

**Between
Demands and Prosecution**

**The State of Peaceful Assembly in Bahrain
During the First Quarter**

2025 (January–March)



Between Demands and Prosecution:

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Contents

Between Demands and Prosecution:	2
In International and Domestic Laws	4
Protesting is a Fundamental Human Right	4
Legally: Between the Permitted and the Prohibited in Bahrain	4
Laws Restricting and Criminalising Peaceful Assembly in Bahrain	5
The Reality on the Ground in Bahrain	6
Monitoring Peaceful Demonstrations and Violations – January 2025	7
Details of Peaceful Demonstrations – January 2025	8
Details of Summonses and Arrests – January 2025	9
Monitoring Peaceful Demonstrations and Violations – February 2025	10
Details of Peaceful Demonstrations – February	12
Details of Summonses and Arrests – February	13
Monitoring Peaceful Demonstrations and Violations – March 2025	13
Details of Peaceful Demonstrations – March 2025	14
Details of Summonses and Arrests – March 2025	15
Conclusion	16
Recommendations to the Government of Bahrain	16

The intensification of the war in Gaza and the Levant, along with a rise in tensions and regional conflicts, has captured the attention of the international community, diverting it from other developments and human rights violations occurring in many countries in the region, such as Bahrain. This has led to the marginalisation of key human rights issues, even as voices calling for an end to the barbarity of these wars have grown louder. With limited international human rights scrutiny, governments have escalated crackdowns on citizens and activists. These states have also benefited from the evident weakness of international law and its inability to deter aggression or defend the oppressed, especially considering the widespread humanitarian tragedies and violations that have been exposed.

The government of Bahrain (GoB) has benefited from limited human rights scrutiny and the shift in international focus away from its domestic record of suppressing freedoms. Signs of a police state remain clearly visible, and the government continues to engage in repressive practices and systematic violations of citizens' rights despite having released around 800 political prisoners in 2024, most of whom had been detained on charges related to peaceful protest and freedom of expression.¹

Since 2024, the right to peaceful assembly has been increasingly threatened. The Bahraini government has intensified its restrictions on public gatherings and imposed broad bans on protests, using security justifications to legitimise the use of force against demonstrators. This has included arbitrary arrests, detentions without fair trial guarantees, as well as security summons and legal prosecutions of activists and opposition figures.² Peaceful assemblies, vital tools for individuals to express grievances, demand accountability, and call for reform, are increasingly portrayed as threats to state stability and public order rather than as legitimate exercises of democratic and political rights.

Despite all the restrictions imposed on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, citizens have not hesitated to participate in various peaceful protests and movements, which have spanned political, socio-economic, human rights, and religious themes. Throughout 2025, multiple areas across Bahrain witnessed popular mobilisations such as the commemoration of the anniversary of the 14 February 2011 protests, calling for the release of political prisoners, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza, among other causes that will be detailed later in this report.

This report documents the work of Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR) in monitoring protests in Bahrain during the first quarter of 2025, along with related summonses, arrests, and trials. It also sheds light on the Bahraini government's obligations under international law and the contradiction between those obligations and domestic laws, which facilitate the imposition of restrictions on citizens' right to peaceful assembly. The identities of most victims have been withheld for their protection.

¹ Human Rights Watch, World Report, Bahrain, 2025
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/bahrain>

² Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Ongoing Systematic Violations of Human Rights in Bahrain, February 2025
<https://bahrainrights.net/?p=137100>

In International and Domestic Laws

Protesting is a Fundamental Human Right

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)³ established the principle of the right to peaceful assembly, affirming in Article 20 the right of individuals to freely participate in peaceful meetings and associations and to express their opinions.

Likewise, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights enshrines the right to peaceful assembly.⁴ Article 21 stipulates that the right of peaceful assembly shall be recognised. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in accordance with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has been ratified by 173 countries, making most countries obligated under international law to recognise the right of peaceful assembly, particularly in their national constitutions.

Legally: Between the Permitted and the Prohibited in Bahrain

Article 28 of the 2002 Bahraini Constitution states that individuals have the right to private assembly without the need for prior permission or notification, and no member of the public security forces may attend their private meetings. Public meetings, marches, and gatherings are permitted according to the conditions and procedures specified by law, provided that the purposes and means of the assembly are peaceful and do not violate public morals.

