

Universal Periodic Review
4th Cycle

Bahrain - Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Joint Submission

Rights Realization Centre
Salam for Democracy and Human Rights

Human Rights Council - 41st Session



Co-submitting organisations:

1. **SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights** (SALAM DHR) is an independent non-governmental organisation that promotes adherence to international human rights standards and the principles of democracy, including through partnerships. Registered in several European states, it is not able to work in Bahrain, where it nonetheless has members.

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2. The **Rights Realization Centre** (RRC) is a UK-registered charity that promotes and protects international human rights standards through partnerships with other NGOs but also by way of engagement with governments and corporations.

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Overview, Previous review and international legal obligations

Note: this text also uses hyperlinks to provide quick and easy access to more substantive, relevant material

1. This joint submission addresses aspects of economic and social rights in Bahrain and focuses on:
 - (1) *Working conditions, especially in respect to migrant workers and the overall working context, including access to healthcare;*
 - (2) *Non-discrimination, namely towards religious communities in Bahrain;*
 - (3) *Business and human rights*
2. The methodology for this text is based on the research conducted and issued by SALAM DHR and RRC, itself based on interviews, legal analysis and open source research.
3. Bahrain is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) as well as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in relation to which it has lodged specific reservations. In this reporting cycle, to the best of our knowledge, the GoB has not allowed human rights experts from the United Nations (UN) thematic mechanisms to visit the country; international human rights organisations have not been permitted to visit the country or accorded any unfettered access while SALAM DHR as well as other Bahrain-focused NGOs based outside the country are not permitted to operate in Bahrain.
4. The GoB's state human rights bodies have failed to adequately address ESCR in their current reports
5. In the previous UPR cycle, economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) were not discussed in those terms, though aspects of the four areas examined by this text were addressed and these are assessed in the relevant subsection, below.

(1) Working conditions

6. In the 3rd Cycle, the GoB accepted ('supported'): 114.172, on improving measures to strengthen the rights of foreign migrant workers, including putting in place the necessary domestic legislation and access to health care and legal aid (Sri Lanka); 114.154, on continuing efforts to ensure the safety, security and dignity of foreign migrant workers, including women domestic workers, through requisite institutional and legislative measures (Nepal) and 114.171, on strengthening legal protection for migrant workers, including domestic workers, against discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality (Sierra Leone). As set out below, the GoB has not implemented these commitments.
7. Domestic workers, not examined closely in this text, are frequently not granted their legally required 30 days of annual leave a year and law does not address the matter of working hours per day, overtime, or weekend leave. Domestic workers are also prevented from making an appeal against an employer. and domestic servants are often subject to various forms of abuse¹.

¹ [World Labor Day in Bahrain: How does it go?! – SALAM DHR \(salam-dhr.org\)](#), World labour day in Bahrain: How does it go!?, 2018

8. Asia Perri's report for SALAM DHR, Covid-19 and the socio-legal status of migrant workers in Bahrain notes that Bahrain's workforce is overwhelmingly non-Bahraini: while the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that at least 63% of Bahrain's workforce is made up of overseas workers coming from nearby states² the Bahrain Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) estimated, in 2021, that 77.5% of the entire labour force comprises migrant workers³. In the private sector alone, this rises to 79.4% of the workforce.⁴ The majority of foreign nationals are of South Asian origin, especially Indian nationals who make up 47.4% of the foreign workers: Asian nationals who migrated to Bahrain to contribute to the labour force of the country historically form a large cohort of the migrant worker community.⁵
9. The legal status of migrant workers and the terms and conditions under which they work is one in which the host government can curtail or extend, depending upon need. This system is called the Kafala (the Sponsorship System).⁶ Under it, the GoB grants work visas to an employer or sponsor (Kafeel) who issue it to migrant workers. This framework, with limits upon workers' rights, is not possible with domestic labour.⁷ Crudely, within margins that exceed international standards, migrant workers can be exploited and disposed of.
10. Kafala, as it operates even today - both before and after Covid - has repeatedly been shown by independent assessors, including UN and INGO bodies to be flawed, including abusive and unfair. It is not consistent with international best practice in the field of migration, for example, for a migrant to work for many decades in a given location and not be accorded anything more than the temporary or restricted legal status under which they work. This legal framework carries many negative, including corollary effects which directly impact on migrant workers. These can include effective deprivation of freedom, modern forms of slavery and physical abuse to mental health issues. For example, fear over regular payment of salary; personal safety or of a summary or arbitrary deportation remains ever-present in the minds of many workers. At one end, for example, a very small number of educated people tend to get high-earning jobs, while a significantly larger number of lower-skilled migrants are forced to take *"vulnerable job categories and are prone to marginalization."*⁸
11. Bahrain's private sector does not appear to exercise a minimum wage and it is therefore difficult for many lower-skilled migrant workers to survive and remit the expected amount of money to their families. According to the ILO, "minimum wages should afford adequate protection to all workers in an employment relationship, including women, youth and migrant workers, regardless of their contractual arrangements"⁹, but this is not the case in Bahrain, where migrant workers often take on considerable debt while paying off the fees that their sponsors impose.

