



Mr. Simon Coveney T.D.
Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade

6 June 2019

Honourable Mr. Coveney T.D.,

In 2011, the Government of Bahrain violently suppressed the country's peaceful pro-democracy movement. More than half of the population protested structural inequalities, corruption, repression, and a lack of democratic political representation. In response to the protest movement, the Bahraini government dispatched security forces to quell the demonstrations, leading to thousands of arrests, hundreds of injuries, and dozens of deaths. From athletes to lawyers, and students to nurses, the government targeted anyone who raised a dissenting voice with media attacks, home raids, arbitrary detention, judicial harassment, torture, and even extrajudicial killing.

Over the last several years, the government has only intensified its repression of civil society, including by interrogating, arresting, and imprisoning dozens of human rights defenders, journalists, religious figures, and political opposition leaders such as Abdulawahab Husain, Hasan Mushaima, and Shaikh Ali Salman. Among those the authorities have targeted are prominent activists like human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, and Sayed Ahmed Alwedaie and his family. Bahraini officials have also undertaken an unprecedented campaign to restrict the rights of the country's Shia population. They have suppressed Ashura processions and targeted Shia clerics and religious leaders, including Sheikh Isa Qassim – a leader of Bahrain's Shia community.

Indicating its concern over the situation in Bahrain, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) has passed five joint statements since the pro-democracy movement began in Bahrain in 2011. The joint statements have addressed numerous issues including political prisoners, the imprisonment of human rights defenders, accountability, Bahrain's engagement with UN bodies, denationalisation, and the systematic crackdown on free speech and expression in the kingdom.

The EU Parliament has also expressed its concern over the situation in Bahrain. Since 2011, the EU Parliament has passed eight resolutions concerning human rights in Bahrain. The resolutions have covered thematic issues such as medical impartiality, citizenship revocation, human rights violations of children, the role of the judiciary, and executions and capital punishment.



This joint letter from members of Dáil and Seanad Éireann calls on the Irish government to instruct its department of foreign affairs, and its Minister, Mr Simon Coveney TD to begin the process of leading a joint statement at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

It is imperative that Ireland reaffirms its position in the world as a key human rights defender.

Sincerely,

Niall Collins on behalf of 44 TDs and 14 Senators from Fianna Fáil.

Sean Crowe on behalf of 21 TDs and 6 Senators from Sinn Féin.

Richard Boyd Barrett - People Before Profit TD

Gino Kenny - People Before Profit TD

Bríd Smith - People Before Profit TD

Thomas Broughan - Independents 4 Change TD

Clare Daly - Independents 4 Change TD

Ivana Bacik - Labour Party Senator

David Norris - Independent Senator

Jan O'Sullivan - Labour Party TD