



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), with the support of Alsalam Foundation, would like to note with particular concern the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain. Despite having made commitments to the international community to improve the status of human rights in the country, Bahrain has continued to violate the universal human rights of its citizens through the ongoing use of torture, arbitrary detention, restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, expression and the press, and by placing greater restraints on civil society and human rights defenders. We would like to highlight a number of cases that represent the ongoing systemic human rights challenges in Bahrain:

On the night of 7 October 2012, seven masked men dressed in civilian clothes stormed into the house of Tagi al-Maidan, dragged him out of his bed, and abducted him. He spent the next 22 hours disappeared, during which time Tagi alleges that he was blindfolded, beaten, and tortured at the Bahrain Criminal Investigative Directorate building until he falsely confessed to assaulting a police officer. On 24 September 2013, the Bahrain criminal court used this confession to sentence Tagi to 10 years in prison.

On 16 December 2013, Bahraini CID forces arrested 10-year-old Jihad al-Samea, allegedly beating him during his arrest. Afterwards, they took him to a youth hostel, where Jihad alleges that they continued to beat him. Later, when Jihad was asked to testify in Court regarding his treatment, he was overcome with fear and could not speak. Jihad was placed in detention on 18 December, and held for over a month.

Ahmed al-Fardan is an award-winning photojournalist who has chronicled civil unrest in Bahrain. On 26 December 2013, Bahraini security forces stormed into his house and took him to an unknown location. The Bahrain government held Ahmed for two weeks, during which time he alleges he was severely beaten and sexually abused. In January 2014 he was released from custody pending a criminal trial.

In addition to these cases relating to the alleged torture of children and journalists, Bahrain's prisons have become severely over-crowded with more than 3,800 political prisoners. Many of these prisoners were convicted under Bahrain's terrorism laws on charges of "illegal protest" used to restrict the exercise of free expression and assembly.

The case of human rights in Bahrain is urgent. ADHRB urges the Council to work with the Bahrain Government to take concrete steps to improve the status of human rights in that country. These steps should include the release of political prisoners, full and immediate cooperation with the various UN Special Procedures, and the establishment of a permanent OHCHR office in Bahrain with a full reporting and investigatory mandate.

Thank you.