



Anatomy *of a* Police State

*Systematic Repression, Brutality,
and Bahrain's Ministry of Interior*



Americans for Democracy
& Human Rights in Bahrain

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and Bahrain's Ministry of Interior*

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Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization based in Washington, D.C.
that fosters awareness of and support for democracy and human
rights in Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf.

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Executive Summary

A comprehensive look at the core security agency driving Bahrain's human rights crisis, *Anatomy of a Police State* is the first full study of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) police force's integral role in the kingdom's repression of dissent. It reveals that the MOI has led Bahrain's catastrophic devolution into a police state even as it has received millions of dollars from countries like the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), presenting overwhelming evidence of widespread gross human rights violations perpetrated as a matter of government policy.

Drawing on years of primary documentation, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) analyzes over 1,000 discrete incidents of abuse comprising more than 3,000 specific rights violations attributable to MOI agencies from 2011 through to the present day, from arbitrary detention and torture to rape and extrajudicial killing. The report demonstrates a clear pattern of police brutality and repression at every command level of the MOI, with the same types of violations perpetrated by the same units consistently over time.

Despite Bahraini government claims that misconduct is isolated to a few "bad apples," our documentation proves that serious violations like torture are the product of *de facto* policy generated not just by a culture of impunity, but also by a system of incentives aimed at rewarding perpetrators. As the government has gradually tasked the MOI with enforcing new and more stringent prohibitions on fundamental freedoms, the most ruthless officers are distorted into the most effective officers – and they are promoted, not punished.

No amount of superficial reform, training, or international assistance will prevent abuse when law enforcement has become synonymous with repressing basic human rights. This is the reality of the modern Bahraini police state, and the kingdom's partners must immediately suspend cooperation with all those responsible within the MOI. Moreover, with a view toward stemming the tide of abuse and compelling real accountability measures, we urgently call on the international community to impose sanctions on key perpetrators across all MOI agencies and command echelons, up to and including Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Bahrain is among the most heavily policed countries in the world, with **approximately 45 MOI personnel for every 1,000 civilians**. That is **more than double** the comparable rate at the height of **Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq**, which dwarfed similar regimes in Iran and Brazil.
- The MOI police force is the single most abusive government agency in Bahrain, with **more than 1,000 incidents of severe abuse documented** by ADHRB within a seven-year period. For comparison, that is **200 more cases** than were recorded by the US War Crimes Working Group for the **20-year conflict in Vietnam**.
- As many as **one in every 635 Bahrainis** has been arbitrarily detained, disappeared, tortured, raped, killed, or otherwise abused by the police according to our data. In just our sample subset, the MOI is directly implicated in **570 cases of torture and 517 arbitrary detentions**, with personnel committing around **400 specific human rights violations annually**, including **13 sexual assaults per year**.

KEY FINDINGS

45 MOI personnel
for every **1,000 civilians**

more than
1,000 incidents
of severe abuse within
a seven-year period

570 cases of torture

517 arbitrary detentions

400 specific human rights
violations annually

13 sexual assaults per year

- Bahrain has the **highest rate of mass incarceration in the Middle East**, with thousands held in MOI detention centers that **universally violate international standards**.
- The oversight mechanism meant to hold police accountable, the **MOI Ombudsman**, has **referred just 5% of cases** for serious prosecution. At the end of 2017, **only three police officers were in prison**.
- The senior-level officer cadre is **virtually immune from prosecution** and has been continuously promoted since 2011 with the explicit approval of the king, prime minister, or interior minister. **Of 12 senior commanders identified** by ADHRB within the MOI's top 8 abusive units, **every single one reached a higher rank or command post despite evidence of severe rights violations**. Just one faced prosecution, and he was promptly acquitted and promoted.

Throughout this period of escalating repression, Bahrain's chief western allies have consistently trained, funded, and equipped the MOI's most brutal sub-agencies – with more than \$13 million in support from the US and UK alone. Our report finds that:

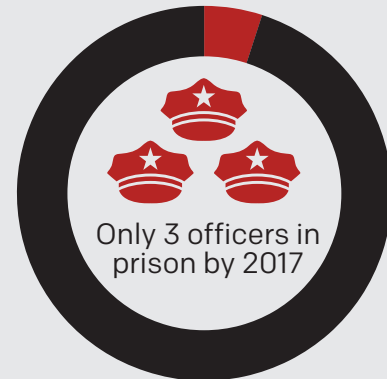
- Despite ongoing restrictions on American arms sales to the MOI over rights concerns, **police continue to receive training for their largely US-made arsenal**.
- From 2007 to 2017, the American taxpayer provided **nearly \$7 million in security assistance** to the MOI and **specifically the riot police** – a notorious national police force responsible for dozens of extrajudicial killings, countless protest raids, and reprisal attacks on prisoners.
- **President Donald Trump is now reviving MOI training** programs that declined after **units failed Leahy Law vetting** under the Obama Administration, proposing an extensive 10-course program for 2019 that includes advice on **“attack methodologies.”**
- The UK, which played a direct role in the formation of the Bahraini police during the 20th century, has provided **over £5 million to the MOI** and the kingdom's accountability mechanisms, **taking no steps to limit cooperation**.
- Canada and France, likewise, are supporting programs for the **MOI's medical division**, which is **infamous for denying medical care** to detainees and **interfering in torture investigations**.
- Companies from the UK, Canada, Italy and elsewhere have sold **surveillance technology** to the MOI **in violation of export controls**, directly enabling police to track and detain human rights activists.

KEY FINDINGS

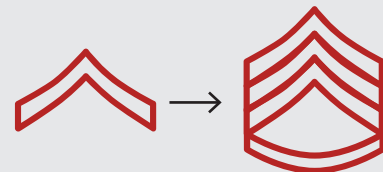
highest rate of mass incarceration in the Middle East



Approx. **1 in every 152** Bahrainis is jailed



MOI Ombudsman, has referred just **5% of cases** for serious prosecution



12 senior commanders implicated in violations across the top 8 most abusive units **have been promoted**

ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| ADHRB | Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain |
| BCHR | Bahrain Center for Human Rights |
| BICI | Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry |
| BIRD | Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy |
| BNA | Bahrain News Agency |
| CID | Criminal Investigation Directorate |
| DHS | United States Department of Homeland Security |
| DOD | United States Department of Defense |
| DOS | United States Department of State |
| FSCID | Forensic Science/Criminal Information Directorate |
| GDAEES | General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, Economic, and Electronic Security |
| GDCIFS | General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science |
| GDRR | General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation |
| GSS | Geographical Security System |
| MOI | Ministry of Interior |
| MOJ | Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs |
| NAC | National Ambulance Center |
| NIHR | National Institute for Human Rights |
| NPRA | Nationality, Passports, and Residence Affairs |
| NSA | National Security Agency |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| PDRC | Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission |
| PPO | Public Prosecution Office |
| SIU | Special Investigations Unit |
| SSFC | Special Security Force Command |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UPR | Universal Periodic Review |

METHODOLOGY

Unless otherwise indicated, the statistics presented in this report are drawn from ADHRB's United Nations (UN) Complaint Program and internal case database, which are in turn based on extensive interviews and primary documentation obtained through our fieldworkers and processed by our legal team. Not every case included in the dataset has been published or formally taken up by the UN Special Procedures. When appropriate, the dataset is augmented by reliable open-source information.

Each entry in the database represents a discrete case or incident, which typically comprises multiple distinct human rights violations (e.g. arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture are three separate but interrelated violations that commonly occur within one case of abuse against a targeted person). The vast majority of the entries also represent distinct individuals, however several individuals have been involved in multiple cases of abuse, and are therefore entered into the database more than once. These cases account for approximately two percent of total entries. A small number of entries reflect mass incidents without reference to distinct individuals, such as protest raids. These entries likely underrepresent the number of victims, as ADHRB is unable to verify the total number of affected individuals; as a result, these are counted as merely one use of excessive force or violation of free assembly, which again likely underrepresents the true scale of the abuse (*see below*).

Because of the extreme restrictions on human rights work in Bahrain, as well as the nature of the abuses we document, the dataset is not a random sample: it is a collection of the cases recorded by our fieldworkers. It is therefore inherently limited by their access to documents and witness testimony, as well as ADHRB's capacity to formally process complaints. Due to fear of reprisal, it is assumed that many cases of abuse go unreported or undocumented. Others will only emerge after considerable time has elapsed. When possible, we continue to document incidents that have occurred years in the past, once survivors and witnesses have resolved to provide information about the abuse – in many cases after relevant individuals have been released from government custody.

Our dataset is also necessarily limited by our complaint procedures themselves, which are structured primarily around individual incidents that can be corroborated through testimony, court documents, hospital records, and other primary evidence. Such procedures help to ensure accuracy, but they also require extensive, often risky cooperation with relevant parties. This makes it easier to document incidents with multiple witnesses that are formally entered into the Bahraini criminal justice system, while more difficult to document spontaneous acts of police brutality or enforced disappearance. As a result, comparing the frequency between certain abuses in our database may yield distorted conclusions – for example, we have formally documented far more cases of torture committed during arbitrary detentions than the use of excessive force against protesters, though we have reason to believe that the latter is almost equally as common as the former. This discrepancy does not exist because cases of excessive force are infrequent, it exists because a) it is rare for all victims to be formally arrested in such incidents; b) they are typically forced to seek informal medical care; and c) they are often unable or unwilling to file complaints due to fear of detection and retaliation, among other obstacles. As noted above, in instances where we have confirmed mass incidents of excessive force have occurred but have not formally documented individual victims, for example, we register the case as a singular abuse; this ensures incidents are not over-counted, but undoubtedly fails to reflect the full scope of police violence.

In sum, the statistics presented here ultimately reveal trends specific to ADHRB's documentation. Information drawn from our database is not meant to be interpreted as complete picture of human rights violations in Bahrain; on the contrary, it should be understood as a partial, representative glimpse at the full scale of abuse. Because of the reasons outlined above, it is estimated that the true total number of abuses is exponentially higher, and the types of violations even more diverse.

A Note on Names:

Due to a pattern of reprisal against individuals for communicating details of government abuses, particularly to international human rights organizations, ADHRB has either omitted names or used pseudonyms when describing many of the cases cited in this report. When used, pseudonyms are marked with an asterisk (*). ADHRB has only included the actual names of individuals if their case has already been publicized, or with the express permission of them or their families.

A Note on Translations:

The Bahraini government has not released a definitive list of English translations for its various government agencies and subdivisions, and its official English publications repeatedly refer to the same institutions by different names. In some cases, an institution's own documents will include a different English translation of its name than the physical sign located on its headquarters facility, which in Bahrain almost always include both Arabic and English.

For example, the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science is regularly translated several different ways by both official and unofficial sources, including: the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science; the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Evidence; the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Evidence; the General Directorate of Investigation and Criminal Identification; and the General Directorate of Crime Detection and Forensic Evidence, among other variations. Moreover, it is often conflated, both formally and colloquially, with its chief subdivision: the Criminal Investigation Directorate (and the acronym, CID), which is itself sometimes referred to additionally as the Directorate of Criminal Investigations or the Department of Criminal Investigation ("Department" and "Directorate" are typically used interchangeably to refer to the immediate subdivisions of a General Directorate).

