

Apart in Their Own Land

GOVERNMENT DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST SHIA IN BAHRAIN



VOLUME II

Economic Disclusion, Cultural Marginalization, and Media Discrimination



Americans for Democracy
& Human Rights in Bahrain



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September 2015

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The Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy is a London, UK based non-profit organization focusing on advocacy, education and awareness for the calls of democracy and human rights in Bahrain.

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Acronyms

ADHRB	Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain
BCHR	Bahrain Center for Human Rights
BICI	Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry
BIRD	Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy
BTV	Bahrain National Television
BNA	Bahrain News Agency
BTA	Bahrain Teachers Association
IAA	Information Affairs Authority
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NSA	Bahrain National Security Agency

Methodology

This report is the product of extensive research on the ground, accomplished by examining government records, interviewing involved actors, and personally recording events taking place in the country. Such research is significantly supplemented by a literature review taken from a wide variety of reputable sources, including well-established newspapers, magazines, and journals. When possible, the report provides a citation to a publicly-available source. In such instances where the interests of confidentiality force us to anonymize information or redact our source, the report may omit the source and indicate the need for confidentiality. Such sources may be available privately upon request.

Foreword

When we first published Volume I of *Apart in Their Own Land* over six months ago, my staff and I thought that we were documenting the nadir of governmental discrimination and reprisal against Bahrain's Shia majority. Even as we worked exhaustively to catalogue the violence suffered by peaceful Shia protesters, the destruction of Shia mosques, and an electoral field tilted against Shia politicians and voters, we did so with the knowledge that these acts were unsustainable. To maintain these policies, the Government of Bahrain would risk alienation abroad and a metastasizing political conflict at home. Rational leadership, we assumed, would at least pull back from suppressing a full two-thirds of its population so harshly, even if it refrained from implementing the pluralist reforms that we presented.

The last half-year, however, has weakened our confidence that Bahrain's leadership can reason prudently about the long-term. The government has not just failed to reconstitute a national dialogue capable of delivering needed social and political reforms; it has taken the opposite tack, waging a campaign against Shia, Sunni, and secular figures central to the opposition. The arrest and prosecution of top activists and leading political society members can only be read as an attempt to stir up chaos within these organizations, thereby forestalling both dialogue and any resultant reform.

This government recommitted to this campaign in earnest in March 2015, when Ministry of Interior officials decided that the government had suffered enough nonviolent criticism. Authorities arrested Fadhel Abbas, Secretary-General of the secular al-Wahdawi political society, for online remarks that opposed the GCC's military intervention in Yemen. A week later, police detained Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, for condemning the Yemeni war and daring to disclose official brutality against the inmates of Jau Central Prison. As summer arrived, courts sentenced Sheikh Ali Salman, Secretary-General of the Shia opposition party al-Wefaq, to four years in prison; they swiftly allotted five to Fadhel Abbas. Then, publicly undermining its own clemency, the government re-arrested Ebrahim Sharif in July, three weeks after cutting short his prison term. In the interim, Waad's Secretary-General had shocked no one by calling for peaceful protests that would force the government back to the negotiating table.

As we send this report to print, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. Both Khalil al-Marzooq, al-Wefaq's assistant secretary, and Sheikh Maytham al-Salman, an interfaith activist at Bahrain Human Rights Observatory, have been hauled in for questioning. A deplorable act of terrorism in Sitra has prompted blanket harassment of the Shia community, both in print and in the street, instead of the targeting of the attack's specific perpetrators. Even the mid-July release of Nabeel Rajab comes tinged with uncertainty, as criminal charges for his political speech still hang over him and his family.

This renewed suppression of a cross-sectarian opposition has one purpose: to oppress a Shia population that would, if it truly shared power, help likeminded Sunnis channel resources from an opulent minority to a struggling majority. For a government that values prejudice over equality, cronyism over merit, and division over reconciliation, such an outcome is unconscionable.

So, in support of equality, merit, and reconciliation, ADHRB, BIRD, and BCHR release the second volume of a report detailing a *de facto* system of apartheid in Bahrain. Where Vol. I focused on violence and discrimination in the political sphere, Vol. II demonstrates what this disclosure yields. For Bahrain's Shia, economic inequality, cultural erasure, and media demonization stem, terribly yet unsurprisingly, from the lack of representation previously detailed. In Bahrain as elsewhere, absolute governance is hardly beneficent, and those outside of the ruling clique can expect neither equality nor charity.

Still, despite these last few months, we remain optimistic that change will come. The discrimination documented in this volume, though persistent and troubling, is not permanent. No number of politically-motivated arrests or prosecutions can shift the calculus for King Hamad, Premier Khalifa, and the rest of Bahrain's leadership. Whatever their private hopes, they cannot succeed where South Africa and countless other exclusionary governments have failed. And when they come to the table, their political concessions will not only engender fairer representation, but equitable economics and cross-cultural respect as well.

Husain Abdulla,
Executive Director, ADHRB

Introduction

In February 2015, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) released *Apart in Their Own Land: Government Discrimination Against Shia in Bahrain*, Volume I. The report studied the marginalization of Bahrain's Shia majority through a largely political lens, covering the persecution and prosecution of peaceful protesters, the suppression of a legitimate opposition, and the faux-democratic elections borne of asymmetric redistricting. These exclusionary political tactics had immediate, and frequently violent, outcomes. Doctors who treated demonstrators suffered torture in their own hospitals, individuals were arbitrarily arrested for tweets, and mosques fell under bulldozers and wrecking balls.

A population's inability to participate in the formation of its government relegates its members to second-class status outside the political sphere. Cadres of elites do not arrest the self-determination of large populations through political oppression alone, but through institutionalizing its resulting inequalities. In order to establish lasting divisions between rulers and ruled, the marginalized must be disadvantaged in every facet of daily life. Government policy must make their historic occupations precarious and their culture alien. State-sponsored media must define patriotism along sectarian and ethnic lines. These are old tactics that, both before and after the democratic movement of 2011, the Bahraini government has applied to its Shia citizens.

The Bahraini government directs a campaign of media discrimination against its Shia citizens. In the wake of 2011's pro-democracy movement, Bahrain state television broadcasts anti-Shia propaganda. Under government influence, newspapers declare which citizens are loyal and which are traitors. They reduce the tens of thousands who descended upon the Pearl Roundabout seeking justice and reform to armed agents of a foreign power, ignoring the protesters' national aspirations and nonviolence.

This campaign of present-day media discrimination directly supports a larger effort to marginalize the Shia majority's cultural and historical influence on Bahrain. The government, both before and after the events of 2011, has sought to deny that its majority population has made any contribution to Bahraini society. Tourists are funneled from visiting heritage sites, security forces do not respect Shia funeral rites, and textbooks promote Al Khalifa historical narrative above all others.

This cultural marginalization and media discrimination helps cover the perpetuation of regressive economic policies that disproportionately harm the Shia community. In recent years, the government has engaged in coastal "land reclamations" that have spoiled ocean habitats and restricted access to public land, thereby denying thousands of mostly-Shia workers their traditional employment. University students have lost their seats, and professors their positions, for even mild political activism. Many government jobs, particularly in the national security and defense forces, remain off-limits to Shia men and women.

Many authoritarian governments subdue certain minorities; only apartheid-promoting states take on the bulk of their population with the sophistication and reach of the Bahraini government. The following report holistically addresses this intricate apparatus of discrimination, attempting to demonstrate just how thoroughly Bahrain's governing elite have set Shia apart in their own land. By doing so, the report demonstrates that the government does not limit its oppression to temporary upheavals, but that it continuously seeks to build its power on the backs of the island's oldest continuous communities.

Media Discrimination

As part of its broader campaign to constrain the development of an independent civil society in Bahrain, the government has worked to establish central control of the public exchange of information. To this end, the government has continually restructured its extensive regulatory infrastructure in order to consolidate its authority over the Bahraini media and further supervise all forms of domestic communication. The current network of government-affiliated entities involved in the transmission of information—to which this chapter will collectively refer as the state information services—has increasingly used its influence over a variety of media sources to manipulate public perception of the pro-democracy movement and reconfigure the Shia majority population as an existential threat to Bahraini security.

The State Information Services

In 2010, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a set of royal decrees that downsized the Ministry of Culture and Information¹—Bahrain’s former regulatory body—and created a separate, dedicated supervisory mechanism called the Information Affairs Authority (IAA).² Under the IAA, the king incorporated the entirety of Bahrain’s disparate state or state-sponsored information services, including the Human and Financial Resources Directorate, the Bahrain News Agency (BNA), and the Directorates of External Information, Press, Governmental Press, Radio, Television, News, Art, and Publications and Publishing.³ The IAA has also reportedly started a “unit [to] monitor social media and foreign news websites.”⁴ In 2012, the king issued Royal Decree No. 40, formally establishing the Ministry of State for Information Affairs (MSIA) to house the IAA and further centralize the regulatory function of the state. According to the Ministry of State for Information Affairs (MSIA), the IAA operates as the executive body for the new ministry,⁵ enacting “the policies, strategies, and legislations regulating the media and communication sector, implementing the media programs and initiatives, in an aim to shape professional and credible media.”⁶

In reality, the MSIA and the IAA work together to ensure that the Bahraini media operates under the strict censorship and direction of the Bahraini government. This steady concentration of regulatory power in the state information services has meant that nearly every news outlet in Bahrain explicitly supports the government. The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) has officially documented the degree of government influence, concluding, “it is clear that the media in Bahrain is biased towards the GoB. Six of the seven daily newspapers are pro-government and the broadcasting service is State-controlled” via the government-owned Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation (commonly known by the name of its subsidiary network,

1 These decrees renamed the Ministry of Culture and Information the Ministry of Culture. In 2015, Royal Decree No. 10 renamed the institution again, entitling it the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA).

2 “His Majesty issues decrees,” Gulf Daily News, July 9, 2010, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=281924>.

3 Ibid.

4 “Freedom on the Net 2014 – Bahrain,” Freedom House, accessed August 17, 2015, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2014/bahrain>.

5 “FAQ,” Ministry of State for Information Affairs, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.mia.gov.bh/en/The-Ministry/FAQ/Pages/default.aspx>.

6 “Vision, Mission and Goals,” Ministry of State for Information Affairs, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.mia.gov.bh/en/The-Ministry/Pages/Vision-Mission-and-Goals.aspx>.

Bahrain National TV or BTV).⁷

With the onset of civil unrest in 2011, the government has worked to further leverage the state information services as part of its militarized reaction to the pro-democracy movement. In particular, the government has used the media to target and vilify the disenfranchised Shia majority. At the same time, it has deployed security forces, working within the strategic parameters set by the MSIA, to intimidate, arrest, and prosecute dissenting journalists and activists; authorities even forcibly detained a CNN news crew reporting near the Shia neighborhood of Bani Jamrah.⁸ Since 2011, independent media outlets have also faced fines, state-takeovers, and forced closures simply for providing coverage of the Shia community or the civil unrest. As recently as February 2015, the IAA moved to “halt the activities” of the Alarab TV Station after it ran an interview with Khalil al-Marzooq, a Shia member of the al-Wefaq opposition party.⁹ The state information services have overseen this discrimination in standard media coverage of the Shia community, coverage of ongoing civil unrest, and in “independent” and social media.

Discrimination in the State Media

Standard Coverage

Through BTV, the state effectively dominates the audiovisual broadcasting service in Bahrain.¹⁰ BTV runs five of the seven domestic (or terrestrial) broadcasting stations, and BBC reports that the private Al-Ayyam and Al-Ittihad TV channels are firmly pro-government.¹¹ According to a report published by *The Atlantic* in 2011, the consequent “lack of foreign press coverage means a virtual monopoly on airwaves for state-run BTV.”¹² The government has exploited this broadcast monopoly in order to institute its official messaging organ, the BNA, as both the official mouthpiece of the Sunni governing elite and the chief source of public information in Bahrain.¹³ Consequently, since its original inception as the Gulf Daily News in 1978, this “extension to the Information Affairs Authority”¹⁴ has gradually acquired the unique capacity to determine whether information falls within the national news scope, and thus monopolizes how it should be covered.

For the Shia community, already excluded from mainstream Bahraini society, the BNA’s power has meant an additional exclusion from the mainstream national news cycle. BNA news reports seldom provide coverage of Shia individuals or their activities, and almost always lack general Shia-related information. According to ADHRB and BIRD’s contacts in Bahrain, it is even rare for individuals to speak the Arabic dialect common to Bahraini Shia on official channels. Tellingly, the MSIA’s official description of Bahrain’s “Population and Demographics” asserts that the country “is

7 Mahmoud Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria al-Awadhi, Philippe Kirsch, and Mahnoush Arsanjani, “Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry,” Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, <http://www.bici.org.bh/BIClreportEN.pdf>.

8 Karen Leigh, “The Anti-al-Jazeera: Bahrain’s Notorious State-Run TV Channel,” *The Atlantic*, April 19, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/04/the-anti-al-jazeera-bahrains-notorious-state-run-tv-channel/237462/>.

9 “Bahrain suspends newly launched Alarab news channel,” *Al Jazeera*, February 9, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/02/bahrain-suspends-newly-launched-alarab-news-channel-150209155209829.html>.

10 Bassiouni, et. al., “Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry,” Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

11 “Bahrain Profile – Media,” *BBC News*, November 26, 2014, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14541053>.

12 Leigh, “The Anti-al-Jazeera: Bahrain’s Notorious State-Run TV Channel,” *The Atlantic*.

13 “About BNA,” Bahrain News Agency, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/aboutbna>.

