

Bahraini MP offers to post bail for detainees

Arab News - 13 January, 2007

Relatives of two Bahraini detainees arrested last November for possession of anti-government leaflets protested in Manama yesterday calling for their release.

They were joined by MP Jalal Fairouz, of the 17-member Al-Wefaq bloc, who called the prolonged detention unnecessary and offered to post bail.

Dentist Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahlawi, 35, and 32-year-old insurance company employee Hussain AbdulAziz Al-Hebshi were arrested for possession of leaflets.

"The leaflets only expressed a point of view, which is a right guaranteed under the constitution," Fairouz said. "I am willing to post bail for both until they appear in court. They are productive members of the community and represent no danger to anyone." Al-Wefaq, biggest of the opposition groups, plus the leftist Democratic Action Society known as Waad (Promise) and the Haq (Rights), had all called for the release of the two, whom they described as prisoners of conscience.

The two, who were caught with leaflets calling for the boycott of the elections which were held last November, had already appeared in court earlier this week to face charges carrying a maximum sentence of seven years.

The charges are based on Articles (161) and (168) of the Bahraini Penal Code for possession of publications, without legitimate reason, calling for the change of the state system through illegal means and possession of publications containing false news and rumors, which would incite disruption of public security and damage the public interest.