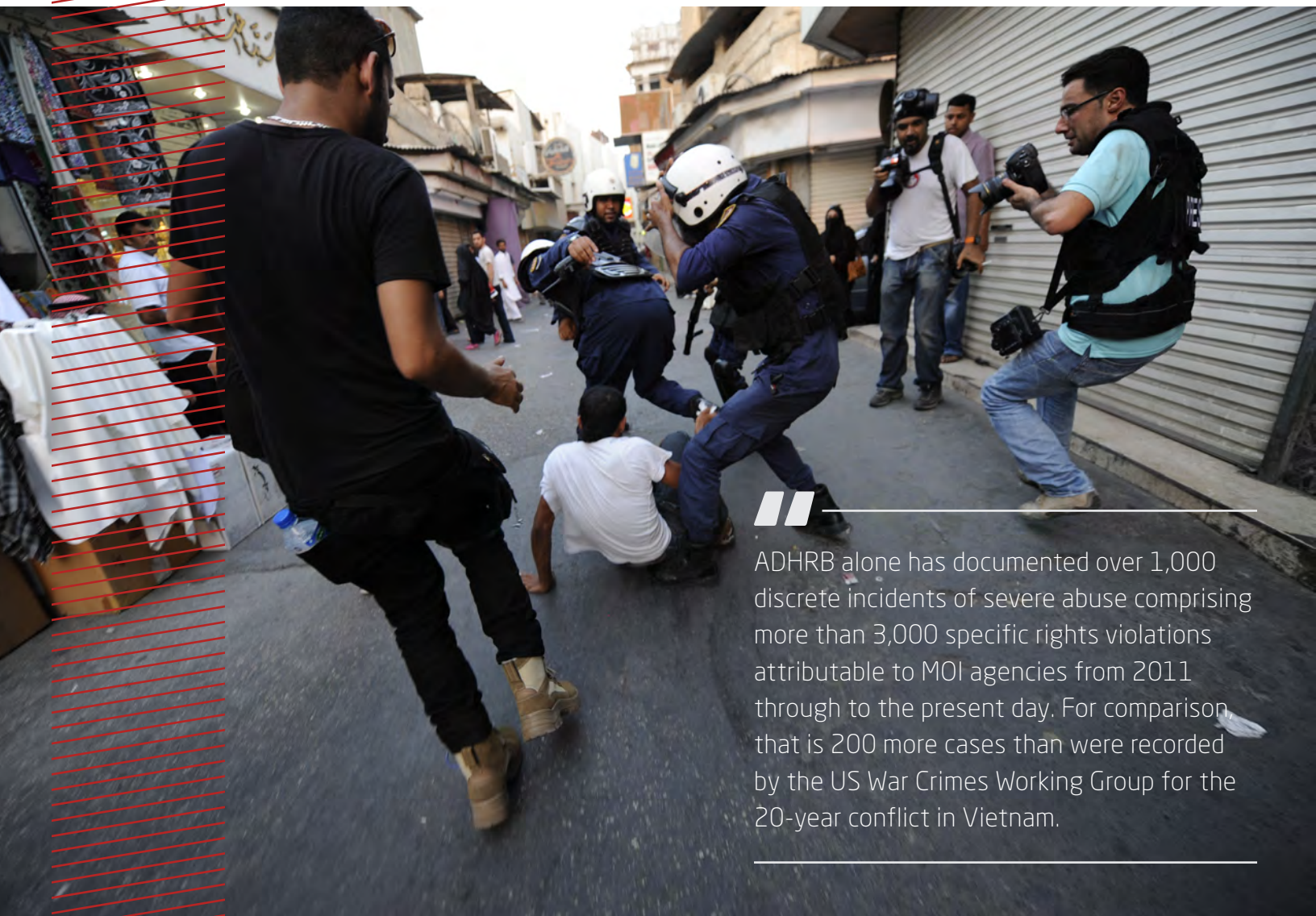
When possible, this report refers to agencies by the English translation found on their physical headquarters, official insignia, or uniforms. In other cases, it refers to the agency by its most common translation. For the above example, the report uses "General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science (GDCIFS)" to refer to the overarching general directorate because this is the official English translation written on its physical headquarters; it uses "Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID)" to refer to the main subdivision, because that is its most common referent.

If applicable, the report includes footnotes that provide other common translations when the agency in question is first introduced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of this documentation could not have been accomplished without the work of our partners at the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), and the European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR). It would be virtually impossible without the work of activists in Bahrain who take immense risks to record and communicate this information.

Warning: This report contains graphic images.



ADHRB alone has documented over 1,000 discrete incidents of severe abuse comprising more than 3,000 specific rights violations attributable to MOI agencies from 2011 through to the present day. For comparison, that is 200 more cases than were recorded by the US War Crimes Working Group for the 20-year conflict in Vietnam.

State Terror, Gross Human Rights Violations, and Policing in Bahrain

Bahrain is one of the most heavily policed countries in the world. While the government does not provide detailed information on the Ministry of Interior (MOI) – Bahrain’s chief law enforcement agency – estimates put its strength at 11,000¹ officers supplemented by another 15,000-20,000 civilian staff in support roles.² With a citizen population of approximately 665,000,³ this means that Bahrain maintains roughly 45 security personnel per 1,000 civilians.⁴ That is an enormous rate that places Bahrain among history’s most oppressive regimes – more than double the relative number of police per civilians at the height of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship in Iraq,⁵ which at the time dwarfed comparable police states in Iran and Brazil.⁶

The MOI has only continued to expand since its leading role in the violent suppression of Bahrain’s 2011 protest movement, with the government recruiting thousands more personnel and adding entire new departments over the last seven years. Easily the largest and most active security institution – if not the single largest and most active government agency – it sits at the center of the kingdom’s extensive and overlapping security infrastructure, coordinating operations between Bahrain’s military, national guard, intelligence community, as well as the MOI’s own vast number of interrelated subdivisions. As in a classical police state like Ba’athist Iraq, the boundaries between these various agencies are ill defined, with redundant ambits meant to ensure that no one escapes Bahrain’s near-absolute prohibition on dissent. And, as the primary policing authority, the MOI and its personnel are directly involved in nearly every case of arbitrary arrest, torture, enforced disappearance, excessive force, and extrajudicial killing in the kingdom.

In, *Anatomy of a Police State*, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) traces Bahrain’s evolution into one of the world’s most draconian police

states by examining its principal tool of repression: the MOI. Drawing on years of primary documentation and research – including formal complaints processed with the United Nations (UN) Special Procedures – the report presents evidence of widespread and systematic human rights violations at every command level of the MOI’s core agencies, with the same types of violations occurring consistently through time. ADHRB alone has documented over 1,000 discrete incidents of severe abuse comprising more than 3,000 specific rights violations attributable to MOI agencies from 2011 through to the present day. For comparison, that is 200 more cases than were recorded by the US War Crimes Working Group for the 20-year conflict in Vietnam.⁷ According to our data, as many as one in every 635 Bahrainis has suffered an extreme human rights violation at the hands of the MOI, with police committing more than a hundred serious abuses a year.

Despite Bahraini government claims that misconduct is isolated to a few “rotten apples,”⁸ our documentation proves that serious violations like torture are the product of *de facto* policy generated not just by a “culture of impunity,” but also by a system of incentives aimed at rewarding perpetrators. As the government has gradually tasked the MOI with enforcing newer and more stringent bans on fundamental freedoms, the most ruthless officers are distorted into the most effective officers – and they are promoted, not punished. The system is not broken, this is how it is was designed by the ministry’s top leadership cadre – up to and including Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. No amount of superficial reform, training, or international assistance will prevent abuse when law enforcement has become synonymous with repressing basic human rights and deflecting scrutiny.

This is the reality of the modern Bahraini police state.

1 K.T. Abdulhameed, “Bahrain’s Migrant Security Apparatus,” in Abdulhadi Khaladf, Omar al-Shehabi, and Adam Hanieh, Eds., *Labor Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, Pluto Press: 2015, Print.

2 In 2010, Bahrain’s Central Informatics Organisation reported that 82,679 people worked in the “public administration and defense sector” (K.T. Abdulhameed, “Bahrain’s Migrant Security Apparatus,” in Abdulhadi Khaladf, Omar al-Shehabi, and Adam Hanieh, Eds., *Labor Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, Pluto Press: 2015, Print.). A year later, the Interior Minister announced that the MOI would be adding around 20,000 additional personnel to the MOI, indicating that it already maintained significant high employment, and that – if these employment goals were met – it may have grown even larger than these estimates suggest in recent years (“Bahrain’s Ministry of Interior to create 20,000 jobs; announcement seen as move to give Shi’ites jobs,” Reuters, 6 March 2011, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-promises-government-jobs-protests-continue-384994.html>). For further reference: combined, the Bahraini military and the National Guard employ approximately 15,600-23,600 people (low-end estimate versus high-end estimate, respectively). Employment figures for Bahrain’s intelligence services, like the NSA, are unknown. For more information on employment figures and demographic trends in Bahrain’s security sector, see: *Sectarian Discrimination and Extremism in Bahrain’s Security Forces*, ADHRB, November 2017, http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017.Sectarianization-of-Security-Forces_White-Paper.pdf

3 *Bahrain in Figures – 2016*, Information & eGovernment Authority, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, <http://www.data.gov.bh/>

4 Even if only half of the MOI’s total personnel are actually involved in policing roles, that still brings the figure to approximately 23 per 1,000 civilians – two more than in Ba’athist Iraq, which maintained 21 police officers for every 1,000 civilians. Moreover, these estimates include only MOI personnel; they do not account for the thousands more military, national guard, and intelligence officers that Bahrain employs in domestic security.

5 Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989 (updated edition, 1998), Print, 38.

6 Sam Jones, “Building the Ba’athist Police State: A Conversation with Kanan Makiya,” Unpublished Interview, 2016, Transcript Available Upon Request.

7 Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam*, Picador, 2013, Print.

8 Marc Owen Jones, “Rotten apples or rotten orchards: Police deviance, brutality, and unaccountability in Bahrain,” in Eds. Ala’a Shehabi and Marc Owen Jones, *Bahrain’s Uprising*, Zed Books, 2015, Print.

1



*Background:
Crime and Criminality
in Bahrain*

There is an extreme mismatch between Bahrain's rate of policing and its rate of crime. By all objective metrics, the kingdom has exceptionally little criminal activity, with some indices ranking it among the lowest in the world.⁹ The United States (US) Department of State (DOS) ranks Bahrain as a "low-threat" for crime, reporting that violent offenses are particularly rare.¹⁰ Common infractions include "various types of immigration and residency fraud, ATM/credit card theft, white collar fraud, embezzlement, possession or trafficking of illegal narcotics, and property theft."¹¹ It assesses Bahrain as a "medium-threat" for terrorism due to its geographic location and political situation,¹² documenting a decline in terror activity for 2016¹³ followed by a nominal uptick in 2017.¹⁴ The MOI's own figures demonstrate a gradual decrease in all types of crime over the last several years, including a "21 per cent reduction in cases received by 911 [sic]" in 2017.¹⁵

Bahrain's moderate criminal profile is the first indication that its massive, militarized police force is not a product of rampant *crime* – but of rampant *criminalization*.

Since Bahrain's current king took the throne in 2001 and particularly since the 2011 pro-democracy movement, the government has issued or amended a dizzying array of laws and policies aimed at limiting fundamental freedoms. Countless acts of nonviolent free expression, assembly, belief, and association have been reclassified as national security offenses and crimes against the state. As observed by the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, many "provisions of [Bahrain's] Penal Code are so vague and overly broad that they could ... [and do] result in penalties being imposed on individuals who had merely exercised their rights under international law."¹⁶ Anti-terror and cybercrime legislation have likewise grown to envelop the most basic forms of peaceful dissent as terrorism or cyber-terrorism with catchall offenses like "insulting the king," inviting violent counterterror responses.



9 For example, see Bahraini pro-government blog "Citizens for Bahrain" - "Ten reasons why Bahrain is best - #3 personal safety," Citizens for Bahrain, 29 June 2015, <https://www.citizensforbahrain.com/index.php/entry/ten-reasons-why-bahrain-is-best-3-personal-safety>

10 *Bahrain 2017 Crime & Safety Report*, Overseas Security Advisory Council, DOS, United States Government, 2017, <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=21245>

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 "Bahrain: US State Department Documents Decline in Terrorism Last Year, Continued Rights Concerns," ADHRB, 21 July 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/07/bahrain-us-state-department-documents-decline-terrorism-continued-rights-concerns/>

14 "US State Department Cites Bahrain's Political Repression as Major Risk Factor for Instability," ADHRB, 20 September 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/09/us-state-department-cites-bahrain-political-repression-as-major-risk-factor-for-instability/>

15 "Pride of the Nation: Crown Prince Praises New Security Officers," Al-Amn, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/59100>

16 "Mr. Rajab has been arrested, detained, prosecuted and imprisoned for allegedly spreading false news abroad which damages the national interest and for allegedly spreading false rumours in wartime, insulting governing authorities and insulting a foreign country — pursuant to articles 133, 134, 215 and 216 of the Penal Code...These provisions of the Penal Code are so vague and overly broad that they could, as in the present case, result in penalties being imposed on individuals who had merely exercised their rights under international law." See: A/HRC/WGAD/2018/13 - Opinion No. 13/2018 concerning Nabeel Ahmed Abdulrasool Rajab (*Bahrain*), Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations (UN), 13 August 2018, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session81/A_HRC_WGAD_2018_13.pdf

The MOI has expanded to keep pace with this rising web of restrictions, and it has consistently taken an active role in their development. Ministry leaders routinely act on their own wide interpretations of these already excessive legal provisions, imposing *ad hoc* bans on evolving forms of activism or dissent against new government policies, from criticism of “the approach Bahrain has taken [in the Yemen conflict]” since 2015,¹⁷ to “any expression of sympathy with ... Qatar or opposition to ... Bahrain” stemming from a diplomatic dispute in 2017.¹⁸

Throughout, the MOI has zealously enforced a set of crimes that find no basis in international law with widespread surveillance, militarized tactics, and wanton brutality.



SYSTEM OF INJUSTICE

The MOI ruthlessly enforces a legal framework that criminalizes fundamental freedoms, including:

Penal Code

- Outlaws “spreading false rumors” and transmitting information that undermines “public peace”
- Bars “insulting public authorities,” foreign allies, the “national emblem,” the “flag,” and the king

Law on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts

- Bans criticism that “harms national unity”
- Prohibits peaceful assembly in Manama

Public Gatherings Law

- Allows MOI to ban demonstrations at will

Law on Associations and Law on Political Societies

- Empowers the government to ban, dissolve, or restrict civil society organizations and opposition groups

Press Law

- Criminalizes journalism that is critical of Islam and the governing system or which negatively impacts “state security”

Cybercrime Law

- Forbids encryption, “misuse of social media,” and online criticism of the government

MOI leaders like the Chief of Public Security explicitly interpret their mission to include suppressing speech acts that have “promoted disharmony, affected civil peace and were seditious.” The Interior Minister has demonstrated the police will go as far as to issue and enforce their own “directives” to silence dissent “against the norms and traditions of Bahrain...and the interests of the internal front” – even before new laws have been put in place.