² "Bahrain", International Organization for Migration <https://www.iom.int/countries/bahrain>

³ See the table issued by the LMRA at: http://blmi.lmra.bh/2021/03/data/lmr/Table_A.pdf

⁴ See the LMRA data at: http://blmi.lmra.bh/2018/03/mi_dashboard.xml but also Françoise De Bel-Air, Demography, Migration, and the Labour Market in Bahrain (s.l.: Gulf Labour Markets and Migration, 2019), 3

⁵ Françoise De Bel-Air, Demography, Migration, and the Labour Market in Bahrain (s.l.: Gulf Labour Markets and Migration, 2019), 7

⁶ "Reform of the Kafala (Sponsorship) System", International Labour Organization <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/132/PB2.pdf>

⁷ Center for International and Regional Studies, Migrant Labour in the Gulf (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2011), 1.

⁸ Huda Alsahi, COVID-19 and the Intensification of the GCC Workforce Nationalization Policies (Bawader: Arab Reform Initiative, 2020), 4

⁹ "Who Should Be Getting Minimum Wages?", International Labour Organization <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/wages/minimum-wages/beneficiaries/lang--en/index.htm>

12. Under the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA)'s Grievances' Unit, workers can make complaints. Yet, its limited working hours pose a challenge to those wishing to make a complaint and workers may also fear reprisals if they make complaints, including threats of deportation or being rendered irregular in terms of legal status. They may be, accordingly, reluctant to report violations and seek a resolution from a position of relative vulnerability. The requirement for written material is likewise a hurdle. The website of the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) Community in Bahrain reminds workers that they must have: (1) letter explaining complaint/grievance; (2) Copy of employee ID card; (3) Copy of passport with residence visa; (4) Copy of documents supporting complaint/grievance, such as attendance sheets, salary statements, resignation letter, and other files that prove or support your complaint/grievance.¹⁰
13. Challenging financial conditions can have a detrimental impact upon the mental health of the migrant workers. Immigrant workers in Bahrain all too often struggle with mental health and many commit suicide. According to Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, there was an increase in suicide rates among migrant workers due to "*physical abuse, forced labour, debt bondage, poor living conditions, and isolation*".¹¹ In 2013 it was estimated that the suicide rate in Bahrain was 12.6/100,000 for non-Bahrainis under 35 years for financial problems.¹² Living and working in isolated and abusive conditions can result in the development of mental illnesses. According to Migrant-Rights.Org, a non-governmental organisation focusing on migrant workers' rights, due to language barriers migrant workers are all too often unable to adequately articulate their symptoms, which prevents accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment.¹³ The effective, or *in practice* inability of migrants to access healthcare violates Article 28 of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers which Bahrain signed in 1990.
14. The Wage Protection System (WPS) should now protect workers from the delay or the non-payment of salary by employers. After some years' delay, in January 2022, the Labour Market Regulation Authority (LMRA) and the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) embarked upon the final phase of its enactment.¹⁴ In this regard, Bahrain now uses "*an electronic salary transfer system that allows institutions to pay workers' wages via banks, bureaux de change, and financial institutions approved and authorized to provide the service*".¹⁵ While the WPS should allow for transparency in payments, non or late payment of wages remain possible.
15. Regarding access to healthcare, it is not mandatory for employers to provide health insurance for their employees¹⁶ and the ramifications of this are set out below. There are a few factors that pose challenges to access to health care by migrant workers:

