



Bahrain – Reading list, June 2018

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Global reports

- BCHR, [No Right to Rights: A Report into Human Rights Violations Committed by BAHRAINI Authorities](#), June 2018

The report accounts for some of the most significant, wide-ranging human rights violations perpetrated by Bahraini authorities over the period running from January to December 2017, including widespread restrictions on civil, religious and political freedoms and on the right to privacy. It finds that the number of politically-motivated detentions and the use of torture and ill-treatment during interrogations have increased. It also documents the continued criminalization of peaceful activism and targeting of human rights defenders and Shia clerics, as well as other systematic patterns of human rights violations, ranging from the resumption of military trials against civilians, the handing down of death penalties and the revocations of citizenship.

- BTI, Transformation Index 2018, [Bahrain Country Report](#), April 2018

Covering a period running from February 2015 through January 2017, the BTI report explores trends in Bahrain’s economic and political transformation paths. It concludes that during the period under review, Bahrain has been “taking on the characteristics of a police state”, with authorities intensifying their crackdown on dissidents, human rights activists, clerics and opposition forces, and expects further deterioration of the rule of law and civil and political rights, with an accompanying deterioration of the country’s economic situation. It also exposes socioeconomic barriers and systematic discrimination affecting women, Shiite and foreign workers. While the latter are excluded from the country’s minimum wage and facing systematic abuse, the report notes that authorities have not done enough to prosecute abusive employers despite minor improvements brought about by the 2012 Labour Law.

- Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2018](#), Country chapter on Bahrain, January 2018

Noting that the human rights situation in Bahrain continued to worsen in 2017, HRW reflects on the government’s backpedalling on the BICI’s recommendations, from the resumption of military trials for civilians and the restoration of the National Security Agency to the end of the de facto memorandum on death penalty. It also documents the ongoing repression of human rights activists and peaceful critics, including arbitrary arrests and torture and the shutdown of the last independent newspaper, and the government’s refusal to cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms.

- Amnesty International, Report 2017/2018, [Country chapter on Bahrain](#), February 2018

- BCHR, [Overview of human rights violations in Bahrain between January and June 2017](#), June 2017

The first six months of 2017 have seen increasing instances of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders, journalists, and active members of civil society in Bahrain. In the report, BCHR shows

how the Bahraini government has regressed to a near total suppression of human rights with increased numbers of individuals arbitrarily arrested, an increased number of protests, a significant number of citizenship revocation orders, and the end of an unofficial moratorium on the death penalty.

- HRW, [Member States should call for improvements in the human rights situation in Bahrain](#), 24 February 2017

In view of the marked deterioration in the human rights situation in Bahrain, a group of 16 NGOs addressed a joint letter to Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the UN Human Rights Council urging them to call for improvement in the human rights situation in Bahrain.

- ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, [Collective Efforts: International Calls for Accountability and Reform in Bahrain](#), 14 September 2016

In the report, ADHRB, BCHR and BIRD analyzed all the statements and resolutions of the member states of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), the European Parliament (EP), the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Secretary-General since 2011 in order to track the international reaction to the deterioration of Bahrain's human rights situation.

- ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, [Shattering the Façade: A Report on Bahrain's Implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry \(BICI\) Recommendations Four Years On](#), 16 November 2015

In the report, ADHRB, BCHR and BIRD document how the Bahraini government has so far only fully implemented two, and has not made any progress on eight, of the 26 recommendations made by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in 2011, providing recommendation-by-recommendation analysis.

UN Universal Periodic Review

- UN HRC, [Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bahrain](#), 10 July 2017

The working group issued a number of conclusion and recommendations on Bahrain human rights situation recognizing that issues relating to civil and political rights remained a challenge, that significant limitations on the right to freedom of association and assembly are still in place and expressed regret about the incomplete implementation of the recommendations of the BICI.

- ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, [Bahrain's Third Cycle UPR: A Record of Repression](#), 7 March 2017

ADHRB, BCHR and BIRD provide a clear and comprehensive assessment of the Bahraini government's technical implementation of its 176 second-cycle UPR recommendations. The report finds that the Bahraini government has still failed to fully implement any of them. Of the 158 recommendations accepted by the government, only two have seen any significant progress toward implementation. The above-mentioned NGOs have not perceived any substantive progress for 133 recommendations and assess that 23 others have been merely technically implemented with little to no substantive impact.

- UN HRC, [Summary of stakeholders' submission on Bahrain, Report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), 20 February 2017

It is a summary of 43 stakeholders' submissions to the UPR which discusses a number of issues, notably civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and rights of women, children, minorities, migrants and stateless people.

- UN HRC, [Compilation on Bahrain, Report of the Office the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), 14 February 2017

The report noted that the political situation in Bahrain had stagnated since the second cycle of the universal periodic review in 2012, and that the three rounds of national dialogue had done little to change the political scene in the country. Furthermore, it calls on Bahraini authorities to implement international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies.

- UN HRC, [National Report submitted in accordance with paragraph 15\(a\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1: Bahrain](#), 13 February 2017

Bahrain has submitted its third national report on the latest developments regarding its international commitments and the application of previous recommendations.

- Amnesty International, [Bahrain: promises of reform unfulfilled, Amnesty International submission for the UN Universal Periodic Review – 27th session of the UPR Working Group, May 2017](#), September 2016

Amnesty International highlights the shortcomings in the human rights framework in Bahrain, including national laws that restrict the rights to freedom of expression and association, imprisonment of political opponents and human rights defenders, the independence, impartiality and effectiveness of national human rights institutions and raises concerns about arbitrary revocation of nationality of hundreds of persons and the death penalty.

Freedom of expression and human rights defenders

- BHCHR, [Terrorizing People by the Law of Terrorism](#), June 2018

The report provides a substantive analysis of Bahrain's Law of Protection of the Community Against Terrorism Act and details how its judicial application, based on broad provisions, has precipitated rights abuses against civil society and restrictions on political activity, and has been used to target peaceful dissidents and human rights activists.

- Amnesty International, [No one can protect you: Bahrain's year of crushing dissent](#), September 2017

The report sheds light on the repressive tactics used by the Bahraini government over the past year to **crush civil society and violently crack down on protests**. Furthermore, it documents how, between June 2016 and June 2017, at least 169 government critics or their relatives were arrested, tortured, threatened or banned from travel by the authorities.

Cooperation with international mechanisms

- UN Human Rights Council, [Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights](#), 36th Session, 11-29 September 2017

The report denounces the ongoing trend of **major harassment and intimidation against human rights defenders**; the imposition on travel ban against selected individuals and the arrest, detention and ill-treatment of targeted individuals as a form of reprisal. In particular, it expresses concerns about an **orchestrated crackdown on civil society**, stressing that the authorities have resorted to drastic measures to curb dissenting opinions, including reprisals for cooperating with the United Nations, and in particular OHCHR.

- ADHRB, [Crushing Civil Society: Bahraini Government Reprisals for International Engagement](#), 7 June 2017

ADHRB highlights in the report how Bahraini authorities have worked to **dismantle independent civil society and undermine substantive cooperation with the international human rights community**. It analyzes the current set of restrictions on civil and political society space within the country, and examines the authorities' efforts to close all avenues for civil society engagement abroad.

Torture and lack of accountability

- ADHRB, [Bahrain's NIHR Ignores Government Violations, Endorses Abuses in 2017 Report](#), 20 April 2018

[ADHRB's report](#) demonstrates how the NIHR continues to lack the necessary will or independence to objectively and comprehensively assess the state of human rights in Bahrain. In particular, it highlights that the NIHR whitewashed some of the most serious abuses, such as torture, arbitrary detention,

forced disappearance and the resumption of military trials, while endorsing the arbitrary prosecution of peaceful critics.

