



## **Universal Periodic Review**

### **Bahrain**

Joint Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review

**41<sup>st</sup> session of the UPR Working Group**

**Salam for Democracy and Human Rights, Gulf Institute for  
Democracy and Human Rights, Bahrain Forum for Human  
Rights, Human Rights Sentinel**

## Introduction

- 1) Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR) is a non-governmental human rights organisation that promotes adherence to international human rights standards and universal principles of democracy. It focuses primarily on Bahrain and other Gulf countries. It is registered in France, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, while its personnel are geographically distributed. It is prohibited in Bahrain, where the organisation nevertheless has members.
- 2) The Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR) is a non-governmental organisation based in Australia 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.
- 3) Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR) is an independent human rights organisation based in Lebanon. It seeks to promote commitment to the principles of human rights and to peruse those involved in human rights violations in Bahrain.
- 4) Human Rights Sentinel is a transnational non-governmental organisation based in Ireland and promotes the global empowerment and mutual participation of civil society to foster the compliance of and adherence to human rights values, standards, and law in contexts where those fundamental principles are denied or at risk.
- 5) At the 3rd cycle of the UPR Bahrain supported 139 out of 175 recommendations. SALAM DHR's midterm assessment in 2019 assessed Bahrain's progress.
- 6) This joint submission addresses the organisations' core concerns in respect to civil and political, economic and social rights, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and citizenship.
- 7) The methodology of this report is based on the research of the contributing organisations listed above, along with statements, laws and policies set out on websites belonging to the Government of Bahrain (GoB); reports from non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others.

## Previous UPR for Bahrain Under the First, Second, and Third Cycles

- 8) Bahrain was previously reviewed during the [1st, 13th and 36th sessions of the UPR](#), in 2008, 2012 and 2017 respectively.
- 9) In the first cycle, during the 1st session, Bahrain received [nine recommendations](#) to prioritise drafting a law on the provision of citizenship to children where the father is not a Bahraini citizen, which Bahrain accepted.
- 10) In the second cycle, during the 13th session, [six recommendations](#) were made to Bahrain regarding nationality and statelessness in relation to gender discrimination.
- 11) In the third cycle, during the 36<sup>th</sup> session, [fourteen recommendations](#) were made to Bahrain regarding statelessness and the right to a nationality, seven of which it accepted, and seven it noted.
- 12) Since 2016, various international human rights committees have also made recommendations to Bahrain on the matter of statelessness and discrimination against women and children.
- 13) Bahrain has engaged in some reforms. However, SALAM DHR continues to receive reports of torture and ill-treatment, particularly of detainees arrested on suspicion of terrorism, including minors.

- 14) Most legislation criminalising the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly remains in place. It continues to be used to detain prisoners of conscience.
- 15) Many prisoners of conscience - including those detained in 2011 – remain incarcerated. Human rights defenders continue to work in a hostile environment, and impermissible restrictions on political associations remain in place.
- 16) Bahrain continues to strip citizenships - often resulting in statelessness - and using the death penalty. In both cases, “confessions” are often rendered under torture and verdicts rendered by unfair trials.

### **Bahrain’s Mid-Term Review**

- 17) The 2019 midterm assessment conducted by SALAM DHR and BFHR indicated a fundamental lack of willingness by Bahrain to address human rights concerns raised in successive UPR cycles. Since 2011, the GoB has refused to effectively implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and UN human rights bodies: it has rejected appeals to release prisoners of conscience or to improve its trial procedures. Discriminatory practices remain. These practices violate freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Additionally, women remain [politically and economically marginalised](#) and [migrants remain highly vulnerable](#). Finally, the use of the death penalty continues, despite considerable concerns about due process.
- 18) The submitting organisations urge the international community to learn from these examples and to assess critically all claims of progress by the GoB.
- 19) The submitting organisations implore the international community to reiterate and expand the recommendations it made in 2017.
- 20) Finally, the submitting organisations call on the international community to place meaningful pressure on Bahrain to support and implement all recommendations it receives, including via adherence to legally binding conventions.

### **Economic Rights**

- 21) The GoB has failed to implement safeguards under the ICESCR, including the recruitment and employment of migrants. Foreign workers [lack key labour protections](#) and remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, violating Article 6 of the ICESCR and Article 13 of the Bahraini Constitution. Bahrain is also in violation of recommendation 114.88 from the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR.
- 22) The GoB has discriminated against members of Bahrain’s Shi’a community in respect to [employment in the public sector](#). Bahrain is in further violation of Article 6 of the ICESCR, Article 13 of its constitution, and recommendation 114.88 from the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR.
- 23) There are numerous instances of domestic workers not receiving legally guaranteed 30 days of annual leave. Female workers are also subjected to [a range of religious impositions and frequently suffer abuse](#). Additionally, a range of [occupational health and safety issues](#) are alleged. This means Bahrain is in violation of Article 7 of the ICESCR and recommendation 114.154 from the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR and has failed to ensure that domestic workers enjoyed the contracted terms and conditions of their employment.
- 24) The GoB has failed to ensure that employers abided by laws preventing employers from withholding workers’ passports. These practices [fundamentally restricts workers’ rights by removing their freedom of movement](#). Bahrain is in violation of Article 7 of the ICESCR and recommendations 114.170, 114.171, and 114.172.

- 25) Bahrain has not ratified Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise or Convention No. 98 on the right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, meaning workers have [no guarantee of rights](#).
- 26) While Bahrain permits strike actions in some contexts, it submitted a [declaration stating this does not extend to essential utilities](#). It has not elaborated on the meaning of “essential utilities”, meaning it could be interpreted broadly, undermining the right to take industrial action.
- 27) [Bahrain’s minimum wage is applicable only to the public sector](#), threatening the right to an adequate standard of living because.

## Recommendations

- 11) SALAM DHR echoes calls made by Bahrain’s National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) that Bahrain:
  - Accede to International Labour Organisation Convention No. (87) of 1988 regarding freedom of association and protection of the right to organise, and to
  - Convention No. (98) of 1988 regarding the implementation of the principles of the right to organise and collective bargaining, and to
  - Make the necessary amendments to the provisions of Decree-Law No. (33) of 2002 promulgating the Trade Unions Law and its amendments, to introduce a provision stating the right of workers addressed by civil service systems and regulations to establish and join trade unions.
- 12) Contributing organisations call on Bahrain to:
  - Ensure that discrimination in the recruitment process is ameliorated
  - Ensure that discrimination against Shi’a in the public sector is addressed
  - End discrimination against migrant workers by amending labour laws to include domestic workers
  - Clarify as precisely as possible what strikes are permitted.

## Social Rights/Combating Racial Discrimination

- 17) The GoB engages in a range of discriminatory, sectarian practices. The recent [Khums case](#) is an example, where a religious leader was arrested for misappropriation of funds and collecting money without a licence. This ignored the fact that all the correct procedures were followed. The paying of Khums is a religious obligation for Shi’a Muslims. Additionally, Shi’a clerics face harassment and prosecution.
- 18) Women’s rights are violated. The Bahraini penal code states that a person who commits rape or sexual assault is exempt from criminal prosecution if the woman states that she wishes to marry the offender.<sup>i</sup> Additionally, Bahrain’s reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women renders the convention effectively meaningless. This is shown by paragraph 52 of the Bahrain’s state report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The fact this reservation remains in force means Bahrain is in violation of recommendation 114.1 from its 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR.
- 19) There are concerns regarding the right to health enshrined under Article 12 of the ICESCR. Bahrain’s migrant workers have suffered significantly from the COVID-19 pandemic, both in [terms of cases](#) and economically. Bahrain’s migrant workers have had their wages by half during the pandemic. Concurrently, employers in Bahrain have been [eligible for a range of](#)

[government support measures](#). This means Bahrain is in violation of Article 7 of the ICESCR.

- 20) There have also been violations of freedom of conscience with various violations of the Shi'a community's right to conduct religious rites, specifically Ashura rites. In respect to Ashura SALAM DHR recorded a total of 42 violations in 2020. These violations include:
- 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 health measures in place.
  - Prohibiting the broadcast of commemorations via loudspeakers.
- 21) Several violations also occurred in 2021, with several arbitrary arrests carried out, along with another 15 instances of religious scholars being interrogated.
- 22) The extent of the problem is shown by the Human Rights Committee's expression of concern and restrictions of the right to worship, and that freedom of conscience is not adequately protected in Bahrain. The discriminations faced by Shi'a groups means Bahrain is in violation of recommendations 114.62 and 114.63.
- 23) As of 2022, Bahrain has taken no additional measures to address an increasing use and legitimisation of hate speech and violence against the Shi'a population. This failure to take concrete measures has worsened discrimination and the welfare of the targeted persons.

