



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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ADHRB Commemorates the International Day of Democracy and the International Day of Peace

WASHINGTON, DC – September 20, 2013 –September 15th marked the 6th annual [International Day of Democracy](#), a time for reflection and examination considering the state of democracy across the globe. This year's theme, "Strengthening Voices for Democracy", focuses on the importance and ability of people to 'raise their voices and decide how they are governed'. On September 21, the 31st annual [International Day of Peace](#) will be celebrated by commemoration and practical acts of peace-building on the part of 'individuals, organizations, and nations'. In recognition of these important occasions, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain celebrates the contributions of democracy defenders and peace warriors around the world.

International support for the democratic aspirations of the people of Bahrain was recently demonstrated through a [resolution](#) passed by the European Parliament. The resolution, which 'calls on the Bahraini authorities to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression', closely follows a 47-nation [joint statement](#) made at the United Nations Human Rights Council that addressed the various challenges placed upon those working peacefully to achieve their democratic aspirations in Bahrain.

"This year's theme reminds us that freedom of expression is crucial to a healthy democracy," said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. "Democracy's champions act from their conscience, often in the face of great resistance, to lend voice and perspective to the most important debates of our time," Abdulla said.

In recent moves against peaceful opposition to the status quo, the Government of Bahrain [detained](#) opposition leader Khalil al-Marzooq and [moved](#) to liquidate the Islamic Scholars Council. These acts are not isolated incidents: since the peaceful uprising began in Bahrain more than two years ago, the Bahrain government has virtually incriminated public political activity that questions the government or the status quo and has refused to negotiate fairly with the broad-base opposition coalition.

"In spite of institutionalized violence and human rights violations, the opposition in Bahrain remains committed to nonviolent tactics and has condemned acts of violence committed both by and against the regime," Abdulla said. "As violence only serves to drown out the voices calling for democracy and respect for human rights, the commitment to peace remains the only course for creating a democratic society that respects the will of the people and the rule of law. As we celebrate these two important days, we must remember that peace is the result of action, not inaction: people and nations must choose peace over conflict, as it is a sacrificial commitment to human dignity," Abdulla said.