



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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ADHRB Calls for Full Cooperation between Bahrain and OHCHR

WASHINGTON, D.C. – 2 May 2014 – Today, the United Nations (U.N.) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concludes a two-month technical mission to the Kingdom of Bahrain. The purpose of the OHCHR mission was to assess any technical steps the Bahrain government has taken in addressing the human rights crisis facing the country since OHCHR's previous technical mission to the country in 2012. Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) welcomes the decision by the Bahraini government to allow for a temporary mission and applauds OHCHR's continued engagement on the human rights situation in Bahrain. At the same time, ADHRB is greatly concerned over the Government of Bahrain's failure to fully cooperate with the OHCHR and its representatives during their time in the country.

OHCHR has been extremely active in addressing the litany of human rights abuses in Bahrain. Unfortunately, the Government of Bahrain's own obstinacy and interference limited the amount that OHCHR's mission was able to achieve. Far from having a full implementation and reporting mandate, the Bahrain government limited OHCHR's mission to "technical assessment," and did not allow OHCHR's team to provide implementation assistance or a public report of their findings. Further, the Government of Bahrain has refused to allow OHCHR to establish a full and permanent office in Bahrain in order to assist the Government in fulfilling its human rights obligations, despite the continuation of well-documented and systematic human rights abuses. When combined with previous slights against OHCHR, including the twice-cancelled visit by the Special Rapporteur on Torture and failure to allow any other U.N. Special Procedures to enter the country, it is clear that the Government of Bahrain is interested only in cosmetic cooperation with OHCHR and the positive media attention that it receives from such interaction.

"OHCHR continues to push the Government of Bahrain for greater accountability and better implementation of its human rights commitments," said Husain Abdulla, Executive Director of ADHRB. "While we applaud OHCHR for endeavoring to hold Bahrain to task, we must hold the Bahrain government for refusing to allow OHCHR to fully perform its mandate."

ADHRB calls on the Government of Bahrain to fully enable and comply with the aims and objectives of OHCHR by: allowing OHCHR immediate and unfettered access to Bahrain without the limitations imposed on the most recent mission; facilitating an expedient visit by the U.N. Special Procedures, especially the Special Rapporteur on Torture; bringing the National Institute for Human Rights in compliance with the Paris Principles and seeking OHCHR accreditation; establishing good faith by releasing all political prisoners held under charges relating to freedom of expression and assembly; and repealing repressive national legislation restricting free speech and assembly. These short-term, yet concrete steps should be taken with the aim of establishing within a year a permanent and full reporting office for OHCHR in Manama to transparently and independently oversee Bahrain's implementation of its international human rights obligations.

"Full and complete cooperation with OHCHR is necessary in order for the Government of Bahrain to demonstrate to the international community that it is serious about addressing systematic human rights violations," said Husain Abdulla, Executive Director of ADHRB. "By continuing to insist on limited technical missions and refusing to allow the Special Procedures admittance, the government broadcasts that they want to sweep their human rights abuses under the rug instead of engaging them in a real, substantial, and committed fashion."



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