



## Updates on the Crackdown on Human Rights in the Gulf

### Inside:

- 2 Bahrainis; A Young & A Detainee Died Because Of Their Injuries
- US State Department's Annual Report on Bahrain

10-YEAR-OLD  
CHILD **ALI NAIM**  
ON TRIAL  
BEFORE  
**BAHRAINI  
COURT**





Jassim Al-Basri (15 years)

## Bahraini Security Authorities Launched a Security Campaign

The security authorities launched a [new raid campaign](#) on the morning of Monday (6th March, 2017) which resulted in arresting about 20 citizens from different Bahraini villages.

The [raid campaign](#) continued on the second day leading to arresting at least 6 citizens. A child Jassim Al-Basri (15 years old) was taken to an unknown place.

Another child, [Ali Naim Marhoun](#) (10 years old) had to stand before the Minor Criminal Court on Sunday (26th March 2017) after Bahrain's Public Prosecution raised a lawsuit against him and others. Reports noted that a group of children were summoned to court.

## Bahrain approves military trial for civilians

Bahrain's upper house of parliament on Sunday approved a constitutional amendment which grants [military courts](#) the right to try civilians, sparking concern for the fate of activists already in custody.

## Bahrain Continues to Issue Death Penalties

On Thursday (23rd March, 2017), a Bahraini court [sentenced](#) three men to death. The ruling came amid increased tensions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as the authorities have stepped up a crackdown on dissent by arresting activists, and banning the main opposition group Al-Wefaq Society in addition to other measures.



Safaa Al-Khawaja

## The Situation of the Detainees is Deteriorating

In the month of February 2017, Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) has documented at least [10 cases of people arrested](#) and detained without access to their lawyers. Nor being granted free access to communicate with or receive visits from their families. BCHR has expressed concerns that these detainees were subjected to torture.

[Activist Ibtisam Al-Saegh](#) said on Sunday (5th March, 2017) that Ahmad Isa Al-Malali (23 years) sustained a gunshot wound and multiple fractures.

Information at the Dry Dock detention centre reported that detainee [Ali Mohammad Hakim Al-Arab](#) was beaten up and tortured, because he refused to kiss the foot of a prison guard. The officer had asked Al-Arab to do so as soon as he came from the intelligence building, 26 days after his arrest.

In a statement (Wednesday 8th March, 2017), Bahrain Centre for Human Rights member [Safaa Al-Khawaja](#) said that according to the families of some detainees

in Jaw Prison, the officer in charge summoned the hunger strikers, and orders to handcuff them from 6:00 pm until 1:00 am. With him there would be an officer who verbally harasses the detainees.

The administration of [Dry Dock Prison](#) proceeded in its restricting measures against the detainees and their families. It has banned the detainees' families from bringing in clothes to their sons who are detained over political cases. Detainees said that they are obliged to buy their needs from the prison and that the prices are too expensive.

According to the [Dry Dock prison cells' union](#) in a statement issued on 8th March 2017, the prison's administration continued to deprive prisoners from their rights, through placing them in semi-solitary confinement, and depriving them from food, sports, and sun. The prison also confiscated their school and religious books, and deprived them from reading newspapers, in a systematic policy to place them in a circle of ignorance, the statement also noted.

Moreover, the prison cells' union said the Dry Dock Prison administration also imposed a glass barrier between the detainees and their mothers, children, and families (during visiting hours), without taking into account the humane aspect.

According to detainees in Dry Dock Prison, their inmate [Abu Al-Fadel Al-Qashaami](#) was taken from his prison cell and no news were reported about him for 3 consecutive days, amid fears of him being subjected to brutal torture again.

The human rights abuses continue in Jaw Central Prison, as well. Human rights activist Safaa Al-Khawaja, quoted families of detainees in Jaw Central Prison as saying that the [prison's police beat one of the detainees](#) for reciting Dua'a Kumail (a religious ritual) on Thursday night, and that he was returned to the prison cell while suffering from fatigue due to beating.

A statement issued by [Bahrain's opposition figures](#) detained in Jaw Central Prison confirmed the deterioration of the prison's condition, due to more restrictions imposed on detainees by prison authorities. On top of those restrictions was reducing the visiting hours from 4 hours to 1 hour. They also said that all hospital appointments were canceled, and daily newspapers were banned since January 15, while the authorities halted any purchases at the prison shop. According to the opposition figures, the complete halt of visits by officers to the prison buildings, and not responding to complaints or letters, indicated the absence of any role and impact by any judiciary or regulatory authorities over the prison.