As for the domestic laws that restrict and criminalise peaceful assembly in Bahrain, they are presented as follows:

³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 20, United Nations Website:
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 21, United Nations Website:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

Laws Restricting and Criminalising Peaceful Assembly in Bahrain

Law	Article	Provision
Decree-Law No. (18) of 1973 on Public Meetings, Processions, and Gatherings	Article 2	Organisers must notify the Chief of Public Security at least three days in advance before holding a public meeting.
	Article 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organiser must be from the city or area where the meeting will be held (Article 3/1). • They must reside in that city or village or be well-known for a good reputation (Article 3/2). • They must enjoy full civil and political rights (Article 3/3), meaning those whose rights have not been restricted by the state, such as those barred from running for office or voting due to past political participation. • The notification must include the names, occupations, and addresses of the signatories (Article 3/4). <p>If any of these conditions are not met, the notification is considered void, and the request to hold the meeting will not be accepted.</p>
	Article 4	The Chief of Public Security has the authority to change the time and place of a meeting or ban any public gathering deemed a threat to "public order."
	Article 8	<p>Any meeting held in a public or private place open to individuals without personal invitations is considered a public meeting.</p> <p>A meeting may also be deemed public by the Chief of Public Security based on its topic, the number of invitations, or other factors.</p> <p>Religious gatherings and meetings held by commercial companies are not considered public meetings.</p>

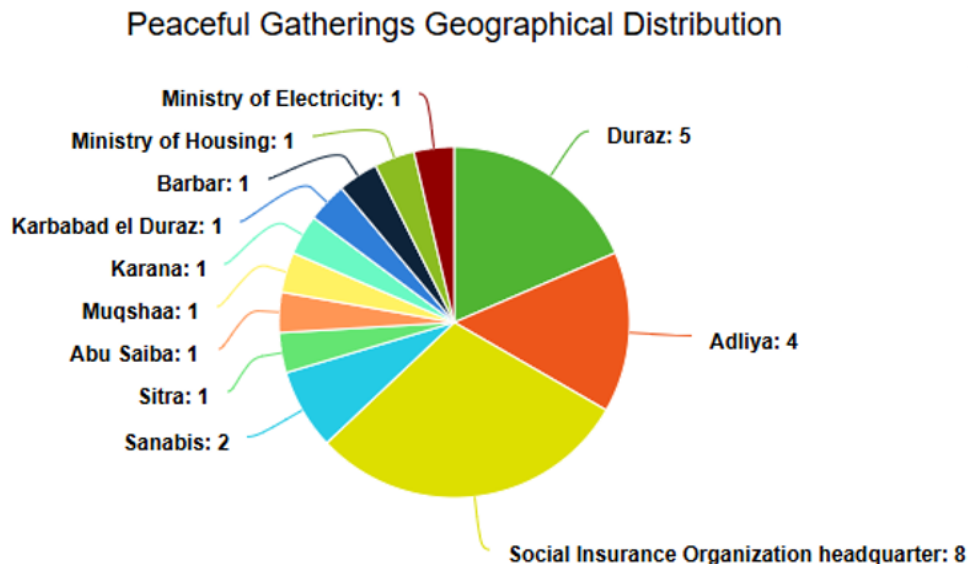
Law	Article	Provision
Decree-Law No. (22) of 2013 Amending Article 11 of Decree-Law No. (18) of 1973	Article 11	<p>Prohibits demonstrations and processions in the capital of Manama.</p> <p>Bans protests, marches, gatherings, or sit-ins before sunrise or after sunset unless a special written permit is obtained from the Chief of Public Security.</p> <p>Prohibits demonstrations near hospitals, airports, shopping centres, or security-sensitive locations, as determined and announced by the Minister of Interior.</p> <p>Prohibits the use of vehicles in any protest, march, or gathering without special written permission from the Chief of Public Security or</p>
Decree-Law No. (18) of 1973 on Public Meetings, Processions, and Gatherings	Article 13	<p>Illegal protests are punishable by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3 months in jail or a fine (100 BHD) for organisers of unapproved protests. • Up to 6 months in jail or a fine (100 BHD) for continuing a protest after a ban. • Up to 1 month in jail or a fine (20 BHD) for participating in a banned protest. • Up to 15 days in jail or a fine (15 BHD) for other violations of the law.
Bahrain Penal Code	Articles 178 and 180	<p>Article 178: A gathering of 5 or more people is punishable if it aims to commit crimes or disturb public security (even if the goal is lawful). Penalty: Fine or up to 2 years in prison.</p> <p>Article 180: Remaining in a gathering after being ordered to disperse. Penalty: Unlimited jail time and a fine of up to 300 BHD</p>

The Reality on the Ground in Bahrain

Although the authorities occasionally allow certain gatherings to take place, such as licensed marches in the capital, Manama, the GoB uses multiple methods to suppress and marginalise them. In its efforts to safeguard the right to peaceful assembly and monitor the extent to which the GoB respects this right, SALAM DHR monitored and documented peaceful protests in Bahrain from January to March 2025, including recording the number of detainees and the methods of repression used.

