

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain



Alsalam Foundation

**THE TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT OF PRISONERS IN DETENTION IN THE
BAHRAIN**

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**Joint Submission to the United Nations
Universal Periodic Review
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I. Submitting Organization

1. The following submission has been prepared by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) based on data collection carried out by this organization, and information received from independent human rights defenders in Bahrain. ADHRB is a non-profit organization that fosters awareness of, and support for, democracy and human rights in Bahrain and the wider Gulf region. ADHRB has repeatedly requested permission to formally visit Bahrain to consult with official human rights bodies, such as the National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR) but has so far been denied access. The government of Bahrain has declined every opportunity to cooperate with ADHRB on any level.

II. Introduction and Key Concerns

2. This submission documents the Bahraini government's use of torture in violation of international law and demonstrates the centrality of torture in maintaining the authoritarian style of governance and its chilling effect on the exercise and protection of human rights in Bahrain. Security forces regularly use violence and intimidation to extract false confessions, extrajudicially punish detainees, and suppress dissent.
3. Such practices violate the government's freely undertaken obligations within international treaties and have become a systematic pattern of torture documented by human rights organizations and international institutions.

III. Bahrain's International and National legal framework regarding Torture and the treatment of prisoners

4. As a State Party to various UN human rights treaties, Bahrain has international obligations to prevent torture, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ("CAT") and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR") establish the international standards regarding the prohibition of torture. Even though Bahrain has been a State Party to the CAT since March 6, 1998,¹ the Bahraini government has not taken any further actions to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CAT despite the pressure

¹ UN Treaty Collection, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtmsg_no=IV-9&chapter=4&clang=en.

exercised by the international community. In addition, the Government of Bahrain did not ratify the two Optional Protocols to the ICCPR.² As a member of the United Nations (UN) since 1971, Bahrain is also obligated to follow the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, which were adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly resolution 45/111 of 14 December 1990. Moreover, in December 2015, the UN General Assembly revised the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners also known as “the Mandela Rules.” The latter constitutes the universally acknowledged minimum standards for the management of prison facilities and the treatment of prisoners.

5. Domestically, Bahraini legislation forbids any form of torture. Article 19(d) of the Bahraini Constitution states, “no person shall be subjected to physical or mental torture, inducement, or degrading treatment, and the law shall provide the penalty for these acts.” Moreover, any statement or confession which has been made under torture shall be null and void. The Bahrain Penal Code of 1976 contains two additional provisions criminalizing the use of torture by public officials. Article 208 establishes the penalty of life imprisonment for any civil servant or officer whose “use of torture or force lead[s] to death.” Article 232 includes the penalty of “at least six months” imprisonment for any use of torture or force that “results in harming the safety of the body.” Furthermore, Article 2 of the Code of Conduct for Police Officers outlines the duties of police officers, which include “a zero-tolerance policy on torture and any other type of mistreatment” and a duty to safeguard the health of all detainees.

III. Bahrain’s Systematic Use of Torture

² UN Treaty Collection, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?chapter=4&clang=en&mtdsg_no=IV-4&src=IND.

6. United Nations Special Procedures has received six communications of torture allegations in Bahrain from February 2020 to date.³ In addition, on June 22, 2021, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders expressed concern about the poor treatment that three human rights defenders faced during their detention.⁴ Bahraini officials have tended to use excessive and unjustifiable force while arresting persons, especially those who face politically motivated charges. Bahrain uses torture and ill-treatment as a deterrent against its citizens to avoid any form of dissent against the regime. Furthermore, torture is the most recurrent interrogation method used by Bahraini security forces to extract false confessions.
7. The CAT in its concluding observation on the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain, highlighted its concern for the numerous cases of torture and ill-treatment in the country.⁵ The Committee was also concerned regarding the prevailing climate of impunity among Bahraini officials responsible for torture resulting, *inter alia*, in death.
8. During the 3rd UPR cycle, Bahrain welcomed many recommendations related to torture. For instance, Bahrain accepted recommendations aiming to investigate all allegations of torture and to prosecute responsible individuals. However, nothing has been done in this regard, revealing the contradictions in Bahrain's acceptance of the international recommendations and its actions at home. Bahrain also welcomed recommendations to grant the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment the permit to enter the country, but the Bahraini government is yet to extend such an invitation.
9. The human rights situation has further deteriorated and in the last four years, the torture allegations in Bahrain have been numerous and consistent in their gravity. Since 2011,

³ See communications: 05 Feb 2020 Bahrain JAL [BHR 1/2020](#), 02 Mar 2020 Bahrain JAL [BHR 2/2020](#), 29 Jun 2020 Bahrain JAL [BHR 3/2020](#), 29 Jul 2020 Bahrain JUA [BHR 4/2020](#), 03 May 2021 Bahrain JAL [BHR 2/2021](#), 28 Jun 2021 Bahrain JAL [BHR 1/2021](#).

