



21 October 2025

Bahrain must release extradited Bahraini dissident Ali Alshowaikh

We, the undersigned human rights organisations, call for the immediate release of Bahraini dissident Ali Alshowaikh, who has been imprisoned in Bahrain since 2018 following unlawful extradition from the Netherlands. We also urge the Dutch government to take responsibility for its role in his unlawful deportation and to act urgently to secure his freedom.

Ali Alshowaikh is a Bahraini dissident who has been imprisoned since his forcible deportation from the Netherlands in 2018, where he had sought asylum. He is currently on hunger strike since 6 October 2025 alongside other political prisoners held in Building 12 of Jau Prison to demand their unconditional release.

On 20 October 2018, Mr Alshowaikh was expelled from the Netherlands following a rejection of his asylum claim and forcibly returned to Bahrain. According to [Amnesty International](#), he was arrested at the airport and interrogated by the Criminal Investigations Directorate for 11 days during which time he was denied access to a lawyer.

According to Mr Alshowaikh, he was blindfolded for ten consecutive days with a dirty piece of cloth, handcuffed from behind, and placed in solitary confinement. During this period, he alleges that he was subjected to physical and verbal abuse, including threats to his family, and forced to sign false confessions under the threat of renewed torture.

On 28 February 2019, a Bahraini court sentenced him to life imprisonment based on coerced confessions and stripped him of his Bahraini citizenship following an unfair trial. He was accused of terrorism-related charges, including possessing unauthorised firearms, despite having been handed over to Bahraini authorities from the Netherlands. He was then sentenced to an additional six years on separate, politically motivated charges.

In October 2023, the European Court of Human Rights [ruled unanimously](#) that the Netherlands was to pay Ali Alshowaikh “50,000 euros (EUR) in respect of non-pecuniary

damage.” The Court concluded that “the Dutch authorities had failed to properly assess the alleged risk to the applicant of ill-treatment before removing him to Bahrain in the context of his last-minute asylum application, in violation of Article 3 (procedural obligations).” The Court also stated that “Dutch authorities’ assessment of risks when expelling a Bahraini national to his country of origin was not rigorous enough.”

Mr Alshowaikh stated that while, according to his family, there was a procedural error during his deportation from the Netherlands and the official responsible was later dismissed — “That mistake destroyed my life, my family, and my future.”

In a recent testimony from Jau Prison on 25 September 2025, Mr Alshowaikh stated:

“My message to the Dutch government is simple: they must take responsibility and act urgently to secure my release before it’s too late.”

Mr Alshowaikh suffers from several medical issues and complains of inadequate access to medical care. Despite repeated requests for access to a specialist for chronic nasal allergies, he has only been provided nasal drops and antihistamines, and his prescriptions dated 25 September 2025 have not been filled. He also suffers from untreated dental issues and while he was referred to the prison clinic twice, he was returned without being examined.

According to Mr Alshowaikh, prolonged isolation and separation from his family have severely affected his mental health. He stated that Bahraini authorities have rejected over ten requests for private family visits without a glass barrier, where he can physically touch his family members; depriving him of hugging his daughter since 2018. He also said that while he was previously interviewed for inclusion in Bahrain’s alternative sentencing measures (open prisons or non-custodial sentences), he received no follow-up from the authorities.

In light of the above, we urgently request the Dutch Government to:

- Make high-level representations, privately and publicly, to the Bahraini government to secure the immediate release of Mr Alshowaikh and, in the meantime, ensure that he is provided with the necessary medical care.

We also urge the Bahraini government to:

- Ensure the safety and humane treatment of all political prisoners on hunger strike in Jau Prison.

Signed by:

Al Amal Center for Human Rights and Justice

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR)

Bahrain Forum for Human Rights

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)

SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights