



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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ADHRB Condemns Reduction of Bahrain Police Officer's Sentence

WASHINGTON, DC – May 28, 2013 – Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) condemns recent decisions by a Bahrain appeals court to reduce punishments for police officers responsible for killing protesters in 2011. On Sunday, the court [reduced](#) the sentence of a Bahraini police officer convicted of killing a protester to six months. The officer was originally sentenced to seven years in prison for killing Hani Abdul Aziz Juma during protests that broke out in March 2011. In a separate case, the court acquitted two other police officers charged with killing a protester in November 2011. The public prosecutor's office [plans to challenge](#) the sentence reduction before the court of cassation.

“The Government of Bahrain's complete unwillingness to hold human rights abusers accountable is not only a disgrace, it's also a violation of the government's international human rights obligations,” said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. “Actions speak louder than words, and while the Bahrain government routinely boasts of its progress toward reform and accountability, these verdicts paint quite a different picture.”

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI)—a body commissioned by the Government of Bahrain to recommend reforms following the 2011 protests—[investigated](#) the circumstances surrounding Mr. Juma's death in 2011, finding no evidence that Mr. Juma was killed in self-defense. . Instead, the commission found that Mr. Juma died due to “excessive use of force” after being shot three times from a distance of no more than one meter while fleeing police.

Both the BICI and the US State Department, in its [2012 Bahrain Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#), as well as several human rights organizations, have expressed concern that Bahrain's judiciary system remains highly politicized and lacks independence.

“The lack of accountability for human rights abuses, and the lack of an independent judiciary, both must come to an end,” said Mr. Abdulla. “The Government of Bahrain cannot credibly claim to have implemented meaningful human rights reforms when it continually fails to take its international human rights obligations seriously. The government must revise its sentencing standards for cases involving excessive use of force and unlawful killings to ensure meaningful accountability for inappropriate actions by its police. It must also grant international monitors unhindered access to Bahrain so that they may observe trials involving protesters, human rights defenders, and other activists, including those against police officers. Beyond these small changes, the government must adjust the way judges are appointed if its judiciary is going to have any hope of becoming independent.”

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