### Recommendations

- 23) Salam DHR and contributing partners call on Bahrain to:
- Cease practices of religious and sectarian discrimination
  - Cease the practice of cultural oppression of excluded groups
  - Withdraw reservations to the Articles 2 and 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
  - Amend the penal code to remove the exemption from criminal prosecution for those accused of rape, sexual assaults, or immoral acts if the woman declares she wishes to marry the offender.

### Prisoners' Rights

- 27) Article 13 of the ICESCR provides everyone with the right to education. Despite this, 221 children were arrested between 2017 and 2019. While detained, these children were denied an education. At the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year, 400 students under the age of 18 were imprisoned.
- 28) [Article 13 of the ICESCR](#) has been interpreted to mean that all members of the academic community have the right to develop and transmit knowledge. Despite this, in April 2021 Dr Ali Al-Singace had a draft of an apolitical book confiscated.
- 29) Article 12 grants the right of everyone to the highest possible standards of health. Bahrain's prison authorities have [failed to implement even basic standards of infection control](#). There are also credible reports of overcrowding of cells and denial of medical care. This means Bahrain is in violation of Article 12 of the ICESCR and recommendation 114.84 from its 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR.

### Recommendations

30. Salam DHR and collaborating organisations calls for Bahrain to:
- End overcrowding in Jau Central Prison

- End the practice of incarcerating those under 18 in all possible cases, release as many detained minors as possible, and provide the best possible education to those who remain detained
- Respect its obligations under Article 13 of the ICESCR
- Respect its obligations under Article 12 of the ICESCR and ensure effective medical treatment to all of Bahrain's prisoners
- Release all persons detained solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression or peaceful assembly.

### **Political and Civil Rights**

31. The 2018-enacted Exercise of Political Rights Law disqualified those with sentences of over 6 months along with leaders and members of forcibly dissolved political parties.
32. In 2018, an amendment to Article 3 of decree law (no 14) of 2002 was enacted, prohibiting leaders of dissolved political societies from running for parliament. The same measure was used against those who had resigned from parliament.
33. Consequently, the November 2018 election to the Council of Deputies systematically excluded political figures from formerly prominent political groupings such as Al-Wefaq and Wa'ad as well as human rights defenders not affiliated with any political association.
34. The Ministry of Labour also requires that candidates for boards of directors of NGOs should be subject to security checks. This is likely meant to exclude former leaders and members of dissolved societies.
35. The GoB's 2017 Exercise of Political Representation Law removed the right of association for swathes of activists and people.

### **Recommendations**

36. SALAM DHR and co-signing organisations call on Bahrain to:
  - Abide by articles 1, 4 and 31 of its constitution
  - Fulfil its obligations on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by implementing Articles 2, 25, and 26.
  - Repeal law (no.25) of 2018, which amended Article 3 of decree law (no. 14) of 2002
  - Repeal law (no 15) of 2018, which amended decree law (no 21) of 1989
  - Withdraw the circular of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development No.2020/36/731. This document requires that the names of candidates for the board of director of NGOs should be sent to the Ministry of Labour for evaluation.
  - Lift all restrictions on the political opposition regarding candidacy and voting in parliamentary and municipal elections.
  - Restore normalcy to political life through reconsidering the decision to dissolve Al-Wefaq, the National Democratic Action Society, and the Islamic Action Society.
  - Launch a comprehensive national dialogue to resolve contentious points with the opposition, so that rights violations can end.

### **Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment**

- 48) Bahrain is a signatory to the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the Arab Charter on Human Rights. Torture is also prohibited under [Article 19 of Bahrain's constitution](#) and Articles 208 and 232 of Bahrain's penal code. These various laws are in conformity with the

Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

- 49) Despite this, instances of torture remain widespread in Bahrain with one such example being provided by the case of Ebtsam Al-Saegh, who gave her consent for her story to be shared. A Bahraini human rights activist, Al-Seagh was [subjected to torture](#) for her human rights activism in May 2017. Ebtsam testified to SALAM DHR that she suffered physical torture and was sexually abused.
- 50) Ebrahim Sarhan, a Bahraini lawyer who gave his consent for his account to be shared, was also subjected to torture in May 2017. Sarhan was kicked continuously in his privates, threatened with rape, and sexually harassed. Throughout his ordeal, officers insisted he confess to a crime he had not committed.
- 51) Torture is also used as a form of reprisal against family members of activists. For example, [Younis Ahmed Sultan](#), who gave his consent for his story to be shared, was questioned regarding his brother. Younis was tortured, sexually harassed, and ill-treated in November 2017. A week later he was recalled to the same police station, where he was severely beaten and raped.
- 52) Due to conditions in prisons several prisoners have lost their lives including [Abbas Mal Allah](#) and [Hussein Barakat](#). Hussein Ahmed Eissa Barakat died of COVID-19 complications. He was denied serious medical care.
- 53) Prisoner H.A. (identity withheld for their protection) gave testimony in which they claimed torture and ill treatment are frequently used. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 they were attacked by prison officers. They stated that to this day they bore the marks of torture.
- 54) [Younis Abdel Aziz Mansour Ahmed Al-Nasiri](#) was arbitrarily arrested on 31 October 2018. He was beaten and suffered degrading treatment. Younis informed his family that he had been subjected to electric shocks, sleep deprivation, and being forced to stand for extended periods of time.

## Recommendations

- 54) SALAM DHR and contributing partners calls on Bahrain to:
  - Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.
  - Ensure that independent investigations are undertaken for all allegations of instances of torture.
  - Extend an invitation to the Special Rapporteur for Torture and facilitate regular visits.
  - Cease the practice of institutional torture and hold those who partake in torture and ill-treatment to account.
  - Improve the health conditions within Bahraini prisons.

## Revocation of Nationality

- 55) [Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) states that everyone has the right to nationality, and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality. [Article 29 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights](#) also states that every person has the right to a nationality and that no citizen shall be deprived of their nationality.
- 56) Despite this, revocation of nationality continues to be practised by Bahrain as shown by the fact that in 2018 alone the GoB stripped [232 individuals of their nationality](#). That same year, a Bahraini court [stripped 115 individuals of their nationality](#) in a single trial.



- 57) All power to revoke nationality in Bahrain currently sits with the Minister of Interior and is subject only to cabinet approval. Bahrain claims that these practices are done only to protect against terrorism.
- 58) However, the US Central Intelligence Agency claims that while there are terrorism cases involving violence against Bahraini security, they have concerns that the GoB utilizes counterterrorism laws and punishments – specifically citizenship stripping – to prosecute and harass individuals for criticising the government.<sup>11</sup> The Ministry of Interior (Moi) and other security apparatuses routinely act on wide interpretations of these ambiguous legal provisions, imposing ad hoc bans on activism or dissent.
- 59) The consequence of citizenship stripping is that it effectively revokes a person’s right to have rights. Victims lose access to their bank accounts, their right to work, their pensions, and any housing allowances. Moreover, their official documentation becomes invalid, and, in some cases, their assets are liquidated by the state.
- 60) Citizenship stripping also impacts the children of victims. Bahraini citizenship is only inherited through the father. Any children born after their father has lost his citizenship are born stateless, even if the mother is a Bahraini citizen.
- 61) Some Bahrainis become ‘illegal aliens’ when they lose their nationality. These victims are often detained, tortured, and coerced into signing statements confessing their illegal status in Bahrain and deported soon after.
- 62) Those with restored citizenship do not enjoy full rights regarding housing, social allowances, social welfare, healthcare, and continue to face discrimination. They are also barred from running for office even if their citizenship is returned. Additionally, they’ve received no compensation for any assets seized.
- 63) There has been some improvement regarding citizenship stripping since the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle. Revocation via royal decree appears to have ended. Since 1 January 2018, all known incidents of citizenship stripping have been handed down by civil or military courts. However, there have been [widespread fair trial violations](#) in both courts. These violations include a lack of access to lawyers, especially during interrogation, and coerced confessions.
- 64) In April 2019, by royal decree, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, restored Bahraini citizenship to 551 individuals. Moreover, the power to strip nationality was restricted to the cabinet. Under these amendments, the King and the judiciary claim that they can no longer unilaterally strip Bahrainis of their citizenship for the purpose of national security or terrorism. Such reforms have not truly rectified the issue of citizenship stripping, however.
- 65) Moreover, 343 former Bahraini citizens remain stripped of their nationality. The GoB has made no comment on whether their citizenships will ever be restored.
- 66) The GoB’s reforms hold no parties accountable for citizenship stripping and its harmful consequences. The King can to rule by decree via numerous avenues and Bahrain’s law-making system is loyal to him, with many of its members being relatives.
- 67) In previous UPR cycles, Bahrain has received various recommendations relating to citizenship and for Bahrain to speed up the legislative process to address the problem of statelessness.

