

Deplorable Bahraini Human Rights Abuses Continue

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In summer 2010, sporadic protests began. In mid-February 2011, major ones erupted. Bahrainis want democracy. They want King Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalif's repressive regime replaced.

They rally courageously. They defy government diktats. They brave beatings, tear gas, rubber bullets, live fire, arrests, torture and disappearances. They persist. They refuse to back down. They want freedom replacing police state terror.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) promotes civil, political and economic freedom, ending racial discrimination, disseminating human rights culture, and protecting victims' rights.

Any Bahraini doing so risks life, limb and freedom. Al-Khalifa despots spurn human rights, justice and other democratic values. Iron-fist governance is policy.

Children and youths are treated like adults. On March 31, 17-year old Hussein Hashem Fardan was arrested. He was sought for over two and a half years. He was in hiding to stay safe. His luck ran out.

He was ambushed by plain-clothed police. He was severely beaten. He was sexually assaulted and threatened with rape. He faces detention and torture.

He's unjustifiably charged with "detonating a bomb for terrorist purposes." He's denied legal representation. He'll be imprisoned, tortured and perhaps killed.

Last year's Bahrain Grand Prix featured state-sponsored terror. It showed up in blood in the streets. Security forces escalated violence. Protesters, activists, and journalists were targeted.

Tear gas, rubber bullets, shotguns, stun grenades, and baton beatings followed. So did arrests, torture and other abuse. Perhaps this year won't be different. Competition is scheduled for April 21.

BCHR received numerous reports and documented evidence of house raids. Masked men in civilian clothes are involved. Arbitrary arrests followed. They continue.

Villages close to the Bahraini International Circuit are targeted. Since April 1, 10 or more children and youths were arrested. Doing so spreads fear and intimidation.

Human Rights First director Brian Dooley told Formula 1 head Bernie Ecclestone:

"One issue is whether or not human rights violations might be happening as a result of the

race being there.”

“If the regime arrests people in order to intimidate others from peacefully protesting around Formula One, then the organizers, participants, and sponsors really need to say something about that.”

Last year, Al-Khalifa despots weren’t held accountable. Expect nothing different this year.

On April 1, BCHR discussed Ahmed AbdulGhani AlRayyes. He was lawlessly arrested. Earlier, his brother Hussain was shot in the abdomen with pellets. He was left bleeding. He could have died. He survived. He’s had two operations. He may need more.

Ahmed’s father inquired about him at the Budaiya police station. He heard him screaming inside. He was denied permission to see him. He was beaten, rendered unconscious, and killed.

He was dead on arrival at Bahrain’s International Hospital. Lawless crackdowns claim other victims. Pre-dawn raids terrorize innocent civilians. Families watch helplessly while parents or children are beaten and dragged away. Severe repression continues.

On March 28, three children under age 14 were abducted. They sought shelter from a nearby protest. They weren’t involved. Security forces attacked it violently. They saw the children enter a nearby house.

They stormed in, seized them, threatened them, beat them with batons and rifle butts, and inflicted cigarette burns on the arm of one child.

They were taken to a stable known unofficially as a torture center. Beatings continued. Bleeding and other signs of abuse were visible. Police reports didn’t explain.

Another Daih area youth was abducted. He was beaten and burned on his back with a lighter. Similar incidents happened in AlMuqsha village. Innocent youths and children were severely beaten and arrested.

Families fear lodging complaints. Doing so leaves them vulnerable to harassment, arrests, torture and imprisonment.

On March 29, BCHR said 16 innocent civilians (including children) were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment despite no evidence or charges brought against them.

Arbitrary injustice is policy. Anyone accused of challenging state authority faces appalling human rights abuses. No one’s safe from state repression.

On April 8, BCHR published its [new report](#). It’s titled “Bahrain: Limited Medical Access and Breach of Medical Neutrality....A need for accountability and an end to ongoing violations.”

It updates Bahrain’s “medical situation,” the role of the Bahrain Medical Society, militarized hospitals, medical access for injured victims, and care (or lack thereof) for political prisoners.

BCHR documented systematic Geneva violations. Militarized medical services deny care. Politicized ones serve a political agenda. Overall conditions are deplorable.

Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC) is Bahrain's main facility. In mid-March 2011, it was besieged. No one was let in or out. Wounded protesters inside were arrested.

Salmaniya's emergency unit went on complete lockdown. Severely injured patients were moved to the hospital's sixth level. Guards monitored their rooms. Medical providers weren't allowed in.

The entire complex was searched. Injured protesters were sought. Several doctors and other providers tried to leave. They were stopped, beaten, and forcefully returned inside. Others were arrested. Phone lines and other forms of communication were cut.

What happened began a long nightmare. It continues out-of-control. Seeking healthcare in Bahrain risks arrest, beatings, torture and imprisonment. Medical providers and patients are vulnerable.

