

Bahrain: No More Excuses— Time for Radical Change

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Introduction

This report briefly examines the response of the Bahrain Government to the release and recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) published on November 23, 2011, including the continued prosecution of the notorious case of 20 medics. It highlights some emblematic cases of those who continue to be prosecuted or detained by the Bahrain regime, including a group of policemen who refused to join the crackdown against the democracy protestors earlier this year. It also features the cases of teacher Mahdi Abu Deeb and the treatment of Human Rights Defender Abdulhadi Al Khawaja in detention.

It summarizes Human Rights First's findings, and evidence presented by the BICI, showing complicity of the Bahrain Defence Forces (BDF) in the crackdown. A proposed \$53m weapons sale from the U.S. to arm the BDF is currently on hold, pending the U.S. Government's assessment of Bahrain's human rights performance.

Poor Response to Its Own Report

The room hushed when Cherif Bassiouni stepped to the podium in one of the royal palaces in Bahrain to deliver his summary of the long-awaited Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI). It was 3.30 pm on Wednesday November 23. He had led the commission in its work over the previous five months after being appointed by King Hamad bin Al Khalifa of Bahrain to investigate the crackdown and associated events earlier in the year. The commission was paid for by the king.¹

The report was awaited with some anticipation by the Bahrain authorities, international media and other governments, not least the U.S. Government, which had declared that it would wait for the report before deciding how to proceed with a proposed \$53m arms sale to Bahrain. "The [State] Department will review the Commission's findings carefully and assess the

1

The investigation was paid for the by Bahrain government, which had allocated \$US1.3m to its bank account. According to the BICI report, Bassiouni was paid \$US22,500 a month, the other four commissioners \$US1,00 per day for work done in Bahrain.

government of Bahrain's efforts to implement the recommendations and make needed reforms. We will weigh these factors and confer with Congress before proceeding with additional steps related to the recently notified arms sale," it said in a letter dated October 18 to Sen Ron Wyden (D-OR) in response to his concerns—and those of other Senators—about the wisdom of arming the Bahrain regime.

Bassiouni stood in front of the King of Bahrain and largely confirmed what the world's leading international human rights organizations and media outlets had been saying for months:

- thousands of people were illegally arrested,
- many were tortured;
- detainees were subjected to unfair trials;
- several people died in custody;
- dozens had been killed in the streets;
- thousands of workers and students were dismissed for perceived association with the democracy protests;
- there were some attacks on expat workers;
- there had been a series of attacks on Shi'a places of worship.

A series of recommendations followed his hefty, 500-page report which King Hamad promised to implement.

However, in the days since the report's release the Bahrain regime has not significantly altered its behavior. Police continue to attack protestors and funeral mourners. Those imprisoned after being convicted on the basis of tortured confessions have not been released. Those who appear to be detained on the basis of peacefully exercising their freedoms of expression or assembly are still imprisoned.

King Hamad has ordered the establishment of a committee to "follow up and implement" the BICI recommendations. It is expected to report by the end of February and to make suggestions "including the recommendations to make the necessary amendments to the legislation and the application of the recommendations." It includes the Minister for Justice, and human rights activists told HRF some of those on the

commission are “part of the problem,” and so “can’t be part of the solution.”

King Hamad also announced he was removing the head of the National Security Agency (NSA), Sheikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. The NSA was heavily criticized in the BICI report for its use of excessive force. However, it would appear that Sheikh Al Khalifa has been promoted, and made the Secretary-General of the Supreme Defence Council and a National Security Adviser to the King with ministerial rank. On December 7, the Bahrain government announced that the King “forgave” a group of athletes who had criticized him and would drop charges against them, although did not say it would free other athletes already sentenced.

The Bahrain regime has engaged the services of former Miami Police Chief John Timoney and former London Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner John Yates to help with training and reforming of the police. There is no question urgent change is required throughout the Bahrain police force.

Cracking Down on Those Who Wouldn’t

In early November HRF reported the case of Ali Jasim Al Ghanmi, a Bahraini policeman who is being held in solitary confinement and prosecuted for refusing to join the crackdown on democracy protests earlier this year and for joining the protestors. The role of the police and other security forces during the crackdown has been criticized in a series of reports from HRF and other leading national and international human rights organizations, and now by the BICI.

The BICI report found that Public Security Forces (PSF) “units involved in the events of February/March 2011 and subsequent events in many situations violated the principles of necessity and proportionality, which are the generally applicable legal principles in matters relating to the use of force by law enforcement officials. This is evident in both the choice of weapons that were used by these forces during confrontations with civilians and the manner in which these weapons were used.”

