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Endangered Scholars Worldwide

Matt Congdon

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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

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, sentenced to 3 and 10 years, respectively, 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 teacher strike in March 2011; **DR. ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE**, a professor of engineering at the University of Bahrain, sentenced to life imprisonment on June 22, 2011, on charges of training and financing a terrorist organization, and reportedly tortured during his pretrial detention; and **RULA AL-SAFFER**, Assistant Professor at the College of Health Sciences and the Head of

Information current, to the best of our knowledge, as of June 10, 2012. 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/>.

the Bahrain Nursing Society, sentenced on September 29, 2011, to 15 years in prison.

Appeals to:

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

GU CHUAN, a scholar, editor, and blogger, has been denied permission to leave China in order to take up a visiting scholar position at Columbia University in New York. On April 4, 2012, while attempting to leave China, he and his family were stopped at airport security, detained, and interrogated. Gu's passport and US visa were confiscated during the detention. He was told that his departure for the United States would "endanger national security." According to a report from Scholars at Risk, police presence has increased around his home since he and his family returned to their apartment. Chinese authorities have not publicly stated reasons for denying Gu's permission to travel.

Scholars featured in previous issues who remain in prison in China include writer and editor **TASHI RABTEN** (pen name **TE'URANG**), sentenced to 4 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"; and **GUO QUAN**, a former literature professor at Nanjing Normal University,

sentenced to 10 years in prison and 3 years of deprivation of political rights in October 2009 on charges 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

In March 2012, the Pardon Commission of Tehran Province Judiciary denied a pardon request for **ABDOLREZA GHANBARI**, a teacher of Persian literature who was imprisoned and sentenced to death following political protests on December 27, 2009. He was tried without the knowledge of his family or access to a lawyer and was convicted of “enmity against God” as a result of his alleged involvement with antigovernment groups. He has been beaten during his detention at Evin Prison and reportedly has made confessions under duress that led to his conviction. A date of execution is unknown and his family fears his sentence could be carried out at any moment.

RAMIN ZIBAEI, a previously featured professor of psychology and dean at the Baha’i Institute of Higher Education (BIHE) in Tehran, had his four-year prison sentence upheld by an appellate court in February 2012. He was arrested for his involvement with BIHE in May 2011 along with more than a dozen others. Members of the Baha’i faith are denied access to higher education in Iran and BIHE has been subject to attacks from authorities over the past year as a result.

Scholars from Iran who remain in prison include **MASSOUD SEPEHR**, a political science lecturer at Shiraz Azad University, detained without charge since his arrest on November 17, 2011; **SOHRAB RAZZAGHI**, a former faculty member and head of the Volunteer Actors Institute, an organization dedicated to research and education of activists and civil society organizers, sentenced to 20 years in prison in October 2011; seven people connected to the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, following coordinated attacks on the Institute in May 2011, including **KAMRAN MORTEZAIE** and **VAHID MAHMOUDI**, each sentenced to 5 years, and **RAMIN ZIBAIE**, **MAHMOUD BADAVAM**, **FARHAD SEDGHI**, **RIAZ SOBHANI**, and **NOUSHIN KHADEM**, each sentenced to 4 years; three cultural figures, all charged with "acting against national security" through supporting Kurdish opposition groups, including poet **JAMAL KHANI**, serving a 2-year sentence; educator **FARHAD VAKILINIA** serving 3 years; **NAEEM NAJAFI**, a student, serving 4 years, and Kurdish author and scholar **SAJJAD JAHANFAR** serving 1 year; 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; **SAEED LEILAZ**, a journalist and professor of economics at Shahid Beheshti University, convicted in 2009 of violating public order, planning to undermine the country's security, and insulting Iran's Supreme Leader; **DR. MOHAMMAD MALEKI**, former chancellor of Tehran University, held in Evin Prison since August 2009 on charges of "propaganda against the regime"; and **DR. MOSTAFA ALAVI**, an Iranian doctor and researcher sentenced to 15 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. SA'UD MUKHTAR AL-HASHIMI**, a medical doctor and faculty member at the King Abdulaziz University, sentenced in November 2011 to 30 years in prison, which is to be followed by a 30-year travel ban; **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, 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
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

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

TURKEY

Previously featured scholars who remain in prison in Turkey include **BÜSRA ERSANLI**, a constitutional law expert and professor of political science at Marmara University in Istanbul, arrested on October 28; and academic and writer **RAGIP ZARAKOLU**, arrested as part of the same crackdown as Ersanli.

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

ZIMBABWE

MUNYARADZI GWISAI, a law lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe previously featured in our Spring 2011 issue, was found guilty of “conspiracy to commit public violence” at a trial in March 2012. Also convicted on the same charges were student leader **WELCOME ZIMUTO** and social activists **EDDSON CHAKUMA** and **TATENDA MOMBAYARARA**. The group was arrested in February 2011 along with 41 others after attending a lecture entitled “Revolt in Egypt and Tunisia: What Lessons Can Be Learnt by Zimbabwe and Africa,” where they watched a video of Arab Spring protests. They were sentenced to two-year suspended sentences, 420 hours of community service, and fined \$500 each. They

testified during their trial that they were tortured by police during their detention. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have condemned the arrests and sentences as attempts by the Mugabe government to instill fear into would-be dissidents.

