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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 January 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Human Rights Report on Kuwait

We have monitored the human rights situation in Kuwait since the issuance of the recommendations of the Human Rights Council in January of 2020. We were hoping that the Kuwaiti government will exert all efforts to meet all those recommendations through the creation of a systematic strategy. However, until now, none of the recommendations made by your esteemed Council was met.

In our capacity in the “Tweeting is not a Crime” campaign, we wrote to Mr. Talal Almutairy - Assistant Under Secretary for Human rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 25th of October, 2020. In our letter to Mr. Almutairy, we requested to know the authority responsible for the execution of the recommendations of the Human Rights Council. We were ignored under the pretext that they only communicate with an officially recognized organization. So, the same communication was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the “Kuwait Freedom Society” on the 19th of November 2020. A copy of the letter was also sent to the National Diwan on Human Rights. We have received no response from either authorities which are supposed to be responsible for the human rights matters.

Furthermore, we tried throughout the year 2020 to communicate with the parliament to amend the laws which are in breach of article 36 of the Kuwaiti Constitution and in violation of the International Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Kuwait is a signatory of both in 1996. We have sent a letter to the Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly – Mr. Marzoug AlGhanim - on 19 November 2020 requesting legislative changes to laws incriminating freedom of expression as a total 819 years of imprisonment have been passed against opinion tweeters and the like.

In an answer to a parliamentary query posed by the Member of Parliament (MP) Khalid AlOtaiby, the Minister of Justice answered the following on the 8th of September, 2019:

Between the 1st of February, 2016 and 31st of December, 2018, 328 tweeters were fined, 171 were given suspended sentences of incarcerations, 35 were actually imprisoned, and a total of 889,651 Kuwaiti Dinars (around \$3 Million) were demanded to be paid as legal fines by tweeters.

As for the amendments required for laws of suppression and hindrance of freedom of expression, we handed a list of those laws to the speaker of the Parliament and other MPs on the 21st of December 2020. Further, the issue of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti men is standing still in violation of articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution. Your esteemed Council addressed this matter in prior correspondence with the Kuwaiti government to no avail.

As for the Kuwaiti “Bedones”, this remains an unsolved issue. Two Bedones committed suicide in the year 2020. One hanging himself in a police station’s cell, the other committed suicide by setting himself on fire.

The human rights matters in Kuwait need immediate actions by your esteemed Council in its 46th session thus demanding that the Kuwaiti government meets its international obligations and the Universal Periodic Review recommendations for an improvement of the human rights in the country.

Gulf Forum for Human Rights, an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.