

Bahrain: Torture is the Policy and Impunity is the Norm

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BAHRAIN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Defending and promoting human rights in Bahrain



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I. Introduction

Bahrain has witnessed several uprisings throughout its contemporary history. Since before its independence, different popular movements have sought the same goal; a democratic society with equal rights. These peaceful movements have been faced with force and resulted in increased repression. The last popular movement of February 2011 was no different.

From the first day of the 2011 popular movement, the Bahraini government chose to resort to force to end the peaceful demonstrations. Many protesters were killed because of the security forces' brutality, either on the streets or under torture in the detention centres. Local and international reports have documented hundreds of cases of torture and ill-treatment. The UN concerned bodies and different international organisations have called on the Bahraini government to address the violations and end impunity. Almost a decade has passed since 14 February 2011, and nothing has changed.

Under international law, Bahrain has an obligation to address torture and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment. Although, since 2011, Bahrain has introduced several reforms to address illegal practices committed by its security forces, torture is widespread and systematic. According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR)'s documentation, almost every person who has been arrested as a result of the 2011 popular movement was subjected to different levels of ill-treatment during arrest, interrogation, pretrial detention, or in prison.

The security forces tortured detainees either to extract confessions or as a punishment for participating in the peaceful protests. Different types of physical and psychological torture were committed against detainees in different police stations, security apparatus' premises, detention centres, and prisons.

The security forces have not spared prominent opposition figures and civil society activists from torture and degrading treatment. This report details the cases of 24 opposition figures and civil society activists, in addition to dozens of cases of convicted political prisoners.

The Bahraini law prohibits torture and stipulates life imprisonment for those who commit torture that leads to death. Despite thousands of torture cases, convictions for perpetrators have been low with light prison sentences, even if torture has led to death. In Bahrain, impunity seems the norm. The government has not taken any serious and effective steps to end either torture or impunity. Therefore, it appears that the reforms undertaken by the government are misleading, as there is no genuine intention to stop the violations committed against detainees, who are punished for the exercise of their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association, guaranteed by all international human rights conventions.

II. Methodology and Resources

This report was written and researched by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) in cooperation with the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) through a project funded by the European Union to address torture and accountability in the Gulf region.

The report presents some cases and testimonies documented by BCHR and several partners.

Most of the information included in this report has already been published by investigations, news, and reports on this matter. BCHR backed its research with documents that included:

- United Nations human rights texts, treaties and conventions, and bodies' reports; monitoring human rights situation in Bahrain, especially the Committee against Torture (CAT).
- Reports published by local and international partners.
- Official state reports.
- The report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI).
- Documentation, photos, and video recordings, whether they were publicly posted on the internet or in the possession of BCHR.
- Interviews with torture survivors and witnesses.

It is important though to draw attention to the fact that this was not easy whatsoever to interview survivors of torture, because the majority refused to speak out of fear of retaliation. Therefore, BCHR decided to keep the identities of some survivors anonymous unless they gave permission.

III. Main Acronyms

BCHR	Bahrain Center for Human Rights
GCHR	Gulf Center for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
NSA	National Security Agency
UNCAT	United Nations Convention against Torture
MoI	Ministry of Interior
BICI	Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CID	Criminal Investigations Directorate
HRD	Human Rights Defender
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council

IV. Background

The Bahraini struggle for freedom, democracy, and social justice traces back to the 1920s when citizens were fighting against injustice and calling for independence from the British colonisation. At the time and till this day, citizens have been demanding the establishment of a democratic state with equal citizenship premised on equal participatory rights in the political, economic, and social decision-making process, in which every citizen has a voice.

The struggle to achieve these legitimate demands continued in the 1960s. On 5 March 1965, an uprising broke out,¹ calling for the end of the British presence in Bahrain, in which six people were victims of extrajudicial killing; they are Abdullah Hussein Najem, Abdullah Saeed Al-Ghanim, Faisal Al-Qassab, Abdul Nabi Sarhan, Abdullah Sarhan, and Jassim Abdullah.

On 14 August 1971, Bahrain gained independence, with no changes concerning human rights. Injustices evoked labour strikes, which demanded the abolition of laws restricting freedoms and entrenching injustice, especially the State Security Law.²

¹ The uprising of March 1965, an immortal event from our national history, Sanawat Al Jareesh, 9 March 2013, <http://www.jasblog.com/wp/?p=6133>, [Arabic]

² Decree-Law on State Security Measures, Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission, 2005, <https://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/LegislationSearchDetails.aspx?id=5682#.WXeD4oSGPIV>, [Arabic]

In response, the government pledged to move the country to a new era based on democracy and respect for human rights. However, the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of the constitution in 1975 proved the government was not serious about conducting political reforms. The government chose to resort to force to quash dissent by promulgating the decree-law on state security measures, under which grave human rights violations were committed.

Hundreds of people were killed after being imprisoned on charges of violating the national law and public order. Mohammed Bu Nafoor, Mohamed Ghuloom Bucheeri, Saeed Abdallah Al-Awainati, and others were killed as a result of torture carried out by the security agencies at the time.

In the 1980s, as the protests escalated, the government stepped up its brutal crackdown. The aggressive security agencies intensified raids, mass arrests, assassinations, enforced disappearances, and torture. This round of repression resulted in numerous revocations of citizenships, the banishment of entire families, attacks on religious ceremonies, and massive defamation campaigns against dissidents. The security agencies killed many citizens in prison, most notably: Jameel Al-Ali, Karim Al-Habashi, Shaikh Jamal Al-Asfoor, Hashim Al-Ali, Redha Zaineddin, and Shaikh Abbas Al-Rusti. At the time, many persons were arrested and tried based on confessions extracted under severe torture.

The number of detainees held by the security agencies had risen to more than 3,000 people by the mid-1990s. This policy of the iron grip continued, in which expressing an opinion was considered a ‘terrorist act’. In this decade, many lost their lives as a result of the security forces’ brutality, such as Saeed Al-Shafiee, Ali Al-Sayed Amin, Nooh Al-Nooh, and many others.

After King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa succeeded his father as the nation’s ruler in March 1999, the government carried out extensive political reforms and undertook significant steps to halt torture and other forms of ill-treatment by security officials. The steps taken included:

- Abolishing the State Security Court;
- Abolishing the National Security Law;
- Releasing more than 3000 political prisoners;
- Allowing all those living in involuntary exile to return to the country;
- Permitting the freedom of association.

In February 2001, Bahrainis approved a referendum on the National Action Charter promising democratic reforms.³ The following year, Bahrain held its first National Assembly elections after the parliament was suspended for more than a quarter of a century. However, after a short period of peace, notably by the end of 2007 the government had restored its repressive policies, and reports of torture and ill-treatment during interrogations had started to come up.