14 Ibid.

known historically as a model of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among all cultures, religions and sects,” but nowhere on its website does it actually note the presence, let alone the proportion, of Shia in Bahrain.¹⁵

The state media’s basic failure to acknowledge the Bahraini Shia extends beyond simple indifference; it constitutes an implicit rejection of Bahraini Shia culture and religion. Although Friday prayer is an important occasion for all Muslims, the state media has almost never broadcast any Shia prayer service, even in part.¹⁶ In contrast, BTV provides complete coverage of Sunni mosques, including religious oration and the prayers themselves.¹⁷

Similarly, the state media has declined to broadcast any faith-based television shows that espouse Shia belief systems. Though there is a disproportionate number of Shia in Bahrain, all Islamic television programs are explicitly and intentionally rooted in Sunni theology. While Internet streaming technology has made it possible for tech-savvy Bahrainis to circumvent the Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation’s broadcasting restrictions, the IAA has simultaneously advanced an ambiguous cybersecurity doctrine that interprets Shia religious expression as sectarian incitement.¹⁸ Using this justification, the state information services have blocked access within Bahrain to over 1,000 websites, including that of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR)¹⁹ and the opposition news site *Bahrain Mirror*.²⁰ In 2013, the government also blocked ‘matam.tv’, a Shia religious website that livestreams sermons and festivals from Bahrain’s *matams* (traditional Bahraini Shia congregation halls) in order to avoid the *de facto* broadcasting ban on Shia television programming.²¹ Its censorship signaled the government’s resolve to deny Shia even private access to online coverage of their religious and cultural heritage.

Coverage of Civil Unrest

Since emergence of the pro-democracy protest movement in 2011, BTV and the BNA have supplemented their negligence of the Bahraini Shia community with a campaign of explicit, anti-Shia defamation. In the absence of a publicly recognized Bahraini Shia identity—an absence expressly manufactured by a state policy of neglect—this campaign has advanced a demonized caricature of Bahraini Shia culture as a means to isolate Shia reformers and delegitimize their political grievances. The state information services have sought to characterize broad, secular social discontent as criminal disorder, factional sedition, and/or long-standing sectarian rivalry. Ali al-Saffar, a Middle Eastern specialist at the Economist Intelligence Unit in London, quoted in *The Atlantic*, states that “the narrative the government wants to put across, which is powerful, is that this is a sectarian conflict, different than [the popular uprisings of] Egypt and Tunisia. And the vehicle it chose to do that with is BTV.”²² To this end the MSIA and the IAA, primarily through

15 “Population and Demographics,” Ministry of State for Information Affairs, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.mia.gov.bh/en/Kingdom-of-Bahrain/Pages/Population-and-Demographic-Growth.aspx>.

16 Bassiouni, et. al., “Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry,” Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, 24.

17 Confidential source.

18 “Bahrain: The ‘Cyber Safety Directorate’ Monitors Internet Activity In Style Similar to Big Brother,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights, November 25, 2013, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/6624>.

19 Ibid.

20 “Access to blocked sites restored by Reporters Without Borders,” BBC News, March 12, 2015, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-31836330>.

21 “Bahrain: The ‘Cyber Safety Directorate’ Monitors Internet Activity In Style Similar to Big Brother,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

22 Leigh, “The Anti-al-Jazeera: Bahrain’s Notorious State-Run TV Channel,” *The Atlantic*.

BTV and the BNA, have propagated an ever-evolving anti-Shia narrative of the Bahraini civil unrest.

The state media has grounded this narrative in a historical anti-Shia prejudice. According to the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, the “Sunni government and its loyalists use [history] today when they brand the Shia opposition as ‘Safavid loyalists of Iran.’”²³ The government regularly invokes the past rule of Bahrain by the Persian Safavid Dynasty as a means of pseudo-historical exclusion; at the same time, it uses it to appeal more broadly to modern anxiety over Iranian influence. Within this expansive framework, the state media has been able to recast the Shia as fundamentally non-Bahraini, and thus inherently threatening to the Bahraini state. At their most severe, these tactics have laid a foundation for wider dehumanization of the Bahraini Shia by normalizing pejorative designators for Shia groups and ultimately displacing the Shia from shared national history.

Since the original Pearl Roundabout protests began in 2011, the state media has employed these ingrained biases as the basis for its coverage of the demonstrations, equating dissent with “Shiism” or Iranian aggression. Karen Leigh of *The Atlantic* states: “the narrative that BTV keeps driving is one in which Sunnis should fear the mostly Shi’ite protesters, with an implicit warning -- if they win, you are in danger.”²⁴ As the most established of its discursive tools, the state media has relied on accompanying anti-Shia stereotypes to further this narrative. In this widening sectarian divide, official journalists have openly referred to individual demonstrators as “terrorists,” “saboteurs,” and “Iranian infiltrators,” while some average citizens take the cue further, describing their “Shi’a neighbors as ‘cockroaches’ that ‘must be put down.’”²⁵

While the state information services have generally misrepresented the unrest, they have also worked to actively manipulate ongoing events.²⁶ Masked BTV crew members have planted evidence, including knives and guns, at protest sites, only for camera crews and correspondents to turn around and film this evidence of protester “violence.”²⁷ ADHRB and BIRD interlocutors on the ground in Bahrain also relate that pro-government media outlets publish the pictures and names of these “criminal” Shia as a matter of policy (see Figure 1), something that is rarely done for alleged Sunni offenders.²⁸

In instances of clear government abuse, state and pro-government media attempt to shield security forces from scrutiny, refusing to broadcast images of government violence. At Bahrain’s Salmaniya Hospital, for example, the security forces have imposed draconian measures on medical personnel since the original protests in 2011, forcing them to report any wounded protestors to the authorities and beating or arresting those who do not comply.²⁹ A nurse at Salmaniya told Leigh that when a BTV news crew arrived at the hospital, security officials stopped beating him

23 Geneive Abdo, “The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi’a-Sunni Divide,” The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, April 2013, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2013/04/sunni%20shia%20abdo/sunni%20shia%20abdo>.

24 Leigh, “The Anti-al-Jazeera: Bahrain’s Notorious State-Run TV Channel,” *The Atlantic*.

25 Ibid.

26 “Bahrain Profile – Media,” BBC News.

27 Leigh, “The Anti-al-Jazeera: Bahrain’s Notorious State-Run TV Channel,” *The Atlantic*.

28 YouTube Video of Bahrain News Agency Report, “كشف شبكة اراهابيه تستهدف امن واستقرار مملكة البحرين,” September 4, 2010, accessed August 14, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDSPFmz_dsQ.

29 Sayed Abu al-Shifa, “For treating protesters, Bahrain’s government made me an enemy of state,” *Middle East Eye*, July 28, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/treating-protesters-bahrain-s-government-made-me-enemy-state-733675005#sthash.Wq3uopWC.dpuf>.

and his colleagues so that the crew could film “a happy doctor walking unscathed through the doors of the ER to freedom.”³⁰ As soon as the crew was finished filming, however, the security forces resumed the abuse.³¹



Fig. 1. Akhbar al-Khaleej report showing names and pictures of alleged Shia terrorists

Programs devoted to social and political commentary complement this television reporting. Shows like *Al-Rased* (The Observer) and *Hiwar Maftouh* (Open Dialogue)—while providing disclaimers against sectarian generalization—have consistently promoted a causal link between the core of Shia theology, Iranian expansionism, and violent extremism.³² Each episode of *Al-Rased* examines the involvement of different individuals from different sectors of Bahraini society in the Pearl Roundabout protests. The targeted individuals, which have included activist Nabeel Rajab and journalist Mansoor al-Jamri, are then openly maligned by the show’s hosts; these figures are not allowed to respond on-air to these attacks.³³ On other occasions, *Al-Rased* has functioned as a forum for the government to publicly denounce the Shia community. During one such discussion, an *Al-Rased* anchor compared the Shia to “a military organization.”³⁴ He proceeded to argue that the Shia community functions as a strict religious hierarchy that ultimately takes orders from the Iranian theocratic establishment. The anchor’s guest replied, “no, it is worse.”³⁵ The episode ended with a notably insincere concession: Bahraini Shia are not individually to blame for their inclination toward sedition, they are simply following Tehran’s orders.³⁶

In the show *Hiwar Maftouh*, host Saeed al-Hamad has frequently used religious terminology to denigrate the pro-democracy movement. He commonly accuses its members of seeking to establish *Welayat al-Faqih*, thereby linking them to Iran.³⁷ Based on his own accusations, and the prevailing state-sanctioned pseudo-history, he has argued that Shia are traitorous by nature and cannot be meaningfully included in the Bahraini national dialogue.³⁸ As evidence for these claims, on the first episode of *Hiwar Maftouh* the host highlighted a human chain demonstration that

30 Leigh, “The Anti-al-Jazeera: Bahrain’s Notorious State-Run TV Channel,” *The Atlantic*.
 31 Ibid.
 32 “Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation is responsible for Bahrain TV turnover as a sectarian provocation platform,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights, May 26, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/4121>.
 33 Ibid.
 34 “برنامج الراصد عن الوسط” AlWasat Newspaper Al Rasid Bahrain TV,” YouTube, April 2, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gst1ClyASBU>.
 35 Ibid.
 36 Ibid.
 37 A form of government espoused by Iranian religious leaders in which Shia jurists directly administer the state; for more information, see “What is Wilayat al-Faqih?” Al-Islam.org, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.al-islam.org/shia-political-thought-ahmed-vaezi/what-wilayat-al-faqih>.
 38 Confidential source.

reached from the Pearl Roundabout to the Sunni al-Fateh mosque, where many pro-government groups hold gatherings. Though demonstration's stated aim was to call for unity, the host of *Open Dialogue* characterized the event as an attempt to antagonize "the other component in the country"—Sunnis.³⁹

BTV has also worked to extend the reach of the anti-Shia narrative into basic entertainment programming. On the Bahrain Sports channel, for example, one program dedicated an entire evening to determining athletes' political and sectarian affiliations. During this show, the hosts and guests praised Sunni athletes for their supposed role in the "political crisis", noting the enduring loyalty of Sunni players—simply by virtue of being Sunni. Shia players, conversely, were castigated and accused of treason in overtly sectarian language.⁴⁰

As the civil unrest has persisted into 2015, BTV and the BNA have declined to provide consistent coverage of the pro-democracy movement. Instead, they have intensified their already-disproportionate coverage of pro-government supporters. When the BTV presents footage of rallies held by loyalist organizations like al-Fateh Political Society, which the government has permitted to continue demonstrating, it has even provided patriotic musical accompaniment.⁴¹ If BTV programming addresses the initial civil unrest, it commonly uses selected images of low-turnout gatherings in order to suggest that "the numbers [of anti-government protestors] are not thousands as has been stated,"⁴² and that the original uprising was in fact a loose collection of Shia insurrectionists.⁴³

Discrimination and State Influence in the 'Independent' Media

State media has perpetuated this anti-Shia language with the complicity of many independent outlets. Since the initial government reaction to the Pearl Roundabout demonstrations, independent news outlets have increasingly adopted the use of sectarian hate speech in their own coverage of the civil unrest. The central influence of the IAA has effectively ensured that the state media's anti-Shia discourse pervades print, Internet, and basic social media interaction.

'Independent' Publications

According to the BICI, six of the seven major newspapers in Bahrain have displayed a clear government bias: *Ahkbar al-Khaleej*, *Al-Ayam*, *Al-Watan*, *Al-Bilad*, *Gulf Daily News*, and the *Daily Tribune*.⁴⁴ In making this determination, the BICI "viewed a selection of material from national television, radio and print media."⁴⁵ It concluded that "much of this material contained derogatory language and inflammatory coverage of events."⁴⁶ This coverage has been directed

39 "برنامج حوار مفتوح مع سعيد الحمد - الحلقة الاولى", YouTube, April 19, 2011, accessed August 17, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fMsGTr8pM>.

40 "BTV Show on Sport Violations الرياضيين", YouTube, April 4, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXd6UQ5MAAds>.

41 "مسيرة الفاتح تصوير جوي", YouTube, March 1, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty94kOcIpKc>.

42 "ناصر الفضالة شحوال دوار مجلس التعاون "دوار اللؤلؤة"س", YouTube, October 20, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oi0_kKQTNEM.

43 "تقرير عن فضيحة الشيعة بدوار مجلس التعاون البحرين", YouTube, May 7, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRGlz-F95Qk>.

44 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

toward the pro-democracy movement, generally, and the Shia community, specifically.

A recurring column in the *Al-Watan* newspaper by Sawsan al-Shaer is representative of the BICI's broader findings. In it, the author regularly catalogues the supposed terroristic and subversive tendencies of Bahraini Shia. Her column in the 2 December 2013 issue, for example, directly associates all of the region's "Arab Shia" with Iran.⁴⁷ Al-Shaer writes that there is a "lesson" to be learned about "Arab Shia who rushed to be carpets under the feet of Iranian clerics to enter their countries."⁴⁸

More recently, after an explosion killed two police officers in Sitra on 28 July 2015,⁴⁹ *Al-Watan* published an article by columnist Hisham al-Zayani that accused the Shia community of condoning the attack.⁵⁰ Prior to the reported findings of any investigation, al-Zayani wrote that the incident is proof of "systematic Shia terrorism" and urged the government to take action against "Shia terrorists" by possessing their homes, depriving them of all government services, and employing force against them. He went on to compare the violent bombing to the actions of Shia doctors at Salmaniya Hospital, who treated wounded protestors during the 2011 demonstrations. Al-Zayani referred to those doctors who resisted the authorities' seizure of the hospital and impartially provided medical services as terrorists. Though Shia opposition groups like al-Wefaq condemned the Sitra attack, al-Zayani claimed that they were liars who routinely engage in deception. He concluded the article with a call to exclude the Shia majority from employment in major businesses and ministries, lest they go on strike and undermine key components of Bahraini society.⁵¹

Though the Government of Bahrain retains centralized control over the distribution of print and online media, it has failed to levy this influence to create a climate of inter-sect tolerance and instead creates tension. Conversely, the country's sole neutral newspaper, *Al-Wasat*, has faced years of government sanction.

