalila al-Salman, acting Chair of the BTA (in lieu of Mahdi Abu Dheeb, detained since April 2011), was transferred to the Women Prison of Isa Town on 7 November after being summoned without explanation to the Investigation Department in Manama. Her lawyer and family were not allowed to accompany or contact her. Neither could she go home before being transferred to the prison.

Jalila and Mahdi were condemned in September 2011 by a military court after being forced to sign "confessions" while in detention. Mahdi and Jalila's only "crime" was to have the temerity to promote respect for the values of solidarity, equality and democracy by supporting calls for reform in Bahrain. On 21 October the Manama Appeal Court upheld the guilty verdict against Mahdi and Jalila, but reduced their prison sentences to five years and six months respectively. The lawyers of the BTA leaders filed an objection to the Supreme Court regarding this verdict.

We need you to increase pressure on the Bahraini Government to respect human and trade union rights.

### WHAT EI DOES

EI has been supporting the Bahraini teachers and the BTA since the beginning of the governmental repression in March 2011. EI condemned the crackdown on the teachers and their representative union on several occasions and launched numerous urgent action appeals. EI presented a complaint to the ILO and a submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review process of Bahrain. EI General Secretary, Fred van Leeuwen, visited the Bahrain teacher leaders and activists in November 2011 and took part in a joint trade union mission to Bahrain in April 2012. The international pressure exerted so far by EI and its affiliates has resulted in the presence of international human rights organisations and Western diplomatic representations in Bahrain in almost all judicial hearings of BTA leaders.

The recent verdict of the Manama Appeal Court and the arrest of Jalila on 7 November prompted EI to strengthen its campaign. EI officially protested to the authorities against the recent developments and a new online campaign was launched on the LabourStart website. On the International Labour Organisation (ILO) front, EI and ITUC just submitted a supplement to the ILO complaint 2882 to be received by the Committee on Freedom of Association meeting this month in Geneva. EI also requested the ILO Director General, Mr Guy Ryder, to intervene directly with the Bahrain authorities to respect the trade union and human rights of the BTA and to comply with their obligations as ILO Member State.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### 1. Send appeals (using the attached model letter), in English, Arabic or your own language, urging the Bahraini authorities to:

- Release immediately and unconditionally Mahdi Abu Dheeb and Jalila al-Salman as their judicial case is unsubstantiated;
- Set up a full, impartial and independent investigation into their reported ill-treatments and bring those responsible to justice;
- Relegalise the BTA as a registered teacher union;
- Respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of teachers, students and union activists in accordance with international standards;
- Implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry
- Set the conditions for a respectful and all-inclusive dialogue that addresses the legitimate aspirations of all Bahrainis, to promote social justice to bring about a peaceful transition to democracy.

#### Send appeals to:

- **His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin `Issa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain**  
Fax: +973 17664587
- **Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister**  
Fax: +973 17533033
- **H.E. Khalid Bin Ali Al Khalifa, Minister of Justice**  
Fax: +973 17536343

#### Copies to:

- Diplomatic representatives of Bahrain accredited to your country;
- EI ([headoffice@ei-ie.org](mailto:headoffice@ei-ie.org) or fax +32 2 224 0606).

2. **Contact your Government and the diplomatic representation of Bahrain in your country**, requesting them to engage with the Bahraini authorities.
3. **Encourage your individual union members to send online messages** to the authorities through the [LabourStart website](#).
4. **Give visibility to the situation of teachers in Bahrain** in your magazine, on your website, during meetings and via other appropriate means.
5. **Learn more about the context of teacher unions rights in Bahrain and what EI has done so far by checking information on the [EI website](#).**

EI will endeavour to keep you updated on all developments. EI will also inform the BTA colleagues of all solidarity actions undertaken on their behalf. For additional information or to discuss possible action, contact the [EI Human and Trade Union Rights Coordinator](#).

**EI thanks you for your solidarity in support of our Bahraini colleagues.**

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary