



GULF INSTITUTE
for Democracy and Human Rights

UPDATES ON THE CRACKDOWN ON
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GULF

ISSUE 28#

August 2021

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Violating Ashura Rites is Annual Ritual of Bahraini Authorities



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Discrimination & Violations of Rights inside the Prisons

For more than a year, peaceful protests have been taking place within different regions in Bahrain. Participants held banners demanding the immediate release of their detained family members, who were arrested over charges related to freedom of opinion and expression, and chanted slogans calling for setting them free. During August, several sit-ins took place in Bahraini villages including Sanabis and Al-Dair.

Detainees demand their lawful rights using peaceful and legitimate means. On 2nd August, detainees in Jaw Prison protested after their request to mark Ashura was rejected. They submitted a written request, which included a complete schedule of how they wish to mark the annual occasion. On 10th of August, a group of prisoners in Jaw Prison refused to return to their cells after being prohibited from

practicing their religious rituals during Muharram in the lead-up to annual Ashura commemorations. They believe that the authorities are using Covid 19 pandemic to intensify existing restrictions on the Shiite community's freedom to worship, especially inside the kingdom's prisons. From its side, the prison's administration threatened the detainees to use force against them. On the other hand, some detainees who had no other way to get their demands, went on a hunger strike. The prominent detained opposition figure Abduljalil Al-Singace has started a hunger strike on 8 July demanding better treatment and the release of 12 confiscated notebooks, which his family says hold the manuscript of a book on Arabic dialects. Al-Singace has spent more than 50 days of his hunger strike, however, authorities are still refusing to fulfill his demands.

> Bahrain

During the first three weeks of Al-Singace's strike, he lost 18 kilograms and has been hospitalized. Moreover, the detainee Ibrahim Al-Momin, who started a hunger strike in July, was transferred, on 5 August, to an unknown location. Al-Momin is demanding to be returned to a prison cell housing native Bahrainis. Whereas, two other detainees, Hussain Al-Qaym and Mohammad Jaafar, started a hunger strike on 20 August demanding family visitations. Medical negligence has been still detainees deprived of medical treatment during August.

used as a punishment for the detainees, where a group of the detainee Mustafa Abdel Karim Khatam wasn't taken to the hospital although he was supposed to undergo a surgery in early August. In addition, detainee Muhammad Hassan Al-Raml said on 12 August that he is being denied desperately needed medical treatment for an unspecified gastrointestinal infection. Al-Raml's health was deteriorating where he was vomiting blood due to medical negligence. And the detainee Reda Mushaima said he is on the brink of death due to medical negligence.



Violating Ashura Rites is Annual Ritual of Bahraini Authorities

Multiple violations against annual Ashura commemorations were documented during August, including police summonses and arrests of Shiite reciters, religious clerics and citizens. Summonses and arrests were not the only violation authorities performed regarding citizens participation in religious rites during Muharram, but also Ashura displays in several villages were taken off.

A large group of Shiite religious figures and reciters were summoned during August including Sheikh Aziz Al-Khadran, Sheikh Hani Al-Banna, orator Mahdi Sahwan, reciter

Sayed Ahmed Al-Alawi, Mr. Faisal Al-Momen, Sheikh Abdul Mohsen Mulla Atiya Al-Jamri, reciter Hassan Nowruz, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Riyash, Mr. Ali Mansour Al-Mallah, Mr. Mohammed Mahdi Daif, reciter Saleh Sahwan, and reciter Mahmoud Al-Qallaf. Among those summoned, at least three were detained while others were released.

Moreover, at least two instances involving the sabotage of Ashura manifestations, 12 cases involving the confiscation of Ashura banners, and 31 cases of provocative practices were documented.



Bahrain Spies on Activists Abroad & Target Others residing in the Country

Research conducted by Citizen Lab and released on 24 August concluded that mobile phones of nine Bahraini activists, including two who were granted asylum and are now living in London, were hacked between June 2020 and February 2021 using NSO Group spyware.

The hacked activists included three members of Waad (a secular Bahraini political society), three members of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, two exiled Bahraini dissidents, and one member of Al Wefaq (a Shiite Bahraini political society).

Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International had spoken earlier about the project: "The Pegasus Project lays bare how NSO's spyware is a weapon of choice for repressive governments seeking to silence journalists, attack activists and crush dissent, placing countless lives in peril".

Authorities' spying on activists' phones is not the only violation committed against them, where Bahrain Press Association (BPA)

documented 15 cases of abuses against journalists, media professionals and tweeters during the first half of 2021.

The recorded cases documented by BPA between January and June 2021 were as follows: 6 summonses to police stations or public prosecution offices for questioning, 5 arrests and 4 judicial proceedings and penalties. The most prominent charges against interrogators, detainees or convicted in the courts or through administrative proceedings were "criticism of normalization", "questioning the efforts of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus", "insulting the judiciary", "criticizing the Ministry of the Interior" and "violating public morals".

Moreover, the organization said that the total number of violations since the beginning of the political and security crisis in the country in early 2011 until the end of June 2021, amount to about 1,721 violations of freedom of opinion and expression.

ALQST HRO: Authorities are Attempting to Murder Political Prisoners

According to the ALQST organization, an attempt to kill the

prisoner The organization documented that the attempt to

> Bahrain

to kill Al-Omair was made by another prisoner whom he had never seen before and has not seen again since the murder attempt.