Specifically, the commission found “that PSF units used shotguns in many situations when this was not necessary,” that “In many situations, PSF units that used shotguns

during the execution of their duties did not respect the obligation enshrined in Bahraini and international law to use firearms in a manner that was proportionate to the seriousness of the danger presented.”

The BICI report also found “that in the use of shotguns, PSF units did not, at all times, strictly comply with their legal obligation to target the individuals in a manner that would disable or incapacitate the individual. The available evidence, including forensic and ordnance reports, indicates that on a number of occasions PSF personnel fired their weapons without taking due care to ensure that individuals were not fatally injured. Similarly, the Commission has found that PSF units fired rubber bullets in a manner that did not aim to cause minimal injuries to civilians. The Commission has found that PSF units resorted to the disproportionate use of tear gas for the dispersion of protesters. On many occasions, the number of tear gas canisters fired at protesters was disproportionate to the size of the demonstration and the number of participants. In a number of situations, tear gas canisters were fired at private homes, in a manner that was unnecessary and indiscriminate.”

The BICI report also found “that excessive force was used by PSF units at the checkpoints that were set up on various roads in many areas of Bahrain. PSF personnel beat, kicked and physically harassed individuals who were suspected of having participated in or sympathized with the protests that occurred in Bahrain,” and concluded that “PSF units, force and firearms were used in an excessive manner that was, on many occasions, unnecessary, disproportionate, and indiscriminate.”

Despite the evidence showing that the police in Bahrain acted unlawfully, the Bahrain authorities continue to prosecute its policemen who refused to join the crackdown. In late November, HRF met a number of policemen in Bahrain who refused to join the government crackdown and who were detained and sentenced to prison, typically for terms of three years for being absent from work.

The policemen HRF spoke to estimate that 160 of them had been tried for refusing to join in the crackdown, and that 74 of those were still in detention. Those HRF met had been sentenced but released pending appeal dates

which have yet to be set. The policemen still in detention are believed to be largely together at the Dry Dock Prison.

They told consistent and credible stories of being blindfolded, handcuffed and tortured in detention. Some say they were also leg cuffed. Their stories are similar and are consistent with the pattern of wider detainee abuses recorded by HRF and many other human rights organizations. They say they had confessions tortured out of them and were not given adequate access to lawyers. They said they had been arrested during March or April after they refused to join the government crackdown.

Several told HRF how they had been made to stand for long periods, and were told that if they did not sign a confession their female relatives would be sexually assaulted.

One told HRF how he had witnessed police colleagues beating students at the University of Bahrain. “I saw them stealing laptops and phones from the students too. After that I decided not to go to work anymore—I’d sworn to protect people when I started the job.” He told HRF he was forced to sign a confession about joining the democracy protests.

He, like others, reports being sentenced to three years in prison for being absent for work. Hassan Hameed Hassan is 26. He says he served in the Bahrain police force for five years but decided to leave when he saw attacks on protestors in March. He was phoned by his boss when he didn’t turn up for work and told if he didn’t turn himself in they would come and take his female relatives—his wife, his sister, and mother. He says on April 26 they attacked his house and took him for interrogation where he was beaten. “I was forced to stand for two days and to confess I’d been at the Pearl Roundabout. They said if I didn’t confess they would bring my wife and rape her.”

He says other detainees were also beaten. “One guy was beaten black and blue and they shoved his shoes in his mouth. Some have been so badly tortured other detainees have to care for them.”

Ahmed Mansoor Mohammed told HRF his brother Abdulmuneim Mansoor Mohammed is still in detention after failing to go to work in mid-March. He says his brother was forced to stand continually for three days, was

beaten severely on his back and that his interrogators threatened to rape his sister. He has also been sentenced to three years in prison.

Hussain Ali Ahmad is 40, and has been in the Bahrain police for 20 years. He played the French horn and the bugle in the police band and so was part of the police protocol detail. He says he was arrested after some conversations at work with colleagues when he said he was sympathetic to the protestors. He says he was sentenced to four years in prison, and is waiting an appeal date.

The Bahrain regime's failure to drop the charges against these policemen and others is indicative of its poor initial response to the BICI report. On December 4 seven employees of the Bahrain Defence Forces (BDF) were each sentenced to a year in prison by the military court for their opposition to the crackdown. These included the bodybuilder, Tareq al-Fursani, a gold medalist in several Asian championships, Ali Said, a goalkeeper in the national soccer team, and Mohammed Hassan al-Dirazi, a member of the national basketball team.

