


Updates on the Crackdown on Human Rights in the Gulf

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#Bahrain Embassy Statement Regarding Allegations in the Case of Ebtisam Al Saegh

Statement Regarding Allegations in the Case of Ebtisam Al Saegh 14 July 2017

The Kingdom of Bahrain is firmly committed to the protection and safe guarding of human rights. This commitment is enshrined Bahrain's constitution and in international treaties and obligations. It does not condone or support any violation of basic human rights.

Ombudsman for the Ministry of Interior, the Ombudsman for the National Security Agency to independently examine complaints in order to take all necessary measures to promote and defend fundamental freedoms in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Mrs Al Saegh is currently detained and is facing serious charges related to terrorism, links with terrorist organizations, and known terrorist cells operating. The charges against her have no bearing on her views nor her political opinions.

Bahrain is unique in the region regarding oversight bodies that safeguard and independently investigate allegations of violations or infringement upon Human Rights

12:28 PM - 14 Jul 2017

Violations against activist continue

Nabeel Rajab, one of the most prominent Bahraini activists, was sentenced on Monday, 10 July 2017, to 2 years in prison over charges related to the freedom of expression.

On the other hand, the Bahraini Embassy in the United Kingdom issued a statement on 14 July 2017 on its official Twitter account regarding "[Allegations in the Case of Ebtisam Al-Saegh](#)", in an attempt to defame her as a punishment for her activism.

According to "[Salam for Democracy and Human Rights](#)", Al-Saegh was subjected to torture and maltreatment in the Criminal Investigation building, her health is deteriorating, and she was held in solitary confinement. She was denied her right to meet her lawyer and family as well.

The Bahraini authorities prevented on Sunday the 30th of July 2017, activist and member of Bahraini Centre for Human Rights Hussein Radhi from leaving the country.



Hani Al-Banaa'

Siege on Diraz entered its 2nd year & Shiite citizens are still prosecuted

On Monday, 3 July 2017, Shiite religious scholar Sheikh [Hani Al-Banaa'](#) was arrested while visiting his detained son in Dry Dock Prison. Two days later, Bahrain's Public Prosecution arrested Shiite cleric [Kadhim Darwich](#) for two weeks pending investigation. The arrest came on grounds of religious sermons he delivers.

The Bahraini security authorities interrogated Shiite opposition cleric Sheikh [Abdullah Al-Daqaq's wife](#) twice after her arrival to the country on Wednesday, 19 July 2017, night. She was informed that her nationality has been revoked and deported hours after her arrival.

Furthermore, no news were reported about Shiite cleric Sheikh Bashar Al-A'ali after he was summoned by the security authorities on Thursday, 20 July 2017.

On Thursday the 13th of July 2017, the Bahraini House of Representatives passed the unified family law bill despite reservations of senior Shiite clerics. The clerics had previously reiterated in a statement on 19 April 2017, that "the unified family law bill, according to preliminary reading, includes big errors and violates the sect's views and provisions. This will impose on this sect followers provisions that contradict with their faith."

Moreover, the Bahraini authorities continue to impose restrictions on freedom of religion and movement in Diraz, as the siege on Diraz entered its second year, along with the ban on the biggest Shiite Friday prayers.

International calls condemning verdict against Rajab and demanding Alsaegh release

The US Department of State expressed disappointment by the verdict sentencing prominent human rights activist Nabeel Rajab to 2 years in prison. “We believe no one anywhere should be prosecuted or imprisoned for exercising their human rights or fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression or peaceful assembly,” the Department of State said in its [press statement](#). It also urged the Government of Bahrain to abide by its international obligations and commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The US Department of State Spokesperson Heather Nauret said, in a press conference, that US continues to follow the case of detained activist Ibtisam Alsaegh. Nauret called upon the authorities in Bahrain to release Alsaegh and to investigate the allegations of abusing her during her detention and hold the responsible to the appropriate account.

