



Shadow report for the Kingdom of Bahrain report Universal Periodic Review (4th session)

Manama – March 2022

Introduction:

The Bahrain Human Rights Society is a non-governmental civil society that was established in May 2001 and is registered with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development in the Kingdom of Bahrain under registration No. (142ج/ت.ث/). The Society was the first licensed society in the Kingdom of Bahrain specializing in the field of human rights.

The Society seeks to achieve, maintain, and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms contained in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the charters of the United Nations, foremost of which is the International Covenant on Human Rights, covenants, charters, declarations, and protocols issued by the United Nations and other international organizations concerned with human rights.

The Society has cooperation relations with regional and international organizations working in the field of human rights. It is a member of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, the NGO Network for Development, the International Federation for Human Rights, and the International Coalition for the International Criminal Court, and it also cooperates closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Kingdom of Bahrain submitted its national report during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2017. The Kingdom of Bahrain announced that it supported 139 out of 175 recommendations within the thematic list.

In our parallel report, we will address the essence of the recommendations and our observations on issues related to our human rights work

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A) The Law on the Exercise of Political Rights:

- 1) According to Law No. 25/2018, Article (3) of the Law on the Exercise of Political Rights No. 14/2002 was amended in June 2018 by replacing the second paragraph where the change stipulates denying candidacy for the House of Representatives for anyone who has been sentenced to a criminal penalty, even if he was rehabilitated or was granted a special pardon. Also, a person sentenced to imprisonment for more than six months is prohibited from running even if a special pardon was issued for him, as well as anyone who deliberately harmed or disrupted the course of constitutional or parliamentary life by terminating or leaving parliamentary work or whose membership was revoked for the same reasons. With this latest change, the re-election of members of political societies dissolved by court rulings has been prevented.
- 2) This amendment to the law has resulted in the permanent deprivation of many citizens from running for elections¹. The amended item (3) is considered unconstitutional in accordance with Article 20² and Article 31³ of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- 3) This ratification has been applied to members of political societies that were dissolved in 2016 and 2017, although there was no law at that time that punished members of political societies when they were dissolved, whatever method of the dissolution⁴. This leads to the conclusion that the introduced laws aim to restrict the work of opponents.⁵
- 4) **We recommend repealing the amendment under Law No. 25/2018 of the Exercising Political Rights Law No. 14/2002 as it contradicts the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the international agreements ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain, and because it detracts from the political rights of citizens.**

B) Membership of boards of directors of civil society organizations and sports clubs:

- 5) Law No. 21/1989 amended by Decree-Law No. 44/2002 regulates the work of civil society organizations and the conditions for membership of their boards of directors. In July 2018, Article (43) of this law was amended by Law No. 36/2018, where the amendment stipulated that “a member of the board of directors shall be required to enjoy all his civil and political rights,” while the original text of the article referred only to the requirement to enjoy civil rights.
- 6) The executive authority also interpreted the amendment under Law No. 25/2018 in Article No. (3) of the Political Rights Exercise Law No. 14/2002, which we referred to earlier, with great expansion, as it considered that a citizen of this category lacks full political rights due to the fact that Full political rights are a required condition for membership in the boards of directors of civil society organizations, and that a citizen within this category is not eligible to run for boards of directors of these organizations.



- 7) This means that tens of thousands of citizens who used to belong to dissolved political societies are not eligible for elections in hundreds of civil society organizations and sports clubs in Bahrain, which will undermine the essence of the work of those organizations⁶.
- 8) For example, the nomination of three names to the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Human Rights Society was rejected on the pretext that they belong to a political society that was dissolved by a court ruling, and the same was repeated with the Women's Union and dozens of clubs and charitable funds.
- 9) In April 2018, Law No. 15/2018 added a second paragraph to Article (60) of Law No. 21/1989, whereby the addition states that "a candidate for membership in the board of directors of a club or sports federation may not be affiliated with any political association." This amendment has deprived thousands of citizens who are members of active political societies, in addition to former members of dissolved political societies, from participating in the management of any sports club.
- 10) We recommend repealing Law No. 36/2018 that amends Article (43) of Law 21/1989 because it conflicts with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and with political and civil human rights under international conventions, to which the Kingdom of Bahrain is a party.**
- 11) We recommend repealing Law No. 5/2018 amending Article (60) of Law 21/1989 because it conflicts with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and with political and civil human rights under international conventions, to which the Kingdom of Bahrain is a party**

