



NGOs Voice Concern Over Sitra Arbitrary Arrest Campaign Following Last Week's Bombing

5 August 2015 – Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) are extremely concerned over the escalated measures and collective punishment the authorities have subjected the people of Sitra to in the aftermath of the bombing incident. On 28 July 2015, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD [condemned](#) the violent attack on security forces that reportedly killed two policemen and injured eight.

Last week, the Government of Bahrain announced an explosion in Sitra that has reportedly resulted in the death of two policemen and the injury of eight. Immediately following the incident, Bahraini authorities put Sitra under siege and started a random and arbitrary arrest campaign. As a result, around 32 people have been arrested, 26 of which remain in detention. Arrests and searches were carried out without presenting legal warrants. All arrests were conducted through house raids leaving households in chaos and mess, and members of the families were reportedly harassed and traumatized. It was reported that one woman was violently beaten by security forces while trying to defend a relative who was being arrested. Since their arrest, detained individuals were allowed just one call to their families, which lasted only a few seconds before the call was ended. All persons arrested were not allowed to contact their lawyers or have legal representation following their arrest.

The bomb incident has left the area under siege; the mobility of people living on the island has been restricted. Checkpoints were set up, including on the main causeway connecting Sitra and the main island, which has created traffic jams and hindered movement. Cars and trucks searches have been conducted and there have been some reported arrests at checkpoints. The boosted presence of security forces and newly created checkpoints add to the already existing tension on the island.

ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD condemn the arbitrary arrests and find it alarming that safety of the detainees has been compromised, along with their basic rights of contact with their families and lawyers. We have seen [previous, similar cases](#) in which speedy arrests and enforced disappearances have led to further human rights violations, including the torture of detainees in detention, deprivation of due process and right to a fair trial. BCHR, ADHRB and BIRD suspect a breach of Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating, “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.”; and Article 12 stating, “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.” The recent actions are also not in compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9, Paragraphs 1-5.

Based on the above, ADHRB, BCHR and BIRD urge the Government of Bahrain to:

- Immediately provide all detained individuals in this case with a lawyer, and allow them access to family visits;
- end the practice of torture to extract false confessions, and end the practice of subjecting detainees to enforced disappearance;
- Respect and protect human rights of the suspects during and after the investigation process.