Mohammad Al-Shaikh

## BAHRAIN CONTINUES TO TIGHTEN THE GRIP AGAINST ACTIVISTS

On Monday (20th March, 2017) the security Bahraini authorities held human rights activist [Ibtisam Al-Saegh](#) for seven hours on her return to Bahrain from speaking at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. They questioned about her work and threatened her family. Her passport was confiscated as well.

Bahrain Airport authorities arrested the AFP photographer [Mohammad Al-Shaikh](#) at the early hours of Wednesday (March 22, 2017) upon returning from private vacation in India. He was not allowed to meet his lawyer, and was transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department before setting him free on the next day.

Bahraini liberal opposition figure [Ibrahim Sharif](#) was charged on Monday (21st March, 2017) with "inciting hatred" against the regime with his tweets. Sharif was released from jail in July 2016 after having served a year, also on a charge

of inciting hatred against the regime. As well as, he served a four-year jail term after the protests were crushed before being released under a royal amnesty in June 2015.

Another detained prominent human rights defender, [Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja](#) is under the risk of lasting loss of vision and potentially more severe neural complications. Al-Khawaja requires urgent access to a specialised medical professional. According to updates received from his family, an [ophthalmologist](#) concluded that, from the description of the symptoms, Al-Khawaja "is experiencing temporary loss of vision due to disturbances of blood supply to his eye."

[Nabeel Rajab](#), a prominent human rights activist, has been held in solitary confinement since 9 months. There are serious concerns about the effect it is having on his health and well-being.



## Bahrain's Ministry of Justice Demands to Dissolve Another Political Society

The Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments announced on Monday (6th March, 2017) that it has filed a lawsuit demanding to [dissolve the National Democratic Action Society](#) (Wa'ad) and accused it of "promoting forceful overthrow of political regime".

Wa'ad is considered the second largest opposition society after Al-Wefaq that was dissolved in June 2016.

The society is demanding transformation of Bahrain into a constitutional monarchy that the king had promised to do in 2011 before he failed to achieve what he agreed on with the political opposition at that time.

The decision was criticised by number of Bahraini human rights organisations, including Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, Bahrain Forum for Human Rights, SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights, Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, and others.

## 2 BAHRAINIS; A YOUNG & A DETAINEE DIED BECAUSE OF THEIR INJURIES

On Thursday (26th March 2017), a Bahraini detainee Mohammad Sahwan (45 years old) died while he was still serving his 10-years prison verdict. Sahwan was denied medical treatment in prison, despite suffering from 80 shrapnel in his head, sustained by shotgun bullets during a protest in 2012.

Later, on Friday (24th March, 2017), youth Mustafa Hamdan (17 years old) died after spending about 2 months in a coma in the hospital. Hamdan was shot in the head by gunmen in civilian clothes outside the house of the spiritual leader Sheikh Isa Qassim.



## US State Department's Annual Report on Bahrain: **Problems Worsened & Discrimination Continued**

The US Department of State released its [annual report](#) for 2016 on Human rights in nearly 200 countries and territories worldwide. In its country report on Bahrain, the state department shed light on the continued societal discrimination against the Shia citizens, who represent the majority of the country's population, and the fact that the government had not fully implemented the BICI report's recommendations, highlighting the most serious human rights problems in the island kingdom.

The annual report noted that the most serious human rights problems included limitations on citizens' ability to choose their government peacefully, including due to the government's ability to close arbitrarily or create registration difficulties for organised political societies; restrictions on free expression, assembly, and association; and lack of due process in the legal system, including arrests without warrants or charges and lengthy pre-trial detentions--used especially in cases against opposition members and political or human rights activists.

## INTERNATIONAL CALLS FROM UN HRC TO RESPECT **HUMAN RIGHTS** **VALUES**

Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, criticised the increasing repression exercised by the authorities in Bahrain since June 2016.

Presenting the [annual report](#) in the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, the high commissioner called on Bahrain to allow his office's representatives and Special Procedures mandate holders to swiftly conduct visits to the country, urging the Government of Bahrain to undertake concrete confidence building measures.

