



PRESS RELEASE (for immediate release)

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre calls on Government of Bahrain to release Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, a member of the Centre's International Advisory Network



London, 10 April 2012 – Business & Human Rights Resource Centre yesterday appealed to the Government of Bahrain to release [Abdulhadi al-Khawaja](#) on humanitarian grounds, and because he is a prisoner of conscience.

Since 2003 Abdulhadi al-Khawaja has been a member of the Resource Centre's [International Advisory Network](#), chaired by Mary Robinson (former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland, now President of the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice).

Amnesty International considers Abdulhadi al-Khawaja to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has asked Bahrain to consider transferring Abdulhadi al-Khawaja to Denmark on humanitarian grounds. The Danish Government had requested that Abdulhadi al-Khawaja (who also has Danish citizenship) be transferred there for emergency treatment.



Abdulhadi al-Khawaja is former president and co-founder of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, a non-profit organization that works to promote human rights in Bahrain. He was arrested in April 2011 following pro-democracy protests in the Bahraini uprising. Since 8 February 2012 he has been on hunger strike, and his health has been declining;

he has been hospitalised and there are fears that he may die. On 7 April he was reportedly moved from the Interior Ministry hospital into a military hospital.

Christopher Marsden, Chair of the board of Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, appealed for the release of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja on 9 April in faxes to the King, Prime Minister, and Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs. Today the Resource Centre is bringing its appeal to the attention of Bahraini embassies.

Recent reports about Abdulhadi al-Khawaja include:

[“UN: Bahrain should consider transferring jailed activist”](#), AP, in *Gulf News*, 10 Apr 2012

[“Abdulhadi al-Khawaja's death would be a stain on Bahrain”](#), Lord Avebury & others, in *Guardian*, 9 Apr 2012

[“Hunger striker's daughter: Father having trouble breathing”](#), CNN, 8 Apr 2012

[“Bahrain rejects Danish request for prisoner transfer”](#), BBC News, 8 Apr 2012

[“Bahrain hunger-striker al-Khawaja moved to hospital”](#), BBC News, 6 Apr 2012

[“Bahrain: Release leading rights activist at risk of death from hunger strike”](#), Amnesty International, 30 Mar 2012

Further information, including contact details for appeals to the Government of Bahrain, are in [this Amnesty International document](#).

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre tracks reports on the human rights impacts (positive & negative) of 5000 companies in over 180 countries, and provides guidance tools to assist all those working in this field. Its researchers are based in Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, South Africa, UK, Ukraine and USA. For further information about the Centre, see the [“About us”](#) section of the website.