X August 2018

Dear MP,

I am writing to express serious concern for the mental health and physical wellbeing of, Bahraini political leader Hassan Mushaima. On 1 August, his son Ali Mushaima, declared a hunger strike outside the Bahraini Embassy in London against his father’s denial of adequate medical care by prison authorities while serving his sentence to life imprisonment in Jau Prison. Despite requests from his family, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) have failed to address the issue adequately.

**Background**

Hassan Mushaima, aged 70, was a founding member and Deputy Secretary-General of the political party Al-Wefaq from 2002-2006, which was [dissolved](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/17/bahrain-al-wefaq-shia-opposition-group-sunni) in 2016. In 2006, he withdrew from Al-Wefaq to establish and lead the Haq movement until his imprisonment.

Amnesty International has [labelled](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/7743/2018/en/) Mr Mushaima a *“prisoner of conscience”* while the United Nations (UN) has [called](http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsqYPuFZC34VM6MoD0MvS%2bS%2bhcJl3TUrOvvF%2fGuWWUtDMNTj4lYASRqLw7nbC8IcS25V04LGI8FMQttufqvlxyVSqBsgx3LVglkkCx%2bAgXg%2bL) for his release. Following his arrest in 2011, Mr Mushaima was victim to what [Human Rights Watch](https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/28/bahrain-system-injustice) described as a “*highly functional injustice system*”, which used physical and psychological torture at the hands of authorities and gross violations of his right to fair trial. The physical abuse caused such severe complications that Mr Mushaima required a total of four surgeries. Al-Arabiya broadcasted [video](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ofcom-fines-saudi-owned-al-arabiya-channel-for-bahraini-torture-interview-dxpcwzdz5) footage of the torture of Mr Mushaima in prison, which they received through official channels from the Bahraini government. The Saudi-funded channel was [fined](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ofcom-fines-saudi-owned-al-arabiya-channel-for-bahraini-torture-interview-dxpcwzdz5) £120,000 by Ofcom for violating Mr Mushaima’s privacy and for broadcasting “*confessions*” without making it clear that he had been tortured.

**Current Situation**

Mr Mushaima requires regular scans as he is in [remission](http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/al-arabiya-faces-closure-uk-after-airing-interview-bahraini-prisoner-549154523) for lymphoma cancer. Despite it being a necessity, prison authorities have not allowed Mr Mushaima to attend a check up since September 2016.

In January 2018, Mr Mushaima was taken to Bahrain Royal Defence Force Hospital (BDF) in an emergency. His sugar levels had reached a dangerously high level, therefore Mr Mushaima was given insulin shots to stabilise his immediate condition. Before leaving the hospital, the doctor recommended Mr Mushaima to consult a diabetes specialist to treat his condition in the long term. The prison authorities have failed to follow this advice and have also delayed the administration of his existing medication, which he last received four months ago. Given these inadequacies, I am extremely concerned that Mr Mushaima’s life is at risk.

Besides the denial of medical care, Mr Mushaima is subjected to further degrading treatment on account of his status as a political prisoner. For one, Mr Mushaima has not seen his family since February 2017. Moreover, under current prison regulations, the authorities [shackle](https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/30/bahrain-end-degrading-treatment-activists) inmates whenever they leave their cells, even for medical appointments. This [humiliating procedure](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1161592017ENGLISH.pdf) is reserved specifically for those who are guilty of exercising their right to freedom of expression. Furthermore, Mr Mushaima is also denied access to reading material, following a raid in October 2017. These discriminatory policies are in violation of the universal standard set by the United Nations [Standard Minimum](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/GA-RESOLUTION/E_ebook.pdf) Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

**Final Remarks**

The FCO has failed to adequately address Mr Mushaima’s case with the Bahraini authorities despite their communications with BIRD. Their insistence that human rights bodies will investigate grievances suggests that they do not attach any seriousness to the matter.

I ask you to raise Mr Mushaima’s case with the FCO in the hope that it will end his ill-treatment and ensure his access to immediate medical treatment, family visitation, and reading materials. I further urge you to call on the FCO to to scrutinise the severe and humiliating treatment of political prisoners, culminating in the unconditional release of Mr Mushaima.

Given Mr Mushaima’s ill-health and old age, I hope you can urge the FCO to take meaningful actions to improve the conditions of his imprisonment.

Yours sincerely,

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