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: 202-332-7100
Fax: 202-483-9326
Email: Zimbabwe@
africandiamondcouncil.org

ENDANGERED STUDENTS: NEW AND CONTINUING CASES

BAHRAIN

Student activist **AHMED AOUN** has been refused necessary surgery and medical treatment after a metal pellet fired from a police shotgun lodged in his eye during a pro-democracy rally. Aoun was arrested by authorities when he sought treatment at a hospital following his injury on May 13, 2012. He reported to the public prosecutor that he was sexually harassed during his detention and that he suffers from bleeding in his eye, severe pain, and fainting spells due to his injury. According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Aoun was forced to remain in detention and miss his scheduled eye surgery on May 29, 2012, when the pellet was to have been removed. Due to the delay of surgery, it is possible that Aoun will lose his eye. According to BCHR, Aoun's case points toward a general trend of injured activists who avoid seeking treatment at hospitals for fear of being arrested.

Six students were sentenced to 15 years in prison at a trial on March 5, 2012, as part of a crackdown on student involvement in pro-democracy demonstrations against the al-Khalifa regime that began in February 2011 in Bahrain. Five of the convicted students were identified by BCHR as **JAWAD AL-MAHARY**, **SHAWQI RADHI**, **JASSIM AL HULAINI**, **JASSIM AL-MUKHODHER**, and **YOUSIF AHMED**, all of whom

were accused of arson, attempted murder, and theft. In addition to their prison sentences, they were handed fines of 349,300 dinars (about US \$925,000). According to a report from BCHR, they were forced into false confessions through torture.

Appeals to:

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

BELARUS

ALIAKSANDER ATROSHCHANKAU, a previously featured scholar from Belarus who remains in prison, is an international law student at the European Humanities University. He 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 of 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

In May 2012, 17 human rights and student organizations issued a joint statement addressing concerns about heightened threats to academic freedom and students in Iran in recent years. According to the statement, over 600 students have been arrested since 2009, many of them imprisoned and deprived of their educations, as a result of their political activities. The statement points out that Iran has repeatedly violated students' right to an education free of discrimination, which is guaranteed by several international conventions to which Iran is either participant or signatory. We have posted a link to the "Joint Statement on the Right to Education and Academic Freedom in Iran" on our Endangered Scholars Worldwide website.

OMID KOKABEE, a PhD student in physics, was sentenced to 10 years in prison at a trial on May 12, 2012, on charges of communicating with a hostile government and taking illegal earnings. Kokabee, an Iranian citizen, was pursuing his doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin and was arrested while attempting to return to the United States after a visit to Iran in February 2011. He spent 15 months in detention before his trial, and reported in open letters from Evin Prison that he has not been allowed to talk with his lawyer.

According to a report from the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, imprisoned student activist **JAVAD ALIKHANI** was beaten in front of his family and was refused visitation rights during an attempted family visit to his prison on April 23, 2012. Alikhani was beaten after refusing to submit to a strip search before speaking with his parents. He was arrested on May 28, 2010, and has been charged by authorities with “propagating against the regime,” “acting against national security,” “blasphemy,” and “insulting the Supreme Leader.” He suffers from kidney disease and bleeding of the bladder and does not have access to sufficient medical care.

Previously featured students from Iran who remain in prison include **MOHSEN SANATIPOUR**, a student activist and journalist, sentenced to one year in prison in Spring 2012; **ABOLFAZL TABARZADI**, a civil engineering student and human rights activist, serving nine months since October 2011 after being convicted of “acting against national security” and “contact with foreign media”; **ABDOLLAH MOMENI**, a student activist and spokesman for Iran’s largest reformist student organization currently in Evin Prison; **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 Jomhuri
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 MAJD 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
Interior
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Fax: +963 11 222 3428

GOOD NEWS: RELEASES

BAHRAIN

HASSAN 'OUN, an 18-year-old student at the Shaikh Khalifa Institute of Technology, was released from prison on May 27, 2012, and placed on probation. He was reportedly subject to torture and other mistreatment during his detention by authorities after being arrested on January 23, 2012, on charges of "illegal public gathering." He had been detained once before in 2011 after involvement in antigovernment protests, during which he was also allegedly tortured, according to information he provided to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

IRAN

MAHDIEH GOLROO, a student activist and member of the Right to Education Council in Tehran, was released from Evin Prison on May 20, after serving a sentence of two years and four months on charges of "propaganda against the regime," "congregation and mutiny," and cooperation with the Mojahedin Khalq Organization, an outlawed political group.

PAYMEN AREF, a student activist and member of the Iran Freedom Movement, was released from Evin Prison on April 4, 2012. He has been detained several times since 2009 and was sentenced to a flogging in October 2011 that, according to interviews with him, was carried out illegally.

SUDAN

Haidar Mahmoud Abderrahman Manis, a student activist in association with the Darfur University Student Association, was released in April 2012 after several weeks in detention. In the days preceding his arrest, he allegedly gave speeches to student groups concerning the political situations in Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile.

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*