



Bahrain Forum and SALAM DHR :  
An Update on Prisoner  
COVID Cases in Bahrain





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According to the Bahrain Forum for Human Rights and SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights, the first prisoner of conscience COVID case has been confirmed on the 23rd of March in Jau Central Prison in Bahrain. At the time of writing, the confirmed number of cases of infected prisoners of conscience has reached 39. The Bahrain Forum and SALAM have warned that the spread of the virus in the prisons will expose the detainees and employees to imminent danger.

It is important to note that three of the cases also suffer from chronic illness: Fadhel Muhammed Ridha Baddah, Ahmed Muhammed Saleh, and Muhammed Al-Sankees. Furthermore, prisoners of conscience are generally detained in overcrowded cells and wards. It has been confirmed that four of the aforementioned infected cases have been residing in a ward that contains more than 150 prisoners of conscience – Ward No. 2 in Building No. 21 in Jau Central Prison.

The two organizations have raised concerns over the slower and fewer releases of prisoners of conscience in light of the pandemic; the release of 677 prisoner of conscience cases have been recorded since March 2020. Among those cases, many had already ended their sentences prior to their release.



Both organizations have also indicated that the most severe form of torture and ill-treatment in recent years that has been detected in prisons is the 'denial of medical care'. From January 2018 to March 15, 2021, there were 776 cases of violations of the right to receive appropriate and necessary medical treatment.

In previous cases, the deterioration of prison conditions had raised many complaints which led to many protests demanding the prison administration to meet the minimum standards for the treatment of its prisoners. The most prominent of these protests took place in 2013 at Hidd Prison and in 2015 at Jau Central Prison.



In a statement released on March 25, 2020 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet expressed her grave concern about the overcrowding of prisons in a number of countries worldwide. In many such situation, many of the prisoners reside in unclean and unsanitary conditions, which may be the cause of the wide spread of the coronavirus. The High Commissioner called for the release of the largest possible number of prisoners as a decisive measure to curb and limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

SALAM DHR had previously forewarned the government of Bahrain about the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic reaching the prisons (<https://salam-dhr.org/?p=4009>). In the statement issued by the NGO, 67 Arab and international human rights organizations signed on the warning. Today, we reiterate the recommendations about the risk of casualties in prisons.

The government of Bahrain's legal and human rights obligations guarantee and ensure the health and well-being of its citizens and residents, including prisoners, and to protect them all from infectious and deadly diseases. The detention of huge numbers of individuals is a very big obstacle to healthcare in light of the spread of a serious threat such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The healthcare measures, such as the prevention of its spread through social and physical distancing as advised by doctors and specialists, are not being implemented in prisons. Therefore, it has become imperative for the government to take prompt measures, to release prisoners, and to abide by its obligations towards prisoners according to international human rights law. As High Commissioner Bachelet noted, "under international human rights law, States have an obligation to take steps to prevent foreseeable threats to public health and have a duty to ensure that all who need vital medical care can receive it".



## The following are the names of detainees infected with Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Prisoners of Conscience Infected with COVID-19				
Number	Name	Area	Testing Date	General Notes
1	Hani Ahmed Eissa Marhoun	Al-Sanabis	22-Mar-2021	
2	Nasser Ya'aqoub Yusef Nasser	Adhari	23-Mar-2021	
3	Fadhel Muhammed Ridha Ali Hassan Ibrahim Baddah	Sitra	23-Mar-2021	Suffers from a chronic illness, such as epilepsy
4	Hussein Sa'id Ibrahim Hassan Ali	Sitra	23-Mar-2021	
5	Sami Ja'afar Abbas Muhammed Ali Al-Sheikh	Al-Ma'ameer	23-Mar-2021	
6	Muhammed Abdullah Yusef Ahmed Al-Sunaikis	Al-Sanabis	23-Mar-2021	Suffers from chronic illnesses
7	Sayed Ali Mousa Ja'afar Alawi Hussein	Al-Diraz	23-Mar-2021	
8	Ahmed Ja'afar Al'ajouz	Al Nuwaidrat	23-Mar-2021	
9	Ahmed Muhammed Saleh Jassem Hassan Ali	Bani Jamra	24-Mar-2021	Suffers from chronic illnesses
10	Sayed Mahmoud Sharaf		24-Mar-2021	
11	Mujtabba Sadeq Hassan Ali Abdullah Eissa	Abu Quwah	24-Mar-2021	
12	Abdulaziz Ja'afar Abdulaziz Ahmed Jawad	Barbar	24-Mar-2021	
13	Sayed Ahmed Alawi Jawad Mahfouz Ali		24-Mar-2021	
14	Hassan Jawad Al-Mikhawdher	Al-Sanabis	25-Mar-2021	
15	Nuh Abdullah Hassan Ahmed Hassan Al-Amroum	A'ali	25-Mar-2021	
16	Ali Abbas Hassan Ali Ahmed Al-'Asfour	Al-Diraz	25-Mar-2021	
17	Abdullah Qassim		26-Mar-2021	
18	Sayed Qassim Jalil		26-Mar-2021	
19	Sayed Nizar Ni'ma Baqer Ali Yusef Al-Wada'i	A'ali	26-Mar-2021	
20	Hadi Ibrahim Muhammed Amin Ibrahim Al-'arab	Bani Jamra	26-Mar-2021	
21	Muhammed Ja'afar Talebb Ja'afar Abdullah Al-Ghisrah	Bani Jamra	26-Mar-2021	
22	Khalil Ibrahim Abdalrasool	Al-Diraz	26-Mar-2021	
23	Nasser Faisal Al-Naboul	Sitra	26-Mar-2021	
24	Ali Furaikh	A'ali	26-Mar-2021	

