

SALAM DHR

# TORTURE IN BAHRAIN

END THE CULTURE OF IMPUNITY



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## Introduction

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 2022, Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR) calls on the Government of Bahrain (GoB) to use the opportunity presented by its comprehensive, June 2022, government cabinet reshuffle to end, once and for all, the use of torture. Amidst government plans to develop a human rights strategy, new leadership in government should provide new impetus to end such long standing practices, discussed below.

In the decade following the 2011 Pearl Uprising, the Government of Bahrain (GoB) has orchestrated an ongoing human rights crackdown. The GoB has restricted rights and freedoms and imposed a culture of fear. Torture has been one of its lodestars. It undertook scores of arbitrary arrests, instances of enforced disappearance, and carried out executions, including following unfair trial. The GoB has tried officials alleged to have violated human rights. Yet, the outcome of such cases remains opaque and officials are protected by a climate of impunity. The GoB has systematically failed to enact meaningful reforms regarding the use of torture, which it incorporated into its promised reforms following the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in June 2011 and successive recommendations made by United Nations' human rights treaty bodies (see below).<sup>1</sup> This report sets out how the use of torture is cloaked in a culture of impunity, which has long been enshrined in the Bahraini judicial system. The enduring result of that culture has been a decade of suppression, evasion of reparations and closure for torture survivors. In a context of interwoven, intersectional rights, the pervasive climate of impunity erodes *all* rights and every protection afforded by international human rights treaties, including in relation to human rights defenders, women, the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and those afforded to migrant workers. The continued existence of torture in Bahrain casts a shadow over all rights and freedoms.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry was established on 29 June 2011 in the Kingdom of Bahrain pursuant to Royal Order No. 28 by His Majesty, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The Commission was tasked with investigating and reporting on the events that took place in Bahrain from February 2011, and the consequences of those events. The Commission released its report on the 23rd of November 2011 on the link below:

[BICI | Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#)

## The Legal Framework

In 1998, Bahrain acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) but not to its Optional Protocol (OPCAT).<sup>2</sup> In 2006, it acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 7, which states that “*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*”. Bahrain is a State Party to the League of Arab States’ Arab Charter on Human Rights, which was amended in 2004, with Articles 8, 9, and 20 criminalizing torture and ill-treatment. Articles 19 (d) and 20 (d) of Bahrain’s constitution explicitly prohibit torture.<sup>3</sup> Articles 208 and 232 of Bahrain’s 1976 Penal Code likewise prohibit torture, with both stating any official that uses force to elicit a ‘confession’ should be imprisoned if convicted.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, Article 81 of Decree Law No. 53 of 2011, which amended the 2002 Code of Criminal Procedure provides the Public Prosecution Office with jurisdiction to consider allegations of torture during identifications, investigations or proceedings before the court and in other cases based on referrals by the Ombudsman Office or the Inspector General for the General Security Forces.<sup>5</sup> Decree No. 14 of 2012, issued by the Minister of the Interior on 30 January 2012, on the ‘Code of Conduct for Policemen’, stipulates that Policemen are prohibited from using torture or other ill-treatment and may not

<sup>2</sup> UN treaty bodies database, ratification status for Bahrain, ratification date 06 March 1998, [Treaty bodies Treaties \(ohchr.org\)](http://www.ohchr.org/Treaty_bodies/Treaties)

<sup>3</sup> Arab Human Rights Committee, Arab Charter on Human Rights, [سعادة السفير عدنان عيسى الخضير \(lasportal.org\)](http://www.lasportal.org) ; Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission, Constitution of Bahrain, Arabic version, [هيئة التشريع والرأي القانوني-دستور مملكة البحرين \(legalaffairs.gov.bh\)](http://legalaffairs.gov.bh) ; UN Women, Constitution of Bahrain, English version, [Bahrain\\_2017.pdf \(constituteproject.org\)](http://constituteproject.org)

<sup>4</sup> Refworld, Penal Code of Bahrain of 1976 (in Arabic), [hyperlink](#)

<sup>5</sup> Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission, decree law No. 53 of 2012 amending the 2002 code of criminal procedure, [مرسوم بقانون رقم \(53\) لسنة 2012 بتعديل بعض أحكام قانون الإجراءات الجنائية الصادر بالمرسوم بقانون رقم \(46\) لسنة 2002 \(legalaffairs.gov.bh\)](http://legalaffairs.gov.bh).

invoke superior orders or exceptional circumstances such as a state of war or the existence of a threat to national public security to justify torture.<sup>6</sup>

Bahraini law has provided for the criminalization of torture and a framework for accountability. In practice, however, the GoB has not implemented effective prevention or accountability measures.