Although the government said on December 8 it would take steps to implement the recommendation in paragraph 1722g of the report that “There should be audiovisual recording of all official interviews with detained persons,” a move which could be completed easily and quickly to prevent or at least reduce torture, it has yet to do so.

Charges Against Medics Still Pending

Five days after the report was released, 20 medical professionals whose case had caused international furor were back in court for an appeal. Despite having been arrested illegally, detained for months without access to lawyers, forced to confess under torture and sentenced to between five and 15 years in a military court, the charges against them have not been dropped. While HRF and other leading international human rights organizations have detailed the injustice of their treatment and called for charges against them to be dropped, the regime presses on with the flawed prosecution. It appears as though the medics have been targeted primarily for treating injured protestors and for informing international media about the number of casualties and the extent of their injuries.



Rula Al Saffar was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the military court. Head of the Bahrain Nurses Association, she is one of the medics still being prosecuted by the government. She spent 18 years in the US, trained and studied at Baylor University Medical Center in Texas and at Widener University in Pennsylvania.

Among the most serious allegations made against the medics are that some of them supplied weapons to the protestors. The BICI report stated: "The Commission finds the allegations that medical personnel assisted the demonstrators in the form of supplying them with weapons to be unfounded."

But the issue of weapons has not gone away. When the medics returned to court on

November 28, five days after the release of the BICI report apparently exonerating them of involvement in supplying weapons, the government produced "new evidence." Too much incredulity and even hilarity the government presented in court two boxes of weapons it now claims were the medics' hidden arms cache. The boxes contained swords, hammers, chains, and machine guns.

One of the defendants, Dr. Fatima Haj, told HRF the court was "like a circus."

Another defendant, Dr. Zahra Al Sammak, trained in Ireland and is Consultant Anesthetist at the Salmaniya Medical Complex. She was sentenced to five years by the military court. She described to HRF what happened at the November 28 appeal hearing.

"While standing in front of the judge in court, I saw three men bringing in a few boxes. I was wondering what was in them—a new TV or a new cabinet or some sort of new furniture for the room? When the prosecution said to the judge all of a sudden 'Now we will show you the weapons we found,' the three men started opening the boxes. We burst out laughing when they started taking out the things like the hammers, chains, bottles of pesticide, two



Dr. Fatima Haj

Kalashnikov [automatic rifles] which was the first time for me to see [one] in reality. It looked like a toy to me. Yes, these men were taking these things out of the box which they actually opened using the same old fruit knife found in one of the boxes and they were handing these things to the three judges. Each one held a

piece to look at, sometimes laughing because he doesn't know what it was and for what it was used, and what was it called.

All those who were in court were laughing because they didn't believe what they were seeing, and the way that so many people handed these pieces of what they consider evidence. Dr. Basim [Dhaif] was allowed to talk so he said 'I was forced to confess that they found 20 Kalashnikovs

but now there are only two?' Dr. Ali Ekri was also allowed to talk—he said the only evidence regarding weapons was in our confessions under torture which the prosecution claimed they withdrew in the last session, so why they are bringing this evidence now?"



Dr. Taha Al Durazi carrying a sign that says Neurosurgeon, Sacked for treating the injured.

Another of the defendants, Dr. Nada Dhaif, told HRF "It was so funny... Dr. Mahmood Asghar apparently was hungry so he thought

they were lunch boxes to be distributed as the hearing appeared to be long. I said to Dr.Ghassan Dhaif and Dr.Zahra Al Sammak: 'Wow it looks like huge bouquets of flowers and roses ...they want to look good in front of the media and they will give us, the reporters, and NGOs, flowers.' Then they started to bring all sort of weapons. I swear everybody was laughing like crazy ... old Kalashnikovs that were rusted, a huge number of bullets, screwdrivers, small knives used in the kitchen which I call fruit knives, hammers, chains, swords, sickles that you'd use in the garden. The guards were holding and touching them—even the judges held them without any concern about fingerprints.”

Apart from those being prosecuted, other medics have been fired from their jobs for their association with the protestors.

Despite the BICI findings, despite the criticism from international human rights organizations and an array of foreign governments about the treatment and trial of the medics, the case against them still hasn't been dropped and is adjourned until January 9.



Activists Tortured

The Bahrain regime continues to put people on trial despite the overwhelming evidence—as outlined by the BICI and elsewhere—that its criminal justice process falls far below internationally recognized standards. Those sentenced by the military courts have not had their convictions quashed, and many remain in prison, serving out sentences handed out after an unfair process. These include 14 of the most prominent dissidents who were tortured and sentenced to lengthy prison terms by the military court.