At the beginning of the recent popular movement on 14 February 2011, countless human rights violations were committed by members of the security agencies in Bahrain against peaceful protesters. From the beginning, the security forces resorted to lethal force to end the demonstrations, using tear gas, rubber bullets, and shotgun pellets. However, the crackdown significantly intensified after the declaration of a state of emergency on 15 March 2011. Many people were killed, such as Kareem Fakhrawi, Zakaria Al-Asheeri, and Jaber Al-Alaiwat. Thousands were arrested and tried for charges based on confessions extracted under torture. Thousands of employees were dismissed for their participation in the peaceful protests, many of whom have not been reinstated till today. In its crackdown campaign, the government banned opposition groups, arrested human rights defenders

³ Explanatory note to the amended Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain issued in 2002, Legislation & Legal Opinion Commission, 2002, <http://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/93.aspx?cms=iQRpheuphYtJ6pyXUGiNqiE9wn3faJCY>, [Arabic]

(HRDs) and opposition figures, shut down independent newspapers, intimidated medical professionals to stop treating the wounded, and destroyed places of worship.

Today, the detention centres are overcrowded with political prisoners, HRDs and activists; many other activists are banished and persecuted; hundreds of Bahrainis are denaturalised. Amid the lack of accountability and widespread impunity, these practices are still pervasive over nine years after the uprising.

V. Bahrain's International Obligations Regarding Torture

International law is decisive in prohibiting all types of torture. Freedom from torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment is an uncontested human right. International law has set out a comprehensive legal framework for torture prohibition, in addition to legally non-binding instruments, which serve as guidelines for UN member states.

Bahrain is a party to several international conventions prohibiting torture, mainly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),⁴ ratified by Bahrain on 20 September 2006, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), to which Bahrain has been a party since 1998. Bahrain also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 22 September 2011, which bans torture under Article 15.

Under the UNCAT, which is the main international legal instrument prohibiting torture, Bahrain should take “effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction.”⁵ It has to ensure all acts of torture are offenses punishable by appropriate penalties, and it has to educate persons “who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention, or imprisonment” regarding the prohibition against torture.⁶

Regrettably, the ratification of these conventions was not accompanied by genuine adherence to their provisions.

The Bahraini government carried out numerous reforms in compliance with its international obligations and in response to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI),⁷ such as amending articles of its penal code, establishing the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims, and adopting a Code of Conduct for Police Officers in January 2012. The government is working tirelessly to promote the idea that it is training and rehabilitating its security forces to enhance their performance concerning human rights. However, the implementation of these reforms is questionable in light of the extensive violations and the extremely low number of convictions for perpetrators.

The UN Committee against Torture, in its concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports on Bahrain in 2017, expressed its concern about “discrepancy between the legislative and institutional frameworks and their implementation in practice.” The Committee pointed to consistent allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment at the Criminal Investigations

⁴ United Nations Human Rights, Office of High Commissioner, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 23 March 1976.

⁵ Article 2 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

⁶ Article 4 and 10 of the same Convention.

⁷ The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry was established by the King of Bahrain on 29 June 2011 mandated with looking into the incidents that occurred during the Bahrain uprising, particularly from February to March 2011, and the consequences of these events.

Directorate (CID), at the moment of arrest, during pretrial detention and in prisons “to extract confessions or as punishment.”⁸

Although under the UNCAT Bahrain should ensure that “any statement which is established to have been made as a result of torture shall not be invoked as evidence in any proceedings,”⁹ hundreds of convictions have been made based upon coerced confessions, several of which have led to lengthy prison terms and even executions. (This report will discuss a number of them later in detail). Moreover, no one has been prosecuted and punished for extracting confessions, according to the UN Committee against Torture, which also stated its concern “at the widespread acceptance by judges of forced confessions.”

The BICI report also reveals the widespread torture and ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners. The report documents five deaths attributed to torture in the custody of the security forces in 2011; four in April and one in June. The report states that the BICI received 559 complaints concerning the mistreatment of persons in custody during the period between February and April 2011, the majority of whom were Shia Muslims, and it concludes that “Many detainees were subjected to torture and other forms of physical and psychological abuse while in custody. This again indicates certain patterns of behaviour by certain government agencies.”¹⁰

The Bahraini constitution prohibits torture; under Article 19, “No person shall be subjected to physical or mental torture, or inducement, or undignified treatment and the penalty for so doing shall be specified by law.” The penal code is also unequivocal in prohibiting torture.¹¹ Article 208 stipulates: “A prison sentence shall be the penalty for every civil servant or officer entrusted with a public service who uses torture, force or threat, either personally or through a third party, against an accused person, witness or expert to force him to admit having committed a crime or give statements or information in respect thereof. The penalty shall be life imprisonment should the use of torture or force lead to death.” Also, under Article 232, “A prison sentence shall be the penalty for any person who uses torture, force or threatens to use them, either personally or through a third party, against an accused person...”

Nonetheless, the few prosecutions of perpetrators of torture have resulted in acquittals and light sentences and focused on low-ranking officers. No one has been sentenced to life imprisonment for torturing detainees to death. In one case, two officers who beat Ali Saqer to death were sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment by the trial court, commuted later to two years by the appeals court. While many are serving life in prison in Bahrain for voicing dissent, perpetrators of torture resulting in death have received only two years in prison.¹²

Although torture is explicitly prohibited under the Bahraini law, its use is pervasive, systematic, and deliberate. Many international reports exposed a pattern of mistreatment for detainees and common techniques. It also revealed that most of the detainees were tortured to extract confessions, which were later used in criminal proceedings. In fact, these illegal practices have gone unpunished before and after Bahrain’s ratification of international conventions that prohibit torture. A climate of impunity is what allows torture to take place.

⁸ The UN Committee against Torture in its concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports on Bahrain, 29 May 2017.

⁹ Article 15 of the Convention against Torture.

¹⁰ Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, 23 November 2011, <http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf>

¹¹ Bahrain Penal Code 1976, BCHR, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/Bahrain-Penal-Code.doc>

¹² Criminalizing Dissent, Entrenching Impunity: Persistent Failures of the Bahraini Justice System Since the BICI Report, Human Rights Watch, 28 May 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/28/criminalizing-dissent-entrenching-impunity/persistent-failures-bahraini-justice>

VI. Practices of the Security Agencies in Detention Centres

The UNCAT defines torture as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.”