In 2011, during the original Pearl Roundabout protests, BTV's *Al-Rased* dedicated a two-and-a-half-hour special to the open defamation of *Al-Wasat* and its editor-in-chief, Mansoor al-Jamri.⁵² *Akhbar al-Khaleej* also published a cartoon that depicted *Al-Wasat* as a gun, shooting and killing a personified Bahrain (see Figure 2). *Al-Wasat*'s printing press was attacked and its journalists harassed. On 2 April, during the state of national emergency, the government closed its offices for a day. *Al-Wasat* was allowed to resume publishing on 4 April, following the resignation of al-Jamri and other editorial staff. A court charged them with "spreading false news which tarnished the image of Bahrain."⁵³ Bahrain's High Criminal Court sentenced al-Jamri, managing director Walid Noueihed, local news editor Aqeel Mirza and editorial board secretary Ali al-Sherify to separate BHD 1,000 fines.⁵⁴ Ali al-Sherify and *Al-Wasat* Development Manager Raheem al-Kaabi, both Iraqi nationals, were then deported from Bahrain on the basis that they posed a threat to the

47 Sawsan al-Shaer, "مآمال أوعيش", *Al-Watan*, 2013, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwatannews.net/ArticleViewer.aspx?ID=mzlwQTeO9vM43Mc4smpDKw933339933339>.

48 Ibid.

49 "Bomb kills two policemen in worst Bahrain bombing in months," Reuters, July 28, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/28/us-bahrain-security-blast-idUSKCN0Q20HJ20150728>.

50 "هشام الزباني.. حاصرتهم «داعش».. وتركتهم إرهاب الحوالمش", *Al-Watan*, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwatannews.net/ArticleViewer.aspx?ID=Pu833338phJzoF2HSz7BJN1hOYA933339933339>.

51 Ibid.

52 "Al-Wasat Newspaper Al-Rasid Bahrain TV برنامج الراسد عن الوسط", YouTube.

53 "Bahrain regime continues to target freedom of expression by taking journalists and photographers to trials," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, October 16, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/4767>.

54 Ibid.

state.⁵⁵ The management of *Al-Wasat* has also received anonymous threats, and its employees have been subjected to repeated physical attack.⁵⁶ In April 2011, *Al-Wasat* cofounder Abdulkarim Ali Ahmed Fakhrawi died in security force custody. According to the BICI, security officials tortured Fakhrawi to death while he was in custody. Though a Bahraini court later found two police officers responsible for the killing, the defendants have since appealed and had their original seven-year prison sentence reduced to three.⁵⁷

On 7 August 2015, the IAA “temporarily suspended *Al-Wasat* newspaper until further notice... due to its violation of the law and repeated dissemination of information that affects national unity and the Kingdom’s relationship with other countries.”⁵⁸ In its official suspension of the newspaper, the IAA failed to either cite a particular law or fulfill its technical obligation to seek judicial approval. Though the suspension was lifted on 9 August, the IAA has reportedly required “the newspaper’s management team to rectify past legal and regulatory failings, and [commit] to meet the necessary standards in future.”⁵⁹ At time of writing, the details of both *Al-Wasat*’s “legal and regulatory failings” and its rectification agreement with the IAA remain ambiguous.



Fig. 2. An Akhbar al-Khaleej cartoon accusing *Al-Wasat* of betraying and attacking Bahrain.

“in the name of the king.”⁶⁰ Unwilling to conflate his Sunni faith with his profession, he states that he left the job and returned to Egypt after a few weeks.

Social Media

The state information services have also strictly regulated social media usage in Bahrain. In 2014, Freedom House assigned Bahrain an internet freedom rating of “Not Free,” estimating the government’s “internet penetration” at 90%.⁶¹ As they have worked to supervise and censor internet

Finally, foreign journalists have acknowledged the sectarian bent of Bahrain’s print media. In a column discussing the difficulties of a long career in journalism, the Egyptian writer Mohammed Mousa relates his brief employment at an unnamed Bahraini newspaper. After only a few days at the position, he writes, he discovered that the outlet for which he worked was published primarily to attack the majority Shia population,

55 Confidential source.

56 “Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation is responsible for Bahrain TV turnover as a sectarian provocation platform,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights, May 26, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/4121>.

57 Ibid.

58 “Bahrain suspends publication of Al Wasat newspaper,” Gulf News, August 7, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-suspends-publication-of-al-wasat-newspaper-1.1562665>.

59 “Bahrain lifts brief ban on opposition paper: agency,” Reuters, August 9, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/09/us-bahrain-opposition-paper-idUSKCN0QE05P20150809>.

60 “ننجل اي ف نوي ف حص د جوي ال,” Al-Shorouq, August 5, 2015, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=05082015&id=c7c7d8d5-5c75-41f8-bdea-975038bb03a7>.

61 “Freedom on the Net 2014 – Bahrain,” Freedom House, 2014, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2014/bahrain>.

communication, however, the IAA and the state telecommunications institutions have recognized the medium's unique messaging opportunities. With the help of individual social media users, the government has utilized its near-absolute control of the internet to foster more persistent, "grassroots" support for the anti-Shia narrative. In the same way the MSIA has integrated the majority of independent newspapers into its broader narrative strategy, the government's discriminatory cybersecurity policies have censored moderate dialogue and dissent, effectively translating sectarian hate speech into a form of accepted social media interaction.

Despite its commitment to evenly "apply the law against users whose accounts incite hatred, violence, and cause harm to the nation, as well as its leaders and security forces," it has used the cybersecurity and press laws to target non-violent activists and Shia dissidents. Freedom House notes that between 2013 and 2014 a "government initiative to censor 'terrorist materials' resulted in the blocking of at least 70 websites, including many that feature content from political opposition or Shiite religious groups."⁶² According to contacts on the ground, the Shia al-Wefaq opposition party, for example, has faced regular prosecution for sending standard online invitations to peaceful events. The BBC noted in 2014 that the government continues to use "the 2002 Press Law to restrict the media from publishing criticism of Islam or the king, inciting actions that undermine state security, or supporting regime change. Maximum punishment is five years in prison and some well-known journalists and bloggers are currently behind bars."⁶³

The government's two-pronged approach to cybersecurity is most evident in its repeated prosecution of Nabeel Rajab, a human rights activist and president of BCHR.⁶⁴ In August 2012, a Bahraini court sentenced Rajab to three years in prison on charges related to "involvement in illegal practices and inciting gatherings and calling for unauthorised marches through social networking sites."⁶⁵ Rajab was released in May 2014⁶⁶ after an appeal won him a shortened sentence,⁶⁷ but on 2 April 2015, a large group of armed security officers arrested him at his home on charges related to a new set of tweets. The first tweet—for which he was initially charged in October—described the security forces as an "ideological incubator" for ISIS (see Figure 3); the other tweets documented the recent riot and the ongoing torture in Bahrain's Jau Prison. In May, an appellate court upheld Rajab's six-month sentence for "insulting a public institution" with the former tweet.⁶⁸ Though Rajab was recently pardoned of this conviction, having served four months of the sentence, the government is pressing additional charges against him that could carry up to 15 years in prison.⁶⁹

62 Ibid.

63 "Bahrain Profile – Media," BBC News.

64 Ibid.

65 "Nabeel Rajab sentenced to 3 years imprisonment," FIDH: 2012, August 16, 2012, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.fidh.org/International-Federation-for-Human-Rights/north-africa-middle-east/bahrain/Nabeel-Rajab-sentenced-to-3-years>.

66 "Bahrain: End imprisonment of democracy campaigner Nabeel Rajab," Index on Censorship, May 11, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2015/05/bahrain-end-imprisonment-of-democracy-campaigner-nabeel-rajab/>.

67 Sara Yasin, "Bahraini activist acquitted of Twitter charges but remains in prison," Index on Censorship, August 23, 2012, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2012/08/bahraini-activist-acquitted-of-twitter-charges-but-remains-in-prison/>.

68 Gianluca Mezzofiore, "Bahrain upholds prison sentence for Nabeel Rajab over 'IS defection' tweet," International Business Times, May 14, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bahrain-upholds-prison-sentence-nabeel-rajab-over-defection-tweet-1501261>.

69 "ADHRB and BIRD Cautiously Welcome Pardon of Nabeel Rajab," Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, July 13, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://adhrb.org/2015/07/adhrb-and-bird-cautiously-welcome-the-decision-to-pardon-nabeel-rajab/>.



Fig. 3. Tweet for which Nabeel Rajab was sentenced to six months in prison

activists like Nabeel Rajab have tolerated and even rewarded exponents of anti-Shia hate speech.

On 14 January 2014, then-Minister of State for Telecommunication Affairs Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa held a meeting with Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and a group of pro-government Bahraini social media users.⁷¹ According to the BNA, the Prime Minister “praised the efforts of those who use modern technology and means of communication to defend Bahrain’s ruling system and society, expressing deep regret over the ungratefulness of those who use social media networks to post destructive criticism of the homeland, government and people.”⁷² He then told the audience of “patriotic” social media users to “face whoever posts tweets to target Bahrain,” urging the audience “to expose those who allow themselves to be used by foreign sides against the nation.”⁷³ Among this audience was the individual who runs the Twitter handle @khalidburshai, a username known specifically for its demeaning verbal attacks on Bahraini Shia. Both on the popular messaging site and on *Safa*, a television program that espouses Sunni extremist views, @khalidburshai has contributed to the multifaceted and contradictory discourse on Bahraini Shia origin—commonly used to discredit the *Baharna* heritage.⁷⁴ The user @khalidburshai has speculated that the Bahraini Shia were foreigners who were imported to serve affluent Sunni families, or that they traveled from Iran in onion sacks. The user has even referred to the Shia community as Bahrain’s Ku Klux Klan,⁷⁵ alleging that the major Bahraini Shia imams are racists and killers.⁷⁶

The government has extended this tolerance for anti-Shia hate speech from civilian users to former officials who helped make it policy. Mohammed Khalid, an ex-member of Bahraini parliament known as @boammar, has openly used the derogatory terms *Majoos* (Magi) and *Rafadhi* (rejectionist) to attack Shia on Twitter. He has even called for direct violence against the Shia community, demanding that *Safawi* (Arabic for Safavid) ‘terrorists’ be punished with

While the government increasingly employs strict cybersecurity and press legislation to criminalize dissent and anti-government expression in social media, Freedom House has found that “online hate speech against religious figures dignified by Shia Muslims often takes place with impunity.”⁷⁰ Frequently, the same authorities that punish

70 “Freedom on the Net 2014 – Bahrain,” Freedom House.

71 “HRH Premier calls for the need to use social networks to defend the nation,” Bahrain News Agency, January 14, 2014, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/597534>.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 See Chapter 2 for further historical background.

75 “حملة جند الفاروق- عاشوراء في البحرين بين الشعائر الدينية والوظيف السياسي - خالد بورشيد”, YouTube, November 23, 2013, accessed August 14, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_jv4OjCO4U.

76 “خالد بورشيد إساءة و إزدراء للشيعه في البحرين”, YouTube, August 28, 2014, accessed August 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUaMJ_GZr8Q.

amputation.⁷⁷ A separate tweet read: “teargas will not help with the terrorist Iran slaves who want to kill security men. Shotgun, live bullets and deportation is the medicine they deserve.”⁷⁸

As sectarian tensions have continued to escalate across the Gulf, government officials and their supporters have intensified this rhetoric. Immediately following the ISIS suicide bombing at the Shia Imam Hussein Mosque in Dammam, Saudi Arabia on 29 May 2015,⁷⁹ Jassim al-Saidi, another former member of Bahraini parliament, praised anti-Shia violence on Twitter. In one post al-Saidi wrote, “O Allah, destroy the Magi and their Jew and the Christian’s supporters...Amen,” while in another, he stated, “To heretics and infidel Magi, you are Christians and Jews’ dogs and donkeys... Iran’s agents in the Arabian Gulf.”⁸⁰

On 25 July 2015, after Ayatollah Khamenei said he would continue to support “oppressed” nations like Bahrain,⁸¹ the government announced it had shut down an arms smuggling operation allegedly undertaken by two Bahraini nationals with connections to Iran and had recalled its ambassador from Tehran.⁸² As part of the greater government response, the Ministry of Interior



Fig. 4. Tweet posted by Ahmed al-Malki in reply to the blocked opposition site Bahrain Mirror’s criticism of MOI statement

(MOI) released its own statement condemning Khamenei’s remarks and initiated a Twitter campaign on social media and internet news sites under ‘#NoForIranianInterventions.’ Many prominent Bahraini officials and public figures took part in the campaign, posting derogatory anti-Shia remarks under the hashtag, generally characterizing the Bahraini Shia community as an Iranian proxy force. Ahmed al-Malki, a member of the government’s Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission, a government body responsible for ensuring the humane treatment of prisoners in Bahrain, tweeted, “You cannot win Zionists’ loyalty, that’s why Hitler decided to exterminate them and the British established a colony for them in Palestine; and this is what we should do with *Welayat al-Faqih*.”⁸³ Though he later deleted the tweet, a screen capture can be viewed at Figure 4, left.

77 @boammar, “الإرهاب الصفوي في البحرين لن يخشى من الإبتكارات .. طبقوا فيهم القصاص بقطع الأيدي والأرجل وستجدون النتائج العجيبة..(ولكم في القصاص حياة” (Twitter: 2015). Retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/boammar/status/56429979661411232>

78 @boammar, “مسيلات الدموع لن تنفع مع الارهابيين عبيد إيران الذين يريدون قتل رجال الأمن.. الشوزن والرصاص الحي والترحيل الدماء الذي يستحقونه #البحرين” (Twitter: 2013). Retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/boammar/status/366258084550688772>

79 Greg Botelho and Paul Cruickshank, “ISIS claims 2nd Saudi mosque attack,” CNN, May 29, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/29/middleeast/saudi-arabia-mosque-blast/>.

80 “حريات الوفاق: ٥٤١ احتجاج و٣٤ حالة قمع وانتهاكات أخرى كثيرة في الأسبوع الأخير من مايو” Bahrain Mirror, February 6, 2015, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://bmirror.no-ip.org//news/24318.html>.

