

A YEAR OF
MILESTONES:

**SALAM FOR DEMOCRACY
AND HUMAN RIGHTS
ANNUAL REPORT ON
ACTIVITIES
2022**





SALAM For Democracy And Human Rights

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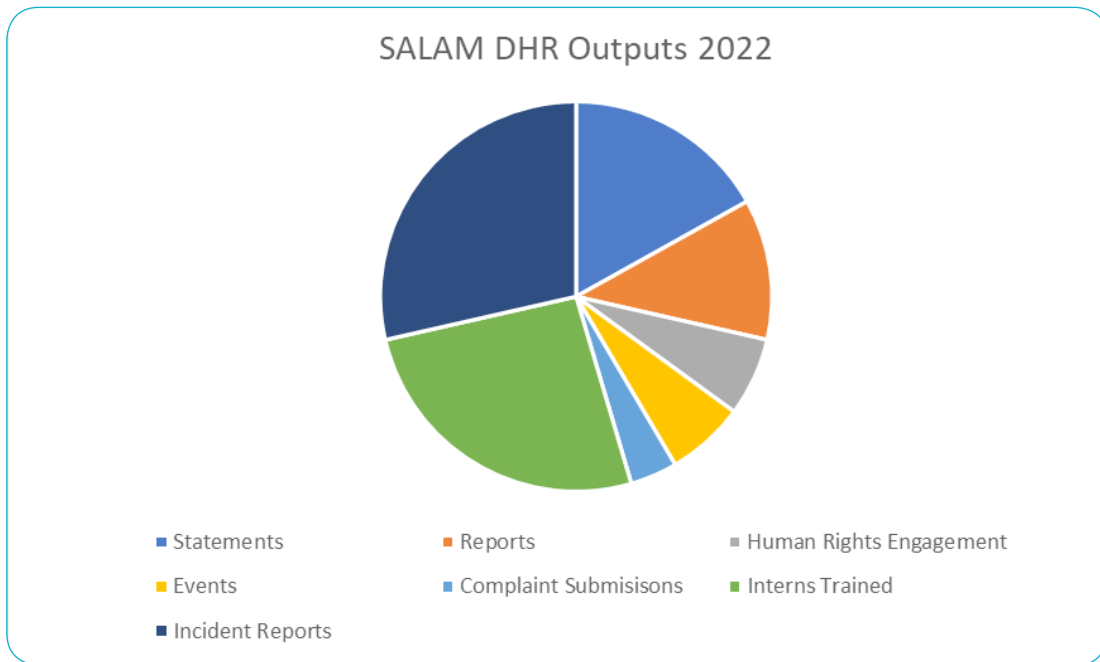
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A Year of Milestones:
SALAM for Democracy and
Human Rights Annual Report on
Activities – 2022

Summary

Over the course of 2022 Salam DHR held 5 events, produced 3 major reports, compiled, and circulated daily news broadcasts, submitted 2 complaints to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and made 5 submissions to UN Human Rights Mechanisms. Salam also recruited and trained 20 interns from 3 continents. Salam DHR also published its first academic article through its new partnership with the International Affairs Institute.

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Throughout the year, SALAM DHR produced statements in reaction to marking events and ahead of several days of commemoration dedicated to international human rights. This work enables researchers, activists, and patrons to remain up to date and well informed regarding ongoing events and issues within the region and their effects across the world.

January 21, 2022—SALAM DHR reiterated concerns by multiple human rights organizations in response to the Bahraini government’s use of the NSO’s Pegasus spyware. SALAM DHR urged the NSO to suspend the Government of Bahrain’s (GoB) use of the spyware with immediate effect.

Moreover, SALAM DHR called on the OECD to cease engagement with the GoB until the government alters their business practices to adhere to international human rights standards. Other recommendations made by Salam included fair and extensive investigations by both the High Commission for Human Rights and Bahrain’s Public Prosecutor into the targeted surveillance by the government and bringing those responsible to justice. Salam also urged the Human Rights Council to impose a moratorium on the use, sale and transfer of surveillance technologies produced by private firms with immediate effect. Finally, SALAM DHR also recommended that the European Commission impose restrictive sanctions on the NSO Group.

January 24, 2022—SALAM DHR released a joint statement condemning the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia against two Bahraini citizens who faced seven charges of terrorism and smuggling—six of which took place in Bahrain—citing a transgression of spatial jurisdiction by the Saudi judiciary.

