



US dual citizen serving two-year prison sentence in Bahrain

***Update: A Bahraini court of appeals upheld the two-year sentence against Abdulla Jaffar on 23 January 2017, exhausting his appeals process.*

13 January 2016 - The Government of Bahrain has taken 19-year-old Virginia-born Bahraini-American citizen Abdulla Jaffar into custody. This arrest is meant to begin an arbitrary prison sentence passed against Jaffar almost two years ago when a Bahraini court convicted him on fabricated charges based on a false confession coerced through torture. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) condemns the arrest and arbitrary detention of Abdulla Jaffar and calls on Bahraini authorities to immediately release him and overturn his conviction.

On 7 December 2016 in the early hours of the morning, members of the Bahraini security forces entered Jaffar's family home and arrested him. Police forces took Jaffar to Sitra Police Station for a short period of time. Jaffar is now being held at Dry Dock Detention Center while appealing his two-year prison sentence.

Bahraini authorities first [arrested](#) Jaffar almost three years ago on 10 March 2014, and accused him of attending an illegal protest, possessing Molotov cocktails, and attacking policemen. Authorities severely beat Jaffar. Security forces forced Jaffar to give a false confession in order to stop the abuse. Jaffar was [released on bail](#) on 23 June 2014 after his trial was [postponed](#) due to lack of witnesses and evidence.

Then, on 17 February 2015, a Bahraini court [sentenced](#) Jaffar to two years in prison. Since the announcement of Jaffar's sentence, he was subject to arrest at any time. Because of his fear and uncertainty about his future, Jaffar was unable to attend school to further his education.

Since Jaffar's recent arrest, he has had one final appeal hearing on 29 December 2016. Courts postponed this trial date, and Jaffar's next hearing is on 23 January 2017. During his time in detention, Jaffar has had access to phone calls to speak with his family. Since the [Jau Prison incident on 1 January 2017](#), detainees in Dry Dock Detention Center report that guards have instituted new measures in the facility. These new measures include unexpected cell inspections during the night, verbal harassment of prisoners carried out by prison guards, and confinement to prison cells for a period of days at a time.

"The Bahraini government's practice of arresting and detaining children and young adults for their alleged participation in protests is an all-too-common issue," said ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla. "As a strong ally of the Gulf kingdom, the United States must strongly and clearly condemn the arrest of Abdulla and work to ensure that Bahraini authorities release him."

Jaffar is a native US citizen, born in Virginia. He is not the first US-Bahrain dual citizen that the Government of Bahrain has arrested and detained. Forces arrested Connecticut-born [Tagi al-Maidan](#) in 2012 and subjected him to torture and ill-treatment during his more than three-year detention. The United States worked diligently to toward al-Maidan's release, which they achieved in April 2016.

The sentence against Abdulla Jaffar and his recent detention violate international standards of human rights. Bahraini authorities arrested Jaffar when he was a minor, subjected him to torture to extract a coerced confession, and did not uphold fair trial standards. ADHRB condemns the two-year arbitrary sentence against

Abdulla Jaffar and his recent arrest. We call on the Government of Bahrain to immediately release Jaffar and vacate the sentence against him. Additionally, ADHRB urges the United States to work with Bahraini authorities to secure Jaffar's release from prison.