## Recommendations

- 68) SALAM DHR and contributing partners call on Bahrain to:
- Align its legislation with international law. Furthermore, citizenship should only be revoked in extreme circumstances and only if the party has another nationality.



- Ensure any decision to revoke nationality should be subject to separation of powers, judicial review, and appeal.
- Ensure local authorities do not have the power to revoke citizenship.
- Permit women to pass on their citizenship to their children.
- Restore citizenship to those made stateless by revocation of their nationality.
- Pay reparations to all victims of citizenship revocation.

## Summary Findings

69) Salam DHR and its partners continue to welcome the commitments made by the GoB as expressed through many, broad-based recommendations it has accepted. However, the GoB continues to pursue a strategy of accepting broad, generally framed recommendations but rejecting specific ones. By doing this, the GoB can present itself as positively engaging with the OHCHR.

70) The GoB has not meaningfully engaged with the OHCHR: it has not extended a standing invitation to special procedures since 2006 and continues to resist requests for country assessment missions. Its correspondence with the OHCHR continuously counters recommendations based in international human rights law and practice.

71) The GoB has not verifiably acted on treaty body recommendations made during the reporting period. Instead, it has restored practices ruled out in the BICI report. The GoB remains in non-compliance with the OHCHR and the purpose of the UPR process.

72) Bahrain's failure to address the central socio-political conflict between the GoB and recognised leaders and supporters, including human rights activists from the Shi'a community, inhibits the country from developing its international human rights standards. This is expressed by its reintroduction of laws and practices ruled out by the BICI. This core conflict results in other human rights shortcomings, including:

- The GoB's failure to meaningfully engage with the OHCHR, including its rejection of repeated recommendations made by the OHCHR in respect to release prisoners of conscience Ali Al-Singace, or in respect and trial procedures
- Flawed and discriminatory provisions and practices relating to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, constituting rights violations in themselves but which have aggravated other violations in relation to the administration of justice, which can be tempered by a freer media environment
- Limited verifiable initiatives undertaken by the GoB in respect to gender equality and the rights of women and girls, including migrants, across the range of rights recognised under international standards
- Until 2020, high rates of arbitrary citizenship stripping of Shi'a Bahrainis
- High levels of judicial, police and intelligence, as well as social harassment of political and human rights activists
- Cases of arbitrary arrest and prolonged pre-trial detention based on vaguely framed, flawed provisions that criminalise acts that are not internationally recognisable as criminal such as "terrorist activities", where ill-treatment or torture are often features culminating in unfair trials carrying multiple-year sentences
- The effective re-instatement of the death penalty for acts that are not violent or have lethal consequences
- Targeting and abuse of human rights defenders.

## Rights of Women

- 78) In 2017, Bahrain reaffirmed aspirations to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Legislative Decree No. 70 of 2014 amending certain provisions of Legislative Decree No. 5 of 2002 rephrases some reservations to the Convention. It states that Bahrain is committed to implementing the provisions of Articles 2, 15(4) and 16 of the Convention without breaching the provisions of the Islamic sharia.
- 79) In 2018 CCPR/C/BHR/CO/1, reported [significant shortcomings](#) relating to gender equality in Bahrain.
- 80) Bahrain has made little progress in achieving equitable representation of women in public and political spheres, particularly in decision-making positions or ensuring that women have equal access to employment opportunities and that the labour laws do not perpetuate stereotypes about women. [Female participation in the labour force](#) has in fact decreased.
- 81) Bahrain has made no verifiable progress in combating, preventing, eradicating, and punishing trafficking in persons and forced labour.
- 82) It has also failed to expand labour law protection to domestic workers, ensuring that they can exercise their rights and that they are protected from exploitation and abuse, and provide access to effective legal remedies for the protection of domestic migrant workers' rights, which are essential to preventing the gendered exploitation and abuse of migrant women.