Monitoring Peaceful Demonstrations and Violations – January 2025

January 2025 witnessed sustained peaceful gatherings and protests in various regions of Bahrain. SALAM DHR's team documented 27 peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins addressing socio-economic, political, and human rights issues. It also recorded approximately 40 summons and 17 cases of arbitrary arrest of citizens on the grounds of exercising their right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.



The peaceful gatherings were distributed by area as follows:

- 5 peaceful gatherings in Diraz
- 4 in Adliya
- 8 in the Social Insurance Organization headquarters
- 2 in Sanabis
- One gathering each in Sitra, Abu Saiba, Muqshaa, Karana, Karbabad el Diraz, and Barbar

In addition to:

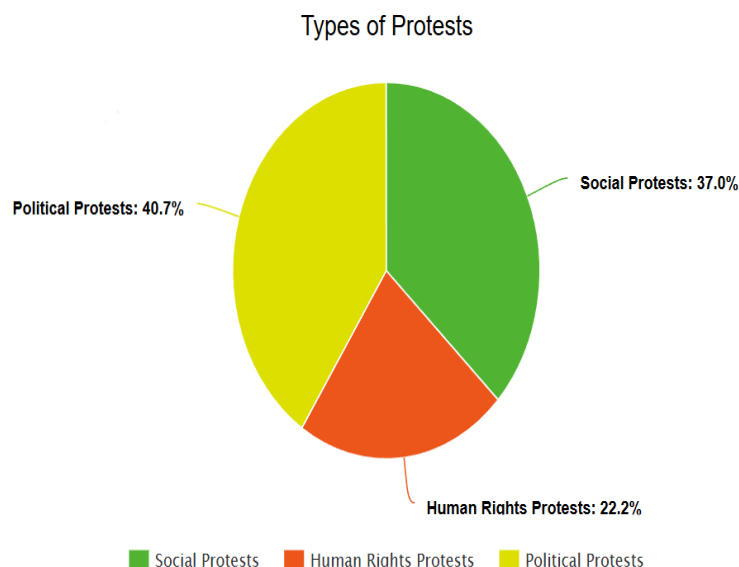
- A sit-in by a former detainee in front of his workplace near the Electricity and Water Authority, demanding justice in his employment after 10 years of imprisonment
- A sit-in by another former detainee in front of the Ministry of Housing to demand acceleration of his long-delayed housing request

In Terms of Content, the motivation for these gatherings varied:

- 10 social gatherings, during which participants demanded improvements in their deteriorating financial and living conditions caused by government programs like

"Khutwa" ⁵ or due to housing service delays

- 11 political gatherings, held on national occasions such as martyrdom anniversaries or in solidarity with the Palestinian cause
- 6 human rights-themed gatherings, calling for the release of prisoners of conscience and denouncing ongoing human rights violations



Details of Peaceful Demonstrations – January 2025

In the first week of January, three peaceful gatherings occurred in Diraz. They were in solidarity with political prisoners and commemorating the execution of martyrs Sami Mushaima, Abbas al-Samea and Ali al-Singace.⁶ In Adliya, the “Bahraini Society Against Normalisation with the Zionist” and the “Palestine Solidarity” Society held a licensed peaceful gathering under the slogan “Limbs are severed, but determination remains undefeated.”

On 4 January, after Bahrain’s national football team won the Gulf Cup,⁷ families of detainees marched alongside national celebrations, demanding the release of prisoners of conscience. SALAM DHR recorded a protest in Diraz coinciding with these celebrations. Utilising freedom of expression, activists and families of prisoners took to social media to demand the release of political detainees and launched an online campaign as users reacted to the team’s win.

In the second week, a peaceful protest was organised in Sanabis to denounce the ban on Friday prayers and simultaneously express solidarity with political detainees. Another licensed gathering was held in Adliya by the same two organisations (against normalisation and in support of Palestine) under the slogan “It is not the eyes that go blind, but the hearts.”