¹⁰ Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) Community in Bahrain - How to File a Complaint as a Worker in Bahrain, undated. See: <https://bahrainofw.com/file-complaint-worker/>

¹¹ "Rise in Suicides Among Migrant Laborers in Bahrain Gives Testament to Abysmal Conditions and Treatment Workers Endure", Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/07/rise-in-suicides-among-migrant-laborers-in-bahrain-gives-testament-to-abysmal-conditions-and-treatment-workers-endure/>

¹² Suhail Akhtar Abdul Latif Sarwani, Kunhaleema B Abdulla, Mohammed Ali Jafar Mandeel, "Prevalence of Stress, Anxiety and Depression among Expatriate Workers", Bahrain Medical Bulletin, 35, n.3 (2013), 2

¹³ "The Precarious Health Situation of Migrant Workers in the Gulf", Migrant-Rights.org <https://www.migrant-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Assessment-Editorial.pdf>

¹⁴ Migrant-Rights.Org - Bahrain begins the final phase of its "Wage Protection System" / Scheme falls short of adequately protecting migrant workers from wage theft, 17 January 2022. See: <https://www.migrant-rights.org/2022/01/bahrain-begins-the-final-phase-of-its-wage-protection-system/>

¹⁵ "Wages Protection System (UAE)", International Labour Organization https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/migmmain.showPractice?p_lang=en&p_practice_id=186

¹⁶ Ibid

- Status - those rendered irregular by their employers have limited access on the basis of legal status;
 - Location - those working in rural areas rather than urban areas may face further challenges;
 - Cost - In the absence of medical insurance, medical care - like everywhere - is costly and low paid workers may not be able to afford it. Analogously, pre-pandemic in any case, migrant workers who lacked funds could have been admitted into a medical facility for a fee of \$18.60 for every visit¹⁷, though some may have found even this prohibitive. During the pandemic, however, the government waived this fee.¹⁸
 - Overwork - those working in physically demanding roles, working long hours, may not have the wherewithal to file a complaint (see below).
16. The environment that some workers face each day can also be significantly dangerous with inadequate safeguards for protection: those in the '3D industries' ("dirty, dangerous and degrading"), such as maintenance, construction, agriculture, extraction, petroleum and others routinely faced highly dangerous work environments.¹⁹ Some of these workers faced extreme and near-constant heat at work, especially during the summer. While working around noon is currently banned, many workers are still required to work more than 12 hours a day in very high temperatures.²⁰ Many migrant workers develop heat-related illnesses such as sunburn and heat stroke.²¹ Moreover, the materials that they work with – like solvents, cleaning agents and pesticides – can be highly damaging to the skin and other organs, even causing cancer while working with oil because of benzene.²² Specifically, workers faced musculoskeletal implications.²³
 17. These factors, coupled with a risk of metal poisoning in some sectors²⁴, points to the dangerous, harmful and exhausting environment faced by 3D industry workers without adequate protection by the GoB.
 18. Such factors create mental and psychological strain associated with work in such arduous conditions for extended periods of time. Migrant workers who attempt to take their own life are, in general, criminalized and deported, rather than cared for. As there is only one mental health hospital in the country – situated in the capital - anecdotal evidence suggests that migrant workers are inadequately served in this regard²⁵. Mental health concerns can be overlooked or missed, too, on account of language barriers which can serve as an obstacle to getting the appropriate treatments.
 19. General living conditions and, say, hygiene, evidence suggests that 3D industry workers' living quarters are of poor quality, where hygiene can be restricted through poor water supply or a

¹⁷ "Comparison of Health Care Coverage for Migrant Workers in the GCC". Migrant-Rights.org
<https://www.migrant-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Comparison-Of-Health-Care-Coverage-For-Migrant-Workers-In-The-GCC-.pdf>

¹⁸ Bahrain News Agency - Health Ministry suspends BD7 fee for non-Bahrainis, 9 April 2020. See:
<https://www.bna.bh/en/HealthMinistrysuspendsBD7feefornonBahrainis.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgisL2fwlzON1%2BDvbi%2BsPq1k1eN15zFYF6aT8%3D>

¹⁹ "The Precarious Health Situation of Migrant Workers in the Gulf", Migrant-Rights.org
<https://www.migrant-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Assessment-Editorial.pdf>