The European Union (EU), also, issued a [statement](#) saying that: "The EU encourages the Government of Bahrain to aim for stability through further reforms and inclusive reconciliation in an environment where peaceful political grievances can be expressed freely, and where violence has no place."

"The EU calls upon all parties to engage in an inclusive dialogue and condemns the use of violence as a political instrument. We greatly regret the authorities' recent decision to resume executions, urging Bahrain once again to estab-

lish an official moratorium on the death penalty," the statement concluded in regards to Bahrain.

France expressed its support to the European Union (EU) statement, which warned against the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain. France stressed that it would continue to work on "banning torture and ill-treatment in many countries including Bahrain."

On its part, Czech Republic expressed grave concern concerning the escalating human rights violations in Bahrain, especially by mean of death penalty implementation. On another hand, Ireland said it is worried concerning the imposed restrictions on civil society association in Bahrain, and the execution of death penalties.

Furthermore, Denmark warned of the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain, and called on the Gulf monarchy to exhibit more cooperation with the Human Rights Council.

Moreover, Switzerland called on Bahrain to fully cooperate with the council. It confirmed that Bahrain is among the countries that practice repression against civil society, in violation of its international binding commitments. Switzerland further called on the Bahraini government to respect human rights and release all prisoners detained for practicing basic rights, among them prominent activist Nabeel Rajab, and other human rights activists.



## GIDHR Activism

On Friday (31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017), Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights in cooperation with the University of Melbourne, Asia Institute organised a seminar titled as “Human Rights Abuses in the Gulf States”.



Diana Sayed

During the seminar, GIDHR launched its latest report on the recent executions committed in Bahrain “[Death Penalty in Bahrain: Failure of Justice](#)”.

The head of the reports and studies committee at the Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, Fatima Yazbek, stressed that the death penalties executed against three activists in Bahrain were not based on fair trials, noting that the report highlighted the “human rights violations committed by the Bahraini government since the launch of its investigations, during the trial and after the executions.”

For her part, Diana Sayed, Campaign Coordinator at Amnesty International Australia, addressed the major human rights abuses continuously taking place in Bahrain since February 2011. She further stated that the weapons purchased by the Bahraini government in arms deals are later used in the crack-down on peaceful protestors.

President of Reprieve Australia and criminal law barrister, Julian McMahon, described the judicial system in Bahrain as unfair, stressing that it uses the law to commit violations. He further noted that the latest executions in Bahrain



Julian McMahon

are deemed extrajudicial killings, since there are allegations that the three defendants were subjected to torture and were deprived of their right to a fair trial.

Concluding the first session, President of SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights and former MP, Jawad Fairouz, spoke of the religious persecution in Bahrain practiced against the Shiite majority on all levels, underlining the need to implement the issued recommendations for respecting the rights of all citizens and defenders of human rights and freedoms, particularly freedom of expression and religious liberties.

The second session was dedicated to addressing the war crimes committed by Saudi Arabia in Yemen. Ibrahim Al-Mahdi, a Yemeni academic, shed

light on the human rights crisis caused by the current war in Yemen, stressing that the Saudi-led coalition forces are directly targeting Yemeni citizens and infrastructures, highlighting that the death toll and number of people suffering from malnutrition reached catastrophic levels, with many civilians and children among the dead and injured.

Moreland City Councillor and Socialist Alliance member, Sue Bolton, also discussed the humanitarian crisis caused by the war on Yemen, emphasizing the significance of the West's role in putting an end to the deteriorating situation in the country.

Hamza Culin, Socialist Alternative member, discussed the siege imposed on Yemen and its catastrophic humanitarian results.

# Bahraini Human Rights Organisations

## Five Bahraini HR Organisations Stress Failure of NIHR in Protecting Human Rights

Five Bahraini human rights organisations (Bahrain Forum for Human Rights, Bahrain Human Rights Observatory, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights, Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights and Bahraini Society for Human Rights) issued a report on the failure of Bahrain's National Institution of Human Rights (NIHR) in reflecting the real conditions in the country. The report confirms that the situation does not follow Paris Principles that Bahrain said the institution was formed in accordance with.

