



Bahrain UPR Adoption

September 2017

The human rights situation in Bahrain has deteriorated dramatically in the period leading up to and since Bahrain's third UPR in May 2017. The government had accepted 158 of the 176 UPR recommendations from 2012, but has largely failed to implement the most substantive of them. Bahrain continues to deny access to UN OHCHR special procedures despite repeated requests. Authorities in April prevented dozens of rights advocates from travelling to Geneva ahead of the third UPR review.

Over the past year, authorities have shut down the country's only independent newspaper and the two leading, licensed, opposition political societies. Nabeel Rajab, the country's preeminent human rights defender, and Shaikh Ali Salman, the leader of the largest opposition political society remain in prison on speech charges. The government ended a de facto moratorium on use of the death penalty and executed three persons in January following unfair trials, despite their alleging that they had been tortured. In May the UN Committee Against Torture expressed concern at "consistent allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment" and "the climate of impunity that seems to prevail."

In 2017 the government reversed two of the few substantive recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry that it previously implemented. In January authorities restored arrest and investigation powers to the National Security Agency, despite its record of torture and abuse, and in April King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa signed legislation authorizing trial of civilians before military courts.

We urge Bahrain to accept and implement the most important recommendations coming out of its 2017 UPR review regarding criminal justice reform and respect for allcore human rights: civil, economic, political, social and cultural', including the release of all those jailed solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Bahrain's glossy PR campaign around its UPR engagement cannot be allowed to cover up its complete disregard for the substantive recommendations made nor the human rights crisis on the ground.