

**Joint global civil society letter:**

**RELEASE MARYAM AL-KHAWAJA AND END CLAMPDOWN ON CIVIL SOCIETY  
IN BAHRAIN**

18 September 2014

HM Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama, Bahrain

Dear King Hamad,

We, the undersigned civil society organisations from around the world write to you united in our condemnation of the politically motivated arrest of human rights defender and co-director of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, Maryam Al-Khawaja at Manama airport on 30 August 2014. We urge that Maryam is immediately and unconditionally released.

We believe that Maryam Al-Khawaja is being persecuted for exercising her legitimate rights to freedom of expression and association in the defence of fundamental freedoms including her co-operation with international institutions and her important role in documenting human rights violations in Bahrain. We stand in solidarity with Maryam and all other human rights defenders wrongly imprisoned by your government for their work and beliefs.

We remind you that the harassment, intimidation or stigmatization of a human rights defender, including arrest, detention, trial or imprisonment for reasons of the opinions they may hold, constitute a serious violation of Bahrain's obligations under international law.

We remain concerned that since the pro-democracy protests intensified in February 2011 your government has deliberately subverted democratic freedoms using a combination of legal and extra-legal measures involving politically motivated prosecutions, brutal crackdowns on protests and silencing expressions of dissent in the print and online media. Many have raised the concern about the arbitrary detention of hundreds of pro-democracy activists and their being subjected to torture and ill-treatment in detention centres across Bahrain.

At the UN Human Rights Council, during Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2012 your government agreed to protect human rights defenders and allow them to conduct their work without hindrance, intimidation or harassment. On 5 September 2014, a group of United Nations independent human rights experts also demanded Maryam Al-Khawaja's release, and urged you to follow through on your commitments made during the UPR to end the persecution of all human rights defenders in Bahrain. We support Maryam's courage and strength for advocating for democratic change.

We urge your government to recognise the legitimate demands of the Bahraini people for their rights and end the cycle of protest and repression. We thus call upon you to begin a process of democratic reform, healing and reconciliation in Bahrain. Key steps towards achieving the above would be to release all detained human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience and cease the oppression of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organizations.

1. Accion Solidaria on HIV/AIDS – Venezuela
2. African Life Center – USA
3. African Women's Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social Change (AWANICH) - Democratic Republic of the Congo
4. Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) - Bangladesh
5. Aithria Agro-Environmental Research and Action Team – Greece
6. Aman Network for Rehabilitation & Defending Human Rights – United Kingdom
7. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) – USA
8. Andalus Institute for Tolerance & Anti-violence Studies – Egypt
9. Arab Network for Democratic Elections – Lebanon
10. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) – Lebanon
11. Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) – Egypt
12. ARTICLE 19 – UK
13. Asian Human Rights Commission – Hong Kong
14. Asian Press Institute – Sri Lanka
15. Association Dea Dia from Serbia - Serbia
16. Association for Progressive Communications – South Africa
17. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) -Canada
18. Association Transparence et Développement (ATED) – Mauritania
19. Avocats Sans Frontières Network – France
20. Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) – Bahrain
21. Bahrain Human Rights Observatory (BHRO) - Bahrain
22. Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) – United Kingdom
23. Bahrain Rehabilitation & Anti Violence Organization (BRAVO) - Bahrain
24. Bahrain Salam for Human Rights – United Kingdom
25. Baidarie Pakistan – Pakistan
26. Belgrade Center for Human Rights - Serbia
27. Bishkek Feminist Collective SQ – Kyrgyzstan
28. Buergerwissen in Bielefeld- Germany
29. Building More Future Opportunities and Capacities (BMFOCA) – Nigeria
30. Burundi Child Rights Coalition (BCRC)– Burundi
31. Bytes for All – Pakistan
32. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) - Egypt
33. Cambodia Center for Human Rights (CCHR) – Cambodia
34. Campaign Against Ignorance & Illiteracy (CAII) - Nigeria
35. Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) – Canada
36. Center for Civil Liberties – Ukraine
37. Center for National and International Studies (CNIS) – Azerbaijan
38. Center for Peace and Human Rights of the Venezuelan Central University- Venezuela
39. Center for Peace Education - USA
40. Center International Training for Human Rights and Development – Democratic Republic of the Congo
41. Center of Studies on Justice and Resolution of 1325 – Democratic Republic of the Congo

