



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9 September 2015 - Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) welcomes the introduction of [H.R. 3445](#), the bipartisan resolution in the United States House of Representatives that would reinstate the US arms sales ban to Bahrain until the country implements all 26 recommendations of the Bahrain Commission of Inquiry (BICI). We applaud the commitment of the bill's co-sponsors, Congressmen Joe Pitts (R-PA) and Jim McGovern (D-MA), co-chairs of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC), and Congressman Hank Johnson (D-GA), towards ensuring that US foreign policy continues to promote the respect of human rights and the belief that citizens should not live in fear of their government.

HR. 3445 is the House companion bill to [S.2009](#), The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) Accountability Act introduced by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Marco Rubio (R-FL) at the end of July. The resolution seeks to overturn the Obama Administration's June decision to remove the arms ban on Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) and the National Guard. When the ban was lifted, Congressman McGovern released a [statement](#) saying, "If the U.S. is truly committed to regional stability, we must push our allies to embrace policies that will strengthen free societies, not silence entire segments of their population. This is the only way to combat extremism."

In introducing the bill, Congressmen Pitts, McGovern, and Johnson, along with Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Ron Wyden (D-OR), act to ensure that no US-made weapons will be utilized in the government's ongoing human rights abuses, which have continued largely unabated since the pro-democracy uprising in February 2011. Security forces in Bahrain continue to use certain types of arms to silence peaceful protests and speech critical of the government: items such as tear gas, birdshot, and other weapons continue to be used to violently disperse protests, commit acts of collective punishment, and torture.

"Since the government publicly accepted the recommendations of the BICI report, Bahraini security forces have acted with impunity, extra-judicially killing numerous Bahraini citizens," said Husain Abdulla, Executive Director of ADHRB. "Many of those deaths were a result of the use of lethal amounts of tear gas, live ammunition, and shotgun birdshot, weapons that these resolutions specifically ban."

By reinstating the ban, these resolutions seek to hold the Government of Bahrain accountable to its international commitment to implement all 26 of the BICI recommendations, which King Hamad publicly accepted following the release of the Commission's report. According to the State Department, his government has refrained from instituting the recommendations in any meaningful fashion: a concerning 2013 State Department report, commissioned under the FY2013 NDAA, stated that Bahrain had only implemented [five of the BICI recommendations](#), while the most recent 2014 Department of State Human Rights Country Report on Bahrain found that the government had failed to address many of the subjects covered by the BICI, including issues relating to [torture and the criminalization of free speech](#).

"The United States government's own documentation makes clear that Bahrain has not achieved meaningful progress on human rights reform and national reconciliation to merit renewed, unrestricted arms trade with the US," said Abdulla. "The introduction of the companion bill in the House should make clear to the Obama Administration that Congress will not sit idly by while the State Department allows security interests and arms sales revenue to trump human rights."

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