BCHR presented a snapshot of what's happening. Media scoundrels suppress it. Most people outside Bahrain have no idea what's happening.

An entire country's on lockdown. No one's safe anywhere. Seeking medical services risks life and limb. Monarchal repression targets anyone considered a threat to state authority.

In March 2011, "medics, including doctors, nurses and paramedics, started to disappear from hospitals or during dawn house raids."

Arrests became "enforced disappearances." Victims were isolated. All communications were cut off. Plain-clothed security forces kidnapped doctors. Torture and abuse followed.

By May, over 170 were affected. Medical centers throughout Bahrain were targeted.

On March 16, the National Security Agency took over the Ministry of Health. Its staff was subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Arrests followed. So did appalling human rights abuses. They continue now. They include:

- daily long hours of standing;
- sleep deprivation;
- denial of food and water;
- personal hygiene denied;
- limited bathroom use;
- severe beatings;
- electric shocks to the head and other body parts;
- rape and execution threats;
- threats of rape and torture against family members;

- administering mock executions;
- threatened removal to Saudi Arabia;
- verbal abuse, including religious beliefs;
- verbal and physical sexual abuse;
- solitary confinement;
- blindfolding and painful handcuffing for extended periods; and
- forced dancing and singing the national anthem, as well as other forms of humiliation.

Victims are denied access to family members and lawyers. They're forced to sign false confessions. They're not permitted to read them. They're videotaped.

Detainees are unaware of the gravity of what they face until appearing in military court. They can receive short or long sentences. Innocence is no defense. Guilt by accusation is policy.

Some medics were detained, tortured and abused without charges. Others face potentially long prison terms. What began earlier continues. Police state terror leaves no one safe.

CCTV cameras monitor everything. "To this day, health services are being used to identify protesters and target them." Patients trying to access treatment face check points at hospital entry areas allowed to stay open.

Riot police and private security officers check names on a wanted list before letting people into hospitals. Inside, checks for injuries are made. Intelligence agents interrogate anyone thought to have suspicious ones.

In January 2012, doctors and other medical staff were ordered to report injuries thought related to protests. Failure to do so risks prosecution.

"The constant presence of armed forces in (hospitals) created an environment of fear and insecurity, and affects the psychological status of patients coming for treatment."

Injured protesters avoid hospitals for good reason. Clinics operate secretly. They administer portable first aid. Volunteers include doctors, nurses, and others with some medical training.

Basic care only is provided. Resources are limited. Penalties for getting caught are severe. Political prisoners are denied treatment elsewhere.

According to General Assembly Resolution 44/111:

"Prisoners shall have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation."

General Assembly Resolution 45/111 covers “Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners.” It states:

“All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings.”

“There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Al-Khalifa despots ignore international and Bahraini law. Prisoner rights are spurned. Serious injuries and illness go untreated. Police state terror is state policy.

BCHR “found evidence of continuous violations.” They include breaching fundamental Geneva principles. Militarized healthcare services reflect a Sword of Damocles threatening Bahrainis seeking treatment for protest injuries.

BCHR names officials most accountable. They include:

- King Hamed; he rules with an iron fist;
- Minister of Justice Khaled bin Ali Al-Khalifa; he militarized Salmaniya Hospital
- temporary Minister of Health Fatima Al-Balushi; she bears direct responsibility for kidnapping, torturing, interrogating, and sacking medical providers given no chance for defense;
- Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) Drugs Department head Noura Al-Khalifa; she bears similar responsibility;
- Cleansing Committee head Baha’a Eldin Futayha for similar crimes;
- Salmaniya’s Chief of Medical Staff Mohammed Amin Al-Awadhi for similar crimes;
- Assistant Undersecretary for Human Resources and Services Hassan Jabir;
- Director of Human Resources Fatima AbdulWadid Al-Ahmed;
- head of BDF hospital administration Salman Ateyatallah Al-Khalifa;
- Supreme Council for Health and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Lt. Gen. Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa;
- Minister of Health and Supreme Council for Health vice chairman Sadeq Al-Shihabi;
- SMC CEO Waleed Al-Manea;
- Ameen Al-Sa’ati for witnessing state atrocities and concealing them;

- Bahrain Medical Society head Nabeel Al-Ansari; and
- CID Drug Department official Mubarak Bin Huwail.

Many Bahraini officials and external allies share responsibilities. Washington does most of all.

Bahrain hosts America's Fifth Fleet. Generous aid is provided. A Pentagon statement said:

They "improve Bahrain's capability to meet current and future armored threats. Bahrain will use the enhanced capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen its homeland defense."

Bahrain has no external enemies. Washington sells it advanced weapons. They include bunker buster, wire-guided and other missile systems, attack helicopters, munitions, armored combat vehicles, and more.

Western media scoundrels ignore its deplorable human rights record. Al-Khalifa despots remain unaccountable.

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