



June 30, 2011

Hon. John Baird, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Lester B. Pearson Building, Tower A  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Minister:

As you may know, 24 doctors and 23 nurses in Bahrain were arrested this spring, detained for several weeks, and charged with undertaking anti-state activities for providing care to injured protesters. They are now facing closed-door civilian trials. The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) is urging you to voice Canada's concerns over the treatment and trial of these 47 medical professionals as well as the closed-door nature of the trials.

Doctors and nurses have an ethical duty to care for patients irrespective of such factors as race or political affiliation. The Geneva Conventions, of which Bahrain is a signatory, contain established standards and protocols to protect health professionals and facilities, as well as patients, from harm during times of conflict. Health professionals must be free to protect the wounded and sick during times of peace, as well as times of conflict, without fear of interference or repercussion from state forces. No health professional should be put on trial for caring for those who are injured or ill. It is essential that the neutrality of health professionals be respected by state and non-state actors throughout the world in all circumstances.

CNA would like Canada to be represented at the trials, and we call on you to seek a formal request for one or more representatives of the Consulate of Canada to Bahrain to attend the trials. Further, we request that you formally call on the authorities in Bahrain to ensure a fair and public trial.

We appreciate your consideration of this request, and look forward to hearing your thoughts on this critical matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Judith Shamian".

Judith Shamian, RN, PhD, LLD (hon), D.Sci. (hon), FAAN  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rachel Bard".

Rachel Bard, RN, M.A.Ed.  
Chief Executive Officer

*CNA is the national professional voice of registered nurses in Canada. A federation of 11 provincial and territorial nursing associations and colleges representing 143,843 registered nurses, CNA advances the practice and profession of nursing to improve health outcomes and strengthen Canada's publicly funded, not-for-profit health system.*