SALAM DHR condemned the sentences, stating its arbitrary nature and for Saudi Arabia exceeding its jurisdiction. SALAM DHR urged a retrial for the defendants and a reduction to a single smuggling charge. Providing a detailed background on the issue, SALAM DHR stated that the Saudi Public Prosecution exceeded its jurisdiction regarding the charges against both defendants and that the Saudi Criminal Court erred in its reasoning in finding the defendants guilty.

Finally, the statement declared that the court wrongfully sentenced the defendants to death due to such charges and the Saudi explosives and fireworks regulation not stipulating the death penalty as punishment.

February 7, 2022—SALAM DHR echoed the need for the Government of Bahrain to end restrictions on freedom of association by ceasing interference in associations' affairs. SALAM DHR called for Bahrain's Council of Ministers to overrule the instructions written in a letter, which designated the approval of candidates to serve on the administrative board of the Bahrain Society for Human Rights for 2022 and 2023. SALAM DHR highlighted the rejection of three former members of the banned National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad)—Abdul Jalil Yousef, Issa Ebrahim, and Mohsen Matar—as a deprivation of exercising their right to association.

SALAM DHR also emphasized that such actions violate Article 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bahrain is a state party. SALAM DHR urged the Bahraini government to provide an explanation detailing the reasons for their rejection and for the Council of Ministers to overrule and rescind this initiative.

February 12, 2022—Approaching the 11-year anniversary of the 2011 protests in Bahrain, Salam DHR reiterated calls for the release of prisoners of conscience, the implementation of transitional justice, and justice for victims of the crackdown on the 2011 protests and the ensuing actions carried out by authorities in Bahrain.

SALAM DHR echoed that Bahrain has a legal and moral obligation to stop ongoing human rights violations within its borders. The statement also called for the Government of Bahrain to implement a project to achieve transitional justice, reparations towards victims, holding all perpetrators accountable, and releasing all prisoners of conscience unconditionally.

February 25, 2022—SALAM DHR condemned the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and wrote to the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the United Kingdom. In the email, SALAM DHR expressed concern regarding legal, moral, and ethical challenges arising as a result of the invasion.

Additionally, SALAM DHR stated that Russia constitutes an occupying power and breaches the principles of peace, security, and peaceful resolution disputes, thereby violating Chapters 6 and 7 of the United Nations (UN) Charter. Finally, SALAM DHR also urges the Russian people to call upon the Russian government to adhere to international law, and for the international community to protect international security and uphold human rights.

March 20, 2022—With Formula 1 touring the world every year, the Grand Prix arrived in Bahrain in March. Amid the active ‘sportswashing’ of Gulf human rights by F1 and FIA, SALAM DHR called for a suspension of holding the Formula 1 motor race in Bahrain until the government addresses issues of long-standing human violations. Such violations include the release and compensation for prisoners of conscience, the end of torture and ill-treatment, and ending restrictions on freedom of expression and association.

SALAM DHR also called on the government to provide independence to Bahrain’s Lawyers’ Association and give redress to those who suffered from arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, and arbitrary deprivation of their citizenship.

June 3, 2022—In accordance with Article 344 of Bahrain’s Code of Criminal Procedure, SALAM DHR demanded the immediate release of prisoners with confirmed cases of tuberculosis. In response to multiple testimonies and complaints arising from Bahrain’s Jau Central Prison, SALAM DHR also expressed great concern regarding the lack of medical care for prisoners and routine negligence by the prison administration and staff.

The statement also emphasized the appalling conditions in prisoners, notably deprivation of adequate health care and food, while also refusing to transfer political prisoners to specialized hospitals. Describing the alarming cases of Hassan Abdullah Habib Ali Ahmed and Murtatha Mohammad Abd al-Ridha Jaafar Mohammad, SALAM DHR also stressed proper monitoring for diseases and prisoners’ health conditions.

Finally, SALAM DHR urged the GoB to release all prisoners of conscience, particularly those with life-threatening conditions, and for an investigation into the spread of pulmonary tuberculosis in the prison.

July 7, 2022—SALAM DHR stressed the importance of inclusion and exercising the right to participate in political life in the wake of Bahrain’s plans to build a national plan for human rights. SALAM DHR echoed its recommendations for the GoB to release all prisoners of conscience and end the harassment and prosecution of civilians for exercising their right to speech.

