



ADHRB welcomes release of Ghada Jamsheer but calls for remaining sentence to be commuted

On 12 December 2016, Bahraini human rights defender Ghada Jamsheer was [released](#) from prison following four months in detention. Bahraini officials arrested Jamsheer and imprisoned her for charges related to tweets she made highlighting corruption in a Bahraini-run government hospital. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights (ADHRB) welcomes the release of Ghada Jamsheer but notes with concern that remaining charges against her are not dropped. Jamsheer is required to work off the remainder of her sentence at a government position.

The Government of Bahrain [arrested](#) Jamsheer on 19 August 2016 when she arrived at the Manama airport following a trip to London for medical treatment. Security forces transferred Jamsheer to [Isa Town Women's Prison](#) and held her there for approximately four months. During that time, Jamsheer suffered from medical problems in the prison's poor facilities, where [reports](#) claim poor temperatures and unsanitary living conditions. In addition to the charges related to her tweets, Bahraini officials fined her BHD 10,000 (approx. US\$ 26,500).

"We're glad that Ghada was finally released after four months in prison, but four months was already too long," said ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla. "These politically motivated charges in relation to her free expression which the government continues to maintain against Ghada must be dropped immediately."

Jamsheer's is one of several recent cases where the Government of Bahrain has arrested and charged individuals for tweeting. Bahraini authorities arrested and charged journalist Faisal Hayyat for tweets, and he is currently [serving](#) a three-month sentence. In June 2016, Bahraini security forces arrested human rights defender and President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) Nabeel Rajab for [tweets](#) he posted criticizing the Saudi-led war in Yemen and the torture epidemic he documented in Jau Prison. Nabeel is currently in pre-trial detention and may face up to 15 years in prison for his tweets. Judges have postponed his case five times since July 2016.

The charges for which the Government of Bahrain sentenced Ghada Jamsheer violate her internationally-sanctioned rights to freedom of expression. The Bahraini government's commitments under the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#) guarantee in Article 19 that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression." Further, it states "this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds through any other media of [her] choice." Article 19 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#) says, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." ADHRB welcomes the release of Ghada Jamsheer, but we call on the Government of Bahrain to drop the remaining charges against her. Additionally, we call on Bahraini officials to release all other prisoners of conscience imprisoned for exercising their rights to freedom of expression.