The State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tone Skogen said in a [statement](#) that “The sentence against Nabeel Rajab shows how difficult the situation is for human rights defenders in Bahrain,” adding “We are particularly concerned about the increasing restrictions on fundamental human rights”. Skogen urged Bahrain to drop all the charges against Rajab, indicating that “Norway has repeatedly expressed concern about Rajab’s situation and has urged the Bahraini authorities to fulfil their international human rights obligations.”

MEP Tom Brake issued a [proposal](#) to the House of Commons to condemn the sentence passed on Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. He also called on the British Government to condemn Rajab’s sentence; and further called on the Government of Bahrain to immediately release him, commute his sentence, drop outstanding charges and release all human rights defenders.

The European Union called on, in a [statement](#), the Bahraini government to release human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, including on humanitarian grounds. It considered that the verdict against Rajab “runs against Bahrain’s commitment to uphold freedom of expression and work towards creating space for independent activism.”

Germany’s Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, [Bärbel Kofler](#), expressed disappointment over the sentenced issued against Nabeel Rajab, calling on the Government of Bahrain to fulfil its international obligations.



Dry Dock prisoners have limited access to cold drinking water

According to “[Bahrain Mirror](#)”, restrictions against the prisoners in “Dry Dock” have increased; they have limited access to cold water in spite of the hot summer. In addition, a skin disease have spread among prisoners, as they are not having access to sun for over a year.

Prisoners are threatened if any of them requests medical care, he would be transferred to solitary confinement where prisoners are subjected to many types of torture and sectarian prosecution.

UN Bodies are concerned over Rajab’s sentence & Al-saegh’s arbitrary detention

A statement issued on behalf of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva expressed his deep concern over sentencing Nabeel Rajab to 2 years in prison. “The continuing restrictions on civil society and political activists and the targeting of human rights defenders and organisations in Bahrain are deeply worrying. We urge the Government to take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with Bahrain’s obligations under international human rights law, in particular to guarantee the freedoms of expression, opinion and association and the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of liberty,” the [statement](#) added.

A group of [United Nations experts](#) has expressed grave concern at the alleged arbitrary detention of Bahraini human rights defender Ibtisam Al-Saegh amid reports she has been tortured and sexually abused and was on hunger strike. According to reports received by the experts, Ms. Alsaegh was detained on 4 July when Bahraini security forces raided her home. She is reportedly being held in solitary confinement at Isa Town women’s prison, and is being transported daily to an unknown location where she is interrogated for up to 14 hours without access to a lawyer.



Ibtisam Al-Saegh

Bahraini Human Rights Organisations

Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR) said that there are 11 female Bahraini detainees from 9 villages arrested over political motives and charges related to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Some of the detainees were subjected to torture and ill-treatment during their interrogating sessions. The Forum indicated that the Bahraini authorities have put the Bahraini woman among the political retaliation targets and that more than 340 Bahraini women were subjected to arbitrary arrest over political background since 2011.

Marking the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) launched a report "[Torture and Impunity in Bahrain](#)". The report documented numerous cases during 2015-2017 of alleged torture that demonstrate that Bahrain systematically utilises torture during interrogation and detention.



Violations against Qatari investors & students in UAE, Saudi and Bahrain

In a [statement](#) issued on Thursday, 20 July 2017, the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) pointed to stark violations of the blockade on Qatar.

“The unjust siege affected the rights of Qatari investors and residents of Qatar who own property in the UAE specifically, by depriving them of this right as stated in the international human rights conventions,” it said.

Furthermore, the aforementioned committee has submitted a [report](#) to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) detailing the violations committed by educational institutions against Qatari students in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The violations against students included preventing them from taking final exams, withholding certificates of graduation, closing their educational accounts and arbitrarily terminating their registration without giving reasons. At least 85 violations against Qatari students were committed in the UAE, followed by 29 violations in Saudi Arabia and 25 in Bahrain, according to the report.

Increasing fears for civilian lives & property as the authorities escalate the military assault on Awamiyah

On Friday, 28 July 2017, the Saudi authorities announced that the remaining residents of the town of Awamiyah, estimated to be around 35000, must leave the town within four hours. Intermediaries relayed the authorities' directives and informed local residents that they should leave the town through two specific exits and carry white flags as they do so.

