



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

BAHRAIN: 8+ YEARS OF OPRESSION AND RIGHTS ABUSES

Bahrain continue to punish rights related to freedom of expression with complete impunity. Human rights defenders, rights groups and opposition political leaders are targeted, harassed and convicted under the disguise of securing nation and regional peace and order. The international community including the UN has failed to hold perpetrators accountable for rights violations including, torture and other ill-treatment. Through the vague and overly broad definitions of terrorism in the Terrorist Act authorities continue to imprison activists, journalists and their families. Sayed Ahmed al-Mousawi, Hassan Mushaima, Nabeel Rajab, Sheikh Ali Salman are just a few of the prominent rights activists and opposition leaders languishing in prison for criticizing the authorities.

Bahraini authorities regularly subject dissents to judicial harassment, including harsh prison sentences on fabricated charges related to their work. Individuals accused of terror crimes under the kingdom's overly broad anti-terror legislation commonly face citizenship revocation as well, often rendering them stateless and unable to gain access to government resources. Since January 2018 Bahraini courts have stripped at least 243 people of their citizenship, including activists, leaving most of them effectively stateless, of which authorities deported at least 8 people after stripping their citizenship. As part of a wide-ranging crackdown on freedom of expression, Bahrain ended a de facto seven-year moratorium in January 2017 when it executed three Shia men. As of now Bahraini prisons held 14 people on death row.

As such, Sayed Ahmed Al-Wadaei's, families, director of the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) and a prominent exiled activist, continue to be targeted by the authorities for his human rights related work- including arbitrary detention, unfair trial, ill-treatment and possible torture. Duaa Al-Wadaei, his wife, was sentenced to two months for allegedly insulting an officer, three of Al-Wadaei's other relatives are serving prison terms after authorities sentenced them in October



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2017 on dubious terrorism-related charges that appear to have been filed in reprisal against his human rights work. And more often than not they are tortured and convicted after a flawed trial. Although the Bahraini authorities turn a deaf ear to the international plea to release Al-Wadaei's family, the United Nations working group on arbitrary detention confirmed that Mr Al-wadaei's family were "deprived of their liberty, interrogated and prosecuted for their family ties with Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei and that these were acts of reprisal".

Outside of its borders Bahrain continues to participate in the Saudi Arabia-led coalition military operations in Yemen that has caused the world's worst human rights and humanitarian catastrophe.

In addition to rights groups and activists international institutions including the European Parliament condemn Bahrian for its rights abuses. The parliament passed a resolution on June 14 on the human rights situation in Bahrain that called on the government to release all political activists and human rights defenders, it also condemned the high number of death sentences and criticized the stripping of citizenship as a means of reprisal. This call has been echoed by the current UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and her predecessor, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

The dominant culture of impunity that drives the continued suppression of freedom of expression has to end. ICSFT urges Bahrain to immediately lift its restrictions on rights related to freedom of expression, and release all imprisoned activists, opposition political leaders, and revoke its discriminatory legislation, including anti-terror legislation.

Most importantly, western countries including the UK should uphold their responsibility to promote and protect human rights defenders and press Bahrain to stop persecution of and release prisoners of conscience, their support to Bahrain should be conditional on Bahrain's adherence to its international human rights obligations.



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