⁵ The Ministry of Labour and the General Organization for Social Insurance issue a joint statement on violations of the “Khutwa” program, Bahrain News Agency: <https://www.bna.bh/.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDnztaldQVOU%2FS1tTBuT3%2Fxs%3D>

⁶ Execution of Three Shi’ites Convicted of Killing Police Officers in Bahrain, Reuters, 2017: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/--idUSKBN14Z08C/>

⁷ Al Arabiya, “Bahrain Defeats Oman and Wins the Gulf Cup for the Second Time,” January 5, 2025: <https://www.alarabiya.net/sport/2025/01/04/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%B2%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC-%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A3%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AC-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9>

In Sitra and Sanabis, two peaceful demonstrations were held in memory of martyrs Sami Mushaima, Abbas al-Samea and Ali al-Singace. In addition, Mohammed Youssef al-Muhasani staged a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Housing to protest the ongoing delay of his housing request and to question government promises to ease procedures for those covered by the royal pardon.⁸

In the third week, peaceful gatherings continued to commemorate the execution martyrs in Diraz, Sanabis, and Barbar. In Diraz, a protest was held denouncing the ban on Friday prayers under the slogan "You will not prevent our Friday." Meanwhile, the Bahrain Society Against Normalisation and the Palestine Solidarity Society continued their licensed protest in Adliya under the slogan "Signs of victory have appeared." This week also saw the start of a sit-in by victims of the "Khutwa" program at the Social Insurance Organisation headquarters.

In the final week of January, the sit-in by victims of the "Khutwa" program continued daily at the Social Insurance Organisation. Concurrently, the two above-mentioned organisations continued their licensed protest in Adliya under the slogan "Boycott is war with no truce."

In Abu Saiba and Shakhoura, peaceful demonstrations took place to commemorate the martyrs executed and celebrate Gaza's victory. Former political prisoner Mohammed Abdullah Youssef was seen holding a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Works, demanding fair treatment in his employment after 10 years of imprisonment.

Details of Summonses and Arrests – January 2025

Regarding human rights violations and restrictions faced by peaceful protestors, the authorities relied heavily on two tactics: summons and arrests, as primary means to suppress and pre-emptively prevent protests. They also erected checkpoints on the outskirts of towns to prevent citizens from reaching gathering locations, whether to protest or perform Friday prayers.

No cases of violent dispersal, beatings or use of tear gas were recorded during this month.

SALAM DHR documented a rise in summons targeting citizens who participated in such gatherings, with many arrested and some prosecuted. For January, the team recorded over 40 documented summonses related to peaceful protests. However, the actual number is likely higher, as victims have refrained from disclosing their summons out of fear of retaliation, making it difficult to ascertain the full count.

Diraz witnessed the most significant wave of summons, with 30 citizens, including 3 women, called in for interrogation at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigations on 30 January 2025.

SALAM DHR also recorded the continued summons of citizens in Sitra over peaceful protests, including the wife of Hajj Muneer Mushaima. Activist Ali Mhana and Hajj Samoud were summoned via text message to report to the Police Station related to partaking in

⁸ Mohammed served 10 years of a 12-and-a-half-year prison sentence and was released in April 2024 under a royal pardon. However, he continues to face ongoing hardships as a result of the violations he endured during his imprisonment.

protests in Bilad al-Qadeem, while activist Ali Hammam was summoned for participating in a peaceful protest.

Arrests related to peaceful assembly also persisted, with detainees facing charges of participating in unauthorised gatherings or inciting them, despite most of these activities being peaceful and free of any violence. In parallel, 17 arrests were recorded this month, including 6 citizens from Sanabis who were stopped while sitting in the same car on a public street. A 14-year-old child who was with them was released.

In Karbabad and Diraz, two individuals were summoned and later released after a week-long detention, indicating the use of temporary detention as psychological pressure without formal charges.

Another arrest was executed inside a courtroom in Karana. In Samaheej, repeated arrests occurred, including individuals detained while on the street or near their homes, with at least one case involving cars being surrounded before the person was taken, raising concerns of arbitrary use of arrest powers.

Three security summons were also recorded in the same area, where detainees were taken for interrogation and then held at the Sitra Police Station.

