

MESA Academic Freedom Award 2023

**MESA's Academic Freedom Award for 2023 goes to Professor Abduljalil Al-Singace for his unwavering courage and steadfastness in the face of more than a decade of repression and torture**

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 Academic Freedom Award: Professor Abduljalil Al-Singace.

Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, a noted human rights activist, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Manchester's Institute of Technology in the United Kingdom. He served as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Bahrain beginning in 1995. He has been a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Bahrain Society for Engineers and a Board member of the Bahrain Academic Society.

"Dr. Al-Singace was jailed solely for the non-violent expression of his political beliefs," noted Laurie Brand, the Chair of MESA's Committee on Academic Freedom. "Over the past decade our committee has written six times to the Bahraini government decrying the conditions of his detention and calling for his release."

Dr. Al-Singace was arrested on 17 March 2011 during the mass demonstrations in Bahrain during the so-called Arab spring. The reason for his arrest was his "reported involvement in peaceful protests and calls for democratic reform." He was then tried before a military court and sentenced to life in prison on charges of attempting to overthrow the government.

The conditions of his imprisonment have been deplorable. He has often been held in solitary confinement in a tiny cell, been denied family visits, and been subjected to repeated verbal, physical and sexual assaults. His health, already compromised by partial paralysis, poliomyelitis, heart and eye problems, has further deteriorated as he has been denied badly needed medical care.

"In selecting Dr. Singace for this award," Brand added, "we hope to highlight the broader conditions of political repression in Bahrain. We also seek to add our voices to those of many human rights, scholarly and other organizations who have called upon the Bahraini government to release Dr. Al-Singace immediately and unconditionally,"