



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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ADHRB Marks International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

WASHINGTON, DC – June 26, 2013 – In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed June 26 to be the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Each year, nations and organizations around the world pause on this day to speak out against torture and to honor and support victims and survivors who have endured unimaginable suffering through torture. On the 16th anniversary of this important day, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain expresses its concern for the ongoing use of torture by the Government of Bahrain, and stands in solidarity with the government's victims.

Following the outbreak of peaceful protests in Bahrain in 2011, thousands of protesters were detained by security forces for peacefully exercising their free speech rights. During their detention, many of those individuals were tortured, often in an attempt to obtain a forced confession. The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, a body commissioned by the king of Bahrain to recommend reforms in response to the 2011 uprising, investigated nearly 600 allegations of torture and confirmed several deaths [resulting](#) from torture.

“Torture is prohibited under any circumstances, and has been illegal under international law for decades, and yet countries around the world continue to use it to denigrate and humiliate individuals,” said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. “The use of torture by the Government of Bahrain to silence protesters is unjustifiable and must be accounted for. Those responsible for torturing medics, journalists, and activists such as [Rula al-Saffar](#), [Nazeera Saeed](#), and [Abdulhadi al-Khawaja](#) must be punished to the full extent of the law, and the victims of such heinous crimes must be compensated for the abuse they endured.”

Despite ongoing international outcry against such abuses, cases of torture [continue to occur](#) in Bahrain, while the perpetrators continue to get away with impunity. Just this week, a Bahrain appeals court [upheld](#) the acquittal of a Bahraini police officer who tortured Bahraini journalist Nazeera Saeed during the 2011 uprising. This decision closely follows a decision by the Bahrain government to [indefinitely postpone](#) a visit by United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez, casting further doubt on the government's claim that torture is not perpetrated by officials.

“Nazeera Saeed's case is, unfortunately, one of many in Bahrain,” said Abdulla. “The use of torture by the Government of Bahrain has continued unchecked for years. The Bahrain government must immediately cease the use of torture, release those serving sentences based on coerced confessions, compensate all torture victims and their families, and prosecute those responsible for committing acts of torture. Additionally, Bahrain must allow immediate access to the Special Rapporteur on Torture so that he may independently investigate all claims of torture.”