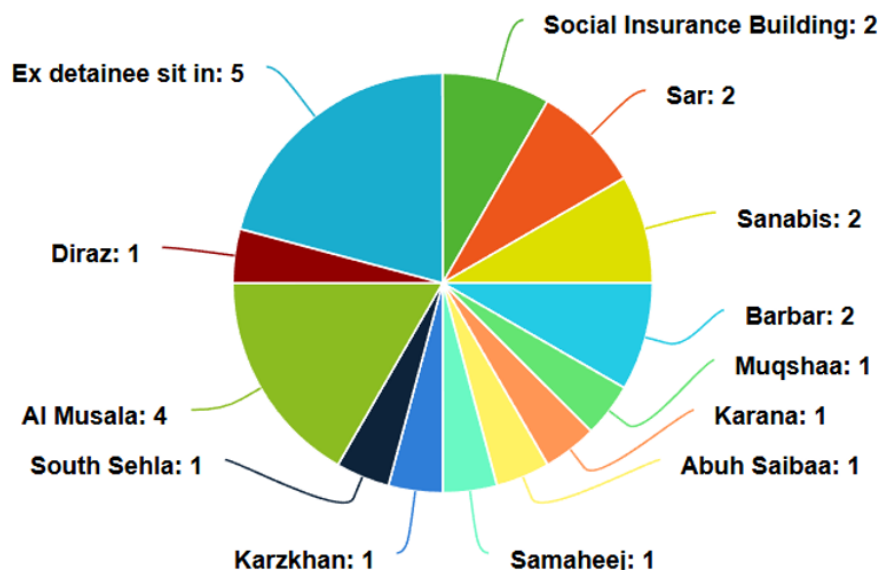
In Sitra, a citizen was arrested on the street and charged with illegal gathering and assaulting a security officer.

Monitoring Peaceful Demonstrations and Violations – February 2025

The month of February 2025 witnessed the continuation of peaceful protests in Bahrain, as Salam's team was able to document 24 peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins in various areas. The protests in February revolved around commemorating the anniversary of the February 14 movement,⁹ in addition to the demands of the Bahraini people for freedom and justice. The team was also able to document 12 arrest cases on the grounds of peaceful protest, in addition to 7 trials related to charges of assembly and rioting. 4 detainees were also released after being arrested for peaceful protest, while 10 summons were recorded by the authorities, although there were unrecorded summons due to the hesitance of some citizens to disclose this information.

⁹ Bahrain: "Commemorating the Anniversary of the February 14 Revolution," Manama Post, February 2025: <https://www.manamapost.com/news/2019150428/البحرين-احياء-ذكرى-ثورة-14-فبراير-بغرف>

Peaceful Gatherings Geographically Distributed

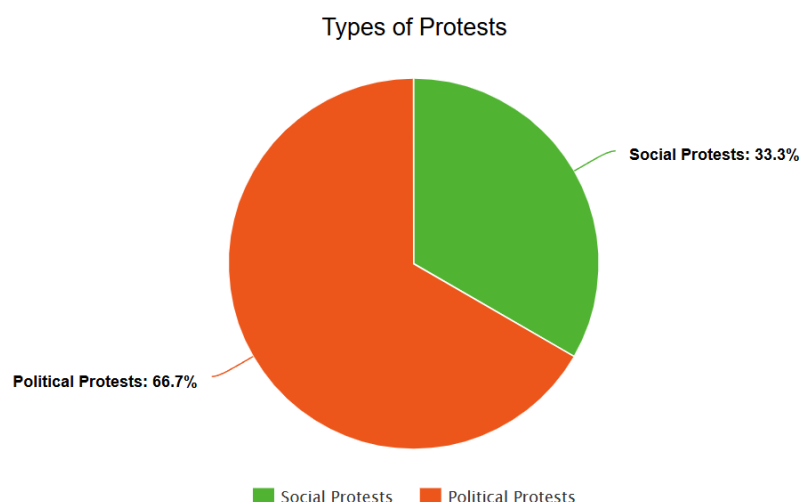


The peaceful gatherings were geographically distributed as follows:

- Two gatherings in the Social Insurance building and each of the areas of Saar, Sanabis, and Barbar.
- One gathering in each of the areas of Al-Maqshaa, Karana, Abu Saibaa, Samaheej, Sitra, Karkabad, Karzakan, Al Musala, Diraz, and South Sehla.
- 5 stands by a former detainee.

As for the content, the reasons for these gatherings varied between:

- 8 social gatherings during which the protestors expressed their demands to improve their deteriorating financial and living conditions;
- 16 political gatherings held on national occasions, such as the anniversary of the February 14 protests, or in solidarity with the Palestinian cause.



Details of Peaceful Demonstrations – February

The first week of February began with a demonstration in Al-Maqsha', in which participants commemorated the February 14 protests and expressed their rejection of normalisation with Israel. The victims of the "Khutwa" Program also continued their sit-in on February 2 and 3, during which a group of men participating in the sit-in on February 3 were arrested but were released the same day. In Saar, as in Karbabad, a peaceful demonstration was launched to commemorate the February 14 protests. In Sanabis, SALAM DHR monitored a gathering in solidarity with executed martyrs on the anniversary of their martyrdom.

