



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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On Eve of Manama Dialogue ADHRB Advises US Policy Shift towards Bahrain

WASHINGTON, DC – December 3, 2013 – This week, United States Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel travels to Bahrain to attend the [Manama Dialogue](#). This international summit focused on regional security provides Secretary Hagel a unique opportunity to reaffirm the United States' dedication to the preservation of human rights and democratic principles in the Gulf by raising awareness of the ongoing abuses endured by Bahrainis at the hand of their government for exercising their basic human rights. ADHRB urges Secretary Hagel and the United States Government to make stronger public statements on the Bahrain Government's systematic targeting of peaceful protestors and human rights defenders.

The people of Bahrain have incurred consistent personal security and human rights violations since the government crackdown on the popular protest movement of 2011. Failure to [meaningfully include](#) dissenting political actors in the public discourse, coupled with a [repressive security response](#) towards civilian demonstrations, has created an unstable environment. Despite President Barack Obama's previous statements [that](#) "The only way forward is for the government and opposition to engage in a dialogue, and you can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail," opposition leaders [remain imprisoned](#), while others continue to be [targeted](#) in politically-motivated attacks.

The recent anniversary of the 2011 Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report served to highlight the Bahrain government's [failure](#) to implement the modest reforms, which were accepted by the King in the aftermath of the February 2011 popular uprising. Unfortunately, many of the violations identified in the report [persist](#), while their [perpetrators](#) suffer little or no punishment for their actions.

"The people of Bahrain continue to be threatened by their own government," said ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla. "The interests of the United States are not served by the increasing instability in Bahrain, which is a direct result of systematic impunity and oppression by the Government of Bahrain. Quiet diplomacy is not enough: The United States must make stronger public statements on the human rights abuses which occur in Bahrain on a daily basis. By remaining silent on the Bahrain government's failure to enact meaningful reform, the United States undermines its standing in the region and betrays its own principles."

It is apparent that current U.S. policy has [not](#) facilitated stability in Bahrain, nor resolved the political conflict that is [exacerbating](#) regional sectarian divisions. To fully serve human rights and political freedoms in Bahrain and promote the stability of the Gulf region, U.S. policy toward Bahrain must include sustained, high-level calls on the Government of Bahrain to adhere to its human rights commitments and enact meaningful reforms, including the release of all political prisoners and accountability for torture and other serious human rights crimes, along with the full implementation of BICI recommendations.

"The United States can and must leverage its military and diplomatic relationship with the Government of Bahrain to encourage steps toward accountability and reform. This is what allies do," said Abdulla. "While attending the Manama Dialogue, it is imperative that Secretary Hagel publicly call for greater respect for both democratic processes and human rights in Bahrain."