

BAHRAIN SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Press Release - Friday, June 10th 2011

FORMER BAHRAINI GOVERNMENT ADVISER TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST AL-KHALIFA REGIME AT MANCHESTER CONFERENCE ON JUNE 18th

Lawyers, journalists, academics and trade unionists condemn human rights abuses

Manchester students show solidarity with Bahraini students persecuted for peaceful protest

Dr Salah Al Bander, former strategic planning adviser to the Cabinet Affairs Ministry of Bahrain, is to speak out for the first time about the widespread human rights abuses in Bahrain during this year's protests against the Al-Khalifa regime.

Dr Al Bander, who was deported from Bahrain in 2006 following his exposure of a Government conspiracy to rig elections and manipulate the country's sectarian balance, will be a keynote speaker at the "Bahrain and the Arab Spring Conference" organised by the newly launched Bahrain Solidarity Campaign which is supported by human rights activists, students, academics and trade unionists.

Until the Formula 1 controversy hit the headlines this week, the Bahraini government's persecution, imprisonment and torture of protesters had been largely ignored by the government in the UK. The conference - to be held at Manchester Metropolitan University's John Dalton Building opposite the BBC in Oxford Road on Saturday, June 18th - will try to redress the balance by highlighting human rights abuses, victimisation of protesters, and the role played by the UK government over the last few months.

Representatives from the MMU Students' Union will open the conference, which will run from 10.30am-4.30pm, by reading a statement on behalf of Bahraini students at universities in the North West who had their funding withdrawn for taking part in protests this spring.

Other speakers will include barrister Pete Weatherby, of the Garden Court Chambers, who has observed trials in Bahrain on behalf of the UK Bar Human Rights Committee. The three other keynote speakers are Dr Dalia Said Mostafa, from the University of Manchester, Mohamed Sadiq, human rights campaigner and Campaign Manager at Justice for Bahrain, and Fatima Abu Idris, a Masters student at Birkbeck University, who is Bahraini, and an active tweeter and blogger on Bahrain.

Afternoon workshops will cover Trade Unions in Bahrain, Sectarianism, the treatment of women in Bahrain, the impact of the press, and solidarity with the students. The Bahrain Solidarity Campaign will also highlight the case of the 20 year old Bahraini poet and student Ayat al-Quarmezi who was arrested in March for reading out a poem at a pro-reform rally and charged with "incitement to hatred of the regime". She has reportedly been tortured while she has been in prison and Amnesty International has called on the Bahraini government to release her immediately.

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