Human rights activist Abdulhadi al Khawaja is still hooded when being taken to and from family visits. He is one of those who should be immediately released.

He detailed to the BICI how he had been arrested and tortured in detention. His story appears as Case no. 8 in the report's appendix.

CASE NO. 8

(Examined by forensic team)

Date of statement: 3 August 2011

Statement: The detainee was arrested on 8 April 2011 while staying with his daughters. Police and masked men in plain clothes came to the house at night. The detainee was thrown on the ground, rolled down stairs, kicked and beaten with sticks. His hands were cuffed behind his back and he was blindfolded. His son-in-law was also arrested. Immediately after the arrest, the detainee received a hard blow to the side of his face, which broke his jaw and

knocked him to the ground. He was taken to the Mol clinic and then the BDF Hospital where he had major jaw surgery for four broken bones in his face.

The detainee spent approximately seven days in BDF hospital. He was blindfolded the whole time and handcuffed to the bed with tight cuffs. When he asked the hospital staff to loosen the cuffs, they refused. Security personnel in the hospital threatened him with sexual abuse and execution. They also made sexual threats against his

wife and daughter. The doctor told the detainee that he needed three weeks of care but he was taken to Al Qurain Prison after only six or seven days.

At Al Qurain Prison, the detainee spent two months in solitary confinement in a small cell measuring approximately 2.5m x 2m. He did not know where he was or what day it was. There was no fresh air. He was hooded whenever he went to the toilet. Eight days after his surgery, regular beatings started at night. Masked guards cursed him and hit him in his head and hands, causing swelling. They forced a stick into his anus. He was also beaten on the soles of his feet (falaka) and on his toes.

Al Khawaja went on several hunger strikes in protest at his treatment.

The detainee was routinely beaten before and after interrogation by men in civilian clothes and masks. He had bruises all over his body and was seen by nurses. A

forensic doctor came with a masked guard to see him after he had been in detention for about three weeks. In the three days prior to the doctor's visit, the detainee was not beaten during interrogations. The doctor documented injuries to his feet and right wrist. On 4 or 5 May, the detainee was forced to apologize to the King. At one point he was taken to another location where he was put in a bed and threatened. A man's penis was put in his face and on his back. His head hit the floor and he passed out and awoke in the car. He was subsequently returned to his cell. A surgeon came to see him and was angry that the surgical wounds were now more swollen.

On 8 May, the detainee went to court and was cursed and sexually harassed in the car on the way there. He was taken to the side of the court for executions. A guard told him, "It is a long time since we executed anyone." The detainee told the judge about the sexual harassment and beatings in prison. As punishment, he was punched and kicked, and left in the sun blindfolded for 45 minutes with his hands raised.

He was sentenced to life in prison, at which point he raised his hand and said, "We will continue this struggle for human rights." In response, he was beaten by the guards. He was handcuffed behind his back, his nose was hit against the wall and he was hit on his face, left wrist and right leg. On 22 June, he was taken to the emergency room at BDF.

The detainee has lost 12 kilograms during his time in detention. He suffers several physical ailments including the following: lower spine pain when sitting; right elbow pain; right lateral ankle pain; left facial pain; numbness and gum pain; and he cannot open his mouth normally. He feels startled whenever he hears the sound of a door. He sleeps only two or three hours per night. The worst experience for him has been hearing other people being tortured and not being able to help; this has caused him to feel ashamed.

Teachers Targeted

Dozens of teachers who were also arrested during Bahrain's crackdown are still being prosecuted. Seven from the Bahrain Teachers Association were in court on November 30 charged with taking part in illegal gatherings,

inciting others to commit crimes, leaving work on purpose and encouraging others to do so and disrupting the implementation of laws. Their case was adjourned until January 12, 2012.

Mahdi Abu Deeb is the former President of the Bahrain Teachers Association. He's 48, has played top-level basketball in Bahrain, and had his pottery exhibited in several countries. To his daughter 20 year-old Maryam he's "easy to talk to, easy to get along with." She says, "he loves doing family stuff, camping trips or sitting in the living room all of us under one cover watching a movie. He watches a lot of movies or boring TV like National Geographic."

When the crackdown against democracy protestors began and prominent figures began to be arrested, he left his house in case the police came for him. His family separated and went to live with relatives. A few days later his wife and daughters returned to the house, and it was raided by the security forces.

