Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I write to ask that you support human rights in Bahrain by speaking up on behalf of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and all prisoners of conscience currently suffering from torture and mistreatment in the country. Abdulhadi al-Khawaja is a Bahraini-Danish activist who has spent his life peacefully advocating for the human and civil rights of the people of Bahrain, and played a prominent role in the major peaceful protests of 2011.

In February 2011, thousands of Bahrainis took the streets to peacefully call for democracy, freedom, and political reforms as part of a broader movement in the Middle East. The authorities in Bahrain responded with a violent and brutal crackdown that resulted in dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, and thousands of arbitrary arrests. Since then, the government has only continued to crack down on human rights by the recently criminalizing the rights to freedom of assembly, association, and speech, while fostering a culture of impunity for human rights abusers. Arbitrary detention and torture continue unabated, while the government reduces the sentences of convicted human rights offenders.

Among those arbitrarily arrested and tortured was Mr. al-Khawaja, a 52-year-old staunchly non-violent human rights defender and co-founder of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. On April 9, 2011, security forces stormed his daughter’s house, severely beat him, and placed him under arrest. On June 22, 2011, he was sentenced by a military court to life in prison, despite credible evidence that the confession used in his conviction was obtained under the duress of torture.

Since his arrest, Al-Khawaja has been subject to prolonged abuse from security personnel while in detention, ranging from bone-breaking beatings to sexual assault. The Government of Bahrain has refused to investigate these allegations and Mr. al-Khawaja has been denied adequate medical care since his detention in 2011. Between February and May of 2012, Mr. al-Khawaja went on a 110-day hunger strike, which prompted the government to, at one point, tie him to his bed and forcibly insert a feeding tube. During this time, he was denied access to any independent medical examinations or care. Despite the rapid deterioration of his health as a result of the hunger strike, Mr. al-Khawaja remained committed to peaceful protest, [encouraging](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17793857) all Bahrainis “to continue on a path of peaceful resistance…I don’t want anybody to be hurt in my name.” An appeal by the Danish government for Mr. al-Khawaja to be released and afforded medical treatment in Denmark was denied by the Government of Bahrain.

As your constituent, I ask that you utilize the platform I helped you achieve by raising al-Khawaja’s case and his status as one of many political prisoners arbitrarily detained and tortured by the Government of Bahrain. Although the government made some progress in implementing some reforms since the initial uprising in 2011, many independent observers now believe the human rights situation in Bahrain has deteriorated further. The United States government has an obligation to ensure that its allies in the region uphold basic human rights such as the rights to peaceful association, assembly and speech.

For that reason, I ask that you, in your capacity as a public figure, bring attention to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja’s situation, and send a strong signal that the United States does not condone the arbitrary detention and torture of peaceful demonstrators and human rights activists.

Sincerely,

Name

Address