The organization further accused Saudi authorities of the attempt. And it added that what is happening to the prisoner of conscience Mohammed Al-Qahtani is also an incitement to kill him.

“Rights activist and prisoner of conscience Mohammed Al-Qahtani is another victim of deliberate

medical neglect. He too had caught Covid 19 at the time of Shareeda’s death, but the prison administration did not alert him to this. Furthermore, al-Qahtani is still in a section reserved for mentally ill prisoners, despite having asked repeatedly to be transferred elsewhere. He has more than once gone on hunger strike in protest at his ill-treatment and the lack of a response to his demands.” the organization added.



Mass Trials Marred by Violations & Intensified Sentences Issued by **Saudi Courts**

On 8 August 2021, the Specialised Criminal Court in Riyadh delivered verdicts against 69 Palestinians and Jordanians, handing jail terms from six months to 22 years, in a mass trial marred by serious violations of international fair trial guarantees.

The group was detained in March

2018 during a wave of arrests by Saudi authorities on a group of long-term Palestinian and Jordanian residents in the kingdom on alleged links with an unnamed “terrorist” group.

They were first brought before the SCC on 8 March 2020, in a mass trial

> Saudi Arabia

that has been marred by numerous violations of international fair trial guarantees. Neither their relatives nor international observers from foreign embassies were able to attend the trial, and there were no independent lawyers present. These individuals were subjected to numerous violations in detention following their mass arrest early in 2019, including months of enforced disappearance, long periods in solitary confinement, and in some cases torture.

Moreover, on 16 August the Court of Appeal slapped the jailed human

rights activist Khaled al-Omair by a further two imprisonment years added to the seven years he is already serving.

The new charges Al-Omair is facing are related to things he has written in prison. During his time in Al-Hair Prison, Al-Omair has smuggled out various communiqués denouncing the Saudi courts and the Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Cybercrime Laws under which he was arrested and tried, and declaring his trial and sentencing illegitimate.

Int'l Calls Demanding **Justice for Imprisoned Women**

On 10 August, a group of Democratic senators introduced a resolution condemning four Middle Eastern states for the unjust imprisonment of women. The resolution talks about women in several countries including Saudi Arabia.

The senators demanded the release of Maya'a al-Zahrani, an imprisoned women's rights activist. The senators further called on the US government to raise the cases of "unjustly imprisoned" women in their dealings with the relevant countries.



> Saudi Arabia



Unlawful Siege Imposed on Yemeni Ports Worsen the Humanitarian Crisis in the Country

The Saudi-led coalition continues its war crimes in Yemen, such as killing civilians, preventing fuel entering, preventing medical supplements entering... The coalition set up restrictions on imports to Yemen, in violation of international humanitarian law. Those restrictions have delayed and diverted fuel tankers, closed a critical port, and stopped life-saving goods.

According to the health minister, the siege prevented the entry of necessary medications for liver patients, especially albumin and the necessary medical devices. Which in turn doubled the number of people with liver disease to more than 12 percent of the population with a total of more than two million people.

On the other hand, the continued detention of fuel ships caused power outages, suspension of services in 100 medical facilities, and a decline in the level of health care provision for patients.

From its side, the Kidney Diseases

and Dialysis Centers in Al-Hodeidah Governorate confirmed the deteriorating health condition of the patients due to the electricity outage and the acute shortage of diesel fuel running the generators.

The centers further reported that organizations working in the health field have reduced the monthly allocations for these centers of diesel to 20 percent, which makes more than 887 patients in the governorate vulnerable to death.

Moreover, service sectors have warned of catastrophic consequences for the environment, health, and the humanitarian situation in general, because of the continued detention of fuel ships. The protesters pointed out that the detention of fuel ships will lead to the suspension of sewage treatment plants, stop water pumping of approximately one million and ten thousand cubic meters and deprive nearly five million people of drinking water.

Nearly Half a Million Patients Need Treatment Abroad amid Forced Closure of Sana'a Airport for 5 years

August marked the 5th anniversary of Sanaa International Airport closure by the Saudi-led coalition. According to Raed Talib, the Undersecretary of the General Authority for Civil Aviation and Meteorology, the closure of Sanaa International Airport caused the death of more than 95,000 patients who were in urgent need of treatment abroad.

He further noted that more than 480,000 patients urgently need to travel for treatment abroad in a way that cannot be postponed.

Moreover, he pointed out that that cannot be postponed. Moreover, he pointed out that more than 71,000 patients with cancerous tumors are threatened with certain death, and more than 8,000 patients with kidney failure need kidney transplants and urgently need to travel abroad.

Talib added that the closure of Sanaa International Airport has also prevented 4 million Yemeni expatriates from returning home, while thousands of students lost their scholarships.



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.

معهد الخليج للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان منظمة غير ربحية وغير حكومية، تم تأسيسه في أستراليا ويهدف إلى تعزيز ونشر ثقافة الديمقراطية، كما يسعى لتحقيق مبادئ حقوق الإنسان والعدالة الاجتماعية وإيقاف الانتهاكات في دول الخليج. وله الحق في فتح فروع أخرى في مناطق أخرى، ويكون له شخصية اعتبارية وذمة مالية مستقلة ولا يستهدف من نشاطه جني الربح التجاري. يسعى معهد الخليج للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان لأن يكون في مصاف كبرى المنظمات المدافعة عن حقوق الإنسان عبر المساهمة في تحقيق السلام والعدالة في دول الخليج.

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