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Endangered Scholars Worldwide

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Endangered Scholars Worldwide

Social Research was founded by a group of scholars known as the University in Exile, refugees from Nazi Europe who found a home at the New School. In each issue we publish the names and details of scholars, researchers, and students who have been threatened or imprisoned, along with ways to offer them support. We see this effort as consistent not only with our own history as a journal but with the need to call attention to the increasing and often brutal attempts to silence our colleagues around the world.

If you are aware of a scholar or student whose case you believe we should investigate, please contact us at socres@newschool.edu.

SCHOLARS AND RESEARCHERS: NEW AND CONTINUING CASES

BAHRAIN

On September 28, 2011, a military court upheld the life sentence of previously featured scholar **DR. ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE**. Dr. al-Singace, a professor of engineering at the University of Bahrain, was sentenced to life imprisonment on June 22, 2011, on charges of training and financing a terrorist organization. He reported that he was tortured during his pre-trial detention.

Previously featured scholars from Bahrain who remain in prison include **JALILA AL-SALMAN** and **MAHDI 'ISSA MAHDI ABU DHEEB**, both board members of the Bahrain Teachers' Association, arrested on charges of "inciting hatred against the regime" and "calling to overthrow and change the regime by force" following the group's call for a

Information current, to the best of our knowledge, as of December 10, 2011. Additional information and more current information about many of these cases may be available on our website at <http://www.newschool.edu/cps/endangered-scholars/>.

teacher strike in March 2011.

Appeals to:

His His Majesty Sheikh Hamad bin Issa
Al-Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 176 64 587

Dr. Fatima Al-Balushi
Minister of Human Rights and Social
Development, Acting Minister of Health
Ministry of Human Rights and
Development
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al-Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P.O. Box 450
Al-Manama
Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 31 284

CHINA

Scholars featured in previous issues who remain in prison in China include writer and editor **TASHI RABTEN** (pen name Te'urang), sentenced to four years' imprisonment on June 2, 2011, for his critical political writings; **LIU XIAOBO**, a human rights activist and 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, held in an undisclosed location in Beijing since his arrest in December 2008 for "inciting subversion of state power"; **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"; and **ZHENG YICHUN**, professor of English at Liaoning University, arrested in the winter of 2004 and charged with "suspicion of inciting subversion of state power."

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. Wang Shengjun
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

Facebook group in support of Liu Xiaobo:
<<http://www.facebook.com/Free.Liu>>

IRAN

Seven people connected to the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education have been sentenced with prison time at a trial in October 2011 following coordinated attacks on the institute in May 2011. Those sentenced include **KAMRAN MORTEZAIE** and **VAHID MAHMOUDI**, who each were sentenced to five years, and **RAMIN ZIBAIE**, **MAHMOUD BADAIVAM**, **FARHAD SEDGHI**, **RIAZ SOBHANI**, and **NOUSHIN KHADEM**, who each received four years. Their connections to the institute range from serving as administrators and faculty to providing financial assistance. The institute is a community-led organization founded in 1987 as a nonviolent response to the Iranian government's denial of higher education to members of the Baha'i faith, which is regarded by the authorities as an illegal cult.

A group of Kurdish cultural figures in Iran were given prison sentences of varying lengths in November 2011, according to a report from the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. Poet **JAMAL KHANI** received a two-year sentence; educator **FARHAD VAKILINIA** received three years; **NAEEM NAJAFI**, a student, received four years, and Kurdish author and scholar **SAJJAD JAHANFAR** received one year. All were charged with "acting against national security" through supporting Kurdish opposition groups.

Previously featured scholars from Iran who remain in prison include religious scholar **AHMAD GHABEL**, who reentered jail on July 31, 2011 to begin a 20-month sentence on charges of acting against the regime and national security; and **DR. MOSTAFA ALAVI**, an Iranian doctor and researcher sentenced to fifteen years in August 2008 for "plotting against the regime."