81 “Bahrain summons Iranian diplomat over leader’s comments,” The Daily Star, July 20, 2015, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Jul-20/307422-bahrain-summons-iranian-diplomat-over-leaders-comments.ashx>.

82 Maha El Dahan and William MacLean, “Bahrain says foils arms smuggling bid, recalls Iran envoy,” Reuters, July 25, 2015, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/25/us-bahrain-iran-idUSKCN0PZ0HD20150725>.

83 Twitter feed of Ahmed al-Malki, “أحمد المالكي @butalalbhr,” (Twitter: 2015), retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/butalalbhr>.

Former MP al-Saidi also participated in the government's social media campaign, urging his followers on Twitter to "beware the Iranian Safavid Magianism cells in the GCC...there are multiple political and military wings" and rejecting the notion that "Iranians become ministers, judges, members in Shura council and parliament, merchants, and immoral."⁸⁴ After the Sitra bombing, Nabeel al-Hamer, a consultant to the king, also posted a tweet suggesting that Bahrain is the target of concerted Shia terrorist operations: "Yes, this is sectarian Shia terrorism backed up by Iran. Bahrain is exposed to sectarian Shia terrorism. This is our reality. All Sunni and Shia should fight it."⁸⁵

Conclusion

In its most recent assessment of press and media freedoms in 2014, Freedom House classified Bahrain "Not Free", ranking it as the tenth most restrictive country for the press in the world.⁸⁶ That same year, *Reporters Sans Frontières* dubbed Bahrain the "kingdom of disinformation."⁸⁷ Through a complex but increasingly centralized network of state information services, the government has assumed effective control of television, print, and social media. It has systematically employed this influence to exclude any substantive representation of Bahraini Shia identity or voice from mainstream cultural discourse.

With the most recent outbreak of civil unrest, the government has exploited its authority over the media to sustain a distorted Bahraini nationalism predicated on Shia marginalization and discriminatory security measures. As the Government of Bahrain has demonstrated the absolute capacity to censor state, independent, and social media, it has also demonstrated its refusal to do so consistently. Instead, it has used an inherently prejudiced system to isolate, intimidate, and dehumanize both a non-violent pro-democracy movement and the country's majority Shia population. To serve the monarchy's shortsighted interest in authoritarian stability, the government has purposefully instigated deepening sectarian enmity and legitimized extremist hate speech, allowing it to permeate nearly all public mediums of information exchange and social interaction.

84 Twitter feed of Jassim al-Saidi, "D.jasm Saidi @jassimalsaeedi," (Twitter: 2015), retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/jassimalsaeedi>.

85 Ibid.

86 "Freedom of the Press 2014 – Bahrain," Freedom House, 2014, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2014/bahrain#.Vaf6bflViko>.

87 "Bahrain Profile – Media," BBC News.

Cultural Marginalization

Both before and after the protest movement of 2011, the Government of Bahrain has sought to erase the influence of Shia culture within Bahrain. Textbooks and official historical narratives deemphasize or ignore entirely the role played by Shia political and religious movements in the centuries before the Al Khalifa conquest. Heritage sites of cultural and historical significance to Shia inhabitants are unrecognized or renamed, when they are not demolished. Additionally, since 2011 Bahraini security forces have actively antagonized public funeral processions of the Shia community.

Recognition of Shia History and Practices

Historic Marginalization

Shia heritage is deeply-rooted within Bahrain's history. The *Baharna*, Bahrain's indigenous Shia, are the longest continuous inhabitants of Bahrain.⁸⁸ Today's *Baharna* are thought to be the descendants of both a pre-Islamic east Arabian community and Muslim migrants fleeing persecution during the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates.⁸⁹ In the 1600s, Bahrain joined the Iraqi city of Najaf and Jabal Amel in modern Lebanon as a major center of Shia theological education and jurisprudential scholarship.⁹⁰ For most of the period between 900 and 1783 CE, many local Shia dynasties ruled Bahrain and its surrounding territories.

State-sponsored histories marginalize this past, instead focusing on Bahrain's recent development under Al Khalifa rule. In doing so, the government fails to present Bahrain's social and cultural variation and multiple traditions. This narrative is set at the highest levels. In 1994, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, then Crown Prince, authored *First Light: Modern Bahrain and Its Heritage*.⁹¹ The text's narrative revolves around Al Khalifa history before and after their conquest of Bahrain in 1783, minimizing or outright omitting entire periods of Bahraini history that saw Shia governance or in which Shia played major leadership roles. The Qarmatians, a Shia dynasty that ruled Bahrain from the 9th to 11th centuries, merit only a brief mention as a transitory occupier despite their near-200 year rule.⁹² The book then ignores the role played by the Shia Safavid Empire in dislodging the Portuguese from Bahrain in the early 1600s. It does, however, highlight a brief period of cooperation between the Portuguese and the Safavids in the 1500s, framing it as an example of "the sort of policy that foreign powers have pursued in the past and still do today to create conflicts between Iran and the Arab Islamic countries."⁹³

Bahrain National Museum, a work published in 1992 that presents the country's historical trajectory through work of the Bahrain National Museum, also erases Shia influence. It provides

88 James Belgrave, *Welcome to Bahrain*, Augustan Press, London, 1953, eight edition, 1973, 16.

89 Cole, Juan, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam*, I.B. Taurus, 2002, 45; Frederic M. Wehrey, *Sectarian Politics in the Gulf: From the Iraq War to the Arab Uprisings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 12.

90 Geneive Abdo, "The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide," The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, April 2013, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2013/04/sunni%20shia%20abdo/sunni%20shia%20abdo>, 9.

91 Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, *First Light: Modern Bahrain and its Heritage* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1994).

92 "Qarmatian: Shi'ite sect," Encyclopaedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Qarmatians>.

93 Al Khalifa, Hamad bin Isa, *First Light: Modern Bahrain and its Heritage*. (Kegan Paul International: 1994), p. 24.

an extensive description of Bahrain under Portuguese rule, but it fails to mention the subsequent 116 years of Safavid control of the islands, or the decades of regional instability which preceded the Al Khalifa conquest of Bahrain.⁹⁴ Authorities only make reference to the Safavid period when seeking to label organized Shia groups as “Safavid loyalists of Iran,” a trope that, as the previous chapter demonstrated, still resonates today.⁹⁵

Educational Erasure

Though the two books discussed above are now twenty years old, the official historical narrative has changed little since their publication and is dominant within the Bahraini educational system. One high school textbook printed for the 2014/15 school year, *The Modern and Contemporary History of Bahrain and the Gulf*, presents a typical portrayal of Bahraini history. Lesson nine, “Al Khalifa in Zubara and Bahrain, 18th-19th Centuries,” gives a detailed political history of the rise of the Al Khalifa family, providing an overview of the town on the modern Qatari shore that they ruled, the conflict between Zubara and the Persian governor of Bahrain, and the Al Khalifa conquest of Bahrain.⁹⁶ Whole portions of Bahrain’s history prior to the arrival of the Al Khalifa family, with which many Shia have an emotional connection, are not discussed, suggesting that the only relevant history is that which has occurred since Bahrain came under Al Khalifa rule.

Beyond erasure from the state-accepted historical narrative, government policy prevents the vast majority of Shia children from receiving a Shia religious education within their schools. As detailed in *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, state-run elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools heavily integrate the precepts of the Maliki school of Sunni jurisprudence into their curricula, and Muslim practices and beliefs unique to Shia are denigrated.⁹⁷ Additionally, the Government of Bahrain permits only one Shia-specific school, the Jaafari Institute, to operate legally within the country. The Jaafari Institute enrolls some 1,200 in elementary and secondary-education programs.⁹⁸ In a nation containing several hundred thousand Shia citizens, the government has created an infrastructural shortfall in which only a small fraction of their children and adolescents can access, at any one time, a Shia-specific education.

Suppression of Funerals

Bahraini authorities have disrupted or otherwise intervened in Shia funeral rites. In the aftermath of 2011, funeral processions and commemorations have become a rallying point for Shia protesters and their Sunni supporters, thereby inviting a significant security presence. This interference has led to intermittent clashes. On 15 February 2011, 2,000 Bahrainis amassed to attend the funeral procession of Ali Abdulhadi Mushaima, the first protester to be killed by security forces.⁹⁹ As

94 Bahrain National Museum, *Bahrain National Museum*, Immel Publishing Ltd, 1993, pp. 87-106.

95 Geneive Abdo, “The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi’a-Sunni Divide,” The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, 9.

96 Ministry of Education, *Tarikh al-Bahrain wal-khaleej al-arabi al-hadith wal-m’asir: lil-marhala al-ghanawiya*, Code: 201, 2014, pp. 46-9.

97 *Apart in Their Own Land: Government Discrimination against Shia in Bahrain*, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Vol. I, February 2015, http://adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ADHRB_Apart-in-Their-Own-Land_web.pdf, 27.

98 “Bahrain 2013 International Religious Freedom Report,” U.S. Department of State, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/10/saudi-arabia-prominent-writer-detained>, 4.

99 “Bahrain protests: King announces probe into two deaths,” BBC News, February 15, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12468336>.

the procession continued to swell, riot police confronted the mourners, firing tear gas and bird shot.¹⁰⁰ Police shot and killed another Shia protester, Fadhel Ali Matrook, during the procession.¹⁰¹ After investigating the incident, the BICI concluded that the use of lethal force by the police was unjustified.¹⁰²

Despite King Hamad's initial promise to rein in security personnel's excessive use of force, authorities continued to interfere with Shia funerals. On 4 November 2011, police set up barricades to block Bahrainis from attending the funeral of Ali al-Daihi, the father of a prominent al-Wafaq member who had died from wounds sustained during a protest.¹⁰³ Interference of this kind repeatedly instigated clashes between police forces and mourners, including incidents that broke out during or after funerals on 3 October 2012,¹⁰⁴ 16 February 2013,¹⁰⁵ and 22 May 2014; during this last incident, 14-year-old Sayed Mahmood died after police shot him with birdshot from a distance of less than six meters.¹⁰⁶

Landmarks and Physical Cultural Constructs

Sectarian Designations

The Government of Bahrain has displayed a pattern of naming culturally-significant heritage sites and historical events in a sectarian manner. For many Shia Bahrainis, this begins with the official framing of the nation's founding. The government refers to the 1783 conquest as *Fath al-Bahrain*, which translates to "the opening of Bahrain." In this context, "opening" (or "*fath*") carries an explicitly religious connotation; traditionally, a Muslim ruler "opens" another nation by bringing Islam to its people. To describe the conquest of Bahrain as the opening of its people to Islam implicitly devalues the archipelago's preexisting Shia population. That Bahrain's Grand Mosque bears the name "*al-Fateh*,"¹⁰⁷ a title placed upon Bahrain's first Al Khalifa emir, Ahmed ibn Mohamed ibn Khalifa, is seen as highly contentious by members of the majority-Shia population.

The Bahraini ruling family, however, has not limited itself to appending the names of its predecessors on specifically Sunni sites; it has sought to rename whole tracks of Bahraini land after its living members. In recent years, as members of the ruling family monopolize more of the Bahraini coastline and smaller portions of the archipelago, they have begun to name islands after themselves, attempting to displace their traditional titles. For example, the ruling family renamed

100 Bilal Randeree, "Deaths heighten Bahrain tension," Al-Jazeera, February 15, 2011, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/201121571645551445.html>.

101 "Document – Bahrain: Two die as protests are violently repressed: 'Ali 'Abdulahdi Mushaima, Fadhel 'Ali Matrook," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, February 15, 2011, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/3731>.

102 Mahmoud Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria al-Awadhi, Philippe Kirsch, and Mahnoush Arsanjani. "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry." (Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry: 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIREportEN.pdf>, 229.

103 "Bahrainis clash with police at funeral," Reuters, November 4, 2011, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/04/us-bahrain-funeral-idUSTRE7A35N220111104>.

104 Umberto Bacchi, "Bahrain: Protesters and Police Clash at Ali Ahmed Mushaima Funeral," International Business Times, October 3, 2012, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/bahrain-protesters-clashes-police-funeral-mushaima-salmaniya-390721>.

105 Elizabeth Dickinson, "Police and mourners clash at Bahrain funeral of teen killed in protest," The National, February 16, 2013

106 "Bahrain: Gunshot Deaths Require Swift Investigation," Human Rights Watch, June 11, 2014, accessed August 13, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/11/bahrain-gunshot-deaths-require-swift-investigation>.

107 http://www.alfateh.gov.bh/ahmed_al-fateh.html.

Umm al-Suban, an island lying adjacent to Bahrain's northwest coast, "Mohammediya" after it was purchased by Sheikh Mohammed Al Khalifa, the uncle of King Hamad and brother of Premier Khalifa.¹⁰⁸

As development in Bahrain proceeds apace, there is a further effort to rename areas traditionally inhabited by Shia with names that purposefully marginalize their heritage. In the aftermath of the February 2011 protests, one writer for *Al-Watan* newspaper, Naja al-Mudhaki, encouraged the government to "Correct Bahrain's Regions."¹⁰⁹ Warning of a "Safavid" plot to claim areas of Bahrain for Shia, the writer pressed the government to supply Bahraini regions with "Arab names that prove the history of the Al Khalifa," pointing to the al-Fateh suburb and Hamad Town as strong examples of this naming process.¹¹⁰ Yet, the Government of Bahrain only established Hamad Town in 1991.

