



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

BAHRAIN = REPRESSION

Bahrain has continued its downward spiral on human rights with heightened crackdown against human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organizations. At this point the outcry and relentless advocacy for the promotion and protection of human rights in Bahrain is met with empty promise for reform, deafening international silence and severe government repression.

Bahrain has become the poster child for repression and persecution of dissents – systemic targeting of human rights activists and journalists has substantially increased since the peaceful popular movement of the Bahraini people which started on 14 February 2011. The targets of the regime's repressive measure include human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, political activists, Shia clerics and peaceful protesters. The human rights defenders and journalists who are not already in jail or on exile are continuously harassed and intimidated in the form of travel ban, citizenship revocation, arbitrary detention and torture. This is designed to isolate the human rights movement and cut its links with the international human rights mechanisms in particular the United Nations. Travel ban is imposed on all human rights defenders, preventing them from participating in the activities of the three sessions held each year at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva. As well, international NGOs and journalists, along with UN experts, cannot freely visit Bahrain.

As well several Bahraini Human Rights groups and activists accused Bahrain's National Security Agency of torture in their report entitled "Death Chamber". These claims are substantiated by various Human Rights activist on the ground as well as Human Rights groups. Ebtisam El Saegh, Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Naji Fateel are only few examples of the many prisoners of conscience and activists who have been subjected to atrocious acts of torture by the NSA paying the heavy price for freedom.

To illustrate, in January, May, and June 2017, the Bahraini regime executed three Shia young men and closed the secular, liberal National Democratic Society (Wa'ad), because it protested the executions, and al-Wasat, the only independent newspaper in the country. Following this a series of de facto travel bans were placed on human rights activists by the government to block them from attending relevant human rights meetings outside of the country. Further, the regime's courts, following a partial and biased military trial sentenced over 10 activists. As expected the Bahraini government's repressive hands did not stop there, families and relatives of activists are also the part of the target. In addition 156 Bahrainis have been stripped of their nationality; thereby rendering them stateless persons.

Just this week "A Danish MP and an Irish human rights activist have been denied entry to Bahrain after they cited their reason as visiting a prominent Bahraini prisoner. Lars Aslan Rasmussen and Brain Dooley wrote on their visa application "To visit jailed human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja" as the purpose of their visit.

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¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/danish-mp-irish-activist-denied-entry-bahrain-180404123228961.html>



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@dooley_dooley wrote on his twitter following his failed attempted to visit human rights activist Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja

"Happy 57th birthday to jailed #Bahrain human rights icon Abdulhadi Al Khawaja; @lars_aslan & I tried to visit you today but we've been confined to the airport since we arrived here 22 hours ago. Hope we can all be together & free for your 58th."

Dooley has reported that the security officials at the airport repeatedly told them that they are "security risks". They have not been granted entry and their passports were held hostage by Bahrain security forces for over 24 hours.



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https://twitter.com/MARYAMALKHAWAJA/status/981313494552399883/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aljazeera.com%2Fnews%2F2018%2F04%2Fdanish-mp-irish-activist-denied-entry-bahrain-180404123228961.html

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From left to right, Lars Aslan Rasmussen, Brain Dooley

Such act of arbitrary detention has become the norm for Bahrain nowadays and goes to show how much the regime has to hide from the international community.

ICSFT urges countries like the UK, USA and other countries that have leverage over Bahrain to speak out in the face of the disastrous decline in human rights in the country over the past seven years. The silence and inaction has effectively encouraged the government to intensify its repressive measures to silence the few remaining voices of dissent.

We call on the government of Bahrain to give unconditional access to Lars Aslan Rasmussen and Brain Dooley, and duly overturn the convictions, following unfair trials, of demonstrators and human rights defenders and activists.

Most importantly ICSFT urges the government of Bahrain to respect the right to freedom of expression and opinion for all people in Bahrain, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Constitution.