It also called for cooperation and coordination between the Government of Bahrain and relevant internal and external human rights organizations, and UN human rights bodies.

SALAM DHR recommended the restructuring of Bahrain's National Institution for Human Rights in accordance with the Paris Principles and the official judicial and human rights regulatory institutions to align with international charters, treaties, and frameworks. Salam also proposed the formation of an equity and reconciliation council that would take on the responsibility of implementing the recommendations of the Bahrain Commission Inquiry regarding human rights violations and provide compensation to victims of such violations.

October 1, 2022—SALAM DHR expressed concern and condemned the attempted attack on religious scholar Sheikh Abdul Jalil Al Miqdad, a prisoner of conscience who is one of the 'Bahraini Thirteen', who faced detainment since March 27, 2011. In the wake of this incident, SALAM DHR urged the Government of Bahrain to put an end to the human rights violations carried out by security forces against prisoners.

SALAM DHR's statement also echoed calls for justice for the victims of murder under torture, prison reforms to help prisoners of conscience and human rights activists, and respond to demands made by prisoners, including detainees, who carry out strikes.

SALAM DHR additionally reiterated its call on the Bahraini government to release all prisoners of conscience arrested on the grounds of expressing their political opinions and that they make reparations to reconcile with the victims.

24 October 2022 - On the occasion of the International United Nations Day. SALAM DHR's Beirut office released a statement calling on the necessity of democratizing the state and strengthening the rule of law in Bahrain.

November 1, 2022 - Ahead of controversial elections in Bahrain in November, SALAM DHR released a statement emphasizing the need for democracy and strengthening the rule of law in Bahrain.

SALAM DHR underlined the importance of the authority's involvement in a comprehensive dialogue, with the objective to democratize the state on the basis of equal citizens. It also stressed the need to strengthen the rule of law and respect the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international conventions, particularly to preserve the principle of freedom of opinion and expression.

Finally, SALAM DHR urged the release of all prisoners of conscience and for Bahrain to adopt transitional justice and a reparation project.

December 9, 2022—Ahead of international Human Rights Day on December 10, SALAM DHR echoed the Government of Bahrain's obligation to implement the recommendations listed in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which took place last November in the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In addition, SALAM DHR stressed the dire status of human rights in Bahrain and demanded that the Bahraini government also respects the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with respect to freedom of opinion and expression.

SALAM DHR also continued to urge the Government of Bahrain to release all prisoners of conscience and political prisoners suffering from unjust detainment. Additional recommendations included accountability for those responsible for torture in prisons and during investigation, and for the government to impose an official moratorium on executions, with the ultimate goal of abolishing the death penalty.

10 December 2022- On the occasion of the Human Rights International day, SALAM DHR released a statement calling the Bahraini government to implement the recommendations of the universal periodic review.

Reports

Throughout 2022 - A considerable amount of time and effort was spent on the composition of the report “‘Nothing but a Pen and a Word’: Voices from the Stateless Bidoon Community During the Covid-19 Pandemic’, which was launched in January 2023. The project, done in collaboration with the Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion, was one of the largest research undertakings SALAM DHR has ever embarked upon.

Over the course of 2022, dozens of Bidoon were interviewed, and numerous experts were consulted, resulting in a report that synthesized academic research, human rights activism, and the voices of those directly affected.

26 June 2022 - Marking the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Salam DHR’s Beirut Office published a report under the name “Torture in Bahrain: End the culture of impunity”.

This report set out how the use of torture is cloaked in a culture of impunity in Bahrain, which has long been enshrined in the Bahraini judicial system. It called on the Government of Bahrain to use the opportunity presented by its comprehensive, June 2022, government cabinet reshuffle to end, once and for all, the use of torture.

22 July 2022 - To commemorate Nelson Mandela International Day, Salam DHR’s Beirut Office launched ‘Bahrain: The Treatment of Prisoners During the COVID-19 Pandemic’ report in Arabic.

This report highlighted abuses and ill-treatment from Bahraini authorities against prisoners in Jau Central Prison during the pandemic. In addition, the report highlighted how these practices had violated Bahrain’s international promises, specifically The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules.

Coming in 2023 - On the occasion of the Bahraini election on 12 November, Beirut’s Office drafted the ‘One Vote One Citizen’ report. It features the right to equal electoral representation, in addition to previous raw data and statistics concerning the 2014 and 2018 elections that highlight gerrymandering.