See: “Legal steps against illegal assembly,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 6 September 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/65490>

“Bahrain Vows Greater Crackdown on Online Criticism Amid New Arrests,” ADHRB, 30 March 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/03/bahrain-vows-greater-crackdown-on-online-criticism-amid-new-arrests/>

17 Quoted in Justin Gengler, “The Political Economy of Sectarianism: How Gulf Regimes Exploit Identity Politics as a Survival Strategy,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.), *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.

18 “Bahrain says it will jail Qatar supporters for up to five years,” The Telegraph, 8 June 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/08/bahrain-says-will-jail-qatar-supporters-five-years/>





Command and Control: Structure, Hierarchy, and Organization

The MOI is comprised of numerous agencies and general directorates at both the local and national level. These institutions are typically overseen by MOI officials with the title of assistant undersecretary or director-general who then report to the Interior Minister directly or to his two primary subordinates: the Interior Minister Undersecretary and the Chief of Public Security. The MOI also has authority over the kingdom's four governorates¹⁹ and their regional police directorates, which fall under the command of the Chief of Public Security, as well as national emergency services like the ambulance system and firefighting.

In October 2004, Bahrain's king issued Decree No. 69/2004,²⁰ replacing Decree No. 29/2003 as the legal basis for the organization of the MOI. Though the law has been amended at least nine times in the interim – with the most recent adjustment made in January 2018²¹ – the core structure of the MOI has remained largely the same, and can be characterized as centralized, complex, and hierarchical. Highlighted below are the most significant facets of the MOI hierarchy – and the individuals and institutions most responsible for severe human rights violations up and down the chain of command.

A. SENIOR LEADERSHIP

i. Interior Minister

The MOI is headed by a royally appointed minister who consults with the king and prime minister to select his subordinates. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, a member of the royal family and former major general in the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), has served as Bahrain's Interior Minister since May 2004, when he was promptly promoted to lieutenant general. Assuming the post just months before the final major reorganization of the MOI, Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah is directly responsible for the development of the modern Bahraini police force under the rule of King Hamad.

Immediately below the Interior Minister are the Interior Ministry Undersecretary; a separate Interior Ministry Undersecretary for Nationality, Passport, and Residency Affairs (NPRA); the Chief of Public Security; the Inspector General; and the General Coordinator of Governorates. The Interior Minister previously had a Deputy Interior



Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid Bin Abdullah Al Khalifa (center, blue uniform) inspects SSFC personnel

Minister under his authority separate from the two Undersecretaries, but this position was abolished in 2018.²² Additionally, several agencies report directly to the Interior Minister, including: the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science; the General Directorate of Traffic; and the Directorate of Financial Affairs.

ii. Interior Minister Undersecretary

The Interior Ministry Undersecretary, currently Sheikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, serves as a deputy to the Interior Minister, assisting with general administration and overseeing a set of Assistant Undersecretaries with various additional operations and subdivisions under their command. These include: the Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Organization, whose directorates manage procurement, information technology, and related portfolios; the Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, who administers the MOI's internal Security Court²³ system; the Assistant Undersecretary for Human Resources, who supervises employment practices and related issues for the officers and civilian employees of the MOI; and the Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs, whose directorates run the MOI's internal logistical systems such as transportation and health. The Undersecretary also oversees the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation, which runs the country's prison system, and the General Directorate of Women Police, which is a specific administrative subdivision

¹⁹ The king abolished the Central Governorate in 2015, reducing the total number of governorates from five to four.

²⁰ Decree No. (69) – 2004, *Reorganization of the Ministry of the Interior*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 31 October 2004, http://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/AdvancedSearchDetails.aspx?id=896#_W1e1-6inFPa; An unofficial English translation is included in the annex.

²¹ "HM King issues four decrees," BNA, 7 January 2018, <https://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/819582>

²² Ibid.

²³ This is often translated as or otherwise referred to in Bahraini government documents as "Directorate of Military Courts," but this court system is clearly situated within the MOI, not the kingdom's military – the Bahrain Defence Force. To distinguish the MOI court system from the military judiciary of the Bahrain Defence Force, this report refers to the MOI judiciary as the Security Courts.



Interior Minister



Interior Ministry Undersecretary



NPRA Undersecretary



Inspector General



General Coordinator of Governorates

Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Organization

Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs

Assistant Undersecretary for Human Resources

GDRR

GD of Women Police

Directorate of Security Courts



GDAEES

GDCIFS

Directorate of Financial Affairs

GD of Traffic



Jau Prison

Dry Dock Detention Center

Isa Town Women's Prison

Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
 Interior Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa
 NPRA Undersecretary Sheikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa
 Inspector General Maj. Gen.

Ebrahim Habib al-Ghath General Coordinator of Governorates Mubarak bin Ahmed al-Fadhel
 Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan
 Deputy Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Abdullah al-Zayed
 GDRR Director-General Brig. Abdulsalam Yousef al-Oraifi

Acting Head of Jau Prison Lt. Col. Adnan Bahar
 GDCIFS Director-General Brig. Abdulaziz Mayoof al-Rumaihi
 Northern Police Director-General Brig. Abdulla Khalifa al-Jairan
 Capital Police Director-General Brig. Khalid Mohammed al-Thawadi

Southern Police Director-General Brig. Hamad Ali Huwail Al-Marri
 Muharraq Police Director-General Brig. Fawaz Hassan Al-Hassan
 GDAEES Director-General Col. Bassam Mohammed al-Muraj
 Ombudsman Nawaf Mohammed al-Ma'awda

All the Way to the Top: Setting a Policy of Repression





Left to right: Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan justifies the lethal May 2017 police raid on a peaceful sit-in at the village of Diraz; Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan inspects sites ahead of a joint exercise (2016).

that houses the MOI’s female police officers. Lastly, the Undersecretary has authority over Bahrain’s Police Band, Public Security Market, and Public Security Officer’s Club.

iii. NPRA Undersecretary

The NPRA Undersecretary, Sheikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, oversees a standalone division of the MOI that regulates Bahrain’s citizenship and immigration policies. It includes an Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality, Passports, and Residency; as well as an Assistant Undersecretary for Exits, Investigation, and Follow-up who is tasked with addressing potential offenses related to the NPRA’s ambit. Notably, the NPRA’s scope does not extend to customs, which fall to agencies under the command of the Chief of Public Security, and it works with other police subdivisions for enforcement. (See Section 2.C.ii for more information on the NPRA’s functions and how they fit into the MOI’s broader pattern of abuse).

iv. Chief of Public Security

Most powerful among the Interior Minister’s subordinates is the Chief of Public Security, who serves as the primary commander of Bahrain’s police personnel, sometimes referred to collectively as the Public Security Forces (PSF). By

Bahraini law, the Public Security Forces are the “regular armed service within the Ministry of Interior that is responsible for the maintenance of public order, security and morals inside Bahrain, and the protection of lives, persons and property.”²⁴ As described by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) in 2011, the Chief of Public Security oversees “all MOI field units responsible for maintaining order and security in Bahrain.”²⁵ These include the General Directorate of Guards; the General Directorate of Civil Defense; the four governorate police directorates; the King Fahd Causeway Police Directorate; the Bahrain International Airport Police Directorate; the Directorate of Crime Prevention; the Directorate of Community Service Police; the Coast Guard; the Special Security Force Command; and Police Aviation, among others. Aside from these field units, the Chief of Public Security also manages the Royal Academy of Police and its various training institutions, and the Public Security Sports Association, which is a formal athletics body for MOI officers. The Chief has three immediate subordinates: the Deputy Chief of Public Security; the Assistant Public Security Chief for Operations and Training Affairs, who oversees the directorates of Training, Communications, and Operations as well as the Joint Terrorism Center; and the Assistant Public Security Chief for Community Affairs, who helps supervise a number of the directorates listed

24 Emiri Decree Law No. 3 of 1982, Article 1, quoted in Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria al-Awadhi, Phillipe Kirsch, and Mahnoush Arsanjani, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, <http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIREportEN.pdf>

25 Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria al-Awadhi, Phillipe Kirsch, and Mahnoush Arsanjani, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, <http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIREportEN.pdf>

above, such as the governorate police forces and that of the Directorate of Community Service Police.

The current Chief of Public Security is Major General Tariq al-Hassan,²⁶ who replaced Major General Tarek Mubarak bin Dayna after the MOI's violent security operations to suppress the mass pro-democracy protests in 2011. With the exception of the Interior Minister, Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah, no individual has exercised as much control over the trajectory of the kingdom's police forces since the events of 2011 as Maj. Gen. al-Hassan.

v. Inspector General²⁷ The MOI Inspector General, sometimes referred to as the Inspector General of Police, is the institution's primary internal investigations and disciplinary authority. Three directorates fall under the command of the Inspector General: the Directorate of Quality and Financial and Administrative Control; the Directorate of Complaints and Human Rights; and the Directorate of Discipline and Preventive Security. The Inspector General, his deputy, and the directorates are ostensibly tasked with monitoring and promoting compliance with MOI policies and Bahraini law through conducting audits; holding workshops; processing complaints; and undertaking disciplinary reviews, among other functions. The Inspector General, currently Major General Ebrahim Habib al-Ghaith, may refer serious cases of misconduct to the MOI's Security Court system, which falls under the Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs (*see above*). Since the promulgation of an amendment to the Public Security Forces Law in 2012, however, the Security Courts have been restricted from hearing cases of "torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or deaths linked thereto" due to their apparent failure to impartially and transparently adjudicate cases of severe abuse.²⁸ The amendment underscores the structural failures of the MOI's internal accountability mechanisms and renders the Inspector General largely incapable of directly addressing serious rights violations by police personnel. The Inspector General serves at the pleasure of the king and reports directly to the Interior Minister, undermining its independence from the ruling family and rest of the

MOI. As such, the BICI concluded that the Inspector General could not effectively carry out the office's mandate to investigate police misconduct and recommended that the government "place the office of the Inspector General ... as a separate entity independent of the [MOI's] hierarchical control, whose tasks should include those of an internal 'ombudsman's office.'" Bahrain established a quasi-independent Ombudsman's Office to monitor the MOI in 2012, but – contrary to many assessments of BICI implementation, including that of the United States (US) State Department in 2016²⁹ – the government did not actually remove the extant Inspector General from the MOI hierarchy. The Inspector General continues to operate and influence police investigations under the Interior Minister's direct authority³⁰ (*see Section 4 on the MOI's failure to hold perpetrators accountable for abuse*).

vi. General Coordinator of Governorates

Last among the upper echelon of MOI leadership is the General Coordinator of Governorates, who is tasked with supervising and facilitating the administration of Bahrain's four governorates: Capital, Muharraq, Northern, and Southern. Bahrain's governors are appointed rather than elected, and are incorporated into the MOI's security apparatus rather than civilian public policy infrastructure. Instead of answering to their governorate's constituency, Bahrain's governors ultimately report to the Interior Minister, and they work closely with their governorate's police directorates under the Chief of Public Security. Since the first coordinating meetings for governors just after the security crackdown in 2011, the Interior Minister has exercised direct authority over governorate policy, with governors required to submit "all recommendations related to future programme and plans" to Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah for approval.³¹ The General Coordinator of Governorates, Mubarak bin Ahmed al-Fadhel,³² and his subordinates serve as an added layer to this hierarchy, providing further oversight of governorate policy for the Interior Minister and representing overall MOI interests in interactions between governorates.

26 "New Police Chief Aims for a 'Fresh Start' and Pledges to Hire 500 Extra Officers to Boost Community Relations," Police Media Center, Ministry of Interior, Kingdom of Bahrain, 1 January 2012, <http://policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/14446>

27 The position of Inspector General is separate from the MOI Ombudsman.

28 CAT/C/BHR3, *Third periodic report of States parties due in 2011 – Bahrain*, Committee against Torture, United Nations, 6 March 2016, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/BHR/CAT_C_BHR_3_29_E.pdf

29 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 15 February 2018, <https://fas.org/spp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

30 For example: "HE Interior Minister directed to review MOI-related recommendations in the annual NFAAC report," Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain. 6 December 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/77727>

31 "First coordinating meeting held among governorates," BNA, 22 October 2011, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/477810?date=2012-03-2>

32 Appointed in 2015; see: "Interior minister receives governorates' coordinator-general," BNA, 7 July 2015, <https://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/676878>

B. LEAD AGENCIES AND DIRECTORATES

Below the top leadership cadre, the MOI is divided into myriad general directorates, directorates/departments, sections, and units (largely in descending order of authority and size, though these descriptors are not uniform across all agencies).³³ This section analyzes the core agencies at the heart of the MOI's repressive machinery, and those most responsible for systematic human rights violations: the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science; the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation; the Special Security Force Command; and the four governorate police directorates.

i. General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science (GDCIFS)

The GDCIFS and its primary subdivision, the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID),³⁴ are among the most notorious and brutally effective repressive mechanisms in Bahrain. As indicated by its direct link to the Interior Minister, the GDCIFS is the kingdom's top investigatory agency, tasked with detecting crime, compiling information on suspects, and securing the apprehension of individuals for interrogation. In practice, the GDCIFS is the Interior Minister's principal tool for targeting dissident activity. It effectively operates as the MOI's domestic intelligence wing, and its subdivisions are essential to the MOI's broader reprisal campaign against any and all individuals associated with human rights or political activism.

