



General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 September 2012

English only

Human Rights Council
Twenty-first session
Agenda 6
Universal Periodic Review

**Written statement* submitted by the Organization for
Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), a non-governmental
organization in special consultative status**

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

[25 August 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Bahrain UPR

The situation of human rights in Bahrain is now in its worst scenario, a compilation of continuous and brutal crackdown with an agonizing and meaningful world's most important Medias silence. Unfortunately even during and after working group session on 2nd Bahrain's UPR, something is still missed: A real, genuine, respectful and tolerated approach from the government towards the wishes and needs of protestors, the people who were beaten, tortured and jailed, instead of being listened to.

We, as a nongovernmental organization, that is active in different fields of advocacy and monitoring human rights, especially in the Middle East and Persian gulf region, are concerned about blatant violations of human rights of Bahrainis, specially Shia minorities and human rights defenders and ask government of Bahrain to pay special attention to the cases which have been classified below and our subsequent recommendations.

Human Rights defenders and doctors

One of the most extensive forms of human rights violations in Bahrain are the grave violation of the rights of doctors in the country, which causes Organization for Defending Victims of Violence and human rights defenders in various countries serious concern. Richard Sollom deputy director of the Physicians for Human Rights says in this regard: "in two decades of study on human rights violations in more than 20 countries, I have never witnessed such extensive and systematic violations that take place in Bahrain." Ambulances, hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses and medical staff are all targeted, and this is very extensive and continues to take place. These attacks seriously violate the neutrality of physician's principle and international law.

While observing their code of ethics in fair and unprejudiced treatment of injured protestors and civilians, the rights of doctors and nurses in Bahrain themselves are violated, and not only we've witnessed their dismissal from medical treatment centers, but in instances these humanitarian acts of theirs has resulted in their arrest and detention. At least 22 medical experts were grabbed by security forces and sent to solitary confinement.

Meanwhile the situation of other prominent human rights defenders like Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-khawaja, Zainab Al-khawaja and Abdul-Jalil Al-singace, who have been sentenced to jail, just for engaging in their inalienable rights of freedom of thoughts and speech, is a matter of concern to us.

Destruction of properties and holy places

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence is deeply concerned over the attacks on mosques and destruction of holy Islamic property and also banning the Shia to hold religious ceremonies and also attacks on mourners over the recent months in the country which are all grave violations of international law with regards to the protection of places of worship, and also Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regards to freedom of religion and belief and holding of religious ceremonies in public or private.

Violation of the right of self determination

The independent decision making of a nation with regards to internal issues is a value. Thus Article 2 of the UN Charter mentions the objectives and principles of the United Nations with regards to the self determination of nations. Article 2.4 also stresses: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner

inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. This is while the military intervention of Saudi Arabia is a blatant violation of the aforementioned paragraphs. The philosophy behind the clear military support of Bahrain by Saudi Arabia is for the crackdown of the Bahraini Shia and preventing them from getting political power. This is a clear violation of Article 1.2 of the Charter.

Recommendations

1. The rights of various groups that include human rights defenders and doctors that have been violated in the recent unrests must be compensated in accordance with international laws, and these individuals have a right to complain against the abuse of their rights in national courts as stated in Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. We ask the government of Bahrain to carry out an in-depth inquiry into past and present allegations of torture as well as all allegations of excessive and illegal use of force and bring those responsible to justice and also to continue the reform process and ensure accountability by investigating all allegations of torture and mistreatment and by prosecuting any individuals found responsible, including senior government officials.

3. We ask the government to review convictions, commute sentences, or drop charges for all persons who engaged in non-violent political expression, especially 4 human rights defenders; Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-khawaja, Zainab Al-khawaja and Abdul-Jalil Al-singace. In this regard we associate ourselves with 38 human rights NGO’s who in the middle of August 2012, called on the government to free these human rights activists.¹

4. We recommend full implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry’s (BICI) which cover a broad range of tasks, including the ensuring of accountability, prevention of the recurrence of human rights violations through law reform and training of law enforcement personnel, and respect of due process. ODVV urges the government of Bahrain to implement the outcome of the national conciliation dialogue in order to overcome the effects of unfortunate events.

Alongside of that we ask the government to ensure that all allegation of human rights violations during and after the February – March 2011 protests by the security forces are independently, promptly and thoroughly investigated, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing victims with due redress and rehabilitation.

5. For non-occurrence of those regrettable events, we recommend the Bahrain government to impose some amendments or ratification of due regulations such as:

- Repeal or amend the 2002 Press Law eliminating all restrictions upon the freedom of the press not in line with relevant provisions of the ICCPR, and also Amend the Penal Code to remove all criminal penalties for alleged libel offences and the press law to bring its provisions into compliance with article 19 of ICCPR;
- The ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the full alignment of Bahrain’s national legislation with its provisions;
- Amend any article of its Penal Code that can be used to prosecute individuals for the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly or association, and bring its laws into line with international standards established by the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.

6. ODVV calls upon Bahraini officials to accept the visit of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of assembly and association and also continue and strengthen cooperation with the

¹ <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/5388>.

UN Human Rights Mechanisms and its various efforts made for human rights capacity building and also Establish an open, genuine, all-inclusive and effective national dialogue among different concerned parties with the aim of effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of all the population in a democratic manner.

7. According to Article 1.2 of the UN Charter one of the purposes of the United Nations is: “To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.” Also Article 2.4 of the Charter states: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”; therefore it is expected for other countries, such as Saudi Arabia to while respecting human rights laws to refrain from military intervention in Bahrain.

8. We call upon the government of Bahrain, as it has been endorsed by Bahrain representatives in article 113 of final report of UPR working group, to comply with its commitments regarding reconstruction of all the places of worships that had been destroyed during unrests.

9. We also associate ourselves to the statement made by Switzerland in 20th session of human rights council on behalf of 27 countries, calling on Bahraini authorities to agree to the establishment of an OHCHR office in Bahrain.
