

# LESS FREEDOM

## BROADER IMPUNITY

2013 التقرير السنوي  
ANNUAL REPORT



An annual report conducted by Bahrain Press Association, in both Arabic and English languages, to characterize and document violations related to freedom of expression and media in Bahrain.



**Less Freedom, Broader Impunity**

The Second Annual Report on Media  
& Journalism Freedoms in Bahrain in  
2013

**Bahrain Press Association**

Incorporated in 2011 in London, The  
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The cover is a photograph taken for the family of citizen photojournalist Ahmed Ismail Hassan. Members of the family are wearing Ahmed's photo as a mask and holding a camera to represent their new identity -- the identity of a young man who sacrificed his own life to capture the truth.

**LESS <sup>v</sup> FREEDOM**

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**BROADER IMPUNITY**

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# Free Humaidan

I'M A  
PHOTO  
GRAPHER  
NOT A  
TERROR  
IST!



BECAUSE OF CAMERA  
AHMED HUM AidAN  
WAS KIDNAPPED AND ARRESTED

#FreeHumaidan  
#Freebhphotographer





# 01

## Introduction

The Bahrain Press Association 2013 annual report, "Less Freedom, Broader Impunity," is intended to be an objective resource documenting violations of freedom of expression and suppression of the news media and the press during the year in Bahrain. This is the fourth report issued by the association, an independent organization founded in London in 2011 by exiled Bahraini journalists concerned with defending the rights of journalists and media personnel. Previous reports were "Bahrain: Word Leading to Death," issued in October 2011; "Hunger for Freedom," May 2012; and the 2012 annual report, "Bahrain: Silence Is a War Crime."

"Less Freedom, Broader Impunity," issued in Arabic and English, outlines the obstacles and challenges facing freedom of the media and the press in Bahrain. It also explores the special challenges for television and new media and the targeting of online activists. The report focuses on the culture of impunity that was evident during the official investigations and trials of those accused of committing torture that led to the death of journalists and media workers in 2011 and 2012.

The report provides full documentation of the violations against Bahraini and international journalists, media professionals and online activists. It also contains documentation of other violations, including



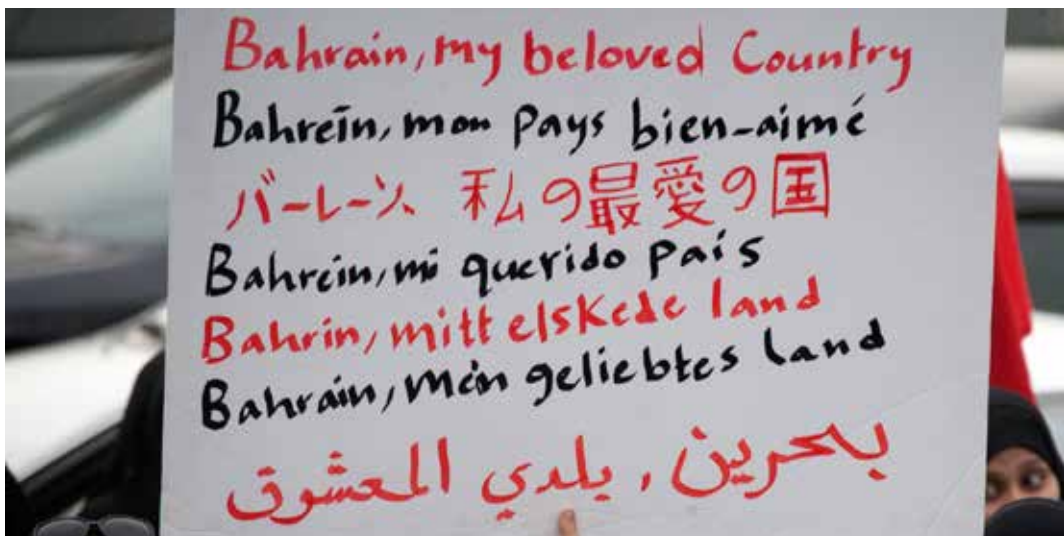
killing and torture, as well as the dismissal of more than 145 media professionals in various sectors since 2011.

### **The most serious violations witnessed in 2013 include:**

- ▶ The Bahraini authorities continue to practice a hostile policy against media professionals, journalists and online activists using arbitrary arrest, prosecution and direct targeting. These policies have resulted in the arrest and trial of Bahraini journalists and the deportation of foreign journalists.
- ▶ Physical assaults of journalists and photographers covering demonstrations in Bahrain were documented. Those who were arrested were subject to mistreatment and torture, which appears to be systematic.
- ▶ The Bahraini government is still delaying fulfillment of its commitment to implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry as well as the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council regarding reforming the media sector and securing freedom of expression.
- ▶ The authorities are still using prosecution as a tool to pressure journalists and online activists and seek revenge from those who do not cooperate with the government.
- ▶ The judiciary authority, headed by the king himself, continues to hold simulated trials of those accused of killing and torturing media professionals. Only one light verdict has been announced against any officials to this day which raises the association's concerns regarding the culture of impunity in Bahrain.
- ▶ The government did not fulfill its promise to introduce a new journalism and media law, and freedom of expression is still restricted by Law 47 of 2002, which organizes the press, printing and publishing. This has enabled the regime to practice total control over the media in Bahrain.
- ▶ The regime has imposed more restrictions on freedom of expression through measures passed in 2013 by the National Assembly.
- ▶ Political prosecution increased this year, and the courts received more cases involving charges of "insulting the king and the political institutions in Bahrain."
- ▶ The state implemented several organizational measures through the Ministry of Information in order to track more activists on

social networks.

- ▶ The regime is still monopolizing TV and radio broadcasting and not allowing opposing voices to appear on the state-run TV and radio channels.
- ▶ The regime still interferes – directly and indirectly – in the content of local newspapers, censoring many opinion columns and news media coverage and banning some content outright.
- ▶ No media professionals were reinstated to their jobs since the arbitrary dismissals during the brutal crackdown in early 2011.
- ▶ The authorities continued a crackdown against those media professionals living in exile. Their names were blacklisted in many Arab countries, which in turn led to their being banned from entering some of these countries.
- ▶ The authorities still refuse to grant entry visas to those affiliated with international organizations concerned with freedom of expression.







# 02

## Three years of decline: taking over the last spaces of media and press freedom

Since the first wave of pro-democracy protests started in Bahrain on Feb 14, 2011, media freedom has steadily declined. Violations against journalists, photographers and bloggers increased in 2013 over the previous year, even though the pace of the protests decreased in 2012, compared with the first year of the uprising.

About 40 cases of attacking journalists were documented in 2012; one of these cases was the killing of videographer Ahmed Ismail [1]. However, this number increased to 53 cases in 2013; in addition to 11 arrests, six cases of summoning by the authorities and several cases of imprisonment for one year or more on the charge of "insulting the king." At least three photographers were wounded while covering demonstrations, and eight media professionals and bloggers are still under arrest.

The year 2011 was the worst year for journalists and media professionals in Bahrain. More than 129 cases of violations against journalists were documented; among those cases were the killing of two media professionals after torture: the publisher Abdul-Karim Fakhrawi, a founder of Al-Wasat, the country's premier independent daily newspaper, and the blogger Zakariya al-Ashiri. Al-Wasat was forced to shut down, and its editorial team was forced to resign,

including the editor in chief, Dr. Mansoor Aljamri. [2] The press freedom group Reporters Without Borders classified the Bahraini capital, Manama, as one of the most dangerous places for journalists in 2011. It also listed Bahrain in 2012 as one of five countries that are “enemies of the Internet.”

The year 2013 was no different. According to reports by international organizations, the climate for freedom of expression did not improve. The human rights organization Freedom House categorized Bahrain as “not free” in its report “Freedom on the Net 2013.” [3]

The report mentioned the “intensive government suppression campaign,” “prosecuting Internet users,” and “increasing online attacks and government censorship to suspend or monitor the opponents’ activities.”[4]



There was no progress in reinstating media professionals who were arbitrarily dismissed from their jobs since the crackdown of 2011. According to statistics of the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions, which developed an updated list of dismissed persons in 2013, 27 journalists with unresolved cases were not reinstated to their former positions – six from Al-Ayam newspaper, 11 from Al-Bilad newspaper, and 10 from Al-Watan newspaper. In addition, an employee of Parliament was dismissed from his job after expressing his views on Twitter. This is approximately the same number of journalists who were dismissed from their jobs after expressing support for the pro-democracy movement in 2011.

The year 2013 witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of citizens prosecuted for charges such as “insulting the king” and “inciting hatred against the regime” because they expressed critical opinions in public. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights counted about 30 cases brought before courts in 2013 for the charge of “insulting the king.”[5]

The government continues to use the judiciary authority to limit public freedoms. In 2011, the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry documented that the regime in Bahrain was misusing Article 165 of the Penal Code regarding “inciting hatred against the regime.” The commission said the law “was applied in a way that infringes upon the freedoms of opinion and expression by

excluding from the public debate opinions that express opposition to the existing system of government.”

Instead of mending the situation, the government prosecuted several citizens based on Article 165, like the consultant ophthalmologist Dr. Saeed Al-Samahiji, who was sentenced to one year in prison in 2013 for “insulting the king,” and Sheikh Ali Salman, the secretary general of the largest opposition society, Al-Wefaq. Sheikh Salman was transferred to the Public Prosecution and prohibited from traveling for “inciting hatred against the regime.” The human rights defender Hussein Jawad, secretary general of the European Bahraini Organization for Human Rights, was arrested on the same charge in addition to many others.

A number of those of lower ranks in the police were brought before court in 2012 for crimes related to committing violations against detainees. This was part of the commitment promised by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa upon the release of the independent commission’s recommendations. The regime focused on bringing to court the most severe cases, like the killing of media professionals who were tortured in detention. However, soon after the trials started, it was clear that they were only intended to avoid international pressures.

The year 2013 was the year of impunity for those involved in violations. During this year, Bahraini courts have acquitted five Pakistani policemen accused of torturing to death the cyber activist Zakariya al-Ashiri. The officer accused of torturing Nazeeha Saeed, a correspondent for France 24 and Radio Monte Carlo, was also acquitted, and an appeals court upheld the verdict. The prison sentence for two police officers of the National Security Agency who



were convicted of torturing the publisher and founding member of Al-Wasat newspaper, Abdul Karim Fakhrawi, was reduced to three years from seven years.