## A Decade of Suppression

On 14 February 2011, demonstrations and political rallies erupted throughout Bahrain: the Pearl Uprising, which lasted until the end of March 2011, had begun. During that period, Bahrain witnessed a state of unrest and increasing levels of violence and tense confrontations between security forces and protesters.

According to the BICI, in the course of the unrest, GoB security forces arrested hundreds of people and caused 35 deaths. GoB officials tortured to death five of these individuals. The Commission received 559 complaints concerning the treatment of persons in state custody and 788 complaints over allegations of torture.<sup>7</sup>

Ministry of Interior (Mol) officials detained three of the five killed, who were subsequently tortured to death at Dry Dock Detention Centre. National Security Agency (NSA) officials tortured another individual, whom they transferred to the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) Hospital, where he died. Another death occurred four days after the Mol released the individual from the Dry Dock Detention Center.

One such case is **Hasan Jassim Mohamed Maki** whom security officials arrested at his home on 28 March 2011.<sup>8</sup> They took him to the Central Investigation Department (CID), and to Jau Prison 24 hours later. He was pronounced dead on 3 April 2011. The official cause of death was heart failure and cessation of breathing due to sickle cell anaemia,

<sup>6</sup> Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission, decree No. 14 of 2012 on the code of conduct for policemen, [قرار وزير الداخلية رقم \(14\) لسنة 2012 بشأن إصدار مدونة سلوك رجال الشرطة \(legalaffairs.gov.bh\)](http://legalaffairs.gov.bh).

<sup>7</sup> The committee's report, [BICI | Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#).

<sup>8</sup> Deaths caused by torture, Case No. 22 Hasan Jassim Mohamed Maki, BICI's report, page 241, [BICI | Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#).

which was confirmed by a forensic report. However, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Amnesty International examined Maki's body and confirmed to his relatives that he had been assaulted with sharp objects. GoB officials did not permit family members to see his face after his death. A witness, who shared a cell with Maki, overheard prison personnel tell him that because he had sickle cell anaemia, they would give him a cold shower, turn on the air conditioning in his cell, and deny him any medical treatment.<sup>9</sup> The BICI confirmed that GoB officials tortured Maki's to death in the Dry Dock Detention Center. His ordeal is one of dozens that occurred between 14 February and March 2011.

BICI's investigation and forensic medical reports found that the NSA and MoI systematically physically and psychologically mistreated detainees which amounted to torture in tens of cases. Officials tortured and ill-treated hundreds of individuals detained in February and March 2011, during the unrest. The Commission highlighted that statements by detainees consistently showed that those engaging in torture and ill-treatment expected impunity. Some detainees told the Commission that they informed a judge or Military Prosecutor about their mistreatment during their trial. In one case, a detainee alleged that the Military Prosecutor 'did not believe him'.<sup>10</sup> In another case, the detainee reported that the Military Prosecutor assured him that the beatings would stop, only for them to continue as soon as the detainee left the courtroom. Such cases have not abated since the end of the Pearl Uprising.

## **Incidence of torture since 2019: an ongoing problem**

Over the past 10 years, the GoB has increased its suppression of rights and freedoms, including through the practice of torture. According to recent communications sent by the Special Procedures of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the GoB (from 2019 onwards):

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<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, "Bahrain urged to stop targeting protesters as two more die in custody", 12 April 2011, [Bahrain urged to stop targeting protesters as two more die in custody - Amnesty International](#).

<sup>10</sup> BICI's report, Annex B: Summary on Torture Allegations, [BICI | Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#).