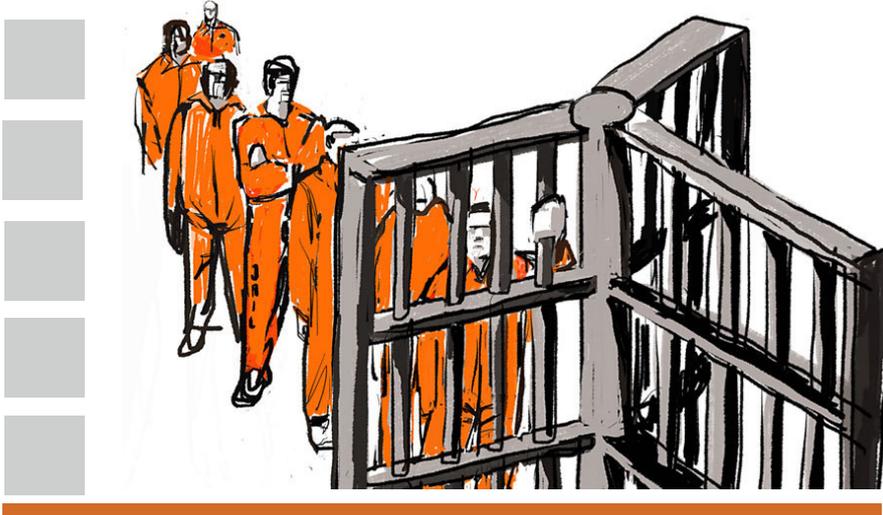
<b>Prisoners of Conscience Infected with COVID-19</b>			
<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Testing Date</b>
25	Mansour Al-Nasri	A'ali	26-Mar-2021
26	Hussein Ali Jum'aa	Al-Daih	26-Mar-2021
27	Ali Ahmed Ja'afar Ahmed Laith	Dar Kulaib	26-Mar-2021
28	Mustafa Abdulkareem Ibrahim Ali Hassan Khatem	Karzakkan	26-Mar-2021
29	Sayed Ahmed Ali	Al-Shakhurah	26-Mar-2021
30	Ahmed Humeidan		27-Mar-2021
31	Hussein Yunis		27-Mar-2021
32	Abbas Ibrahim Hassan Al-Majed		27-Mar-2021
33	Abduljabar Abdulhussein	Tubli	27-Mar-2021
34	Hussein Ali Saleh Al-Marzouq		27-Mar-2021
35	Ahmed Ali Yusef Jassem		27-Mar-2021
36	Sadeq Abdullah al-Ithna'ashar	Al-Diraz	27-Mar-2021
37	Mazen Mansour Ahmed Al-Wenna	Sitra	27-Mar-2021
38	Abbas Ahmed Khamees		27-Mar-2021
39	Ahmed Jaber Radhi		27-Mar-2021



## Jau Central Prison: Poor Detainment and Healthcare Conditions

Some testimonies received from detainees highlight the worsening of conditions in the new buildings as opposed to the older ones. There is no natural ventilation available: as such, ventilation is limited to the network of air conditioners linked to each other throughout the prison. This network, controlled by the prison administration, is sometimes used as a method of torture. There have been some cases in winter, when the weather was too cold, wherein the prison administration would deliberately turn on the air condition systems and set it to a cold temperature in order to cool the cells at an increasing rate and intensity, all whilst confiscating blankets from the detainees for the purpose of mistreating them.

