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Bahrain - Deteriorating health of human rights defender Ghada Jamsheer

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the deteriorating health of detained women's rights defender **Ghada Jamsheer**, who is currently serving combined sentences in Issa Town Detention Centre in Bahrain. She was sentenced for her criticism, on social media, of the alleged corruption by the management of the King Hamad hospital, run by the ruling family in Bahrain.

Ms [Ghada Jamsheer](#) is a Bahraini human rights defender and the Head of the **Women's Petition Committee**, a network of Bahraini women human rights defenders who campaign for gender equality, the codification of Bahrain's family laws, and their reform. She is a writer and blogger who has been banned from writing for Bahrain national media since 2005, and had to stop blogging on her online page [Bahrain-eye](#) as it has been blocked on Bahraini internet servers since 2009. Ghada Jamsheer also published a book in 2005, entitled "The Executioner and the Victim in Sharia Courts" where she documented cases of women who had been victims of abuse before Sharia courts in Bahrain.

On 15 August 2016, Bahraini authorities detained Ghada Jamsheer at Bahrain's International airport upon her return from London where she had received specialized medical treatment. She was transferred directly to the Issa Town Detention Centre, with no explanation of what charges or case she is being held under. The human rights defender believes that her detention is in retaliation to the comments she made on social media about cases of corruption involving the management of the King Hamad hospital.

Ghada Jamsheer's health condition is deteriorating, as she is suffering from rheumatoid arthritis which requires specialized treatment that has been denied to her by prison authorities. This chronic and progressive disease causes inflammation in the joints and results in painful deformity and in immobility, yet a medical bed and appropriate treatment have not been provided to her. While in detention she was brought only once to a general practitioner who recommended that the human rights defender be referred to a specialist. However, prison authorities have repeatedly rejected her request to see a specialist, and have failed to provide her with adequate medical care.

A hearing is scheduled for 7 November 2016 to replace the short prison term imposed on Ghada Jamsheer with community service. However, on 17 October, the human rights defender filed a request to prison management in order to advance the date of the hearing on humanitarian grounds due to her deteriorating health.

Authorities in Bahrain have persistently harassed Ghada Jamsheer due to her human rights work and advocacy for women's rights and gender equality. She is currently facing several prison sentences on fabricated charges including insulting a policewoman and assaulting a police officer. She has been repeatedly arrested and detained, has faced travel bans, and has been under constant surveillance by the government.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the health of human rights defender Ghada Jamsheer and the limited medical care that she has received.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Bahrain to:

1. Ensure **Ghada Jamsheer** receives immediate specialist medical care and that her treatment in detention fully adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
2. Quash the sentence and drop all charges against Ghada Jamsheer and release her, as Front Line Defenders believes that her sentencing is solely motivated by her legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Bahrain are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.