- 1) The communication sent on 05 February 2020, showed that the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) sometimes reports on torture, but it does not necessarily affect the courts' sentence.<sup>11</sup> This case concerns **Mohammed Ramadan** and **Husain Ali Moosa** (see below). Both were arrested in February 2014, accused of killing a police officer, and subjected to torture and forced to make a confession. In December 2014, they were convicted on terrorism related charges and sentenced to death. In March 2018, the SIU requested that the cases be returned to the Court of Cassation for re-examination considering new evidence, including torture allegations. In October 2018, the Court of Cassation quashed the death sentences and referred the cases back to the Court of Appeal. In January 2020, the Court of Appeal sentenced the two men to death again. However, the GoB, in its reply to the communication, on 02 April 2020, wrote that: *'The court established that the confessions matched the truth, were consistent with the facts of the case [...] and that the men had made the confessions intentionally of their own free will, without any physical or moral coercion, misrepresentation, fraud, threat or promise on the PPS. Neither of them claimed to have been subjected to any kind of coercion [...].'*<sup>12</sup>
- 2) The communication sent on 29 June 2020, mentioned the arrest and subsequent torture of a sixteen-year-old student, whose name is not cited for security reasons. The student was arbitrarily arrested and subjected to enforced disappearance for 12 days. He was interrogated by the CID for 20 days, and during interrogations, he was tortured and beaten, but 'did not accept to incriminate himself'.<sup>13</sup> The reason for the arrest was never communicated formally. He was released on 24 February 2019, on a decision of the Public Prosecutor Office (PPO), *'based on the improbability to determine the author of the criminal offence'*.<sup>14</sup> On 30 April 2019, he was re-arrested

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<sup>11</sup> Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 05 February 2022, [DownloadPublicCommunicationFile \(ohchr.org\)](#).

<sup>12</sup> Reply of the GoB to the Communication of the Special Procedures, OHCHR, 02 April 2022, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=35216>.

<sup>13</sup> Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 29 June 2020, [DownloadPublicCommunicationFile \(ohchr.org\)](#).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



without a warrant by the CID and accused of ‘disrupting traffic on the streets’. The present communication mentioned that:

*“he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment during his interrogations, at the hands of the same interrogation officer who questioned him during his previous arrest. [...]. [He] finally agreed to confess to the alleged crimes. As a result of torture during interrogations, [he] had reportedly suffered from bruises and wounds and did not get any medical treatment”*.<sup>15</sup>

The young boy was sentenced to two years in prison on 30 October 2019. However, The GoB’s reply on 20 August 2020, stated the following:

*“He did not claim to have been subjected to torture or ill-treatment during the interrogation. The allegations that confessions were obtained under coercion and torture are therefore unfounded [...]. We wish to emphasize that all confessions are obtained in accordance with legal guidelines and the individual in question was not subjected to torture or coercion to extract a confession from him”*.<sup>16</sup>

The reply also mentioned that neither the SIU, nor the Office of the Ombudsman received any complaints for this case.

- 3) The communication sent on 01 November 2019, is related to the arrest of two women who have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment.<sup>17</sup> The women in question are **Hajar Mansoor Hasam**, who is the mother-in-law of **Sayed Ahmed Al-Wadaei**, a well-known human rights defender who is currently outside the country, and **Medina Ali**, Ms. Mansoor’s cellmate. Ms. Ali was arrested in Riffa on 29 May 2017, she was beaten and threatened during the arrest. She was sentenced to three years of imprisonment in February 2018 for hiding a convicted criminal, based on a forced confession. Ms. Mansoor was sentenced to three years of imprisonment for ‘planting a dummy explosive device’. During their detention, Miss Ali and Ms. Mansoor were physically assaulted, tortured, medically neglected, and subjected to

<sup>15</sup> Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 29 June 2020, [DownloadPublicCommunicationFile](#) (ohchr.org).

<sup>16</sup> Reply of the GoB to the Communication of the Special Procedures, OHCHR, 20 August 2020, [DownloadFile](#) (ohchr.org).

<sup>17</sup> Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 01 November 2019, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24917>.

humiliating searches. In its reply on 29 December 2019, regarding the physical assault on the two women, the GoB stated that the National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR), who received the complaint, concluded that ‘no assault had taken place’.<sup>18</sup>

- 4) The communication sent on 14 October 2019, is related to the arbitrary detention and torture of 20 individuals convicted in a mass trial on terrorism charges.<sup>19</sup> They were arrested between March 2015 and June 2018. In 15 cases, torture allegations were made. The communication expresses concern regarding ‘forced confessions allegedly obtained under torture’ which have been used as evidence in the convictions. In a previous reply to the Special Procedures on these torture allegations, the GoB stated that the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) concluded that there existed no evidence of physical injuries related to torture. Moreover, the communication expressed concern over the lack of investigation on psychological torture on the part of the SIU; and stated that ‘the fact that some of the injuries of convicted individuals could have healed or were not visible at the time of examination, does not mean that the victim was not tortured.’ No reply from the GoB could be found.

