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Highlights on the Crackdown on the Human Rights in the Gulf

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Bahrain Excludes Political Prisoners in the Royal Pardon

The Bahraini authorities announced a royal pardon for 545 detainees on the eve of Al-Adha Eid. However, they did not provide further details about the number of political prisoners included in the pardon. After days of secrecy, only 7 political prisoners were released, 2 of whom were already benefiting from Alternative Code Law, and 4 minors whose sentences were close to ending.

This exclusion of political prisoners from the pardon is a violation of their rights, as it prioritizes the release of those who have committed crimes over those who should not have been imprisoned in the first place. Additionally, it is worth noting that more than 400 of the 545 pardoned prisoners are foreigners.

The continued detention of political prisoners in Bahrain is a clear indication of the government's crackdown on dissent and opposition voices. It is crucial for the international community to hold the Bahraini authorities accountable for their actions and to advocate for the release of all political prisoners who have been unjustly imprisoned.

The detention conditions continued to deteriorate. Despite the ongoing protests by political prisoners against their prolonged detention, the prison authorities have resorted to isolating any prisoner leaving their cell for family visits, medical appointments, or exams. This punitive measure is aimed at pressuring the prisoners to end their peaceful protest. Among them was the elderly prisoner Hasan Al-Raml. On 4 June, Hasan was unexpectedly transferred to the isolation building after his doctor's appointment. In response, Hasan initiated a hunger strike to protest this transfer, but his whereabouts remain unknown. Similarly, on 6 June, Ebrahim Al-Samahiji was also placed in isolation after meeting with a local MP and a member of National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR).

Commenting on the inhuman measure, the political prisoner housed in Jaw, Abdullah Habib Swar, said that the prison administration prevented him from attending a session at the Special Investigations Unit of the Public Prosecution. He also mentioned that other prisoners also were prevented from external movements to not be isolated under harsh conditions.

22 Arrests Through June

Although Bahrain has spread the vibes of ending the political issue in the kingdom after the royal pardon on Eid Al-Fotor by releasing a large section of political prisoners, it continues arresting citizens over political reasons. 22 citizens were arrested during June over politically motivated cases, some were released while others were kept in custody.

The largest number of arrests, 11 citizens, occurred when they participated in a gathering for prisoners' families, calling for the release of their sons. Additionally, multiple arrests were made in connection with various protests, including those in solidarity with Palestine and those advocating for the release of political prisoners.



Calls on FIFA to Consider Saudi Arabia Human Rights Record Persist

The ongoing requests for FIFA to take into account Saudi Arabia's human rights record have persisted. From the moment the Saudi authorities

revealed their plans to bid for the FIFA World Cup in the upcoming two sessions, numerous human rights organizations, lawyers, and activists have urged FIFA to address the concerning human rights situation in the kingdom. These calls emphasize the importance of the association adhering to international human rights standards, which have been mandated for tournament hosts by FIFA's own policy since 2017.

Amnesty International has urged FIFA to thoroughly consider Saudi Arabia's human rights record before making any decisions regarding the country's bid to host the 2030 and 2034 men's World Cup tournaments. The organization emphasized the importance of upholding international human rights standards and avoiding any potential risks of human rights abuses associated with hosting the prestigious sporting event.

“The human rights issues associated with the joint 2030 World Cup bid are significant and must be addressed but the risks associated with the 2034 FIFA World Cup bid by Saudi Arabia – including those faced by workers, fans and journalists – are of an entirely different magnitude and severity,” Steve Cockburn of Amnesty said.



Migrants' Rights Are Violated in Saudi Arabia

Less than a year after Human Rights Watch discovered that Saudi border guards had engaged in widespread and systematic killings of Ethiopian

migrants on the border with Yemen, Equidem exposed what it claims are significant human rights and labor violations against migrant workers in the hospitality, maintenance, and construction sectors.

Equidem's report confirmed that migrant workers in Saudi Arabia faced discrimination based on nationality, as well as vulnerability to abuse, deceptive recruitment practices, recruitment fees, and harsh working conditions that included physical violence, intimidation, threats, overwork, and prolonged exposure to high temperatures. The prevailing pattern of legal exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, and suppression of freedom of association in Saudi Arabia constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights. This highlights the deficiencies in labor and migration reform processes in Saudi Arabia.

Additionally, the Building and Wood Workers' International union has lodged complaints against KSA with the International Labor Organization of the UN, citing severe human rights abuses suffered by at least 21000 migrant workers in the country. Migrant workers make up about 75% and 41% of KSA's workforce and population, respectively. The complaints by BWI address violations of the ILO's Forced Labor Convention, as well as the Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, according to the union.



Marine Resources in Yemen Suffers A Critical Production Reduction

Yemen's marine resources are facing a critical threat. A significant portion of Yemeni fishermen are witnessing an unprecedented and drastic decrease in their catch due to an environmental catastrophe affecting the coasts of Yemen.

A recent report by The New Araby Newspaper revealed that over 20 species of fish have vanished from the Yemeni shores along the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden, including dirak, bayad, sharuri, ghalous, and ghurayd. This disappearance has resulted in a surge in prices for the remaining available fish varieties.

Conversely, a group of nine fishermen who were released shared details about their arrest and the dangers fishermen have been facing since 2015. According to the fishermen, they were captured by a Saudi patrol while fishing in Yemeni waters near Dhul Harab Island. They were subjected to provocative and degrading actions, had their catch confiscated, were fined, and endured different forms of abuse and mistreatment while in detention.



Rare Yemeni statue from 3rd century BC to be auctioned in London

Abdullah Mohsen, a Yemeni specialist in tracking artifacts, has announced that there will be two auctions taking place in London in July featuring

Yemeni artifacts. The first auction, set for early July, will showcase a collection of artifacts from ancient Mediterranean and Red Sea cultures, including two antique pieces from Yemen.

The second auction, scheduled for 13 July, will include a Yemeni statue to be sold at the Ancient and Militaria Auction by Apollo Auctions. According to Mohsen, the marble statue dates back to the third century BC and hails from Qataban in Yemen. It portrays a standing figure adorned with a hat and a long, tight jacket, placed on a three-layered base. The top two layers bear the owner's name inscribed in Musnad script.

Statistics indicate that 4265 Yemeni archaeological pieces have been sold in 16 global auctions in the US, Europe, and Israel, conducted by renowned auction houses in six Western countries from 1991 to 2022. Furthermore, an additional 2610 Yemeni artifacts have been sold in international auctions in recent years. In addition, 1384 smuggled and stolen Yemeni artifacts are currently on display in seven international museums.