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ M.K. Al-Haddad, Adel Al Offi, "Psychiatric services in Bahrain: past, present and future", *Int Psychiatry*, 6, n.1 (2009)

lack of washing facilities while the quality of their food, too, may be poor.²⁶ As 3D industry workers - amongst others - work long hours in onerous conditions, they require the respite of decent quality food and adequate rest: musculoskeletal illnesses referred to above can be caused by exhaustion and malnutrition exacerbated by arduous working conditions. More than 600 informal labour camps have been deemed "*unfit for living*"²⁷. In April 2020 workers were relocated to public facilities from their accommodation, but only 9,000 of them were able to relocate. The remainder still inhabit (at writing) overcrowded accommodation.²⁸ While it can be said that the Ministry of Labour has made it obligatory for employers to sterilise worksites and camps, to provide sufficient toilet facilities and to reduce the number of workers²⁹, this has had little effect on the number of migrant workers with the virus, which is growing at an exponential rate. This only extends to formal labour camps anyway, with informal labour camps being untouched by this ruling, meaning that many migrant workers are still being forced into deplorable conditions.

20. This framework creates an overarching discrimination: the structure of Kafala and low level of resources allotted to the care of migrant workers accounts for poor or - over the long term, declining - health amongst migrant workers. According to the UN Human Rights Council "*treatment interruptions, lack of follow-up and treatment failures are documented at higher rates among migrants than the stationary population*"³⁰. Thus, even when migrant workers have access to health care, Bahraini nationals are favoured over migrants because they are unable to attend the necessary follow-up appointments and treatments, as they continue to work for long periods in deplorable conditions. As a result, migrant workers are often seen as disposable and dehumanised by and in comparison to the native Bahraini population.
21. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated this scenario: in February 2020 the government decided to close non-essential businesses instead of going directly into an overall lockdown yet a disproportionately high number of cases of Covid-19 among migrant workers in comparison to Bahraini nationals suggest that they continued to live in overcrowded accommodation.
22. The government initially took steps to help workers by waiving health, electricity and water bills for three months yet landlords started taking legal action against tenants after the Bahraini government decided to renew this support, again for three months, but for nationals only. Non-nationals were unable to afford the bills.³¹
23. Also, despite the government's stimulus package, some workers were not paid for months by their employers. The Bahraini Labour Law states, in Article n.43, that in case of emergency, employers are allowed to reduce workers' wages by 50%: "*[...] if the worker showed up at the workplace and was prevented from executing his work for reasons of force majeure beyond the*

²⁶ "The Precarious Health Situation of Migrant Workers in the Gulf", Migrant-Rights.org <https://www.migrant-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Assessment-Editorial.pdf>

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ "Migrants in Bahrain Face an Eviction Crisis Amid Covid-19 Pandemic", Migrant-Rights.org <https://www.migrant-rights.org/2020/09/migrants-in-bahrain-face-an-eviction-crisis-amid-covid-19-pandemic/>

²⁹ "Food Woes for Quarantined Migrants in Bahrain", Migrant-Rights-org <https://www.migrant-rights.org/2020/04/food-woes-for-quarantined-migrants-in-bahrain/>

³⁰ United Nations Human Rights Council, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health", (2013), 14.

³¹ Bahrain Migrant Workers Face Homelessness Amid Covid-19 Without Rent and Accommodation Protections, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre <https://www.business-humanrights.org/pt/latest-news/bahrain-migrant-workers-face-homelessness-amid-covid-19-without-rent-accommodation-protections/>

employer's control, the worker shall be entitled to half his wage".³² This can be seen as an advantage to the employers at the expense of migrant workers during the pandemic. While their employers would be exempt from municipal fees and industrial land rental fees for three months³³, the immigrant workers have been treated as though there is no aid to employers at all: employers came to use the pandemic as an excuse to exploit migrant workers for maximum labour with minimum expense, with the state prioritising and protecting businesses and citizens over the migrant population, seeing them rather as a chattel or a resource to be used rather than the humans that they are, with the human rights that they are entitled to.

