

UA 165/17, **UPDATE 3**, AI Index: MDE 11/7014/2017 of 31 August 2017  
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## **BAHRAIN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER REMAINS IN DETENTION**

**Bahraini human rights defender Ebtisam al-Saegh was removed from solitary confinement following a two-day hunger strike in protest at her conditions of detention. She is a prisoner of conscience. The authorities have undertaken to carry out an investigation into her allegations of torture and sexual assault during her May detention.**

On 15 August, women's rights defender Ebtisam al-Saegh was removed from solitary confinement. This followed a two-day second hunger strike in protest at being detained in solitary confinement in a cell usually reserved for very ill detainees at Isa Town Detention for women, in the Bahraini capital Manama. Ebtisam al-Saegh is now allowed daily calls to her family and weekly visits. She is also being taken for regular medical check-ups. On 24 August, the National Security Agency (NSA) Ombudsman informed her husband of his office's ongoing investigation in relation to her allegations of ill-treatment and sexual assault circulating in the media.

On 3 July, Ebtisam al-Saegh was arrested after tweeting about female detainees who were victims of abuse at Isa Town detention centre for women. She was interrogated at an undisclosed location outside the detention facilities, believed to be the NSA building in al-Muharraq, and later held in solitary confinement at the women prison. She had no access to her family or a lawyer during interrogation despite multiple requests. On 18 July, in the presence of a lawyer, the Terrorism Crimes Prosecution charged Ebtisam al-Saegh with "using human rights work as a cover to communicate and cooperate with Alkarama Foundation to provide them with information and fake news about the situation in Bahrain to undermine its status abroad". Ebtisam al-Saegh's detention was extended for a further six months pending completion of the investigation.

On 23 July, a forensic doctor diagnosed Ebtisam al-Saegh with a fracture around her left hand and a broken rib dating back to her 26 May 2017 detention and torture which included sexual assault. Amnesty International believes that her arrest relates to her human rights work.

**Please keep the pressure on.**

\* Insist that the authorities release Ebtisam al-Saegh immediately and unconditionally as she is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression and her human rights work.

\* Welcome the NSA Ombudsman's investigation into Ebtisam al-Saegh's allegations of torture and sexual assault during her detention in May, and seek guarantees that it will be impartial, independent and effective. Anyone who is reasonably suspected of responsibility must be prosecuted in proceedings which meet international standards of fair trial.

**Address your appeals to**

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Fax: 011 973 1766 4587  
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa  
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Salutation: Your Excellency

**Please send a copy to**

His Excellency Shaikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Khalifa  
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Via website: [www.bahrainembassy.org](http://www.bahrainembassy.org) Click on CONTACT in the blue line near the top and scroll to the bottom. You can send emails via the site directly to specific positions within the Embassy. Choose Legal & Human Rights Directorate and enter your message.

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs

Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa  
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Thank you for your efforts both to free Ebtisam and until then,  
to safeguard her from further torture and mistreatment.