During the 2011 popular movement, most of the detainees and prisoners were arrested at midnight without a warrant by groups of masked security forces who raided their homes and took them to unknown destinations, where they were held *incommunicado*. The majority alleged that they were severely tortured during the first days of detention by security officers. Moreover, they were not allowed access to their lawyers nor to speak to their families during the investigation. A great number of those who were arrested did not know their charges till the first hearing. Also, some of the detainees were forced to sign blank papers. The coerced confessions extracted from the detainees were later used in their convictions; and the trials absolutely lacked due process.

According to testimonies from present and former detainees, BCHR listed the detention centres of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) where abuses and violations against detainees were committed as well as the most common torture methods used by the security officers.

The detention centres include:

- The current headquarters of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Muharraq;
- The headquarter of the NSA (*basement*) in Al-Qala’a;
- The Dry Dock Detention Centre (*a short-term detention unit*);
- Jau Central Prison;
- Hamad Town Police Station (Roundabout 17);
- Al-Hooria Police Station;
- Isa Women's Detention Centre;
- Nabih Saleh Police Station;
- Al-Hid Prison;
- Al-Noaim Police Station;
- Qudaibiya Police Station;
- Rifa’a Police Station;
- Samaheej Police Station;
- Sitra Police Station;
- Umm Al-Hassam Police Station;
- Ghuraifa Police Station;
- Al-Wusta Central Province Police Station;
- Asri Prison;
- Al-Budaiya Police Station;
- Exhibition Police Station.

According to testimonies from a number of civil society activists, room number 1 in the third floor of the security compound in Muharraq city is where the NSA carried out interrogations with activists during which the following usually took place:

- Interrogation for prolonged hours while blindfolded;
- No lawyer allowed to follow the proceedings of the investigations;
- Severe beatings;

- Insulting the detainees' beliefs and religion;
- Personal insult and humiliation;
- Psychological torture, especially the threat of rape;
- Verbal harassment, sexual assault, and being stripped naked;
- Electrocuting detainees;
- Intimidating detainees and threatening them with targeting members of their families if they don't stop their activism;
- Forcing detainees to publicly announce that they have stopped their human rights work.

More practices amounting to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as defined by the UNCAT, included:

- Hitting feet with rubber hoses and/or batons;
- Slapping and kicking the detainees and beating them with tools;
- Forcing detainees to stand for long periods;
- Blindfolding and handcuffing for extended periods of time;
- Threatening detainees with death;
- Holding detainees in painful positions;
- Hanging detainees by their hands and feet;
- Exposure to extreme temperatures;
- Sexual abuse and humiliation (including forced nudity);
- Refusing to give prisoners access to toilet facilities for prolonged periods;
- Refusing to give prisoners access to clean water for drinking and washing;
- Verbal abuse;
- Psychological torture (sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, intimidation, etc.).

Moreover, according to medical reports, victims' injuries included:

- Scars, which are consistent signs of physical abuse;
- Bruising caused by beatings;
- Scars around the wrists caused by the placement of tight instruments around the wrists (not the normal use of restraints);
- Shoulder joint dysfunction, which leads to reduced movement;
- Disturbances in the collarbone;
- Burns.

BCHR has also to point out that many current and former detainees suffer from permanent damage caused by torture (see the Victims and Survivors' section for more details).

VII. The Officials Involved in Torture Practices

It should be noted that the government of Bahrain is promoting a policy of impunity and always seeks to amend its law accordingly. Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa issued a decree (Royal Decree 56 of 2002) granting personnel from the NSA, the most powerful security agency in Bahrain, immunity from prosecution for human rights violations committed before the year 2001.

Over the years, many names of those involved in torture have circulated in Bahrain. Their names have become known not because of convictions or official punishment but rather from the testimonies of those released from prison. These perpetrators either tortured political prisoners themselves or supervised the torture, and others were involved to varying degrees. This report names a number of them:

Ian Stuart Henderson (deceased)

Ian Henderson's died in 2013, yet should be named for institutionalising torture in the Bahraini security services.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Henderson was the Director-General of the State Security Investigation Department in Bahrain and adviser to the Minister of Interior and the person responsible for torturing Bahraini opposition. He joined the State Security Agency on 23 April 1966, and was disqualified from his post on 3 July 2000.

Members of the opposition oppressed by Henderson have delivered most of the information we have today about him. Human rights activists reveal that Henderson was the reason behind the killing of dozens and therefore has reinforced the culture of extrajudicial killings in the security services.

He was brought from the United Kingdom to crackdown on dissidents in Bahrain after his glory in suppressing Kenyan rebels in the 1950s. The security agency in Bahrain, which was led by Henderson, led harsh repressive practices and gross violations of human rights at the time.

The British officer was the first man in the private security agency for 30 years of Bahrain's history. He reshuffled the State Security Investigation Department, which was founded in 1957, and headed the Secret Intelligence Service to surveil politicians until 2000.

Henderson's oppressive behavior in dealing with dissidents is quite popular; he supervised with his "partner in crime", officer Adel Fleifel, many operations during the uprising of the 1990s. Henderson conducted a series of dialogues in prison with opposition leaders during the 1990s uprising.

He was able to recruit some dissidents as informers. Many witnesses said that he didn't practice torture himself but rather relied on agents acting on his behalf to practice the actual act of torture on detainees and prisoners. Henderson preferred to look like the "negotiator", who proposed solutions while hiding behind his tactics of repression and aggression.

Henderson received numerous awards from representatives of the government in Bahrain. On 20 January 1982, he was awarded the First-Class Military Service medal by the former Emir Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa. In 1983, he was awarded the First Order of Bahrain and later in 2000, the Sheikh Isa Medal of First Class by the current king.

On 22 February 1998, and more precisely two weeks before Bahrain signed the Convention against Torture, in Geneva, it did announce Henderson's retirement. On 7 January 2000, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw stated that the Organised Crime Section of the Metropolitan Police in London had opened an investigation into the involvement of Henderson in widespread human rights violations.

Henderson retired in 1998, but the Government of Bahrain assigned him as an adviser to the interior minister. Henderson, who was the engineer of the systematic torture in Bahrain died on 13 April 2013 in Bahrain, at the age of 86 years, without being held accountable for his crimes.¹³

Adel Jassim Mohamed Fleifel

Adel Jassim Mohamed Fleifel's has built a reputation in almost every act of torture in Bahrain between the years 1980 and 1997. He personally committed and oversaw acts of torture on both physical and psychological levels.

