



# INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

## Bahrain – a state where opinion is a crime



The human rights climate in Bahrain remains to be one characterized by oppression and crackdown against rights claims and defenders. The outgoing High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Zeid in his last address of the Human Rights Council stressed that Bahrain has continued its refusal to engage and cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the HRC, and the mandates of the Special Procedures. He also noted that “Bahrain was among the 40 states who had not allowed any visits by a Special Rapporteur over the past five years, and that it also had more than five pending visits from the Special Procedures.” Ongoing suppression of civil society and human rights defenders, as well as its use of legislation to curtail fundamental human rights are met with little to nothing accountability measures by the relevant international community. Rather these profoundly damaging acts of reprisal are rewarded with multibillion



## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

deals and show of support by countries like UK and USA – the self-acclaimed champions of democracy and human rights.

The lack of accountability for Bahraini security forces who engaged in extrajudicial violence has led to the creation and perpetuation of a climate of impunity for security force violence. As illustration, the violent suppression of the peaceful protests in Duraz by Bahraini state authorities, which resulted in the arbitrary arrests of 287 people and the death of five men, the continued unlawful detention and arrest of prominent human rights activists<sup>1</sup> including, Nabeel Rajab, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, Sheikh Isa Qassim<sup>2</sup>, and Sheikh Ali Salman. Bahrain has shown time and again the lack of commitment to implement its UPR recommendations pertaining to halting torture and ensuring accountability. The widespread use of torture by Bahraini security forces and the lack of accountability for perpetrators of torture remains to be the norm. The dissolution of opposition groups ahead of the elections, the trend of denaturalizations, and the deteriorating human rights situation and shrinking civic space are also a clear indication of the unfair and biased upcoming election. Opposition parties have been banned and key leaders are unable to run as individuals.

The same trend of gross violation of international law and standards depict the current justice system of the country. Judges are appointed by Bahrain's king, the court system is used as a tool to target and attack dissidents signifying the lack of independence of the judiciary, and civilians are tried in a military court.

ICSFT calls on Bahrain to reverse these profoundly damaging trends of reprisal and to facilitate effective and genuine engagement with the international human rights mechanisms. We further call on Bahrain to immediately release all political

---

<sup>1</sup>Hundreds of Bahrainis have been arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared for months without being charged, before being sent to Isa Town Women's Prison or the notorious Jau Prison

<sup>2</sup> Sheikh Qassim departed Bahrain earlier this month as a result of his deteriorating health that rights campaigners blame on a prolonged deprivation of medical care. The cleric, who is a central figure in Bahrain's popular uprising, had been confined to Diraz since June 2016 when he was arbitrarily stripped of his citizenship.



## **INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS**

Registration No. 2795/2012

**OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION**

prisoners in order to ensure that its upcoming parliamentary elections are legitimate, free, and fair, and to end impunity for crimes committed by security forces and to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights like freedom of expression and assembly, in line with international law.