

Bahrain

The human rights situation in Bahrain in 2011 witnessed unprecedented deterioration at almost all levels, especially in light of the repressive retaliatory action aimed at crushing the popular uprising which demanded far-reaching democratic reforms, including punishing those who participated in or supported the demonstrations and peaceful sit-ins. The crackdown on the uprising was directly supported by Saudi Arabian and Emirati military and security forces, which ostensibly intervened in the country to “maintain stability and secure vital institutions.”

The most significant feature of the decline in human rights was seen in the suppression of peaceful protests through excessive force, which killed more than 30 people, the intensification of the practice of torture inside detention facilities, and the establishment of an exceptional military court before which hundreds of political activists and prominent rights advocates were tried, some of whom received life terms in prison and even the death sentence. Massive pressure was brought to bear on freedom of expression, as websites were shut down, publications banned, and journalists arrested; two journalists were killed in mysterious circumstances shortly after their detention. A state of emergency was imposed under Royal Edict 18/2011, calling it a “state of national safety.” The edict gave broad powers to the general commander of the Bahrain Defense Force to preserve the “safety of the nation”, including the authority to issue arrest and search warrants, evacuate or isolate certain areas, restrict the freedom of assembly and movement, prohibit gatherings, deport foreigners, censor and restrict various media, suspend the activities of associations on the grounds of inciting to

strife or civil disobedience, and revoke the citizenship of Bahrainis and deport them from the country.¹

Human rights defenders faced increased threats and abuses, including unfair trials, physical attacks, and torture. Masked men and riot police raided the homes of rights defenders, and some of their homes were pelted with tear gas canisters. Retaliatory acts included arbitrary dismissals or suspensions from work for thousands of citizens thought to have supported the popular uprising. Numerous academics and students were also denied the right to study or recalled from their study-abroad programs. The reinstatement of workers, academics, and students was dependent on their signing pledges declaring their loyalty to the king and the government and promising to refrain from joining any activities of a political nature.

During this year, it was the Shiite community that bore most of the violations and retaliatory acts that accompanied the crackdown on the pro-democracy uprising, as they were the most heavily involved in supporting it. Little relief was offered by the royal amnesty issued early in the year for 23 political and rights activists who had been prosecuted in unfair trials prior to the 2010 parliamentary elections; only a few weeks later, most of them had been targeted in renewed detentions, referrals to military courts, or various other types of hostile practices aimed at harassing those involved in or supportive of the Bahraini uprising. The formation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in June 2011 has done little to ensure progress on human rights reform or address rights violations. The violations to be investigated by the commission continued even after the commission had been formed and began operations. Nor was the formation of the commission accompanied by any indication that the authorities had adopted different policies, particularly regarding the release of prisoners of conscience or the hundreds detained without trial, amnesty for those convicted before the exceptional courts or at least a retrial before the courts of rightful jurisdiction, or the suspension of campaigns aimed at forcing broad swathes of the population to sign oaths of loyalty and refrain from any sort of political activity. Nevertheless, the final report issued by the BICI remains significant, as the Bahraini authorities will find it difficult to cast doubt on its conclusions. The report condemned the excessive use of force against civilians and the use of torture or other forms of deliberate physical or psychological abuse against many detainees with the goal of punishing them, taking vengeance, or extracting specific confessions from them. The report also condemned the lack of accountability and, consequently, the

¹ Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, Dec. 10, 2011, <files.bici.org/bh/BICIreportEN.pdf>; the text of Royal Edict 18/2011 can be viewed at <<http://www.fajrbh.com/vb/showthread.php?t=18107>>.

prevalence of a culture of impunity within the security apparatus. The report urged the Bahraini authorities to publicly respond to the commission's recommendations, especially regarding the establishment of an independent, impartial mechanism that would guarantee accountability for crimes and abuses committed since the eruption of the Bahraini uprising, fairly compensate victims of these abuses, and void the sentences and charges against hundreds of individuals due to their exercise of the freedom of political expression, assembly, and peaceful protest.² However, the Commission's findings have largely been ignored by the government in terms of policy creation, with little or no enforcement and implementation of its recommendations.

