



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, 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.

[22 May 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



## Human Rights Situation in Bahrain

The suffering of the Bahraini people in all matters relating to freedoms and human rights has continued for years. The Bahraini Government has consistently pursued many practices that constitute a clear violation of human rights in Bahrain.

These practices have included many important human rights issues, including torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by the Government, life-threatening conditions of imprisonment; Arbitrary detention; Political prisoners; Arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; Serious restrictions on freedom of expression and information, including censorship, the existence of criminal defamation laws; Serious restrictions on Internet freedom; Substantial interference with freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including excessively restrictive laws on the organization, financing or operation of non-governmental organizations; Restrictions on freedom of movement, including the revocation of nationality; Serious and unreasonable restrictions on political participation; Significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association.

In terms of arbitrary arrest and detention, many cases of arrests of individuals were recorded without notification at the time of their arrest by the legal authority. The authorities refrain from informing the arrested individuals of the reasons for the arrest and the charges against them. Arrests are also carried out as a whole in private homes without a warrant or an inaccurate or incomplete warrant. Charges against political prisoners included terrorism, treason, espionage and attempted overthrow of the monarchy.

As for prison conditions in Bahrain, conditions in prisons and detention centres are certainly always harsh and sometimes life-threatening due to overcrowding, physical abuse, inadequate health conditions and medical care. Detainees also experience severe overcrowding in pretrial detention facilities as a result of significant delays in investigations and trials.

On the other hand, the Bahraini government refuses to allow independent humanitarian organizations access to political detainees to ascertain their health and conditions of detention, including Abdul Jalil al-Senkis, Hassan Mushaima and many others. Here it is worth mentioning the academic political detainee Abdul Jalil al-Senkis, who announced his hunger strike in April 2021 in protest against the confiscation by the prison authorities of his manuscript on Arabic dialects. He has been serving a life sentence since 2011 after being convicted of attempting to overthrow the monarchy. Bahraini authorities refuse to hear popular and international demands for his release and take into account his deteriorating health situation.

The Bahraini government also takes punitive measures for Internet users by imposing very high levels of censorship and blocking many websites. It also interrogates and intimidates media users to remove content and often arrests them for addressing topics related to the country's political and living conditions.

With regard to freedom of expression, and enabling media professionals, journalists and other media to exercise their functions and roles, the Authority has undertaken numerous actions aimed at reducing the space for expression in both traditional and social media. Here, Bahraini authorities have consistently harassed, arrested and threatened journalists, photographers and activists on social media for their reports exposing practices affecting human rights in Bahrain. Many international media outlets are also restricted and their representatives are not allowed to enter Bahrain by delaying and preventing them from obtaining visas and work permits as journalists.

On the issue of citizenship, the Bahraini Government is withdrawing the nationality of the accused in both criminal and political cases, including Bahraini-born citizens. The Bahraini authorities continued to revoke citizenship from some opposition political and religious figures. The Bahraini Government has also refrained from reviewing the procedures relating to the revocation of nationality as constituting a gross violation of the human rights guaranteed by the Constitution, international humanitarian law, the International Covenants on Human Rights and all international legislation. It is necessary to point out that these actions cause individuals to become stateless, which leads to many problems for them and

their families in terms of not being able to obtain their payments or remove their families from government-subsidized housing if the head of the family loses his nationality. United Nations reports confirm that the number of Bahraini citizens who have lost their nationality has exceeded 900 since 2012, and the number has increased steadily.

On the other hand, foreign workers in Bahrain suffer exploitation because of their limited rights under the sponsorship system. Bahrain continues to impose this system, which makes the worker's lawful stay in the country conditional on his relationship with the sponsor employer. In this context, international rights organizations have sought to prepare a collective case to be brought before the Indian judiciary on behalf of a number of Indian workers in Bahrain seeking compensation for hundreds of Indian citizens who complained that they were not receiving wages and termination bonuses when they were dismissed from their jobs in Bahrain during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from March to October 2020. At that time, The Bahraini Government then imposed on hundreds of workers from India, Nepal and other Asian countries to return to their homeland without receiving their full financial entitlements.

With all the aforementioned violations of human rights in Bahrain, the realization of the right to justice has remained incomplete and lacked transparency. and the cases of torture and other ill-treatment of human beings in Bahrain continue to be reported without any deterrence or accountability.

The International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights calls on the Bahraini authorities to release immediately all political detainees and prisoners of conscience in Bahrain and to initiate prompt fair trial proceedings for all detainees in Bahrain's prisons. In addition, the International Council considers that the Bahraini authorities should review their responsiveness to the requests of United Nations human rights experts to visit Bahrain and closely examine the human rights situation, in a manner that ensures optimal limitation of human rights in Bahrain.

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