In an interview, the lead of the Bahrain Independent Commission, Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, said he was surprised with these sentences, adding "there are no strict trials regarding torture in Bahrain." [6]

The Bahraini National Assembly (both houses) was held under the request of the king on August 2013 simultaneously with the launch of the "Tamarod of Bahrain" campaign, protests two and a half years after the



start of the 2011 uprising. The Assembly issued 22 recommendations for new restrictions on freedom of expression and an unlimited ban on all public gatherings in Manama. The sixth recommendation called for "prohibiting all sit-ins, rallies and gatherings in the capital Manama." Recommendation No. 16 stated that government measures could be taken against "basic liberties, particularly freedom of opinion," in order to strike a balance between law enforcement and human rights protection.

Human Rights Watch said these recommendations, "when codified into law, will suspend the right to free assembly indefinitely in Manama and may severely curtail free speech." [7]. The authorities used the Parliament's recommendations as a cover to pass more measures imposing a firm fist on the remaining space for freedom of expression.

Soon after this, the minister of state for communications affairs, Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, announced in November the development of an Online Safety Department to monitor websites and social networking. He said that he was going to track "the unlawful usage of Internet and social networking sites" as well as those who "spread lies and threaten the security and stability of the state." He also emphasized that "restrictions and regulations on freedom of expression are a necessity to preserve national security." [8] In this regard, the ministry of state for communications affairs declared that it "monitored 70 opposed sites, forums and social networks" and threatened "to take necessary measures against them." As a result, there was a major increase in the number of cases brought before court for online activities in 2013 – a total of 11 cases.

The Information Affairs Authority refused to recognize citizen journalists and bloggers as media professionals based on an outdated definition that differentiates between journalists and bloggers. The authority used that definition on an official statement to respond to the Committee to Protect Journalists when the press organization criticized the jailing of a number of online activists. "They are bloggers and not practicing journalism as a career," the authority said in responding to the criticism. [9]

The year 2013 ended with eight Bahraini journalists, photographers and bloggers still in detention. They are: Ahmad Humaidan, Hassan Maatouq, Mahmoud Abed Al-Saheb, Hussein Hubail, Jassem Al-Naeimi, Qassem Zein Din, Abdullah Al-Jardabi and Ahmad Al-Fardan.

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**#SAVEHUBAIL**



**Hussain  
Hubail is  
in prison  
and being  
denied  
adequate  
medical  
care!**

**Silence  
kills democracy.**

ALAYAM

الأيام

ستيدي لك الايام ما كنت جاهلا وياتيك بالأخبار من لم تزود

03

## Print journalism in Bahrain: a political and economic victim

Print journalism in Bahrain was relatively independent before the severe political crisis in 2011. The economic prosperity and political openness that accompanied the political reform initiative leading up to the Bahrain National Charter in 2001 gave license to starting new newspapers, and press freedom enjoyed its golden era. Newspapers started to compete over investigative stories and attract competent journalists.

By 2005, the golden age began to fade away, and the Bahraini press started to suffer from local and regional political tension. There was a clear attempt to distract public opinion and turn it away from the democratic transformation.

Bahrain was swept up in the global financial crisis in 2008, and the press also suffered economically. Government advertising became the only source of income for most newspapers after the decline of private advertising, and this shift was reflected in the coverage of these newspapers, which started to become less critical and more biased toward the government. This was the case for most newspapers in Bahrain, except for two independent publications: Al-Waqt, which was forced to shut down in 2009, and Al-Wasat, which faced a difficult political situation after being accused by the Information Authority of

fabricating news in its coverage of the 2011 uprising.

The Bahraini press declined dramatically after the crackdown on the 2011 pro-democracy movement, which was followed by an aggressive attack on journalists and the press. The year 2011 is still considered one of the worst ever for the Bahraini press. This was evident in the

reports issued by international organizations like Reporters Without Borders, Freedom House and the Committee to Protect Journalists as well as by the Bahrain Press Association. For the first time, Bahrain was added to the list of the 10 worst countries for freedom of expression. Moreover, the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry considered the Bahraini press' "six major newspapers" to be "biased" and "loyal to the government."



### Why did the Bahrain press retreat?

- ▶ The state restricted the press with Law No. 47 of 2002, which organizes the press, printing and publishing, as well as with other security measures that affected press coverage.
- ▶ Objective news coverage became rare in the local press due to the lack of transparency as well as the one-sided coverage of the political crisis in Bahrain since 2011. Many important issues received insignificant and unbalanced coverage in newspapers, including stories of violations of human rights, corruption, reports of the national audit court and illegal land acquisition by members in the ruling family. Newspapers practiced self-censorship rather than chance appearing to be supportive of the opposition leading the protests.
- ▶ The state enhanced its domination of the local press, and most newspapers started to become public relations machines for the government and its institutions, publishing the same press releases. Today, most headlines of newspapers in Bahrain are the same, which reflects the lack of professional reporting and critical journalism.
- ▶ Management of local newspapers cared a lot about their image in front of the government and the fact that most of the papers' funding comes from government advertising. Newspaper management was not hesitant to dismiss many journalists from their jobs during the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement

in Bahrain.

- ▶ The press in Bahrain became a repelling field; most experienced journalists left the industry since they could not practice professional journalism anymore. Newspapers started to prefer to hire young and unexperienced journalists or foreign journalists who cost less and could easily be controlled and politically directed.
- ▶ Government-owned papers have lowered the standards of professional journalism in Bahrain. Most of their coverage is biased and shallow, mirroring how unqualified and untrained many journalists in these papers are, while others practice self-censorship to protect themselves.
- ▶ Several unethical and unprofessional practices started to be seen, including the publishing of photos and names of accused citizens before their trials, as well as the changing of facts and fabricating of news.
- ▶ New and digital media started to fill the information gap created by the biased traditional media in Bahrain. These new media channels were equipped with photos, videos and documented recordings. This has negatively affected the print media inside the state that was not able to compete with the electronic press.

### **Bahraini Press: the Past and the Present**

The continuous political crises have negatively affected press



performance in Bahrain. The Bahraini press has almost always been considered a mouthpiece of the government and worked within numerous restrictions to freedom of expression.

After each political crisis, the regime has blocked newspapers, silenced activists, tightened censorship of news and information flow, hardened laws and rules of printing and publishing, and punished, imprisoned, deported and silenced writers and journalists.

This was evident after the 1950s crisis and right before the disbanding of the National Action Authority and the deportation of its leaders. The same happened again after disbanding the Parliament in 1975, along with the suspension of the Constitution and enforcement of the State Security Law. The same procedures were taken during the movement of 2011. The authorities started imposing a firm fist over the press, and any critical views were excluded from coverage. The main role of the press became attacking the opposition as well as accusing opposition figures of being traitors and defaming them while defending the ruling family in any way possible.



### Press in Bahrain: Current Reality and Challenges

The Bahraini press is working in a highly politicized security environment under the restrictive Law No. 47 of 2002 for the press, printing and publishing. The polarized political environment has negatively affected the content of the press. As stated in the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry report, six out of seven newspapers in Bahrain were biased and loyal to the government, while only one was independent. According to a study on the press in Bahrain by Dr. Hussein Al Baharna, author of the book "BRITISH EXTRA TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION IN THE GULF 1913 – 1971", "the press law is one of the main obstacles for freedom of the press in Bahrain, alongside the weak and ineffective Parliament."

The Bahraini government adopted its previous old methods to curb the press and force it to always endorse the views of the regime.

However, it was very difficult to contain the flow of information after the political crisis and the February 14 movement, since it took place in the digital age. The previous role of the press as a supporter of authority has weakened, but the press is still reliably obedient to the state.

The Bahraini regime has a long way to go to change the situation of the press. Implementing the recommendations of the commission of inquiry will be the first step by adopting a more flexible approach in applying censorship and allowing space for the opposition in the media. In addition, a progressive press law needs to be issued to support social demands of freedom, justice, human rights and democracy. The Bahraini press is faced with bigger challenges than ever, starting with winning back its readers, restoring its objectivity toward the political situation in the country, and bridging the social, political and sectarian gap that has widened in the past few years.





# 04

## Televised Media: Legal Vacuum and Endorsement of the Single Narrative

Television broadcasting in Bahrain dates back to 1973. Bahrain TV was set up in 1975, and the number of official TV channels eventually increased to six: in addition to the main channel, the foreign channel, the Sport Channel 1, the Sport Channel 2, Holy Quran Channel and Bahrain International Channel.

Lulu TV is a channel belonging to the private sector. Its officials classified it as a Bahraini TV channel, though it is based in London. The channel was established in 2011 under authorization of the British communications and broadcasting regulatory authority. The channel's programs and its coverage focus on Bahraini political events, and its main audience is the Bahraini people, though, it does not have an official office in the country because the Bahraini authorities have refused to authorize one. Since Lulu TV's launch, its signal was jammed on NileSat so it chose another satellite.

Al-Ittihad TV broadcasts under the auspices of the Bahraini authorities. Launched in June 2012, its main program is "Saeed Al-Hamad," the series presented by Saeed Al-Hamad that was shown on Bahrain TV during the period of the National Security (emergency law) and stopped in June 2011. Al-Hamad, a supporter and advocate of the government and its policies, follows the policy of defamation of



opposition activists. Although Al-Ittihad TV broadcasts from Bahrain, the Information Affairs Authority has not granted it official authorization. This raises the question of who is supporting it, especially because it uses the premises and equipment of the Information Affairs Authority in Bahrain.



In February 2012, the head of the Information Affairs Authority signed two memorandums of understanding with the general director and editor in chief of Al-Arab News Channel, Jamal Khashoggi, and the executive director of Rotana Group, Fahad Al-Sukait. Those memorandums turned Bahrain into the headquarters of the Arab News Channel and the high executive management of Rotana Group, effective Dec. 12, 2012.

The Information Affairs Authority did authorize any other channel except Al-Arab to broadcast from Bahrain, and the minister of information refused to authorize the launch of any TV channels based on the absence of legislation granting such approval. That absence is due to the procrastination of Bahraini authorities to adopt a law organizing the audiovisual media in the state despite the accumulating applications, including one from the Islamic society Al-Wefaq, an opposition party. It sent a letter in January 2012 to the head of the Information Affairs Authority requesting authorization to launch a satellite channel, but no official response has yet been received.

### The legal vacuum

The media in Bahrain is organized only by Law No. 47 of 2002 on the organization of the press, printing and publishing. That regulation has been issued by a decree law without being passed by the legislative authority to abolish Law No. 14 of 1979 on printing and publishing.