Suppression of peaceful popular protests:

At least 33 people were killed in 2011 as a result of excessive force used against peaceful demonstrators since the beginning of the widespread popular protests on February 14, 2011. The protests advocated reforms leading to the establishment of a democratic constitutional monarchy that would entrench the separation of powers and promote the principles of citizenship, equality, and non-discrimination. Since the protests began, Bahraini security forces have used excessive force against demonstrators, including beatings, rubber bullets, birdshot, tear gas, and hot water, to disperse the crowds,³ killing seven people between February 14-21 and injuring dozens of other protestors.⁴ Among the injured were medics attempting to aid wounded protestors in or near the Pearl Roundabout. Security forces and the army opened fire without warning on a group preparing to pray near the Pearl Roundabout. Security forces also prevented ambulances from reaching the square, and some medics were threatened that they would be shot.⁵ Paramedics who attempted to help the wounded the morning of the same day were beaten and assaulted by riot police. As the protests intensified, Saudi Arabia sent in 1,000 troops at the behest of the government of Bahrain; they arrived in tandem with police forces sent by the UAE. On March 13, security forces, riot police, and a group of thugs armed with swords, wooden planks, and iron rods attacked those occupying the

² Ibid.

³ Annasr Online, "Isabat al-'asharat khilal qam' muzaharat jadida fi-l-'asima al-Bahrayniya," Mar. 13, 2011, <<http://goo.gl/DJSHa>>.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Hold Perpetrators of Crackdown Accountable," Feb. 28, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/28/bahrain-hold-perpetrators-crackdown-accountable>>.

⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Army, Police Fire on Protestors," Feb. 18, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/18/bahrain-army-police-fire-protesters>>.

Pearl Roundabout and the University of Bahrain, with security forces using tear gas canisters, clubs, rubber bullets, and birdshot. More than 1,000 protestors were wounded, some with serious injuries such as skull fractures, serious eye injuries, and broken bones and other wounds in various parts of their bodies.⁶ Ambulances were also destroyed and paramedics attacked. On March 15, the King of Bahrain declared a general state of emergency for three months. The next day, security forces broke up the sit-in and forcibly evacuated the roundabout, using tanks, water cannons, and helicopters and opening fire on demonstrators, killing at least six people and injuring hundreds. During these two days, the army and riot police denied the injured access to health centers and hospitals, and the Bahrain Defense Force declared a curfew in several areas of the kingdom from 4 pm to 4 am.⁷

Reports documented the widespread targeting of health workers, medical facilities, the sick, and the injured suspected of taking part in the demonstrations and sit-ins.

Medics were prevented from aiding the wounded, while doctors and nurses were charged with participating in criminal activities such as anti-government demonstrations. Several hospitals were surrounded, including the Suleimaniya Medical Complex, the largest public hospital in the country, where tanks were deployed at the entrance. Ambulances were prevented from entering or exiting, and tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and birdshot were fired at the complex's entrances and windows, as well as those of several other medical centers. The Suleimaniya Medical Complex and other medical centers were effectively converted into detention centers, as security forces moved the injured within and between hospitals without consulting doctors and detained them in isolation from the outside world. Some of the injured were even tortured inside hospitals, and medics were intimidated to prevent them from publicly discussing the abuses they saw at health institutions. Doctors and medics were also arrested and prosecuted. A total of 48 medical personnel, most of them from the Suleimaniya Medical Complex, were referred to a military trial.⁸ On September 29, the court

⁶ Bahrain Human Rights Society, "Taqrir mushtarak bayn al-jam'iyah al-Bahrayniyah li-l-shafafiyyah wa-l-jam'iyah al-Bahrayniyah li-huquq al-insan hawl ahdath 13 Maris (Adhar) 2011," Mar. 13, 2011, <<http://www.bhrs.org/viewnews/15/89/statements.aspx>>.

⁷ Amnesty International, "Ensuring Accountability for Excessive Force and Protection for Protestors," Mar. 24, 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/appeals-for-action/bahrain-ensuring-accountability-excessive-force-and-protection-protesters>>.

⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Systematic Attacks on Medical Providers," July 18, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/07/18/bahrain-systematic-attacks-medical-providers>>.

convicted 20 medical providers, sentencing them to prison terms of 5 to 15 years.⁹

Broad assault on human rights defenders:

On April 9, 2011, Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja, the former Arab world coordinator for Front Line Defenders and the former president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), was arrested by masked police officers from his daughter's home in Manama. According to the testimony of al-Khawaja's oldest daughter, her father was brutally beaten until he lost consciousness, after which he was taken to an undisclosed location along with two of his sons-in-law. His third son-in-law, Mohammed al-Maskati, the president of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR), was also brutally beaten, as was al-Khawaja's oldest daughter, who tried to intervene to protect her father.¹⁰ Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja was brought before an exceptional military court on May 8, charged with attempting to forcibly overthrow the regime in cooperation with a terrorist organization working for a foreign nation, receiving funds from a foreign terrorist organization, insulting the army, disseminating false news and rumors that threaten public security, inciting sectarianism, and organizing and participating in marches without the necessary permits. At the trial, Al-Khawaja bore clear signs of ill treatment and torture.¹¹ On June 22, the National Safety Court sentenced al-Khawaja to life imprisonment.¹² Twenty other political dissidents and human rights defendants were also convicted on charges of participating in a terrorist organization working to forcibly overthrow the regime in the Kingdom of Bahrain and spying for a terrorist organization working for foreign nations. Seven of them received life sentences, ten of them were sentenced to 15 years in prison, and three received five-year prison sentences.¹³

On March 20, some 25 masked civilians armed with rifles, supported by dozens of riot police, raided the home of Nabeel Rajab, the president of the BCHR. They searched the house, overturned his belongings, and confiscated his personal computer and some files related to human rights. Rajab was

⁹ Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

¹⁰ CIHRS, "al-Bahrayn: istimrar hamalat al-qam' didd al-mudafi' in 'an huquq al-insan," Apr. 12, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/Arabic/NewsSystem/Articles/2834.aspx>>.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Activist Bears Signs of Abuse," May 10, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/10/bahrain-activist-bears-signs-abuse>>.

¹² CIHRS, "Bahraini Authorities Continue to Abuse Human Rights Advocates, Doctors, and Reformers in the Absence of International Accountability," June 28, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=2070&lang=en>>.

¹³ Ibid.

then cuffed and placed in the back of an Interior Ministry vehicle, where he was insulted, kicked, and cursed before he was taken to the Criminal Investigations Directorate, where he was interrogated.¹⁴ After two hours of questioning, he was released without charge.¹⁵ At the same time, another group of masked civilians accompanied by riot police raided the home of Yousif al-Mahafzah, a blogger and member of the BCHR, coming in through a window on the second story of his house. They searched the home without showing a warrant. Al-Mahafzah was not at home at the time, but they threatened his family saying they would return to storm and search the house every night if he did not turn himself in.¹⁶ On April 18, Nabeel Rajab's home was again attacked by unknown persons, who threw two tear gas canisters, which landed inside the adjacent house.¹⁷ On April 10, the Interior Ministry had issued a statement declaring it intended to refer Rajab to the Military Prosecutor after he published an allegedly fabricated photo of deceased citizen Ali Issa Saqer on his Twitter feed.¹⁸ Rajab had disputed the official cause of death, saying it was likely that Saqer died as a result of torture in prison.

In the campaign of repression ongoing since March, more than 600 people, among them human rights defenders and political dissidents, have been detained in prisons and are at risk of torture, which was increasingly and systematically used against activists over the past year.¹⁹ On the evening of April 15, 24 security officers, most of them masked, stormed the home of lawyer Mohammed al-Tajer, known for his defense of prominent opposition figures and rights activists. His home was searched and personal items were confiscated, including a computer, mobile phones, and documents, before al-Tajer was arrested; he was not told of the reason for his detention.²⁰ Mohammed al-Maskati, the president of the BYSHR, was detained for one

¹⁴ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Bahrain's Authorities Target the President of Bahrain Center for Human Rights and Its Members," Apr. 17, 2011,

<<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/3972>>.

¹⁵ Al-Wasat, "al-Ifraj 'an Nabil Rajab ba'd sa'atayn min i'tiqalih," Mar. 20, 2011, <<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3117/news/read/533235/1.html>>.

¹⁶ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Bahrain's Authorities Target the President of Bahrain Center for Human Rights and Its Members."

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Attack on Rights Defender's Home," Apr. 18, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/18/bahrain-attack-rights-defender-s-home>>.