The report said that the last two reports issued by the NIHR ignored issues that tackle human rights issue mainly, including banning citizens from staging protests, preventing detainees from their rights, torture and revoking of citizenships. The Kingdom of Bahrain has been under total ban of peaceful protests and demonstrations since October 2014 until now, although citizens have repeatedly submitted requests to obtain permits to stage protests and demonstrations. However, the NIHR did not find the total ban of protesting an alarming issue or a one that infringes or violates human rights.

The report confirmed that the NIHR ignored the fact that "many people who were damaged as a result of human rights violations did not receive compensation and that the file of dismissed people over 2011 incidents has not been closed yet." As well as the public prosecution also prevents defendants from seeking help from their lawyers.

Moreover, NIHR ignored the humanitarian situation in Diraz that was under complete siege after the sit-in staged outside the house of religious leader Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim, whose nationality was revoked by the authorities in June 2016.

The read the full report (in Arabic) press [here](#)

### HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

#### Bahrain: Activist's Family Targeted

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/06/bahrain-activists-family-targeted>

#### Human Rights Council Should Take Action on Bahrain, the Philippines, and Turkey

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/15/human-rights-council-should-take-action-bahrain-philippines-and-turkey>



#### Bahrain – Prominent opposition figure charged for tweets ‘inciting hatred’ against government

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/bahrain-prominent-opposition-figure-charged-for-tweets-inciting-hatred-against-government/>

#### Item 4: General Debate – Amnesty International's Oral Statement to HRC 34 Concerning Bahrain and the Philippines

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/5882/2017/en/>

#### Bahrain: Three Bahrainis Executed by Firing Squad: Ali AbdulShaheed Al-Sankis, Sami Mirza Mshaima and Abbas Jamil Taher Mhammad Al- Samea

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mdl1/5889/2017/en/>

#### Bahrain: King Must not Ratify Constitutional Amendment Allowing Military Courts to Try Civilians

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mdl1/5832/2017/en/>

#### Suspending Human Rights Restrictions on U.S. Arms Sale to Bahrain Sends Dangerous Message

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/press-releases/suspending-human-rights-restrictions-on-us-arms-sale-to-bahrain-sends-dangerous-message>





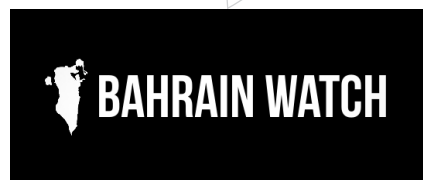
### Bahrain: Opposition figure faces charges for free speech

<https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2017/03/bahrain-opposition-figure-faces-charges-free-speech/>



### Former AFP photographer arrested in Bahrain airport

<https://cpj.org/2017/03/former-afp-photographer-arrested-in-bahrain-airport.php>



### 250 Days of Internet Shutdown Costs Residents Over \$500,000

<https://bahrainwatch.org/amanatech/en/alerts/internet-shutdown-for-250-days-in-bahrain>

## Bahrain in Media



### Bahrain Regime Targets Families of Dissidents in Fresh Reprisals

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/bahrain-regime-targets-families-of-dissidents-in-fresh\\_us\\_58d2553be4b002482d6e6caa](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/bahrain-regime-targets-families-of-dissidents-in-fresh_us_58d2553be4b002482d6e6caa)

the**guardian**

Bahrain moves to ban opposition party and let army courts try civilians

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/06/bahrain-moves-ban-opposition-party-army-courts-try-civilians>

**MEE**

**MIDDLE EAST EYE**

'We have lost hope': Bahrain's dark night descends

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/bahrain-any-way-out-1366064981>

**Newsweek**

Bahrain Parliament's Approval of Military Trials for Civilians  
'Disaster for Human Rights'

<http://www.newsweek.com/bahrain-parliaments-approval-military-trials-civilians-disaster-human-rights-564353>



GULF INSTITUTE  
for Democracy and Human Rights



**Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR)**, is a civil non-governmental and non-profit organization aiming to promote the respect for democratic principles, as well as establishing the human rights and social justice principles, and stopping the human rights violations in the Gulf Region in general and in Bahrain in particular. Headquartered in Sydney, Australia GIDHR has the right to open branches in other regions, has legal character and independent financial disclosure. GIDHR is seeking to be in the ranks of the major organizations defending democratic and human rights principles and values through contributing to achieve peace and justice for all in the Gulf States.

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