

**King Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa  
Office of His Majesty the King  
P.O. Box 555  
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama, Bahrain**

Brussels, the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2013

**Re: Concerns regarding the detention of Mr Abdul Aziz Moussa, a human rights lawyer**

Your Majesty,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over the situation of Mr Abdul Aziz Moussa, who was detained after reporting via Twitter, a social media network, on his client's visible signs of torture.

Mr Aziz Moussa is a prominent lawyer who is currently in charge of the defence of Mr Mohamed Hassan. Mr Hassan was arbitrarily arrested on 31 July 2013 after acting as a contact for various foreign media during the anti-government protests and police crackdowns in Bahrain.

According to reliable information that we received, on 7 August 2013, Mohamed Hassan was brought before the Court of Manama after more than one month of incommunicado detention. After this meeting, Mr Abdul Aziz Moussa reported via his Twitter account the visible signs of torture on his client's arms — confirming the human rights defender's reports that he had been subjected to torture while in custody at the Criminal Investigation Department.

The CCBE has been informed that as a consequence of his report, Abdul Aziz Moussa was summoned for an interrogation on 8 August, and was then kept in detention by authorities who claimed that he had "disclosed confidential information on the investigation".

The CCBE has grounds to fear that the allegations against Abdul Aziz Moussa are closely connected to his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your Majesty's attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

Furthermore Article 18 states that:

*Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions.*

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges your Majesty to immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against Abdul Aziz Moussa, and to subsequently release him without delay. The CCBE also implores you to take immediate and effective steps to guarantee that the credible reports of Mohamed Hassan being tortured while held in incommunicado detention are immediately and impartially investigated, and all necessary measures are taken to ensure in all circumstances that lawyers and human rights defenders in Bahrain are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, intimidation and harassment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Tsouroulis', written in a cursive style.

EVANGELOS TSOUROULIS  
CCBE President