ACLED Reporting

Over the course of 2022, Salam DHR produced 22 incident reports for the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). Utilizing online scrapping and open-source intelligence (OSINT), researchers cataloged incidents related to religious and sectarian violations in Bahrain and compiled them into full reports fortnightly. This work contributed to building a clearer image of religious and sectarian issues in Bahrain and the Gulf, which are published by ACLED.

August - SALAM DHR invited its interns and staff to participate in a two-day ACLED led workshop on how to utilize Tableau software for reporting protests, acts of violence and human rights violations in the Middle East and North Africa, and providing them insight into how open-source intelligence (OSINT) works in the human rights profession.

Engagement with Human Rights Bodies

31 March 2022 - SALAM DHR's Beirut Office submitted to the 41st working group for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations 'Political and Civil Rights in Bahrain'. In coordination with the World Organization against Torture (OMCT), this report reviewed the reality of political participation in the Kingdom of Bahrain and concluded that Bahraini citizens are being imposed to political isolation.

In August, members of Salam DHR attended the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva, Switzerland to cite specific issues and provide recommendations.

14 April 2022 - SALAM DHR's Beirut Office, along with Drewery Dyke, provided a submission to the Human Rights Committee, following-up on the concluding observations of 15 November 2018 on Bahrain's initial report under the reporting procedures to the Treaty Bodies. In this submission SALAM DHR reviewed the implementation by the GoB of recommendations highlighted in the COs of 2018 related to military courts, death penalty and freedom of expression.

24 November 2022 - SALAM DHR's Beirut Office responded to a call for input for the Special Rapporteur on torture and submitted a report that focuses on the legislative, investigative, and prosecutorial practices concerning torture in Bahrain, in addition to the mechanisms and institutions involved in such practices.

Events

Throughout the year, SALAM DHR hosted webinars live-streamed on its YouTube channel. Although each webinar delved into a particular topic, SALAM DHR hosted webinars with the objective to raise awareness about human rights violations in Bahrain. SALAM DHR also aimed to inform the audience about the deprivation of human rights, from political participation and freedom of speech to religious freedom and tolerance.

February 14, 2022 (3 p.m.-4:30 p.m. GMT)—In the wake of the 11-year anniversary of the 2011 protests, SALAM DHR held a webinar discussing the authoritarian practices and governance carried out by the Government of Bahrain. The webinar was chaired by SALAM DHR Researcher Director Dr. Andrew McIntosh.

Its speakers included Jawad Fairouz, former Bahraini MP and Chairman of Salam DHR; Tony Lloyd, member of the British Parliament; Dr. Staci Strobel, professor of criminal justice at the University of Shenandoah; Devin Kenney, GCC Researcher at Amnesty International; and Ghassan Sarhan, Bahraini lawyer and human rights advocate.

June 20, 2022—Amid the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council, SALAM DHR hosted a webinar to discuss the restrictions and precariousness of Bahrainis taking part in political life within Bahrain. This webinar also aimed to raise the issue of human rights violations regarding the right to public participation in Bahrain and the absence of accountability within the government and the monarchy.

It was chaired by SALAM DHR Research Director Dr. Andrew McIntosh. Speakers included Ebtsam al-Sayegh, in charge of Monitoring and Documentation at SALAM DHR, Dr. Jalal Fairouz, former Member of Parliament in Bahrain, Lazarie Eeckloo, human rights officer for the Centre for Civil and Political Rights, and Jawad Fairouz, former Bahraini MP and Chairman of Salam DHR.

25 June 2022 - To recognize the “United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture” on the 26th of June, the Beirut Office hosted a discussion over Twitter Space entitled “The reality of torture in the prisons of Gulf countries and how to support victims”. The discussion brought together human rights activists, defenders and experts from the MENA region who shared their experience on torture in the Gulf detention centers.

During the event, a torture-related legal framework on the international level was presented by the legal advisor Achref Afi on behalf of OMCT. SALAM DHR’s torture report of June the 26th was also presented over the course of the event which was concluded with some recommendations directed to the official authorities of Gulf countries.

November 14, 2022—SALAM DHR hosted a live event on its YouTube channel discussing the widespread discrimination based on religion and the limited civil liberties and tolerance towards one practicing their religion of choice in Bahrain.

Internships

Salam DHR recruited 20 interns over the course of 2022. The interns came from a highly diverse set of backgrounds, having been recruited from the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, North America, and South Asia. Our program aims to provide a framework by which students can enhance their educational experience through practical work assignments.