Fleifel was Ian Henderson's right-hand and reputed for his malicious tactics of psychological torture. He used to threaten detainees with assault and used to stare and smile viciously at detainees'

¹³ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

while being sexually assaulted. Fleifel electrocuted, extracted nails, and used hot metal sticks during his sessions of interrogation.¹⁴

After being sent to retirement in 2002, and due to local pressure and protests, Fleifel fled to Australia.

Khaled Al-Wazzan

Khaled Al-Wazzan is one of the most prominent perpetrators of torture in Bahrain and another colleague of Ian Henderson and Adel Fleifel. He carried out all forms of torture against prisoners of conscience, such as beatings with batons on feet, better known by “*Falaqa*”, and hanging detainees from their hands or feet.

Al-Wazzan carried out raids on houses in the early hours of dawn. He was involved in vandalising these houses and terrorising their owners.

Witnesses confirmed that he sexually assaulted 17-year-old Saied Al-Eskafi, who had been arrested from his home in the village of Sanabis. Al-Eskafi died on 8 July 1995 while in custody, a week after his arrest and torture. One of Al-Wazzan’s victims, who also witnessed the incident, recounts that Al-Wazzan was mercilessly beating Al-Eskafi with a heavy wooden stick all over his body. The boy died while Khaled Al-Wazzan was torturing him.

Al-Wazzan’s name was again brought up in the torture case of Nooh Khalil Al-Nooh, who was 22-years-old at the time of torture. Nooh suffered the same fate as Saied on 21 July 1998 less than seven days after he was detained.

Reports confirm that he personally committed torture, whether in Al-Khamis Police Centre, in the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) or in Al-Qalaa (the Command Centre of the State Security Agency). The testimonies indicate that Al-Wazzan used to severely torture detainees of Muharraq city to force them to give false confessions.¹⁵

Bassam Mohammed Khamis Al-Maeraj

One of the interrogators involved in torture and ill-treatment of detainees, Bassam Al-Maeraj used to psychologically torture detainees, mainly by threatening them with assault on their wives, mothers or sisters, in order to extract false confessions. Al-Maeraj with Fahad Al-Fadhala and other officers, witnessed an assault on an activist stripped naked, and raped using a baton while handcuffed.¹⁶

Khalid Abdullah Saqer Al-Maawda

With Khaled Al-Wazzan, Khalid Al-Maawda was a subordinate of the notorious officer Adel Fleifel in the 1990s. He accompanied both Fleifel and Al-Wazzan in all their raids to arrest citizens and torture them to exert confessions. He has been known to quench cigarette ends on parts of detainees’ bodies. He used to delight in competing with Al-Wazzan to inflict the utmost harm on detainees.¹⁷

Abdulaziz Atiyatullah Al-Khalifa

Abdulaziz Atiyatullah Al-Khalifa was the head of a so-called Security Committee. This Committee had a number of internal officers who investigated detainees during the events of the 1990s. He was personally involved in torture. Al-Khalifa was the first chief of NSA, with the rank of Minister, after its formation on 8 May 2002.¹⁸

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

To save him from prosecution, especially after the growing public anger against him, his job post was changed in 2005, from being the Chief of the NSA to the Prime Minister's Adviser for Security Affairs, with a rank of minister as well.

Farooq Salman Jassim Al-Maawda

Farooq Al-Maawda was director of the CID, which has an investigation centre where torture is widely practiced and is almost systematic. The authorities have honoured Al-Maawda with many rewards in recognition of his efforts in various positions he has held.¹⁹

Khalifa Ali Rashid Al-Khalifa

Khalifa Ali Rashid Al-Khalifa is the former chief of the NSA, from 26 September 2005 until 3 July 2008. He arrested many political activists and human rights defenders (HRDs), whose many testimonies reveal that they were subjected to torture and ill-treatment.²⁰

Talal bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa

Talal bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa is the second son of former Minister of Interior Mohammed Al-Khalifa and the younger brother of Bahrain's ambassador to Britain Fawaz Al-Khalifa. He assumed his duties following the Royal Decree No. 66 of 2016 and was appointed head of the NSA. Human rights activists say he has been involved in numerous human rights abuses committed by the NSA. He is accused of torturing dissidents by using various means, notably electric shocks, to extract confessions.²¹

Fahad Abdullah Al-Fadhala

Fahad Abdullah Al-Fadhala's name emerged distinctively in the practice of torture alongside Isa Al-Majali and Bassam Al-Maaraj. He was the one to accompany detainees when taken to the Public Prosecutor's Office. He used to torture and beat those who refused to sign false confessions or who dared to refuse the charges against them.

Testimonies reveal that he threatened detainees with his weapon. There are allegations that he is responsible for the disappearance of several persons through made-up events. Testimonies also confirmed that he and Al-Majali raped several detainees with wooden sticks to force them to confess to false charges.²²

Isa Awad Talal Al-Majali

A Jordanian who got naturalised in Bahrain, Isa Awad Talal Al-Majali worked in the CID at the rank of lieutenant. He was responsible for terrorizing and demoralizing the detainees, before starting the interrogation with them.

Al-Majali is known for his use of slanderous and contemptuous language with detainees, insulting the honor of their mothers, sisters and wives, besides ridiculing and mocking their religious beliefs. He has witnessed the torture of many activists and human rights defenders in person.²³

Isa Sultan Al-Sulaiti

Isa Sultan Al-Sulaiti's role has emerged in helping his supervisor Al-Wazzan. He led night raids on the activists' homes. He also played a role in interrogating detainees in the villages of Muharraq,

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

specifically the youth of Arad, Dair and Samaheej. Al-Sulaiti uses various means of torture and intimidation methods to force detainees to confess to alleged charges.²⁴

Khalifa Abdullah Mohammed Al-Khalifa

Khalifa Abdullah Mohammed Al-Khalifa was the head of the NSA and responsible for the arrests of political activists and HRDs after he took over from Khalifa Ali Rashid Al-Khalifa.

It is known that he led the process of televised confessions presented on Bahrain state TV, in December 2008, of young people who were subjected to electric shocks and severe torture of what is known as the “detainees of Al-Hujayra”. These false confessions were used to carry out mass arrests of prominent leaders in January 2009, triggering protests in the villages and cities of Bahrain until they were released in April of 2009 after charges were suspended.²⁵

Hassan Ebrahim Al-Bu Ainain

The King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa had issued Decree No. (4) Of 2017 on 12 January 2017, to assign Brigadier General Hassan Ebrahim Ali Al-Bu Ainain as an agent in the NSA, when also Irish judge Green O'Neill rejected request to bring Al-Bu Ainain to trial on the grounds of complaints of torture and torture assistance.

Al-Bu Ainain oversaw prison facility run by the NSA, Al-Qalaa, in there, detainees were subjected to various types of torture and ill treatment including electric shocks, sleep deprivation and beatings on the soles of the feet.

