

Advocacy dossier

Ali Al Hajee

علي الحجي

At liberty **Bahrain**

Ali Al Hajee, a former political prisoner held from 2013 to 2023, was detained in March 2025 over posts on X about political prisoners and human rights. He was released under a residence guarantee on 10 March 2025 while the investigation stays open.

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The case at a glance

Ali Al Hajee, a former political prisoner held from 2013 to 2023, was detained in March 2025 over posts on X about political prisoners and human rights. He was released under a residence guarantee on 10 March 2025 while the investigation stays open.

Status **At liberty**	Arrested **1 Mar 2025**	Country **Bahrain**
Sentence No sentence in the 2025 case, which is under investigation.		
Charges Misuse of social media (posts on X about political prisoners and human rights)		

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Ali Al Hajee and on any family members affected by the same order.

02 Restore valid travel documents and remove any border-watch flags placed in connection with peaceful human rights work.

03 Comply with the ICCPR Article 12 guarantee of freedom of movement.

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Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Arbitrary detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9

Denial of legal counsel International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)

Inhumane detention conditions International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10
UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)

Judicial harassment UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12

Press freedom violation International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19

Travel ban International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12

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How the case unfolded

2013

Arrest

Imprisoned over peaceful protests

Ali Al Hajee was imprisoned on convictions linked to peaceful protests. He spent more than ten years in prison.

2023

Travel ban imposed

Travel ban after release

After his release in June 2023, the authorities placed Al Hajee under a travel ban.

2 June 2023

Conditional release

Released under alternative sentencing

Al Hajee was released under Bahrain's alternative sentencing law after more than ten years in prison.

November 2023

Release

Released after brief detention

Al Hajee was released after his brief detention in November 2023. The exact release date was not reported.

14 November 2023

Arrest

Briefly detained over travel ban request

Al Hajee was briefly detained. He was later prosecuted for 'entering a prohibited area' after asking the authorities to lift his travel ban. The outcome is not known.

28 February 2025

Interrogation

Summoned and interrogated without a lawyer

Al Hajee was summoned in writing to the Criminal Investigation Directorate in Adliya, told to come alone without a lawyer, and interrogated about his posts on X about political prisoners and human rights.

1 March 2025

Arrest

Detention ordered over posts on X

The Public Prosecution ordered Ali Al Hajee detained pending investigation over his posts on X about political prisoners and human rights.

3 March 2025

Context

UN expert raises concern over detention

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders raised concern about Al Hajee's detention.

6 March 2025

Pretrial detention renewed

Detention renewed for 15 days

The Public Prosecution renewed Al Hajee's detention for 15 days.

10 March 2025

Conditional release

Released under conditions

Al Hajee was released under a residence guarantee, which requires him to keep the Public Prosecution informed of his address. The investigation remains open.

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The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: this record was checked against sources up to 18 September 2026. Ali Al Hajee is at liberty under the residence guarantee imposed on his release on 10 March 2025; no charge, trial or closure of the social media investigation has been reported. In 2026 he addressed the UN Human Rights Council on 12 March and 18 September, in statements delivered for Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain.

Background and Work

Ali Al Hajee is a Bahraini human rights defender and former political prisoner. He spent more than ten years in prison, from 2013, on convictions linked to peaceful protests. He was released on 2 June 2023 under Bahrain's alternative sentencing law. Since his release he has used X to campaign for political prisoners, including children, and for the rights of released prisoners to education, housing and work.

Travel Ban and 2023 Detention

After his release, the authorities placed him under a travel ban. On 14 November 2023 he was briefly detained, and he was later prosecuted for "entering a prohibited area" after he asked the authorities to lift the travel ban. The outcome of that case is not known.

2025 Arrest

On 28 February 2025 he was summoned in writing to the Criminal Investigation Directorate in Adliya and told to come alone, without a lawyer. He was interrogated about his posts on X about political prisoners and human rights. On 1 March 2025 the Public Prosecution ordered his detention pending investigation on a charge of misusing social media, and on 6 March it renewed his detention for 15 days. In detention he was denied adequate food and basic hygiene items. On 3 March 2025 the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders raised concern about his detention.

His arrest came as Bahrain hosted Formula 1 pre-season testing, during a wider crackdown on online expression.

Release Under Conditions

He was released on 10 March 2025 under a residence guarantee, which requires him to keep the Public Prosecution informed of his address. The investigation remains open, and no trial has been reported.

Context: Sport, Reputation, and Repression

Bahrain hosts Formula 1 races and related testing as part of a broader strategy to position itself as a regional hub for international business, tourism, and sport. Critics have described this approach as sportswashing, using high-profile events to divert attention from systemic human rights abuses, including the detention of activists, restrictions on assembly and expression, and the denial of fair trial guarantees.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit:https://humena.org/defenders/ali-al-hajee/

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