

WAKE UP CANADA: Canadian Citizen Faces Risk of Death From Jail Ordeal in Bahrain

Family Appeal To Ottawa Government To End Its Silence Over Barbaric Treatment

By [Finian Cunningham](#)

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A Canadian citizen with a life-threatening heart condition has lost his appeal for acquittal in Bahrain and is now beginning a five-year sentence.

The family of Naser Al Raas (29), from Ottawa, fear for his life. He has already been subjected to months of illegal detention and torture, verified by Médecins Sans Frontières.

According to his family, Al Raas is not receiving the medication he requires for his pulmonary embolism. And they are urging the Canadian government to intervene for his immediate release. His critical condition is worsened by the ill treatment he has been subjected to during weeks of interrogation. Human rights groups verify that Al Raas was beaten, trussed for long periods, deprived of sleep and his safety was routinely threatened by his interrogators, including threats of rape.

The calls for his release have been echoed by Amnesty International [1] and the Canadian surgeon, Fraser D Rubens, who treated Al Raas several years at the Ottawa Heart Institute.

Under the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry in its report last November the case against Al Raas should have been dropped as the charges against him relate to freedom of political opinion and protest.

His five-year sentence is based on convictions of “illegal assembly” and “spreading false information” against the Western-backed Bahraini regime. His prosecution by a military court was conducted solely on the basis of a forced confession and he was denied legal representation.

Twelve other co-defendants in his case were acquitted or had their charges dropped by a civilian court of appeal on 24 February. However, the court upheld the conviction against Al Raas.

Global Research previously highlighted the miscarriage of justice against the Canadian IT expert [1] [2].

His ordeal began when he was departing Bahrain on 20 March after visiting family in the Persian Gulf Kingdom. That date followed five days after the US-backed invasion by Saudi-led troops to crush the mainly Shia pro-democracy movement in Bahrain. Al Raas was detained at the airport by ministry of interior officers and taken into secret custody for

several weeks. His family was not informed of his whereabouts and the Bahraini authorities denied any knowledge of his detention. During that period, Al Raas was tortured.

Repeated appeals by his family to the Canadian government have been met with muted response from Ottawa. Global Research has reported that a nascent bilateral trade deal between the Bahraini regime and the Canadian government that took several years to negotiate may be a factor in Ottawa's silence over the case of Al Raas.

His fiancée made a heartfelt plea to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper as Al Raas began his sentence. "We are asking Mr Harper to please do something - now - to stop this nightmare for Naser. My fiancé has done nothing wrong. He is an innocent Canadian citizen who has been put through hell and now his life is in danger because of this barbaric treatment. For God's sake Mr Harper help one of your citizens."

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NOTES

[1] Members of the public are urged by Amnesty International and family supporters of Naser Al Raas to write to Canada's foreign minister Diane Ablonczy calling on the Canadian government to demand his immediate release by the Bahraini regime. Write to diane.ablonczy@parl.gc.ca

[2] Bahrain: Canadian Government Silence Over Torture Reeks of Hypocrisy

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=27755>

[3] Canadian Citizen Tortured in Bahrain... But Harper Government Keeps Silent

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25666>

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Finian Cunningham has written extensively on international affairs, with articles published in several languages. Many of his recent articles appear on the renowned Canadian-based news website Globalresearch.ca. He is a Master's graduate in

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