Nevertheless, Swiss prosecutors have launched an investigation into Al-Bu Ainain after a number of survivors testified being tortured and ill-treated under his supervision.²⁶

Captain Bader Ebrahim Habib Al-Ghaith

Captain Bader Ebrahim Habib Al-Ghaith is accused of torturing thirteen prominent political figures (known as the Bahrain 13, mentioned later in the report), and who is specifically responsible for the injuries inflicted on the HRD Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja.²⁷

It is worth mentioning that the persons listed in this report have never been held accountable or prosecuted for the crimes they committed against Bahraini citizens, activists and political opponents. Yet, most of them have been promoted and rewarded by higher posts. Just another stark manifestation of impunity for human rights violations in Bahrain.

VIII. Victims and Survivors of the Practices of the Security Agencies

It is important to note here that the information included in this section of the report is not extremely detailed so as not to make this report too long. We have only provided a short description of the cases and the torture practiced. For more detailed information, extensive reports have been published online by local and international organisations concerning the persons mentioned in this section of the report.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

A. Political Activists and Human Rights Defenders

Shaikh Abdullah Al-Madani (deceased in 1976)

Shaikh Abdullah Al-Madani was an active member of the Arab Nationalist Movement in the 1960s. In 1972, he won the Constituent Assembly elections, which drafted the Constitution of the State of Bahrain. He was elected to the first National Assembly in 1973.²⁸

In September 1973, he founded the first magazine after the independence of the State of Bahrain. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Madani was killed on 18 November 1976, after being abducted from his house by three armed men who forcibly took him under gunpoint to an isolated area in Saar village, and stabbed him in various parts of his body.

Mohamed Ghuloom Bucheeri (deceased in 1976)

Mohamed Bucheeri was active in the movement demanding freedom and democracy. After Shaikh Al-Madani was killed, Bucheeri got arrested and brutally tortured by the intelligence services. Transferred after to the hospital to die on 2 December 1976, after 10 days of ongoing torture.

The intelligence service summoned his father to see his corpse and he was discreetly buried in the cemetery of Manama; his grave is unknown until this day.²⁹

Shaikh Jamal Al-Asfoor (deceased in 1981)

Shaikh Jamal Al-Asfoor was active in the “London group”, later known as the Bahrain Islamic Freedom Movement. Shaikh Al-Asfoor was arrested and severely tortured to death. He was accused of establishing a movement called the “Martyrs' Movement”.³⁰

Abdul Karim Fakhrawi (deceased in 2011)

BCHR documented that on 12 April 2011, Abdul Karim Fakhrawi went to the police station to report that the security forces had raided his house and vandalized it. However, he disappeared for a week. Afterwards, the security authorities called the family to come to pick up his body, claiming that he had died as a result of kidney failure. In the morgue, severe torture scars were obvious on his body. There are eyewitnesses who reported that members of the NSA tortured him severely for a week before he died in custody.

Zakaria Al-Asheeri (deceased in 2011)

BCHR documented that on 2 April 2011, the NSA detained Bahraini journalist Zakaria Al-Asheeri for his relationship with the Committee to Protect Journalists, which documented the abuses against journalists in Bahrain. Nine days after his arrest, Al-Asheeri died as a result of torture and beatings; his body was full of signs of torture.

Bahrain 13 (2011)

The “Bahrain 13” is a group of well-known opposition leaders who were arrested in March and April 2011 after calling for civil and political rights during the 14 February uprising. They are

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

³⁰ *ibid.*

sentenced for up to life imprisonment after being systematically ill-treated and tortured during their arrest and detention period. Their case is locally known as the Case of Icons (Arabic: قضية الرموز) (or the Group of 21 (Arabic: مجموعة الـ 21).³¹

They are: Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Abdul Wahab Hussain, Abduljalil Al-Singace, Hasan Mushaima, Mohammed Hassan Jawad, Ebrahim Sharif, Mohammed Habib Al-Muqdad, Mirza Al-Mahrooz, Abdulhadi Al-Makhdour, Salah Al-Khawaja, Saeed Al-Noori, Mohammed Ali Ismael, and Sheikh Abduljalil Al-Muqdad. More details for some of the cases of the Bahrain 13 are as follows:

- **Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja**

Refer to CASE NO. 8 in the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) dated 3 August 2011.

Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja has been severely beaten throughout his years of activism, arrested in 2004, 2005, and 2006 for protesting, subjected to torture, travel bans, and continuous defamation campaigns. He is the co-founder of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) and BCHR, for which he was also President, and worked for Front Line Defenders. He was arrested on 9 April 2011, and is still behind bars to this day. In his latest arrest, Al-Khawaja reported torture, insult and sexual abuse, lengthy solitary confinement, and the humiliation of being tried in military courts. Bones in his face and jaw were broken when he was arrested and he still requires surgery for it.

The BICI report noted that “Immediately after the arrest, [Al-Khawaja] received a hard blow to the side of his face, which broke his jaw and knocked him to the ground. He was taken to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) clinic and then the Bahrain Defence Forces (BDF) Hospital where he had major jaw surgery for four broken bones in his face.”

In the BDF hospital he was “blindfolded the whole time and handcuffed to the bed with tight cuffs.... Security personnel in the hospital threatened him with sexual abuse and execution. They also made sexual threats against his wife and daughter.”

In prison, he “spent two months in solitary confinement in a small cell measuring approximately 2.5m x 2m... Eight days after his surgery, regular beatings started at night. Masked guards cursed him and hit him in his head and hands, causing swelling. They forced a stick into his anus. He was also beaten on the soles of his feet (*falaqa*) and on his toes.”

Al-Khawaja has also detailed multiple cases of mistreatment and torture of other prisoners in Jau Prison, where he is being held, as listed in a letter published by GCHR on 15 May 2015.³²

- **Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace**

Refer to CASE NO. 7 in the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) dated 3 August 2011.

Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, a blogger, engineer and academic, was sentenced to life in prison for his role during the protests of 2011. In August 2019, GCHR reported that local sources had informed international rights groups that Dr. Al-Singace was suffering from numbness in his fingers and his left hand was shaking, in addition to having prolonged chest pain. GCHR said, “In addition to having post-polio syndrome which requires him to use crutches to walk, he suffers from other health

³¹ Bahrain 13, Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, <http://birdbh.org/bahrain-13/>

³² Bahrain: Open Letter from Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja on his 21st day of hunger strike to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Gulf Centre for Human Rights, 15 May 2015, <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1000>

issues (vertigo, cervical disk herniation, spinal disc herniation) caused by the torture and ill-treatment to which he has been subjected since his arrest in March 2011.”³³

From February 2017 until 2020, Dr. Al-Singace was deprived of family visits, medical treatment, canteen visits to buy hygiene supplies, and all his books were confiscated, in part because he did not follow the rules to wear the prison uniform. The authorities refused to take him outside the prison for medical treatment without the prison uniform and shackles. This treatment is in violation of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules), specifically Rule 47, which states that “The use of chains, irons or other instruments of restraint which are inherently degrading or painful shall be prohibited.”