¹⁸ Police Media Center, "Ihalat Nabil Rajab ila-l-na'ib al-'amm al-'askari bi-sha'n nashrihi sura li-mutawaffan mutala'ab fih," Apr. 10, 2011, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/news_details.aspx?type=1&articleId=7631>.

¹⁹ CIHRS, "al-Bahrayn: istimrar hamalat al-qam' didd al-mudafi'in 'an huquq al-insan."

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Defense Lawyer Detained after Night Raid," Apr. 16, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/16/bahrain-defense-lawyer-detained-after-night-raid>>.

week before being released on April 7. On April 3, security forces raided the home of human rights defender Suhail al-Shihabi, a member of the Committee of the Unemployed and one of the 11 human rights defenders who were detained from September 2010 to February 2011 on terrorism-related charges. Security forces assaulted his brothers and threatened to rape their wives if they did not reveal al-Shihabi's whereabouts.

Maryam Khawaja, who heads the foreign relations office at BCHR, received death threats, which forced her to remain abroad in fear of her safety.²¹ At the end of the year, the intimidation of rights advocates by former officials of the security apparatus and those close to the authorities intensified, as part of which Nabeel Rajab, Yousif al-Mahafzah, and Mohammed al-Maskati received death threats.²² The pressure extended to international rights groups. In mid-April, the authorities refused to renew the entry visa of a researcher with the US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW), ordering him to leave the country within 24 hours. The authorities also denied entry to the group's legal representative on May 4, who was coming to observe trials before the exceptional military court, forcing him to return upon arrival at the airport. On May 12, the government of Bahrain informed HRW that the Deputy Director of the Middle East division of the organization was no longer welcome in the country. The government did not respond to requests by other HRW researchers for visas to visit the country.²³

The Bahraini authorities have also fabricated statements of senior UN human rights officials. After a meeting on June third between Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), and Fatima Al Balooshi, the Bahraini minister of social development, the official Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reported that Pillay admitted to having received erroneous information about the human rights situation in Bahrain. The statement was denied by the official spokeswoman for the UNHCHR on June 7, who said that the BNA story "grossly misrepresented" the meeting and noted that the agency did not attend the meeting. Pillay's spokeswoman

²¹ Front Line Defenders, "'al-Bahrain: Akhir al-anba' 'an wad' al-mudafi' in 'an huquq al-insan fi-l-Bahrain,'" April 6, 2011, <<http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/ar/node/14907>>.

²² CIHRS, "Crackdown on Human Rights Defenders Sweeps Arab Region: Seeds of Repression Planted in Year of Revolution," Dec. 14, 2011, <<http://www.cihrs.org/?p=494&lang=en>>.

²³ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain's Human Rights Crisis," July 5, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/07/05/bahrain-human-rights-crisis>>.

described Pillay as being “disturbed by this blatant distortion of her words” and asked for an official correction from Al Balooshi.²⁴

Undermining due process on a broad scale:

The Bahraini authorities undermined due process on a broad scale by depriving civilians of their right to appear before a civilian court, instead referring them to the National Safety Court, an exceptional military court. As of mid-June, 82 defendants had been prosecuted before the court, 77 of whom were convicted. They received sentences ranging from five-years to life imprisonment and the death penalty in connection with political charges of participating in demonstrations, inciting hatred of the regime,²⁵ conspiring to overthrow the regime, or establishing terrorist organizations. In the trial of Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja, the former president of the BCHR, he and seven other prominent opposition figures and democracy advocates were sentenced to life in prison. The other defendants included Hasan Mushaima, the secretary-general of the Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy (HAQ), and Abduljalil Alsingace a leading member of the same movement. Thirteen other defendants received terms of 2 to 15 years in prison. The investigating authorities in the case did nothing about the brutal physical assault on Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja during his arrest, his torture in prison, or the attempt to sexually assault him. The torture left him with a broken jaw and other serious injuries that required surgical intervention at a military hospital. Judges on the military court also refused to hear al-Khawaja’s complaint of torture or to investigate it.²⁶

On June 12, two opposition figures, Matar Ibrahim Matar and Jawad Fairooz, both former parliamentarians, were referred to the exceptional military court without notification of their attorneys or families. They were arrested in May 2011 on charges of giving false statements to the media and participating in illegal assemblies. Matar and Fairooz are members of the Wefaq National Islamist Society bloc, which includes 18 parliamentarians

²⁴ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Press Briefing Note on Bahrain,” June 7, 2011, <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11116&LangID=E>>.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, “Bahrain: Stop Military Court Travesty of Justice,” June 14, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/14/bahrain-stop-military-court-travesty-justice>>.