C) Establishing and managing civil society organizations and sports clubs:

- 12) Law No. 21/1989 on social and cultural societies and clubs, private bodies working in the field of youth, sports, and private institutions, amended by Decree-Law No. 44/2002, imposes strict restrictions on the establishment, management and financing of civil society organizations, and places civil society organizations under the supervision and oversight of the concerned ministry as stated in Article (33) of the law. This restricts the freedom of action of civil society organizations⁷.
- 13) It is stated in the first paragraph of Article (20) of Law No. 21/1989 that "no society may affiliate with, participate in, or join an organization, body, club or federation based outside Bahrain without prior permission from the concerned administrative authority."
- 14) It is stated in the second paragraph of Article (20) of Law No. 21/1989 that "it is not permissible for any society to obtain funds from a foreign person or a foreign entity, nor to send anything of the foregoing to persons or organizations abroad except with the permission of the concerned administrative authority." According to Ministerial Resolution No. 65/2012, any funding by a foreign or international body requires the approval of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, which usually refers the request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It takes months to get an answer, and in many cases the answer is a rejection, which results paralyzing the projects, activities, and training programs of civil society organizations for their affiliates. This further weakens the possibility of developing the work of Bahraini community organizations.
- 15) The circular of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development No. 731/48/2020 requires all civil society organizations to take the Ministry's prior approval in all offers of scholarships, training courses and field visits offered by embassies and foreign missions



to members of civil society organizations. The Ministry refers the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- 16) Article (21) of Law No. 21/1989 stipulates that civil society organizations must obtain a license from the concerned ministry before collecting donations from the public, holding events and charitable markets, or other means of raising money locally for the organization. This was also confirmed in the circular of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development No. 731/38/2020.
- 17) Article 23 of Law No. 21/1989 gives the concerned minister the right to appoint a temporary director or board of directors for any civil organization if the ministry considers that the organization has committed violations that require this appointment, and without the need to resort to the judiciary.
- 18) Article (24) of Law No. 21/1989 gives the concerned minister the right to merge more than one association working for similar purposes, unify its management, or modify its objectives if the ministry deems it necessary and without the need to resort to the judiciary.
- 19) Article (18) of Law No. 21/1989 states that civil society organizations may not “engage in politics,” which is vague and highly restrictive statement given that civil society organizations are involved in the public sphere and address issues that are related to politics in the broad sense and not to the politics of political parties. The Ministry of Labor and Social Development interprets many activities and actions as political to take punitive measures against these societies, and all of this restricts dealing with international agencies and organizations in consultation and cooperation, including meeting with foreign representatives and embarking on joint projects.
- 20) We recommend repealing Law 21/1989 and issuing a new law for civil society organizations or radically amending the current one to comply with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the ratified international conventions related to civil society organizations. It should be left to the members of civil society organizations to manage their affairs, and the judiciary should be the tool to address any violations of the law, and that legislation, policies, directives, and measures in dealing with civil society organizations and the civil society as a whole are in accordance with the constitution and ratified international conventions related to human rights.**

D) Problems in implementing the Alternative Penal Code:

- 21) Law No. 18/2017 and its amendments regarding alternative penalties and measures gave the Ministry of Interior wide powers to set eligibility conditions for alternative penalties for convicts, and thus decide on implementing alternative penalties and determine who is eligible for alternative penalties. Out of the thousands⁸ who have benefited from this law, the number of convicts for political backgrounds does not exceed dozens, despite the high number of convicts in cases of this type, which makes many convicts unable to benefit from the facilities of alternative punishments.
- 22) The actual application of the Alternative Penal Code imposes several restrictions on the beneficiaries, such as travel bans, denial of obtaining a certificate of good conduct necessary for any employment, house arrest within the residential area, and the exploit of beneficiaries as unpaid employees in jobs that are in many cases not commensurate with their qualifications or social status, or the age of the convict.