⁴ OHCHR, *Bahrain: UN expert alarmed by prolonged detention of human rights defenders*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27190&LangID=E>

⁵ CAT, Concluding observation on the second and third period reports of Bahrain, 29 May 2017, <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPRiCAqhKb7yhsqYPuFZC34VM6MoD0MvS%2BS%2BhcJl3TUrOvvF%2FGuWWUtDMNTj4lYASRqLw7nbC8lC8S25V04LGI8FMQtufqvlxyVSqBsgx3LVglkCx%2BAGXg%2BL>

83% of the individuals executed⁶ - all of whom were convicted of terrorism charges due to their political activity - alleged to be subjected to serious forms of torture.⁷ Currently, 12 individuals are facing imminent execution for terrorism-related offenses, and 92% of them allegedly suffered torture by the Bahraini authorities.⁸ In addition, at least 27% of them allege that they were convicted based on false confessions extracted through torture.⁹

10. Bahraini authorities continue to inflict various forms of torture, including blindfolding and handcuffing, forced standing, sleep deprivation, severe beatings, the use of electroshock devices and cigarette burns, beating soles of feet, verbal abuse and threats of rape, sexual abuse, and rape, hanging, solitary confinement, exposure to extreme temperatures and other humiliating and degrading techniques.¹⁰
11. In 2021, ADHRB documented around 27 cases of brutal torture perpetrated by Bahraini authorities. These individuals faced inhumane physical and psychological torture. For instance, Sayed Mujtaba Al-Khabbaz was 18 years old when he was arrested in 2020 without a warrant. He was taken incommunicado for many hours and then charged with terrorism-related activities. During his interrogation, Sayed was stripped of his clothes, electrocuted on his genitals, and threatened with sexual assault. The brutal physical and psychological forms of torture Sayed faced, including electroshock, various beating through bastons and kicks on his ears and abdomen, forced staying in a cold room, and lack of food, resulted in the loss of 7 kg of weight in ten days from his arrest.
12. Sayed Redha Fadhul was 15 years old when he was arrested without a warrant in 2020. Sayed Redha was disappeared for more than a month during which he went through severe physical and psychological torture. Sayed Redha was sentenced to 15 years in prison. During the interrogation stage, which ended with Sayed Redha's collapse and his

⁶Jeed Basyouni (2021). *From uprisings to executions: The death penalty in Bahrain, ten years on from the Arab Spring*, page.3 [online] Reprieve. Available at: <https://reprieve.org/uk/2021/07/27/death-penalty-in-bahrain/> [Accessed 26 Jan. 2022].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Patterns of Torture in Bahrain: Perpetrators must Face Justice A Report by the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR). (2021). [online] Available at: <https://usercontent.one/wp/www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/GCHR-Patterns-of-Torture-in-Bahrain-16-March-2021-En.-FF.pdf>.

testimony extracted under various forms of torture, Sayed Redha was placed in solitary isolation for about a month. He was deprived of sleep, subjected to brutal physical torture and psychological pressure through constant interrogations. In addition, he was threatened with being electroshocked and raped. Each of these severe violations have enormous consequences because of their infliction on a minor of only 15 years.

13. Hasan Hameed Meshaimea was also arrested in 2020 without a warrant. During his arrest, Hasan was physically attacked, stripped of his clothes, and threatened by two men carrying metal sticks. Hasan was charged with joining a terrorist cell and related crimes. On October 2, 2020, he was interrogated for ten days in which he faced various forms of torture, losing 5kg in weight. Hasan was handcuffed throughout the investigation period, he was deprived of sleep, and first placed in a space with extremely cold temperatures and then in one with very high temperatures. He was subjected to threats, such as subjecting his wife to the same treatment, and advised to avoid talking about the torture he faced. He was dramatically beaten, especially on his head and back. He was prevented from praying and deprived of the use of the bathroom. Furthermore, he was the victim of severe insults directed toward him and his family.