²⁶ CIHRS, “Sultat al-Bahrayn tuwasil al-tankil bi-du’at huquq al-insan wa-l-atibba’ wa-l-mutalibin bi-l-islah.”

who resigned in protest of the use of excessive force to suppress peaceful demonstrations.²⁷

The military court also sentenced Ayat al-Qurmuzi to one year in prison after she took part in popular protests in the Pearl Roundabout. She was accused of inciting hatred of the regime by reciting poetry critical of the King and the Prime Minister.²⁸ On March 28, the military prosecutor issued Edict 5/2011 prohibiting the publication of any information about its investigations for reasons of national security.²⁹

Violations of freedom of opinion and expression:

The authorities tightened restrictions on freedom of expression and information and placed increasing pressure on local journalists and crews working with foreign media outlets, in some instances resulting in death. Bloggers and journalists were arrested, and some journalists were forced to resign. The government also blocked several websites, among them those of the BCHR and the Bahrain Online Forum, and banned publications, including those issued by legally recognized political opposition groups. Electronic activist Zakariya al-Aushayri was killed on April 9 in mysterious circumstances while in the custody of the authorities. Karim Fakhrawi, a founding member of *al-Wasat*, was killed on April 12 two days after his arrest. Reports based on his family's viewing of the body point to his subjection to physical abuse and serious torture.³⁰ Journalists Faisal Hayat, Haidar Mohammed, and Ali Jawad were arrested, along with several bloggers and online activists, while arrest warrants were issued for others, compelling some to leave Bahrain to preserve their personal safety.³¹ On April 3, the Minister of Information announced that *al-Wasat*, the country's sole independent newspaper, would be shut down and its website blocked; it was permitted to resume publication the following day, but three of the paper's most prominent journalists were forced to resign: Mansoor al-Jamri, the editor-in-chief; Walid Nouwaihith, the managing editor; and Aqeel Mirza, the local news editor. The government accused *al-Wasat* of

²⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Stop Military Court Travesty of Justice."

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ International Federation for Human Rights, "Bahrain: Risk of Blackout on Human Rights Violations," Apr. 1, 2011, <<http://www.fidh.org/Bahrain-risk-of-blackout-on-human>>.

³⁰ International Federation for Human Rights, "IFEX Members Appeal to World Leaders to Take Action against Rights Abuses," May 11, 2011, <http://www.ifex.org/bahrain/2011/05/11/appeal_to_world_leaders/>.

³¹ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Journalists in Bahrain: The Murder of Free Speech and the Siege of Freedom," May 3, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/3992>>.

attempting to undermine security and stability by publishing false and misleading news liable to damage the country's reputation.³²

Journalist Reem Khalifa faced severe pressure, including death threats, after speaking at a press conference with the Bahraini Foreign Minister on February 17, 2011. She was referred to trial in November on charges of libeling pro-government elements who had harassed³³ and cursed her as she left a press conference with an Irish delegation in July. At the time, Khalifa filed a complaint against these persons accusing them of defamation and physical assault. The accusation was ignored and Khalifa is facing charges carrying a penalty of at least one year in prison.³⁴ On June 9, Ali Hussein Ali Makki, the manager of the Rasd News Network's pages on Facebook and Twitter, was arrested; Rasd is an important source of information about human rights violations in Bahrain. The security apparatus assumed control of the pages and published content justifying the authorities' crackdown, forcing Rasd to establish a new page.

The authorities also blocked the website of *al-Quds al-Arabi* on May 23, after it published an article by editor-in-chief Abd al-Bari Atwan criticizing Saudi Arabia's deployment of 1,000 troops to participate in the crackdown on the peaceful protests.³⁵ The website of the Bahrain Justice and Development Movement was also blocked, because it allegedly violated Bahraini law.³⁶ Lulu TV, a satellite channel launched in London by the Bahraini opposition, was constantly jammed from the first day of broadcast, although it repeatedly changed frequencies. The channel was slated to launch its programs from Bahrain, but the authorities refused to grant it a license.³⁷ The authorities also exerted heavy pressure on Al-Jazeera International after

³² Reporters Without Borders, "Bahraini and Syrian Authorities Try to Impose News Blackout, Kidnapping in Yemen," Apr. 4, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/bahraini-and-syrian-authorities-04-04-2011,39946.html>>.