- 23) Those covered by the law of Alternative Penal Code are employed in official or semi-official institutions during official working hours without pay, which prevents the convicts from working and obtaining incomes that help them meet their living requirements, especially those who have families and are the main or only breadwinners, in addition to preventing them from participating in community life, such as preventing them from entering some areas or participating in some activities in a way that prevents the convicts from reintegrating into society on the one hand and creates additional burdens on their families by bearing the living expenses of the convict on the other hand.
- 24) We recommend that the punishment execution judge be solely empowered to decide who is eligible to benefit from alternative punishments and to choose one or more alternative punishments from among the penalties stipulated in Article (2) of the law based on objective criteria and at the request of the prisoner, his family, or his lawyer.**
- 25) We recommend amending the Alternative Penal Code in line with best practices and achieving the goal of rehabilitating the convicts and helping the convicts rely on remuneration for their work, integrate into society, and preserve their dignity.**

E) Children's Restorative Justice Law:

- 26) Law No. 4/2021 on Restorative Justice for Children and Protection from Abuse stipulates that a child who have been tried by ordinary courts must be retried before the Children's Correctional Justice Court pursuant to a retrial request submitted by the Public Prosecution. However, to date, no case under such consideration have been announced.
- 27) Despite the amendment of the law, the age of criminal responsibility for children in Bahrain is still 15 years, in contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which stipulates that the age of childhood is from birth to 18 years. There exists in Bahrain recent cases after the issuance of the law in which judgments were issued against children who, at the date of the crime in which they were accused, did not reach the legal age stipulated. One such case is that of the 16-year-old child, Sayed Hassan Ahmed Amin.
- 28) We recommend that the full age of 18 years be adopted as the age of criminal responsibility in all laws, and that those below that age are considered a child to whom Law No. 4/2021 regarding restorative justice for children applies, and to improve procedures to achieve the protection of childhood and the promotion of children's rights.**

F) The Right to a Fair Trial:

- 29) All the cases that passed through the courts, especially those with a political background and related to freedom of opinion and expression, have considered confessions suspected to have been extracted under duress or ill-treatment. In most cases, there is no material evidence to support the accusations. The verdicts were based on those confessions in addition to the statements of secret sources, and the defendants were not confronted with all the evidence⁹. Heavy sentences were passed that in many cases did not fit the actions attributed to the defendants, in addition to interrogating the defendants without the presence of a lawyer¹⁰.



30) We recommend amending the law and reviewing the procedures and practical practices in order to achieve the foundations and principles of a fair trial in accordance with United Nations charters and international standards in this regard.

G) The death penalty:

- 31) On 15th of January 2017, the death sentence was carried out on three Bahraini citizens with suspicions arising about the circumstances of their trial. The death sentence was later carried out on three other citizens on 27th of July 2019.
- 32) There is a list of 16 death row prisoners awaiting His Majesty the King's ratification of the death sentences to be executed, and BHRS kindly appeal to His Majesty not to ratify this list.

33) We recommend a moratorium on executions and the abolition of the death penalty from Bahrain's legislation.

H) Revocation of Nationality:

- 34) During the past years, several rulings and decisions were issued revoking the citizenship of 990 Bahraini citizens, including former MPs and human rights activists. His Majesty the King decided to reverse the effect of some of those provisions and decisions by re-establishing the citizenships of 551 of those whose citizenships had been stripped.
- 35) The revocation of citizenship was used as a punishment that affected even the families of those stripped of their citizenship. New-born children were denied citizenship, housing applications were canceled, their families were treated as stateless, and all rights related to citizenship were forfeited.

36) We recommend changing the laws and procedures to ensure that citizenship is not revoked, and the re-instatement of citizenship to those who have stripped from them.

I) Freedom of political activities:

- 37) Despite what is stipulated in Article (27)¹¹ and Article (31)¹² of the Constitution, and despite what has been stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain by Law No. 56/2006 (paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of Article (22)¹³), and even though the Kingdom of Bahrain has ratified the international conventions related to freedom of organization and political action, nevertheless, Law No. 26/2005 on political societies sets strict conditions for the licensing and operation of political societies, which do not constitute the same level as political parties in any case¹⁴.
- 38) The law entrusts the Ministry of Justice with the supervision and control over political societies and their prosecution before the High Civil Court, where criminal procedures could reach the dissolution of the society and the liquidation of its property. This is in fact an arbitrary power of the executive authority that enables it to restrict the freedom of political activities in general. Accordingly, the main opposition societies¹⁵ were dissolved in 2016 and 2017.



39) We recommend that Law No. 26/2005 be abolished and that the formation of any political party or association be subject to the will of the founders in accordance with the constitution and international covenants, and that the judiciary be the arbiter and reference on any lawsuits against political organizations.

