

Mr. Rapporteur,

IDO, together with the European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights and Defenders for Medical Impartiality, would like to take this opportunity to address call your attention to the situation of sickle cell anemia patients in Bahrain.

Due to low supplies of morphine for almost 4 weeks, sickle cell anemia patients needlessly suffer from debilitating pain. More than 18,000 people suffer from sickle cell disease in Bahrain, many of whom experience periodic episodes of acute sickle cell crisis. Patients undergoing a sickle cell crisis need 2 to 10 mg of morphine to control severe pain, which can last from an hour to more than a week. In Bahrain, however, these patients have limited access to morphine.

Bahrain's Ministry of Health provides the Hereditary Blood Diseases Center at Al-Salmaniya Hospital with small quantities of morphine ampules that run out in the early morning hours. The ministry also provides health centers with morphine, but the supplied quantity is consumed in 2 or 3 days leaving many patients with no option but to suffer in silence.

Nine sickle cell patients have died so far this year in Bahrain. 31 deaths were recorded in 2015 compared to 46 in 2014.

We are additionally concerned with the health of sickle cell patient held in Bahrain's detention centers, like the prisoner of conscience, Abdulwahab Husain, who remains in Jau Prison. Husain, who is diagnosed with sickle cell, experienced several episodes of loss of consciousness. His health continues to deteriorate.

The government of Bahrain has an obligation to ensure access to palliative medicine, including morphine. Failure to do so may result in a violation of the right to health and could constitute a breach of the prohibition on cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

Mr. Rapporteur, what steps would you recommend to States like Bahrain toward remedying such widespread failures to deny adequate care on a national level?

Thank you.