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Matt Congdon

Social Research: An International Quarterly, Volume 78, Number 1, Spring 2011, pp. v-xiv (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2011.0040>



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BAHRAIN

After being freed from jail for less than a month, **DR. ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE**, a professor of engineering at the University of Bahrain who was featured in our Fall 2010 issue, was re-imprisoned on March 17, 2011, without charge. Al-Singace was one of a number of prisoners released on February 23, 2011, by order of the king of Bahrain. Following a trip to the United Kingdom, where he had given a speech on the human rights situation in his country, al-Singace was arrested and had been detained since August 13, 2010, including a 15-day period when he was held at an undisclosed location without access to legal counsel or family. He is the spokesperson and director of the Human Rights Bureau of the Haq Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy, an opposition political organization with support from the Shiite community in Bahrain. During his past imprisonment, al-Singace, who suffers from poliomyelitis that has left him partially paralyzed, was not given access to sufficient medical treatment.

Appeals to:

His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman
Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.O. Box 547
Government Road
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax to: +973 1-753-6343
Salutation: Your Majesty

Information current, to the best of our knowledge, as of March 21, 2011.

BELARUS

Following protests over the disputed Belarusian presidential election on December 19, 2010, hundreds of protestors were arrested, including 11 students and a lecturer from the European Humanities University (EHU). Among them was **ALIAKSANDER ATROSHCHANKAU**, an international law student at EHU, whose trial began on March 1, 2011, after he had been held in prison for over two months. He is accused of mass riot and armed resistance against the police and could face a sentence of 5 to 15 years. Viasna, a nongovernmental human rights organization based in Belarus, reports that first sittings of his trial revealed no evidence that Atroshchankau is guilty of participating in mass riot or using armed resistance against the police. Also held for over two months was **ANASTASSIA PALAZHANKA**, a student of political science and European studies at EHU, who has been banned from leaving the country and, if prosecuted, faces up to 15 years in prison. **ALEKSANDER FEDUTA**, a lecturer at EHU and a political activist, has also been charged with mass riot and faces a 5- to 15-year sentence. Feduta was a member of Vladimir Nekiajev's presidential election team.

Appeals to:

President of the Republic of Belarus
Alyaksandr G. Lukashenka
Karl Marx Str. 38
220016 g. Minsk
Belarus

Fax: +375 (172) 26 06 10 or
+375 (172) 22 38 72
Tel: +375 (172) 22 38 72
Email: pres@president.gov.by
Salutation: Dear President

CHINA

On October 8, 2010, the Nobel Committee awarded Chinese writer and human rights activist **LIU XIAOBO** the Nobel Peace Prize “for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.” He has been held in an undisclosed location in Beijing since his arrest in December 2008 for “inciting subversion of state power.” Since the prize was awarded, Chinese authorities have clamped down on dissident groups and individuals, placing several people, including the **HU SHIN-**

GEN (who was featured in our Winter 2007 issue) and Liu's wife, LIU XIA, under house arrest without charge.

TUSUNJAN HEZIM, a former history teacher, writer, and manager of a website featuring scholarly articles on Uighur history and culture, was sentenced to seven years in jail following a secret trial in March 2011. Chinese officials have not publicly stated the reasons for Hezim's detention, and his location remains unknown. He was arrested and detained following the July 2009 protests in Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Hezim's website, Orkhun, which was shut down shortly after the protests, was an important Uighur-language resource for Uighur students and intellectuals. Hezim's detention and sentencing are part of a larger crackdown by the Chinese government on Uighur intellectuals and activists following the July 2009 unrest.

Scholars featured in previous issues who remain in prison in China include **GUO QUAN**, a former literature professor at Nanjing Normal University, sentenced to 10 years in prison and three years of deprivation of political rights in October 2009 on charges of "inciting subversion of state power"; **LÜ GENGSONG**, a Chinese writer, activist, and former university teacher, arrested in the summer of 2007 on charges of "incitement to subvert state power" and "illegally possessing state secrets"; **ZHENG YICHUN**, professor of English at Liaoning University, arrested in the winter of 2004 and charged with "suspicion of inciting subversion of state power"; and **XU ZERONG**, a professor affiliated with the Provincial Academy of Science and Zhongshan University, arrested in 2002 and charged with revealing state secrets for his use of historical materials in researching the Korean War.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of
China
Zhong Nhai
Beijing 100032
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr. Xiao Yang
President, Supreme People's Court No.27
Dongjiaominxiang Dongcheng District
Beijing 100745
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65292345 (c/o Ministry of
Communication)
Salutation: Dear President