"It was about 1.15 in the morning," Maryam told HRF. "I heard some noise outside and at first I thought it was the cats. Then the door crashed in and where were masked



Mahdi Abu Deeb is the former President of the Bahrain Teachers Association



Mr. Abu Deeb's 20 year-old daughter Maryam

men and police everywhere. My mum tried to cover herself with a blanket. There were about 40 riot police and 5-10 men in ski masks. It was chaos—our alarm system went off and the lights went out. I couldn't figure out how to turn off the alarm. My sisters are 13 and 9 and they were very scared, we all were. The police ransacked the house, stole some phones and left about 3.30am. Of course my dad wasn't there."

Her father was finally found and arrested on April 6. "I learned of his arrest on twitter," said Maryam.

"No-one told us officially they'd taken him. They called us a week later to bring his medication."

According to Mahdi, he was beaten when he was arrested, handcuffed, blindfolded and verbally abused. He said he was taken to the CID headquarters in Adliya, beaten and forced to stand for long period of times. He said on the second day of his detention he was taken from his cell to another room where he was hanged from the ceiling beaten with a plastic hose and, despite signing a confession, continued to be tortured.

On April 9, he said he was taken to the Bahrain Defence Forces hospital. Like several others HRF has spoken to, he says he was tortured at the hospital. He was then put into prison cells with some of the high-profile dissidents who were also seized in early April, including prominent human rights activist Abdhulhadi Al Khawaja. He says he was forced to make a videotaped confession and was threatened with rape. His account is consistent with many other reports from detainees who have spoken to HRF.

"Several weeks after he was seized he was allowed to call and to tell us he was okay," said Maryam. "Again, it was through twitter that we heard where he was being detained and that he was going to be on trial." Despite being civilians, he and the former vice-president of the Bahrain Teachers Association, Jalila Al Salman, were tried in the military court. Charges included "inciting others to commit crimes, calling for the hatred and overthrow of the ruling system, holding pamphlets, disseminating fabricated stories and information, leaving work on purpose and encouraging others to do so and taking part at illegal practices."

Their trial was a farce, falling far short of any recognizable international legal standards. "The first time he saw his

lawyer was on the day of the trial," Maryam told HRF. "We went to the trial—it was the first time we'd seen him in months. He'd been in solitary confinement for 64 days. He looked really bad."

Jalila Al Salman was sentenced to three years in prison, and Mahdi Abu Deeb was sentenced to 10 years on September 25. "On the day of the sentencing he wasn't even brought to court," said Maryam. The appeal was set for December 11. Although Jalila Al Salman has been released pending the appeal, Mahdi is still in Jaw Prison. "Jaw is a nightmare. It's the worst place on earth," says Maryam. "There are seven of them in a small cell, locked up for 22 hours a day—they don't get any real news. They treat us really badly when we visit—we sit across a table from him every two weeks for 55 minutes. There's a policeman who stands behind him the whole time and a policewoman who stands behind us, the family. My mum memorizes the news and just recites it to him as he listens. She's brilliant at it."

The Case Against a U.S. Arms Sale to Bahrain

The Role of the Bahraini Defence Forces in the Crackdown

On September 14, 2011, the Obama Administration notified Congress that it intended to sell \$53 million of TOW missiles and Humvees to Bahrain. The White House tried to justify the sale by citing the close friendship between the two countries.

Human rights organizations, along with several members of Congress, have launched a campaign to oppose the sale because of the Bahraini Defence Forces' (BDF) part in human rights violations.

On March 15, 2011, the government of Bahrain issued Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011, a series of laws intended to rein in the peaceful protestors challenging its repressive policies. The decree authorized military units, including the BDF, to clear streets, enforce curfews, secure certain locations, and manage security checkpoints in Manama,

Bahrain. It also gave the BDF legal and judicial powers that it used to arrest more than 100 people, including parliamentarians and doctors who treated victims of violence.

Human Rights First conducted fact-finding missions in Bahrain in May, July, and November 2011. We spoke to many people who had been released from detention and who said that members of the military had tortured them or abused them in other ways.

On October 18, the Administration announced it would delay the sale pending the results of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI). The BICI released its report on November 23. Like HRF and others, it found evidence of serious abuses by the BDF.

The human rights violations include those detailed below. This evidence argues against any arms sales to Bahrain until the violations stop and the perpetrators are held accountable. Moreover, it should compel the United States to publicly condition its relationship with Bahrain on its respect for human rights.

BDF's Scope of Authority

The BICI outlines the BDF's scope of authority and responsibility under the decree:

Agencies of the Government of Bahrain Responsible for the Implementation of Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011.