## Rights of the Child

- 83) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC), confirm the necessity to protect children's rights and provide a safe environment for them. Bahrain is a signatory to all three.
- 84) Although Bahrain acceded to and ratified the UNCRC in 1991, signed it without reservations in February 1992, and it indeed came into force in March 1992, legal loopholes regarding children remain.
- 85) Bahraini laws do not prohibit employers from employing children. Article 7 of the law stipulates that "a child's employment shall not affect their safety, health or the essence of the rights provided for in the law, and as per the Bahrain Labour law."
- 86) At the same time, Bahrain Labour Law states in Article 24 that "it is prohibited to employ anyone who is less than fifteen years of age", while Article 4 of the Bahraini Child Law states that "the term 'child' shall apply to all persons under the age of 18." This does not comply with the UNCRC, which states that children shall not be subject of human trafficking, in any form, nor be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age.
- 87) In Bahraini legislation, no financial assistance is given to children of low-income families. Additionally, children of families whose fathers or mothers face long prison terms are forced to work, often in dangerous conditions. Many children also must leave school when their parents are prohibited from work because they can't obtain work permits from the security authorities. The system obliges employers not to employ a job seeker if they have not obtained a certificate of good conduct from these agencies.
- 88) In addition to legal shortcomings, Bahraini authorities have used children of political and human rights activists as forms of blackmail and reprisal. For example, arbitrary deprivation of nationality has been used against children born while their parents are imprisoned for

their demands for political and civil rights. Such examples include [Sara](#), the daughter of Sheikh Ali Salman, who was recently sentenced to life imprisonment, the child Hadi Wafi Kamel Al-Majid, and the child Hussein Mortetha Abdul Jalil Al-Meqdad.

- 89) In Bahrain, children are subjected to the citizenship stripping. For example, in 2016, a Bahraini court in absentia sentenced Mehdi Farhan, aged 17 at the time, to ten years' imprisonment and the revocation of his citizenship.
- 90) The authorities have also refused to grant citizenship to children who were born following the citizenship revocation of their parents, including Zahrra Saber Al-Salatnh and Ruqayya Yousef Imran. These children are deprived of the right to treatment in public hospitals because they do not have basic documents such as a passport or national ID card, and as such are denied the right to study, travel, and many other basic civil rights.
- 91) There are hundreds of children arrested and sentenced on political charges in Bahrain's juvenile prisons, often from confessions extracted under torture.
- 92) For example, on 14 August 2018, Salam DHR published a [report on 108 cases of torture and ill-treatment](#), including a child in juvenile detention, Mohammed Isa Al-A'adab, who was beaten and severely harassed by the prison administration. They are also deprived of the right to adequate education and medical care.

### **Recommendations**

- 93) While many countries have been quick to implement and respect the UNCRC, Bahrain is lagging. Children are still being subjected to widespread and systematic human rights violations, including enforced disappearance and torture, sexual harassment, denial of education, and the deprivation of many basic rights guaranteed in the constitution and international treaties. Therefore, we urge the government of Bahrain to:
  - Enact legislation that protects children from the dangers of poverty or labour
  - Respect the international charters and treaties that have been ratified, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
  - Fully realise children's rights, including their rights to life, development, education, and care
  - Immediately release children in detention and fully compensate for all the suffering they have endured.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 94) The characteristics set out above in the findings constitute are, we believe, socio-politically unsustainable: that isolating whole swathes of a community will only result in further socio-political tension and, with it, frequent and grave human rights violations that to prevent unrest which, in turn, fuels future strife and instability.
- 95) We, the submitting organisations, implore the GoB to use this UPR review to re-evaluate and reassess its trajectory, with a view to the GoB deciding to engage with the OHCHR, notably by acting on repeated recommendations.
- 96) Such recommendations could be a declaration of a moratorium on the death penalty or the release of one or more prisoners held for protected conduct, although these would only be the beginning of a more comprehensive reform agenda.

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<sup>i</sup> Bahrain Gender Justice & Law, United Nations Development Programme, 2018, page 14.

<sup>ii</sup> United States State Department Country Report Terrorism in Bahrain 2014 (footnote 168);

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Cordesman, Markusen, and Jones, *Stability and Instability in the Gulf Region in 2016: A Strategic Net*

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Assessment, *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, 15 Jun 2016.