During their internship period, interns were asked to contribute to reports writing, to write their own human rights related reports on Bahrain and were provided as well with training on the UN system for Human Rights.

Intern Reports Composed in 2022

January-July- A report on Bahrain’s international art exhibitions, sectarianism and image laundering was composed, exploring how Bahrain’s official museums and high art scene attempt to silence conversations about sectarianism in the country and make itself appear more cosmopolitan abroad. It is due to be released in the first quarter of 2023.

January-September- Salam DHR collaborated with the University of Lancaster to train _interns on human rights in Bahrain and the country's relations with the European Union. The report is due to be released in 2023.

February-August - A report on systemic issues surrounding the mistreatment of female domestic workers in Bahrain, including legal gaps in Bahraini law. The work is scheduled to be released in the first quarter of 2023.

June-August- A report was composed on the Bahraini economy and how a post-rentier state may affect human rights in the country. It is due to be released in the second quarter of 2023.

July-October- Two interns were recruited and trained to research the legal issues facing Kuwaiti Bidoon asylum seekers in the UK and how asylum law and procedure carries the potential to harm an already vulnerable demographic. The report is due to be released in the second quarter of 2023.

Complaint Submissions

As part of its engagement with the UN office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Salam DHR's Beirut Office submitted 3 complaints to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council on behalf of Bahraini citizens, victims of human rights violations, and kept track on these submissions by coordinating with the regional office of OHCHR located at Beirut in order to get the best outcome of these complaint.

Coordination, Partnerships, and Publications

Salam DHR coordinated with the World Coalition against the Death Penalty and campaigned with them against the death penalty on World Day.

Salam DHR collaborated with The Advocates for Rights, a US-based, ECOSOC accredited, legal group that focuses on international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law.

The Advocates for Rights assisted Salam DHR in securing one-to-one briefings with state representatives leading up to the UPR. Salam DHR also collaborated with them on the 2022 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) shadow report.

SALAM DHR entered an official partnership with UNHCR Global Alliance Taskforce to End Statelessness working with them throughout the year to promote the #IBelong campaign to recognize the unique circumstances of statelessness and enable their ability to be recognized both in their home countries and to have fair treatment as asylum seekers.

International Advocacy and Academic Engagement

April-November- SALAM DHR met with Mohamed Nasoor, the Director of MENA operations at the OHCHR in Geneva, Switzerland. At the three separate meetings SALAM DHR members discussed human rights in Bahrain, the proposal of Memorandum of Understanding between the OHCHR and Bahrain, the UPR, and the Bahrain Human Rights National Plan.

June- Members of SALAM DHR attended Rightscon 2022, on human rights and technology, where Jawad Fairouz gave an interview with Washington Post and Deutsche Welle journalist, Melissa Chan, on the use of surveillance technology and restrictions on social media use in Bahrain.

November- members of SALAM DHR met with the Papal Nuncio, who passed information regarding Shi'a discrimination and denial of civil and political rights to Pope Francis, who raised these issues when visiting Bahrain.

November- Members of SALAM DHR attended the 8th World Congress Against the Death Penalty (ECPM).

December- Members of SALAM DHR attended the 2022 Sectarian, Proxies & De-Escalation (SEPAD) conference on Citizenship, Sectarianism, and Belonging at the University of Lancaster. There, they gave the presentation 'Identity in Exile: National Belonging and Cultural Hegemony in the Bahraini Diaspora'.

Coming in 2023

SALAM DHR currently has six reports awaiting publication, has applied for funding of two international research projects, and continues to expand its profile by working with NGO's think tanks and elected representatives around the world. Members of SALAM DHR also intend to attend Rightscon, hosted by AccessNow again this summer.

SALAM DHR will be resuming its monthly all-staff workshops in 2023, which will give interns a chance to work with human rights experts around their world and give them the opportunity to present their research to a global audience.

SALAM DHR and all its staff will continue their mission advocate for human rights, democracy, and non-violence in the Gulf via global advocacy, research, seminars, workshops, and media. For the past three years, its reach continued to expand, as new, talented experts are recruited, and high-profile partnerships are formed. None of this would be possible without the support of our members, every accomplishment from SALAM DHR is your accomplishment, and we owe everything to your support. For that, we thank you, and look forward to another year of making a difference.