

5 March 2013

British Embassy in Manama, Bahrain  
21 Government Avenue  
P O Box 114  
Manama 306  
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Your Excellency

**Re: Free Mahdi Abu Dheeb and reinstate Jalila al-Salman**

On behalf of the 117,000 members of the University and College Union (UCU), I am writing to condemn the continued harassment, imprisonment and dismissal of human rights and trade union leaders in Bahrain.

The UCU has been informed that Mrs. Jalila al-Salman, acting Chair of the Bahrain Teachers' Association, BTA (in lieu of the BTA President, Mahdi Abu Dheeb, detained since April 2011), received a dismissal letter days after speaking publicly about human rights violations in Bahrain at a meeting in Washington. The letter from the Ministry of Education HR department states that al-Salman was fired on October 22, 2012, the date of the "final verdict" of her judicial case, although her case is in the midst of an appeal with Bahrain's Court of Cassation.

Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi Abu Dheeb were condemned in September 2011 by a military court after being forced to sign "confessions" while in detention. The guilty verdict was upheld by the Manama Appeal Court on 21 October. The lawyers of the BTA leaders filed an objection to the Supreme Court regarding this verdict.

The UCU, alongside Education International and other teachers' organisations, is raising concerns regarding the Bahraini Government's respect of international labour standards, in particular freedom of association and discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

In order to give visibility to these cases and to support the cause of human and trade union rights, please encourage the Bahraini authorities to:

- Release immediately and unconditionally Mahdi Abu Dheeb and reinstate Jalila al-Salman as their judicial case is unsubstantiated;
- Set up a full, impartial and independent investigation into their reported ill-treatments and bring those responsible to justice;
- Implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry;
- Re-legalise the BTA as a registered teacher union;
- Respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of teachers, students and union activists in accordance with international standards;
- Implement the recommendations of the ILO Tripartite Agreement.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Sally Hunt  
General Secretary