- **Mohammed Hassan Jawad Parweez**

Refer to CASE NO. 2 in the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) dated 3 August 2011.

Mohammed Hassan Jawad Parweez is a well-known, independent human rights activist, who has campaigned for human rights on behalf of detainees and prisoners. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Jawad was arrested several times including in 2007, when he was hung by his hands for prolonged periods of time.

Armed forces raided his home on 15 December 2010, and took him forcefully for taking part in a peaceful protest in Manama where he was holding a banner with photos of detained HRDs calling for their release.

Jawad was arrested again on 22 March 2011. He testified saying: “After my arrest on 22 March, I stayed for 15 days in Al-Qalaa prison with other detainees which I could not recognize. I was hung from the hands and beaten with hoses as well as electrocuted on my legs with marks still showing on my body. I was also sexually harassed and they took off my clothes and tried to insert a stick into my anus but I fiercely resisted which resulted in me being beaten severely.”

While in prison, Jawad’s health condition has deteriorated significantly. Jawad reported that while at Al-Qalaa prison clinic on 9 April 2012, he was tortured by the King’s son who flogged, beat, and kicked him along with pulling his hair and beard. He is still in prison.

- **Hasan Mushaima**

Just before dawn on 17 March 2011, masked armed forces broke down the door to Hasan Mushaima’s house. They beat Mushaima, blindfolded and handcuffed him before taking him by car to an unknown location. Despite his advanced age and frail health, Mushaima was subjected to all forms of insults, beatings, humiliations, swearing, spitting in his mouth and forcing him to swallow, denied a shower for 10 days, forced to stand for five hours or more, drenched with cold water and then placed under an air conditioning unit, and subjected to sleep deprivation. He is still in prison.

- **Saeed Al-Noori**

During his arrest in 2010, the BCHR received information that Saeed Al-Noori was being subjected to brutal physical and mental torture. He was handcuffed and blindfolded in a solitary cell and was not allowed any food or drinks for extended periods. Torture marks were easily visible on Al-Noori’s body. He was tortured by the so-called ‘Falaqa’ position (tying, securing the feet in stocks, locking the legs into an elevated position, or hanging upside-down and then continuously beat on the feet) until his feet swelled and he was unable to walk. Al-Noori was not allowed to speak to his

³³ Bahrain: Human rights defender and academic Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace needs immediate medical care, Gulf Centre for Human Rights, 25 August 2019, <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/2193>

lawyer alone, and during the interrogation sessions at the Public Prosecution, his lawyer was asked to sit quietly behind Al-Noori so that there would be no eye contact between them.

Al-Noori was released on 28 February 2011, but was arrested again by security forces on 17 March 2011, and was subjected to torture and humiliation again, including stuffing shoes into his mouth and forcing him to stand for prolonged periods. He is still in prison.

- **Mohammed Habib Al-Meqdad**

Mohammed Habib Al-Meqdad is a very famous Shia religious scholar and social activist. He is well known for delivering straightforward speeches that criticize the Bahraini authorities. His speeches aim to raise public awareness on human rights issues and fight poverty and corruption.

Al-Meqdad was first arrested in August 2010. While serving his prison sentence, he was subjected to daily torture and was held in solitary confinement for 60 days. During his trial he was able to show more than 50 traces of electric shocks on his body and was able to produce evidence that a member of the royal family perpetrated his torture. However, the judge denied him his right to testify claiming that “this court has its respect.”

Al-Meqdad was once again arrested on 1 April 2011 for standing against corruption, repression, and violation of human rights in his country. NSA officers dragged Al-Meqdad from the house where he was hiding, stripped him naked and started beating him all over his body when he attempted to cover his private parts with his hands. Horrified and uninterruptedly insulted, he was transferred to “Al Qalaa”, an underground prison.

While in custody, Al-Meqdad was a subject to several methods of torture, including being hung upside down, beaten with hoses on his legs and the soles of his feet for several hours, being forced to gargle with his own urine, being forced to sit naked for extended periods, sleep deprivation, and sexual assault using sticks. He was also electrocuted all over his body and on his genitals. Al-Meqdad was subjected to humiliation and psychological torture when guards spat in his mouth and forced him to swallow, and to kiss their shoes and pictures of the king. He claimed that he was tortured by the son of the king. He is still in prison.

- **Abdul Wahab Hussain**

Abdul Wahab Hussain was repeatedly interrogated, beaten, and subjected to torture by NSA officers during his arrest and detention, he was tortured by a man claiming to be a direct representative of the King. The torture included having cold water poured over him, forcing him to stand for prolonged periods, spitting in his mouth, and forcing him to kiss the shoes of the guards under threat of beating. Hussain was also kept in solitary confinement for weeks. He is still in prison.

Hussain Jawad (2015)

On 16 February 2015, human rights defender and son of prisoner Mohamed Hassan Jawad Parweez, Hussain Jawad was arrested by masked police officers in plain clothes, who searched his house and confiscated his passport and mobile phone. Jawad was not informed about the reason for his arrest. After 10 hours of *incommunicado* detention, he called his wife and informed her that he was detained in the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID). He said to his wife that he was ill-treated in custody.

On 18 February, he was taken to the Public Prosecution without his lawyer or family being informed. The Public Prosecution ordered his release pending trial on charges of “illegal gathering” and “rioting”.

On 21 February Jawad appeared again before the Public Prosecution for another case against him. He suffered from both physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment. He alleged being beaten

and threatened with death. He was reportedly blind-folded, deprived of sleep and drinking water, and forced to constantly stand. He was made to listen to the yells of other inmates who were being electrically shocked, in order to force him into signing confessions.

Furthermore, he was denied the opportunity to go to the bathroom, and was beaten when he requested to do so. He had no contact with his family nor a lawyer, except two calls to his wife. When he informed her in the first call that he was hurt, he suffered retaliation. He was also sexually harassed where he was stripped naked and groped.³⁴

During the interrogation at the Public Prosecution, Jawad appeared to be not fully conscious, hallucinating and falling asleep, and his clothes were covered with urine. He was forced to sign confessions extracted under torture. On 15 December, he was sentenced to five years of imprisonment *in absentia*, after he managed to leave the country.