14. The aforementioned cases of torture are but a fraction of what ADHRB has recently documented. Bahraini authorities have also targeted family members of activists and victims as other forms of reprisal. In some instances, officials have intimidated relatives of victims in an attempt to dissuade them from seeking accountability for the abuse of their family members. In other cases, the government has targeted individuals simply for being related to a human rights defender or opposition figure. This is, by now, the ordinary way in which Bahraini authorities target any form of dissent against the regime.

IV. Systematic mistreatment of inmates in Bahraini prisons

15. On 15 August 2019, prisoners in Dry Dock Detention Center and in Jau Prison began a hunger strike to protest abusive conditions. These included prisoners being kept behind glass walls preventing them from contacting their families during family visits and

continuous religious discrimination with guards humiliating and insulting prisoners' religious practices and beliefs. Inmates have also protested prison guard brutality including random beatings and degrading physical abuse. While poor detention conditions are nothing new in Bahraini detention centers, since 2017, the situation has worsened, particularly for political prisoners. For example, it has been widely reported that Bahrain's prisons administration has actively prevented political prisoners and activists from receiving medical care.

16. On 1 November 2019, eight UN Special Rapporteurs expressed serious concern for human rights violations in Bahraini prisons, including restrictions on religious practices and family visits.¹¹ The experts underlined a series of acts of mistreatment aimed at intimidating prisoners charged for political reasons. Bahraini prison authorities subject these political prisoners to unjustifiable treatment such as physical assaults, deprivation of sleep, deprivation of contact with familiars, lack of medical care, restriction of time outside, and denial of drinking water. Furthermore, prisoners report instances of limited or no access to lawyers, and terrible hygienic conditions that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Threats of rape and sexual assaults are also systematically used against prisoners.

17. The denial of adequate medical care is a recurrent issue in Bahraini prisons. On 18 September 2019, four UN Special Procedures offices sent an allegation letter to the government of Bahrain regarding the denial of medical care to prisoners in Jau Prison.¹² The UN experts brought to the attention of the Bahraini government ten detailed cases of prisoners who, despite their serious health conditions, were denied any medical treatment. Prisoners such as Mr. Hassan Mushaima, who was diagnosed with cancer before his arrest in 2011 and who also suffers from multiple health conditions including diabetes, has been denied appropriate medical care. In the case of Dr. Abduljalil AlSingace, another political prisoner who, despite having multiple disabling and life-threatening health problems from polio, has been deprived of adequate medical treatments since

¹¹ See UN experts' communication at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24917>

¹² See UN experts' communication at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24768>

October 2018.

18. The situation in the Bahraini prisons has deteriorated due to the Covid-19 outbreak. A clear example of the failure of the Bahraini government in addressing this grave issue is the death of several inmates from suspected Covid-19 complications. A recent case involves Husain Barakat, who was imprisoned after a grossly unfair trial and died on 9 June 2021 as a result of contracting Covid-19. Despite an earlier outbreak of Covid-19 at the Bahraini detention centers in March and April 2021, family members informed international NGOs that the Bahraini prisons administration had still failed to distribute face masks or hand sanitizer to protect prisoners. They further reported that inmates were prevented from calling families, sometimes for up to several weeks. In addition, overcrowding in Bahrain's prisons is a long-standing concern that continues to make social distancing impossible.

19. The unnecessary use of brutal violence has become a method of reprisal against inmates. On 30 April 2021, The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released a briefing note on the "unnecessary and disproportionate force" used by authorities in Jau prison on 17 April 2021 to dismantle a peaceful sit-in.¹³ According to the OHCHR, special forces threw stun grenades and severely beat detainees on their heads, injuring many of them. The authorities have taken thirty-three protestors to another building in the prison, keeping them incommunicado and prohibiting contact with families or lawyers. The peaceful protest started on April 5, after political prisoner Abbas Malallah died as a consequence of being denied timely access to essential healthcare.