According to the European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESOHR), witnesses have revealed that despite

these announcements, the authorities randomly fired at the mass influx of residents fleeing the town. It remains unclear how many of the fleeing civilians have been killed and wounded because of the random shooting which has been ongoing for the past few days.

ESOHR said that it has also received worrying reports from local residents that new and heavier weapons than those of the past months have been used in shelling residential areas in the past few days.

Following torture & unfair trials, 4 Saudi prisoners were executed amid increasing fears of executing other 14 including a disabled protestor

On Tuesday, 11 July 2017, Saudi Arabia executed four detainees: Amjad Al-Moaibed, Yusuf Al-Mushayyas, Zaher Al-Basri and Mahdi Al-Sayegh. Information reported that all of them were subjected to severe torture to extract confessions and were held in solitary confinement.

Meanwhile, urgent fears mount regarding the imminent execution of several prisoners, following their transfer to the kingdom capital Riyadh in the early hours of Saturday 15 July 2017, from Dammam sparking concerns of imminent implementation of their execution orders. According to the European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESOHR), the [transferal of prisoners to Riyadh](#), is a common procedure which has been seen in previous death penalty cases in kingdom, and signals a worrying development.

It is noteworthy that amongst those transferred to Riyadh is Munir Al-Adam, a disabled prisoner who was arrested in connection with his participation on Arab spring protestors. Munir's transferral comes after his death sentence was upheld by a secret appeals court two months ago, and follows recent reports that he had been taken into solitary confinement whilst still in prison in Dammam in recent days, which is a common procedure in the kingdom when death penalty orders are about to be implemented. Munir was initially arrested in February 2012, he was tortured during his detention and beaten so hard he lost the remaining hearing in one ear.



One in every 45 people in Yemen is expected to contract cholera, Red Cross says

An estimated 600,000 people in Yemen, or one in every 45, could contract [cholera](#) before the end of the year as the conflict-riven country struggles to contain the disease, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has said.

Peter Mauer warned that the “great tragedy is that this cholera outbreak is a preventable, man-made humanitarian catastrophe”.

The rapid spread of the disease is now the worst cholera epidemic in modern history.

Yemen’s health ministry says airport closure has cost nearly 10,000 lives

Yemen’s health ministry estimates that more than 10,000 people seeking life-saving treatment abroad have died from critical health conditions since Sana’a airport was closed, said a group of NGOs including the International Rescue Committee and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Emirati man arrested for showing sympathy with Qatar

An Emirati man, [Ghanem Abdullah Mattar](#), was arrested late Wednesday, 5 July 2017, for exercising his right of freedom of speech after criticising UAE authorities and showing sympathy with Qatar via social media.



UAE authorities ban family visits for prisoners of conscience

The International Centre for Justice and Human Rights (ICJHR) said that UAE authorities banned on Monday visit to ten prisoners of conscience arbitrarily held in al-Razin prison.

According to the Emirates Centre for Human Rights (ECHR), the prison authorities have consistently abused the detainees' rights, as well as their families', by repressing their rights and banning any visits even though some families travelled for long distances under difficult conditions, to be banned from meeting their jailed relatives.



Bahrain: two-year prison sentence for human rights activist Nabeel Rajab condemned

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/bahrain-two-year-prison-sentence-human-rights-activist-nabeel-rajab-condemned>

Urgent Action: Bahraini Prisoner of Conscience in Detention (Bahrain: UA 170.17)

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-bahraini-prisoner-of-conscience-in-detention-bahrain-ua-170-17/>

Bahrain: Jail term for human rights defender Nabeel Rajab exposes authorities' relentless campaign to wipe out dissent

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/07/bahrain-jail-term-for-human-rights-defender-nabeel-rajab-exposes-authorities-relentless-campaign-to-wipe-out-dissent/>

Bahrain: Human rights defender charged with terrorism

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/07/bahrain-human-rights-defender-charged-with-terrorism/>

Bahrain: terrorism charges against human rights activist Ebtisam al-Saegh condemned

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/bahrain-terrorism-charges-against-human-rights-activist-ebtisam-al-saegh-condemned>

Bahrain: Woman human rights defender at high risk of torture, including sexual assault

https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/07/bahrain-woman-human-rights-defender-at-high-risk-of-torture-including-sexual-assault/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=quote&utm_term=V2hIbiBzaG&utm_campaign=social

The logo for FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) consists of the lowercase letters 'fidh' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a dark purple rectangular background.