The present law recognizes the instruments, devices and programs used to transfer words, figures, photos or films in order to publish or exchange it. However, this same law lacks sufficient articles that organize clearly the radio and television media. Opposition groups say that the authorities procrastinate in organizing that media, intending to dominate broadcasting and direct public opinion. The authorities also aim to prevent any opposition capable of emulating Bahrain TV, the only official state TV channel.

## The governmental TV: single opinion and defamation policies

The programs broadcast by Bahrain TV betray a complete bias toward the government view. The channel's content depends on information from official sources without providing opposition views.

The Information Affairs Authority has fired a number of Bahrainis during the period of the Emergency Law in 2011 for political and sectarian reasons. As of the publication of this report, most of those who were fired have not returned to their jobs, and some were moved to lower positions to force them to resign.

According to the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, in its report issued Nov. 23, 2011, Bahrain TV broadcast during the period of emergency insulting language and provocative and defamatory coverage of events.

Among the commission's recommendations was No. 1724, requesting the following of the Bahraini government:

1. To consider relaxing censorship and allowing the opposition greater access to television broadcasts, radio broadcasts and print media. The continuing failure to provide opposition groups with an adequate voice in the national media risks further polarizing the political and ethnic divide.
2. To establish professional standards for the media and other forms of publications that contain an ethical code and an enforcement mechanism, designed to uphold ethical and professional standards in order to avoid incitement to hatred, violence and intolerance,



without prejudice to internationally protected rights of freedom of expression.

3. To undertake appropriate measures including legislative measures to prevent incitement to violence, hatred, sectarianism and other forms of incitement which lead to the violation of internationally protected human rights, irrespective of whether the source is public or private.

According to a reform plan devised by the Information Affairs Authority in order to follow up on the commission of inquiry recommendations, the Bahraini government suggested a draft law on audiovisual media for passage by the legislative authority. The draft includes the formation of a Higher Media Council with members assigned by the king to monitor the content of audio and visual programs and provide supervision of media.

The governmental plan assumes that the council guarantees the independence and neutrality of all media, ensuring multiple opinions, without inciting hatred or fanaticism because of race, gender, religion or nationality and ensuring pluralism and freedom of opinion and expression in media programs.

However, two years after the commission issued its report and recommendations, the government media policy has not changed regarding biased coverage of events and the exclusion of opposition opinion. The TV channels are still presenting political programs supporting the government and its policies, in addition to songs glorifying the ruling leadership in Bahrain, while violations of human rights, opposition viewpoints and the actions of state security still go unreported by state television.

## Opposition TV Media

Al-Arab channel is described as News TV, and concerned with Arabic issues in general and not specific to Bahrain. Al-Ittihad Channel is representative of the view supporting the authorities. Thus, Lulu TV is the only TV channel whose coverage of daily events in Bahrain is not dominated by the government. Although Lulu TV sometimes presents information derived from governmental resources, it rarely allows government views to go unchallenged. The TV channel will report when governmental officials refuse to show up or comment. It also focuses strongly on the stance of the opposition parties and the religious speeches broadcast are focused on a group of clerics from one sect, which is why it is considered an Opposition TV Channel.

## Present Restrictions and Future Ambitions

The main shortcoming of the television media in Bahrain is the absence of a law that organizes the visual media and allows establishment of TV channels that are independent of the government. It is important to open government television channels for all opinions.

The government should facilitate the authorization process for launching non-governmental TV channels. Also, the absence of a law on visual media should not be an obstacle to having multiple opinions, especially since Al-Arab TV has been allowed to operate within existing law.

If the legislative authority approves the formation of a Higher Media Council, it must be formed through a mechanism that ensures its independence from government control. The council's representatives should include private sector media operators and members of independent trade unions, in order to allow journalists and media professionals to operate without being influenced by either the government or the opposition.



حرين

صمود

ثورة الأولو

ميدان الشهداء



# 05

## Journalists trapped in impunity

On June 7, 2013, a YouTube video was uploaded by a Bahraini government-supporting account showing Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa during his visit to Mubarak bin Hwail, an officer in the Ministry of Interior, after bin Hwail was acquitted by the court on that same day of charges that he tortured detained doctors during the crackdown of 2011.

The previously undeclared official visit was interpreted as confirmation by the Bahraini prime minister that a policy of impunity had been adopted from the highest levels of the ruling family. The visit also affirmed the lack of independence of the judiciary in Bahrain. The prime minister said in his meeting with Bin Hwail: "Nobody applies those rules on you except our relation with you, and what is applied on you is applied on us. We are one body." Those words act as clear evidence to show that impunity in Bahrain is becoming a systematic policy adopted by the senior leadership in the state.

In the realm of media and freedom of expression in Bahrain, the judiciary has also established the concept of impunity and lack of accountability for those responsible for killing and torturing workers in the news media and the press. In this regard, the High Criminal Court acquitted five policemen accused in the murder of the blogger

Zakariya al-Ashiri in prison.

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry indicated in its report (paragraph 998) that a forensic examination discovered large bruises on the neck of al-Ashiri. The report stated that at 9 a.m. on April 9, 2011, al-Ashiri was pronounced dead. The death certificate stated that the cause of death was severe heart failure and cessation of breathing following complications from sickle cell anemia. The forensic report confirmed the cause of death and concluded that the deceased had large bruises on his back and thighs and smaller bruises on his face and hands. The commission stressed in its report that the cause of death of al-Ashiri was being tortured at the Dry Dock Detention Centre, given that he was in the custody of the Ministry of Interior at the time of his death.



Nazeera Saeed

On Oct. 27, 2013, the Court of Appeal cut the jail terms of two policemen from the National Security Agency convicted by the Court of First Instance of torturing to death Abdul-Kareem Fakhrawi, the publisher and one of the founders of the opposition newspaper Al-Wasat. The court reduced the terms of the men to three years from seven.

On April 12, 2011, Fakhrawi, 49, was killed nine days after being detained. He was the fourth detainee to die after torture, the commission of inquiry said. According to his family, the day before Fakhrawi was detained; the police surrounded his house, charged into it and broke possessions inside during the period of national unrest in Karbabad. The next day Fakhrawi presented himself at the Sanabis police station to inquire about the police raid, but he disappeared. Nine days later his body was delivered to his family.

On Oct. 22, 2012, the First Instance Court acquitted Lt. Sarah Al-Moosa of torturing the journalist Nazeera Saeed, a correspondent

for France 24 and Radio Monte Carlo, during her detention in the period of civil unrest. The High Court of Appeal upheld the verdict on July 23, 2013.

This case passed through several stages, starting from submitting the case before the military courts where Saeed's lawyer, Hameed Al-Mulla, stated that the Military Judiciary convicted the officer and ordered her to pay a fine of BHD 200 (US\$ 530) for assaulting the journalist in addition to a fine of BHD 200 for insulting the victim. The court also ordered that her annual pay increase be stopped for one year.

Saeed said the judicial system in Bahrain had been "unfair" with her and had neglected to consider many aspects of her case. She said the judgment "makes her feel fear and injustice."

Two years have passed since the killing of the citizen journalist Ahmed Ismail Hassan by a live bullet on March 31, 2012, while filming a peaceful demonstration in Salmabad. There has been no legal accountability for those responsible for the shooting. Nevertheless, Minister of Interior Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa confirmed in an interview with the newspaper Al-Ayam on Oct. 3, 2013: "They are arresting accused people in all terrorism cases that happened. A number of those involved in each case was arrested." In many cases of the killing of citizens over their political or media activity, however, no accusations have been made.

Abdul-Kareem Fakhrawi







الإعلامي:

أحمد اسماعيل

تاريخ الاستغناء: 31/3/2012

الفتاحه



# 06

## Two years later, the murder of Ahmed Ismail is pending investigation

The anguish of the family of the photojournalist Ahmed Ismail Hassan has continued since March, 31, 2012. He was not yet 22 years old when he was shot dead. Hassan was holding his video camera to film a demonstration in Salmabad when it documented the last moments of his life.

Hassan's family is still suffering today because of deliberate procrastination by the Bahraini officials, starting with a 13-day delay of the funeral and burial and a continuing cover-up of the killing by the security forces that has lasted two years.

Hassan carried a camera for years and considered it his special instrument to document the events in his country – and the violations suffered by his people. Several of his films were shown on TV outlets, which were searching for any source of footage, particularly since Bahraini authorities blocked several media groups from entering the country.

Since he was 14, Hassan was arrested several times and faced abuse and torture, his family said. The aim of the arrests was to recruit him as an informant for the security agencies; these efforts did not impress him.

He lost his study because of his successive arrests, and he died before completing high school. His sister Nadia Ismail confirms that he wanted to finish his university study in law to work as a lawyer.

"Security forces have besieged us in the International Hospital while Ahmed was breathing his last breath out," Nadia said. "They did not allow us to ask about or see him, but they started questioning us even though we were worried about my brother's fate." She added: "Suddenly doctors stopped their efforts so they did not perform the predetermined surgery. Instead it was decided to transfer him to Salmaniya Medical Centre, where his death was declared."

The family refused to accept a death certificate stating that Hassan's death was due to cardiac arrest, breathing problems and inner injury in the stomach. After checking with the police of Central Directorate to request a forensic report confirming his death by live bullets, according to Nadia, the family "moved between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health and the Public Prosecution, where each was waiving the responsibility of issuing the death certificate and stating its reason along a period of 13 days."

Said Nadia: "In a meeting with the security authorities to reach a solution and receive the body, we met officers from the Central Region police station. One of them presented information about the killer and the kind of weapon used. When I asked for clarification and declaring the bullet size or the weapon that could indicate to the murderer, the officer changed what he had said and denied having any information regarding the weapon or the murderer and said what he had mentioned was just assumptions."

The family concluded, after its own investigation, that the weapon used to kill Hassan might be of French make, with a laser beam used to shoot the victim from a relatively far distance.

"My brother was shot near the main street where an ATM security camera was there, and a surveillance camera on the nearby university building," Nadia Ismail said. "Surveillance cameras were also on the nearby stores. However, all of that got in the hands of the Ministry of Interior after the incident, and it is still covering up the murderer."

Hassan's family lost the camera that was with him at the time of the shooting, and when they got it, the last recordings had been deleted.

Four days after his death, the Public Prosecution threatened the family that it would bury Hassan's body if they did not receive it with the death certificate issued by the prosecution. The family confirms that the threats were "a legal action under the Law 16 for 1993, Article 49, the seventh chapter that prevents issuing any death certificate in

cases of criminal suspicion.”