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 Jomhuri
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In
the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah
Shahroudi)
Salutation: Your Excellency

RUSSIA

SVYATOSLAV BOBYSHEV and **YEVGENY AFANASYEV**, both professors at Baltic State Technical University in St. Petersburg, Russia, have been 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

SAUDI ARABIA

Previously featured scholars from Saudi Arabia who remain in prison include **DR. YUSUF AL-AHMAD**, an Islamic scholar who teaches at Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud University in Riyadh, arrested after posting a YouTube video critical of long-term detentions of security suspects without due juridical process; **NADHIR AL-MAJID**, a teacher and writer, detained on April 17, 2011, soon after the appearance of an article in which he criticized the Saudi government; and university professors **SA'UD AL-DUGHATHIR**, **MUHAMMAD BIN NASIR AL-GHAMIDI**, and **ABD AL-KARIM AL-KHADHAR**, all members of a group of nine intellectuals who drafted a party proposal seeking to create what would have been the first political party in Saudi Arabia, who were arrested on February 16, 2011.

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

SYRIA

YASSIN ZIADEH, brother of human rights researcher and activist **RADWAN ZIADEH**, has been held incommunicado and without charge since August 30, 2011. According to a report from Scholars at Risk, Yassin Ziadeh is being wrongly held as part of the government's retaliation for his brother's research and human rights work. The family of Radwan Ziadeh, who is a visiting scholar at George Washington University and founder of the Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies, has reportedly suffered ongoing harassment since his departure from Syria in 2007 following death threats.

Appeals to:

President
Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 332 3410
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Walid al-Mu'allim
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 214 6251/2/3
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defense
His Excellency General Dawood Rajiha
Ministry of Defense
Omayyad Square
Damascus,
Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 113110554
Salutation: Your Excellency

TURKEY

BÜSRA ERSANLI, a constitutional law expert and professor of political science at Marmara University in Istanbul, was arrested on October 28, 2011, as part of a mass operation targeting the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK). Also arrested as part of the same crackdown was academic and writer **RAGIP ZARAKOLU**, known for his defense of public expression and minority rights. According to their lawyers, the arrests were made in connection with lectures the two scholars gave at the Peace and Democracy Party Academy, a pro-Kurdish political organization. On November 2, 2011, Zarakolu released an open letter through his lawyer in which he stated that his arrest was “part of a campaign to intimidate all intellectuals and democrats living in Turkey and, more specifically, to isolate Kurds.”

Appeals to:

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Prime Minister of Turkey
Office of the Prime Minister
06573 Basbakanlik
Ankara Turkey
Fax: 90 312 417 04 76

His Excellency Sadullah Ergin
Minister of Justice
06669 Kizilay
Ankara, Turkey
Fax: 90 312 419 3370

ENDANGERED STUDENTS: NEW AND CONTINUING CASES BAHRAIN

In response to pro-reform protests that started in February 2011, hundreds of students, researchers, and university staff have been expelled or banned from studying or working at public universities

throughout the country. It remains unclear as the semester proceeds when these students and staff will be allowed to return to their studies and teaching. At least 500 students were expelled in total, including 400 from the University of Bahrain and 60 from Bahrain Polytechnic, both of which are public universities. Many of the students reported that the universities, which are ultimately overseen by the king of Bahrain, offered no opportunity to challenge or appeal their expulsion. Students who were allowed to re-enroll were required to sign an oath of loyalty to the government and the royal family, as well as a statement that they would not pursue academic matters that were not relevant to their degree.

Appeals to:

His Majesty Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al
Khalifa
King of Bahrain
Office of His Majesty the King
P. O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: + 973 1766 8884

His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al
Khalifa
Minister of Justice & Islamic Affairs
Ministry of Justice & Islamic Affairs
Diplomatic Area,
P.O. Box 450
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 6343

His Excellency Dr Majid bin Ali Al-Naimi
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education Building
Al Istiklal Street
P.O. Box 43
Isa Town Central, Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 1768 7866

BELARUS

ALIAKSANDER ATROSHCHANKAU, an international law student at the European Humanities University, was sentenced in the spring of 2011 to four years in prison on charges of inciting rioting following protests over the disputed Belarusian presidential election in December 2011.

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

BURMA (MYANMAR)

KO AUNG HTUN, a writer and former student activist, arrested in Burma in the winter of 1998, remains in prison. He was convicted of violating state censorship and engaging in unlawful association and sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment.

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

IRAN

Women's rights and student activist **SETAREH ELYASI** was expelled from her university after being accused of disobedience and causing disorder in school, according to a December 2011 report from the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. While she had completed all of her requirements and has been awaiting her diploma since her thesis defense in 2009, she received word over the phone that university officials had declined to grade her thesis and that she has been expelled.

