

## **On Universal Children's Day, ADHRB Calls on the Government of Bahrain to Respect the Rights of Children**

November 20 marks [Universal Children's Day](#), a date when governments around the world are asked by the United Nations to promote "the welfare of the children of the world." On this Universal Children's Day, ADHRB calls upon the Government of Bahrain to abide by its commitments, as party to the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC), to respect the rights of children in Bahrain.

Between November 2011, when the [Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#) (BICI) report was released, and June 2012, approximately 123 children were [reportedly](#) arrested by authorities according to the [Bahrain Center for Human Rights](#) (BCHR). At least 34 of those children were arrested between April and June 2012. As of June 2012, there were reportedly 63 children still in detention.

[According](#) to the Bahrain Rehabilitation & Anti-Violence Organization, there are a "growing number of children detained for investigation in security cases." The average period of detention for these children is 91 days, according to BCHR. Article 37(b) of the CRC prohibits the unlawful or arbitrary arrest of children, and requires that the length of detention of a child be "for the shortest appropriate period of time." Similarly, Article 40(2)(b) requires that a child accused of a criminal offense shall "have the matter determined without delay."

[According](#) to Ali Hasan, an 11-year-old boy who was arrested this past June while playing with friends in the street, he was interrogated for hours without the presence of his parents or an attorney, and was ultimately forced to make a false confession. Article 37(d) of the CRC guarantees children the "right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance," while Article 40(2)(b) prohibits states from compelling forced confessions.

Following his interrogation, Ali was taken to a detention facility where, he says, he and other children were subjected to forced labor while in detention. As reported by BCHR, many children have been subjected to other forms of abuse, and even torture, while in prison. Article 37(a) of the CRC prohibits states from subjecting children to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. According to Ali, other than being permitted to play for four hours per day, he and the other children were locked in a room.

ADHRB applauds the Government of Bahrain for recently enacting a provision in its new [Child Law](#), which raises the age of adulthood from 15 to 18. However, the law also [prohibits](#) children from participating in public gatherings, in violation of Article 15 of the CRC. Much more work remains to be done in order for children like Ali to be afforded, as a matter of course, the basic protections required by the CRC.

ADHRB calls upon the Government of Bahrain to bring its laws, law enforcement policies, and juvenile justice system fully into compliance with its international legal obligations so that Bahrain may legitimately be considered to have promoted the welfare of the children in Bahrain on Universal Children's Day, and every day.