20. Another relevant issue in the Bahraini prisons is the psychological and sexual abuses that female political prisoners face. Between April and May 2017, Ebtisam AlSaegh and Najah Yusuf suffered the most severe forms of mistreatment at the hands of NSA officers, including torture, sexual assault, and rape.¹⁴ The women's testimonies show that throughout the arrest process, officials threatened them with rape or death, and many of

¹³ See briefing note of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=27042&LangID=E>

¹⁴ Breaking the Silence Bahraini Women Political Prisoners Expose Systemic Abuses. (n.d.). [online] Available at: https://usercontent.one/wp/www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ADHRB_BreakingTheSilence_Web.pdf.

them said they were physically assaulted with beatings, kicks, and punches. Other forms of ill-treatment reported included prolonged solitary confinement, forced standing, and being held in cold or dark rooms in painful positions for several hours.

21. In Bahraini prisons freedom of religion is also constantly targeted. On 8 August 2020, in a broadcasted voice recording from prison, the human rights activist Naji Fateel affirmed that he, along with around 500 other political prisoners in Buildings 13 and 14 of Jau Prison, would be going on a hunger strike protesting the administration's ban on Shia religious rituals. On 10 August, Fateel, along with five other prisoners – Sadiq Al-Ghasra, Mohamed Fakhrawi, Sheikh Zuhair Abbas, Mohamed Sarhan, and Ali Abdul Husain Al-Wazir – were transferred to Building 15 as a form of reprisal for having mobilized the other inmates. ADHRB received information that these individuals were each placed in a cell with three other inmates, all migrant Asian prisoners. Each cell is granted an hour in the yard at separate times and therefore, these individuals cannot meet each other or any other Bahraini prisoner and are surrounded solely by their cellmates who do not share their language, culture, or religion.

22. Human Rights Watch has discovered the heinous brutality of the Bahraini authorities towards children, who they threatened with rape and electric shocks.¹⁵ Police and prosecutors refused to allow parents or lawyers of the children, ages 11 to 17, to be present during their interrogations, and during unnecessary, judicially ordered detention. Bahraini police officers continue to commit grave abuses against children, terrorizing them and forcing them to confess for crimes they never committed, while prosecutors and judges shut parents and lawyers out of proceedings. According to information from family members and the Bahraini rights advocate Ebtisam al-Saegh, police arrested and detained 13 children in early to mid-February 2021. Bahraini police arrested children for allegedly burning bicycle tires, chairs, or blocking a road. Children are also accused of planting a fake bomb, vandalism, and throwing Molotov cocktails in November 2020. If convicted, some of the children could face sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Police Beat, Threaten Children. Parents, Lawyers Barred from Interrogations, Hearings." March 2021.

23. The cases of mistreatment in the Bahraini prisons are a fraction of what ADHRB has recently documented. Bahraini authorities have also targeted family members of activists and victims as another form of reprisal. Officials intimidate relatives of victims to dissuade them from seeking accountability for the abuse of their family members held in prisons. In other cases, the government has targeted individuals with forms of mistreatments and threats simply for being related to human rights defenders or opposition figures. This is, by now, the ordinary way in which Bahraini prison authorities deal with inmates. Despite its formal acceptance of international standards, the government of Bahrain is committing serious human rights violations under the eyes of the international community.

V. Ineffectiveness of National Human Rights Bodies and Control Mechanisms

24. In response to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), the government of Bahrain created three oversight human rights bodies: the Office of the Ombudsman to the Ministry of the Interior (“MoI”), the Special Investigation Unit (“SIU”), and the National Institute for Human Rights (“NIHR”). However, these institutions lack fundamental independence from the monarchy and transparency. They are ineffective in their attempts to investigate and prosecute law enforcement officials, instead contributing to the cover-up and white washing of human rights abuses including torture, ill-treatment, and inappropriate use of force by security forces. However, they have been ineffective in their attempts to investigate and prosecute law enforcement officials, contributing to cover-ups and whitewashing further human rights abuses.

25. The Ombudsman’s purpose is to ensure that employees of the MoI respect human rights.¹⁶ Specifically, the Ombudsman should oversee the treatment of prisoners and detainees and ensure that they are free from torture, inhumane, or degrading treatment.¹⁷ However, the Ombudsman does not abide by its own mandate because it lacks

¹⁶ Ministry of the Interior, Bahrain Independent Ombudsman, First Annual Report 2013/2014. Manama, Bahrain, 2014.