In addition to renaming Shia sites, the government has placed a sectarian spin on places that carry cross-sectarian significance. The clearest example of this policy came following the demolition of the Pearl Roundabout. Security forces destroyed the roundabout during the state of emergency in March 2011, after it had become the center of the pro-democracy uprising in February 2011. Bahraini authorities paved over the location of the Pearl Roundabout and rebuilt it as a traffic-light junction called the "Al Farooq Junction." The name refers to Caliph Umar "al-Farooq" (634-44 CE), the second of the four "Rightly Guided Caliphs," who ruled when the early Muslims conquered Persia. As independent observers have noted, the name is intended as a slight to a protest movement that the government seeks to paint as exclusively Shia.¹¹¹

Tourism

In 2015, the World Travel & Tourism Council forecasted that tourism would contribute 552,500,000 dinar to the Bahraini economy, or 5.7% of its total GDP.¹¹² In 2014 alone, the tourism sector added 31,000 jobs within Bahrain.¹¹³ While international consultants with a stake in Bahrain's tourism industry extol the islands' beaches,¹¹⁴ the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities also expends significant effort in advertising heritage sites.¹¹⁵

Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities refrains, however, from promoting Shia heritage sites. The ministry channels travelers interested in learning about Bahrain's cultural inheritance to Sheikh Salman bin Ahmed al-Fateh Fort, wherein "lives the memory of the ruling family of Bahrain, the Al Khalifas." The ministry also promotes the Sheikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa house, which "offers insight into the royal life of the 19th century." The al-Fateh mosque in Manama is also centrally highlighted.¹¹⁶ Nowhere, however, does the ministry list a mosque or pilgrimage site

108 Maryam al-Khawaja, "My Parents' Bahrain," *Jadaliyya*, August 12, 2013, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/13532/my-parents-bahrain>.

109 تصحيح مناطق البحرين, *Al-Watan*, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://alwatannews.net/ArticleViewer.aspx?ID=10Knol8833338dJCN3Tsr2p2dw933339933339>.

110 Ibid.

111 "Bahrain: The Unauthorized Tour," *Bahrain Watch*, accessed August 14, 2015, <https://bahrainwatch.org/tour/>.

112 "Travel & Tourism : Economic Impact 2015 Bahrain," World Travel & Tourism Council, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/bahrain2015.pdf>, 3.

113 Ibid., 4.

114 Lina Stahl, "Could You Find Bahrain on a Map?" *The Huffington Post*, August 11, 2015, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lina-stahl/could-you-find-bahrain-on_b_7961348.html.

115 "Visiting Bahrain," Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities, <http://culture.gov.bh/en/visitingbahrain/destinations/>.

116 "Bahrain Touristic Map," Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities, http://culture.gov.bh/en/visitingbahrain/bahrain_map/.

directly relevant to the Shia community. This omission may bear some relation to the government's destruction, in March and April 2011, of 38 mosques, shrines, and other religious places significant to Shia, many of which Shia had built and used well before the arrival of the Al Khalifa. The al-Barbaghi mosque, a destroyed Shia center of worship that housed the remains of a prominent Shia scholar, predates the arrival of the Al Khalifa by more than 200 years.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

The Government of Bahrain pursues policies that delegitimize traditional Shia customs and the Shia majority's impact on the islands' history and culture. Frequently, this de-legitimization adopts a purposefully sectarian posture, as officials attack public Shia funerals or rename locations of shared importance with titles specific to the legacy of the ruling family. Even when a sectarian motivation is not obvious, as in the near-erasure of Bahrain's pre-Khalifa history in official records, it has the effect of preventing the Shia majority from fully engaging with its past.

117 *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, 24-25.

Economic Disclusion

Shia in Bahrain have long seen themselves as second-class citizens who are deprived of a proportionate share of power and prosperity. Many of the demands of the 2011 protests focused on the lack of jobs and economic opportunities for Bahrainis, problems that still contribute to unrest today.¹¹⁸ Official corruption, crony capitalism, and a general lack of transparency have led to uneven development and a vast disparity in wealth; while these practices have harmed Bahrainis from multiple populations, they have disparately impacted members of a Shia community more likely to belong to the nation's lower socioeconomic strata.¹¹⁹ Unequal treatment of Shia manifests itself in many economic sectors, but this chapter will specifically focus on employment, education, housing, government programs, land usage, business practices, and law. A review of discrepancies between Shia and Sunnis in these areas reveals systemic economic discrimination.

Employment

Employment of Shia citizens in security forces

Bahraini Shia have long maintained that systematic sectarian discrimination has permeated in-country hiring practices. Bahrain's security services provide a case in point. The MOI and various security forces serve as some of the largest employers in Bahrain, and they generally refuse to hire Shia Muslims.¹²⁰ While representing a majority of Bahrain's population, an extremely limited number of Shia serve in security-related government agencies such as the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF), National Security Agency (NSA), and police forces.¹²¹

Estimates place Shia employment in the security services at approximately 2-5 percent of all security personnel, compared to a Shia population of at least 60-70% in the nation.¹²² While the BDF does not produce official employment figures, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) estimated BDF personnel to be at around 12,000, including a significant number of non-nationals. Educated guesses put the percentage of Shia citizens in the BDF at less than ten percent.¹²³ A 2009 leak from the NSA additionally suggested that the percentage of Shia in its workforce did not exceed four percent, and that the majority of those employed worked in non-supervisory positions.¹²⁴

Shia presence on the police force remains small. Outsiders estimate that the MOI currently employs approximately 30,000 individuals, of which 2-3,000 are Shia. Most Shia employees within the police force work in administrative roles. While Shia are employed in the community police,

118 Kenneth Katzman, "Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy." Congressional Research Service, 2014: 1.6.

119 Tahiyya Lulu, "The real story of Bahrain's divided society," The Guardian, March 3, 2011, accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/mar/03/bahrain-sunnis-shia-divided-society>.

120 Maryam al-Khawaja, "Beneath Bahrain's Shia-versus-Sunni narrative, only the tyrants benefit," The Guardian, October 27, 2012, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/27/bahrain-shia-versus-sunni-narrative>.

121 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

122 Ian Siperco, "Bahrain's Sectarian Challenge," Middle East Policy Council, accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.mepc.org/articles-commentary/commentary/bahrain-s-sectarian-challenge?print>.

123 Brian Dooley, "Bahrain's Soldier Sailor Sunni Shia Struggle," The Huffington Post, February 7, 2014, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-dooley/bahrains-soldier-sailor-s_b_4745595.html.

124 "Bahrain: Dangerous Statistics and Facts about the National Security Apparatus," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, March 8, 2009, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/2784>.

established following the protest movement of 2011. The community police, however, play only a ‘marginal’ policing role,¹²⁵ and no evidence exists to suggest that the government has taken any steps toward integrating the BDF, NSA, or private security services.¹²⁶

This disparity is only heightened by the large number of foreign-born Sunnis employed by these agencies.¹²⁷ National security personnel in Bahrain continue to be drawn inordinately from Sunni communities both at home and abroad. Over the past two decades, tens of thousands of Sunnis from places like Syria, Jordan, Yemen, and Pakistan have received citizenship in Bahrain.¹²⁸ These foreign-born Sunnis tend to find employment in the security and defense forces, while Shia Bahrainis frequently cannot exercise the right to serve in their own armed forces.¹²⁹

Rights groups and political activists criticize this policy of hiring non-national Sunnis as a form of political naturalization aimed at altering the demographics of Bahrain. In recent years, the government has hired and thereafter naturalized a significant number of non-nationals into the state security services. The policy, first revealed in the ‘Bandargate’ scandal in 2006,¹³⁰ has led to the naturalization of over 100,000 Sunni foreigners in the last 15 years, with an accelerated pace of naturalization since 2011.¹³¹ During the state of emergency between March and May 2011, the Government of Bahrain recruited over 2,500 ex-military servicemen from Pakistan into both the BDF and the police service, which Al-Jazeera reported as a 50% increase in Bahrain’s security personnel.¹³² None of the new recruits were Shia.¹³³ Not only do these emigres assume government jobs to the detriment of general Shia employment, but naturalized Sunnis are also guaranteed government housing and social benefits.¹³⁴

The MOI pledged in March 2011 to help remedy the situation by creating 20,000 new jobs in the Coast Guard, Traffic Directorate, and Civil Defense, among other agencies, as well as hiring at least 1,000 new community service police officers.¹³⁵ The Ministry claims these hires were drawn from a cross-section of the population, though demographic information on officers is not public. However, the government reportedly requires new hires to produce proof of sect.¹³⁶ Recent employment ads for the MOI request that applicants submit marriage certificates for themselves and their parents. This is not a standard practice of employment; marriage certificates are among the few documents that clearly show proof of sect.¹³⁷

125 “One Year Later: Assessing Bahrain’s Implementation of the BICI Report,” Project on Middle East Democracy, November 2012, <http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/One-Year-Later-Assessing-Bahrain-Implementation-of-the-BICI-Report.pdf>, 13-14.

126 Ibid., 14-15.

127 *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, 20.

128 Al-Khawaja, “Beneath Bahrain’s Shia-versus-Sunni narrative, only the tyrants benefit.”

129 Lulu, “The real story of Bahrain’s divided society.”

130 “Al-Bandar Report: Demographic engineering in Bahrain and mechanisms of exclusion,” BCHR, September 30, 2006, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/528>; the al-Bandar papers, leaked by a civil servant, revealed an inter-ministry plan to employ foreign Sunni nationals and grant them citizenship at a fast rate, thereby proportionally reducing the Shia demographic from a majority to a minority.

131 Justin Gengler, “Bahrain Drain: Why the King’s Sunni Supporters are Moving Abroad,” *Foreign Policy*, accessed July 16, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-09-05/bahrain-drain>.

132 Mujib Mashal, “Pakistani Troops Aid Bahrain’s Crackdown,” Al Jazeera, July 30, 2011, accessed August 10, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/07/2011725145048574888.html>.

133 Confidential Source.

134 Ibid.

135 “One Year Later,” Project on Middle East Democracy, 14.

136 Ibid.

137 Confidential Source.

The government additionally announced a plan in January 2012 to recruit five hundred new officers annually from all segments of society. Little demographic information exists on the new recruits. One officer from the graduating class of 2012 claimed that approximately 75% of the class was Shia, though the government has complained that it is difficult to attract Shia recruits.¹³⁸ Since the government does not disclose demographic information on new officers, questions remain as to whether the new officers proportionally represent the Shia majority.¹³⁹

Employment in the security forces heavily favors Sunni citizens of Bahrain. Those Shia who find employment in government positions often occupy non-sensitive roles in the lower rungs of the hierarchy. The security forces continue to overwhelmingly employ Sunnis, contributing to Shia grievances stemming from a lack of job opportunities.¹⁴⁰

Post-Uprising Dismissals

Following the uprising in February and March 2011, the government dismissed thousands of Bahrainis from their jobs and suspended university employees for their alleged support of protests.¹⁴¹ Shia employees who participated or were suspected of participating in the demonstrations constituted the majority of victims of these unlawful dismissals. Some have testified to having stayed at home for various reasons, either due to safety concerns or an inability to travel to work because of the road blockades and traffic jams common during the uprising, only to be fired on suspicion of attending protests.¹⁴² Others appear to have been dismissed for their familial and marital relations to prominent activists. The BICI found that some employers treated Sunni employees preferentially, choosing not to dismiss them if they were absent during the protests.¹⁴³

A man identifying himself as Sayed Ahmad, spokesman for a committee formed by activists to aid workers who lost their jobs, estimates that the government dismissed close to 4,000 Shia workers after protests began in February, fired either for missing work to join demonstrations or because they did not want to leave home during the clashes.¹⁴⁴ The BICI report states that at least 2,000 public sector employees and 2,400 private sector workers lost their jobs for supporting the protests.¹⁴⁵

The Government of Bahrain has promised to reinstate all those dismissed from work or school for participating in protests, but observers disagree on the extent to which this promise has been kept.¹⁴⁶ The government states that it has fully met its commitment to those dismissed related to exercising their right to freedom of expression, having rehired 99 percent of the more than 4,500

138 *Implementation by the Government of Bahrain of the Recommendations by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, U.S. Department of State, 2013.

139 "One Year Later," Project on Middle East Democracy, 14.

140 Brian Dooley, "Bahrain's Soldier Sailor Sunni Shia Struggle," The Huffington Post.

141 Brian Murphy, "Bahrain Mass Job Dismissals: Shiite Majority Claim Discrimination," The Huffington Post, September 8, 2011, accessed July 16, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/08/bahrain-jobs-shiite-protests_n_954298.html.

142 "Flawed Reforms: Bahrain Fails to Achieve Justice for Protesters," Amnesty International, 2012, http://files.amnesty.org/archives/3858/Bahrain_REPORT_web.pdf, 45.

143 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, par. 1428-56.

144 Murphy, "Bahrain Mass Job Dismissals: Shiite Majority Claim Discrimination."

145 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, paras. 1390, 1454.

146 "Flawed Reforms: Bahrain Fails to Achieve Justice for Protesters," Amnesty International, 9-41.

people dismissed in 2011. Other sources put the number closer to 95 percent. Responding to the government's claim of resolving 99 percent of reinstatement cases as of November 2013, the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) asserted that several hundred cases had not yet been resolved.¹⁴⁷

The GFBTU additionally reports that some private sector companies have not reinstated their former employees, and that others have rehired workers into lower-rank positions. Since 2011, businesses have also dismissed employees who miss work on protest days and anniversaries.¹⁴⁸ Other workers have reported reduced salaries upon their return to work or have been forced to sign loyalty pledges.¹⁴⁹ Some employers have refused to award back pay for unfair dismissal and have forced unionists to disengage from their activities after returning to their jobs.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, many Shia have encountered difficulties in attempting to obtain certificates of good conduct from their employers. Employers typically require these certificates from applicants, rendering many Shia completely dependent upon their current employers.¹⁵¹

During the 2011 uprising, security forces targeted medical professionals for providing aid to injured protesters.¹⁵² The BICI report specifically examined events that took place at Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC), a public hospital two kilometers from the Pearl Roundabout. According to the report, the Ministry of Health prevented ambulances from accessing the roundabout during protests. Security forces arrested and detained medical personnel as well as protesters receiving medical treatment. Between 16 March and the end of May 2011, security forces detained a total of 64 medical professionals. In June of that year, a national safety court charged 28 with misdemeanors and 20 with felonies. Government accusations against medical personnel included colluding with opposition groups, protesters, and foreign powers.¹⁵³

Bahraini courts found all those charged with felonies guilty, despite credible allegations that security forces used torture to extract confessions. Sentences ranged from five to fifteen years in jail.¹⁵⁴ In June 2012, nine medical professionals were acquitted, and others had their sentences reduced.¹⁵⁵ Pressure on doctors, however, has not completely abated. In April 2014, the Public Prosecutor's Office questioned Dr. Fatima Haji on accusations of insulting the MOI in an interview with France24 regarding the use of tear gas in Bahrain. Another doctor previously charged with a felony, Dr. Saaed al-Amahiji, received a one year jail sentence for insulting the king based on remarks he allegedly made at a funeral in 2013.¹⁵⁶ Doctors have not escaped harsh treatment by security forces and have been prevented from fulfilling their obligation to treat wounded protesters.