J) Freedom of the press and expression:

- 40) Decree-Law No. 47/2002 regulating the press, printing and publishing includes many restrictions on the freedom of the press, printing, and publishing. There are many demands to amend the law and remove the restrictions contained therein and other laws. For example, Article (70)¹⁶ of this decree stipulates a restriction on freedom of expression related to the work of public officials.
- 41) Furthermore, a restriction was mentioned in Clause “B” of Article (70) so that law enforcers can apply this article and hold accountable any criticism directed at the Legislative Council, courts, other statutory bodies, or any of the bodies mentioned in the text of the previous article, which severely restricts the freedom of criticism. It is evident from previous experiences that the restriction of freedoms is expanded, and the legal texts extended through which it is possible to escalate pressure on opponents and restrict freedoms. Based on such interpretations, the former Secretary General of the dissolved National Action Society was sentenced¹⁷.
- 42) The Ministry of Information Affairs also issued a decision to suspend the issuance of the Bahraini newspaper, Al-Wasat, for an indefinite period. Al-Wasat was independent of the government, which was also confirmed by the report of the Bahrain Commission for Inquiry issued on 23rd November 2011 in Item No. 141588.
- 43) It is also clear from the text of Article (364)¹⁸ of Decree-Law No. 15/1976 related to the Penal Code that there is a restriction on freedom of publication with vague, rubbery texts. The text criminalizes the attribution of a fact that would make the other party subject to punishment and contempt, and frees the hand of law enforcers to interpret and assess any act and adapt it within that scope. This was applied to several activists and tweeters¹⁹.
- 44) We recommend repealing Law No. 47/2002 and issuing a new modern law for the press, printing and publishing that guarantees the freedom of the press and journalists to deal with public affairs, based on the relevant international covenants.**
- 45) We recommend that the text of Decree-Law No. 15/1976 relating to the Penal Code be amended and that the penalty be limited to a fine only.**

K) Right of peaceful assembly:

- 46) Law No. 32/2006 regarding assembly and demonstration severely restricts the freedom of assemblies and marches. Article (11) of the law has been amended to prohibit marches and gatherings in the capital governorate Manama²⁰. Marches in front of malls, hospitals, airports and places of a security nature were also prohibited. With a quick review, this restriction includes most of Bahrain's regions and constrains marches to specific places far from the eyes. The use of vehicles in rallies was also banned to impose a restriction on rallies that were frequently launched in Bahrain.



- 47) From 2017 to date, no march or sit-in opposing official directions has been authorized, except for two sit-ins, one of which was held in the morning in front of the “Bahraini Society for Resisting Normalization with the Zionist Enemy”, and the other for the same purpose was held in a square located in the Busaiteen area in Muharraq Governorate during the year 2021²¹.
- 48) We recommend amending laws to enhance the right of peaceful assembly and peaceful marches in accordance with the constitution and international conventions, and adopting the principle of notification to organize assemblies and marches instead of prior approval.**

L) Elected authority:

- 49) The internal regulation of the House of Representatives affected several changes and legal amendments that express a tendency to restrict the originally restricted authority, due to the presence of a non-elected Shura Council with the same number of members and powers in legislation. This weakened even the parliamentary tools that were long considered relatively weak anyways and in need of further reform to develop the 20-year-old parliamentary experience.
- 50) For example, Article (173) which added restrictions limiting the general parliamentary discussion so that the number of debaters does not exceed 10 members, and the member’s discussion does not exceed five minutes only for each member, and criticism, blame or accusation may not be directed, or include statements that violates the constitution or the law, or constitutes a violation of the dignity of persons or bodies, or harms the higher interest of the country. It is clear from the text of the article that loose restrictions have been placed that can be adapted to any interpretation desired by the government on that discussion, summarized in not violating the constitution, harming government bodies, or harming the higher interest of the country
- 51) We recommend that the legislative and oversight authority be limited to the elected House of Representatives, and the role of the appointed Shura Council is only to give advice to the government.**
- 52) We recommend amending the House of Representatives' internal regulations to achieve the effectiveness in the House's activities regarding legislation and oversight**

M) Constituencies and inequality of citizens:

- 53) The executive authority redrew the electoral districts in the Kingdom of Bahrain with the result that the elections reduced the chances of opponents and reformists, as most of the successful candidates in those elections were individuals not affiliated with any of the active organizations in the Bahraini society, and the political blocs receded within the elected chamber.
- 54) The new division of districts did not take into account any statistical justification or geographical or social unity by uprooting housing complexes from their current geographical and social unity and joining them to complexes and electoral districts with social and geographical orientations that are far removed from their inclinations, and in some cases makes the inequality stark, with severe deviation in some districts and in contravention of the well-established universal principle one vote for every citizen²².



