



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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ADHRB Launches *Champions for Justice: Bahrain's Prisoners of Conscience* Campaign

WASHINGTON, DC – November 4, 2013 – More than two years have passed since the Bahrain uprising began, which was met with a brutal crackdown by the Bahrain government, marked by dozens of deaths, hundreds of arbitrary arrests, and thousands of injuries. To this day, numerous Bahrainis remain behind bars based on politically-motivated charges, including more than a dozen [prisoners of conscience](#).

To highlight the cases of these and other prisoners, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) announces the launch of a new campaign: *Champions of Justice: Bahrain's Prisoners of Conscience*. This new campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the injustice of those political detention, as well as the broader problem of ongoing human rights violations—and impunity—that continues to be perpetrated by the Government of Bahrain. Originally [coined](#) by Amnesty International founder Peter Benenson, the term [prisoner of conscience](#) is used to identify a person imprisoned for their race, religion, political views, or for their non-violent expression of a conscientiously held belief. In Bahrain, prisoners of conscience languish behind bars for participating in peaceful protests, expressing their views on social media, and publicly criticizing the government.

“While the Bahrain government [claims](#) there are no political prisoners in prison in Bahrain, the ongoing detention of prisoners of conscience, such as [Mahdi Abu Dheeb](#), [Nabeel Rajab](#), and [Abduljalil al-Singace](#), provides clear evidence to the contrary,” said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. “We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience in Bahrain, who have already paid a high price for exercising their basic human rights.”

The first prisoner to be featured in ADHRB's campaign is [Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace](#), a mechanical engineer, prominent blogger, and human rights activist who has promoted human rights as a member and leader of multiple political societies, including Al-Wefaq and the Haq Movement for Liberty and Democracy. Due to his ceaseless activism, Dr. al-Singace has long been the target of government repression, having been arrested in 2009 and 2010 for making remarks deemed critical of the government. “The Government of Bahrain continues to punish human rights defenders for speaking out because it fears that Bahrainis will come to realize just how severely their human rights are being violated,” said Zahra Abduljalil, Dr. al-Singace's daughter. “The government's worst nightmare is that people might actually demand that their rights be protected.”

Dr. al-Singace was arrested again in 2011 for his participation in the peaceful protest movement. During his initial detention, Dr. al-Singace was confined to a 2m x 3m cell and subjected to [torture and ill-treatment](#), including forced standing, verbal and sexual assault, beatings, and prolonged solitary confinement. He was tried in the National Safety Court in June 2011 and sentenced to life in prison for allegedly plotting to topple the government. The case was retried in a civilian court in April 2012, which upheld Dr. al-Singace's sentence. On January 7, 2013, the case went to the Court of Cassation, where his life sentence was again upheld. Dr. al-Singace [continues to be denied family visits and medical attention](#), despite the [recent deterioration](#) of his health.

“My father's only crime is exercising his right to free speech and expression,” said Zahra. “But we live in a country that doesn't respect such freedoms, so we were not surprised when my father's sentence was upheld.”

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