- BCHR, [Torture and impunity in Bahrain](#), 26 June 2017

BCHR has documented numerous cases during 2015-2017 of alleged torture that demonstrates that Bahrain **systematically utilises torture during interrogation and detention**. Various methods of physical and mental torture have reportedly been applied, including: use of solitary confinement, sexual harassments and abuses, threats to loved ones, bodily beatings, electrocution, withholding of food and water, restriction to bathrooms and other basic needs, restricted access to medical facilities, loved ones and lawyers.

- BCHR, SALAM DHR, EBOHR, BFHR, GIDHR, [Torture in Bahrain: a State Behaviour and Systematic Policy](#), 26 June 2017

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, several human rights organizations expressed grave concern about the **systematic use of torture in Bahrain with full impunity** for those involved in the crime of torture and the involvement of the judiciary in covering up and justifying the torture of victims who testified themselves inside courtrooms. It also reviews the patterns and types of human rights violations, the allegations and methods of torture used against detainees on political grounds.

- UN Committee against Torture, [Concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain](#), 8 and 9 May 2017

UN CAT expressed concerns about “*continued numerous and consistent allegations of **widespread torture and ill-treatment of persons deprived of liberty***” and “*the climate of impunity that seems to prevail*”. While detainees may now file complaints about torture with a number of bodies (such as the Office of the Ombudsman, the Special Investigation Unit or the National Institution for Human Rights), the UN Committee is concerned that “*these bodies are not independent, their mandates are unclear and overlapping and they are not effective*”.

- Amnesty International, [Window-dressing or pioneers of change? An assessment of Bahrain’s human rights oversight bodies](#), 21 November 2016

The report makes an assessment of the two key institutions that the government created to investigate alleged human rights violations and ensure accountability – the Ombudsman of the Ministry of Interior and the SIU, both established in 2012. It expresses concern on how **the creation of the Ombudsman and the SIU does not appear to have deterred human rights violations as the security forces have largely continued to use torture** and other unlawful methods, and have been able to do so with a large degree of impunity.

Workers’ rights

- ADHRB, [Bahrain’s Forgotten Workers: A Status Report on Labour Discrimination and Forced Dismissals since 2011](#), 14 June 2017

On 13 June 2017, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reviewed progress made by the Government of Bahrain toward rectifying outstanding complaints of labor discrimination, implementing the two associated Tripartite Agreements of 2012 and 2014, and generally adhering to international standards for protecting the rights of workers. The report provides a status update on the implementation of the Tripartite Agreements, as well as a broader look at labor discrimination in Bahrain. It specifically highlights **systemic abuses faced by many migrant workers and by the Kingdom’s Shia majority community**. Ultimately, it concludes that the Government of Bahrain has failed to fully implement the Tripartite Agreements and has continued to facilitate discrimination against workers on the basis of their political views, religious beliefs, or national origin.

Migrant workers

- BTI, Transformation Index 2018, [Bahrain Country Report](#), Part II “Economic Transformation”, April 2018

The report exposes socioeconomic barriers and systematic discrimination affecting foreign workers who remain excluded from the country's minimum wage and face systematic abuse. The report notes that authorities have not done enough to prosecute abusive employers despite minor improvements brought about by the 2012 Labour Law.

- US Department of State, [Trafficking in Persons Report 2017](#), Country Chapter on Bahrain, June 2017

The report acknowledges increasing efforts taken by the government in developing a national referral mechanism, investigating potential trafficking cases and taking steps towards amending elements of the kafala system. However, it concludes that the Bahraini government did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, in particular with regards to the few convictions of traffickers and its little efforts to pro-actively protect and identify victims, and notes that Bahrain remains a “destination country for men and women subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking”.

- HRW, [For a Better Life: Migrant Worker Abuse in Bahrain and the Government Reform Agenda](#), September 2012

The report exposes the many forms of abuse and exploitation, including withhold of wages, passport confiscations and high recruitment fees, faced by migrant workers in Bahrain, most filling low-skilled or unskilled jobs and making up for around 77% of the country's work force. It reports that despite expanding a few protections to domestic workers, the 2012 Labour Law has failed to offer some other basic protections and that workers still face many obstacles preventing them from seeking redress. It concludes that reforms adopted in recent years have not gone far enough and were not adequately implemented.