These practices have also been used to suppress activists in Bahrain; **A.M.** a Bahraini citizen, whose name was not cited for security reasons, shared their recent experience being tortured with SALAM DHR. A.M. was summoned to CID in October 2021, after expressing some of their opinion on Twitter, regarding the Bahraini public’s opposition to normalisation with Israel, which was shared by Al-Jazeera’ official Twitter account. A.M. claimed that authorities initially made them wait for three hours in a room where they could hear people being tortured. They couldn’t determine whether it was real or audio recording. Regardless, they described the scene as terrifying. They were later placed in a room where two interrogators were asking questions related to their tweet e.g., if they had ties with Al-Jazeera journalists or any of their relatives living there, which they answered negatively. During the interrogation process, one of the two interrogators left

<sup>18</sup> Reply of the GoB to the Communication of the Special Procedures, OHCHR, 29 December 2019, [DownloadFile \(ohchr.org\)](#).

<sup>19</sup> Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 14 October 2019, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24887>.

the room twice. On both occasions the second interrogator began insulting, beating and electrocuting A.M. on their legs until the first interrogator returned, in an attempt to coerce a confession. After being tortured, A.M. signed a pledge that they were not given an opportunity to read, and then released.

Techniques of torture and ill-treatment used during interrogations include repeated beatings (sometimes targeting the genitals), sexual harassment, insults, religious and sectarian denigration, blindfolding, sleep deprivation, water deprivation, medical neglect, electric shocks (sometimes targeting the genitals), and various threats (of imprisonment, torture, and/or harming the victim's family). In some cases, victims also mentioned that they were forced to stand for prolonged periods, forced to crawl on all fours, and forced to dance, forced to perform chants supporting the royal family, forced to stay in an extremely cold room with wet clothes, restrained in a room full of insects, photographed while naked etc.<sup>20</sup>

## Torture and the death penalty

*“States need to re-examine their procedures under international law because the ability of states to impose and carry out the death penalty is diminishing as these practices are increasingly viewed to constitute torture [and] all countries [should] consider repealing capital punishment because it is cumbersome and expensive and you’re never sure you’re doing it in the right way.”*

*Juan Mendez, Argentine jurist, and former UN human rights expert, 23 October 2012*

The GoB passes and has, in recent years, implemented the death penalty. SALAM DHR believes that the death penalty is a form of torture. We call for its abolition. The

<sup>20</sup> Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 14 October 2019, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24887> , page 3; Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 29 June 2020, [DownloadPublicCommunicationFile \(ohchr.org\)](https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25071), page 1; Communication of the Special Procedures to the Government of Bahrain, OHCHR, 02 March 2020, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25071> , pages 4-5-6.

organisation fears that torture and ill treatment along with unfair trial form an indispensable part of the administration of justice in relation to death penalty cases in Bahrain. On 17 May 2020, SALAM DHR wrote to the Office of the Ombudsman.

The organisation addressed the cases of **Mohammed Ramadan** and **Ali Moosa** (see above), noting, for example, that in 2016 the Special Investigations Unit (SIA) revealed that a medical report was not disclosed at the time of the initial hearing.

The organisation also sought information collected by the Ombudsman's Office in relation to eight death penalty cases whose sentences had been upheld by the Court of Cassation (with date of final sentence):

1. **Maher Abbas al-Khabbaz** - 29/02/2017 overturned; 29/01/2018 confirmed
2. **Hussein Ibrahim Ali Hussein Marzouq** - 26/02/2018
3. **Sayed Ahmed Fawad Abbas al-Abbar** -21/05/2018
4. **Hussein Ali Mahdi Jassim** - 21/05.2018
5. **Salman Isa Ali Salmazn** - 04/06/2018
6. **Mohamed Radhi Abdullah Hasan** - 25/02/2019
7. **Hussein Abdullah Marhoun** - 20/05/2019
8. **Mousa Abdullah Jafar** - 03/06/2019

In its letter, SALAM DHR sought basic information relating to the conduct of the trial in each person's case, including in relation to allegations of torture. For example, with respect to (4) Hussein Ali Mahdi Jassim, SALAM DHR noted that his lawyer:

*"filed a complaint regarding his treatment. An examination was undertaken and 'no injuries consistent with his allegation were found' so 'the unit completed its investigation by questioning members of the public security forces who had interacted with the complainant and they denied the allegation'. A forensic report concluded that he did not face ill treatment."*

Despite the GoB forensic report rejecting allegations of torture, SALAM DHR believes that the completion of the investigation by interviewing members of a state security unit does not provide the basis for a fair trial.