The family provided the Public Prosecution with a list of names and phone numbers of 12 witnesses to Hassan’s shooting. Nadia Ismail said that some of the witnesses, during questioning, were threatened that their wives would be raped. “They were indirectly accused,” she said, “and all were targeted later by being arrested while raiding their homes or at checkpoints.”

The security agencies questioned Naji Ismail, Hassan’s brother, more than once about his brother’s murder. “We believe that the security apparatuses are responsible for capturing my brother’s murderer.” Naji said. “We asked for the filming of the incident by the surveillance cameras in the area, however, the cameras disappeared since that time. We got names of witnesses who presented their testimonies, but to no avail.”

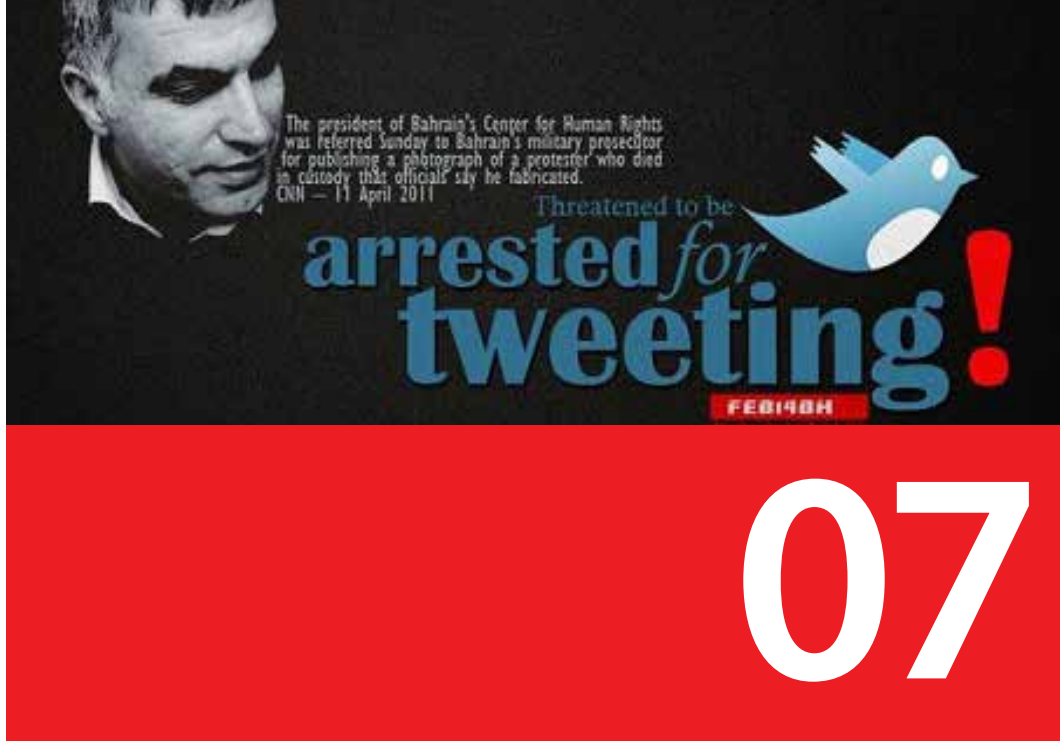
Hassan’s family has not lost hope. The authority in Bahrain places Hassan’s case under the term “pending investigation,” but the family says that they will work to revive an action internationally. The family also confirmed that they will continue their search for justice to identify Hassan’s murderer and bring him to justice.



الصورة الحقيقية رسالة

فعالة بإيصال الحق





## A spying government, an enemy of the Internet

The 2012 report of the press-freedom group Reporters Without Borders classified Bahrain as one of the countries that are “enemies of the Internet.” According to the organization’s criteria, the listed countries impose restrictions on the Internet, monitor the published contents and imprison bloggers.

Though the organization considered 2011 to be “the most dangerous year” for Internet users, Bahrain was chosen among the most five enemies of Internet in 2012.

The organization said that it added Bahrain to its list after the death of the Bahraini blogger Zakariya al-Ashiri while in government custody in 2011. It also suggested that the Bahraini authorities have arrested many Internet users and opened a campaign to defame those who protest for freedom of expression and communications.

The issue of censorship of cyber activists in Bahrain – whether they are journalists, bloggers or photographers – has become a hot issue addressed by many organizations that work for human rights and freedom of opinion and expression around the world. The many arrests of journalists, human rights activists and politicians resulting from Internet censorship have added to the urgency of the issue.

Bahrain Watch, a volunteer initiative led by group of cyber activists and specialists, is the first group to document the use of British spyware by Bahraini government to spy on activists. The organization documented this in its report published on July 25, 2012.

Bill Marczak, a Bahrain Watch founder, and the researcher Morgan Marquis-Boire, a member of Citizen Lab, a Canadian-based group that analyzes the interplay of communications technology and human rights, analyzed a list of suspicious messages sent to a group of Bahraini activists during 2012. Their examination found that it appeared the messages contained attachments that uploaded spyware to the computers of the targeted persons. Some of these messages have used the name of Melissa Chan, a journalist for Al Jazeera English Channel.



The organization's investigations have showed that the spyware is called FinSpy, a product of the British company Gamma International. The company itself was previously criticized for supplying the same spyware to the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak before he was ousted.

Several methods used by the Bahraini government to censor activists were documented. These included sending online messages containing spyware that automatically uploads to the recipient's device, and hacking Facebook and Twitter IP addresses in order to determine the identities of their users and arrest them. In addition, the government demanded the passwords to the online accounts of arrested cyber activists to access their personal contacts and investigate their associates.

Bahrain Watch pointed out in a July 31, 2013, report that Bahraini authorities had launched a spy campaign against activists on the Internet, targeted at least 120 accounts and arrested 11 people accused of posting Twitter messages from anonymous accounts insulting the king.

The eight-month Bahrain Watch investigation showed that the Bahraini government is uncovering the identity of the people behind the anonymous accounts by sending messages containing links to spyware that identifies the accounts' Internet Protocol addresses. These messages are often sent from fake accounts on social

networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. The messages often bear the names of well-known government opposition figures or other false personalities that would not arouse suspicion.

When the targeted person clicks on the spy link, the IP address of his home or mobile phone's Internet line is identified. With this information, the government can request the records of the account's Internet provider to identify the name and address of the owner of the Internet line or the mobile phone related to the revealed IP number.

The report, titled "The IP Spy Files: How Bahrain's Government Silences Anonymous Online Dissent," documented the cases of five people who were arrested on charge of insulting the king on Twitter. Some of them confirmed having been targeted and pursued through spy links.

The examination of court documents in these cases shows that prosecutors' charges are initially based on linking the IP address of the accused person with the anonymous account on Twitter insulting the king. However, the public prosecutor refuses to reveal the way of obtaining IP numbers; he just stated that the numbers were discovered by "special means" that "shall not be revealed."

In some of these cases, defense teams have warned that the accounts were still active even though the accused persons were in prison. Bahrain Watch indicated that the government was secretly exploiting the accounts to target their followers through private messages.

The report pointed out that IP spy links cannot be reliably used to





recognize the real identity of the writer of tweets using a fake name; people other than the original writer can click on the spy link and open the link through an Internet line that is not registered to the writer.

In at least one case, an operator of an anonymous Twitter account clicked on an IP spy link using someone else's Internet connection; the subscriber of the connection was jailed for one year for operating the account despite the fact that he was not the one who had posted tweets about the king.

The report documented more than 120 pro- and anti-regime accounts that have been targeted in the last two years with spy links using a public mention such as a tweet that is visible to the public.

The investigation concluded that in at least six cases, activists were targeted by spy links already opened by an IP address affiliated with Bahraini security authorities. These spy links are connected to hundreds of others sent from the same network of accounts. According to the investigation, one of these accounts is referred to an officer in the Electronic Crimes Unit in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

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<https://bahrainwatch.org/press/press-release-7.php>
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5. Bahrain Watch in the Media <https://bahrainwatch.org/press/>



A group of people, some wearing black hoods and sunglasses, are standing behind a dark wooden fence. They are holding two large signs. The sign on the left lists 'Torture.. Maltreatment.. Insults..' and the sign on the right says 'FREE all Prisoners'.

Torture..  
Maltreatment..  
Insults..

FREE  
all  
Prisoners



# 08

## Recommendations of National Assembly: open the war on freedom of expression and conscience

On July 28, 2013, the National Assembly held a joint extraordinary session for both houses – Shura and Council of Representatives – for the first time since their inception. The five-hour session drew 12 ministers and 77 of the 80 members of the Council and Shura. The members agreed on 22 recommendations on ways to confront what the Council has called “terrorism.” Those recommendations were submitted to the king.

During the session, several members of Parliament presented speeches and recommendations to enforce more restrictions on demonstrations and rallies, particularly rallies in Manama. Most members of Parliament demanded tougher penalties pertaining to the laws against terrorism and revoking the citizenship of those accused of acts of terrorism. The new governmental measures that followed have violated Bahrainis’ rights to express their opinions freely.

The recommendations issued by the Assembly and related directly to freedom of expression were:

1. Issuance of decree laws during the Council’s recess in order to toughen penalties in the terrorism law.

2. Revoking the Bahraini citizenship of those who carry out terrorist crimes and of their instigators.
3. Inflicting tough penalties on those who incite all forms of violence and terrorism.
4. Inflicting severe punishments on all kinds and forms of violence and terror crimes.
5. Drying up all sources of terrorist financing.
6. Banning sit-ins, rallies and gatherings in the capital, Manama.
7. Taking all necessary measures, including the declaration of the State of National Security, to impose civil security and peace.
8. Taking legal actions against some political associations that incite and support acts of violence and terrorism.
9. Amending Law 58 of 2006 with respect to the protection of the community against terrorist acts so as to inflict punishment on those who instigate and support terrorism.
10. Granting the security bodies all required and appropriate powers to protect society from terrorist attacks and prevent them from spreading.
11. Requesting ambassadors to Bahrain not to interfere in the kingdom's domestic affairs respecting international law and regulations.
12. Toughening penalties on those who involve children in acts of terrorism and vandalism of private and public facilities.
13. Total commitment to applying all punitive laws related to combating violence and terrorism.
14. Applying a moderate discourse to protect the social fabric.
15. Direct relevant state bodies to activate the necessary legal action against those who use social networks in an illegal way.
16. Insuring that freedom of speech should be protected, and balancing the rule of law and the protection of human rights.
17. Revise the education policy as well as amending the curriculums at schools in order to protect the society from terrorism.