Bahrain: WHRDIC Statement: Free woman human rights defender Ebtisam Al-Saegh

<https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/bahrain-whrdic-statement-free-woman-human-rights-defender-ebtisam-al>



Arab Gulf States: Assault on Online Activists

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/12/arab-gulf-states-assault-online-activists>

140 Characters: Online Activists Harassed & Jailed in Arab Gulf States

https://features.hrw.org/features/HRW_2016_reports/140_Characters/index.html#en

Gulf Crisis Shows How Discrimination in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, and Qatar Tears Families Apart

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/21/gulf-crisis-shows-how-discrimination-saudi-arabia-bahrain-uae-and-qatar-tears>



Bahraini human rights activist sentenced to two years

<https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2017/07/bahraini-human-rights-activist-sentenced-two-years/>



RSF calls for Bahraini journalist's conviction to be overturned

<https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-calls-bahraini-journalists-conviction-be-overturned>

Al Wasat newspaper gagged for past month

<https://rsf.org/en/news/al-wasat-newspaper-gagged-past-month>

Human rights defender Nabeel Rajab gets two years

<https://rsf.org/en/news/human-rights-defender-nabeel-rajab-gets-two-years>



Nabeel Rajab jailed in Bahrain for 'spreading fake news'

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/bahrain-nabeel-rajab-sentenced-two-years-prison-1642849683>



Activist who accused Bahrain security forces of sexual assault is rearrested

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/06/activist-rearrested-bahrain-risk-torture-amnesty-international-ebtisam-al-saekh>

How Bahrain uses sport to whitewash a legacy of torture and human rights abuses

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/jul/17/bahrain-accused-sport-whitewash-history-torture-human-rights-abuses>



Questions for Head of Bahrain's NSA 10 Days after Ebtisam al Saekh's Arrest

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/questions-for-head-of-bahrains-nsa-10-days-after-ebtisam_us_5967681be4b051f16255e625?ncid=engmodushp-mg00000004



Bahraini Rights Activist Ebtisam Al-Saekh Charged Under Terrorism Law

<https://globalvoices.org/2017/07/23/bahraini-rights-activist-ebtisam-al-saekh-charged-under-terrorism-law/>

How the Assault on Independent Media in Bahrain Silenced a Trusted Regional Watchdog

<https://globalvoices.org/2017/07/19/how-the-assault-on-independent-media-in-bahrain-silenced-a-trusted-regional-watchdog/>

LobeLog foreign policy



Bahrain's Assault on Free Press

<http://lobelog.com/bahrain-assault-on-free-press/>

The Washington Post

Bahrain is stripping dissidents of their citizenship, and the U.S. is silent


https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/bahrain-is-stripping-dissidents-of-their-citizenship-and-the-us-is-silent/2017/07/08/3ad347d0-5154-11e7-91eb-9611861a988f_story.html?utm_term=.a4303fd543f9



GULF INSTITUTE
for Democracy and Human Rights



Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR), is a civil non-governmental and non-profit organization aiming to promote the respect for democratic principles, as well as establishing the human rights and social justice principles, and stopping the human rights violations in the Gulf Region in general and in Bahrain in particular. Headquartered in Sydney, Australia GIDHR has the right to open branches in other regions, has legal character and independent financial disclosure. GIDHR is seeking to be in the ranks of the major organizations defending democratic and human rights principles and values through contributing to achieve peace and justice for all in the Gulf States.

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