Four government organs were primarily involved in implementing the various measures stipulated in Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011. These are the **BDF**, the **Ministry of Interior (Mol)**, the **National Security Agency (NSA)** and the **National Guard**. Each of these organs was given responsibility for particular tasks.

The BDF is the principal armed force in Bahrain. It is composed of three main branches: the army, air force and navy. In addition, the BDF Royal Medical Corps provides medical services to military personnel and civilians. The King is the Commander-in-Chief of the BDF and has authority to order the BDF to undertake operations inside and outside Bahrain. According to article 16 of Royal Decree Law No. 32 of 2002, the BDF is mandated to defend Bahrain against foreign aggression, to aid in protecting the legitimate ruling authority and the

supremacy of the Constitution and to assist the Public Security Forces and the National Guard in maintaining security, order, and the rule of law.

Deaths in the Crackdown

During the day [Wednesday March 16 2011], a number of civilian fatalities were reported. Some of these cases were imputable to BDF units, while in other cases police were implicated in the deaths. Due to the lack of security that Bahrain suffered during this period, the circumstances leading to these deaths remains unclear. (BICI, Section 542)

The Commission finds that the death of Ms. Bahiya Alaradi is attributable to the BDF and may have resulted from the use of excessive and unnecessary force. The Military Prosecution again purports to have conducted an effective investigation, which concluded that the death was the unintended consequence of a legitimate use of force. (BICI, Section 870)

The death of Stephen Abraham is attributable to the BDF. The Military Attorney General's investigation found that the caliber and trajectory of the lethal bullet meant that it could not have been fired by the BDF. The investigation concluded that the BDF personnel appeared to have acted in accordance with the law. As has already been stated, the Commission concludes that the Military Prosecution investigations were not effective and consequently they have not complied with international law. (BICI, Section 882)

The death of police officer Jawad Mohamed Ali Kadhem Shamlan is attributable to the BDF. The Military Attorney General's investigation found that the death resulted from the deflection of a bullet fired in legitimate circumstances. The investigation therefore concluded that the BDF personnel acted in accordance with the law. As has already been stated, the Commission concludes that, the Military Prosecution investigations were not effective and consequently that it was not in compliance with international law. (BICI, Section 887)

The death of Mr. Abdulredha Buhamaid may be attributed to the BDF and may have resulted from the use of excessive and unnecessary lethal force. The Military AG purports to have conducted an effective investigation,

which found that the BDF did fire warning shots but that the caliber and trajectory of the lethal bullet meant that it could not have been fired by the BDF. The investigation concluded that the BDF personnel appeared to have acted in accordance with the law. (BICI, Section 934)

The death of Ms. Alaradi is attributable to BDF. However, the available evidence is not sufficient to conclude that the death resulted from an excessive use of force. The Commission has found no evidence to support the family's belief that the deceased was shot by a sniper. (BICI, Section 954)

Bahrain Defence Forces Hospital

- Several detainees said they were beaten by members of the Bahraini military at the Bahrain Defence Forces Hospital. One teenager spent more than two months in detention. Although shot and seriously injured, he said he was blindfolded, handcuffed to the hospital bed, and verbally abused during his time at the BDF Hospital. "Twice they took me to the BDF hospital for treatment, but both times I was handcuffed to the bed and beaten by the soldiers, so I refused to go again," he said. (Human Rights First, July 2011 Report)
- A 24-year-old man with birdshot wounds near his eyes was detained for more than two months. A few days after his release in July 2011, he said, "I saw friends being taken for treatment to the BDF hospital ... but they were tortured when they went there so I wouldn't ask for treatment in case it happened to me." (Human Rights First, July 2011 Report)
- In July 2011, four men refused to go for medical treatment while in detention because of what had happened to other prisoners who had gone to either the Bahrain Defence Forces (BDF) Hospital or the clinic at the Ministry of Interior. (Human Rights First, July 2011 Report)
- A large number of detainees alleged that they were denied access to health care, which was particularly distressing for those with chronic diseases and pre-existing injuries. Detainees stated that they were taken to hospital for treatment and they were beaten and verbally abused during transfer and in the treatment facilities. This pattern was particularly common to

detainees who were treated at BDF Hospital and the MoI Hospital in Al-Qalaa. It seems that the majority of the NSA detainees who required medical attention were sent to BDF Hospital, while MoI detainees in need of medical attention were sent to the MoI Hospital. (BICI Report, Section 1198)