18. Local media should focus on "terrorism" to educate and inform the citizens and discard anything that enforces it.
19. Supporting the efforts of his highness the King to encourage national dialogue and push it forward, as it will be the only way to resolve the political conflict and protect the social fabric.
20. Those involved in terrorist acts shall not be covered by royal pardon on crimes.
21. Devising an integrated national security strategy in order to be able to face all developments, supporting the efforts of those in charge of it, and ensuring their protection.
22. Implanting new programs for rehabilitation of young people who are used in different crimes.

During the period of adjournment to formulate the recommendations, the minister of state for information affairs, Sameera Rajab, surprised many by declaring the recommendations word by word through a live news conference before their declaration in the National Assembly. Hours after the Assembly voted on the recommendations, the king directed all officials to put in force the important recommendations as fast as possible through the available constitutional and legal channels.

The Bahrain Press Association (BPA) expressed in a statement its disappointment with most of the members' speeches and the recommendations that were full of incitement backed by an open authorization to the security forces to commit atrocious cruelty and



threaten the citizenship rights of the Bahrainis calling for political reforms. Such speeches and recommendations pave the way for an open-ended war that would eliminate the freedom of expression and the freedom of conscience under flimsy justifications and unacceptable reasons.

The BPA considered the actions taken during the session- the adoption of recommendations that conflict with the constitution - a disastrous turn that would bring back the harsh conditions that Bahrain experienced during the State of National Security in March 2011. At the time, many crimes and violations committed by the authorities were reported and documented that claimed the lives of 120 Bahrainis and the imprisonment and torture of thousands of others.



Hussain Hubail

The BPA stressed in its statement that the recommendations are an open authorization to the country's king, the executive authorities, and the security forces to issue decree laws and amend certain laws that would impose an iron fist on civil liberties and press freedom and ban demonstrations from Manama. The changes would also impose the state of national safety "martial laws," leading to the arrest of some opposition leaders and political activists and depriving them of their citizenship in clear violation of the law. This also violates international law and the international conventions, of which Bahrain is a signatory, that protect universal human rights.

"The National Assembly's statement - and its recommendations - is a dark dot in the history of the legislative authorities with its two houses," said the chairman of the BPA, Adel Marzooq. "It also gives a green light to the fierce security fist practiced by the Bahraini authorities. Furthermore, it is a dangerous escalation paving the way to new violations which the country may witness as per this 'rejected' authorization, when it comes to the international law and all other humane considerations."

Marzooq also stressed: "Such recommendations allow the Bahraini government to enact many suppressing policies and laws on the freedom of opinion and the freedom of the press. It also flings to the wall all previous undertakings made by the regime and violates the universal human right to citizenship."

## The arbitrary decisions following the National Assembly's recommendations

Days after the recommendations were issued; two decree laws were enacted for 2013 regarding general meetings, gatherings and demonstrations, and juvenile law. The decree law addressing general meetings and demonstrations aims to ban protests, rallies, gatherings or sit-ins in Manama. The law does allow sit-ins outside offices of international organizations after obtaining written police authorization from the head of Public Security or his deputy, who may specify the number of participants and the time and place of the sit-in.

The amended juvenile law aims to extend penalties to include guardians responsible for the minors' taking part in a demonstration, gathering, protest or sit-in. The guardians could be jailed or fined or both.

The minister of state for communications, Fawaz bin Mohammad Al Khalifa, who was accused of targeting dozens of journalists and photographers during unrest in 2011, has directed the head of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and chief executives of communication companies to speed up implementation of regulations to block website forums that the government maintains instigate violence and terrorism. The minister set up a team between the State Ministry for Communication Affairs and the communication companies in order to monitor and track down websites, forums, and social networking systems.

The minister of justice and Islamic affairs and endowment issued a resolution adding a new article to Ministerial Decree No. 4 of 2005 on the regulation of communications between local political societies and foreign parties or political organizations. This clause stipulated, "All communications between political societies and diplomatic missions and consulates in the kingdom and representatives of foreign governments have to be coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,



Mohammad Hasaan



and in the presence of one of its own representatives or any other official entrusted to do so.”

In mid-September, the minister of justice announced a lawsuit requesting the termination of all activities of the “Ulama Islamic Council,” the liquidation of its assets and the shutting of its office for being an illegal organization established in violation of the provisions of the Constitution and a large number of regulations and laws.

### **Arrests follow the National Assembly’s recommendations**

After the issuance of the National Assembly’s recommendations, arrest campaigns were intensified against a large number of people, including some in the media. Those arrests coincided with the call for protests in Bahrain on Aug. 14, 2013. The Bahraini authorities arrested Qassem Zin el-Din, a photographer who was filming opposition protests in Bahrain on Aug. 2, 2013. His car was searched and his mobile phone and computer were confiscated.

Masked security agents arrested Mohammad Hassan Sudaif, a blogger known on Twitter as @Safybh, at his home on Aug. 31, 2013, and confiscated his cellphone and computer. Sudaif was known by his writings on human rights and political issues in Bahrain before he stopped writing openly in April 2013. The authorities accused Sudaif of membership in the February 14 media network. Before his arrest, he was summoned in June 2013 for interrogation about his relation with the Bahraini opposition. It is said that he was targeted because of his support for foreign media. Sudaif was released in the beginning of October.

On the same day that Sudaif was arrested, the photographer Hussain Hubail, whose works have been published by news outlets like Agence France-Presse and Voice of America, was also arrested. Hubail disappeared that day from Bahrain International Airport and was charged with using social networks to incite hatred against the regime and other charges pertaining to his media activity. Hubail’s family was concerned that the photographer, who has a heart problem and suffers from shortness of breath, would be harmed if he were denied necessary treatment while in detention. Hubail is still in detention to this day. At his trial in January 2014, he mentioned being tortured by the police inside prison.

Earlier in the year 2013, Hubail won a photography award from the independent newspaper Al-Wasat for a photo of protesters amid teargas in a demonstration.

## Targeting the biggest opposition society in Bahrain

The Bahrain Press Association has monitored anxiously as the National Security Agency has continued to send opinion pieces supporting the authorities to newspapers for publication. The articles clearly attack the opposition and its figures, especially the Al-Wefaq Society and its leaders.

On Oct. 26, 2013, the Al-Wefaq Society opened the Museum of Revolution, which portrays the uprising in Bahrain since Feb. 14, 2011. The museum includes seven panoramas that display the movements Bahrain has witnessed, personal belongings of martyrs and more than 30 means of torture.

On Oct. 30, 2013, Bahraini police forces raided the building of the Al-Wefaq Society in Gufool. The security forces cordoned off the premises preventing Al-Wefaq officials from reaching the headquarters. The public prosecution ordered the confiscation of what it termed in its official statement "incitement materials including objects and images that insulted a statutory body, and the possession of such items is punishable by law."

After the raid, Sheikh Ali Salman, the society's secretary general, was summoned for questioning in the public prosecution, where he was accused of "insulting an official body, the interior minister." He was released after six hours of questioning. The questioning of Salman focused on the Museum of Revolution, his speech at its opening, and some symbols of the revolution and the martyrs. Thus, it was a condemnable assault on freedom of opinion and expression.

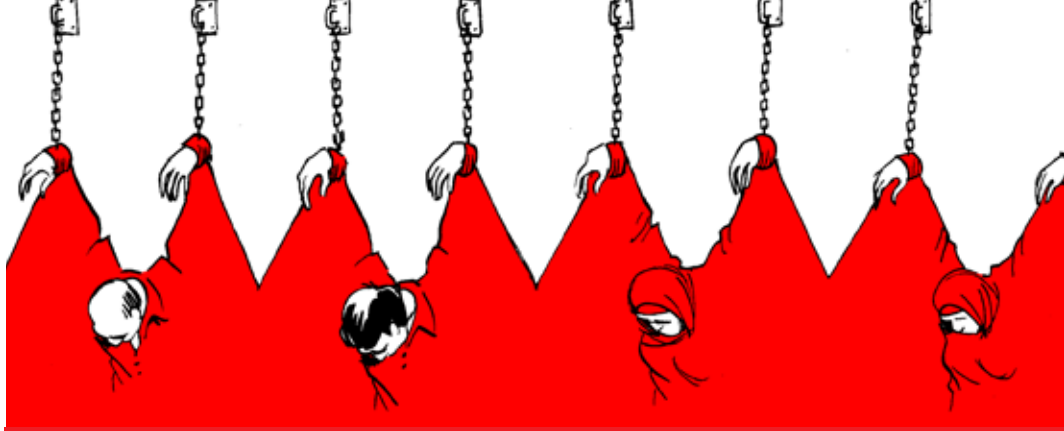
**#FREE  
NABEEL  
RAJAB**



**'Dark day for justice' in Bahrain**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**





# 09

## Internet in Bahrain: All that is contrary to the ruling family's view is concealed.

Even before 2013, governments in the Arab world have harshly targeted opposing political viewpoints on news websites and social media.

This so-called electronic suppression begins with blocking access to critical or opposition websites. It includes monitoring Facebook and Twitter posts and arresting bloggers expressing unwelcome opinions.

The strategy, devised by several Arabic regimes, is enforced in Bahrain by a special electronic crimes department in the Ministry of Interior. Outwardly, the unit is empowered to silence online voices promoting violence, inducing terrorism, inciting against the regime, spreading extreme ideas or other ready-made accusations.

The suppression of websites continued through 2013, confirming the extent of the authorities' fear of the power of online media. Many citizens view Bahraini and international news sites and blogs as a social and political outlet where opinions can be expressed freely.

On Aug. 3, 2013, the Bahraini Ministry of State for Communication Affairs issued a list of 70 websites and forums classified as "dissident." It was not long until specific accusations were added to the term

“dissident”; the ministry described the sites as centers for inciting sectarian terrorism. While it has kept silent regarding what online content was designated to be blocked, the ministry announced that the forum of the Olamaa Islamic Council was included in the list in addition to Al-Manar Channel website and the website of the February 14 Coalition.

Those seventy websites were added to the list of those concealed during the last years. Among them were Bahrain Mirror (<http://bahrainmirror.com>), Bahraini Martyrs and Victims of Torture (<http://www.shaheedbh.com>), the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (<http://bchr.net/ar>), the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (<http://www.anhri.net>) based in Cairo, Fajr Bahrain Forums (<http://www.fajrbh.com/vb/>) and Bahrain Online (<http://www.bahrainonline.org>).