Moreover, SALAM DHR requested that the forensic reports relating to cases (1) to (4) be made available to "an independent organisation such as Freedom From Torture (UK), or the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (Denmark), or indeed

*the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in order to assess the quality of the forensic assessments.”*

On 19 July, 2020 the Office of the Ombudsman replied to SALAM DHR. Its letter stated:

*Thank you for contacting the Ombudsman’s Office in the Ministry of Interior, Kingdom of Bahrain. In line to its commitment to its jurisdiction, the Ombudsman Office is happy to investigate any complaints and/or assistance requests within that jurisdiction. You will understand that the Ombudsman Office would not be able to provide any information regarding the mentioned concerns as it is out of its remit.*

*Hope you will find this helpful.*

والتطوير الدولي التعاون إدارة

*Directorate of International Cooperation & Development*

SALAM DHR believes that if the Ombudsman’s Office considers investigation of complaints over torture and administration of justice is “*outside of its remit*”, then it is not fit for purpose as an organisation.

## **The intersectionality of rights faced by a culture of impunity**

Lack of accountability within the Bahraini security system has led to a culture of impunity, where security officials have few incentives to avoid ill-treatment of prisoners or to take action to prevent abuse from other officials. This practice has been tacitly encouraged by the Bahraini authorities and the so-called human rights institutions, who have repeatedly shown an unwillingness to implement recommendations and reforms.

Since 2011, four human rights institutions have been established by the GoB as a reform measure recommended by the BICI. These were supposedly founded as independent institutions, meant to monitor the human rights situation in Bahrain, specifically in prisons and detention facilities, and ensure that Bahrain is abiding by international laws and guidelines. This step was highly welcomed by the international community. However, these institutions have thus far been ineffective and suspected of

being unofficial government institutions charged with laundering the GoB's human rights image.

For example, the SIU 'is specialized in investigating, disposing and initiating criminal proceedings in all crimes of torture, ill-treatment or punishment committed by members of the public security forces, because of, or during the performance of their duties [...]', while the Ombudsman Office operates within a general framework that includes respect for human rights and the consolidation of justice by receiving complaints from civilians for alleged criminal offenses and informing competent authorities about violations.<sup>21</sup> Continued abuses over the past decade have proven that these institutions alongside the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) and the Prisoners & Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) are not fulfilling their mandate.

According to the 8th annual report of the Ombudsman office of 2020-2021, its secretariat has received a total number of 900 grievances from civilians (691 requests for assistance and 209 complaints), a relatively small number compared to violations reported by Bahraini civil society organisations, activists, human rights defenders, and media outlets.<sup>22</sup> Most of these complaints have been disregarded. Only 10 were investigated by the Ombudsman office and 31 were referred to the SIU for criminal/disciplinary investigations, with no further information provided on their status. This pattern has repeated itself for the past decade.<sup>23</sup> These metrics reflect the Ombudsman's inability or unwillingness to perform its duties, resulting in a lack of credibility and trust from the Bahraini people.

The same pattern is applicable for the SIU. For instance, the SIU Statistics' report of 2021 states that the Unit only received 67 complaints of ill-treatment, torture and use of

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<sup>21</sup> Bahrain News Agency (BNA), "Special Investigation Unit (SIU) crucial in protecting human rights in Bahrain", 04 December 2021, [Special Investigation Unit crucial in protecting human rights in Bahrain \(bna.bh\)](#); For more information about the Ombudsman Office, official website: [About \(ombudsman.bh\)](#).

<sup>22</sup> The 8th annual report of the Ombudsman office of 2020-2021 covering the period of time from May 2020 until April 2021, [Eight Annual Report 2020 - 2021 \(ombudsman.bh\)](#).