Salmaniya Medical Complex

- In mid-March, after the Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC) was taken over by the military, witnesses say that soldiers patrolling the sixth floor—some of them masked—abused and mistreated patients in their hospital beds. (Human Rights First, May 2011 Report)
- A 37 year-old injured protestor said that while he was a patient at the SMC he had been "slapped and verbally abused" by soldiers while in his hospital bed there. "Then they took my medical files, handcuffed and blindfolded me and took me to the BDF." (Human Rights First, July 2011 Report)
- Dr. Ali Ekri, one of the medics targeted and sentenced by the military court, said, "On March 17, 2011, and after three days of continuous hard work [at SMC treating injured protestors], I was abducted from the operation theater by armed, masked and unidentified military and riot police personnel without any arrest permit. I was dragged bare feet, handcuffed to the back, blindfolded, and in my surgical gown in a very inhumane way in front of my colleges and staff." During his detention he reported, "One day, I was taken alone to the military prosecutor office not for interrogation but simply for torture by a group of high officers." (Testimony from Dr. Ali Ekri on doctorsinchains.org)

Arrests and Detention

- A doctor who treated injured protestors and who was arrested testified that she was first interrogated by the regular police, who then forced her to sign a confession after beating her. She recounts, "The next day they took me to the military police and it was the same thing—interrogation and then I had to sign something else I couldn't read." (Evidence obtained by Human Rights First, October 2011)

- Another of the medical professionals targeted by the Bahraini authorities reported, “The military interrogation was the worst—I was tortured and beaten, verbally and sexually harassed. I saw military guards and officers beating and kicking my fellow doctors—my male colleagues. I saw the soldiers verbally abusing them and beating their heads against the wall when they were blindfolded. This happened at the military court.” (Evidence obtained by Human Rights First, October 2011)

There were several cases of arrest operations that were executed unilaterally by some security agencies, including the NSA and the BDF. For example, the BDF undertook unilateral arrests of individuals, including former members of the Council of Representatives and SMC. (BICI Report, Section 174)

Starting on this day [Thursday, 17 March 2011], the GoB began arresting many of the opposition figures who had led demonstrations during the past weeks. In the early hours of the day, the first group of these political and religious leaders was arrested pursuant to arrest warrants issued either by the BDF Commander-in-Chief or the Military Prosecutor General. (BICI Report, section 552)

These arrests, many of which occurred in the early hours of the morning between 01:00 and 03:00, were mostly executed by teams of masked men at the homes of the arrested individuals. On a number of occasions, armed units from the MoI and the BDF accompanied these teams of security agents to provide perimeter security. In many cases, the arresting units forcefully entered the homes of these individuals, destroyed personal property, including cars, failed either to identify themselves or to inform the arrested individual of the reasons for arrest or to show arrest warrants, and acted in an aggressive and, at times, terrorizing manner towards members of the household, including women and children. (BICI Report, Section 554)

One detainee, a doctor, was arrested by the BDF at SMC on 17 March 2011. The BDF transferred him to persons wearing civilian clothing who were accompanied by police. The detainee alleges that his CPR card, passport, wallet, glasses and keys were confiscated, and he was then placed in solitary confinement in a location near SMC.

He alleges that this is where the beatings began. On 18 March, he was interrogated and beaten in what he believes was a military air base by men in military uniform. He stayed at that location for about 10 days with no access to a lawyer or contact with his family. He was then transferred to an isolation cell in prison, where he alleges that masked military personnel interrogated him regularly for two and a half months and subjected him to physical abuse. During one of the interrogations, they brought in barking dogs. He claims that in another session, an individual began threatening him and insulting his dignity until he signed a confession to crimes he did not commit.

At the end of March, he was taken to the CID where he remained for about two weeks. There he alleges that he was tortured, forced to stand for prolonged periods, deprived of sleep and threatened with sexual assault. He also claims that officials frequently placed their hands on sensitive areas of his body. He recalls that he had four interrogations and was forced to sign documents on each occasion. He alleges that they threatened him with torture until he confessed to the allegation that he had been in contact with the Iranian authorities and called for the overthrow of the Government. He claims that he was repeatedly beaten with a hose during these sessions.