147 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2013 Report on International Religious Freedom*, 2014.

148 U.S. Department of State, *Implementation by the Government of Bahrain of the Recommendations by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 2013.

149 "One Year Later," Project on Middle East Democracy, 19.

150 *Ibid.*, 14.

151 "ما الذي دار في لقاء الحقوقي نبيل رجب مع رئيس مكتب التظلمات التابع لوزارة الداخلية؟" Bahrain Mirror, December 5, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://bahrainmirror.com/news/20724.html>.

152 "Bahrain: Human Rights Violation in 2014," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, February 13, 2015, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7312>.

153 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, para. 703

154 *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, 12-13.

155 "Bahrain Government Renews Attacks on Bahrain Medics," Human Rights First, April 8, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/press-release/bahrain-government-renews-attacks-bahrain-medics>

156 *Ibid.*

Education

In addition to persecuting trade unionists and medical professionals, the Bahraini government strongly sanctioned the men and women studying and working within its educational sector. As with the aforementioned cases, this sanctioning has taken two forms: violent suppression and mass dismissal from teaching positions and student enrollments.

Teachers

Bahraini authorities targeted teachers from the earliest days of the 2011 protests, after educators emerged as active members of the pro-democracy movement; in February 2011, the Bahrain Teachers Association (BTA) organized a 5,000-strong strike in response to the 17 February security force attack on protesters in the Pearl Roundabout.¹⁵⁷ In March 2011, after the BTA attempted to organize a second strike in response to security-force raids on schools, the Ministry of Social Development ordered its dissolution and the arrest of its members, accusing the union of “issuing statements and speeches inciting teachers and students.”¹⁵⁸ Officials further accused Mahdi Abu Deeb, BTA leader, of delivering speeches inciting against the regime.¹⁵⁹ Other members of the organization were targeted next.¹⁶⁰ The homes of Mahdi Abu Deeb, his deputy Jaleela al-Salman, and nine other members of the association, all Shia, were unlawfully raided. The authorities arrested, disappeared, and tortured them.¹⁶¹

In total, Bahraini authorities arrested over 100 Shia teachers as a result of the protests. The majority of teachers reported being subjected to torture, including beatings with different objects, being forced into stress positions, and sexual harassment. Security forces humiliated them with sectarian insults. The Ministry of Education treated Shia teachers with suspicion and subjected them to degrading and provocative interrogations, leading to the dismissal of approximately 150 teachers and the suspension of dozens more.¹⁶² Additionally, officials withheld the salaries of more than 100 teachers for months and cut off others’ salaries entirely.¹⁶³ Ministry of Education officials transferred dozens of teachers to other schools in different areas on short notice.¹⁶⁴ Shia teachers constituted the majority of those affected.¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, many unemployed university graduates in Bahrain are qualified to work as teachers but cannot find positions due to discriminatory hiring practices. Though official statistics do not delineate by sect, sources on the ground relate that the majority of unemployed university

157 “Teachers ordeal in Bahrain: arrested, tortured, sacked, suspended and prosecuted,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights, July 14, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/4387>.

158 Ibid.

159 وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية تحل جمعية المعلمين البحرينية وتوقف مجلس إدارة جمعية الأطباء Bahrain News Agency, April 4, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/news/451949>.

160 Justin Gengler, “Bahrain Re-Opens to (Pseudo-) Academics,” Religion and Politics in Bahrain, May 6, 2013, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.com/2013/05/bahrain-re-opens-to-pseudo-academics.html>; see also “Bahrain: End the violations against teachers, unionists and students,” Education International, October 24, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.ei-ie.org/en/uas/uaa_details/31.

161 “Teachers ordeal in Bahrain: arrested, tortured, sacked, suspended and prosecuted,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

162 “Teachers in Bahrain on World Teachers Day: Jailed, tortured, prosecuted, and dismissed from work for political reasons,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights, October 5, 2011, August 14, 2015, <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/4720>.

163 Ibid.

164 أولياء أمور يحتجون أمام <<مدرسة قرطبة>> اعتراضاً على الإساءة لبناتهم Al-Wasat, March 10, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3107/news/read/531554/1.html>.

165 “Teachers in Bahrain on World Teachers Day,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

graduates are Shia. Instead of employing these Bahrainis, the government has hired teachers from other countries, such as Egypt and Jordan. In 2014, a state official announced that the government employed 302 Egyptian teachers.¹⁶⁶ In April 2015, the Jordanian Teachers Union stated that 1,200 Jordanian teachers were candidates for teaching positions in Bahrain.¹⁶⁷ In February 2015, the Ministry of Education opened up teaching vacancies to candidates from Gulf countries. Previously, one of the conditions for hiring was that the candidate had to be Bahraini.¹⁶⁸

Students

As the 2011 demonstrations continued, security forces began to carry out reprisals against schools. Following the army's attack on protesters at the Pearl Roundabout and the declaration of martial law, security forces reportedly targeted more than ten schools.¹⁶⁹ They assaulted teachers and students alike inside campuses. The events that took place at Yathreb Intermediate School provide an example. A band from the National Guard chose to perform in the majority-Shia school, an act seen as provocative by the local community. Security forces surrounded the school and sent policewomen on patrols inside the halls. After allegations of anti-government chanting, police started assaulting both teachers and students.¹⁷⁰ They entered every classroom in an attempt to identify those who allegedly chanted. The officers took the girls to the school yard and forced them to stand facing the wall while they subjected them to beatings and sectarian insults.¹⁷¹

Other students that did not suffer the direct effects of violence could not escape the long-term economic consequences of dismissal. Following the 2011 protests, the University of Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic dismissed more than 500 students, a majority of them Shia, depriving them of their right to education. Additionally, authorities arrested, tortured, and tried in military court more than 70 Shia university students. Several were sentenced up to 15 years in prison.¹⁷²

Suppression of the protest movement also triggered a third discriminatory policy against Shia students: the prejudicial allocation of scholarships. Prior to 2011, scholarships were distributed based on academic merit, and scholarship recipients were always published in local newspapers. In 2011, however, the government fully changed the mechanism for scholarship distribution. The Ministry of Education formed a selection committee and began conducting interviews. In the screening process, academic achievements now account for 60% of the selection criteria while interviews account for the other 40%.¹⁷³ Some students alleged that the questions asked in the

166 <http://www.egyptianpeople.com/defaultnews/2014-09-02/237776#sthash.ABXIeDLf.dpbs>

167 <<التربية>> فتحت باب الترشح للعاطلين البحرينيين خلال فبراير ولم تعلن عن موعد الامتحان, Al-Wasat, April 15, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4603/news/read/981765/1.html>.

168 <<التربية>> تفتح باب التوظيف أمام مواطني <<الخليج>>, Al-Wasat, February 23, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4552/news/read/964299/1.html>.

169 "Bahraini medical centers and schools 'raided,'" Al Jazeera, April 26, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/04/2011426205632924276.html>.

170 مدرسة يثرب: إذاعة البحرين أججت الوضع في المدرسة, Al-Wasat, March 11, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3108/news/read/531720/1.html>.

171 "Students paid the price of belonging to the majority sect and were targeted along with their teachers in a vengeance campaign pr [sic]," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, August 4, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/4466>.

172 "Bahrain: Reinstate Ousted Students, Faculty," Human Rights Watch, September 24, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/24/bahrain-reinstate-ousted-students-faculty>.

173 <<مقابلات البعثات>> انتقادات طلابية تطل, Al-Wasat, July 7, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3225/news/read/571265/1.html>.

interviews focused on their political and religious beliefs.¹⁷⁴ Many Shia students alleged that the scholarships were unjustly distributed. For example, in 2012 a Shia student ranked fifth in the nation was given her tenth choice of scholarship.¹⁷⁵

Following 2015's national scholarship distribution, Bahrainis took to Twitter to express their resentment and anger about the unfair distribution of scholarships. More than 12,000 tweets were posted under the "massacre of scholarships" hashtag, which criticized the Ministry of Education's discrimination toward Shia students in granting scholarships.¹⁷⁶ For example, one Shia student, who obtained a GPA of 99.1%, put medicine as her first choice but was provided a grant of only BHD400—which did not cover half her tuition fees. Another who earned a 99.1% GPA, wanted to study medicine but was given a scholarship to study nutrition. On the other hand, some students reported that their Sunni classmates with GPAs of 90% were given scholarships to study medicine.¹⁷⁷

The arrest and intimidation of Shia students, and their dismissal from their programs of study, causes immediate harm to their future job prospects. Coupled with the unequal distribution of scholarships and the prioritized hiring of teachers from Sunni-majority states, it is apparent that economic discrimination against the Shia majority in Bahrain begins in the classroom.

Government Programs

Housing

Inadequate access to housing remains one of the most prominent complaints of the Shia majority.¹⁷⁸ The housing crisis intricately ties to the larger problem of land distribution, an issue that has grown more contentious in recent years. Lower-income citizens of the kingdom rely on state-subsidized housing, which is plagued by delays in project implementation and accusations of government favoritism.¹⁷⁹ Citizens living in underprivileged areas often find themselves without houses, adequate sewage systems, and water supply.¹⁸⁰ Residents of poor suburbs and villages suffer from a general lack of proper infrastructure.¹⁸¹ A 2011 Gallup poll indicated that 41% of Bahrainis reported not having enough money to provide adequate shelter for their families over the preceding 12 months.¹⁸² In August 2015, the Ministry of Housing confirmed that it had roughly

174 "Discrimination in scholarship distribution," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, September 27, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/4680>.

175 «التربية» يدعو بالبعثات ومصومون بالبعثات ويدعون <<التربية>> للإصاف Al-Wasat, July 24, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3242/news/read/574006/1.html>; see also «أهلاً بكم في البحرين: ٨٩٪ تمنحك رغبتك السادسة لا غير! (٢٠١٢)» Bahrain Mirror, August 15, 2014, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://abbas-alsameea.no-ip.info/news/18007.html>.

176 <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23D9%85%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%AA&src=typd>

177 "Discrimination And Lack of Transparency in the Distribution of Scholarships in Bahrain," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, July 27, 2015, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7584>.

178 Siperco, "Bahrain's Sectarian Challenge."

179 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, para. 63

180 Frederik Richter, "Bahraini Shi'ites feel neglect in government housing crunch," Reuters, October 13, 2010, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/middle-east/129121/bahraini-shias-feel-neglect-in-housing-crunch->

181 Bassiouni, et. al., "Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry," Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, par. 63

182 Sarah Chayes and Matar Matar, "Bahrain's Shifting Sands," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 13, 2013, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/02/13/bahrain-s-shifting-sands>

53,000 outstanding housing requests.¹⁸³

In August 2015, the Ministry of Housing confirmed that it had roughly 53,000 outstanding housing requests.¹⁸⁴ For several years, the ministry has been developing thousands of housing units to meet this high demand. The government is addressing the problem, however, along sectarian lines, privileging mixed and majority-Sunni districts over majority Shia ones. Nowhere is this better seen than in the differential treatments afforded the populous Northern and Southern governorates. The Northern Governorate contains over 194,000 citizens,¹⁸⁵ the majority of whom are Shia, and has voted overwhelmingly for al-Wefaq and other opposition parties in parliamentary elections;¹⁸⁶ the Southern Governorate contains over 32,900 citizens,¹⁸⁷ is majority Sunni, and often votes in government-backed candidates during parliamentary elections.¹⁸⁸

In of 2012, the Ministry of Housing acknowledged that it had received 18,045 housing requests from the Northern Governorate and 3,779 from the Southern.¹⁸⁹ As of today, the Bahraini government has completed the construction 1,271 new units in the Southern Governorate, as opposed to 1,017 in the Northern.¹⁹⁰ Though the ministry has pledged to build 15,000 residential units in a planned “Northern City,” this project has not advanced since its conception in 2012.¹⁹¹

Shia face many obstacles in their attempts to acquire state-owned housing. When the government does complete new housing projects, these houses often go to foreign-born Sunnis while ordinary Bahrainis remain unassisted.¹⁹² Nabeel Rajab, founder of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, asserts, “Most Shi’ites feel that their situation is caused by discrimination and because nationalised foreigners are taking up most of the housing projects.”¹⁹³ In towns like Riffa, the traditional home of the Al Khalifa family, Shia have difficulty renting and buying homes and purchasing land. Maryam al-Khawaja of the Gulf Center for Human Rights likens the housing situation of Shia living in Bahrain to that of apartheid.¹⁹⁴

This problem is not new. Some Shia citizens have reported waiting as long as 20 years to receive government housing.¹⁹⁵ Unemployed Shia sometimes have to wait ten or fifteen years longer than

183 “<<مسألة وقت>> وتليتها... وعهدتنا... 53 ألف طلب في عهدتنا...>>” Al-Wasat, August 17, 2015, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4727/news/read/1017148/1.html>.

184 “<<مسألة وقت>> وتليتها... وعهدتنا... 35 ألف طلب في عهدتنا...>>” Al-Wasat, August 17, 2015, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/4727/news/read/1017148/1.html>.