Yousif Al-Jamri (2017)

On 1 August 2017, the NSA summoned social media activist and blogger Yousif Al-Jamri and interrogated him for 16 hours in three separate sessions while he was blindfolded. Al-Jamri reported on Twitter after being released that the investigation was on terrorism-related cases, despite the fact that his Twitter account presents just a variety of news. He also said that his phone was confiscated, his religious beliefs were insulted, and that he was threatened with rape. They deprived his family of the right to education and housing. The activist confirmed that he was subjected to physical and psychological torture during the interrogation sessions.

Ebtisam Al-Saegh (2017)

Amnesty International reported on 25 May 2017, that Bahraini HRD Ebtisam Al-Saegh was interrogated for more than seven hours about her human rights activities as well as her oral interventions at the UNHRC in Geneva. Al-Saegh reported that she was subjected to torture, including slapping, verbal and sexual harassment, and continuous beatings on the head. She was asked to stop and suspend her activities.

After the interrogation, Al-Saegh was taken to the hospital immediately. Moreover, Al-Saegh has been attacked by media organisations backed by the government, and her car was burnt. On the morning of 4 July 2017, masked armed security men raided her house without presenting an arrest warrant. She was transferred to the CID, and then detained in the Isa Town prison for women. Her second arrest came less than 24 hours after she tweeted about the torture she was subjected to in May 2017. On 22 October 2017, Al-Saegh was released from prison pending trial on terrorism-related offences.³⁵

Al-Saegh was not alone, the NSA has also summoned large numbers of human rights activists and subjected them to intimidation, torture and other forms of ill-treatment in order to force them to suspend their activities.

Adel Al-Marzooq (2017)

On 23 May 2017, Adel Al-Marzooq, head of the Monitoring Committee of the Unitary National Democratic Assemblage, was interrogated by the NSA about his activism that highlighted human rights violations in Bahrain. He reported that he was severely beaten on the head by a solid material and was stripped of his clothes. The interrogators also poured cold water over him, threatened him

³⁴ Bahrain: Hussain Jawad Sentenced, Torture Ignored, Amnesty International, 22 December 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/3127/2015/en/>

³⁵ Bahrain: Further information: Human rights defender remains in Detention: Ebtisam Al-Saegh, Amnesty International, 31 August 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/mde11/7014/2017/en/>

with rape, forced him to repeat the slogan *“I am a traitor to the homeland”*, and forced him to resign from his post.³⁶

Mohammed Khalil Al-Shakhoori (2017)

On 4 July 2017, the security forces raided the house of Mohammed Khalil Al-Shakhoori, and took him to an unknown destination. Al-Shakhoori was summoned by the NSA in May of the same year. After his release, he reported that he had been severely beaten, subjected to exhaustion, electric shocks and sexual assault to force him to resign from the human rights activism.³⁷

Mohammed Hassan Sultan (2017)

A few days before the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, on 22 June 2017, the NSA interrogated Mohammed Hassan Sultan, the son of former deputy Sheikh Hassan Sultan, one of the opposition leaders. During the interrogation, Officer Muhammad Hazeem tortured him, and he was also stripped of his clothes; forced to stand for a long time; threatened with sexual assault and was informed that he is banned from traveling.³⁸

Nizar Al-Qari (2017)

On 5 May 2017, Al-Wefaq Shura Council member, Nizar Al-Qari was arrested for exercising his right to freedom of opinion and expression and was held in the CID and later transferred to a temporary detention unit, Dry Dock prison. SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights obtained testimony that Al-Qari was beaten and forced to stand for long hours and was assaulted for several days. The investigation was based on his activities in the opposition party Al-Wefaq, in which he was a member until the Bahraini authorities dissolved it by court order and stopped all its activities.³⁹

B. On Death Row or Already Executed

Mohamed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa

European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR) said; “According to international watchdogs and human rights lawyers, both men were convicted on the basis of false confessions extracted under torture in an unfair trial marred by due process violations. The Court of Cassation hearing followed an extensive international campaign for their release.”⁴⁰

In 2014, Ramadhan and Moosa were sentenced to death being convicted of terrorism offences. Both men got arrested without warrants and were subjected to severe torture in order to extract false confessions, that included sexual assault, beatings, sleep deprivation and other abuses. Ramadhan and Moosa were denied access to their lawyers until they had been sentenced to death. They are still on death row after the Court of Cassation reaffirmed sentences on 13 July 2020.

Ali Al-Arab and Ahmad Al-Malali

Bahrain executed 25-year-old Ali Al-Arab and 24-year-old Ahmad Al-Malali on 27 July 2019. Both were convicted and sentenced to death in a mass trial ignoring their allegations of torture and due process violations.

³⁶ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

⁴⁰ Bahrain: Torture victims at risk of execution in Bahrain following court ruling, ECDHR, 13 July 2020, <https://www.ecdhr.org/?p=993>

Ali Al-Arab was detained on 9 February 2017 by security agents of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and was taken to the CID, where he was held until 7 March 2017. During this time, they forced him into signing false confessions while being blindfolded. On 7 March, officers transferred Al-Arab to Dry Dock Detention Centre. He had obvious signs of torture, including having all of his toenails removed. On the same day that he arrived at Dry Dock, the guards beat him for refusing to kiss one of the guard's boots.

Ahmad Al-Malali was also arrested on 9 February 2017. The MoI's Coast Guard arrested Al-Malali at sea during a joint operation with the CID, the Special Security Force Command (SSFC), and the NSA. The authorities presented no warrants. During the arrest, Al-Malali was hit by two bullets in his hand and suffered a broken bone in his leg. Doctors did not intervene until 23 days later, and only treated the broken bone with a strap. Following the arrest, officers held Al-Malali *incommunicado* for a month at the CID, where he was subjected to brutal torture, including forced standing, exposure to cold, beatings (including blows to the genitals), and electric shocks.⁴¹

Sami Mushaima, Ali Al-Singace and Abbas Al-Samea

Bahrain executed three Bahraini men in January 2017: Ali Al-Singace, age 21, Abbas Al-Samea, age 27, and Sami Mushaima, age 42. By doing that, Bahrain broke its seven-year *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty. Al-Singace, Al-Samea and Mushaima are the first three Bahrainis to be executed since March 1996.