- 55) As an example, according to the voter lists in the 2014 elections, the number of voters in the tenth district in the southern governorate amounted to 2,368, while the number of voters in the eleventh district in the northern governorate was 12,341 voters. This is a difference of six times and in violation the principle of equitable distribution of constituencies and the principle of one vote for each voter.
- 56) We recommend that the current electoral district distribution decree be amended, and the electoral districts be re-defined by law so that the principle of equitable distribution of electoral districts is realized in accordance with international standards and the principle of one vote per voter.**

Footnotes:

- 1) It is prohibited to run for membership in the House of Representatives for: 3 - Actual leaders and members of political societies dissolved by a final ruling for violating the provisions of the Kingdom's constitution or any of its laws. 4- Whoever intentionally harms or disrupts the course of constitutional or parliamentary life by terminating or leaving the representative work in the Assembly, or whose membership has been revoked for the same reasons.
- 2) Article (20) of the Constitution stipulates that: "A- There is no crime or punishment except on the basis of a law, and there is no punishment except for acts that follow the implementation of the law that stipulates them."
- 3) Article (31) of the Constitution states the following: "The regulation or limitation of public rights and freedoms stipulated in this Constitution shall only be by a law or based on it. Regulation or limitation may not affect the essence of the right or freedom."
- 4) The preceding articles permanently prohibits members of the dissolved political societies from their political right to run for elections, as well as those who used resignation from parliamentary work as a means of expressing their objections, or those whose membership have been revoked for violating the bylaws, such as putting forward an issue that affects a governmental body or the loose national interest.
- 5) For example, candidate Ibrahim Bahr was prevented from running for the elected council in 2018 on the pretext of his affiliation with the Wa'ad Society, which was dissolved in 2017 by a court ruling, and the same was true of Mr. Muhammad Hassan Al-Aradi when he expressed his desire to run for the same elections.
- 6) In accordance with the directive of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development for Civil Society Organizations (Circular No. 2020/36/731), the list of candidates for civil society elections must be sent to the Societies Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development for examination by the Ministry of Interior to ensure that the candidates are not former members of the dissolved political societies. In many cases, the candidates were rejected, forcing many associations to amend and change the names of the candidates submitted to the Ministry.
- 7) The Ministry of Labor and Social Development requires NGOs covered by Law 21/1989 before holding the general assembly to send to the ministry the following: 1- The activities report, 2- The audited financial report, 3- The list of candidates for Board elections, 4- The list of qualified society members, all within 15 days before the general assembly. It is up to the Ministry to approve these reports or to object to one or more reports. Thus, the convening of the general assembly is postponed until the ministry approves the changes that have been dictated. We note as well that the representative of the Ministry can attend the meetings of the General Assembly.
- 8) According to the official statements published by First Lieutenant Yousef Abdullah Al-Sheikh in the Bahraini Al-Ayyam newspaper in the issue published on 26th of September 2021, the number of detainees benefiting from the Alternative Penal Code until that date is 3,552 convicts.
- 9) As occurred in the trial of Sheikh Ali Salman, Secretary-General of the dissolved Al-Wefaq Islamic Society, where he was sentenced to life imprisonment.
- 10) It is important to note that most of those who were interrogated stated in their statements that they were asked if they had a lawyer and they answered in the negative, bearing in mind that lawyers when present



with the accused must refrain from alerting their client about any of their statements or advice then not to answer any of the questions directed to them, and the be content with just their formal presence in the investigation room.