Forensic Science/Criminal Information Directorate (FSCID)

Also known simply as the Criminal Information Directorate,³⁵ the FSCID effectively serves as the analytical branch of the GDCIFS. It is tasked with conducting forensic tests during investigations as well as monitoring and collecting information on potential criminals to identify targets for other divisions of the general directorate and

33 "Speaker praises Bahraini Police performance," BNA, 14 December 2017, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/816489>

34 This general directorate is regularly translated several different ways by both official and unofficial sources, including: the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science; the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Evidence; the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Evidence; the General Directorate of Investigation and Criminal Identification; and the General Directorate of Crime Detection and Forensic Evidence, among other variations. Moreover, it is often conflated, both formally and colloquially, with its subdivision, the Criminal Investigation Directorate (and the acronym, CID), which is itself sometimes referred to additionally as the Directorate of Criminal Investigation or the Department of Criminal Investigation ("Department" and "Directorate" are typically used interchangeably to refer to the immediate subdivisions of a General Directorate). This report uses "General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science (GDCIFS)" to refer to the overarching general directorate because this is the official English translation written on the agency's physical headquarters; it uses "Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID)" to refer to the main subdivision, because that is its most common referent.

35 It is also known less commonly as the Criminal Evidence Directorate or Criminal Identification Directorate.

PARTNERS IN CRIME: THE MOI AND NSA

In 2002, Bahrain's king established the National Security Agency (NSA; also known as the National Security Apparatus) to replace the MOI's General Directorate of State Security as the kingdom's chief domestic intelligence organ. Smaller and more clandestine than the MOI, the NSA serves as the regime's secret police unit and is explicitly mandated to root out subversion or dissent: according to its founding decree, the NSA is "to detect and uncover all activities that undermine the national security of the kingdom, its institutions and its [ruling system], or that threaten the security and stability of the nation, or its interests or accomplishments." While the NSA is formally independent of the MOI and reports directly to the Prime Minister, it works closely with units like the GDCIFS and the SSFC to target, detain, and torture activists and dissidents. It reportedly shares the MOI's budget and it regularly utilizes MOI facilities to carry out abuses, such as the security compound in Muharraq.

In 2011, the BICI cited the NSA as one of Bahrain's most abusive security agencies for its role in arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and extrajudicial killing, with NSA personnel responsible for torturing the cofounder of the kingdom's only independent newspaper to death during the crackdown. The king implemented the BICI's recommendation to strip the organization of its arrest and interrogation powers, but the NSA continued to collect and provide intelligence to other institutions like the MOI. During this period, the NSA relied directly on the MOI to apprehend and torture its targets.

Since 2017, when the king restored its law enforcement authority in violation of the BICI, the NSA has returned with a vengeance, launching a targeted reprisal campaign against human rights defenders. It continues to explicitly participate in joint operations with the MOI, including the February 2017 Coast Guard shooting that left three suspects dead.



Muharraq security facility used by NSA



GDCIFS facility in Adliya



FSCID facility and vehicles

the larger MOI. In its own words, the FSCID is “charged with storing and retrieving electronically all available information on people and their activities outside the law of the land.”³⁶ A former director of the FSCID described it as the MOI’s chief clearinghouse for data on potential security targets: his personnel “monitor the investigation of suspects,” register these cases “with the general security directorates,” and provide the “information to various [other] departments when it is needed.” This information is then utilized by other MOI agencies like the FSCID’s counterpart, the CID, to pursue activists, protesters, and other perceived dissidents.

Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID)

The CID tracks, detains, and interrogates MOI targets. It is the government’s chief instrument of state terror along with the Special Security Force Command (*see Section 2.B.iii below*) and it is the most actively abusive agency in the MOI. Headquartered in the Adliya neighborhood of Manama, the CID’s facilities are the most common sites of enforced disappearance and torture in Bahrain.

Almost every individual detained in the kingdom will come into contact with the CID. Typically working in close coordination with the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) at the Ministry of the Justice and Islamic Affairs (MOJ), the CID oversees the vast majority of initial arrests in the kingdom, accompanying or directing governorate police or the Special Security Force Command on raids of a target’s home or workplace. These raids are consistently warrantless, and they are designed to terrify (*see Section 3.A for more information on arbitrary detention and home raids*). Decentralized arrests by street patrols or protest raids normally result in temporary detention at a local police station before the detainee is transferred into CID custody. CID personnel torture detainees as a matter

policy to extract testimony or confessions. Much of this testimony is explicitly fabricated, with CID personnel forcing detainees to sign prepared statements they are prevented from reading (*see Sections 3.C and 3.D for more information on the CID’s use of torture and due process violations*).

The GDCIFS and the CID are directly implicated in approximately 27 percent of all MOI abuses recorded by ADHRB, with CID personnel or facilities identified in 385 cases of severe human rights violations. In another 80 cases where the responsible agency is not identified, patterns of abuse strongly suggest CID or GDCIFS involvement, bringing the total number to 425, or approximately 30 percent of recorded MOI abuses.

These cases include minors as young as 14, as well as persons with disabilities. One of Bahrain’s own oversight mechanisms, the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) has found that CID personnel do not differentiate between children and adults, and that they have failed to properly address “special needs suspects.”³⁷ Yet the issues cited by the PDRC do not account for the full scale of the problem: while ADHRB’s records indicate that the CID consistently subjects all detainees to ill-treatment and abuse, there is also evidence that CID personnel specifically manipulate children to target adult family members, and that they additionally exploit disabilities or prior injuries to amplify the effects of torture. In one case extending from 2008 to 2014, the CID – in conjunction with governorate police – repeatedly targeted a 14-year-old detainee named Sayed* in an attempt to force him to serve as an informant on dissident activity within his family. CID personnel ultimately detained Sayed and tortured him into signing a document stating that he participated in an “illegal gathering” and “attacked a police

36 Fatima Zayed al-Zayed, “Total commitment: Top services pledge by Criminal Investigation,” *Al-Amn*, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, November 2017, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/76825>

37 See: *Bahrain 2016 Human Rights Report*, United States Department of State, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265704.pdf>

officer;” throughout his interrogation they sent threatening text messages to his mother from his cellphone. Sayed received a 5-year prison sentence. Likewise, that same year, CID personnel tortured and sexually harassed a 16-year-old to pressure him into becoming an informant; the child suffered from disabilities that affected his ability to speak and hear, and he was ultimately unable to relate what the CID forced him to do or say.

ii. General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation (GDRR)

The GDRR runs Bahrain’s long-term detention facilities, chief among them: Dry Dock Detention Center (also known as Men’s Custody Detention Center or Men’s Preventative Detention Center); Isa Town Women’s Prison and Detention Center (also known as Women’s Reformation and Rehabilitation Center/Women’s Detention Center);³⁸ and Jau Central Prison (also known as Men’s Reformation and Rehabilitation Center). Following initial detention and interrogation at local governorate police stations and/or CID facilities, detainees are either released, remanded into extended pre-charge custody pending investigation, or charged. In either of the latter two cases, male detainees are typically transferred to Dry Dock, the primary pre-trial holding facility. Female detainees are transferred to Isa Town Women’s Prison, which is used to hold both those awaiting trial and prisoners that have been convicted. Most commonly, detainees are disappeared into the custody of local governorate police directorates or the CID for up to a month, charged based on extracted testimony, and then rapidly ushered into pre-trial facilities. In some instances, particularly in recent years, detaining authorities have taken individuals directly to Jau Prison’s interrogation facilities for torture sessions. Upon conviction, nearly all adult males serve their sentences at Jau. Minors above the age of 15 have long been held alongside adults in Jau – violating Bahraini and international law – though the MOI expanded the prison’s youth-only facilities in 2015 to account for the growing influx of child prisoners (these facilities are technically administered by Jau, but they are located in the Dry Dock complex). The GDRR also runs a specific pre- and post-trial Juvenile Detention Center (also known as the Juvenile Care Center) for child detainees less than 15 years old.

MASS INCARCERATION IN BAHRAIN: BY THE NUMBERS



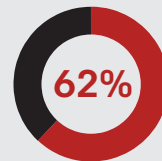
More than **4,000** detainees
3,000-4,000 political prisoners



15-42% overcrowding in Jau Prison



Over 650 human rights violations recorded across the prison system



62% of all MOI abuses occur in GDRR prisons

The most recent figures made available by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime indicate that Bahrain held more than 4,000 detainees as of 2013.³⁹ This number is already astronomical for a country of Bahrain’s size – making it the highest per capita jailer in the Middle East and North Africa region – and it has only grown in the five years since, with authorities unable to complete expansions fast enough to accommodate the rapidly increasing prison population.⁴⁰ In 2015, Bahraini government reports claimed that Jau alone held nearly 2,500 prisoners; though this was likely a significant underestimate, even these reports put the prison 15 percent over capacity at the time.⁴¹ As of 2017, the MOI communicated to the US State Department that it held at least 4,380 individuals in custody, with 895 in

38 The GDRR’s Isa Town facility comprises both the women’s long-stay prison (Women’s Reformation and Rehabilitation Center) and the pre-trial detention center (Women’s Detention Center). The Juvenile Care Center, the children’s detention facility, is also located at Isa Town. See the PDRC reports for more information on the administrative breakdown according to the government: “Reports,” PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, <http://www.pdrc.bh/en/reports>

39 “Total prison population,” UN Office of Drugs and Crime, 2017, <https://dataunodc.un.org/crime/total-prison-population>

40 *Report on the Unannounced Visit to the Jau Rehabilitation & Reformation Center (JRRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2015, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/2a23f018-109f-45cd-b5ae-4240de3d6e2b_Jau%20English%20Final.pdf

41 Ibid.



Jau Prison (2011)



Jau Prison Expansion (2018)

pre-trial detention and 3,485 incarcerated.⁴² Of these 3485 prisoners, it is estimated that 3,311 are men held in Jau and 174 are women held in Isa Town. These figures put Jau 54 percent over its reported 2015 capacity⁴³ - though the facility has since been expanded - and Isa Town three percent over its reported 2015 capacity.⁴⁴

In early 2018, Bahrain informed the UN that it had convicted 7,460 people under just the anti-terror law - not the standard penal code - since 2011; it did not specify how many of these individuals remain imprisoned or how these figures fit into overall conviction rates, but the statistics provide a significant glimpse at the scale of incarceration.⁴⁵ Estimates indicate that between 3,000 and 4,000 of Bahrain's current detainee population are political prisoners, held on charges fabricated from coerced testimony or stemming solely from criminalized political activity or human rights activism. These estimates are supported by Bahrain's extremely low rates of non-political crime (*see Section 1*) and the high rate of convictions under the anti-terror law, which criminalizes dissent. Additionally, official figures exclude the unknown number of pre-charge detainees, many of whom are held illegally, short-term, and/or in unofficial locations such as black sites, further obscuring the true scope of mass incarceration in Bahrain (*see Section 3.A for more information on arbitrary detention and Section 3.B for more on enforced disappearance*).

The GDRR maintains extremely poor living conditions in its detention centers, which are universally overcrowded,

unhygienic, or rife with physical abuse, including torture. GDRR personnel or facilities are directly implicated in 62 percent of incidents of MOI abuse documented by ADHRB - the highest overall rate of malfeasance for any single MOI agency that we examined. Though ADHRB has generally documented fewer cases of singular, active human rights violations perpetrated by the GDRR - as opposed to the CID's direct arbitrary detention and torture of dissidents, for example - we have recorded constant, widespread violations of international detention standards within Bahrain's prison system that the GDRR has either perpetuated or failed to address. Furthermore, we have recorded continual incidents of religious discrimination and retributive torture, including mass collective punishments of inmate populations following isolated disciplinary issues, such as escape attempts, protests, or hunger strikes. In 2013, the MOI's own Ombudsman found that that GDRR prison staff had poor risk management training and "weak theoretical and practical training" on use of force.⁴⁶ Rates of abuse are largely consistent across GDRR facilities relative to size: 365 cases in Jau; 251 cases in Dry Dock; 28 at Isa Town; and 9 in the Juvenile Detention Center. (*See Section 3.C for more information on torture, Section 3.E for more information on detention standards and denial of healthcare, and Section 3.G for more information on religious discrimination, including within detention centers*).

