



CAMERA DEI DEPUTATI

13 May 2021, Rome

To His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain,

We, Members of the Italian Parliament, are writing to you today to express our deep concerns over the fate of the prisoners of conscience and the human rights defenders currently held in the prisons of the Kingdom of Bahrain. We are aware that not only are these prisoners subjected to unjust punishment and ill-treatment, but that they are also experiencing a disproportionately high risk of illness, as they are deprived of medical attention and personal protective equipment necessary to protect against COVID-19. This situation is great cause for concern, since it violates the values of freedom, dignity, and respect that Italy and the rest of the international community hold dear. Moreover, it does not respect the many international treaties that the Kingdom of Bahrain has signed which aim to defend human freedom, dignity, and safety. These treaties further safeguard an individual's right to freedom of expression and freedom of speech, and include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT), and the Arab Charter on Human Rights (ACHR).

As you are certainly aware, on 11th March 2021, the EU Parliament passed a resolution that addresses the cases of the prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders who are currently serving their prison sentences. For example, Hassan Mushaima, the leader of the political opposition, the former Secretary-General of the al-Haq Movement for Liberty and Democracy, and co-Founder and former Vice President of al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, has been imprisoned since 2011 because of his political opposition. We are aware that Hassan Mushaima is a vulnerable person who suffers from various chronic medical conditions, and that he has been denied proper medical treatment in prison. We are also aware that there are many others that are in prison for having exerted their right to freedom of expression, such as Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, Naji Fateel, Abdulwahab Hussain, Ali Hajee, and Sheikh Ali Salman. The imprisonment of prisoners of conscience breaches the ICCPR, a treaty to which the Kingdom of Bahrain is a signatory. Moreover, Italy believes that social and political activism should be respected, not persecuted.

Furthermore, the resolution strongly condemns the death sentence against Mohammed Ramadan and Husain Ali Moosa, and it urges you to commute their sentence and to grant them a new trial in accordance with the international standards of due process and fair trial. The resolution also

urges you to reintroduce the moratorium on the death penalty as a step towards its abolition, and to follow a pattern of conformance with international standards in regard to trials and detention.

We are aware that the Kingdom of Bahrain took some steps toward the liberation of prisoners as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020. We also know that the Kingdom released Nabeel Rajab, a human rights defender, on 9th June 2020, in accordance with the Alternative Sentencing Law. Nevertheless, we are concerned that the majority of political prisoners have been systematically excluded from the decision to release individuals due to COVID-19, and that the Alternative Sentencing Law still entails severe limitations to personal freedoms, such as a travel ban and strict surveillance on former inmates and their families. Such limitations on freedom of speech and assembly should not take place, and these individuals should be unconditionally released.

In the name of the commitments that the Kingdom of Bahrain has taken before the international community by signing the UDHR, the ICCPR, the ICESCR, the CAT, and the ACHR, and following the EU resolution of 11th March, we urge you to unconditionally release all political prisoners, including **Hassan Mushaima, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, Naji Fateel, Abdulwahab Hussain, Ali Hajee, and Sheikh Ali Salman**; to lift the limitations imposed by the Alternative Sentencing Law on **Nabeel Rajab** and on all other individuals subjected to these restrictions; to cease the use of the Alternative Sentencing Law for prisoners of conscience and, instead, approve their unconditional release; and to commute and pardon the death sentence of **Mohammed Ramadan, Husain Ali Moosa**, and all the others currently on death row.

We thank you for your precious time. We appeal to Your Majesty's generous clemency in considering our requests concerning the importance of the cause expressed here, in the hopes that it will be well-received and granted.

Sincerely,

Emilio Carelli

Maurizio Lupi

Laura Boldrini

Francesca La Marca

Members of Italian Parliament