¹⁷ Ibid.

independence as it is under the supervision of the MoI, and effectively reviews complaints against itself. The Ombudsman has ignored complaints against the MoI by classifying them as 1) not concerning the MoI, 2) resolved, or 3) not upheld. In July 2021, the Ombudsman asserted that multiple cases relating to detainees who had been held incommunicado were beyond its remit, despite its clear statutory mandate to investigate all violations of law by the MoI personnel.¹⁸

26. In September 2021, credible reports were submitted to the Ombudsman alleging that a guard in Jau Prison had beaten and tortured Ali AbdulHusain al-Wazeer, breaking many of his bones. Yet, the Ombudsman's statements have framed al-Wazeer as an attempted murderer, and the officer who assaulted him as the victim

27. The ineffectiveness of the Ombudsman can also be seen in the case of Ebrahim Ali Ismaeel. Ebrahim's family submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman since they were prevented from communicating with him for a long time. The Ombudsman replied telling Ebrahim's family that Ebrahim refused to talk to anyone. Nevertheless, nobody contacted Ebrahim on behalf of the Ombudsman, rather, the prison administration prevented Ebrahim from contacting his family. Ebrahim's family later contacted the Ombudsman again to transfer Ebrahim to the hospital when he became severely ill. However, nothing was done in this regard.

28. The Ombudsman tends to systematically ignore complaints regarding torture and the mistreatment of prisoners. In the very few cases where the Ombudsman has acted, its follow-ups have been ineffective. In the Ombudsman's seventh annual report, statistics showed that in the reporting period 2019-2020, it received a total of 890 complaints and assistance requests.¹⁹ No cases were launched by the Ombudsman by its own initiative, underscoring the institution's continued reluctance to take a more active role in investigating police abuses. Out of the 890 cases, only 23 were transferred to the SIU, 25 referred to the security prosecution, and only 2 to the disciplinary committee.²⁰ This

¹⁸ Amnesty International, "Bahrain 2020", 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-northafrica/bahrain/report-bahrain/>.

¹⁹ The Office of the Ombudsman to the Ministry of the Interior, "Seventh Annual Report 2019-2020", 2020, <https://www.ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/magazine/2019-2020/en/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

equates to the Ombudsman's Office pursuing accountability measures for gross rights violations in only a mere five percent of cases raised over the reporting period, and thus depicts how the Ombudsman lacks the will to implement its own mandate, rendering it ineffective in holding perpetrators accountable.

29. The SIU is a mechanism that determines the accountability of those in government who have committed unlawful or negligent acts resulting in the death, torture, and mistreatment of civilians. The investigations should include those in the chain of command, military and civilian, who are found to be responsible under international standards of "superior responsibility."²¹ Nevertheless, the SIU, like the Ombudsman, has a poor record of following-up cases, and even when perpetrators are referred to courts, they tend either to get acquitted or receive very lenient sentences.
30. In the few circumstances in which the SIU does investigate, it does not perform its duties in an effective manner. This can be seen in the case of Hasan Hameed Meshamea. The SIU met with Hasan and took his statement regarding the torture allegations. However, when Hasan's lawyer later read out the report to Hasan, he realized that many details of the torture that he was subjected to were omitted. The SIU is notorious for this covering up of information, failing to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes, and further contributing to the culture of impunity that leaves victims of torture without compensation.
31. In 2015, the NIHR was established to focus on the promotion, development, and protection of human rights and to ensure that human rights are practiced independently and freely according to the Paris Principles of 1993. However, the NIHR remains closely connected to the government and therefore lacks the required ability to ensure the confidence of victims of human rights violations. In practice, the NIHR fails to address cases of torture and ill-treatment in detention facilities. The Sub-Committee on Accreditation ("SCA") of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions ("GANHRI") reported in 2016 that the NIHR failed to comply with multiple aspects of the Paris Principles, including the independence of the member selection process and

²¹ BICI Unit, 2012, "Decision (8) of 2012: Establishing a Special Investigations Unit," <http://www.biciunit.bh/en/decision-of-creating-SIU.html>.