On 13 April, he was taken to Dry Dock Detention Centre where he still was not permitted to contact his family or a lawyer. At one point he was taken with three other doctors to a location underground in the center of Bahrain, where they remained for three days before being taken for medical tests. The detainee and the other doctors were questioned about their ties to Iran and shown photographs of individuals with alleged ties to Iran. Their first court session was on 6 June 2011 and this is where the detainee saw his lawyers and family for the first time. The detainee alleges that he and the other doctors were subjected to physical and verbal abuse on their way to court. The detainee has since seen a psychiatrist because of severe depression and his health has deteriorated. (BICI Report, Section 1186)

Three government agencies, namely the MoI, the NSA and the BDF, were involved in interrogating detainees in relation to the events of February/March 2011. The facilities in which interrogations took place included, but were not limited to, Al Adliya (CID/MoI), Al-Qalaa (NSA)

and the following police stations: Al Asri; Hamad Town (Roundabout 17); Al Wusta; Al Riffa; Al-Qudaibiya; Samaheej; Al Naim; Nabih Saleh; Al-Bodayia; and Sitra. As of November 2011, most detainees were held in either Al Qurain Prison (BDF), Dry Dock Detention Centre (MoI), Juw Prison (MoI) or Isa Town Detention Centre for women (MoI).

Many detainees reported mistreatment at the hands of state agents at these facilities. Detainees at Al Qurain Prison (BDF) reported that their mistreatment ceased and conditions improved dramatically after 10 June 2011, but detainees at other facilities continued to report incidents of mistreatment after that time.

A large number of detainees among the 179 held by the NSA reported instances of mistreatment, including torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, at the hands of that agency. Among these complainants are the 14 political leaders who were subsequently transferred to the custody of the BDF (at Al Qurain Prison) between 20 March and 13 April 2011. The BDF reported that upon their arrival, these detainees were examined by a medical doctor who noted that some of them had marks of physical abuse. Some of these detainees, however, alleged that they continued to suffer mistreatment at Al Qurain Prison until 10 June.

The most common techniques used on detainees included the following: blindfolding; handcuffing; enforced standing for prolonged periods; beating; punching; hitting the detainee with rubber hoses (including on the soles of the detainee's feet), cables, whips, metal, wooden planks or other objects; electrocution; sleep-deprivation; exposure to extreme temperatures; verbal abuse; threats of rape to the detainee. (BICI Report, Sections 1231-1234)

Between 21 March and 15 April 2011, security forces systematically raided houses in order to arrest individuals, and in so doing terrified the occupants. These arrests were performed during the night and in pre-dawn raids by hooded persons, who intentionally broke down doors, forcibly entered and sometimes ransacked the houses. This practice was often accompanied by sectarian insults and verbal abuse. Women and children and other family members frequently witnessed these events. In many of the reported cases, the women were asked to stand in their sleeping clothes, thus humiliating the women and

other relatives present, and terrifying the children. The arrested persons were taken blindfolded to places of detention that at the time were unknown to the arrested persons. The pattern of these arrests indicated the existence of an operational plan which involved personnel from three government agencies, the MoI, the NSA and the BDF. (BICI Report, Section 1704)

Demolition of Religious Structures

Witnesses asserted that the following agencies were responsible for demolition: Nine mosques were reportedly demolished by General Security with the involvement of the BDF who secured the perimeter. These were Masjid Al Imam Al Hasan, Masjid Salman Al Faresi, Masjid Al Imam Al Baqer, Masjid Al Mo'men, Masjid Al Sheikh Youssef, Masjid Amir Mohamed Mohamed Barbagi, Masjid Al Imam Al Hasan Al Askari, Masjid Al Sadeq, and Masjid Al Sheikh Al A'abed. (BICI Report, Section 1317)

Recommendations

To the U.S. Government

- The proposed arms sale and future arms sales to Bahrain should not proceed to the BDF until the abuses end, proper investigations into these abuses have taken place and those responsible held accountable. The U.S. Government should publicly condemn the abuses by the BDF and call for accountability, no matter how high up the chain of command;
- The U.S. Government should publicly state that its current and future relationship with the BDF is dependent on the BDF respecting international human rights standards and holding violators accountable.

To the Government of Bahrain

- Unconditionally release political prisoners and end torture, arbitrary detention, and incommunicado detention;

- Protect Shi'a places of worship and religious buildings, rebuild destroyed mosques, and end systematic discrimination on the basis of religion in political representation, government recruitment, employment, and naturalization policies;
- Reinstate all public and government-invested enterprises' employees who were dismissed from their workplace for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, political opinion, and assembly;
- Allow and fully cooperate with independent human rights organizations and observers, including U.N. bodies such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to monitor conditions and document human rights abuses;
- Investigate and hold accountable all individuals who authorized, condoned, or committed human rights abuses, including the use of violence or torture against peaceful protesters and detainees;
- Drop charges against all those who are being prosecuted under politically-motivated charges;
- Allow access by local and international journalists and human rights researchers to protest sites, hospitals and other public institutions; and
- Implement all of the rest of the BICI recommendations, including those such as 1722g which can be done immediately ("There should be audiovisual recording of all official interviews with detained persons").



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