- 11) Article 27 of the Bahrain Constitution stipulates that “the freedom to form societies and unions, on national bases and for legitimate aims and by peaceful means, is guaranteed in accordance with the terms and conditions specified by law, provided that the foundations of religion and public order are not violated. No one may be compelled to join any society or union, or to continue s member.”
- 12) Article 31 of the Bahrain constitution stipulates that “the regulation or limitation of the rights and public freedoms stipulated in this constitution shall only be by a law, or based on it. It shall not be permissible for regulation or limitation to affect the essence of the right or freedom.”
- 13) “1. Everyone has the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of their interests. 2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those provided by law which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of security national security, public safety, or public order”.
- 14) There are several laws restricting this right, in addition to the restrictions mentioned previously, such as the issue of licensing political work and oversight over what is stated in the statute of the organizations. Furthermore, there is absence of a law regulating the work of parties. We note that a political society cannot operate without obtaining official approval from the state and that requires a review of its statute, founding elements and other restrictions that give the executive authority many powers, including freezing and referral to the judiciary.
- 15) Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, the largest political association, which had 18 out of 40 parliamentarians, was dissolved on the 17th of July 2016, the National Democratic Action Society on 31st of May 2017, and the Islamic Action Society 10th of July 2012, and tens of thousands of members of these associations, even those who had previously resigned, were subsequently stripped of their political and civil rights by permanent deprivation of work and engagement in political and public affairs, depriving them of running for parliamentary and municipal elections or civil society organizations, and preventing their participation in some seminars and events.
- 16) “Without prejudice to any more severe penalty stipulated in the Penal Code or any other law, the penalty provided for in the previous article shall be imposed on publishing what includes: a) Slander of the king or head of an Arab or Islamic country, or any other country that exchanges diplomatic representation with the Kingdom of Bahrain. b) insulting or humiliating any legislative council, courts, or other statutory bodies; c) Publishing false news or fake or forged papers attributed in bad faith to third parties whenever such publication would disturb public security or cause damage to a public interest. d) Publishing news about secret official communications, or statements about the defense force whose broadcast would result in harm to the public interest, or if the government has prohibited their publication, and the penalty is doubled if the crime is committed in time of war or during a general or partial mobilization of the Bahrain Defense Force. Criminal procedures may not be taken in the cases stipulated in Clause (B) of this Article, except at the request of the head of the authority or the concerned authority.”
- 17) Ibrahim Sharif El-Sayed, the former Secretary-General of the dissolved National Action Society and a former prisoner of conscience, was sentenced to a 6-month suspended prison sentence because he demanded in his tweet the departure of the former ruler of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, as the head of a friendly Arab state following the revolution of the Sudanese people, which is what happened subsequently, but the ruling remained in place.
- 18) Whoever accuses another, by any means of publicity, an incident that makes the other party subject to punishment or contempt, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or a fine not exceeding two hundred dinars. The penalty shall be imprisonment and a fine or one of these two penalties if the slander occurs against a public official during, because of, or during the performance of his job, or if it harms honor or the reputation of families, or if it is noted that an unlawful purpose has been achieved. If the defamation occurred by way of publication in a newspaper or publication, it shall be considered an aggravating circumstance.
- 19) For example, the opposition blogger Yousef Al-Khaja, who was referred to the judiciary, and Article (364) of Decree-Law No. 15/1976 was applied against him, and he was fined following his public request from the official authorities to hold a person accountable for insulting a wide section of the society.
- 20) The headquarters of international organizations are excluded from the ban on marches, if there is a special written permission from the Head of Public Security.
- 21) The marches were stopped on international occasions, such as the International Labor Day march that the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions used to hold every year. Seminars were banned for Ibrahim



Sharif Al-Sayed in headquarter of political societies, as were others, on the pretext of their affiliation with political societies that were dissolved according to court rulings.

- 22) For example, the capital Manama, in its old borders, had 6 electoral districts, 4 of which were within the sphere of opposition influence. As for Manama in its current electoral map, and with some extensions in the area of Bilad-Alqadeem on one side, and Al-Burhamah on the other, consists of four districts distributed equally between its opposition and non-opposing sides. It is also clear that the new distribution has apparently managed to “redress” many of the inter-representative differences that previously existed regionally or between the residents. It has significantly reduced the “deviations from the average representation” at the country level by more than half. From its high level of 4226 eligible voters in 2010 fell to 2,075 in 2014. However, what has changed in reality is something more radical than the size of representation. The size of the electorate blocs in the two groups of districts has changed when compared to their previous sizes. These blocs have changed a lot and in two different directions. The bloc of the opposition circles, instead of growing, has shrunk by 1.2%, in contrast to the emergence of an increase in the other group of political circles. The percentage of the current increase in this segment between the two years is 24.13%, by dissolving opposition voices in population circles with a high density of loyalists, in order to dissolve these votes and lose their electoral weight.