Notably, statistical analysis of ADHRB's documentation is incapable of illustrating the full extent of mistreatment

42 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277481.pdf>

43 *Report on the Unannounced Visit to the Jau Rehabilitation & Reformation Center (JRRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2015, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/2a23f018-109f-45cd-b5ae-4240de3d6e2b_Jau%20English%20Final.pdf

44 *Unannounced visit to the Women's Reformation and Rehabilitation Center (WRRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2015, [http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/aa3910d7-7470-480d-9c4e-d8fb30f8a6e0_Reformation%20and%20Rehabilitation%20Center%20\(WRRC\).pdf](http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/aa3910d7-7470-480d-9c4e-d8fb30f8a6e0_Reformation%20and%20Rehabilitation%20Center%20(WRRC).pdf)

45 *CCPR/C/BHR/Q/1/Add.1 List of issues in relation to the initial report of Bahrain - Replies of Bahrain to the list of issues*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 22 February 2018, <http://undocs.org/en/CCPR/C/BHR/Q/1/Add.1>

46 *Ombudsman's Report on the Visit to the Correction and Rehabilitation Centre (Jau Prison)*, Office of the Ombudsman, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2014, <http://ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/pdf/357-Ombudsmans%20Inspection%20Report%20pdf-30105053.pdf>

within Bahrain's prison system, as nearly every one of the more than 4,000 individuals in custody – as well as the unknown number of pre-charge detainees – are affected by the GDRR's systemic refusal to curb abuse and bring its facilities up to international standards. Moreover, as a result of the GDRR's abusive policies as well as the general climate of fear maintained by the MOI, many hundreds of these detainees are unable to communicate evidence of additional human rights violations sustained or witnessed, obscuring the real scale of abuse.

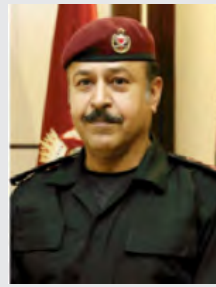
iii. Special Security Force Command (SSFC)

The SSFC is the elite, paramilitary branch of the MOI and its lead counterterrorism agency - it is also the single unit most directly implicated in the vast majority of Bahrain's extrajudicial killings. Similar to military special forces or American police Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) teams, the SSFC consists of several heavily armed battalions and is used to conduct the MOI's most kinetic operations, even deploying with the US Marines in Afghanistan. Due to their weaponry and appearance, they are often referred to collectively as the "commandos," "riot police," or "special forces," and they are commonly identifiable by their distinct red berets and black body armor labeled with the English acronym 'SSFC.'



The SSFC lead near daily police assaults on pro-democracy demonstrations, and they are regularly at the forefront of nightly home raids in pursuit of individuals wanted by the GDCIFS

First established in the 1930s to guard Bahrain's oil infrastructure,⁴⁷ the SSFC has evolved into the PSF's premiere unit, and its development is a personal focus of the Interior Minister. According to the MOI's media center, "in the 1950s, [the SSFC] was also called in to deal with civil disturbances, but it was only after [current Interior Minister] Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid took over when it was modernized and brigades and battalions were created."⁴⁸ In 2004, the SSFC began recruiting women for a female wing, and in 2005 it formed a K9 unit. When Saudi National



Former SSFC Commander: Maj. Gen. Abdullah al-Zayed (now Deputy Chief of Public Security)

In January 2018, Bahrain's king promoted longtime commander of the SSFC Abdullah al-Zayed from brigadier to major general and appointed him Deputy Chief of Public Security. Maj. Gen. al-Zayed – who oversaw years of extreme SSFC abuses, from house raids to extrajudicial killings – is now the second most powerful man in the PSF, directly below Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan and just two positions removed from the Interior Minister. As Deputy Chief, he now holds authority over nearly all the MOI's paramilitary units, and can extend the SSFC's brutal policies throughout the PSF.

Guard troops and Emirati police officers entered Bahrain in 2011 as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)'s Peninsula Shield Force contingent, they assumed protection duty for important installations in the kingdom from the SSFC. Elements of the Peninsula Shield Force remain in Bahrain, allowing the SSFC to concentrate its efforts on suppressing demonstrations and dissident activity.

Though the SSFC's specialized training and combat orientation suggest a limited scope of operations, it is regularly tasked with a wide array of responsibilities, from crowd-control to coordinating security for major nationwide events like the Formula 1 race. In effect, the SSFC serves as the tip of the spear for crushing dissent in Bahrain, violently enforcing the government's ban on nonviolent criticism and peaceful protest under expanded anti-terror legislation that grounds its perpetual deployment. The SSFC lead near daily police assaults on pro-democracy demonstrations, and they are regularly at the forefront of nightly home raids in pursuit of individuals wanted by the GDCIFS (*see Section 3.F for more information on the SSFC's role in excessive force, and Section 3.A for more information on its involvement in home raids and arrests*).

SSFC personnel receive six months of basic training, with an additional three to six months of instruction in "anti-riot procedures." The former commander of the SSFC, now

⁴⁷ Some sources indicate that the nucleus of the original force was two hundred volunteer militiaman from a Saudi tribe loyal to the Al Khalifa. See: Staci Strobl, "Post-Colonial Policing and the 'Woman' Question: A History of the Women's Police Directorate in Bahrain" in Laleh Khalili and Jillian Schwedler (Eds.), *Policing and Prison in the Middle East: Formations of Coercion*, Hurst: 2010, Print.

⁴⁸ Hani Al Amoush, "May the force be with you," *Al-Amm*, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amm-magazine/al-amm-magazine/77817>



Top row: SSFC personnel (2016); Various SSFC units on parade, riot police in foreground (2016). Bottom row: SSFC K9 unit trained by the US (2016); Still from video capturing SSFC throwing Molotov cocktails at protesters (2012)

Deputy Chief of Public Security Major General Abdullah al-Zayed, stated in 2017 that specialized anti-terror units receive “continuous training for two years,” including in “communications courses, special naval operations, air carriers, respirators, rescue and inspection systems, ammunition courses, intelligence and security,” among other skill areas. The SSFC also runs so-called “commando courses” for other divisions of the MOI as well as the BDF, National Guard, and even foreign militaries.⁴⁹ SSFC units have received regular support from the US and have also trained⁵⁰ with the British Royal Marines to improve their sniping capabilities⁵¹ (see Section 5.A for more on foreign support for the MOI).

While SSFC personnel reportedly undergo extensive training, they routinely employ excessive and often lethal force in

dispersing protesters, storming homes, and making arrests – suggesting brutality is policy rather than aberration. In fact, photos obtained by ADHRB of SSFC training programs in 2016 (and which are held regularly) suggest that personnel are explicitly trained to use overwhelming force against protests. The images show large SSFC squads attacking a mock village complete with individuals – presumably other MOI officials – dressed up as Bahraini protesters. The faux demonstrators light items on fire and throw objects, but appear unarmed; nevertheless, SSFC personnel respond with force. Even in this controlled environment, the response appears chaotic and culminates with house-by-house raids in the location of the protest. Such training programs align with official government narratives that present each year’s hundreds⁵² of peaceful protests as consistently violent riots requiring militarized anti-terror responses, instructing recruits that

49 Ibid.

50 “The HMS ST ALBANS Newsletter – Tip of the Spear,” Royal Navy, Government of the UK, 5 July 2016, https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/-/media/royal-navy-responsive/documents/welfare/link_members/stal-newsletter-5.pdf?la=en-gb

51 Jamie Merrill, “British commandos training Bahraini armed forces to use sniper rifles,” *The Independent*, 26 March 2016, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/british-commandos-training-bahraini-armed-forces-to-use-sniper-rifles-a6952836.html>

52 See BCHR annual reports for general statistics on yearly protest rates: “Overview of the human rights violations in Bahrain: Jan-June 2017,” BCHR, 13 July 2017, <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/8876>



Simulated village and protest at SSFC training facility (2017); SSFC advance on simulated village in training exercise (2017); Simulated protest at SSFC training facility (2017)

most public assemblies they encounter will mimic the violent minority they train for and inevitably require force. At times, SSFC personnel have even resorted to deliberately fabricating the violent conditions that would justify an escalation in force: images and videos captured in 2011 and 2012 repeatedly show SSFC officers throwing Molotov cocktails – a homemade incendiary device they routinely attribute to rioters – during MOI attacks on protests.⁵³ This disconnect normalizes the use of excessive force as a first resort against routinely nonviolent gatherings in the slums and Shia villages simulated at the SSFC’s training facilities. Beyond the simulacra, SSFC tactics – and the militarized posture inculcated through “commando” training courses – play out with predictably lethal effect in the real streets of Bahrain.⁵⁴

According to data collected by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), violent MOI protest raids have increased in recent years, with at least 232 in 2017;⁵⁵ 155 in 2016;⁵⁶ and 120 in 2015.⁵⁷ These attacks – characterized by the weaponized use of ostensibly non-lethal crowd control tools like teargas and birdshot to kill or maim – bear all the hallmarks of SSFC operations and are almost certainly directed by SSFC units in conjunction with local governorate police and the Police Aviation unit, which assists the SSFC “to carry out operations and conduct security checks in areas where there are disturbances and riots and guide them to take necessary action.” Though it is difficult to determine the exact unit responsible for individual cases of brutality or extrajudicial killings committed during the MOI’s multi-agency assaults on demonstrations, the SSFC is virtually omnipresent at these raids and maintains command responsibility for “anti-riot” operations. It is the sole MOI agency most clearly

implicated in the deaths of dozens of protesters since 2011. ADHRB has recorded 46 cases of individual abuse directly implicating the SSFC as the lead perpetrator, including 25 extrajudicial killings. We documented another 77 cases that lacked a clearly identified perpetrator but matched SSFC patterns of abuse: 46 of these were extrajudicial killings (*see Section 3.F for more information on excessive force and extrajudicial killings*). Additionally, of the 260 illegal or violent home raids recorded by ADHRB, victims and their families were often unable to identify the specific MOI agency or agencies participating in the initial attack as a result of the perpetrators’ clothing (masks, plainclothes, all-black uniforms, etc.), lack of warrant, or general chaos: it is very likely that the SSFC led or participated in the majority of these raids. (*see Section 3.A for more information on arbitrary detention and home raids*).

Though the SSFC is predominantly used to apply force during attacks on protests or targets at large, its personnel have also been directly implicated in torture at GDRR detention centers. In March 2015, for example, the SSFC were deployed to Jau Prison to assist GDRR personnel in quelling protests over the facility’s inhumane conditions. The SSFC utilized excessive force to regain control of the prison, and then proceeded to subject the entire inmate population to collective punishment including torture (*see Section 3.B for more information on torture, and see Section 3.E for more information on detention standards*). Multiple prisoners report that the SSFC’s K9 unit even directed police dogs to maul inmates. These attacks came just one year after the US embassy completed an Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) training course with the unit funded by the American taxpayer. Though the US

53 Marc Owen Jones, “For the Record: Police in Bahrain Throw Molotov Cocktails,” Marc Owen Jones: Irreverence and Analysis on Bahrain, Disinformation and the Persian Gulf, 18 March 2012, <https://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/for-the-record-police-in-bahrain-throw-molotov-cocktails/>

54 For an official description of such courses, see: “Chief of Public Security attends Commando Foundation Course,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 4 May 2016, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/51802>; For video showing some of the exercises, see: “HE Interior Minister Attends 31st Commando Course 2/5/2017,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2 May 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/videos/tv-news/62341>

55 BCHR presents two different statistics for 2017, reporting that approximately 232 protests were “dispersed using tear gas, and in some cases using live ammunition known locally as birdshot,” but that as early as July 2017 a total of 628 protests had been “suppressed.” The total number of protests attacked by the MOI is likely higher, with the exact level of force varying. See: See BCHR annual reports for general statistics on yearly protest rates: “Overview of the human rights violations in Bahrain: Jan-June 2017,” BCHR, 13 July 2017, <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/8876http://www.bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/No%20Right%20to%20Rights-interactive.pdf>; and *No Right to Rights*, BCHR, 2017, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/No%20Right%20to%20Rights-interactive.pdf>

56 *Annual Report Bahrain 2016*, BCHR, 2017, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/8501>

57 *Bahrain: “2015” Human Rights Violations from Practice to Policy*, BCHR, 2016, <http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/BCHR%20Annual%20Report%202015.pdf>



Top: FSCID officer entering information in system. Bottom: SSFC officers at checkpoint near Bahrain International Airport

government claims to restrict assistance to MOI units involved in policing protests and repressing free assembly, the SSFC K9 unit continues to explicitly “support[...] the operations related to the maintenance of order and fighting riots...[and] vandalism” according to MOI promotional materials produced in 2017.⁵⁸ The SSFC remains one of the primary MOI beneficiaries of US security support and stands to receive expanded assistance under the Trump administration (see Section 5.A for a full accounting of the US relationship with the MOI).

iv. Governorate Police Directorates

Bahrain’s four governorate police directorates comprise the kingdom’s standard, local law enforcement. While these forces are tasked with addressing common crime and safety issues along with their subordinate unarmed “community police” units, each governorate directorate also forms the basic infrastructure of the broader Bahraini police state: a vast network of security stations and checkpoints providing first-order surveillance and detention capabilities. The governorate directorates, which contain their own investigations and information divisions that mirror the

ENFORCING MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

Bahrain’s governorate police are also the frontline enforcers of the kafala labor sponsorship system – an abusive framework that grants employers excessive control over migrant workers in the kingdom. Though migrants, which account for more than half Bahrain’s population, have seen some restrictions lapse over the last year, many aspects of kafala remain in place, facilitating wage withholding and passport confiscation, as well as horrific work and living conditions. It is illegal for migrants to flee abusive sponsors and MOI personnel tackle these offenses as ruthlessly as political crimes: in just 2017, the Capital Police Directorate alone addressed 2,334 cases of migrant worker “escape from the sponsor” and 1,613 cases of migrant “illegal stay,” or remaining in-country without proper documentation. These figures – from only one of the kingdom’s four governorate police directorates – contrast with just 31 ministry-wide investigations into human trafficking that same year.

