

9 January 2018

Kuwait: Human rights defender Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem on hunger strike in protest at unfair trial

The health of human rights defender, Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem, is at risk since he started a hunger strike on 3 January 2018 at Kuwait Central Prison west of Kuwait city. Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem is a human rights defender in Kuwait and co-founder of the National Committee for Monitoring Violations (NCV). The human rights defender has a record of monitoring demonstrations in order to document violations of the rights to freedom of assembly and association, particularly the excessive use of police force during peaceful demonstrations.

On 3 January 2018, Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem started a hunger strike at Kuwait Central Prison, west of Kuwait city, in protest at the lack of fair trial guarantees throughout the legal proceedings against him. The human rights defender's relatives have further indicated that as a result of the hunger strike, Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem needs to receive IV treatment.

On 27 November 2017 the human rights defender was detained and sentenced on the same day to five years in prison on charges of raiding the Parliament in 2011. Suleiman Yousef bin Jassim had originally been acquitted by the Court of First Instance in 2013 when facing the same allegations with a co-defendant, after evidence supported the fact that they entered the Parliament building to seek refuge from violence outside following a political protest. The human rights defender is currently one of sixty-seven who were sentenced in relation to the case, with charges of "unauthorized assembly" and "destruction of state property."

Front Line Defenders condemns the continued detention of human rights defender Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem which it believes is solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate work for human rights in Kuwait, and calls on the Kuwaiti authorities to immediately release the human rights defender.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Kuwait to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem and quash his conviction;
2. Ensure that Sulaiman Yousif Binjassem receives all necessary medical attention while in detention;
3. Guarantee that human rights defenders in Kuwait are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.