42. Charity and Security Network - USA
43. Citizens for Democratic Rights in Eritrea – United Kingdom
44. Civic Initiatives – Serbia
45. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation - South Africa
46. Civil Rights Defenders - Sweden
47. CIVILIS Human Rights – Venezuela
48. Coalition pour le Development et la Rehabilitation Sociale (CODR UBUNTU) – Burundi
49. Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) – South Sudan
50. Concertation Nationale de la Société Civile du Togo (CNSC Togo) - Togo
51. Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (CIASE) – Colombia
52. Counseling Center for Transgender People Association – Turkey
53. Danish PEN – Denmark
54. Democracy Monitor – Azerbaijan
55. Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) – Philippines
56. Diverse Voices and Action for Equality - Fiji
57. East and Horn of African Human Rights Defenders Project - Uganda
58. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms – Egypt
59. Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) - Egypt
60. Elma7rosa Network for Advocacy Media & Arts - Egypt
61. English PEN – UK
62. Ethiopian Human Rights Project - Ethiopia
63. European Bahraini Organisation for Human Rights (EBOHR) – Switzerland
64. European Saudi Organizations for Human Rights - Germany
65. European Women’s Lobby – Belgium
66. Families of Desaparecidos for Justice - Philippines
67. Federation of African Muslim Women in America (FAMWA) – USA
68. FIDH, within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, France
69. Fontaine-ISOKO for Good Governance and Integrated Development- Burundi
70. Foundation of The Victims Of Abduction And Forced Disappearance (FVAFD) – Egypt
71. Freedom House – USA
72. Freedom International – Ghana
73. Freedom Now - USA
74. Front line Defenders – Ireland
75. Ghanaian Centre of PEN International - Ghana
76. Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) –USA
77. Groupe des Experts Nationaux - Madagascar
78. Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) - Lebanon
79. Gulf Civil Society Association Forum - Kuwait
80. Helsinki Citizen’s Assembly – Turkey
81. Human Rights Center "Viasna" – Belarus
82. Human Rights Concern Eritrea – United Kingdom
83. Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP) – Turkey
84. Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS) – Netherlands
85. International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran – USA
86. International Centre for supporting Rights and Freedoms (ICSRF) - Egypt
87. International Commission of Jurists – Switzerland
88. International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)- Japan
89. International Pen, San Miguel Chapter – Mexico
90. International Service for Human Rights - Switzerland
91. International Solidarity Network Women Living Under Muslim Laws - USA

92. International Youth Human Rights Movement – Russia
93. Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) – UK
94. Justice for Iran (JFI) – United Kingdom
95. KAOS GL – Turkey
96. Karapatan Alliance - Philippines
97. Kars Anti-Homophobia and Transphobia Platform – Turkey
98. Khiam Rehabilitation Center For Victims of Torture – Lebanon
99. Kitgum Women Peace Initiative (KIWEPI) - Uganda
100. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM) – Serbia
101. Ligue Algerienne Pour la Defense des Droits de l (LADDH) – Algeria
102. Ligue des Droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs (LDGL) – Democratic Republic of Congo
103. Lualua Centre for Human Rights (LCHR) - Lebanon
104. Maharat Foundation – Lebanon
105. Martin Ennals Foundation – Switzerland
106. MENA Monitoring Group – Tunisia
107. Monitoring of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia – Saudi Arabia
108. Movimiento Amplio de Mujeres de Puerto Rico – USA
109. Mpalabanda - Associacao Civica de Cabinda - Angola
110. Muslim Women's Research and Action Forum – Sri Lanka
111. Nasra for Feminist Studies – Egypt
112. National Lawyers Guild - USA
113. National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms - Yemen
114. National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) – Somalia
115. New Bakkah Foundation – Switzerland
116. Nidal Tagheer Organization for Defending Rghts and Freedoms- Yemen
117. No Peace Without Justice – Italy
118. Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty - Italy
119. Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition – Australia
120. Palestinian Conflict Resolution / Transformation Center – Palestine
121. PEN American Center – USA
122. PEN Català – Spain
123. PEN Center – Nicaragua
124. PEN International - USA
125. PEN International Women Writers Committee – Egypt
126. PEN International - United Kingdom
127. Policy Center – Serbia
128. Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) – USA
129. Pusat Komnas - Malaysia
130. Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association - Turkey
131. Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) - France
132. Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC) – Cameroon
133. Right Defenders Lawyers & Consultants (RDLC) – Pakistan
134. Secularism Is a Women's Issue – UK
135. Shia Rights Watch - USA
136. Sinergia, Venezuelan Association of Civil Society Organizations – Venezuela
137. Social And Human Development Consultative Groups (SAHDCG) – Sudan
138. Society of Former Political Prisoners Against Arrest and Detention in the Philippines – Philippines
139. South African Centre of PEN International – South Africa
140. South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) – South Sudan
141. Swiss Italian PEN – Switzerland
142. Synergie des Associations Feminines du Congo - Democratic Republic of

- the Congo
143. Synergie des Femmes pour les Victimes de Violences Sexuelle – Democratic Republic of the Congo
  144. Tanzania Human rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) – Tanzania
  145. Terra de Direitos- Brazil
  146. Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) - Uganda
  147. The Training Nest - Sri Lanka
  148. Three Cities Foundation – Malta
  149. Tonga Leitis' Association (TLA) – Tonga
  150. Transparency International – Bangladesh
  151. Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign (TALC) – Zambia
  152. Ucan Supurge Women's Association – Turkey
  153. Un Ponte Per- Italy
  154. Union Nacional de Instituciones para el trabajo de accion Social – Bolivia
  155. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights - USA
  156. Vivarta - UK
  157. West African Human Rights Defenders Network (WAHRDN) - Togo
  158. Women and Allies Peace Builders Network – Burundi
  159. Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) – Liberia
  160. Women Peace Initiatives-Uganda (WOPI-U) - Uganda
  161. Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) – Philippines
  162. Women's Solidarity Fund – UK
  163. Women's Resource Center – Pakistan
  164. World Movement for Democracy - USA
  165. World Organisation Against Torture, within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders – Switzerland
  166. Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD) – Zambia
  167. Zeugmadi LGBT- Turkey
  168. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum – Zimbabwe
  169. 1325 Policy Group – Sweden