See: “Strengthening Relations: Police Directorates take Community into Confidence,” *Al-Amn*, December 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/77817>

2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Country Narratives, DOS, US Government, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282800.pdf>

“US State Department Neglects Persistent Rights Abuses in New TIP Designation for Bahrain,” *ADHRB*, 11 July 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/07/us-state-department-neglects-persistent-rights-abuses-in-new-tip-designation-for-bahrain/>

GDCIFS, work closely with national agencies like the CID and the SSFC to execute protest raids and apprehend political activists, human rights defenders, religious leaders, and other suspected dissidents or critics active in their region. Each directorate’s various police stations⁵⁹ regularly serve as the immediate site of enforced disappearance and torture before a detainee’s transfer up the chain of command.

Northern Police Directorate

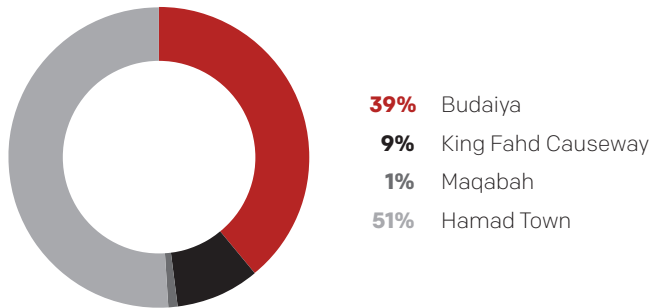
The Northern Police Directorate encompasses Bahrain’s northeast region and is headquartered in Hamad Town, at Roundabout 17. Some of the directorate’s chief facilities are located in Budaiya, Maqabah, and Al-Khamis, and it also coordinates with the King Fahd Causeway police – a separate directorate that falls within the governorate on the border with Saudi Arabia. Home to towns like Diraz and Demistan, which face routine government attacks, the Northern Governorate has the highest rate of abuse among

58 “Chief of Public Security inspects K9 Unit,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/64488>

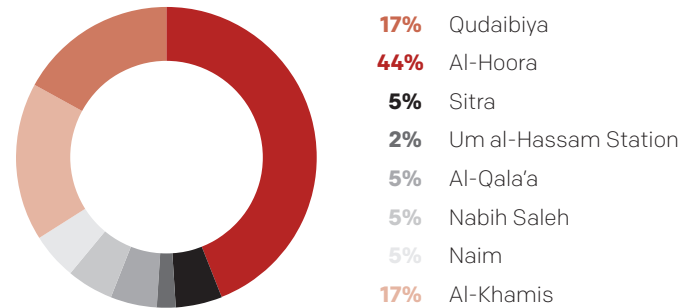
59 The exact number is unclear. In 2014, the government indicated that the MOI maintained at least 22 police stations, but a Reuters report in 2012 paraphrased MOI leadership stating that the ministry has at least 33. See: *Moving Beyond 2011*, BICI Follow-up Unit, Kingdom of Bahrain, February 2014, <http://www.biciunit.bh/reports/BICI%20Implementation%20report%20ENGLISH.pdf>; and Andrew Hammond, “Bahrain police install cameras to curb abuse,” Reuters, 22 March 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-police-rights/bahrain-police-install-cameras-to-curb-abuse-idUSBRE82L0JX20120322>



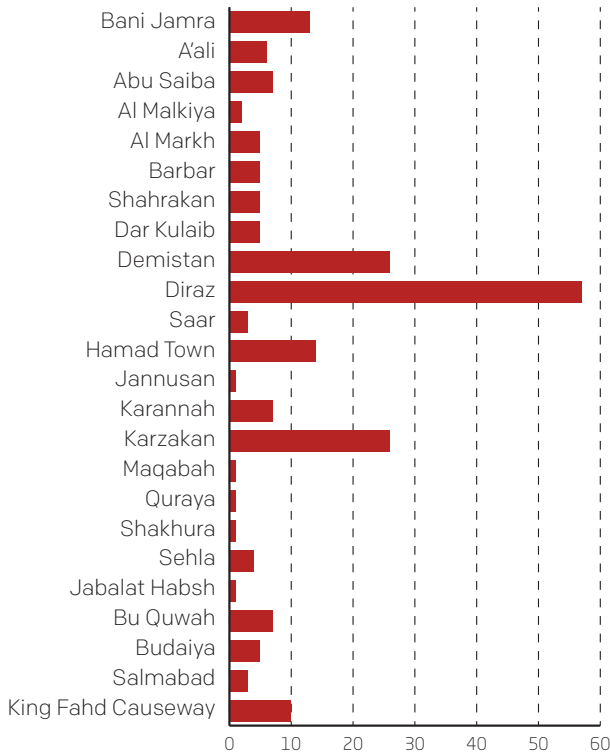
Frequency of Abuse by Police Facility



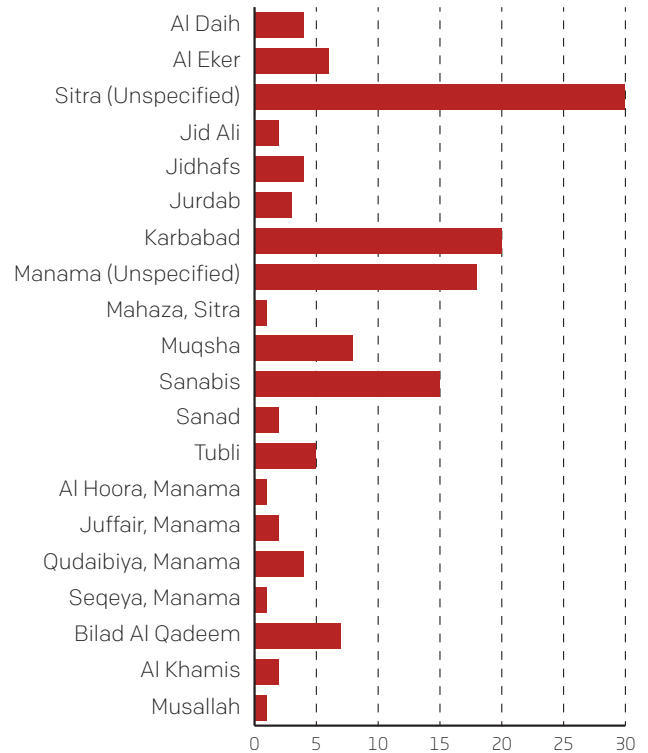
Frequency of Abuse by Police Facility



Frequency of Abuse by Location*



Frequency of Abuse by Location*



*Only includes cases where initial location data was recorded (in most cases this is unclear). Does not include abuses that occurred within specific MOI facilities within the governorate.



Top row: Budaiya Police Station, Northern Governorate Police Directorate; Southern Governorate Police Headquarters. Bottom row: Capital Governorate Police Headquarters; Muharraq security compound

the four regions. ADHRB has documented 221 incidents of severe human rights violations in the Northern Governorate, with 87 specifically implicating Northern Police, including 41 cases at the Hamad Town facility, 31 cases at the Budaiya facility, and seven at the Al-Khamis facility.

Capital Police Directorate

Located to the east of the Northern Governorate, the Capital Governorate comprises Bahrain's capital city, Manama, and contains the largest population of the kingdom's four regions. The Capital Police Directorate is headquartered in the city's Al-Hoora neighborhood at a facility also referred to as "Exhibition Station," due to its address on Exhibition, or Al-Ma'arid, Avenue. It maintains several other facilities throughout the city, including Qudaibiya and Naim, as well as in the surrounding areas, like Sitra Island. The Capital Governorate has the second highest rates of abuse after its northern counterpart, with 132 incidents recorded in the region by ADHRB, and another 34 specifically implicating subdivisions of the police directorate, including 18 at the Al-Hoora facility and seven at the Qudaibiya facility.

Muharraq Police Directorate

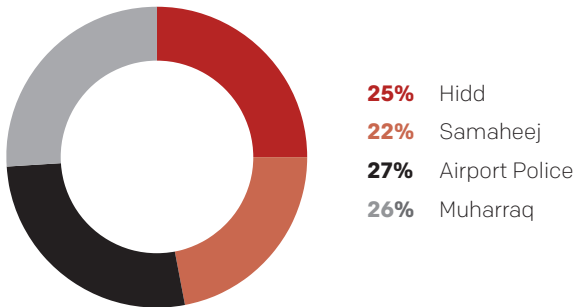
Muharraq Police have authority over the northwestern island of Muharraq, just off the coast of Manama. Bahrain's third largest governorate, the region includes the city of Muharraq and its surroundings, including the Bahrain International Airport and its police directorate, as well as the GDRR's Dry Dock Detention Center. According to government records, the Muharraq Police Directorate operates out of a new facility in the Halat Bu Maher area of the city as of 2014,⁶⁰ and its other principal facilities are in Hidd and Samaheej. The main Muharraq security compound is notorious for doubling as an NSA torture center, with leading human rights defenders and lawyers like Ebtisam al-Saegh and Ibrahim Jawad 'Abd Ullah Sarhan beaten and sexually assaulted there in 2017.⁶¹ Excluding abuses attributed to the GDRR and Dry Dock, ADHRB has documented 51 abuses perpetrated at Muharraq police facilities, including 17 at the Hidd Police Station, as well as another 19 abuses at Bahrain International Airport and 17 elsewhere in the governorate.

60 Unannounced visit to the Muharraq Governorate Police Directorate Hidd Police Station (MGPD), PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2014. http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/a62ea027-2b5f-4bbf-a953-a13103272719_Muharraq%20-%203.pdf

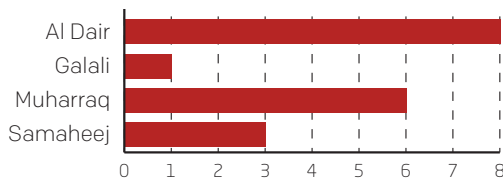
61 Phil Miller, "Britain Trained a Bahraini Police Chief Who Presided Over Abuse of Political Dissidents," Vice News UK, 6 April 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/43b4k9/britain-trained-a-bahraini-police-chief-who-presided-over-abuse-of-political-dissidents



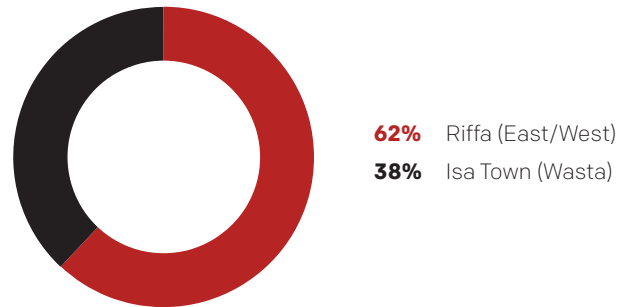
Frequency of Abuse by Police Facility



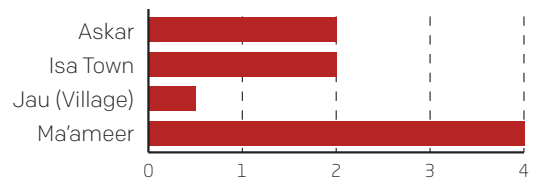
Frequency of Abuse by Location*



Frequency of Abuse by Police Facility



Frequency of Abuse by Location*



*Only includes cases where initial location data was recorded (in most cases this is unclear). Does not include abuses that occurred within specific MOI facilities within the governorate.