The second week of February witnessed continuity in the movement, with many activities organised in different areas such as Sanabis, Karbabad, and Samaheej. There was also mobilisation through graffiti in several areas like Karbabad and Samaheej, in addition to a peaceful demonstration in Saar in solidarity with Gaza and Lebanon. There was also a stand-in by Mohammed Abdullah Youssef Al-Sankis near his former workplace, carrying a loaf of bread, demanding his reinstatement after being arbitrarily dismissed following his arrest and trial on political charges, and his release through a royal pardon in April 2024. The Bahraini authorities arrested him and transferred him to Al-Hooraa Police Station. He was later released.

On the third week of February, specifically on February 14, the anniversary of the 2011 protests, several areas witnessed demonstrations and peaceful gatherings, the most notable of which were in the capital, Manama, in addition to:

- **Capital Manama – under the slogan:** "We hear praise, we defy it... we bow only to God."
- **Sitra – under the slogan:** "A revolution that refuses to break" – a peaceful demonstration commemorating the martyrs and the February 14 revolution.
- **Barbar –** a peaceful demonstration commemorating the martyrs and the February 14 revolution.
- **Barbar – under the slogan:** "14 years and the voice has not broken" – a second round launched.
- **Al-Muqsha – under the slogan:** "We continue in our revolution and there will be no retreat."
- **Sanabis – under the slogan:** "The revolution of the free and noble... still marches forward."
- **Abu Saiba' and Al-Shakhoura – under the slogan:** "The necessity of this movement in its time still stands, and rights do not expire."
- **Karranah – under the slogan:** "Our heads shall only bow to their Creator."
- **Karzakan – under the slogan:** "Steadfast in the squares."
- **Samaheej – under the slogan:** "We continue with firm determination."

Peaceful gatherings continued in the third and fourth week of February to commemorate the 14 February 2011 Protests. Both weeks witnessed increased peaceful gatherings in various locations, such as Karbabad, Saar, A'ali, and Abu Saiba', in addition to mobilisation in Zinj. The demonstrations revolved around affirming the continuation of the peaceful movement in Bahrain, in addition to supporting detainees' demands and raising revolutionary slogans calling for self-determination. Former detainee Mohammed Abdullah Youssef Al-Sankis also continued his stand, raising a loaf of bread near his workplace as an expression of his demand to be reinstated.

Details of Summonses and Arrests – February

The field data from February 2025 in Bahrain shows a recurring pattern of arrests linked to political activities and peaceful practices, especially on the anniversary of the February 14 protests. SALAM DHR documented 32 arrests (4 of which were of minors).

At the beginning of the month, security summons were recorded at Sitra Police Station, followed by a quick release the next day. A citizen was also arrested while trying to leave the country via the King Fahd Causeway and was released after nine days. On 11 February, a former detainee who had previously been released through a pardon in April 2024 was also released after his peaceful sit-in in front of the Ministry of Works to demand his reinstatement. On February 14 itself, a series of arrests took place in multiple areas, including Al-Maqsha', Al-Daih, Diraz, Al-Ma'ameer, Barbar, Karbabad, Maqaba, and Jidhafs, where many individuals were detained in conjunction with the peaceful demonstrations commemorating the anniversary, with some cases of release recorded the next day.

On 22 February, the wave of arrests continued, directly linked to demonstrations, with individuals arrested in areas such as Sanabis, Al-Daih, Abu Saiba', Karzakan, Maqaba, and Karbabad, with a limited number of releases recorded on 23 February. In Sitra, a citizen turned himself in to serve a three-month prison sentence. At the end of the month, specifically on 28 February, several people were summoned for investigation at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigations building, including individuals from Al-Maqsha' and Al-Nuwaidrat. Additionally, one individual was arrested at Bahrain International Airport immediately upon returning from abroad and released the same day.

These documented cases highlight a pattern of restrictions on public freedoms, where individuals are repeatedly targeted due to their peaceful activism or participation in movements, whether through arrests, investigations, or trials. The facts indicate the use of legal procedures as a tool of pressure and intimidation, especially during symbolic periods when political and societal protests are revived.

As for trials, 26 judicial rulings were issued against individuals, including 15 minors. Of these, 22 rulings were prison sentences of one year, three rulings were for two years, and one ruling was a prison sentence of three months. 60% of these rulings were related to charges involving participation in protests and assembly.

