

28 August 2014

Independent Medical Report on Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja

The reports that Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja has resumed hunger strike in Bahrain and has now exhibited blood hypoglycaemia are profoundly disturbing to the international community concerned with humanitarian issues and the upholding of human rights.

In my opinion, he now imminently faces immense life-threatening risks to his life and health. The scientific literature has incontrovertibly established the serious adverse- and potentially fatal-consequences of such a hunger strike, as a result of brain, kidney, liver and heart failure.

In Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja's case these risks are immensely magnified by virtue of his previous extraordinarily prolonged hunger strike, in the course of which he starved for 15 to 16 weeks and lost close to 25% of his body weight.

Medical science has shown that apparent 'recovery' from such a life-threatening event may be followed by significant cognitive damage and critical organ dysfunction.

Therefore the urgent concern now, at the end of August 2014, is that the damaging effects of this new second hunger strike, superimposed on such a previously stressed and almost certainly damaged individual, hugely amplifies the risk of a fatal outcome.

And, disturbingly, such a catastrophic outcome may occur suddenly without warning, or over a much shorter time-frame of abstinence from food and nutrition on this second hunger strike.

There is little time to be lost medically, and I would urge that every effort be made immediately to prevent such a disastrous outcome for Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and his family.

**Professor MX FitzGerald MD FRCP Lond FRCP Ire FRCP Ed**

Diplomate American Boards of Internal and Pulmonary Medicine

Former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine University College Dublin Ireland

Emeritus Professor of Medicine University College Dublin Ireland