Southern Police Directorate

The Southern Police Directorate is headquartered in East Riffa, toward the center of the country. It assumed authority over most of what was the Central Governorate after the province was dissolved in 2015. In addition to the East Riffa headquarters, which also serves as a detention center, the Southern Police Directorate maintains a number of facilities, including police stations in Isa Town and West Riffa, and the Royal Academy of Police is also located in the governorate. The Southern Governorate is the least populous in Bahrain and the largest in geographic size; excluding human rights violations that occur in Jau Prison and Isa Town Women's Prison, which are located in the governorate, it has the lowest rates of abuse of the kingdom's four regions. ADHRB has documented 28 incidents directly implicating the Southern Police Directorate, with 16 involving Riffa police and 10 involving Isa Town police, as well as 12 other serious

human rights violations that took place in the Southern Governorate but lacked direct attribution to directorate forces (involvement of the Southern Police is likely, but only national agencies were explicitly identified).

C. SUPPORT AGENCIES AND DIRECTORATES

In addition to the GDCIFS, GDRR, SSFC, and governorate police directorates, the MOI comprises myriad other subdivisions that supplement the work of the lead agencies and provide specialized support to the repressive mission. Chief among these are the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, Economic and Electronic Security, and the NPRA.

WARRANTLESS SEIZURES

In many of the arbitrary home raids documented by ADHRB, MOI personnel confiscate mobile phones, computers, and other personal items without presenting a warrant. Seized electronics are typically examined by GDAEES “digital laboratories” while detainees are interrogated and tortured, implicating the agency in human rights abuses perpetrated primarily by lead agencies like the GDCIFS and SSFC. Though the MOI claims these laboratories are “highly qualified” and meet international standards, the government continuously delayed the most recent trial against human rights defender Nabeel Rajab for testimony from a purported GDAEES expert that was ultimately denounced by an independent observer: “The quality of the evidence from the purported computer forensic expert was very poor. It extended no further than a recital of the results of a basic Google search.” Though the GDAEES expert was unable to provide evidence that linked Rajab to the twitter account he was charged for – itself a violation of the right to free expression – the court ultimately sentenced him to five years in prison for online criticism of the government.

See: “30 December 2016 - Nabeel Rajab Re-Arrested Despite Court Order to Temporarily Release Him,” Frontline Defenders, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/case-history-nabeel-rajab>

i. General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, Economic and Electronic Security (GDAEES)

Originally a sub-directorate of the GDCIFS, the GDAEES was established by royal decree in 2011 to investigate financial crimes and cyber offenses.⁶² It reports directly to the Interior Minister, and comprises the Corruption Directorate, the Economic Crime Directorate, and the Cybercrime Directorate, sometimes referred to colloquially as the “Cybercrime Unit.” The Cybercrime Directorate is the most feared subdivision of the GDAEES and plays a key support role for the GDCIFS and Bahrain’s telecommunications and information ministries, helping them to target human rights defenders, journalists, opposition politicians, and other individuals accused of violating the kingdom’s blanket ban on Internet criticism. Since 2014, the Cybercrime Directorate has become the primary enforcement authority for Bahrain’s cybercrime law, which – together with the penal code, anti-terror law, and press and publications law – includes vague provisions

that infringe on the right to privacy and criminalize acts of peaceful free expression online.

The Cybercrime Directorate is directly implicated in dozens of cases of arbitrary detention and torture, and it is particularly involved in reprisals against journalists and online activists for offenses that stem solely from free speech. It regularly detains and interrogates individuals for criticizing the government on social media, promoting demonstrations, or reporting on sensitive issues, citing grounds such as: spreading “malicious rumours to damage the social fabric;”⁶³ posting information to “incite sedition and undermine social peace;”⁶⁴ and “misusing social media.”⁶⁵ According to government statements, once the directorate becomes aware of potential dissident activity online, it forms a set “team to follow the account to identify the user.”⁶⁶ Cybercrime personnel use a variety of tools to determine the user’s identity, including technical methods like hacking and phishing to gain unauthorized access to accounts. When this does not yield results, the Cybercrime Directorate, along with the GDCIFS and the NSA, will simply arbitrarily detain individuals suspected of operating the target accounts and force them to unlock their mobile phone or computer; if the detainee is not the person they are pursuing, they often torture them into falsely confessing to operating the account in question, or they attempt to coerce them into using their own accounts to entrap the target or otherwise inform on potential activist communications networks. In some cases, the directorate might infect the detainee’s devices with malware before releasing them, allowing the MOI to access their accounts remotely without their knowledge (*see below*).

The Cybercrime Directorate is implicated in numerous attacks on high-profile media and political figures in Bahrain. Husain Hubail, a freelance photojournalist, was arrested by the MOI in July 2013 on charges including the use of social media networks to “incite hatred of the regime.” During his detention, Cybercrime personnel tortured Hubail and subjected him to other forms of ill treatment; he was ultimately sentenced to five years in prison.⁶⁷ Likewise, the directorate investigated Mohammad Al-Ghasra, a CNN Arabic correspondent, after he published a news update on social media related to political corruption – despite the GDAEES’ broader mandate to address financial crimes – and he later received a warning from the government’s information ministry.⁶⁸

62 Decree No. 109/2011 amending certain provisions of Decree No. 69 of 2004 regarding the reorganization of the Ministry of Interior, Kingdom of Bahrain, 1 December 2011, <http://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/LegislationSearchDetails.aspx?id=3057>

63 “Hamad Town brawl video is old,” BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 3 June 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/843723>

64 Ibid.

65 “Man held for misusing social media,” BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 June 2016, <https://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/675924>

66 Ibid.

67 “Hussain Hubail: June’s Champion for Justice,” ADHRB, 2 June 2014, <http://www.adhrb.org/2014/06/hussain-hubail-junes-champion-for-justice/>

68 “December 2015: Arrest of the “Al-Wasat” journalist, Mahmoud Al-Jaziri, from his home and warning the “CNN” correspondent, Mohammad Al-Ghasra. Tweeter “Bou Khamees” prosecuted over new charges,” Bahrain Press Association (BPA), 13 February 2016, <http://www.bahrainpa.org/wp/?p=305>

In 2016, the Cybercrime Directorate interrogated Ebrahim Sharif of the now-closed Wa'ad opposition society for "inciting hatred of the political system" after speaking with the Associated Press.⁶⁹ More recently, its personnel have continually harassed the leader of Al-Wahdawi, the only formal opposition group that has yet to be forcibly dissolved by the government, summoning him for repeated interrogation over allegedly "inciting protests" on social media throughout 2018.⁷⁰

The Cybercrime Directorate, in connection with the FSCID, the NSA, and other government agencies, is also implicated in widespread unlawful surveillance, often with the use of imported technology. This surveillance ranges from passive monitoring to the hacking and phishing described above, as well as active manipulation of private data and accounts. These intrusions extend to Bahrain's diaspora community, where the Bahraini government has increasingly turned to electronic means to track potential dissidents and launch reprisal attacks against exiled activists. In 2012, it was revealed that the MOI had used Gamma International UK's FinFisher software to gain access to the electronic devices of a more than a dozen⁷¹ human rights defenders, media figures, lawyers, and political activists, including ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla; journalist and campaigner Moosa Abdali; and Bahrain Watch cofounder Ala'a Shehabi. While operating on their devices, the spyware program monitored their online communications and transmitted information to computers belonging to the MOI. Notably, some of these activists, like Abdali, had been previously targeted by the personnel believed to be members of the SSFC before leaving the country.⁷² In 2014, leaked data revealed that FinFisher "could avoid anti-virus software, switch on web cameras and microphones, and catalogue much of what a user does on his or her computer."⁷³ The data also confirmed that, despite repeated denials, Gamma International was officially "selling ... [Finfisher] to people

using their software to attack Bahraini activists"⁷⁴ and that Bahraini officials had even reached out for tech support, complaining that they were "losing targets daily" due to a glitch.⁷⁵ In addition to targeting and surveillance, Bahraini authorities have used these methods to obtain private information, manipulate personal accounts to defame targeted individuals, and attempt to blackmail them into silence. The leaked data showed that officials exploited their access to the Twitter account of one UK-based political activist to publicly post links to pornography in his name, for example.⁷⁶ A leaked communication between the Bahraini government and Gamma International suggested that as early as 2011 authorities were using FinFisher on 30 active targets, referring to successful intrusions as having "caught the fish."⁷⁷ A similar set of leaks in 2015 uncovered that the MOI also purchased spyware from the Italian company Hacking Team through an Emirati intermediary in 2015.⁷⁸ Records explicitly indicate that Bahrain's intermediary paid €210,000 for a one-year pilot program with the GDAAES' Cybercrime Directorate, in addition to separate arrangements between Hacking Team and the NSA and BDF. Like FinFisher, Hacking Team's programs are used to monitor or gain unauthorized access to electronic devices to "steal files, read emails, take photos and record conversations."⁷⁹ The full scale of illegal surveillance usage by Bahraini authorities is unknown, as most people targeted by spyware like FinFisher never detect the intrusion, but evidence suggests that the MOI and the Cybercrime Directorate continue to commit extensive violations of the right to privacy.

The MOI announced an expanded campaign against online dissent in 2018, which will give the Cybercrime Directorate even wider license to target independent civil society actors. On 25 March, Bahrain's Interior Minister stated that the police would be taking new measures to "track down" activists for criticizing the government on social media.⁸⁰ That same day, the MOI made at least five new arrests⁸¹

69 "Bahrain: Critic of UK Royals' Visit Faces Charges," Human Rights Watch, 18 November 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/18/bahrain-critic-uk-royals-visit-faces-charges>

70 "HRC38 Written Statement: Bahrain's Closure of Political Space Ahead of Elections," ADHRB, 15 June 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/06/hrc38-written-statement-on-bahrain-closure-of-political-space-ahead-of-elections/>

71 Kim Zetter, "Bahraini Activists Hacked by Their Government Go After UK Spyware Maker," *Wired*, 13 October 2014, <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/bahraini-activists-go-after-spyware-source/>

72 Joseph Cox, "Bahraini Activists Claim They Were Targeted by FinFisher Surveillance in the UK," *Motherboard*, 13 October 2014, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/d73x3v/bahraini-activists-claim-they-were-targeted-by-government-surveillance-in-the-uk

73 *Ibid.*

74 *Ibid.*

75 Kim Zetter, "Bahraini Activists Hacked by Their Government Go After UK Spyware Maker," *Wired*, 13 October 2014, <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/bahraini-activists-go-after-spyware-source/>

76 Joseph Cox, "Bahraini Activists Claim They Were Targeted by FinFisher Surveillance in the UK," *Motherboard*, 13 October 2014, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/d73x3v/bahraini-activists-claim-they-were-targeted-by-government-surveillance-in-the-uk

77 "FinFisher - Database: Communication BDE8F987," *WikiLeaks*, 2014, https://wikileaks.org/spyfiles4/database.html#support_request

78 Reda al-Fardan, "How The Government of Bahrain Acquired Hacking Team's Spyware," *Bahrain Watch*, 13 November 2015, <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2015/11/13/how-the-government-of-bahrain-acquired-hacking-teams-spyware/>

79 Cora Currier and Morgan Marquis-Boire, "A DETAILED LOOK AT HACKING TEAM'S EMAILS ABOUT ITS REPRESSIVE CLIENTS," *The Intercept*, 7 July 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/07/07/leaked-documents-confirm-hacking-team-sells-spyware-repressive-countries/>

80 "HE Interior Minister affirms tough steps against malicious social media accounts," *Ministry of Interior, Government of Bahrain*, 25 March 2018, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/80623>

81 "Bahrain Vows Greater Crackdown on Online Criticism Amid New Arrests," ADHRB, 30 March 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/03/bahrain-vows-greater-crackdown-on-online-criticism-amid-new-arrests/>

over such charges as “misusing social media.”⁸² Bahraini state media reports indicate that the number of new digital rights arrests has grown to at least 12⁸³ since the MOI announcement, while activists report that dozens more social media users may have been summoned. According to the authorities, many of the arrests are specifically “in line with the directives of the Minister of the Interior to take strict measures to address the electronic anarchy and chaos caused by some social media accounts non-compliant with the law.”⁸⁴ While the interior minister’s statement did not outline specific new policies, it appeared to signal a further expansion of the MOI’s dragnet to target any form of critical expression or activism online. According to the announcement, the MOI will pursue all individuals and accounts that “spread malicious rumours that went against social harmony and civil peace [sic]” and “any cyber activity against the norms and traditions of Bahrain whereas those accounts are destructive and not constructive.” The statement revealed that accounts involved in such activity are already “monitored,” including accounts that “were against the interests of the internal front.” Notably, the interior minister indicated that the authorities will pursue social media activists “even if we need to draft new legislation” – suggesting that the MOI is not only pushing for draconian new laws that further criminalize online free expression, but that it may also target users for activity that is not currently illegal. Notably, the new arrests in this campaign have included members of Bahrain’s Sunni Muslim minority community as well as individuals affiliated with the monarchy and its security institutions, marking a departure from the government’s primary crackdown on political opposition and members of the marginalized Shia Muslim majority, as well as demonstrating the government’s commitment to suppress all criticism.⁸⁵

ii. National, Passports, and Residency Affairs (NPRA)

Headed by a dedicated undersecretary that reports to the Interior Minister, the NPRA enforces Bahrain’s nationality laws, making it responsible for carrying out ministerial orders to arbitrarily revoke individuals of their citizenship and deport people from the kingdom. In 2014,



NPRA Headquarters

the government amended the 1963 nationality legislation to empower the MOI to denaturalize Bahrainis by administrative order. The law now provides that “Bahraini citizenship may be revoked, upon request from the Interior Minister and approval of the cabinet, from any naturalised person” who has, among other things, been “found guilty of a crime connected with honour and integrity” within ten years of receiving it.⁸⁶ Furthermore, it enables the MOI to issue extrajudicial revocation orders for any citizen who: “(1) serves in a foreign army, (2) helps to or serves a hostile country, and (3) causes harm to the interests of the kingdom.”⁸⁷ In addition to the anti-terror legislation, which allows the courts to strip Bahrainis of their citizenship for broad terror offenses, these vague provisions give the MOI wide discretion to issue arbitrary revocation orders against activists and government critics alongside actual violent extremists. Unlike court-ordered denaturalization, the MOI’s revocation orders are often ineligible for standard appeal.

