



The Universal Periodic
Review of

The Kingdom of Bahrain

Twenty-Seventh Session of the UPR Working Group
Human Rights Council

- i. This report has been prepared by the Bahrain Journalists' Association (BJA), an association that represents Bahraini Journalists registered in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The BJA is a member of the Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ), and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).
- ii. The report is based on the growing training that BJA board members and staff have been receiving in the fields of human rights and freedom of speech, and the growing importance of such reports to maintain a balanced and well functioning society that stands for the international principals of human rights and freedom of speech away from any political interference from any body.

Constitutional, Legislative, and Institutional and International Framework

- iii. While the BJA welcomes the establishment of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), it regrets that the NIHR did not receive full accreditation.
- iv. The BJA calls on the NIHR to seek full accreditation in order to support the efforts of NGOs such as the BJA in elevating the status of human rights and freedom of speech in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- v. The BJA welcomes the call of HM the King of Bahrain to quickly pass and enact a modern law for media and communications, and calls on the Legislative Council and the Government of the Bahrain to pass and enact the law after consulting with the BJA in the next legislative term.
- vi. The BJA welcomes the creation of the Ombudsman's Office at the Ministry of Interior, Office of the Inspector General at the National Security Agency, and Prisoners' and Detainees' Rights Commission by Royal Decrees.
- vii. The BJA welcomes the election of one of its members to the board of the Federation of Arab Journalists, and the appointment of one of its members to the Freedoms Committee of the Federation of Arab Journalists.



Freedom of Speech

- viii. Given the current elevated state of international sectarian tensions and the propagation of the ideals of international terrorism, the BJA calls upon all journalists to abide by article 7 of the IFJ's Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists adopted by the 1954 World Congress, and amended by the 1986 World Congress that stipulates that "The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins."
- ix. Having recorded threats against journalists by organizations propagating sectarian and terrorism ideals, the BJA calls upon the legislative body in the Kingdom of Bahrain to pass more stringent anti-sectarian and anti-discrimination laws, which aim to protect the general public and journalists from threats of sectarian undertones that aim to limit the peaceful use of the constitutional and legal rights of freedom of speech and peaceable assembly as guaranteed by Bahrain's constitution and laws.
- x. The BJA equally calls upon all stakeholders to view journalists as equals with the same and equal rights and responsibilities regardless of, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.
- xi. The BJA calls upon the High Authority for Information and Communications, after consulting with the BJA, to issue the guidelines required to clarify the definition of a journalist in order to further help protect journalists and their sources of information.
- xii. The BJA followed with great concern the actions of MP Roua Al Hayki in trying to prosecute journalists, and calls upon the leaders of the National Assembly to propagate the principles of freedom of speech and human rights upon its members.
- xiii. The BJA recognizes that although it has recorded multiple cases being filed against journalists, that no journalist has been jailed for actions conducted while, or for reasons of conducting their professional duties.

Equality and Rule of Law



- xiv. The BJA expresses its concern that Bahrain is being used by foreign entities as a recruiting ground for violent extremism that works to stifle freedom of speech efforts, and the BJA recognizes the efforts of the government of Bahrain in trying to eliminate the push factors and pull factors leading to violent extremism through developing and executing plans and actions supporting equality, and human rights through the creation of active bodies that promote socioeconomic opportunities, pluralism, good governance and affirmative action and the rule of law. It also, acknowledges the necessary measures taken by the Bahraini independent judiciary in any legal or illegal organizations that promote and propagate extremism, violence, and social division and promote principles inconsistent with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- xv. The BJA recognizes the efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain in propagating the rule of law with the narrowly used sovereign right of revoking the citizenships of a limited number of individuals with dual citizenships, who are acting against the spirit of pluralism and tolerance echoed in the Durban Declaration Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

- xvi. The BJA recognizes HM the King of Bahrain's directives to provide journalists with adequate housing, and calls upon the executive body to speed up the development of the housing projects for all journalists in the Kingdom of Bahrain in accordance with the principles of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
- xvii. Acknowledging the general economic situation, the BJA calls on the Government of Bahrain to provide job security measures, Health insurance, and an emergency fund for journalists due to the importance of the field of journalism in holding the essence of freedom of speech.

Recommendations

- xviii. The BJA recommends the Kingdom of Bahrain to take the following measures:
 - 1. The National Institution for Human Rights seek full accreditation
 - 2. The Legislative Council and the Government of the Bahrain to pass a comprehensive law on media and communications.



3. The Legislative Council to pass more stringent anti-discrimination and anti-discrimination laws.
4. The High Authority for Information and Communications to issue the guidelines required to clarify the professional definition of a journalist.
5. The leaders of the National Assembly to propagate the principles of freedom of speech and human rights upon its members.
6. The ministry of education to educate school students in all stages on the principles of freedom of speech and human rights.

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