IRAN

Additional charges have been placed upon **MAHDIEH GOLROO**, a student activist and member of the Right to Education Council in Tehran, who is currently serving a sentence of two years and four months in Evin Prison. Golroo was expelled from the Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran for her political activities and arrested in December 2009 on charges of “propaganda against the regime,” “congregation and mutiny,” and cooperation with the Mojahedin Khalq Organization, an outlawed political group. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran reports that Golroo now faces the further charge of “disturbing public order” in connection with letters published by the media that she allegedly wrote from Evin Prison for Student Day on December 7, 2010. During her imprisonment, Golroo has reportedly been denied access to proper legal counsel as well as adequate medical attention for an intestinal infection she suffered in prison. She began a hunger strike with another inmate on December 21, 2010 to protest their denial of family visitation rights.

SEYED HOSSEIN JAVDANI a lecturer of history at Payame Noor University in Mashad, was dismissed from his university position following the publication of several critical articles on the Internet, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran reported on March 7, 2011. According to the report, Javdani was not directly informed of his dismissal, but discovered that the University Security Unit had asked his faculty not to assign him courses for the upcoming semester. The ban on teaching appears to be the result of his political activities outside the university, including his former involvement with Tehran University’s Islamic Association of Democracy Seeking Students and the appearance of critical articles published on various websites under his authorship. Javdani claims that he never discussed national politics in his capacity as a lecturer at the university and that his dismissal is the result of external pressures the university faces from the government to silence opposing voices in academia. He is fighting his dismissal, and added that other faculty members may be at similar risk, although his protests are being ignored by the university.

Previously featured scholars from Iran who remain in prison include **EMADEDIN BAGHI**, a well-known Iranian scholar and human rights defender who re-entered prison in February 2011 for a seven-year sentence; **MAJID TAVAKOLI**, **BAHAREH HEDAYAT**, and **MILAD ASADI**, distinguished student activists sentenced to eight-and-a-half, nine-and-a-half, and seven years, respectively, for their involvement in anti-government protests in 2009; **DR. MOSTAFA ALAVI**, an Iranian doctor and researcher sentenced to 15 years in August 2008 for “plotting against the regime”; **DRS. ARASH** and **KAMIAR ALAEI**, two AIDS researchers who were sentenced to three and six years, respectively, in January 2009 for “seeking to overthrow the government”; and **BEHROOZ JAVID-TEHRANI**, a student activist and prisoners’ rights campaigner who was sentenced to seven years in jail in 2005. All are at risk of torture and need your support.

Appeals to:

His Excellency
Ayatollah Sayed ‘Ali Khamenei
Leader of the Islamic Republic
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street–
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: info@leader.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Head of the Judiciary
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh /
Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave.,
South of Serah-e Jomhouri
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir
(In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah
Shahroudi)
Salutation: Your Excellency

SAUDI ARABIA

Five political activists who sought to create what would have been the first political party in Saudi Arabia were arrested on February 16, 2011. Among those arrested were university professors **SA’UD AL-DUGHATHIR**, **MUHAMMAD BIN NASIR AL-GHAMIDI**, and **ABD AL-KARIM AL-KHADHAR**, all members of the group of nine intellectuals who drafted the party proposal. The arrests came one week after their attempts earlier that month to gain official recognition for their party, the Islamic Nation Party. An absolute monarchy, Saudi Arabia does not allow the formation

of independent political parties. According to Human Rights Watch, it appears that the men were detained solely for their attempt to create a party with goals of greater democracy and attention to the protection of human rights.

Appeals to:

His Royal Highness Prince Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud
Ministry of the Interior
P.O. Box 2933
Airport Road
Riyadh 11134
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 1185

Mr Turki bin Khaled Al-Sudairy
President
Human Rights Commission
P.O. Box 58889
Riyadh 11515
King Fahad Road
Building No.373
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 4612061

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street
Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 0645

