

21st November 2011

**Islamic
Human Rights
Commission**



Islamic Human Rights Commission

Bahrain: Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review
Thirteenth Session of the UPR Working Group of the
Human Rights Council

21st May - 1st June 2012

The Islamic Human Rights Commission is an NGO in special consultative
status with the United Nations Economic and social Council.

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In this submission, the Islamic Human Rights Commission raises urgent attention in relation to the critical situation of Bahrainis under the current regime.

Executive Summary

In this submission, the Islamic Human Rights Commission provides information under sections B, C and D as stipulated in the General Guidelines for the Preparation of Information under the Universal Periodic Review. Under section B, the Islamic Human Rights Commission gives background information about the serious human rights violations citizens of Bahrain are experiencing. Under section C, the Islamic Human Rights Commission raises concern in relation to Disappearances, lack of due process, political prisoners, Freedom of association and Right to a fair trial, death penalties for protests and targeted violence and killings and the Freedom of speech of Bahrainis. Under section D, the Islamic Human Rights Commission makes a number of recommendations regarding action that should be taken by the government.

B. Background

1. Bahrain is a relatively small island nation that resides along the Persian Gulf coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Islam is the religion followed by the vast majority of citizens in Bahrain, around 60 per cent of whom are from the Shia sect and approximately 40 per cent being of the Sunni sect. The ruling Al-Khalifas ascribe to the latter and as a consequence all political and security apparatus within the country is tightly controlled on sectarian lines. There is no apparent conflict between the two sects, Sunni and Shia, however, any anti-government activity by citizens of Bahrain is wrongfully identified by the Bahraini government to be a sectarian issue.

2. Recent civil and political unrest has gripped the Kingdom since pro-reform protests erupted where thousands of anti-government protesters have been staging demonstrations in Bahrain since mid-February, demanding various reforms, an end to ethnic discrimination in offering government jobs and allowing political representation, and a constitutional monarchy, a demand that later changed to an outright call for ouster of the ruling Al Khalifa family following its brutal crackdown on popular protests. The government of Bahrain had incorrectly addressed any anti-government protest to be labelled as a sectarian issue rather than a governmental one. Information obtained through human rights groups have reported the Bahrain authorities of arbitrarily detaining opposition figures and human rights activists and subjecting numerous prisoners to torture. Under this banner the government of Bahrain have caused atrocious acts of human rights violations.

C. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

Freedom of expression

A large number of citizens of Bahrain involved in a major protest in an attempt to call for justice against the governments discrimination in housing, education and employment, received an unjustifiable response from the government in a crackdown in which more than 30 demonstrators were killed.

In an attempt to prevent freedom of expression of the anti-government protestors, security checkpoints and a heavy police presence was set around the country. Furthermore, according to accounts of Bahraini human rights activists, 34 people were killed, most in the weeks after Pearl Square was cleared. More than 1,400 have been imprisoned, and as many as 3,600 people were fired from their jobs.

Detention and torture

There have been mass arrests, mass firings of government workers, reports of torture and the forced resignation of the top editor of the nation's one independent newspaper. Since 14th February there have been at least 31 confirmed instances where Bahraini citizens have been killed illegally by government and Saudi-led forces. Many of those killed had been engaging in peaceful protests; others were merely going about their daily routine with no intention of protesting.

Police used tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets against hundreds, perhaps thousands, of protesters, confirmed by witnesses and human-rights advocates. Hundreds of people have reportedly been beaten by the authorities, abducted and tortured and many others horrifically shot dead. Emergency laws gave the security forces the right to search houses at will without a warrant and dissolve any organization, including legal political parties, deemed a danger to the state. Even two members of the national soccer team were arrested, despite apologizing on television for attending antigovernment rallies. The special court had sentenced some doctors and nurses among the defendants to terms as long as 15 years because they had treated demonstrators who were wounded by security forces.

Academics, scholars and students have also found themselves subjected to the regime's wrath. Nabil Rajab, President of the Bahraini Centre for Human Rights & Deputy Secretary General for the International Federation for Human Rights, was blindfolded and handcuffed and put into the back of a car. Furthermore, Sayyed Ahmad Saeed Shams a 15 year old boy who was shot dead in the eye with a rubber bullet by Bahraini security forces. Such instances is so widespread and an evident breach of the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) of which Bahrain is a signatory.

D. Recommendations

The Islamic Human Rights Commission recommends that the government of Bahrain:

- Must take more action in resolving the important issues that has created such tumult in Bahrain.
- Must immediately stop the brutal killings of their innocent citizens.
- To free all wrongfully imprisoned citizens.
- Be brought to account for the grave abuse of power.
- Take immediate measures to ensure elected lawmakers have real parliamentary power.