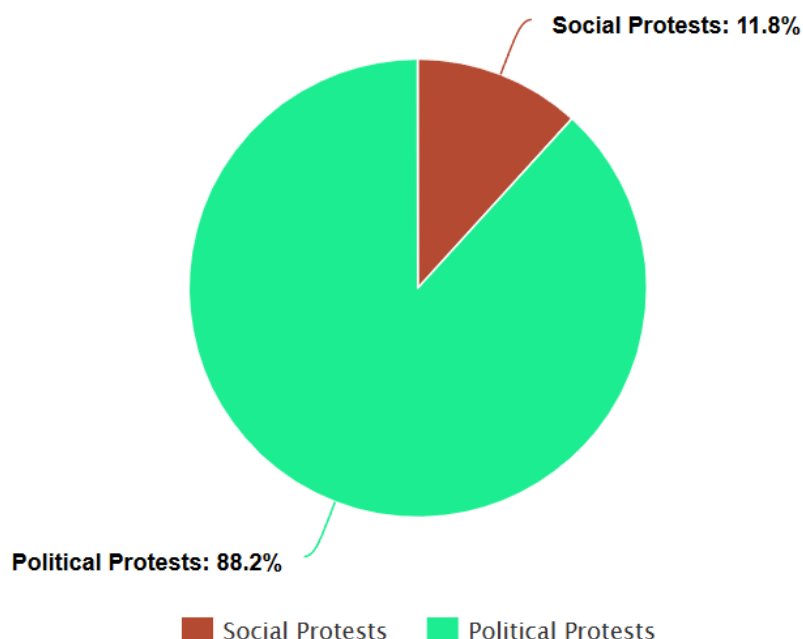
Monitoring Peaceful Demonstrations and Violations – March 2025

March 2025 began with relative calm. No notable demonstrations were recorded during its first week. However, a wave of peaceful protests swept across various areas towards the end of the month. Most of these protests were in solidarity with the Palestinian cause for International Quds Day. SALAM DHR documented 34 peaceful gatherings across different parts of the country, in addition to recording 10 summonses of individuals for participating in peaceful demonstrations, as well as 11 arrests and 7 trials related to participation in these movements.

Peaceful gatherings were held across Bahrain. The following were monitored:

- A gathering in Manama; Bilad Al-Qadeem; Sitra; Diraz; Al-Murkh; Diraz village; Nabih Saleh, and other areas.
- A gathering in front of the National Institution for Human Rights and in front of the Council of Representatives and the Shura Council.

Types of Protests



As for the content, the reasons behind these gatherings varied between:

- 30 political gatherings held for occasions such as International Quds Day or in solidarity with Palestinians
- 4 social gatherings during which the protesters expressed their demands to improve their deteriorating financial and living conditions.

Details of Peaceful Demonstrations - March 2025

In the second week of March, several recently released prisoners of conscience held a sit-in in front of the National Institution for Human Rights. They were protesting human rights violations they were subjected to by the Ministry of Housing (MoH), claiming it manipulated the dates of their housing applications to deprive them of their legal right to housing. The MoH deducted the years of their imprisonment from their waiting periods to receive housing units, which led to their entitlement being delayed by decades. Their time in prison was regarded as a “missed opportunity” by the state bureaucracy rather than a coercive period imposed on them against their will.¹⁰ Their protest was not limited to the National Institution. They also organised sit-ins during the second week of March in front of the Council of

¹⁰ Scandal of the #Ministry_of_Housing: A purely political decision to punish #Prisoners_of_Conscience, Naji Fateel:
<https://x.com/najifateel/status/1900407227346739400>

Representatives and the Shura Council, affirming their continued demand for their legitimate rights and denouncing the policy of discrimination and exclusion practised against them.

In the third week of March, the youth of Bani Jamra organized a protest in front of the area's entrance, in solidarity with the people in Gaza and Yemen, expressing a popular stance supporting major Arab causes. In Diraz, a massive demonstration was held, commemorating the martyrs Hussein Al-Ramram and Mustafa Hamdan, during which photos of the martyrs and slogans were raised. Security forces suppressed this peaceful demonstration by using force to disperse the demonstrators and break up the gathering.

IN the last week of March, Abu Quwah and Sitra witnessed wide peaceful marches coinciding with the approach of International Quds Day, where citizens affirmed their adherence to the Palestinian cause and their rejection of all attempts to eliminate its rights. The demonstrations included no less than 27 areas, in a widely popular expression towards issues of regional freedom and justice, including among them: Manama; Bilad Al-Qadeem; Sitra; Diraz; Al-Murkh; Diraz village; Nabih Saleh; Al-Qadam, and others.

