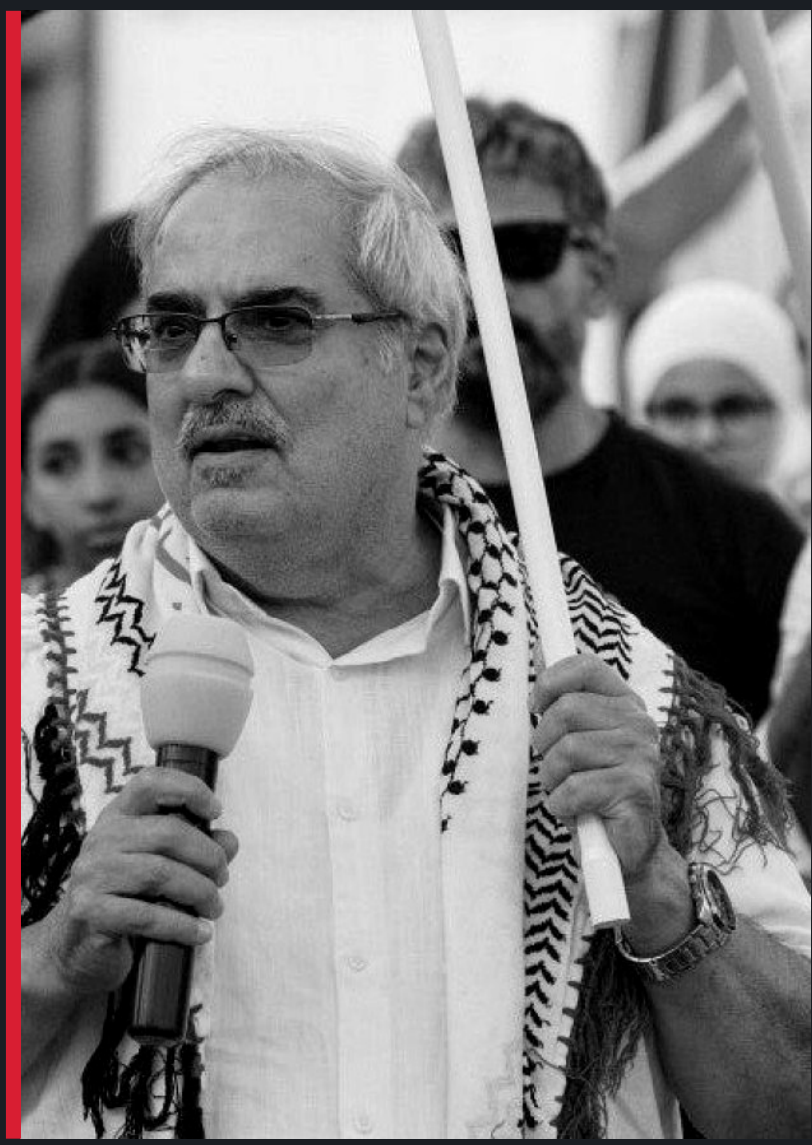


Advocacy dossier

Ebrahim Sharif

إبراهيم شريف

At liberty **Bahrain**

Ebrahim Sharif is a former secretary general of Bahrain's National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad), an opposition group dissolved by court order in 2017, and has been arrested, interrogated or prosecuted at least ten times since 2011 for peaceful political speech. Sentenced to six months in prison over comments on LuaLua TV, he was released on 17 February 2026, when the appeal court upheld the conviction but replaced prison with weekly reporting to the Alternative Penalties Centre.

01

The case at a glance

Ebrahim Sharif is a former secretary general of Bahrain's National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad), an opposition group dissolved by court order in 2017, and has been arrested, interrogated or prosecuted at least ten times since 2011 for peaceful political speech. Sentenced to six months in prison over comments on LuaLua TV, he was released on 17 February 2026, when the appeal court upheld the conviction but replaced prison with weekly reporting to the Alternative Penalties Centre.

Status	Arrested	Country
At liberty	**12 Nov 2025**	**Bahrain**

Sentence	Six months in prison and a fine of 200 Bahraini dinars (8 January 2026); on 17 February 2026 the appeal court upheld the conviction and replaced the prison term with weekly reporting to the Alternative Penalties Centre.
Charges	Spreading false news on social media Making statements deemed offensive to Arab states and their leadership

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Ebrahim Sharif 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.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

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

Denial of family visits UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rule 58

Enforced disappearance International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 2
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 9, 16

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

Prolonged pretrial detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)

Torture Convention against Torture, Articles 1, 2
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7

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

Trial before an exceptional court International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

Unfair trial International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

03

How the case unfolded

2011

Ill-treatment

Torture and ill-treatment in custody

During incommunicado detention, Sharif was subjected to torture including sleep deprivation, beatings, and sexual abuse. He was denied access to family members prior to his first court appearance.

2011

Solitary confinement imposed

Tortured and held in solitary confinement

He was tortured and held in solitary confinement for 56 days without access to a lawyer or any contact with his family.

17 March 2011

Arrest

First arrest during 2011 uprising

Security forces arrested Sharif during Bahrain's pro-democracy uprising for participating in peaceful protests calling for political reform. He was held incommunicado for months and sentenced to five years in prison by a special military court.

22 June 2011

Conviction

Military court sentences Sharif

A special military court sentenced Sharif to five years in prison on politically motivated charges for his participation in peaceful protests.

September 2012

Appeal: judgment upheld

Five-year sentence upheld on appeal

An appeal court upheld his five-year prison sentence.

19 June 2015

Release

Released under a royal pardon

He was released under a royal pardon after four years and three months in prison.

19 June 2015

Pardon

Royal pardon

The king pardoned him before the end of his five-year sentence.