³³ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Bahrain: Continued Harassment of Journalists," July 16, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/4396>>.

³⁴ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "al-Mudafi'a 'an huquq al-insan wa-l-sahafiya Rim Khalifa tuwajih al-muhakama natija li-itthamat mulaffaqa," Oct. 12, 2011, <<http://www.bahrainrights.org/ar/node/4835>>.

³⁵ Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, "al-Bahrain: al-intarnat akbar dahaya al-harb al-lati tashunnuha al-sultat didd al-hurriyat al-'amma," May 24, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=32156>>.

³⁶ Reporters Without Borders, "Violence, Blocked Websites and Prosecutions—Anti-Media Offensive Continues," Aug. 20, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/bahrain-violence-blocked-websites-and-20-08-2011,40811.html>>.

³⁷ Reporters Without Borders, "Arab Spring and Repression Continue from Rabat to Manama," Aug. 4, 2011, <<http://en.rsf.org/saudi-arabia-arab-spring-and-repression-04-08-2011,40746.html>>.

it broadcasted a documentary film on August 4 titled, “Bahrain: A Cry in the Dark,” which forced the channel to refrain from re-broadcasting the film.³⁸

The Bahraini government prevented several international correspondents and independent human rights organizations from entering the country or broadcasting without restrictions. At least four foreign journalists were physically assaulted, while five others were detained by the government. Four journalists were deported, and at least four were denied entry to the country at the Bahrain airport.³⁹

Arbitrary dismissal and denial of education:

Arbitrary dismissals and suspensions from work were used to retaliate against those who took part in the protests. The authorities fired more than 2,600 employees within ministries, government bodies, and private, state-controlled firms. Although the government repeatedly promised to reinstate those who had been illegally fired, only 134 workers were reinstated, according to the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions, and only after they pledged to refrain from participating in any political activity, conceded their right to sue to the government, and pledged not to return to their local union.

The University of Bahrain fired 20 professors⁴⁰ and seven administrators, while issuing warnings to two more professors. It also suspended the foreign doctoral studies of five students and asked them to return to the university.⁴¹ On April 19, the university suspended some 200 students, administrators, academics, employees, and security guards after demonstrations at the university on March 13.⁴² On May 25, the Minister of Education claimed that some students in Bahrain and abroad who participated in the anti-government protests were denied the opportunity to continue studying

³⁸ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, “Bahrain’s Authorities Strive to Muzzle and Intimidate the Independent Channels That Cover Violations in Bahrain,” Aug. 14, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/4568>>.

³⁹ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, “Foreign Journalists Face Continued Harassment and Restrictions by Bahrain Authorities,” July 6, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/4361>>.

⁴⁰ Arab Foundation for Civil Society and Human Rights Support, “al-Munazzama al-‘Arabiya li-huquq al-insan tahuthth malak al-Bahrayn ‘ala ilgha’ al-qarar al-idari ghayr al-shar’i bi-fasl al-akadimiyyin min al-jami’a,” Aug. 21, 2011, <<http://madanya.net/?p=10987>>.

⁴¹ Al-Wasat, “Jami’at al-Bahrayn: fasl 5 asatidha akadimiyyin wa 7 idariyyin wa indhar akadimiyatayn wa iqaf 5 mubta’ithi dukturah,” Apr. 2, 2011, <<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3130/news/read/535469/1.html>>.

⁴² Bahrain News Agency, “Jami’at al-Bahrayn yu’lin ‘an fasl 200 talib wa akadimi wa muwazzaf,” Apr. 19, 2011, <<http://www.bna.bh/portal/news/453445?date=2011-04-20>>.

abroad, while others were facing a similar fate due to their engagement in political activities considered detrimental to the kingdom. He added that those targeted by these measures would be asked to sign a pledge not to repeat these crimes and to refrain from defaming Bahrain at home or abroad. The University of Bahrain also asked each student individually to sign an oath of loyalty as a condition for reinstatement in the university when it reopened in early May. The university's board of trustees approved a compulsory oath of loyalty for all students before permitting them to resume their studies, in addition to another oath signed by their parents.⁴³

