

H.E. Majid bin Ali al-Naimi
Minister of Education

Fax: +973 17273656;
Email: moe@moe.gov.bh

12 December 2011

Dear Minister of Education

Drop all charges against teachers, unionists and students in Bahrain

I am writing to you on behalf of University and College Union, which represents 120,000 academic and academic related staff throughout the United Kingdom, to urge the Bahraini authorities to review the charges and convictions and commute sentences of all teachers, teacher unionists and students charged with offences related to exercise of freedom of speech and right to assemble.

University and College Union is particularly concerned about the appeals, on Sunday 11 December, of the Vice-President and President of the Bahraini Teachers Association (BTA). Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb are appealing of the sentences issued on 25 September by the military National Safety Court of First Instance to three and ten years' imprisonment, for their involvement in peaceful protests last March.

The revision of the convictions is highlighted in the strong recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI). On 23 November, it recommended the Bahraini authorities "to review convictions and commute sentences of all persons charged with offences involving political expression, not consisting of advocacy of violence, or, as the case may be, to drop outstanding charges against them."

University and College Union urges the Bahraini authorities to:

- revoke the sentences against Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Deeb and drop all charges against other BTA leaders;
- reinstate the teachers dismissed and the students expelled, together with their salaries and scholarships;
- drop the suspension of all teachers and academics;
- respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of teachers, students and union activists in accordance with international labour norms;

- implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry;
- engage in a respectful and peaceful dialogue to set up and institutionalise mechanisms to respect fundamental human rights of Bahraini teachers and to end the violations which include arbitrary arrests, detentions, unjust sentencing and dismissals.

I look forward to hearing about your positive intervention on this very serious matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Hoad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first name and another below the last name.

Terry Hoad
President