11 July 2015

Re-arrest

Rearrested three weeks after release

He was arrested again over a speech at a memorial for a teenage protester killed in 2012, and accused of inciting hatred and promoting the overthrow of the government.

February 2016

Conviction

Sentenced to one year for inciting hatred

A court sentenced him to one year in prison for inciting hatred, over his July 2015 speech.

July 2016

Conditional release

Released and placed under travel ban

Sharif was released after one year in detention and placed under a travel ban.

November 2016

Case closed or dropped

Charges over Associated Press interview dropped

The charge of inciting hatred brought over his Associated Press interview was dropped about two weeks after his arrest.

13 November 2016

Arrest

Arrested after Associated Press interview

Sharif was arrested after telling the Associated Press that a visit by Prince Charles risked whitewashing Bahrain's crackdown on dissent.

March 2017

Re-arrest

Rearrested over social media posts

Sharif was arrested again on accusations related to social media posts deemed critical of the government.

31 May 2017

Context

Court dissolves his party, Wa'ad

A court dissolved the National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad). The ruling was upheld on appeal in October 2017.

2019

Investigation opened

Prosecuted for peaceful expression

Sharif was prosecuted again in connection with peaceful expression on social media.

December 2023

Context

Briefly detained for criticising government policy

He was held for a short time for criticising government policy.

March 2024

Context

Briefly detained again

He was held for a short time on similar grounds.

12 November 2025

Arrest

Arrested at Bahrain International Airport

Sharif was detained upon his return from Beirut, where he had attended the Arab National Conference. The Ministry of Interior accused him of spreading false news and uttering phrases offensive to Arab states.

13 November 2025

Pretrial detention ordered

Public Prosecution orders pretrial detention

The Public Prosecution ordered Sharif's detention pending investigation into charges of false news and offensive statements.

8 January 2026

Conviction

Lower Criminal Court convicts Sharif

The Lower Criminal Court sentenced Sharif to six months in prison and imposed a fine of 200 Bahraini dinars for an interview he gave to LuaLua TV criticizing Arab governments for failing to support Palestinians and for normalizing relations with Israel.

17 February 2026

Appeal: sentence reduced

Appeal court upholds the conviction and replaces prison with a weekly reporting pledge

17 February 2026

Conditional release

Released; must report weekly to the Alternative Penalties Centre

Released after 97 days; must report weekly to the Alternative Penalties Centre

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: this record was checked against sources up to 22 June 2026. Ebrahim Sharif has been free since 17 February 2026, when the appeal court upheld his conviction over a LuaLua TV interview but replaced the six-month prison term with weekly reporting to the Alternative Penalties Centre; no new arrest has been reported since. His co-defendants in the 2011 Bahrain 13 case Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Abduljalil Al-Singace, Hassan Mushaima and Mohammed Habib Al-Muqdad remain in prison.

Background and Political Work

Ebrahim Sharif is a former secretary general of the National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad), a licensed opposition group until a court dissolved it on 31 May 2017. For more than a decade he has advocated for democratic reform through public speeches, social media commentary, and participation in peaceful political gatherings. His activism forms part of the pro-democracy movement that emerged during Bahrain's 2011 uprising. His work has remained consistently nonviolent.

The 2011 Arrest and Torture

In 2011 Sharif participated in peaceful protests calling for political reform. He was arrested and held incommunicado for months. During this period he was subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including sleep deprivation, beatings, and sexual abuse. He was denied access to family members prior to his first court appearance. A special military court sentenced him to five years in prison. He was released under a royal pardon on 19 June 2015.

The Pattern of Re-Arrest

Three weeks after his 2015 release, Sharif was arrested again for delivering a peaceful speech critical of government policies. Authorities accused him of inciting hatred and encouraging the overthrow of the government. He was released one year later and placed under a travel ban.

In November 2016 he was arrested after telling the Associated Press that a visit by Prince Charles risked whitewashing Bahrain's crackdown on dissent. Charges were dropped two weeks later, but he was rearrested in March 2017 on similar accusations related to social media posts. Between 2017 and November 2025 he was prosecuted or arrested at least three additional times, in 2019, 2023, and 2024, each time in connection with peaceful expression on social media.

The 2025 Airport Arrest and Latest Sentence

On 12 November 2025 Sharif was arrested at Bahrain International Airport upon his return from Beirut, where he had attended the Arab National Conference. The Ministry of Interior announced that he had been detained for spreading false news on social media and uttering phrases offensive to Arab states and their leadership. The following day the Public Prosecution ordered his detention pending investigation.

On 8 January 2026 the Lower Criminal Court sentenced him to six months in prison and imposed a fine of 200 Bahraini dinars. The conviction relates

to an interview he gave to LuaLua TV in Beirut, in which he criticized Arab governments for failing to support Palestinians and for normalizing relations with Israel. According to a Public Prosecution statement on Instagram, Sharif allegedly made false and offensive statements about Arab states, accusing them of collusion and calling on their populations to resist their governments.

On 17 February 2026 the appeal court upheld the conviction but replaced the prison term with weekly reporting to the Alternative Penalties Centre, and he was released.

This is at least the tenth time since 2011 that Bahraini authorities have arrested, interrogated, or prosecuted Sharif for peaceful political expression.

Due-Process Violations

The recurring use of broadly worded national security laws, including charges of inciting hatred, spreading false news, and offending foreign states, demonstrates the absence of effective safeguards for freedom of expression in Bahrain. Sharif's 2011 trial before a military court violated international fair-trial standards. The repeated prosecutions for speech-related offenses constitute a pattern of judicial harassment aimed at deterring him from engaging in political activity.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/ebrahim-sharif/

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