transparency of visits to sites of alleged human rights violations.²²

32. The appointment and termination of NIHR members are decided through royal decrees, preventing NIHR's full independence. Moreover, the NIHR does not disclose any information regarding its financial support or its spending, violating the guidelines developed by the OHCHR.²³ Besides this lack of transparency regarding its funds, local sources suggest that the NIHR is solely funded by the king, further compromising its independence and reliability.
33. In 2018, the NIHR received 109 complaints however, it did not state the results of these complaints, and it is not clear if there was any follow-up or investigations on them. Moreover, since 2018, the NIHR stopped publishing its annual reports, although it is mandated to publish one every year. Whereas the absence of an annual report makes the NIHR even more opaque, previous reports have also pointed to a lack of a critical analysis of human rights abuses.
34. The NIHR does very little when it comes to dealing with complaints to ameliorate the situation of prisoners. This can be seen in the case of prisoner Mohamed Hasan Abdulla who suffered from severe stomach pain and blood in his urine. He did not receive the necessary medications or the special meals that he needed for his condition and was instead placed in isolation which caused his health to deteriorate further. ADHRB filed a complaint to the NIHR raising his case and the NIHR replied that as of that day he would receive the needed medications and meals. Nevertheless, nothing was done, and Mohamed informed his family days after the NIHR's reply that he remains in isolation deprived of medications and his special meals. ADHRB then filed various complaints regarding his case, but no response has been received.
35. Based upon the above analysis, it is clear that the respective human rights institutions have failed to conduct their mandate in an impartial, transparent, and effective manner. Many victims and their families have even reported to ADHRB that they do not wish to use these mechanisms as they are afraid of reprisal. Hence, torture and the mistreatment

²² ADHRB, "Bahrain NIHR Not Accredited Under Paris Principles," 2016, <https://www.adhrb.org/2016/08/10714/>.

²³ OHCHR, "Assessing the Effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions," <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NHRIen.pdf>, p. 12.

of prisoners continues to take place in Bahrain as perpetrators are not held accountable and victims are not getting compensated nor are they receiving the necessary treatment that they are entitled to. This further propagates the culture of impunity in the country. Although Bahrain has accepted recommendations 114.17, 114.39, 114.40, 114.41, 114.83, 114.80, 114.81, 114.87, and 114.94 in its 3rd UPR cycle, it has failed to implement them despite claims to the contrary.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations.

36. Although the Government of Bahrain accepted most of its Third UPR Cycle recommendations to criminalize and end mistreatment of prisoners, it has wholly failed to implement them. The government has formally prohibited mistreatment, but it has demonstrated a total unwillingness to enforce these laws. Prison authorities continue to mistreat prisoners by, *inter alia*, denying them medical treatment, prohibiting them from contacting their families, and prohibiting Shia prisoners from practicing their religion. Consequently, mistreatment remains a prevalent feature of Bahrain's criminal justice system.
37. Additionally, although the Government of Bahrain accepted most of its 3rd UPR cycle recommendations to criminalize and end torture, it has fundamentally failed to do so. The government has formally prohibited torture and nominally improved its legal framework, but it has demonstrated an inherent unwillingness to enforce such laws. Rather, security personnel continue to regularly inflict torture with impunity. Consequently, torture and ill-treatment remain a constant feature of the Bahraini criminal justice system, particularly in politically motivated cases.
38. To comply with the spirit of its Third Cycle UPR recommendations concerning mistreatment and torture, ADHRB suggests that the government of Bahrain:
- Further amend the Penal Code to bring it in line with the CAT;
 - Ratify the OP-CAT and the CED;
 - Accept an immediate visit from the UN Special Rapporteurs on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to visit Bahraini prisons,

follow-up on cases, and provide an objective report on efforts to combat mistreatment;

- Ensure that the judiciary rejects evidence obtained under duress and orders immediate investigations into any allegations of torture;
- Commute prison sentences based on coerced confessions;
- Enforce the rights of the accused to access family and legal counsel, particularly during interrogation;
- Ensure that prisoners can access the necessary medical treatment that they require at any time;
- Bring an end to the discrimination against Shia prisoners and allow them to conduct their religious rituals freely;
- Improve the hygiene and sanitary conditions of prisons in Bahrain; and
- Ensure the independence and partiality of the Ombudsman, the SIU, and the NIHR. Also, the government must ensure that they are conducting thorough and effective investigations in which perpetrators are held accountable for the crimes they have committed, and victims are being compensated for the mistreatment they have been subjected to.