Student activist **PAYMAN AREF** was arrested on October 30, 2011, along with two others, and is currently in jail, although the official charges against him remain unclear. Aref had been released from prison just weeks earlier on October 9, 2011, after completing a one-

year sentence and receiving 74 lashes on charges of “insulting the president.” After his release, Aref openly spoke out against the way the lashing was carried out and filed an official complaint with Evin Prison. According to his lawyer, the official charges remain unclear, but seem to relate to his speaking out against his punishment.

Previously featured students who remain in prison in Iran include **ABDOLLAH MOMENI**, a student activist and spokesman for Iran’s largest reformist student organization currently in Evin Prison; **MAHDIEH GOLROO**, a student activist and member of the Right to Education Council in Tehran, currently serving a sentence of two years and four months in Evin Prison on charges of “propaganda against the regime,” “congregation and mutiny,” and cooperation with the Mojahedin Khalq Organization, an outlawed political group; **MAJID TAVAKOLI** and **BAHAREH HEDAYAT**, distinguished student activists sentenced to eight-and-a-half and nine-and-a-half years, respectively, for their involvement in anti-government protests in 2009; 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

SYRIA

ISLAM AL-DABBAS and **MAJID AL-DIN KHOLANI**, both students involved in organizing peaceful protests in and near Damascus since March 2011, were arrested on July 22 and August 8, 2011, respectively, and are being held incommunicado in undisclosed locations. According to reports

from Amnesty International, both were beaten following their arrests and are at risk of torture.

Appeals to:

President
Bashar al-Assad
Presidential Palace
al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 332 3410

Minister of Interior
Major Sa'id Mohamed Samour
Ministry of Interior
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 222 3428

UNITED STATES

Fall 2011 witnessed an upsurge of nonviolent student protests across the country, associated in large part with the international Occupy movement, many instances of which were met with excessively violent crackdowns on the part of police and, in some cases, university administrations acting against their own students. Particularly egregious incidents of this kind include the use of pepper spray on peaceful, seated University of California, Davis, student protestors by campus police officers on November 18, 2011, as well as police in riot gear beating nonviolent University of California, Berkeley, students with batons on November 9, 2011. In both cases, the chancellors of the universities, Chancellor Linda P. B. Katehi and Robert Birgeneau, respectively, authorized the police activity. Endangered Scholars Worldwide stands in solidarity with the nonviolent student protestors and condemns the use of excessive force to silence their dissent.

GOOD NEWS: RELEASES

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

On November 28, 2011, **PROFESSOR NASSER BIN GHAITH**, a lecturer in economics at the Abu Dhabi branch of the Paris-based Sorbonne University in the United Arab Emirates, was granted a presidential pardon and released after eight months of detention. He was detained on April 10, 2011, and held in an undisclosed location, after criticizing government officials for failing to make significant political reforms. The release came several weeks after a trial observer appointed by

several international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, reported that the proceedings were “grossly unfair,” had no basis in international law, and violated bin Ghaith’s freedom of expression.

VIETNAM

An appeals court has reduced by more than half the sentence of **PHAM MINH HOANG**, a blogger and lecturer of mathematics at Ho Chi Minh City Polytechnic Institute. He was released on January 13, 2012. Pham was sentenced on August 10, 2011, to three years in jail and three years of house arrest for belonging to Viet Tan, a banned pro-democracy group, and for publishing an anti-communist blog. While the jail sentence was significantly reduced, the court upheld the three-year house arrest, which will follow his release from prison.

Previously featured scholar **TRAN KHAI THANH THUY** was released from prison and deported to the United States in June 2011. She is a novelist and essayist who was arrested in October 2009 after she publicly defended six dissidents facing trial. In February 2010 she was sentenced to 42 months in prison and released early on humanitarian grounds.

SOURCES:

Amnesty International <<http://www.amnesty.org/>>

Bahrain Center for Human Rights <<http://www.bahrainrights.org/en>>

English PEN <<http://www.englishpen.org/writersinprison/>>

Human Rights in China <<http://www.hrichina.org/>>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) <<http://www.hrw.org/>>

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran <<http://www.iran-humanrights.org/>>

Islamic Human Rights Commission <<http://www.ihrc.org/>>

Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR) <<http://www.nearinternational.org/>>

Scholars at Risk (SAR) <<http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/>>

—Written by Matt Congdon