Bahrain also asked several British universities to suspend six Bahraini students after they took part in a solidarity march in London to support the protests in Bahrain. Bahrain then demanded that the students return home immediately and threatened them with the suspension of their grants.⁴⁴ By late September, more than 100 academics and administrators had been dismissed from the University of Bahrain, and more than 500 students had faced arbitrary suspension or expulsion.⁴⁵

Escalation in the use of arbitrary detention and torture:

Hundreds who were arrested and detained during the crackdown on the Bahraini popular uprising remain in detention at the time of this report. Some received unfair prison sentences in the exceptional military Court of National Safety.⁴⁶ According to the final report of the BICI, it is estimated that 2,929 people were detained pursuant to the declaration of a state of national safety, 2,178 of whom were released without any charges having been brought against them.⁴⁷

The Bahraini authorities instituted a campaign of systematic repression and torture against political detainees and human rights activists held in detention centers, leading to four deaths in nine days due to torture, ill-treatment, and medical neglect,⁴⁸ among them Karim Fakhrawi, a journalist

⁴³ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain's Human Rights Crisis."

⁴⁴ Bahrain Center for Human Rights "Bahrain: Urgent Appeal: Growing Violations to the University Students' Rights to Education and Freedom of Expression," June 6, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/4190>>.

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Reinstate Ousted Students, Faculty," Sep. 24, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/24/bahrain-reinstate-ousted-students-faculty>>.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain: Release People Jailed for Speaking Out," Dec. 6, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/12/06/bahrain-release-people-jailed-speaking-out>>.

⁴⁷ Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Bahrain's Medics Are the Targets of Retribution," May 5, 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/05/bahrains-medics-are-targets-retribution>>.

with *al-Wasat*, and Zakariya Rashid Hassan, an online activist.⁴⁹ Before turning the bodies of the deceased over to their families for burial, the authorities required them to sign death certificates that contain no mention of the signs of torture and beatings, with the goal of evading accountability in the future. Rights activist Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja was also tortured, as a result of which he sustained broken bones in the face and head injuries that required a four-hour surgical procedure. The injuries were the result of the brutal beatings he was given after the authorities detained him on April 9.⁵⁰ Four men also attempted to sexually assault him.⁵¹ During al-Khawaja's trial on May 8, two defendants—Hasan Mushaima, the secretary-general of HAQ, and Abd al-Wahab Hussein, a member of al-Wefaq—asked to speak about the ill treatment they faced in detention, but security forces forcibly removed them from the courtroom.

Dozens of doctors and nurses who were prosecuted in military courts were also tortured during their detention, including being forced to stand for extended periods of time, deprived of sleep, and beaten with rubber hoses and wooden planks studded with nails. In this way, they were forced to give false confessions.⁵² The victims include a female Shiite doctor who was whipped with a thick hose and called a “whore” and a “dirty Shiite.” She was also forced to dance and sing, “All the people want Khalifa Bin Salman [the king],” while being filmed.⁵³ Naziha Said, a correspondent with France 24 and Radio Monte Carlo in Bahrain, was tortured and degraded by the authorities, and accused of lying in her stories and dealing with foreign entities. While being interrogated, she was kicked, beaten, and slapped by four policewomen, her shoes were stuffed in her mouth, and she was beaten with a plastic canister.⁵⁴ Several others detainees said they were given

⁴⁹ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, “al-Bahrayn: al-ta'dhib wa-l-ikhtifa' al-qasri li-l-mu'taqalin 'ala khalfiyat al-ihitijajat al-mutaliba bi-l-hurriya wa-l-dimuqratiya,” May 5, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/ar/node/4011>>.

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch, “Bahrain: Activist Bears Signs of Abuse.”

⁵¹ Front Line Defenders, “al-Bahrayn: mu'assasat al-khatt al-amami qaliqa 'ala hayat 'Abd al-Hadi al-Khawaja ba'd iddi'a'at dhat misdaqiya bi-sha'n ta'arrudihi ila-l-ta'dhib wa-l-i'tida' al-jinsi,” May 22, 2011, <<http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/ar/node/15475>>.