As for the old buildings, such as Building No. 4, there is no air conditioning network due to natural ventilation. This ventilation, however, is limited to extremely small windows located at the top of the cell that cannot be reached by the detainees and are never opened. As a result, sunlight is only filtered into the cells through the upper ceiling. These small windows are also usually located in the bathroom, though they are sometimes positioned inside the cell, and overlook the sewers. Consequently, the opening of these windows is harmful to the detainees as much as keeping them closed and locked.



With respect to space in terms of the wards and cells, the 2-person cell holds four detainees, located specifically in Building 4 Ward 4. Following this equation, the cells that are supposed to fit six beds or hold 8 detainees are fitting 10 or 12 beds and holding 14 detainees, respectively. Some of the detainees in the latter living arrangements sleep on the floor. If one of the detainees would need to go to the bathroom during the night, he may have to step on the detainees sleeping on the ground in order to reach his destination.

Regarding the availability of water for bathing, there would be times when the water would be cut off – sometimes for a day or two. At times drinking water, as well, would be cut off. In fact, since 2017, the sale of drinking water at the canteen has been prohibited. It has been replaced by a desalination device that is placed next to dirty water and is not cleaned.

Prisoners are only allotted 1 hour a day of sunlight exposure. More often than not, the hour is canceled, especially on Fridays when the police officers are not in the mood to transport the detainees from their cells to yard to sunbathe – rather, they prefer drinking tea.

Occasionally, the police officers would invoke any unreasonable reason to deprive the detainees of sunbathing, such as a detainee asking a police officer a question, causing himself and other detainees to be deprived of sunbathing because he asked a question. Hence, detainees may remain for days on end in their cells devoid of natural ventilation and sunlight.

Additionally, police officers sometimes deliberately allow detainees to go out to the yard to sunbathe at 2:00 in the afternoon during the months of July and August, i.e., when the temperature is very high and the sunrays very strong and unbearable. During the winter, the detainees are taken out at 6:00 in the morning, when it's biting cold and the sun's barely rising, sometimes accompanied by a bit of rain.

After times of rainfall, the detainees are deprived from going out to sunbathe for a period of a week, sometimes up to a month, under the pretext that rainwater has gathered in the yard, necessitating the long time taken to drain it.



As for the prison clinic, a psychiatrist comes to the prison clinic every Wednesday. He does not examine the prisoners who visit him. Rather, he prescribes medicine for them without examination, and the medicines he prescribes are types of narcotic pills that political prisoners were not taking, and they are now taking. The effect of these pills is that they make the detainee sleep all day for long hours, then he wakes up the next day and may "fight".



A psychiatrist comes to the prison clinic every Wednesday not to examine the prisoners that visit him, but to prescribe them medicines without assessing their medical history. The medicines he prescribes are narcotic pills that the political prisoners were not taking before but have started to take now. The pill's effects render the prisoner unconscious, making him spend his day asleep for long hours only to be roused the next day, ready to 'fight'.

In most cases, there is an official schedule set for visits to the clinic. However, the prison administration is not bound by it, but rather only makes use of exhibiting the list during visits by official guests. If any sick detainee were to visit the clinic, the clinic doctor would start showing his weariness and impatience, prescribing medication without examining him beforehand.

In the past there was a dentist in prison who was nicknamed “Abu Khula” because he always resorted to extracting molars even if he did not need that, and today there is no dentist in the clinic

Today, there is no dentist present at the clinic. Previously, there used to be a dentist nicknamed “Abu Khul’” (Mr. Yank) because he consistently resorted to extracting teeth, even if the situation did not require so.

If the detainees were to ask for appointments at the military hospital, they would be scheduled an appointment for around after 6 months. When the 6 months have passed, the appointments are postponed for a similar period of time with various pretenses used to delay them. The doctors at the military hospital avoid treating the detainees – as such, if any detainee contracts an incurable disease, he may remain untreated.