<sup>23</sup> For instance, according to the 7th annual report of the Ombudsman office of 2019-2020, the secretariat received 890 grievance in total (683 requests for assistance and 207 complaints) from civilians of which only 23 were referred to the SIU for criminal/disciplinary investigations, <https://www.ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/magazine/2019-2020/en/16/>.

excessive force,<sup>24</sup> 12 of which were from the Ombudsman office and 10 from the NIHR. Throughout 2021, the SIU referred three cases to the criminal courts, involving 3 officers and 4 policemen, and one case to the military courts. The department of Mol imposed disciplinary penalties, involving 3 officers.<sup>25</sup> Sentences in the criminal courts were lenient: up to 6-months imprisonment and a fine of BD 100. The disciplinary measures issued by the military courts varied but were also relatively light: dismissals, verbal warning, written warning, salary deduction, reprimand.<sup>26</sup>

A 2016 report by Amnesty International concluded that considerable work is still needed to end Bahrain's long-standing culture of impunity and that the Ombudsman and the SIU must urgently address their failings if they are to keep their credibility.<sup>27</sup> Five years have passed since the aforementioned report was released, and these practices are ongoing: detainees continue to allege torture and other ill-treatment, particularly during interrogation by CID officers and investigations into torture allegations either fail to materialize or have minimal accountability for the perpetrators.

Furthermore, the GoB persistently avoids international obligations and commitments. Bahrain still hasn't acceded to the optional protocol of the CAT and in its 2017 Concluding Observations, the Committee Against Torture expressed its concerns regarding repeated requests to visit the country by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, which the GoB postponed, claiming that it had come at an inopportune time on account of its efforts to implement the recommendations of the BICI and a far-reaching process

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<sup>24</sup> Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Statistics' report of 2021, covering the period of time from January 2021 until December 2021 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dMmD44y68pyRSWI0oDR3uWUeWaSE6DVC/view>, page 12.

<sup>25</sup> Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Statistics' report of 2021, covering the period of time from January 2021 until December 2021 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dMmD44y68pyRSWI0oDR3uWUeWaSE6DVC/view>, page 23.

<sup>26</sup> Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Statistics' report of 2021, covering the period of time from January 2021 until December 2021 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dMmD44y68pyRSWI0oDR3uWUeWaSE6DVC/view>, page 24-25.

<sup>27</sup> Amnesty International, "Bahrain: Window-dressing or pioneers of change?: An assessment of Bahrain's human rights oversight bodies", 21 November 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/5080/2016/en/>.

of reform and development.<sup>28</sup> The Committee recommended the GoB promptly accept the request. Unfortunately, the GoB didn't implement the latter recommendation, as stated by the committee in its 2020 LoIPR.<sup>29</sup> Bahrain has not accepted any request to visit from the special rapporteur on torture nor any other special procedure (SP) since 2011. It also has not extended a standing invitation to the thematic SPs.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain, 2017, [CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3](#), Page 10, paragraph 40; Special Procedures, country visits website: [Special procedures Country visits \(ohchr.org\)](#).

<sup>29</sup> List of issues prior to submission of the fourth periodic report of Bahrain (LoIPR), 2020: [CAT/C/BHR/QPR/4](#), Page 1, paragraph 1.

<sup>30</sup> Standing Invitations: a standing invitation is an open invitation extended by a government to all thematic special procedures. By extending a standing invitation States announce that they will always accept requests to visit from all special procedures. For more info: [Special procedures Country visits \(ohchr.org\)](#).



## Recommendations

### **SALAM DHR urges the Government of Bahrain to:**

1. Use the opportunity of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 2022 to declare its firm intention, in the context of new governmental leadership, to eradicate the practice of torture and to hold to account all officials alleged to have tortured or ill-treated any person;
2. Take immediate steps to abide by its international human rights obligations, including by issuing an immediate and unconditional invitation to all Special Procedures of the UN's human rights agency, notably the Special Rapporteur on torture, enabling such experts to undertake unfettered, investigative visits;
3. Immediately declare, in advance of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a UN human rights procedure scheduled for the last quarter of 2022, that it will take concrete steps to implement all previous recommendations relating to torture and accountability made in previous cycles of the UPR, and to do likewise, in a transparent manner, with regard to recommendations made by the UN's Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Committee;
4. Openly and transparently commit to redressing the suffering and making reparations to all those found by an independent medical procedure meeting international standards to have faced torture or ill treatment;
5. Investigate and try, in a judicial process that meets international fair trial standards, all those accused of having inflicted torture or ill treatment;
6. Release all those whose 'confessions' are alleged to have been made in the context of torture or ill treatment, with a view to re-trying the case in line with international standards, or, where it appears unlikely to achieve that standard, unconditionally release the person (s) concerned; and
7. Acknowledge the intersectionality and indivisibility of all human rights.

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