A closer look at the content of some of the targeted websites may clarify the real reasons to block them:

- ▶ Al-Manar website is divided into several sections. It includes a part specialized for news of opponents' activities and activists calling for political reforms. The site sometimes criticizes the ruling regime and highlights the violations against the nation. Thus, the ultimate solution to obscure the view was concealing the website.
- ▶ The Olamaa Islamic Council website is a religious site constructed on Oct. 21, 2004. The ruling authority in Bahrain was not pleased by the principles and political orientations of the website; it was blocked in August.
- ▶ Also in August, the media website of the February 14 Coalition was concealed. Its mission, in addition to communicating local events, is highlighting the rising violence adopted by the regime's forces.

In addition to the concealed websites included on the list of 70 sites, other sites from the Bahraini Browser have continued to be blocked in 2013. The aim of that action was similar to the one mentioned above.

The news website Bahrain Mirror is considered one of the top news websites in Bahrain. This site was concealed several times and it remains blocked.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights faced the same fate. Publishing civil statistics on its site contrary to the ruling family's interest was enough to be concealed. The center was registered with the Bahraini Minister of Labor and Social Affairs on July 2002. In November 2004, the authorities decided to close the center, which aimed to promote human rights in Bahrain.

This is also what happened with the website of Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org>) and the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (<http://www.anhri.net/>), broadcasting from Cairo. The network aims to defend freedom of conscience and expression in the Arabic world.

Though most of the concealed websites in Bahrain are relevant to the political and social situation, they do not promote terrorism, contrary to what the authorities have alleged. They are not general pornographic websites to be obscured out of fear for an outrage of modesty and corrupting the morals of the youthful Gulf society. They are just news, statistical or social websites.

The clear purpose of the obscuring and online targeting is to split an opposition that is calling for transparency and political reform. However, the facts that the regime is trying to conceal from the Bahraini people will not be hidden from the world beyond the small country. The outside world will browse the websites concealed in Bahrain, observe the details and draw its own conclusions.



The reality that is depicted in social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is also prosecuted. Activists on those sites are arrested one by one, accused of expressing opinion. The scene is then more transparent: the other opinion is concealed quite as the websites. According to the government, these actions are classified as anti-terrorism although the justification of this description is not logical.

The continued electronic suppression campaigns have turned Bahrain into a state deserving of the term "unfree." According to a report on online freedom by Freedom House, Bahrain ranked 10th among 11 included Arab states. It is suffering from political defeats pushing it to use up all means of real or even virtual intimidation. At last, all that is opposed to the ruling family's view is concealed.









I AM  
A  
PHOTO  
GRAPHER  
NOT  
A  
TERROR  
IST !!



# 10

## Documenting Violations of 2013

This table shows the major violations that the Bahrain Press Association has been able to document during the period of: January to December 2013.

Date	Victim	Event
January 6	Photographer Ahmed Humaidan	Humaidan's family succeeds in communicating with him one week after he was kidnapped by the security forces.
January 20	Group of journalists	The criminal court refused to consider the case of journalists who submitted a notice against Al-Arabia Channel on defamation.
January 25	Blogger Nader Abed el-Imam	He was arrested in Manama and accused of calling for unauthorized demonstrations. He appeared before court.
February 14	Photojournalist Mazen Mahdi	He was arrested during his work in Al-Dyeh. He was released later.

Date	Victim	Event
February 14	Photojournalist Mohamad al-Sheikh	He was arrested during his work in Al-Dyeh. He was released later.
February 14	Photojournalist Hasan Jamali	He was arrested during his work in Al-Dyeh. He was released later.
February 24	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	In the Court of Appeal, considering the case of being tortured by Lt. Sarah al-Moosa.
March 7	Online activist "Anonymous"	Convicted and sentenced to one year on a case of insulting the bench. (The news was documented from the local press that did not mention the name of the arrested; the association was not able to know more about the case.)
March 18	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	In the Court of Appeal, considering the case of being tortured.
April 3	Blogger Nader Abed el-Imam	Summoned to Budaiey's Police Station to be questioned about a complaint on freedom of conscience and expression on social networking sites.
April 7	Blogger Nader Abed el-Imam	Summoned to the public prosecution to be questioned about a complaint on freedom of conscience and expression on social networking sites.
April 14	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	Hearing of the forensic doctor in a case alleging torture.
April 16	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	Not allowed to cover the conflicts occurred in Al-Jaberya High School. She was accused of sneaking into it.
April 18	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	She was driven to the police station while working in Makaba.
April 18	ITN British TV team	Driven to the police station after being arrested in Makaba.
April 19	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	Sent to the police station and her occupational license as a correspondent for France 24 was withdrawn.
April 19	ITN British TV team	Expelled from Bahrain after arrest in Al-Qofoul.
April 27	Photographer Mohamad al-Sheikh	Targeted by fissile bullets in Al-Darraz.

Date	Victim	Event
April 27	Photographer Hasan Jamali	Targeted by fissile bullets in Al-Darraz.
May 1	Photographer Mohamad al-Sheikh	He was driven to the police station while working and not allowed to cover demonstrations in Sitra.
May 1	Photographer Hasan Jamali	He was driven to the police station while working and not allowed to cover demonstrations in Sitra.
May 1	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	She was driven to the police station while working in Sitra and her license was withdrawn.
May 15	Mahdi al-Basri, Mahmoud Abed al-Majid, Abdullah al-Jamri, Hasan Abed Ali, Issa Abed Ali, Mohsen Abed Ali, Issa Makki, Ammar Makki and Mohamad al-Alamai	They were sentenced to one year in prison in a case regarding freedom of conscience and expression. They were accused of insulting the king.
June 15	Photographer Hasan Jamali	Threatened by the police while working in Al-Bilad Al-Qadeem.
June 15	Photographer Mohamad al-Sheikh	Struck on the back by tear-gas canisters while working in Al-Bilad Al-Qadeem.
June 15	Photographer Hamad Mohamad	Barred from filming a demonstration and requested to leave Sitra.
June 15	Journalist Mazen Mahdi	Barred from working and requested to leave Sitra. He was also verbally threatened.
June 15	Photojournalist Amer Mohamad	Barred from working and requested to leave Sitra.
June 19	One person, Anonymous	Sentenced to one year in prison on charge of insulting the king. (The news was documented from the local press that did not mention the name of the arrested; the association was not able to know more about the case.)
June 21	4 persons	Sentenced to two years in prison on charge of insulting the king. (The news was documented from the local press that did not mention the name of the arrested; the association was not able to know more about the case.)

Date	Victim	Event
June 21	Photojournalist Mazen Mahdi	Arrested by the police while covering a demonstration in Al-Dair.
June 21	BBC team	Arrested by the police while covering a demonstration in Al Dair.
June 23	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	Acquittal of Lt. Sarah Al-Moosa,
June 25	Ali Faisal al-Shoufah	charged with torturing her, in the Court of Appeal.
July 3	Mahdi al-Basri, Mahmoud Abed al-Majid, Abdullah al-Jamri, Hasan Abed Ali, Issa Abed Ali, Mohsen Abed Ali, Issa Makki, Ammar Makki and Mohamad al-Alamai	Sentenced to one year in prison on charge of insulting the king.
July 23	Journalist Nazeera Saeed	Court of Appeal approved the sentence of one year in prison in the case of insulting the king.
July 25	Photojournalist Mohamad al-Sheikh	Appeal was refused in acquittal of Lt. Sarah Al-Moosa,
July 31	Blogger Mohammad Hasaan Sudaif	charged with torturing the journalist.
July 31	Photographer Hussain Hubail	Shot in leg by fissile bullets while covering in Al Darraz.
July 31	Electronic activist Jassem al-Naeimi	Arrested at dawn at his home.
August 2	Photographer Qassem Zin el-Din	Arrested at Bahrain Airport.
August 7	Blogger Mohammad Hassan Sudaif	Arrested at dawn at his home.
August 8	Journalist Haydar Abbas of Al-Jazeera TV	Arrested at his home.
August 8	Attorney Abdul-Aziz Mousa	Summoned for questioning in public prosecution at 1:30 a.m. He was tortured in criminal investigations building.
August 8	Photojournalist Ahmad al-Fardan	Barred from entering Bahrain.
September 4	Photojournalist Mazen Mahdi	Arrested after declaring that blogger Mohammad Hassan Sudaif was tortured.


Date	Victim	Event
September 12	One person	Kidnapped by militia in civilian outfit, affiliated with the security forces. He was threatened and urged to work with them and provide photos of protesters.
September 13	Photographer Abdullah al-Jerdabi	Requested to leave Al-Sahla in the north while covering a protest.
September 19	Dr. Saeed al-Samahiji	Sentenced to one year in prison in a case of insulting the king. (The news was documented from the local press that did not mention the name of the arrested; the association was not able to know more about the case.)
September 23	Dr. Saeed al-Samahiji	Arrested in a demonstration in Al-Mosalla.
September 30	Activist Mahdi Sahwan	Questioned in a charge of insulting the king.
October 3	Blogger Mohammad Hassan Sudaif	Hearing to consider the charge of insulting the king.
October 11	Photographer Mohamad al-Sheikh	Sentenced to 15 months in prison on charge of insulting the king.
October 11	with continuous trial.	Released
October 11	Photographer Hamad Mohamad	Seized in a demonstration in Sar and barred from filming.
October 13	Dr. Saeed al-Samahiji	Seized in a demonstration in Sar and barred from filming.
October 29	Dr. Saeed al-Samahiji	Seized in a demonstration in Sar and barred from filming.
October 30	Mohamad al-Sheikh	Consideration of the charge of insulting the king.
October 30	Photojournalist Hamad Ikbal	Consideration of the charge of insulting the king.
October 30	Photojournalist Hasan Jamali	Security forces barred him from filming the raid on Al-Wefaq headquarters and expelled him from the country.
October 30	Amer	Security forces barred him from filming the raid on Al-Wefaq headquarters and expelled him from the country.



اطفال البحرين  
رهائن النظام



الحرية  
للمناضل  
ابراهيم  
شريف  
الأمين العام  
لجمعية (وعد)



ضرب في وجدان الوطن  
تاريخ التمثيل 17 مارس 2011

Muhammad  
بمناسبة  
العيد  
Town  
البحرين  
Seef  
عشيرة  
Juffair  
mo



# 11

## Recommendations: eight steps to restore freedom of expression and the press

The Bahrain Press Association sees Bahrain approaching the level of a rogue state within the Middle East. Without regard for its obligations and commitments to local laws or international treaties, the government shows little concern for the guarantee of freedom of expression and the press and the safety of journalists and cyber activists, who face violations and systematic targeting.

