



10 September 2018

Hon. Mike Pompeo
United States Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We, the undersigned human rights and faith organizations, write to call your attention to the abuse [of political prisoner Hassan Mushaima](#), age 70, at the hands of the Bahraini government. Mushaima is one of Bahrain's most prominent political activists and religious thinkers who is serving a life sentence in Bahrain's infamous Jau Prison. As his sentence has progressed, his condition has increasingly deteriorated without access to proper medical care. Since his son has taken up a [hunger strike](#) outside of the Bahraini embassy in the United Kingdom, Bahraini authorities have continued to ignore and largely neglect the medical needs of Mushaima. As Mushaima's health continues to deteriorate, it is imperative that the United States call on the Government of Bahrain to allow Mushaima full and unrestricted access to medical care, as well as proper treatment while in prison in line with international standards.

Prior to his arrest, Hassan Mushaima [served](#) as Secretary-General of the al-Haq movement for Liberty and Democracy. He is the co-founder and former Vice President of al-Wefaq National Islamic Society – Bahrain's largest political opposition group – that the government forcibly dissolved in 2016. He was arrested following the crackdown on Bahrain's 2011 peaceful protest movement on charges of "attempting to overthrow the monarchy," and subsequently sentence to life in prison. With his sentence, he has joined ranks of a dozen other [high profile](#) human rights defenders, political activists, and religious clerics who have all been subjected to poor treatment and abuse in Jau Prison, and all of whom are from the kingdom's majority Shia Muslim community.

In Jau, Mushaima has been denied access to necessary healthcare for a myriad of chronic illnesses. He has a [history of cancer](#), having been diagnosed with and treated for stage four follicular lymphoma in 2010. Despite his remission, the chances that it could return calls for [necessary regular cancer screenings](#). While in Jau, the Bahraini authorities have refused to provide these critical screenings, putting Mushaima's life in peril – his last screening was in September 2016, and there have been no screenings or update on his cancer since. He also suffers from high blood pressure, gout, and diabetes. Despite clear need for consistent medical treatment, Mushaima has been prohibited to see any physician since March 2017. Nor have his medications been regularly administered throughout his sentence, [lest he be in shackles to obtain his required medications](#). On 29 July 2018, he reported that his diabetes medication was entirely depleted, leaving him to resort to self-administered shots of insulin to try and regulate his blood sugar levels.

The abuse Mushaima has faced under Jau Prison officials, unfortunately, extends even further than the deprivation of critical medical care. In addition to denial of treatment, in October of 2017, prison authorities subjected Mushaima to an [unnecessary search and inspection](#), despite no history of violence.



This strip search also coincided with the arbitrary confiscation of his personal items, including religious texts, notes, and phone credit cards. Mushaima and the other high profile prisoners have faced intense [religious discrimination](#) by Bahraini authorities, which has included the shaving of heads and beards of Shia clerics and the disruption of prayer rituals. Jau Prison authorities have made sure to attack every aspect of Mushaima's identity as he serves his sentence, from his chronic illnesses to his faith.

In addition to grave concerns regarding Hassan Mushaima's health in Jau, we also raise the case of his son, Ali Mushaima, who began a hunger strike outside of the Bahraini embassy in London on August 1st, 2018 to [protest](#) his father's abuse and denial of unrestricted medical care. Ali says his hunger strike will continue until the Bahraini authorities provide his father with full, unrestricted medical care unencumbered by shackles, family visitation, and the return his religious texts. However, even Ali's demands have been met with harassment by the Bahraini government. On 12 August, a sleeping Mushaima was [doused](#) with an unknown foamy liquid thrown from the balcony of the Bahraini embassy in London, which also caused him to fear that he been assaulted with acid. When British law enforcement arrived and attempted to contact Embassy officials, no Bahraini representatives responded. The perpetrator and the liquid have not yet been identified, but Ali [fears](#) it was an attempt by Bahraini officials to end his hunger strike or silence him. After being hospitalized briefly at the one-month anniversary of his strike, Ali continues to protest on behalf of his father's rights to healthcare, humane treatment, family visits and access to books and personal effects.

As the health of both father and son become more dire, we call on the United States Department of State to publicly call on the Government of Bahrain to provide immediate, unrestricted access to medical care and to all necessary medications for Hassan Mushaima in accordance with Bahrain's obligation to provide fair treatment of prisoners, as well as the full respect of his religious freedom by returning all personal items and religious texts. Finally, the United States should call for an end to the arbitrary imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, and an end to the over-incarceration of the Bahraini Shia, in line with its espoused commitment to religious freedom and human rights.

Sincerely,

Organizations

AdvanceUSA

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

Center for Pluralism

Church of Scientology National Affairs Office

International Christian Concern

Mission Africa International

Red Eagle Enterprises



Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain

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Religious Freedom Coalition

South Asia Minorities Alliance Foundation

The Junior Sacerdotal of Caodai Council

The Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church of America

The Voice of Karachi

The Way to Happiness Association of Florida

Individuals

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