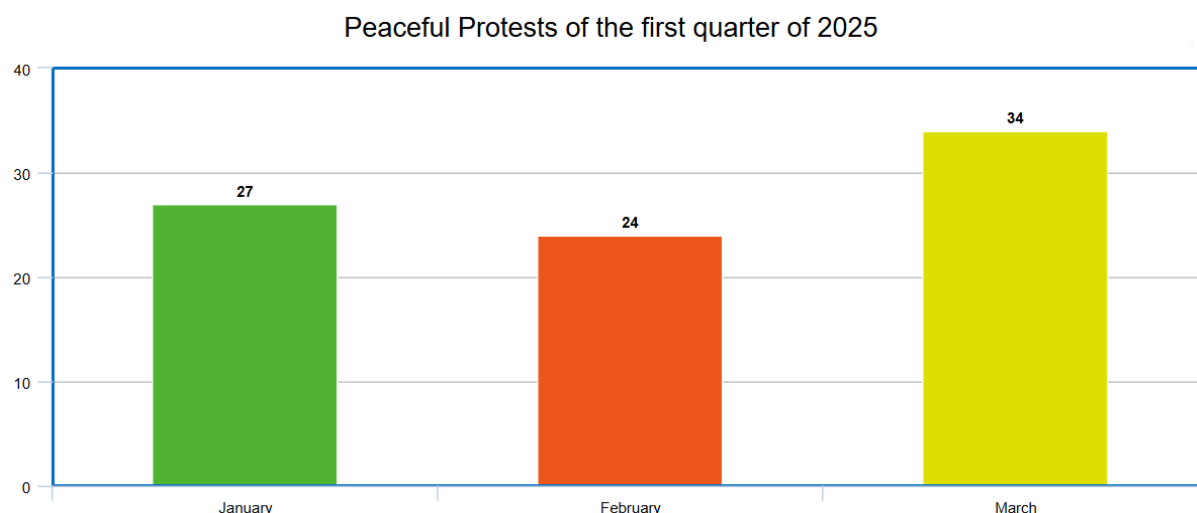
Details of Summonses and Arrests – March 2025

March witnessed the continuation of arrest campaigns targeting activists and participants in peaceful activities, as arrests were distributed across several prominent areas, including Al-Hoor, Sitra, Sanabis, Bani Jamra, Diraz, and Samaheej. On 4 March, an individual from Al-Hoor was summoned for investigation at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation building. He remains detained at the time of writing. In Sitra, a series of arrests were recorded, most of them among minors, as five youths between the ages of 16 and 17 were arrested on 12 March. Some were released on 21 March after serving alternative penalties related to previous sentences, while others remained detained in connection with other cases.

On 21 March, two other youths from Sitra were also arrested and released on 23 March while continuing to serve alternative penalties. In Sanabis, an activist was arrested for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Concurrent with the outbreak of peaceful demonstrations in Diraz, several citizens from Bani Jamra, and Samaheej were arrested and remain in detention as of writing.

These arrests reveal the systematic targeting of younger age groups, especially those under the age of eighteen, in addition to a clear link between peaceful activity and free expression and between security prosecutions, indicating growing restrictions on fundamental freedoms in Bahrain.

Conclusion



The first quarter of 2025 witnessed sustained peaceful gatherings in Bahrain. SALAM DHR documented 85 peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins across various areas. 62 summonses were recorded, with 35 cases of arbitrary arrest and 35 trials on the grounds of peaceful demonstration and participation in popular movements. The motives behind these movements varied between social demands related to improving living conditions, political gatherings on national and solidarity occasions, and calls to release prisoners of conscience and end ongoing human rights violations.

Other activities related to the peaceful movement were also recorded, most notably:

- Writing slogans on walls calling for the release of political detainees
- Posting pictures and slogans in public places
- Organising symbolic or religious events in some areas

SALAM DHR will continue this effort during the coming periods to build a comprehensive and updated picture of the state of freedom of peaceful assembly in Bahrain, in addition to collecting information that helps understand recurring patterns and developments related to the freedom of peaceful assembly in Bahrain.

Recommendations to the Government of Bahrain

- Lift restrictions and amend laws that limit the right to peaceful assembly in accordance with international standards.
- Allow the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association to visit Bahrain.
- Implement the recommendations of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of 2022, including those related to the right to peaceful assembly.
- Release all detainees sentenced for participating in peaceful gatherings.

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