185 “Population by Governorate, Nationality and Sex – 2010 Census,” Bahrain Central Informatics Organisation, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.cio.gov.bh/cio_ara/English/Publications/Census/Population/2.pdf.

186 *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, 17-19.

187 “Population by Governorate, Nationality and Sex – 2010 Census,” Bahrain Central Informatics Organisation, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.cio.gov.bh/cio_ara/English/Publications/Census/Population/2.pdf.

188 *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, 17-19.

189 “البحرين استقبلت 04 ألف طلب إسكاني خلال الـ 01 سنوات الماضية,” Al-Ayam, June 9, 2012, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.alayam.com/alayam/Parliament/170650/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AA-40-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%81-%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%80-10-%D8%B3%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9.html>.

190 “Past Projects,” Ministry of Housing, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.housing.gov.bh/en/Projects/Pages/Old-Projects.aspx>.

191 “Future Projects,” Ministry of Housing, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.housing.gov.bh/en/Projects/Pages/Future-Projects.aspx>.

192 Richter, “Bahraini Shi’ites feel neglect in government housing crunch.”

193 Ibid.

194 Al-Khawaja, “Beneath Bahrain’s Shia-versus-Sunni narrative, only the tyrants benefit.”

195 Al-Khawaja, “Beneath Bahrain’s Shia-versus-Sunni narrative, only the tyrants benefit.”

foreign-born Sunnis employed in the security services to get housing.¹⁹⁶ The extreme wait time exasperates Shia who believe that the government gives priority in housing to Sunnis.¹⁹⁷

In 2014, Bahrain's parliament launched an investigation into the housing crisis. The investigation aimed to address the failure to implement criteria approved by the Cabinet in 2013 that would have eased restrictions on housing access.¹⁹⁸ In June 2015, Housing Minister Bassim bin Yaqoub al-Hamer stressed the ministry's "keenness" to provide adequate and affordable housing to all citizens, highlighting a policy that looked to satisfy all housing demands on waiting lists.¹⁹⁹ Whether or not the government will take concrete steps to address discrimination in housing, or the housing crisis more broadly, remains to be seen.

Social Welfare Programs

Though the government does offer welfare programs that provide financial assistance to families and individuals in need, extremely selective eligibility criteria prevent many Bahrainis from accessing these programs. The Ministry of Social Development recently established a "comprehensive program" that provides 50 million BD in assistance to eligible low income families. However, a strict definition of citizenship accompanied by many other restrictions on eligibility prevents many families from obtaining these benefits. The government continues to deny citizenship to hundreds of eligible persons on account of their sect. A 2008 study estimated that 2000 stateless families resided in Bahrain, many of whom were Shia families that legally qualified for Bahraini citizenship.²⁰⁰ Additionally, the government's revocation of citizenship as a tool to punish dissenting voices means that one of the most basic qualifications for government programs, citizenship, can easily be stripped from Shia.²⁰¹

Bahrainis widely view educational, social, and municipal services in Shia areas as inferior to those afforded to Sunni communities.²⁰² The poor living conditions in Shia villages help to fuel resentment by Shia who see foreign-born Sunnis receiving housing, healthcare, and other government benefits.²⁰³ Regardless of sect, all Bahraini citizens contribute to a national pension fund. A Carnegie Endowment report notes that the fund has been heavily criticized for making unwarranted investments in banks and businesses connected to the ruling family, writing off loans, and transferring assets to friends of the Al Khalifa family without proper compensation. Those who benefit from these transactions represent a small class of elites tied to the ruling family by religion or self-interest.²⁰⁴ The evidence demonstrates that few social programs operating in Bahrain provide Shia with equal benefits as other Bahrainis.

196 Siperco, "Bahrain's Sectarian Challenge."

197 Richter, "Bahraini Shi'ites feel neglect in government housing crunch."

198 "Bahrain's Housing Crisis to be Probed," Trade Arabia, February 26, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.tradearabia.com/news/MISC_252831.html.

199 "Minister Highlights 'Social Housing' Projects," Bahrain News Agency, July 5, 2015, accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/676526>.

200 *Apart in Their Own Land*, Vol. I, 20.

201 *A Follow-Up Report on Bahrain's UPR Second Cycle*, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, January 2014, 52-53.

202 U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2013 Report on International Religious Freedom*, 2014.

203 Richter, "Bahraini Shi'ites feel neglect in government housing crunch."

204 Chayes and Matar, "Bahrain's Shifting Sands."

Land Ownership and Commercial Restrictions

Land Reclamation Program

Over the last 30 years, Bahrain's physical makeup has undergone dramatic changes. Between 1987 and 2013, the total land mass of Bahrain grew from roughly 690 square kilometers to 760 square kilometers, according to World Bank statistics.²⁰⁵ These changes have come as a result of a burgeoning land reclamation program spearheaded by the Government of Bahrain that has modified as much as 80% of Bahrain's original coastline. As part of the process, contractors have dredged sand from the sea floor to be added to the Bahraini coast at public expense. Shia fishing communities have suffered reduced access to the coast, and the construction has degraded underwater wildlife habitats.²⁰⁶ Observers blame land reclamation for damaging the fishing industry and marine environment.²⁰⁷

In the last decade, Bahrain's fish stocks have dwindled by 80%, threatening a collapse of the fishing industry. Over just two years, between 2004 and 2005, Bahrain's fishing exports plunged by 90%, and the value of shrimp sales fell from \$11 million USD to \$95,000 USD.²⁰⁸ The Fishermen's Protection Society (FPS) claims that land reclamation has been a significant factor in the steep fall of the fishing industry, and has taken action against reclamation in the past. In 2009, the society called a week-long strike in protest of reclamation. The strike ended when Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman personally met with the FPS and pledged to follow up on its demands.²⁰⁹ A few months later, however, the FPS threatened legal action against contractors over dredging.²¹⁰

Land reclamation has most affected traditional Shia fishing villages, which have suffered reduced access to the sea after the building of palace complexes on the western coast. The Shia village of Shahrakan in the center-west of the Bahraini archipelago, for example, lost its traditional coastal fishing locations after the construction of the Safriyah palace complex directly between the village and the coast.

Despite protests against land reclamation by different sections of society, the government only appears to hear those made by traditional Sunni allies of the royal family. The residents of the predominantly Sunni town Zallaq led a partially successful protest movement in 2014 against an illegal reclamation project that would have privatized a public beach for luxury housing. The town has close ties to the royal family, and residents claim that King Hamad's father Emir Isa gifted them the al-Dosari majlis, a prominent local landmark.²¹¹

Zallaq citizens protested in late August 2014 that the public beach, in the past a 7-kilometer-long stretch used by fishermen and residents alike for their livelihood and recreation, had been

205 "Land area (sq. km)," The World Bank, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?page=5>.

206 Chayes and Matar, "Bahrain's Shifting Sands."

207 Basma Mohammed, "Reclamation Costs Bahrain Millions," Gulf Daily News, March 7, 2009, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=245058>

208 Elham Fakhro, "Land Reclamation in the Arabian Gulf: Security, Environment, and Legal Issues," *Journal of Arabian Studies: Arabia, the Gulf and the Red Sea* 3:1 (2013): 47.

209 Benjamin Millington, "Bahraini Fishermen End Strike," Arabian Business, February 28, 2009, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahraini-fishermen-end-strike-79674.html>.

210 Andy Sambidge, "Bahrain's Fishermen in legal threat over dredging," Arabian Business, March 5, 2009, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-s-fishermen-in-legal-threat-over-dredging-65551.html#.Vlh3eDGsWLF>.

211 Raji Unnikrishnan, "Save our beach..!" Gulf Daily News, August 25, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-s-fishermen-in-legal-threat-over-dredging-65551.html#.Vlh3eDGsWLF>

reduced to just 100 meters.²¹² Just a week after the protest, the government announced major changes in the planned Zallaq project, including plans for a one-kilometer stretch of public beach and a specialized harbor for fishermen. Despite these changes to the development plans, residents continue to express cynicism over the extent to which the beach can be public when private companies own portions of the one kilometer stretch.²¹³ The partial success of the Zallaq protests do not extend to Shia-led protests against reclamation, which have at times antagonized members of the government and royal family. The evidence appears to fit well within the pattern of preferential treatment shown towards loyalist Sunni areas in comparison to the general disregard of Shia-specific discontent.

Corruption in Land Reclamation

Anger over the control of national resources by networks connected to the ruling family provided fuel for the 2011 protests, and land remains a divisive issue in the country. The government has essentially given away millions of tons of sand to developers while an exploding population remains confined to less than half of Bahrain's land mass. Many have accused developers of profiteering by selling dredged land that they have acquired free of cost.²¹⁴ The enormous swath of properties owned by the ruling family, combined with international military facilities that are off-limits to ordinary Bahrainis, further contribute to the overcrowding and housing shortages experienced by the population at large.²¹⁵

Many claim that the government has unfairly distributed land that has been reclaimed over the past decades, especially the approximately 70 kilometers of new coastline.²¹⁶ The BICI report estimates that more than 90% of reclaimed land has been transferred to private hands, despite its potential to be used for public projects that benefit local communities. Some have pointed out that these lands could have been a solution to the acute housing crisis that Bahrain still faces.²¹⁷ The Shia opposition specifically cites the extensive property holdings of the Al Khalifa family, with references to its stakes in developments on newly reclaimed land on the northern coast, as an aggravation of the housing shortage.²¹⁸ Most of the new land instead becomes upscale residential areas and large private real estate projects.²¹⁹

The privatization of land typically follows a common procedure. The Land Registration Board, headed by a government-appointed director, re-registers lands to members of the ruling family, often changing the classification of the land in question to allow for new development purposes. The recipient then gifts the land to developers at a symbolic price in exchange for a share in the future venture.²²⁰ In March 2011, a report emerged showing that the Prime Minister of Bahrain had acquired prime reclaimed real estate for the price of one Bahraini dinar.²²¹

212 Raji Unnikrishnan, "More support for beach rally," Gulf Daily News, August 28, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=384748>

213 "\$9m beach project on track in Bahrain," Trade Arabia, September 3, 2014, accessed July 16, 2015, http://www.tradearabia.com/news/CONS_264848.html.

214 Mohammed, "Reclamation Costs Bahrain Millions."

215 Chayes and Matar, "Bahrain's Shifting Sands."

216 Kenneth Katzman, "Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, 2014: 21, 64.

217 Mohammed, "Reclamation Costs Bahrain Millions."

218 Richter, "Bahraini Shi'ites feel neglect in government housing crunch."

219 *BICI Report*, par. 64.

220 Chayes and Matar, "Bahrain's Shifting Sands."

221 Frederik Richter, "Special Report: In Bahrain, a symbol at the heart of revolt," Reuters, June 16, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/16/us-bahrain-gfh-idUSTRE75F4LF20110616>; see also "Bahrain: The One Dinar Protest," Global Voices, March 7, 2011, accessed August 14, 2015, <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/03/07/bahrain-the-one-dinar-protest/>.

Two reports on the land reclamation program estimate that 65 square kilometers of public land, valued at between 40 and 60 billion American dollars, have been transferred to private hands without proper payment to the public treasury since 2003.²²² An additional 100 square kilometers cannot be accounted for. Reports identify the prime minister himself as one of the top beneficiaries of these land exchanges.²²³ The land in question totals approximately one fourth of the land mass of Bahrain. The failure to fairly sell reclaimed lands likely caused the government to miss out on millions of dollars that could have been used to support the fishing industry, help solve the housing shortage, or contribute to financial assistance programs.²²⁴

Shia Lands and Businesses

Shia in Bahrain lack even basic control over their religious endowments. The Shia Endowment Authority (*Awqaf al-Jaffariya*) oversees the operation, management, maintenance, and development of all Shia endowments in the country, yet its actions have earned the disapproval of other Shia scholars. In fact, government officials choose the members of the council. The Minister of Justice himself has the power to appoint certain members.²²⁵

The Shia Endowment Authority has consistently faced problems with theft and embezzlement. Senior officials and appointees to the council tend to be the perpetrators of these offenses. A former head of the council has urged Shia scholars to rescue the organization, stating, “Do you believe that a ground that is 170 square meters has a monthly rent of only 375 fils, making the yearly rent 1 dinar and 670 fils (less than five dollars)?”²²⁶

Shia businesses have struggled disproportionately compared to their Sunni counterparts. In November 2013, certain Shia business owners made public complaints of not being able to rent outlets at a new shopping mall in Muharraq, a Sunni-dominated island.²²⁷ During 2011, shoppers boycotted stores owned by a Shia family company, including clothing stores, restaurants, cafes, and express shopping stores, on a sectarian basis. Groups of civilians armed and under the protection of the security forces attacked and looted such stores more than 60 times.²²⁸ One store owner claims to have reported the attacks and provided CCTV evidence to the authorities, but the authorities did not hold anyone accountable. Some of the video evidence appears to show police officers participating in the attacks and robberies.²²⁹

In April 2011, the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI) dismissed two out of the four Shia members of its board on allegations that they committed a “breach of [their] stature as [members] of the Chamber of Management, or offensive to the status or its reputation.”²³⁰ The board promptly replaced them with two Sunni members. The expelled Shia, as well as several

222 “خليل: توصيات ‘برلمانية املاك الدولة’ لم تنفذ” Al-Wasat, November 16, 2013, accessed July 14, 2015. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/pdf/index.php?issue=4088&cat=fir>

223 Chayes and Matar, “Bahrain’s Shifting Sands.”

224 Mohammed, “Reclamation Costs Bahrain Millions.”

225 Kingdom of Bahrain Ministry of Justice & Islamic Affairs, Jaffaria Waqf Directorate, accessed July 16, 2015. http://www.jafwaqf.com/view.php?page=home_en.

226 “The Persecuted Shia Majority in Bahrain,” Salam Human Rights, December 11, 2014, accessed July 15, 2015. <http://bahrainsalam.org/?p=593>.