The three were convicted in an unfair trial in 2015 that used evidence extracted under torture. Despite this, the Court of Cassation denied their allegations of torture and claimed that there was no evidence that security force officers had tortured or otherwise coerced the defendants.⁴²

Zuhair Ebrahim

Zuhair Ebrahim was held *incommunicado* for 55 days after his arrest, during which time he was interrogated without the presence of a lawyer. The death row inmate was subjected to a range of human rights infringements including beatings, electric shocks, sexual assault, and attempted rape. Besides, officers threatened to murder his children and rape his wife.

C. Protesters

Saeed Al-Awainati (deceased in 1976)

Saeed Al-Awainati, 25 years old, was arrested during the State Security Law implementation. He was subjected to various forms of torture under Ian Henderson's supervision until he died on 12 December 1976, 24 hours after his arrest. Al-Awainati was a poet and an activist.⁴³

Jameel Ali Mohsin Al-Ali (deceased in 1980)

⁴¹ ADHRB Strongly Condemns Bahrain's Unjust Execution of Ali AlArab and Ahmed AlMalali, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), 29 July 2019, <https://www.adhrb.org/2019/07/adhrb-strongly-condemns-bahrains-unjust-execution-of-ali-alarab-and-ahmed-almalali/>

⁴² Bahrain executes three Shia men over 2014 police killing, BBC News, 15 January 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38627679>

⁴³ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

Jameel Al-Ali was arrested while participating in a march on 26 April 1980, which was suppressed by the security authorities. He died in detention 13 days after his arrest. He was subjected to torture that left marks on his body, such as:

- Burns caused by an electric kettle;
- Damaged organs;
- Deep cuts in the body as a result of an electric drill;
- Electric shocks marks.

The authorities prevented the family of Al-Ali from receiving his body. The masses went to Salmaniya Hospital and took his body by force. Many photographs were taken as evidence.⁴⁴

Dr Hashim Al-Alawi (deceased in 1986)

On 18 September 1986, the security services launched a campaign of mass arrests against many activists, in response to their demands to restore the Constitution and parliamentary work and to abolish repressive laws restricting freedoms, especially the State Security Law.

After his arrest, Dr Hashim Al-Alawi was subjected to brutal torture leading to his death.⁴⁵

Saeed Al-Eskafi (deceased in 1995)

Al-Eskafi, who was not yet 17 years old, was imprisoned for participating in demonstrations. During his six-day incarceration, he was subjected to physical and psychological torture. Doctors who saw the signs of torture on his body described it as a “crime against humanity” and said perpetrators deserved to appear before the International Court of Justice.

On 8 July 1995, Al-Eskafi's father received a phone call from the security authorities to come to the hospital on the pretext of his son's illness to find out that his son was dead.⁴⁶

Jaber Al-Alaiwat (deceased in 2011)

Jaber Al-Alaiwat died two days after his release from prison on 6 December 2011. The security authorities imposed a blackout on his case. Witnesses reported multiple fractures in his body and the effects of shoes and bruises on his stomach, which was very swollen due to internal bleeding.

The security authorities forced Al-Alaiwat's family to remain silent about the cause of his death and claimed that he died under the influence of drugs.⁴⁷

D. Summary Table of Victims of Torture in Bahrain

The table below shows the names of some Bahrainis who have died under torture committed by the state security officers. The list has been compiled from reports documented by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Chambers of Death: A report that monitors the violations of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Bahrain, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 22 August 2017, <https://www.bfhr.org/english/uploaded/chmber%20en.pdf>

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

Year of death	Name
1976	Saeed Al-Uwainati
1976	Mohammed Gholoom Bucheeri
1980	Jamil Ali Mohsin Al-Ali
1980	Karim Al-Habshi
1981	Mohammed Hassan Madan
1981	Shaikh Jamal Al-Asfoor
1986	Radhi Mahdi Ibrahim
1986	Dr Hashim Isma'il Al-'Alawi
1994	Haj Mirza Ali
1995	Hamid Qasim
1995	Nidal Habib Al-Nashabah
1995	Hussain Qambar
1995	Said Abd Al-Rasul Al-Eskafi
1996	Al-Sayyid 'Ali Al-Sayyid Amin Al-'Alawi
1997	Bashir Abdallah Ahmad Fadhil
1997	'Abd Al-Zahra' Ibrahim 'Abdullah
1997	Shaikh 'Ali Mirza Al-Nakkas
1998	Nuh Khalil Abdullah Al-Nuh
2011	Hasan Jasem Makki
2011	Ali Isa Al-Saqer
2011	Zakariya Rashid Hassan Al-Ashiri
2011	Kareem Fakhrawi
2011	Jaber Ebrahim Yousif Mohamed Alawiyat
2011	Yousif Ahmed Muwali

IX. Recommendations

None of these victims, survivors or their families has had access to justice nor redress. People who inflicted physical and psychological pain upon them are free, and they have faced no punishment. Ensuring adequate and effective remedies for these victims and survivors is a human duty and responsibility.

In order to ensure that actions of torture and ill-treatment are monitored and eliminated, and to bring justice to torture victims in Bahrain, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) recommend the following:

To the Government of Bahrain:

- Immediately stop the use of torture as a policy to extract confessions and to spread fear among people;
- Immediately, impartially and transparently investigate the allegations of torture against dozens of officers who are involved in torture and other human rights violations;
- Hold accountable any person found guilty of committing or supervising the crimes of torture in a fair trial in accordance with international standards;
- Provide compensation and reparation for victims and survivors of torture and/or their families, and establish rehabilitation centres for them;
- End the culture of impunity among the security forces and carry out comprehensive reforms to ensure transparency and legal accountability;
- Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in order to enhance the legal accountability of perpetrators of torture offenses;
- End the practice of enforced disappearance, *incommunicado* detention and arbitrary detention;
- Allow the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit Bahrain urgently and allow him to work freely and meet the survivors of torture with no pre-set conditions; and
- Abide by international human rights obligations.

To the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa:

- Issue a royal decree establishing a committee to investigate complaints of torture and ill-treatment of citizens and detainees in the National Security Agency;
- Amend Decree 14/2002 to allow those affected to file civil and criminal proceedings against members of the National Security Agency who are involved in ill-treatment;
- Ensure the accountability of employees of the National Security Agency, involved in committing torture and referring them to fair trials; and
- Amend Decree-Law No. 56 of 2002 to comply with the principles of human rights.

To the International Community:

- Pressure the Government of Bahrain to put an end to human rights violations committed by its security agencies;
- Form an international committee to investigate the violations committed against citizens and human rights defenders;

- Request the Government of Bahrain to allow the opening of a permanent Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to review Bahrain's implementation of its commitments; and
- Request the Government of Bahrain to extend an open invitation to UN Special Rapporteurs to visit Bahrain and allow them unconditional access to all places of detention.