



EUROPEAN CENTER FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL AND
HUMAN RIGHTS



PRESS RELEASE

Torture allegations: Criminal complaint filed in Switzerland against Bahraini Attorney General

Berlin/London/Geneva, 15 September 2015 – Electric shocks, beatings on the soles of the feet, stress positions during incommunicado detention: those who allow this type of torture can and must be held criminally liable – even abroad. Bahrain-born British citizen Jaafar Al-Hasabi has submitted a criminal complaint to the prosecuting authorities in Berne (Switzerland) against Bahraini Attorney General Ali Bin Fadhul Al-Buainain for participation in torture. The complaint was filed in anticipation of Al-Buainain's attendance at the [International Association of Prosecutors](#) (IAP) annual conference in Switzerland, where he stands to be elected vice president of the organization on 16 September.

Al-Hasabi was detained and tortured in Bahrain in 2010. Despite the United Nations' expressed concerns as to his incommunicado detention and risk of torture, the Bahraini Public Prosecution Office, headed by Al-Buainain, authorized this incommunicado detention twice. Al-Hasabi, who now lives in London, has lodged a complaint before Berne prosecuting authorities with the support of the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights ([ECCHR](#)) in Berlin, the London based organizations [REDRESS](#) and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy ([BIRD](#)) as well as [TRIAL](#) (Track Impunity Always) in Geneva.

The NGOs call on the Swiss authorities not to hide behind diplomatic, political or economic justifications and on the Berne prosecutor to open an investigation in this case, in compliance with Switzerland's obligations under the UN Convention against Torture.

“The Swiss authorities have the opportunity to show they take the UN Convention against Torture seriously and to apply their national law accordingly: opening an investigation into the role of the Bahraini Attorney General and calling him for questioning would send a clear message against torture and in support of the principle of universal jurisdiction”, said ECCHR General Secretary Wolfgang Kaleck.

"Bahrain has endorsed torture for too long by refusing to hold anyone responsible for systematic torture. Swiss authorities should not avoid their obligation to investigate those individuals under their jurisdiction for their role in this horrific practice", said Sayed Alwadaei, Director of Advocacy at BIRD.

“The torture which Al-Hasabi suffered was appalling. Anyone allegedly responsible should be brought to justice, wherever they are, and any opportunity to do so should be vigorously pursued,” said REDRESS Director Carla Ferstman.

If the Swiss prosecutors fail to take up the case against Al-Buainain, ECCHR, REDRESS, BIRD and TRIAL will consider supporting Al-Hasabi's legal challenge against such inaction.

More information on Bahrain http://www.ecchr.eu/en/our_work/international-crimes-and-accountability/bahrain.html

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