Women's rights

- BCHR, [The Legal Status of Women in Bahrain](#), 8 March 2017

The report highlights the legal status of Bahraini women and explores the effect that such laws have on their lives. It finds that despite **women in Bahrain are among the most liberally educated in the Gulf/MENA region, they are still underrepresented politically and in the workforce and treated unequally in regards to personal status laws.**

- UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, [Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Bahrain](#), 10 March 2014

Rights of the child

- BCHR, [Bahrain: Children Without Citizenship](#), 10 March 2017

Bahrain has used denaturalization as a tool against individuals who dissent against the government. Many of those whose Bahraini citizenship has been revoked are active members of civil society, such as human rights activists, journalists, opposition leaders and religious figures. Most of those stripped of citizenship have also been rendered stateless. Stateless persons have no recognised rights in Bahrain, and their ability to obtain and retain housing, employment, legal representation, banking facilities and medical aid are all severely restricted. In recent years, **cases where children of dissidents had been denied nationality** documents were frequently reported. By refusing to issue identification documents or documents confirming the nationality of the child, the state increases the pressure placed on families of dissidents.

Freedom of religion

- US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [2018 Annual Report](#), April 2018

While noting that non-Muslim religious communities have been mostly able to practice their faith freely and welcoming some of the King's recent initiatives to promote religious tolerance, the reports finds that authorities have increasingly targeted Shia religious leaders over the past two years and interfered with religious activities, including by denying clerics access to some mosques and preventing them

from conducting some religious services. It also stresses that the government has failed to fully implement most of the BICI's recommendations relating to freedom of religion or belief.

- US Department of State, [International Religious Freedom Report for 2017](#), May 2018

The report [describes](#) various forms of discrimination against non-Sunnis and especially against the country's Shia majority population, ranging from disparate treatment in education, employment and appointment to positions in the public sector, and within the justice system. It also details the continued targeting of Shia community, including the arrests and detention of clerics, notably Sheikh Isa Qassim, as well as the government's the crackdown on political societies and on gatherings associated with the Shia community, especially in Diraz.

- ADHRB, [Sectarian Discrimination and Extremism in Bahrain's Security Forces - Questions for US Policy](#), November 2017

ADHRB's report investigates the widespread sectarian discrimination and abuses against non-Sunni religious communities in Bahrain's defence sector, in particular against Shia Muslims, ranging from biased hiring practices to the dissemination of radical anti-Shia training materials. It also questions the US' defence and strategic partnership with Bahrain in light of these abuses.

- ADHRB, [Submission for Bahrain's List of Issues Prior to Reporting \(LOIPR\) under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), July 2017

It documents the prevalence of systematic discrimination against the Baharna, the Ajam and the broader Shia Muslim communities, in many aspects of their daily life. It denounces the intensification of sectarian divides and discrimination which the government proved unable or unwilling to curb. In particular, the Shia community have faced increasing harassment, including extrajudicial violence and police harassment, prosecutions of prominent Shia religious figures, and punitive revocations of citizenship.

- US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), [2017 Annual Report](#), 2017

While USCIRF notes that compared to other Gulf countries, Bahrain is among the most tolerant of non-Muslim religious minority communities, it finds that *"during the year [2016], the Bahraini government has increasingly cracked down on the religious freedom of its majority-Shi'a Muslim population"*. It reported a sharp increase in the number of *"interrogations, arrests, convictions, and arbitrary detentions of Shi'a Muslim clerics, mostly on unfounded and unsubstantiated charges."*

- ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, *Apart in their own land, Government discrimination against Shia in Bahrain : [Volume I Violence, Political Disclusion, and Attacks on the Shia Religious Establishment](#) / [Volume II Economic Disclusion, Cultural Marginalization, and Media Discrimination](#), 2015]*