24. During the pandemic, the GoB took inadequate steps to address rising levels of psychological suffering amongst migrant workers: even before the pandemic, the rising trend of migrant workers being unpaid had led to rising suicide (see above). According to Al Ansari, Hamadeh, Ali and El Offi, the overwhelming majority of these suicide victims were under 35 years of age with *"financial domestic problems being the most common reason reported"*³⁴.
25. These conditions created forms of modern slavery: during the pandemic, workers at the construction company Fundament SPC continued to work despite eight months of unpaid salary³⁵. For those who resigned, they were stranded in their camp in Nuweidrat. Due to the Kefala system, they were now without visas, which only complicated matters. In this way, migrant workers are forced into unpaid work while being stranded within a country without a visa and no mobility. In February 2021, for example, a company stopped paying employees and in response to complaints due to lack of pay, the company stopped providing food and accommodation.³⁶ In February 2021, parliament put forward a proposal to take punitive measures against migrant workers that left without employers' permission, requiring that they pay their sponsors back and pay to get back to their home countries³⁷. Due to the extremely impoverished conditions of migrant workers, it is unlikely that any would be able to afford to do this, effectively trapping them in a state of modern slavery.
26. As a result of overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions and little food provided, the pandemic became, circa the end of 2021, endemic to the migrant population, where migrant workers faced much higher rates of infection and cases in the first months and waves of the pandemic – 90 percent of all cases being registered amongst migrant workers – than Bahraini nationals.³⁸
27. The GoB has stated that it worked to improve the principle of equality in a comprehensive manner³⁹. This is, at best, inaccurate: support provided by the GoB to migrant workers has been either insubstantial or has never reached migrant workers themselves and supposed legislative measures recognising migrant workers' human rights such as the right to health was

³² Law No. 36 of 2012: The Promulgation of the Labour Law in the Private Sector, Labour Market Regulatory Authority <https://lmra.bh/portal/files/cms/shared/file/labour%20law%202012.pdf>

³³ The Kingdom of Bahrain and Covid-19: Bahrain's Reaction to the Global Pandemic, Lexology <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=d0314b97-e475-49f4-8af7-b7422c4561c0>

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Migrant-Rights.Org, Prestigious Construction Company in Bahrain Leaves Workers in Despair. See: <https://www.migrant-rights.org/2020/06/prestigious-construction-company-in-bahrain-leaves-workers-in-despair/>

³⁶ Open Democracy, How Migrants in the Gulf Are Fighting Discrimination During the Pandemic, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/openindia/how-migrants-gulf-are-fighting-discrimination-during-pandemic/>

³⁷ Huda Alsahi, COVID-19 and the Intensification of the GCC Workforce Nationalization Policies (Bawader: Arab Reform Initiative, 2020)

³⁸ Arab News, Major companies in Bahrain respond to government's clean-up call in labour camps, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1662661/middle-east>

³⁹ Bahraini Government's Response to Covid-19, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/Bahrain%20100-363-2020%20Updated%20version.pdf>

late or did not reach scores of workers in any case.⁴⁰ The conduct of the GoB indicates that it 'othered' migrant workers - to the point that they are not even recognised to have human rights.

(2) Non-discrimination

28. In the 3rd Cycle, the GoB supported recommendation 114.63, in relation to combating "intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization, as well as discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief, in line with Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 (Brazil)"
29. Evidence published by SALAM DHR shows that, despite non-discriminatory legislation, discriminatory employment and representational problems remains: the preponderant Shi'a community appears grossly underrepresented in governmental, administrative and police/army jobs. While Shi'a groups are technically free to carry out religious observances, Shi'a clerics and community leaders often face harassment, interrogation, prosecution, and imprisonment.⁴¹ Additionally, Shi'as have long faced difficulties in gaining employment, political representation, promotion within the military, and construction of mosques.⁴²
30. Apparently discriminatory practices in the administration of justice are seen in the case of Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Ahmed Qassim: the authorities arrested him for 'possession and misappropriation of funds' and [alleged that he] 'gathered funds for general purposes without the correct license'. This occurred despite all the correct procedures being followed by Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Ahmed Qassim and there being no grounds for criminal suspicion.⁴³ Given that the payment of Khums is a religious obligation⁴⁴ this represents an act of religious discrimination as well as a travesty of justice.
31. The GoB has restricted the right of the Shi'a community to exercise peaceful cultural expression, too: in 2020, the GoB cited the pandemic to disproportionately restrict the Shi'a community's right of assembly for the purposes of commemorating the Ashoura (Ashura) religious occasion, including in prison. These violations included:
 - Threatening organisers with long prison sentences and heavy fines, even though organisers would have implemented precautionary, safety measures. Confusingly, gyms, swimming pools, malls and others were allowed to remain open in accordance with the then health measures in place.
 - Limiting collective commemoration to 20 minutes.
 - Prohibiting broadcast of commemorations via loudspeaker.
 - Summoning organisers and those working to stage commemorations and forced them to remove Ashoura banners situated on their personal, private properties.
 - Coercing managers of many Shi'a mosques to sign a pledge to suspend Ashoura ceremonies and related activities.
 - Forcibly closing places of worship and community gathering.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ <https://fot.humanists.international/countries/asia-western-asia/bahrain/>