227 “مجمع تسوق في المحرق يميز بين المواطنين و يمنح بعضهم من استئجار محلات” Al-Wasat, November 4, 2013, accessed July 15, 2015.

228 “القبض على متهم بالاعتداء الأخير على أسواق ٤٢ في البسيتين الاعتداءات بالتخريب على ‘مجموعة جواد التجارية’ تتواصل منذ ٩١ شهرا” Al-Wasat, September 18, 2012, accessed July 15, 2015.

229 “Continuation of the policy of impunity and the participation of security forces in the assaults on private property and funds,” Bahrain Center for Human Rights, May 8, 2012, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/5247>.

230 Kareem Hamad, “مجلس ادارة الغرفة يقرر في جلسته امس: فصل حسين المهدي من رئاسة لجنة التدريب و كافة مناصبه,” Akhbar al-Khaleej, May 8, 2011, accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12098/article/441979.html>.

other businessmen, protested the decision and demanded reinstatement.²³¹ They eventually regained their positions in April 2012.²³² While evidence of discrimination in land management and business tends to be more anecdotal, Shia have disproportionately suffered its effects.

The Undue Impact of Labor Laws on Shia Employment

Economic discrimination against Bahraini Shia is sometimes the unintended result of codified law. The Labor Law of 2012 contains several provisions that produce such an undue impact on Shia. Article 2 stipulates that provisions of the law do not apply to employees of the government and public entities, whose conduct is governed by a separate law. Since Shia employment in government positions remains low, this means that in practice, separate laws often apply to Shia and Sunni workers. Article 20 of the Labor Law requires that employment contracts contain the material details of the parties to the contract, including “nationality and personal particulars of identification” and “other particulars to be determined by a resolution of the Minister.” This provision essentially allows employers to require workers to disclose sectarian affiliation. Article 177 additionally enables officers delegated by the Minister of Labor to access records related to workers and to seek the “necessary information” to undertake inspection duties.²³³

A separate law, Law 48 of 2010 Promulgating the Civil Service Law, applies to civilian employees in government entities. The provisions do not apply to security personnel in the BDF, the MOI, the National Guard, and the NSA, except for those agencies’ civilian employees. Article ten stipulates that appointments to senior positions and positions “construed as equivalent” shall be made by a decree or prime ministerial resolution; in other words, the prime minister controls sensitive appointments in the civil service. Article 11 goes on to require that appointees may not have been convicted of a criminal offense or received a custodial sentence for a dishonorable crime. Regardless of whether the prime minister would actually appoint Shia to positions of power, Shia tend to be the victims of security force abuses and would be much more likely to have been convicted of a criminal offense.²³⁴

Legislative decree number 41 of 2002, which addresses the Kingdom’s policies and guidelines related to privatization, carves out an additional sphere of economic influence for the government. Article 4 allows for the privatization of “certain tourist areas,” a provision that allows the government to privatize reclaimed coastal areas that Shia communities rely on for fishing. A separate provision allows the Council of Ministers to establish “a separate share to which some private rights shall be attached in order to protect the national interest, and this is in exemption from the general rules applicable to the companies.” These provisions enable the government to act with impunity in the privatization of lands with public-use purposes.²³⁵

231 Bahrain Mirror, July 4, 2012, accessed July 14, 2015.

232 Kareem Hamad, “الدعوى العالِيّ” و “الدعوى الاداريّة” الى مجلس الادارة, Akhbar al-Khaleej, April 9, 2012, accessed July 15, 2015.

233 Kingdom of Bahrain, Ministry of Labour, *The Labour Law for the Private Sector, Law No. 26 of 2012*. http://www.rrc.com.bh/media/141168/labour_law_2012_1_.pdf

234 Kingdom of Bahrain, Civil Service Bureau, *Law Decree No. 48 of 2010 Promulgating Civil Service Law*. <https://www.csb.gov.bh/en/civil-service-legislation/civil-service-law/law-48-20101.html>

235 Kingdom of Bahrain, *Legislative Decree No. 41 of 2002 With Respect to Policies and Guidelines of Privatization*. <http://policy.mofcom.gov.cn/english/flaw?fetch.action?id=c99f18ff-8037-4e4f-a4aa-ec77dc60ab19>

Conclusion

Shia in Bahrain continue to face systematic discrimination in the economic sphere. The Government of Bahrain has failed to adequately integrate the Shia community into the security services, and the continued employment of migrant and naturalized foreign-born Sunni citizens in the BDF and MOI has exacerbated tensions between the government and the Shia population. Meanwhile, students have faced prison time and lost study grants in response to their alleged political activities. The Shia community additionally does not have equal access to government-subsidized housing. Foreign-born Sunnis employed in the security services are granted housing much sooner than Shia Bahrainis, who sometimes have to wait up to 20 years to get housing. Anecdotes suggest that discriminatory policies persist in many Bahraini businesses and business associations, especially those owned or run by the government. Finally, laws governing employment practices leave loopholes for the government to act with impunity and unfairly scrutinize employees on the basis of sect.

Conclusion

Throughout both volumes of this report, ADHRB, BIRD, and BCHR have consistently drawn parallels between the Government of Bahrain's discrimination against Shia and a system of apartheid. This comparison has not been made lightly. A detailed analysis of the multiple, interlocking regimes of oppression affecting Bahrain's Shia population reveals that its members suffer from the political manifestation of deeply-rooted prejudice. Whereas religious faith should allow individuals to connect to communities from which they can draw strength and social support, in contemporary Bahrain, Shia belief has promised its practitioners a counterbalancing level of marginalization.

This marginalization has pervaded every aspect of Shia life in Bahrain. In their daily routines, Shia are consistently reminded of their insecure status as potential enemies from within. The media in Bahrain, both state-owned and state-influenced, compounds these two trends by frequently questioning the loyalty of Shia citizens. In the wake of 2011, television and print media have insinuated, and occasionally stated forthrightly, that Shia form a fifth column within Bahrain. Television anchors and newspaper columnists have purposefully employed sectarian language to present Shia as tools of Iran and "Safavid" aggression, and not as aggrieved citizens seeking greater inclusion and self-determination within their country of birth.

Culturally, the Government of Bahrain has oscillated between ignoring Shia contributions to Bahrain's history and actively seeking to antagonize Shia along sectarian lines. Government schools promote the Al Khalifa narrative while neglecting or even denigrating Shia history and religious practice, and Shia-specific educational options are unavailable to most Bahraini children and adolescents. Security forces heighten tensions and stir clashes with Shia mourners at public funerals. Public officials and private government supporters have utilized nomenclature to displace the islands' pre-1783 history.

In the economic sphere, the government refuses to fully integrate Shia into its expansive public sector. Public and private employers have dismissed Shia men and women for participating in peaceful political protest, a practice that has particularly impacted Bahrain's Shia teachers and students. Additionally, development policies have followed a crony capitalist model; land reclamation projects have benefited the ruling family and their supporters even as they have decimated the traditional fisheries that allow many Shia families to subsist.

Despite apartheid-mimicking policies designed to sow division within a multicultural and multi-faith society, Shia and Sunnis within Bahrain have repeatedly rejected these governmental tactics. Although the discriminatory practices outlined in Volumes I and II of *Apart in Their Own Land* greatly impact Shia communities, their negative effects are disproportionate, not absolute. Many Sunnis suffer the ramifications of land reclamation alongside their Shia neighbors, and disadvantaged Sunnis can hardly reap the benefits of unequal political representation when their politicians are more responsive to the wants of ruling family members than to needs of their local communities.

A full accounting of sect-based discrimination in Bahrain cannot, and must not, end with a call for retrenchment and further separation, or for solutions that only serve one side. Anti-Shia discrimination will not end until equality reigns, a difficult but worthy effort that only King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa can set in motion.

Recommendations

In light of the above findings, we make the following recommendations, several of which mirror reforms put forward at the end of Vol. I:

To the Government of Bahrain:

1. Remove economic barriers that negatively impact employment and wealth accrual within Shia communities:

- a. Cease the active importation of foreign labor to fill positions within the teaching and civil defense professions;
- b. Temporarily halt all coastal land reclamation projects and work to ameliorate their damaging ramifications by rehabilitating fisheries, expanding public beaches, and removing control of the reclamation process from the oversight of the royal family;
- c. Integrate Shia in the nation's security forces so that they are represented proportionally;
- d. Reinstatement of the Bahrain Teachers Association and ensure that all teachers and students are protected from violence while on school grounds;
- e. Ensure the extension of social welfare benefits to stateless families;
- f. Prosecute real estate owners that refuse to lease retail space to Shia businesses;
- g. Reform provisions contained within the Labor Law, the Civil Service Law, and Legislative Decree No. 41 that instigate undue economic impact against Shia communities.

2. Reconcile Shia heritage within the larger Bahraini cultural and historical tradition:

- a. Permit local communities to democratically determine the names of neighborhoods and cultural sites;
- b. Reform textbooks and curricula so that they discuss, in a neutral but inclusive manner, Shia jurisprudence and the significance of Shia historical figures, both religious and political;
- c. Accelerate the reconstruction of Shia mosques destroyed in reaction to the 2011 protest movements;
- d. Adopt a non-interference policy toward public Shia funeral processions, and prevent attendant security personnel from wielding arms at these commemorations;
- e. Direct the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities to promote awareness of, and organize tours to, heritage sites significant to the Shia community.

3. End sectarian coverage of Shia protesters and opposition groups within broadcast and print media:

- a. Direct Bahrain Television and the state information services to pull openly-discriminatory shows such as *Al-Rased* and *Hiwar Maftouh* from the air;
- b. Protect the development of an open and independent media, and refrain from sanctioning *Al-Wasat* or any other private media outlets that are not explicitly loyal to the government;

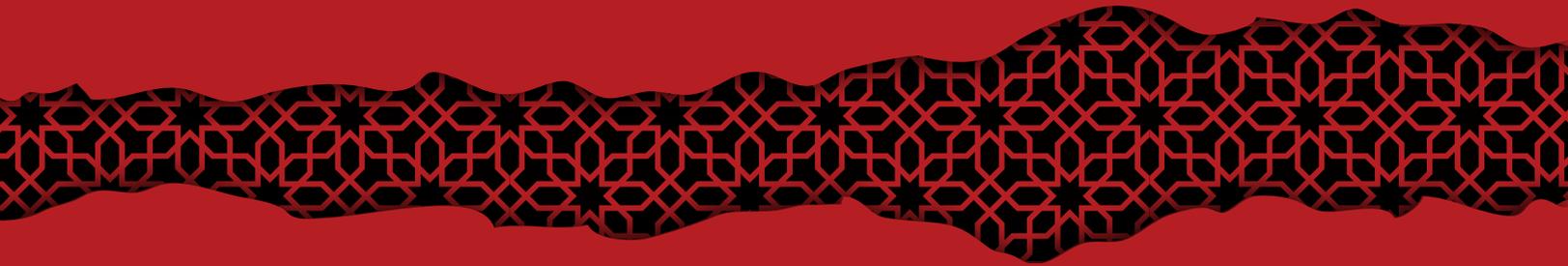
- c. Prevent the use of disparaging sectarian terminology, such as “*Safawi*,” on state-sponsored broadcast and print outlets;
- d. Allot equal airtime to the broadcasting of Shia and Sunni sermons and religious ceremonies;
- e. Cease cultivating contacts with social media users who engage in hardline sectarian rhetoric.

To the United Nations:

- 1. Pressure the Government of Bahrain to end discriminatory policies against the Shia community:**
 - a. Consider passing a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council condemning the human right situation in Bahrain and specifically noting the government discrimination against Shia;
 - b. Examine in a report the consequences of government disclusion on extremism, and consider using Bahrain as a case study in such a report;
 - c. Incorporate the subject of discrimination against the Shia into the next country visit by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and include an examination of the subject into any permanent mandate.
- 2. Facilitate the missions of the Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council:**
 - a. Encourage the Special Rapporteur on religious freedom and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous persons to request access to Bahrain;
 - b. Encourage the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, to request access to Bahrain;
 - c. Encourage the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights to request access to Bahrain;
 - d. Request that the Government of Bahrain issue a standing invitation to all Special Procedures wishing to visit the country.
- 3. Consider amending the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of *Apartheid* to allow it to apply to extremely discriminatory situations of a non-racial character, including situations in which persons face apartheid-like conditions on account of their religion or faith.**

To the International Community, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States:

1. **Pressure the Government of Bahrain to end its campaign of discrimination against the Shia population by instituting measures against Bahrain similar to those that ended apartheid in South Africa:**
 - a. Place an embargo on the Bahraini purchase of any and all weapons, including both military-grade weapons and non-lethal weapons purposed towards riot-control;
 - b. Institute trade sanctions against Bahrain specifically targeting high-end luxury goods generally consumed by elite government officials and the ruling family;
 - c. Demand the release of all Shia political prisoners;
 - d. Consider hosting multilateral talks between the Bahraini government and the Shia majority with the goal of creating a permanent and inclusive solution;
2. **Cease any and all military training programs provided to the Kingdom of Bahrain until such time as the Bahraini military fully integrates the Shia population;**
3. **Consider passing a resolution condemning the Bahraini campaign against its Shia population in the United Nations General Assembly, the European Parliament, the US Congress, and the European Parliament;**
4. **Broaden policy on Bahrain to include bilateral and multilateral approaches to human rights issues and discrimination against specific populations within Bahrain;**
5. **Provide assistance with training programs to the Bahraini government on best practices to ensure the Shia population is included in government jobs and other areas where the Shia population is not fully represented;**
6. **Include analysis on the subject of Shia discrimination in any human rights reports released in 2015, including the United States Department of State Human Rights Report and the United Kingdom Foreign Commonwealth Office Report; and**
7. **Consider amending the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid to allow it to apply to extremely discriminatory situations of a non-racial character, including situations in which persons face apartheid-like conditions on account of their religion or faith.**



Americans for Democracy
& Human Rights in Bahrain

