



ADHRB Condemns Treatment of Bahraini Prisoners during December Hunger Strike

WASHINGTON, DC – January 2nd, 2013 - In early December, Bahrain prison officials in Jaw Prison broke a hunger strike by negotiating with prisoners for the provision of basic essentials to weather the winter season. Days after the hunger strike ended, however, they reneged on their promises and refused to provide prisoners with proper clothing and access to medical treatment. Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) condemns the treatment of the prisoners in Jaw Prison and calls on the Government of Bahrain to honor its commitments and adequately provide for the prisoners in its care.

Prison conditions in Bahrain remain [overcrowded](#) and [inhumane](#), with prison officials refusing to provide inmates with proper clothing, [rations](#), and [medical treatment](#). According to a document received by ADHRB from confidential sources last week, in early December a single prisoner in Jaw Prison protested his treatment by refusing to re-enter his cell after a break. The prison guards responded by locking the other inmates in their cells while they beat the prisoner with their fists and batons. When the other prisoners shouted in outrage, the government sent in riot police, who proceeded to beat the prisoners en masse. After they finished, prison officials locked the prisoners in their cells for two days, denied injured prisoners access to medical facilities, and refused to allow prisoners to contact their families.

The prisoners responded to their treatment by initiating a hunger strike. The strike lasted for 11 days, during which several prisoners fainted due to malnutrition. The prisoners requested only the restoration of their basic rights: winter uniforms with long sleeves, access to proper medical care, better food, and that officials leave cells open until later in the day. To end the strike, prison officials acceded to prisoner demands. Yet once the strike was over, the government reneged on its promises. Prisoners in Jaw Prison today remain without access to adequate food, clothing, or medical treatment.

“The treatment of the prisoners in Jaw Prison is extremely troubling,” said Husain Abdulla, ADHRB’s Executive Director. “As severe prison conditions persist, ADHRB is greatly concerned over the Government of Bahrain’s apparent violations of basic international standards on the treatment of prisoners and deteriorating prison conditions,” said Abdulla.

The [Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners](#), as adopted by the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and as approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, provides that, “[e]very prisoner who is not allowed to wear his own clothing shall be provided with an outfit of clothing suitable for the climate and adequate to keep him in good health.” The Rules further state, “Every prisoner shall be provided by the administration at the usual hours with food of nutritional value adequate for health and strength, of wholesome quality and well prepared and served,” and, “[a] medical officer shall see and examine every prisoner as soon as possible after his admission and thereafter as necessary, with a view particularly to the discovery of physical or mental illness and the taking of all necessary measures...”



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“International law provides very clear guidance on the subject of the treatment of prisoners,” said Abdulla. “In order to comply with international law, the Government of Bahrain must honor its commitments to the prisoners of Jaw Prison and provide them with adequate clothing, food, and medical care. Further, the government must recommit to providing the same standard of care to each prisoner in every prison in Bahrain. Until then, the international community should remain vigilant and hold the Government of Bahrain accountable to respecting the human rights of its prison population.”