⁴² <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/Bahrain.pdf>

⁴³ [محكمة فريضة الخمس - البحرين-English.pdf \(salam-dhr.org\)](#), The case of Khums, SALAM DHR

⁴⁴ [Khums - The World Federation of KSIMC \(world-federation.org\)](#)

⁴⁵ Locations forcibly closed and events forcibly suspended included the funeral of the Taf martyrs in the Naim area; the Sayyida Khadija Mosque in Hamad Town; al-Zahra Mosque in Hamad Town Circle 40; Zahraa Mosque in Hamad Town Circle 10 after (locks changed by the Ministry of Interior) and the Imam al-Hassan Mosque and centre in the Sadad region.

- Arbitrarily detaining those who took part in or oversaw Ashoura commemorations. This included Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Ansari, Abdulnabi Al-Samak, and Nasser Ali Nasser.
 - Additionally on 6th October 2020, the GoB detained two orators, Ahmed al-Majed and Habib al-Mahdi, for taking part in mourning ceremonies.⁴⁶
32. In respect to Ashoura 2020, SALAM DHR, recorded a total of 42 instances on discriminatory acts aimed at restriction the right to enjoy cultural life including:
- 2 instances of sabotaging Ashura appearances.
 - 12 instances of Ashura banners being confiscated.
 - 12 instances of provocative depictions of participants in mourning councils and processions.
 - 8 instances of police harassment, which included provocative speech made by members of the security services in front of Shi'a funerals, police monitoring of ceremonies and participants, and the arrest of participants who failed show their identification papers.
 - 5 instances of restricting standards for holding funeral ceremonies, including preventing processions.
33. It was no better in 2021.⁴⁷ Around the advent of Ashoura when the GoB: carried out four arbitrary arrests during Ashura. They were the head of the Funeral Procession of Imam Ali, Fadhel Hammad from the al-Deir area, and two men, Ali Mansoor al-Mallah and Muhammad Mahdi Daif from the Karzakan district. The men did not respond to summons requests, so members of the security forces attacked a funeral procession in the al-Sayyida Khadija district in Salmabad district where GoB agents arrested the two men, before releasing them on a bail of BD 100 dinars (\$265) each. While the number of summons issued during Ashoura 2021 reached 18, SALAM DHR recorded another 15 instances in which the following religious scholars faced interrogation.
34. The co-submitters echo the July 2018 concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) which expressed concern "at reports that members of the Shi'a community have been subjected to restrictions of their right to worship and profess their religious beliefs and that liberty of conscience is not effectively guaranteed.

(3) Business and human rights

35. The co-submitters urge participants and stakeholders to consider the findings of a SALAM DHR report on 'sportswashing' that will be uploaded as an annex.

The co-submitting organisations call on member states to urge Bahrain to:

- Accede to International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. (87) of 1988 regarding freedom of association and protection of the right to organise;
- Accede to ILO Convention No. (98) of 1988 regarding the implementation of the principles of the right to organise and collective bargaining, and to
- Change the provisions of Decree-Law No. (33) of 2002 on trade unions, to introduce a provision stating the right of workers addressed by civil service systems and regulations to establish and join trade unions, and

⁴⁶ News of Bahrain - Religious Gathering: Bahrain to take legal action, 9 October 2020, at <https://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/66812.html> , accessed 29 October 2020.

⁴⁷ For more information, see: SALAM DHR - Religious Tolerance in the Cross Hairs, 1 December 2021, accessed 15 February 2022 at: <https://salam-dhr.org/?p=4776>

- Adhere to treaty body and UPR-related recommendations to end forms of religious discrimination as detailed above.