

# Bahrain: Women Human rights defender Ghada Jamsheer freed from prison

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## **Bahrain: Human rights defender Ghada Jamsheer freed from prison, allowed to work off remainder of her sentence**

Women's rights defender, writer and blogger Ghada Jamsheer was freed on 12 December after four months in prison in Bahrain, after reaching an agreement to work for the rest of her sentence. Jamsheer has been imprisoned at Isa Town Women's Prison since 15 August 2016, serving a combined ten-month sentence relating to her tweets exposing corruption within the management of King Hamad Hospital.

On 7 November 2016, Jamsheer appeared before Judge Mohamed Al-Khalifa of the High Criminal Court of Appeal to request that she be freed due to debilitating rheumatoid arthritis. In addition to the four months served this year, she also served three months in jail after she was first arrested on 15 September 2014 in the case. The Judge agreed to allow her to leave prison and work at a government-appointed job in lieu of remaining in prison to serve the remainder of her sentences, amounting to four months.

On 22 June 2016, Jamsheer was sentenced on appeal to prison by the Second High Criminal Court for four cases of defamation related to her tweets. Jamsheer has 12 charges against her related to this case. She was fined 10,000 dinars (approx. USD\$26,500) for defamation of the management of the hospital. In addition, she was also sentenced to one year in prison (suspended) on trumped up charges of allegedly "assaulting a police officer" while in custody.

Last month, more than 20 rights groups from around the world called for Jamsheer, President of the Women's Petition Committee (WPC), to be freed. [\[1\]](#)

Another 268 individuals also signed GCHR's petition to free her [\[2\]](#)

While welcoming Ghada Jamsheer's release, the GCHR calls on the government of Bahrain to:

1. Overturn the sentences against Ghada Jamsheer, which violate her right to free expression, and don't require her to work off the rest of her sentences;
2. Immediately and unconditionally free all other detained human rights defenders in Bahrain; and
3. End all forms of reprisals against human rights defenders and other activists, including travel bans, in violation of their rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression.

**The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)**

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**P.S.**

\* <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1448>

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## **Footnotes**

[1] See: <http://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1429>

[2] <https://action.manifesta.net/petitions/ask-the-king-of-bahrain-to-stop-persecuting-women-human-rights-defenders>