

## **ADHRB Calls for Independent Investigation into Death of Young Boy by Bahraini Security Forces**

A 16-year-old boy was killed by Bahraini security forces during protests in Muharraq on Friday. According to initial reports, security forces used live rounds of ammunition on protesters, wounding Hussam al-Haddad, who was pronounced dead after being taken to the hospital.

[According to](#) the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), after security forces fired shots at Hussam, who was reportedly unarmed, a man dressed in civilian clothing began kicking Hussam while police stood by. At Hussam's funeral on Saturday, Bahraini authorities [reportedly](#) blocked off all bridges leading to Muharraq from the mainland, preventing people from participating in the funeral.

Bahrain's Ministry of Interior issued a [statement](#) on Saturday confirming Hussam's death, but also defending its use of birdshot, claiming that "police used legal means to defend themselves and the citizens in the area" from protesters throwing Molotov cocktails at police. No police or bystander injuries have been reported from the incident.

Bahrain is obligated to abide by the [UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms](#), which require that government forces only use lethal force when "strictly unavoidable in order to protect life." The principles also require governments to "ensure that arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offense under their law."

Reports of excessive use of force have been common in Bahrain since the outbreak of protests in February 2011. These reports have been confirmed by several human rights organizations, as well as the government's own Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI). Earlier this month, Physicians for Human Rights released a [report](#) [pdf] which cited examples of police using tear gas, birdshot, and sound bombs to disperse protesters without any warning. Reports such as this raise doubts as to the Government of Bahrain's commitment to human rights reforms.

ADHRB calls on the Government of Bahrain to conduct an investigation, led by independent experts not affiliated with the Ministry of Interior, to determine what transpired on Friday, and to assess whether Bahraini security forces failed to use restraint or proportionate use of force in response to protesters. If security forces are determined to have used excessive force, ADHRB calls on Bahrain to ensure that those officers are held fully and criminally accountable.