



# Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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## ADHRB Observes World Press Freedom Day

Washington, DC – May 2, 2013 – Twenty years ago today, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed May 3 to be World Press Freedom Day. Since then, nations around the world have paused to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom. On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Press Freedom Day, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain applauds those working to secure freedom of expression in all forms of media.

Freedom of expression is the right to hold and express opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and share information and ideas through all forms of media. Although this right is protected under international human rights law, dozens of countries continue to censor the press and limit access to information, and frequently persecute journalists and citizens who run afoul of such restrictions.

As Freedom House [noted](#) in the release of its annual Freedom of the Press report, in 2012, only one in six people lived in a country with a free press. In its report, Freedom House [found](#) that press freedom in the Middle East “remained the [worst in the world](#)” in 2012. The deterioration of Bahrain’s press freedom in particular resulted in its categorization as a country whose press is “[not free](#).”

“The right to receive, share, and access information is an intrinsic component of the freedom of expression,” said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. “Despite the lip service many governments pay to freedom of expression, this right does not receive adequate protection. This is particularly true in Bahrain, where the government has a history of persecuting journalists and citizens alike for exercising their rights to free speech and expression.”

In 2012, Bahraini human rights defender Nabeel Rajab was [sentenced](#) to three months in prison for a Tweet that was critical of the government. By the time his conviction was [overturned](#), Mr. Rajab had already served more than half of his sentence. That same year, freelance journalist Ahmed Ismael Hassan al-Samadi [died](#) after being [shot](#) while filming an anti-government protest in the village of Salmabad. Last October, a Bahrain court [acquitted](#) a police officer accused of [abusing](#) France 24 journalist Nazeeha Saeed following the outbreak of protests in 2011. In April of this year, three journalists from the British television channel ITV were [asked to leave Bahrain](#) after being detained for covering political unrest that coincided with Formula One’s Bahrain Grand Prix.

“The Bahrain government thinks that it can silence the truth by denying entry, intimidating, imprisoning and killing people who speak about human rights violations perpetrated by the,” Abdulla said. “We call on the Government of Bahrain to immediately release all prisoners of conscience still jailed for exercising their rights to free expression, and to open the country to journalists who wish to visit. If the government has nothing to hide, as it says, there should be no reason to continue these practices.”

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