SUDAN

Students involved in protests starting on January 30, 2011, in which protesters called for a change in rule, have reported that they were tortured by security officials during their detention. According to a Human Rights Watch report, violent measures were used by the Sudanese authorities to end the peaceful demonstrations, including arbitrary arrests and beatings in which at least one student is believed to have died. While many students were released within several days, others were held for weeks. Since then, a number of students have said that several forms of physical and mental mistreatment took place during their detention, including violent beatings, sleep deprivation, electric shocks, and death threats. One unnamed detainee reports that she was severely beaten and then raped by security officials. **ALI MOHAMMED OSMAN**, a student protestor and member of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (who was arrested while involved in a demonstration demanding the release of the student

prisoners), reports that his detention included threats, severe beatings, and being forced to stand all night. These are only the most recent events in many years of violent repression of the political opposition on the part of the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service. Please support student protestors in Sudan by urging the Sudanese government to condemn this use of violence and torture as well as to investigate the crimes committed during this series of detentions.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Lt. Omar Hassan Ahmed
Al-Bashir
President of the Republic of Sudan
President's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: President al Bashir,
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: +249 183 783 223/ +249 183 771 651/
+249 183 787 676

His Excellency Ambassador Daffa-Alla
Elhag Ali Osman
Permanent Representative to the UN
Permanent Mission of the Republic of
Sudan to the United Nations in Geneva
Avenue Blanc 47, 1202
Geneva, Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 731 26 56
Email: mission.sudan@bluewin.ch,
mission.sudan@ties.itu.int

His Excellency Mohamed Boshara Dosa
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302, Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 183 78 07 96/ +249 183 770883

ZIMBABWE

MUNYARADZI GWISAI, a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, was arrested, along with dozens of students, for allegedly plotting an uprising to overthrow the government of President Robert Mugabe. The arrests, which occurred on February 19, 2011, were part of a larger crackdown on dissent and government opposition as the Mugabe government reacts with increased political violence and arrests to the fall of autocratic regimes elsewhere in Africa. Gwisai and the students had reportedly gathered to discuss the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, as well as the protests in Yemen, Bahrain, and Libya. The arrested group is being

represented by Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, who maintain that Gwisai and the students were gathered to engage in academic discussion and were not planning to overthrow the government via unconstitutional means. Gwisai and six students were released on bail on March 17, 2011 after a Zimbabwean High Court judge called the charges “unsubstantiated” and weak, but the lecturer and students nonetheless still face charges of treason and could face the death penalty if convicted.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Simbi Veke Mubako
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe
1608 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: +1 202 332 7100
Fax: +1 -202 483 9326
Email:
Zimbabwe@africandiamondcouncil.org

THE FOLLOWING PREVIOUSLY FEATURED SCHOLARS REMAIN IN PRISON:

BURMA (MYANMAR)

KO AUNG HTUN, a writer and former student activist arrested in Burma in the winter of 1998, sentenced to 17 years’ imprisonment on charges of violating state censorship and unlawful association.

Appeals to:

Senior General Than Shwe,
Chairman State Peace and Development
Council
Ministry of Defense
Naypyitaw Union of Myanmar
(for US Postal Service, “Burma” should
appear in parentheses after “Myanmar”
on envelope only, not in the letter itself)
Salutation: Dear Senior General

Minister Counselor U Myint Lwin
Chargé d’Affaires
Ad Interim Embassy of Myanmar
2300 S Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Salutation: Dear Sir

CAMEROON

JUSTICE M. MBUH, a lecturer at the National Polytechnic Bambui in Bamenda Cameroon, arrested in September 2009 following accusations of “treason.” He remains in prison awaiting trial.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Paul Biya
President of the Republic of Cameroon
Yaoundé, Cameroon
Fax: +237 22 20 33 06
Email: cellcom@prc.cm
Salutation: Your Excellency

RUSSIA

SVYATOSLAV BOBYSHEV and **YEVGENY AFANASYEV**, both professors at Baltic State Technical University in St Petersburg Russia, detained without formal charges or trial since March 2010. The professors are accused of spying and passing state secrets to China.

Appeals to:

Dmitry Medvedev
President of Russia
Ilinka Str, No. 23
103132, Moscow, Russia

VIETNAM

TRAN KHAI THANH THUY, a novelist and essayist, was arrested in October 2009 after she publicly defended six dissidents facing trial. In February 2010 she was sentenced to 42 months in prison.

PHAM MINH HOANG, a mathematics lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City Polytechnic Institute, arrested on August 13, 2010, on charges of participating in a banned pro-democracy opposition group, the Viet Tan. Professor Hoang was taken to an undisclosed location, where he has been since held without access to family or his lawyer.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Nguyễn Minh Triết
President of the Socialist Republic of
Vietnam
c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hanoi
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Salutation: Your Excellency

Nguyễn Tấn Dung
Prime Minister
1 Hoang HoaTham Street
Hanoi
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Salutation: Your Excellency

—Written by Matt Congdon