⁵² Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, “al-Bahrain tuwajih iddi'a'at jadida bi-l-ta'dhib tata'allaq bi-muhakamat 'amilin fi-l-majal al-sihhi,” June 11, 2011, <<http://www.anhri.net/?p=33271>>.

⁵³ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, “‘An sahfah al-indibandant al-Britaniya: ‘laqad qamu bi-darbi wa saf'i wa munadati bi-l-'ahira wa-l-shi'iyah al-qadhira,” May 10, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/ar/node/4068>>.

⁵⁴ Reporters Without Borders, “Ta'dhib Naziha Sa'id li-taghtiyatiha al-tazahurat al-da'iyah ila-l-dimuqratiya,” May 3, 2011, <http://arabia.reporters-sans-frontieres.org/article.php3?id_article=32038>.

electroshocks to sensitive parts of their bodies, denied sleep for several days, and hung up while being beaten on their legs and soles of their feet.⁵⁵

Discrimination against Shiites:

Systematic discrimination against the Shiite community continued. Along with measures to suppress the popular pro-democracy uprising, attacks continued on Shiite areas, their places of worship, and even on their cemeteries.

It was reported that security personnel in several Shiite areas vandalized citizens' cars, robbed some homes during arrests, harassed women, and assaulted men.⁵⁶ Some Shiite villages were also subjected to collective punishment, including heavy bombardments of tear gas and the humiliation of and assault on citizens at checkpoints.⁵⁷ The Bahraini authorities, supported by Saudi forces, demolished several Shiite religious sites, leveling them to the ground without prior warning, on the grounds that they were unlicensed. According to official statistics issued by the Jaafari Awqaf Directorate, at least 35 mosques were demolished or damaged.⁵⁸ Among the most prominent mosques attacked were al-Kuweikabat, al-Sayyeda Zeinab, Karim Ahl al-Beit, and Abu Taleb, all facilities for the Shiite religious rites.⁵⁹ The Ministry of Information blocked the website of the Jaafari Awqaf after it published documents showing that several of the mosques demolished were licensed and documented on the official government site.

Nor were Shiite cemeteries immune from assault; the Muharraq, Beni Jamra, al-Nuweidarat, and al-Sayyed Mohammed Abu Khalis cemeteries were all attacked. Shiite students were also subjected to sectarian discrimination, as sectarian incitement in schools increased. At least 12 girls' schools were repeatedly raided by security personnel, and female Shiite students were arrested, beaten, tortured, humiliated, and detained for several

⁵⁵ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Taqrir khass 'an al-ta'dhib wa intihakat huquq al-insan li-l-mu'taqalin fi qadiyat tahaluf al-jumhuriya," June 5, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/ar/node/4360>>.

⁵⁶ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Markaz al-Bahrayn li-huquq al-insan yujaddid idanatahu li-l-'unf al-rasmi wa-l-'unf al-mudadd," May 26, 2011, <<http://www.bchr.net/ar/node/4122>>.

⁵⁷ Al-Wasat, "Muwatinun yashkun al-i'tida' 'alayhim athna' mururhim min khilal nuqat al-taftish," Mar. 23, 2011, <<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3120/news/read/533679/1.html>>.

⁵⁸ Al-Wasat, "al-Awqaf al-Ja'fari: 45 dar 'ibada hudimat wa khuribat," May 25, 2011, <<http://www.alwasatnews.com/3182/news/read/562698/1.html>>.

⁵⁹ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Bahraini Security Forces and Army Destroying Mosques and Religious Facilities of the Shiite Sect, Some Dating Back over a Century," June 8, 2011, <<http://bahrainrights.hopto.org/en/node/4295>>.

days before they were released; they were given no opportunity to request a legal guardian during questioning.⁶⁰ In addition, hundreds of Shiite students were suspended from universities, and their foreign study grants were revoked.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Bahrain Center for Human Rights, “Tullab al-madaris dafa’u daribat intima’ihim li-ta’ifa tushakkil ghalibiyat nasij al-Bahrain,” July 30, 2011, <<http://www.bchr.net/ar/node/4441>>.

⁶¹ Project on Democracy in the Middle East, “POMED Notes: ‘Human Rights in Bahrain’,” May 14, 2011, <<http://pomed.org/blog/2011/05/pomed-notes-human-rights-in-bahrain.html/#.Tv2zukqtz4g>>.

