

ADHRB Condemns Decision by Bahrain Appeals Court to Uphold Convictions of 13 Activists

Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) strongly condemns a decision by Bahrain's highest appeals court to [uphold](#) convictions against 13 prominent activists. The court's decision eliminates any prospect that the activists will have their convictions [overturned](#), unless they receive a pardon by the king--an unlikely prospect. The 13 are part of a group of 20 activists who were convicted by a military court in 2011 of plotting to overthrow the government. The remaining seven activists, who have either left the country or are in hiding, were tried in [absentia](#).

According to the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI)—an investigative commission sanctioned by the Government of Bahrain—National Security Agency officers tortured, abused, and sexually assaulted many of the 13 activists during interrogation sessions in order to extract forced confessions. Evidence obtained through torture was reportedly used at trial, in contravention of international law. To date, these allegations have gone uninvestigated.

“Once again, the Government of Bahrain has demonstrated its hypocrisy in claiming to abide by its international human rights obligations, while simultaneously denying the rights of dissidents and others who dare to demand more from their government,” said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. “This type of behavior is one of the reasons why dialogue has not been possible in Bahrain—the opposition is dealing with a dishonest broker.”

In its [report](#), the BICI recommended that the Government of Bahrain “review convictions and commute sentences of all persons charged with offences involving political expression, not consisting of advocacy of violence, or, as the case may be, to drop outstanding charges against them.” In a report card issued on the one-year anniversary of the BICI report, ADHRB assigned the Government of Bahrain a failing grade for the lack of progress made in implementing this recommendation. The court's ruling today is further evidence that the Government of Bahrain has considerable work to do to fully implement the BICI recommendations.

“We strongly condemn the court's decision and call on the US Government to strongly condemn the court's decision, and to press the Government of Bahrain to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners,” said Abdulla.