This belief is enhanced by the results of judicial trials of those involved in killing and torturing media professionals. These trials ended up acquitting the accused or issuing insignificant judgments and even upgrading security and political positions of others.

It has been proved for the association that in 2013 the Bahraini Government did not take any measures or make any serious reforms to implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (Bassiouni Commission) or the UN Human Rights Council. In fact, the government proceeded in its suppression policies and continued to prosecute journalists and cyber activists. The Information Affairs Authority continues to tighten its control on electronic media through several websites, while Bahrain's audiovisual broadcasting continues to be monopolized by the state.



The Bahrain Press Association appeals to Western countries, especially the United States and United Kingdom, and to different regional and international organizations, bodies and federation concerned with media and press rights as well as human rights to intervene in Bahrain to pressure the Bahraini government toward making real reforms, ending the prosecution of journalists and cyber activists, and bringing those responsible for violations to justice.

**The association seeks to implement the following measures:**

1. Immediate release of detained journalists, photographers and cyber activists, and dropping all charges related to the freedom of expression.
2. Establishment of an independent committee to investigate the killings of the blogger Zakariya al-Ashiri, the publisher Abdul-Karim Fakhrawi and the video-journalist Ahmed Ismail Hassan, in addition to the torture of dozens of media members, and to bring those responsible to trial.
3. Formation of an independent committee to investigate the media approach adopted by Bahrain Radio and Television Corporation during the events in Bahrain since 2011 and to hold accountable the perpetrators of violations established by the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.
4. A pledge by Bahraini government to send a permanent representative to international bodies concerned with freedom of the media and the press (International Federation of Journalists; Reporters Without Borders; Committee to Protect Journalists) to work for two years as permanent monitors. The aim of this is monitoring directly violations, transgressions and targeting of media persons and journalists in Bahrain.
5. Suspension of Law 47 on the organization of the press, printing and publishing; review of sentences handed down in cases related to the freedom of expression; and the dropping of all outstanding lawsuits at the Public Prosecution.
6. Reinstating of all journalists, photographers and bloggers who have been dismissed from their jobs at government and private institutions, and recognition of their right to compensation for all material and moral damage.
7. Separation between the Department of Foreign Media Affairs and the Information Affairs Authority; and election of a supreme commission of Bahraini journalists for the regulation of publishing, press and media.

8. Ending all forms of political persecution, abuse and security targeting of media professional, journalists and cyber activists.

بِحزین  
فمن عزف عليكِ لمن الدم وقد أبكاكِ

بِحزین

ومن بدم الشهداء اسقى الأرض وما رواكِ

READY TO  
DIF  
BAHR



# 12

## Bahrain Press Association's Statements for the Year 2013:

### **Intimidation of Journalists Is on the Rise in the Kingdom of Fear**

### **Bahraini Authorities to Be Held Accountable for the Safety of Photojournalist Ahmed Humaidan**

LONDON, Jan. 2, 2013 – The Bahrain Press Association (BPA), the London-based organization concerned with defending Bahraini journalists and addressing issues related to the country's news media, condemns the kidnapping of the photojournalist Ahmed Humaidan by security forces in civilian clothes in a shopping mall in Manama, the capital, on Dec. 28, 2012.

The BPA is highly concerned about the security forces' denial that Humaidan is being held in their custody despite the fact that he phoned his family informing them about his arrest. The BPA calls on the Ministry of Interior to immediately free Humaidan.

The BPA's correspondent in Manama said the authorities were planning to accuse Humaidan of four trumped-up charges. Humaidan is widely known for his presence at demonstrations and protests, sparing no effort in documenting the clashes and daily confrontations between

Bahraini security squads and protesters.

Humaidan is a professional photographer who has won more than 145 international awards in still photography. He is also a member of the International Federation of Photographic Art and the Photographic Society of America. Humaidan's family said that their house was raided five times and some relatives' houses were also checked in search of Humaidan.

The BPA believes that intimidation of media professionals and photojournalists is continuous in Bahrain. It is clear that the tiny island is becoming a kingdom of fear at the heart of the Gulf, despite several pledges to international bodies by the ruling institutions. Compared with what is happening on the ground, those pledges are just ink on paper.

The BPA also sees a culture of impunity in Bahrain, as demonstrated by the light sentences, acquittals and dropping of prosecutions in the torture and death in custody of several members of the media. These cases include the seven-year sentences for two employees of the national security division in the torture-leading-to-death of the Al-Wasat founder Abdul-Karim Fakhrawi, the adjournment of the trial against the police officer accused of torturing the France 24 correspondent Nazeeha Saeed, and the adjournment of the trial in the death-by-torture case of the blogger Zakariya al-Ashiri. This absence of justice is more testimony to the regime's failure to fulfill the pledges it undertook in front of the international community, whether it be the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry or of the Universal Periodic Review on Bahrain in the Human Rights Council.



### **Arresting Twitter activists on charges pertaining to king slandering is yet another sign of dictatorship**

LONDON, March 13, 2013 – The Bahrain Press Association expresses its deep sorrow for the course of action Bahrain has been witnessing since the dawn of the February 14 Revolution: the suppression of freedom of expression, and the terrorization of journalists, photojournalists, and cyberactivists. This poses many questions as to whether the regime on the tiny island is serious about making real reforms to the deteriorating climate for freedom and human rights.

The BPA stresses that states, NGOs concerned with freedom of expression and journalism, and international human rights watchdogs

should pressure the Bahraini regime to stop its ongoing violations and make justice prevail in the cases of torture that claimed the lives of three innocent citizens – the blogger Zakariya al-Ashiri, publisher Abdul-Karim Fakhrawi, and the photojournalist Ahmed Ismail – in addition to the arrest, torture and detention of dozens of journalists and photojournalists.

### **Bahrain: Enemy of the Internet**

On Monday, March 11, the Bahraini authorities arrested six cyberactivists on charges of slandering the king on Twitter. This accusation was later confirmed by the head of the prosecution directorate, Nayef Yousif, in a statement issued Tuesday, March 12, 2013. The accused were kept in custody in preparation for their trial on “lèse majesté” charges.

The Bahraini judiciary recently sentenced four Twitter activists on charges pertaining to “slandering the king.” The chairman of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Nabeel Rajab, the now-detained human rights defender, and the center’s head of monitoring, Yousif al-Mahafdha, were tried on charges pertaining to practicing freedom of expression and freedom of opinion on Twitter as well. Twelve Bahraini citizens were prosecuted within six months for posting their opinions on Twitter, the BPA said.

### **Journalists Blacklisted**

The BPA condemns the blocking of Dr. Mansoor al-Jamri, editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper Al-Wasat, along with his wife, and an Associated Press reporter, Reem Khalifa, from entering the UAE on Monday, Feb. 25 without giving any reasons.



With the recurrence of denial-of-entry lists barring media professionals and cyberactivists from various Arab countries, especially those with good ties with the Bahraini regime, many of those denied entry have confirmed that the authorities in those countries made it clear that there are ban lists issued by the Bahraini regime.



Dr. Mansoor Al Jamri

### **Zakariya al-Ashiri: Lost Justice**

The BPA condemns the ruling issued by the Higher Criminal Court presided over by a royal family member, Mohamed Bin Ali Al Khalifa, to acquit five policemen -- Pakistani nationals -- who were accused of torturing and killing the head of Al Dair Forums, the blogger Zakariya al-Ashiri, on April 9, 2011, while in the Dry Deck detention house. The killing was affirmed and documented by the Bassiouni commission report in Clause No. 1000 that reads: "The death of Mr. Ashiri is attributed to torture at the Dry Dock Detention Centre. Mr. Ashiri was in the custody of the MOI at the time of his death."

The BPA considers such a ruling yet another testament to the lost justice in the Bahraini judicial system and at the same time condemns, with the severe sense of the word, the Bahraini regime's continued insistence that it has implemented the BICI recommendations. The BICI recommended in its lengthy report issued on Nov. 23, 2011, to hold to account and bring to justice the violators, whether civilian or military personnel, in crimes of torture and murder that took place inside detention houses of the Ministry of Interior or the Bahrain Ministry of Defense.

This commitment was evaded by the Bahraini regime. Instead, the Bahraini regime has turned lower-ranking expat military personnel into scapegoats, leaving high-ranked personnel untouched in the murder of al-Ashiri and in many other cases. Yesterday, the regime acquitted the accused in a court presided over by a royal family member, which emphasizes that the impunity culture is but one pillar of the monarchy and its authorities.

The BPA confirms that the Bahraini regime's commitments to implement the BICI's recommendations and those of the United Nations Human Rights Council are just empty words. Violations of all types, intimidation, and crackdown are prominently on the rise.



## **Twitter users are not 'Nationals' and prison sentences establish the concept of 'Feudalism of Bahrain'**

LONDON, May 16, 2013 -- The Bahrain Press Association condemns the judiciary sentences issued on May 15, 2013, against the attorney Mahdi al-Basri and four Twitter activists: Mahmoud Taresh, Mohsen Abed Ali, Hasan Abed Ali and Ammar Makki. The four activists were sentenced to one year in prison for "slandering the king on Twitter." Another activist was acquitted.

On March 11, the Bahraini authorities arrested six Twitter users for their online activities, according to a press statement by the head of the prosecution directorate, Nayef Yousif. Public Prosecution decided to keep the accused in custody awaiting trial on the charges of slandering the king.

The Bahrain Press Association considers such sentences signs of official suppression of freedom of expression in an island full of prisoners of conscience. According to the association, such sentences establish the concept of "the feudalism of Bahrain." The persistent intimidation shows that the Bahraini government has no intention of fulfilling its obligations before international society to reform its political and judicial systems. This clearly reveals the repeated false claims of the king regarding protecting and guaranteeing freedom of the media and press in addition to guaranteeing freedom of expression on social networking sites.

The Bahraini government is planning to raise the prison sentence for the charge of slandering the king to five years. The security authorities are intending to use technology in order to monitor its citizens online and interrupt electronic communications to arrest journalists and cyberactivists on social networking websites. The British newspaper The Guardian published an article on May 12 about a Britain-based company that used spyware to target the Bahraini activist Ala'a al-Shehabi and others.

In this regard, the Bahraini judiciary issued sentences in 2012 to imprison four Twitter activists accused of slandering the king. Moreover, the head of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, Nabeel Rajab, and Yousif al-Mahafdha, head of monitoring for the center, faced trials regarding freedom of opinion and expression on the same website. Thus, the total of those presented for trials pertaining



to writing on Twitter is 18, 10 of whom were prosecuted on charges of slandering the king.

The Bahrain Press Association also condemns the Public Prosecution's decision to imprison the photojournalist Jawad al-Khabbaz for 45 days without being accused in Abou-Sayba'a in the Northern Province. He was arrested and his camera was confiscated. Khabbaz was dismissed from his job as a photographer for Al-Watan newspaper after the announcement of emergency period in the state in March 2011. The vengeful campaign launched by the Bahraini authorities targeted the jobs of more than 123 media professionals.



### **BPA: The National Assembly's Conclusions Are 'a National Disaster' and Open a War on Freedom of Expression and Conscience**

LONDON, July 28, 2013 – The Bahrain Press Association condemns the conclusions of a joint meeting of the Bahraini National Assembly. In an extraordinary session, the lower and upper houses of the Assembly convened upon a call by King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa to discuss the toughening of penalties for acts of terrorism against the community, although the session is believed to have essential constitutional suspicions.

The BPA -- after thorough follow-up on the session deliberations, its final concluding statement, and its recommendations -- is expressing its disappointment with most of the members' speeches and recommendations, which it found to be an open authorization to the security forces to commit atrocious cruelty and threaten the citizenship rights of Bahrainis calling for political reforms. Such speeches and recommendations pave the way for an open-ended war that would eliminate the freedom of expression, if any, and the freedom of conscience for unacceptable reasons.

The BPA considers the joint session a national disaster reminiscent of what Bahrain went through after the State of National Safety was declared in March 2011. At the time, many crimes and violations were reported and documented that claimed the lives of 120 Bahrainis and the imprisonment and torture of thousands of others. The BPA stresses that the recommendations are an open authorization to the country's king, the executive authorities, and the security forces to issue decree laws and amend certain laws that would impose an iron fist on civil liberties and press freedoms and ban demonstrations from being called in the capital city, Manama.

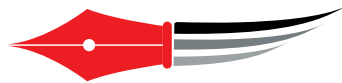
The recommendations would also impose the state of national safety "martial laws," lead to the arrest of some opposition leaders and political activists, and deprive them of their nationality in clear violation of the law. Undoubtedly, this violates international law and the international conventions of which Bahrain is a signatory with a commitment to implement the bylaws focusing on universal human rights.

The BPA is doubtful about the preamble of the undertaking vowed by the Bahraini authorities to abide by human rights commitments. The Bahraini authorities, with the testimony of the international community and human rights organizations, still turn a blind eye to the recommendations made by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry along with the recommendations made by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

The BPA chairman, Adel Marzooq, said "The National Assembly's statement – and its recommendations – is a black dot in the history of the legislative authorities with its two houses. It also gives a green light to the fierce security fist practiced by the Bahraini authorities. Furthermore, it is a dangerous escalation paving the way to new violations which the country may witness as per this 'rejected' authorization when it comes to the international law and all other humane considerations."

Mr. Marzooq also stressed that "Such recommendations allow the Bahraini authorities to enact many suppressing policies and laws on the freedom of opinion and the freedom of the press. It also flings to the wall all previous undertakings made by the regime and violates the universal human right to citizenship."

Therefore, the BPA is calling upon the international community – especially the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom – to very quickly move to stop the imposition of such recommendations and to oblige the Bahraini regime to satisfy its international undertakings and commitments and to initiate a real and meaningful political solution capable of lifting the country from its longstanding crisis.



## August 2013: Suppression Policies of freedom and imposing the one view are continuous

- ▶ 3 media professionals exposed to arrest, torture and abuse; summoning cyber activists
- ▶ Preventing correspondent of Al-Jazeera English, Hyder Abbasi, from entering Bahrain.
- ▶ Blocking websites and increasing the blocking campaigns of websites in State.

LONDON, Sept. 4, 2013 -- Bahrain Press Association condemns the continued of exclusion policies, by the Bahraini authorities, suppression of media freedoms and targeting journalists, photographers and cyber activists in terms of expressing their opinions in public issues and covering the protests in Bahrain.

The association mentioned that August 2013 has witnessed the launch of "Tamarod" Campaign by opponents in Bahrain. Simultaneously, the authorities has implemented in the same month a comprehensive security campaign that targeted at a large scale press and expression freedoms. The campaign included arresting three media professionals and photographers, summoning two activists on social networking websites- imprisoning one of them and one was dismissed from work- preventing a foreign channel correspondent from entering Bahrain and blocking websites.

In this regard, the association mentioned that the user of Twitter account "@Deertybhr" was summoned in August 25th 2013 by the Electronic Crimes Department in Ministry of Internal. According to given information, he works in the Parliament and belongs politically to the Islamic Manbar Association – the political wing of the Society of Muslim Brotherhood in Bahrain. He explained later that the investigation with him stressed on his opinions criticizing the performance of one of the members of parliament on the social network. He received a written warning in September 2nd 2013 from his work after being dismissed for 14 days.

The association condemns the arrest of lawyer Abdul-Aziz Mousa by the Bahraini authorities after he posted on his Twitter account his witness for acts of torturing the arrested media professional Mohammad Hassan Sudayf (Mohammad Al-Safi) who was arrested in last July. The lawyer's home was raided in August 7th 2013 and he was arrested and two computers were seized in addition to 3 mobile phones. The Public Prosecution decided to imprison him for one week pending the investigation charged with "publishing the names of defendants without permission and divulging the secrets

of an investigation". The authorities released the lawyer later on adjourning his trial to the coming October 10th.

Fawaz bin Muhammad Al Khalifa, Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs, mentioned during a meeting with communications companies in August 13th 2013 "the formation of a team between Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs and communications companies in order to monitor and track down the inciting websites, forums and social networks". According to the Bahrain News Agency, the minister emphasized that "the ministry won't delay taking the necessary measures against these criminal websites".

Moreover, the association also mentions the prevention of the journalist Hyder Abbasi in Al Jazeera English channel from entering Bahrain by the Bahraini authorities in the last August 8th. The journalist Abbasi said on his Twitter account "@HyderAbbasi" that "the Bahraini authorities banned him from entering Bahrain just because he is a journalist" indicating that " he came to Bahrain for holidaying".

On August, a number of websites have been blocked among it the website of the Olamaa Islamic Council ([www.olamaa.net](http://www.olamaa.net)). Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs also announced in August 4th that "70 opposed websites, forums and social networks have been monitored" threatening "to take the necessary measures against them".

The Bahraini authorities are still arresting the media professionals Mohammad Hassan Sudayf (Mohammad Al-Safi), the photographer Hussain Hubail awarded several international awards since July 31 and the photographer Qasem ZeineDin since August 2nd. The lawyers of the two arrested - Muhammad Hassan and Muhammad Hubail- informed that they had been tortured by beating, kicking, exposure to extreme low temperature, standing for a long periods and deprivation of sleeping. The arrested were charged with participation in the account of "14 Feb" Network on Twitter "@Feb14Media"; communicating with electronic journal "Bahrain Mirror"; constructing and managing electronic pages and websites inciting to change the ruling regime in addition to other charges.



## Doctor Saaid Samahiji: Victim No. 18 of King's Prestige

Bahrain Press Association condemns the continued targeting of journalists, photographers and cyber activists- by the Bahraini authorities- as well as the suppression of the media and press freedoms in the country . The targeting continues through arrests or intimidation and judicial sentences that is dubious regarding its fairness and safety of implementation. At the same time, the Bahraini government is still obstinate on commitment with its obligations and the honestly implementation of reports' recommendations of Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and UN Human Rights Council.



Dr. Saeed Al Samahiji

### Victim No. 18 of King's Prestige

The association is always condemning the trial of Dr. Saeed Al Samahiji – a consultant ophthalmologist- accused with “insulting the king of state” according to agent of prosecutor-general in the prosecution of North Province-Mohammad Al-Rumaihi. The third low criminal court decided to announce the sentence on the following December 11th. Upon targeting Dr. Al Samahiji, the number of accused with “insulting the king” has increased since November 2012 until today to 18 citizens given that their prison sentences against them have ranged between 4 months and 2 years. The authorities released Al-Samahiji after he served his one year in prison in the issue of “medical cadres”.

The Bahrain Association expresses its deep sorrow to the continuation of issuing abusive sentences by the judicial authorities regarding “political” charges- in terms of form and content. These charges relate closely to freedom of conscience and expression in state.

### Culture of Impunity: Officially Political

Bahrain Press Association strongly condemns the decision of court of appeals on the going October 27th in terms of decreasing the punishment of two policemen from the security body. It decreases the prison sentence from 7 years to 3 years after they were convicted in killing and torturing one of the founders of “Al-Wasat” newspaper- the publisher Abdul Karim Al-Fakhrawi. The association considers

this issue a new evidence on the official custody of the involved from the security bodies in killing and torturing cases that targeted tens of journalists since 2011.

The High Criminal Court headed by Sheikh Mohammad bin Ali Al Khalifa acquitted on March 12th five policemen charged with torturing and killing Zakariya Al-Ushairy- the manager of the electronic forums "Al-Dayr". The High Court of Appeals approved the sentence of the Court of First Instance that acquitted the accused officer charged with torturing the journalist Naziha Saeed while arrested during the National Safety Period.

Bahrain Press Association stressed that the recent judicial sentences- in addition to the escape of authorities in revealing the details of killing the journalist photographer Ahmad Ismail in the last year- clearly indicates that the state adopts a persistent approach; the culture of "impunity". Moreover, the state would not delay to protect the leaderships and persons of the security bodies and justify their violations through the judicial authority and directing politically its sentences.

### **Hubail: patient with heart disease charged with hatred against the regime**

Bahrain Press Association watches with great fear the deteriorating the health condition of the media professional- the arrest Hussein Hubail. The reports indicate that the authorities are still depriving him intentionally from treatment and healthcare since he suffers from heart and breathing problems. The association demands the immediate release of Hubail and all media professionals arrested by security authorities.

The photographer Hussein Hubail was arrested in the end of last July. The authorities accused him with charges of using social networks to incite hatred against the regime. Although the authorities confirms that it provide the care he needs; however, the association depending on previous experience considers that the statements of security authorities are not entrusted especially with the continued complaints on torturing and abuse in Bahraini detention centers and prisons.

# LESS <sup>v</sup> FREEDOM

## BROADER IMPUNITY

Facing freedom of the media and the press in Bahrain. It also explores the special challenges for television and new media and the targeting of online activists. The report focuses on the culture of impunity that was evident during the official investigations and trials of those accused of committing torture that led to the death of journalists and media workers in 2011 and 2012.



رابطة الصحافة البحرينية  
Bahrain Press Association