The Bahraini government has denaturalized more than 700 Bahrainis since 2012, and more than a hundred of these individuals were subject to MOI revocation orders. The majority of those affected are members of the kingdom’s marginalized Shia Muslim community, and many are rendered stateless. While still in Bahrain, they are unable to own property or open bank accounts, access healthcare and social services, or enroll for education. Additionally, because Bahrain’s legislation prevents women from

82 “Suspect remanded in custody for misusing social media,” Bahrain News Agency, 25 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/832799>

83 See the following Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reports: “Suspect remanded in custody for misusing social media,” BNA, 25 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/832799>; “Three social media misusers remanded,” BNA, 27 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/833260>; “Suspect remanded in custody for posting defamatory tweets,” BNA, 28 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/833446>; “Suspect remanded in custody for defamatory tweets,” BNA, 30 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/833832>; “Five suspects arrested for posting defamatory tweets,” BNA, 31 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/833835>; “Abusive tweeter investigated,” BNA, 1 April 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/834036>

84 “Five suspects arrested for posting defamatory tweets,” Bahrain News Agency, 31 March 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/833835>

85 “Bahrain Vows Greater Crackdown on Online Criticism Amid New Arrests,” ADHRB, 30 March 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/03/bahrain-vows-greater-crackdown-on-online-criticism-amid-new-arrests/>

86 “HM the King ratifies law amending some provisions of the Citizenship Law,” BNA, 7 July 2014, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/625156>

87 *Bahraini Citizenship Act (last amended 1981)*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 16 September 1963, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3fb9f34f4.html>

passing Bahraini citizenship to their children, the arbitrary denaturalization of a man can result in the collective punishment of his entire family. Bahraini children that are rendered stateless are forced to apply for residency permits from the NPRA and, once they are adults, obtain sponsorship from an employer in order to continue living in the kingdom. If they have not left Bahrain and are denied residency or sponsorship, denaturalized individuals and their families are typically arrested by the NPRA or other MOI personnel and forcibly deported to another country. Prior to deportation, they are commonly held in the NPRA's two detention facilities: the Men's Removal Center (MRC) and the Women's Removal Center (WRC). According to the government's own reports in 2016, neither facility is equipped with surveillance cameras,⁸⁸ despite MOI claims to have installed cameras in all locations where detainees are held by 2014, in accordance with BICI Recommendation 1720.g to increase audiovisual recording.⁸⁹ Officers in both facilities are not trained in the legal use of force or in the management of risk of self-harm. The WRC is particularly unhygienic and severely overcrowded, at almost double its capacity at the time of reporting, with some detainees sleeping on the floor.⁹⁰

In coordination with the ministries of information and foreign affairs, the NPRA is also responsible for approving entry into the kingdom,⁹¹ and it plays a key role in the government policy to ban or deport virtually all independent international journalists or observers that attempt to visit Bahrain. From 2011 to 2016, more than 250 such individuals were denied access, including representatives of nearly every foreign media outlet.⁹² In February 2016, for example, American reporter Anna Day and three cameramen were arrested and deported for attempting to cover protests around the anniversary of the 2011 pro-democracy movement. German journalist Robert Kempe attempted to travel to Bahrain to cover

the FIFA congress in May 2017, but when he applied for a journalism visa it was denied.⁹³ Kempe believes the decision was due to a February 2016 report he filed that contained allegations of human rights violations against a member of the Bahraini ruling family, Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, who is also FIFA's vice-president. In December 2017, a correspondent for *The Economist*, Gregg Carlstrom, reported he was denied entry to cover the Manama Dialogue, an international security conference.⁹⁴ Some journalists, like *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, have been informally banned from the country for years.

The NPRA has extended this treatment to foreign government officials and human rights organizations as well. In July 2014, the authorities expelled Tom Malinowski, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, after he met with Sheikh Ali Salman, the leader of Bahrain's chief political opposition group.⁹⁵ That August, the government denied entry to US Congressman Jim McGovern, the Democratic Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC), as well as Brian Dooley, then Director of the Human Rights Defenders program at Human Rights First.⁹⁶ Dooley was again denied access in April 2018, when he and Lars Aslan Rasmussen, a member of Denmark's parliament, attempted to visit imprisoned Danish-Bahraini human rights defender Abdulhadi al-Khawaja for his birthday.⁹⁷ The government did the same to a researcher for Human Rights Watch in May 2017.⁹⁸ Likewise, ADHRB has been repeatedly denied entry to meet with the government's human rights bodies and to participate in official consultations; one ADHRB representative submitted a 12-page visa application and a formal request to participate in the national Universal Periodic Review (UPR) consultations that occurred in 2016⁹⁹ but never received a response.

88 *Report 11 – Unannounced Visit to the Men's Removal Center (MRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/0ad15b6e-6cc8-4ab1-8573-a9dd3619ef80_Mens%20Removal%20Center-English.pdf; and *Report 12 – Unannounced visit to the Women's Removal Center (WRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/6c5fdde8-3403-420e-a561-3822e6d0dbb4_Women%E2%80%99s%20Removal%20Center-English.pdf

89 See: Andrew Hammond, "Bahrain police install cameras to curb abuse," Reuters, 22 March 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-bahrain-police-rights/bahrain-police-install-cameras-to-curb-abuse-idUKBRE82L0NE20120322>; and *Moving Beyond 2011*, BICI Follow-Up Unit, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2014, <http://www.biciunit.bh/reports/BICI%20Implementation%20report%20ENGLISH.pdf>

90 *Report 11 – Unannounced Visit to the Men's Removal Center (MRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/0ad15b6e-6cc8-4ab1-8573-a9dd3619ef80_Mens%20Removal%20Center-English.pdf; and *Report 12 – Unannounced visit to the Women's Removal Center (WRC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/6c5fdde8-3403-420e-a561-3822e6d0dbb4_Women%E2%80%99s%20Removal%20Center-English.pdf

91 See, for example: "Multiple re-entry e-visas soon, says official," BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 18 February 2015, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/654818>

92 "At Least 250 Journalists/Observers Denied Access to Bahrain Since 2011," Bahrain Watch, 18 February 2016, <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2016/02/18/access-denied-to-bahrain-reaches-250/>

93 "German reporter denied Bahrain visa to cover FIFA congress," CPI, last modified May 10, 2017, <https://cpi.org/2017/05/german-reporter-denied-bahrain-visa-to-cover-fifa-php>

94 Gregg Carlstrom, @glcarlstrom, 8 December 2017, <https://twitter.com/glcarlstrom/status/939105304440053761>

95 "Expelled US diplomat Tom Malinowski condemns Bahrain," BBC, 8 July 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-28221189>

96 "U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern Issues Statement on Refusal of Bahraini Government to Grant Him Access to Bahrain," Office of Jim McGovern, Congressman for the 2nd District of Massachusetts, 21 August 2014, <https://mcgovern.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=396631>

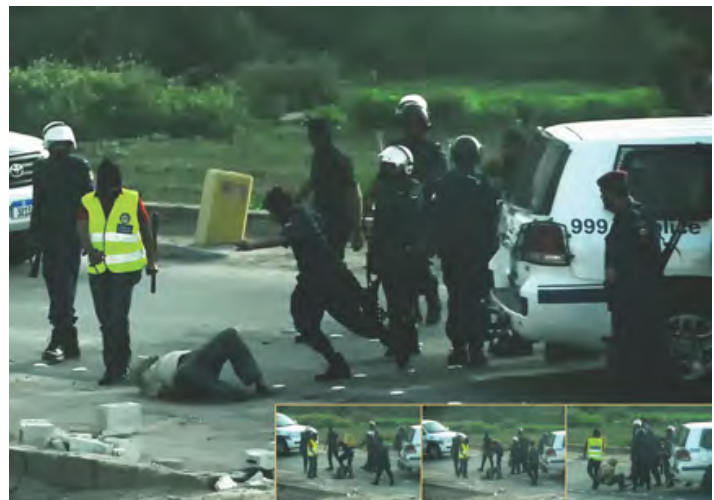
97 "Bahrain denies entry to Danish lawmaker who planned visit to jailed activist," Reuters, 4 April 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-rights/bahrain-denies-entry-to-danish-lawmaker-who-planned-visit-to-jailed-activist-idUSKCN1HB1C6>

98 "Bahrain Denies Entry to Human Rights Watch Representative," Human Rights Watch, 10 May 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/10/bahrain-denies-entry-human-rights-watch-representative>

99 "National consultation session for UPR Report held," BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 22 February 2016, <https://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/712385>

The NPRA is additionally charged with enforcing travel bans on domestic residents,¹⁰⁰ which are regularly issued by the MOJ as a form of reprisal against independent civil society actors. Though the NPRA has specifically emphasized that it is simply “carrying out” court orders, activists and journalists regularly report that NPRA and other MOI officials block them from traveling without providing reference to a judicial decision or any other reason; in some instances, the MOI has prevented individuals from traveling even when officials have explicitly confirmed that no judicial travel ban exists, as in the case of prominent journalist and torture survivor Nazeeha Saeed.¹⁰¹ Estimates indicate that the government has issued arbitrary travel

bans on more than 100 people in retaliation for their activism or on the suspicion they hold dissident views.¹⁰² The list includes human rights defenders, journalists, and political figures like Essa Al-Ghayeb; Ebtisam Al-Saegh; Ebrahim Demistani; Nazeeha Saeed;¹⁰³ Mohammed Al-Tajer;¹⁰⁴ Ahmed Radhi; Sheikh Maytham al-Salman; Dr. Taha al-Derazi;¹⁰⁵ Abdunabi al-Ekry; Nedal al-Salman; Enas Oun; Hussain Radhi; Ahmed Saffar;¹⁰⁶ Sayed Hadi al-Mousawi; Ebrahim Sharif; Farida Ghulam; and Radhi al-Musawi. In addition to violating their right to freedom of movement, these bans have specifically prevented such activists from attending international events like the UN Human Rights Council.¹⁰⁷



Clockwise, from left: SSFC personnel vandalizing a civilian vehicle along with a plainclothes individual; firing teargas haphazardly; and beating a bound and blindfolded detainee.

100 According to the Bahraini government: “The NPRA official said that travel bans and such other punitive measures are only handed out by the court of law. The NPRA and the emigration are only organs of the executive tasked to carry out the decree of the court.” See: “Multiple re-entry e-visas soon, says official,” BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 18 February 2015, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/654818>

101 “Bahrain: Travel ban imposed on journalist Nazeeha Saeed,” Gulf Center for Human Rights, 30 June 2016, <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1305>

102 Brian Dooley, “Bahrain Travel Bans Reveal Insecurity,” Huffington Post, 15 November 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-dooley/bahrain-travel-bans-revea_b_12987660.html

103 Jesse Schatz, “Travel Ban Prevents Journalist From Leaving Bahrain,” ADHRB, 7 July 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/07/10317/>

104 “Authorities Impose Several Travel Bans as Crackdown on HRDs Continues,” CIVICUS, 23 September 2016, <https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2016/09/23/crackdown-against-human-rights-defenders-and-activists-continue-bahrain/>

105 “Bahrain: Gov’t Prosecutes Religious Freedoms Advocate Sheikh Maytham Al-Salman and Rights Activist Al-Derazi for ‘Illegal Gathering,’” ADHRB, 15 August 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/08/bahrain-govt-prosecutes-religious-freedoms-advocate-sheikh-maytham-al-salman-rights-activist-al-derazi-illegal-gathering/>

106 “Bahraini Authorities Continue Crackdown on Activists: More Human Rights Defenders and BCHR Members Face Reprisals,” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, and ECDHR, 16 November 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/11/11328/>; “Ebtisam Al-Saegh summoned for interrogation,” Frontline Defenders, 23 November 2016, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/ebtisam-al-saegh-summoned-interrogation>

107 “Bahrain Authorities Prevent Civil Society Members and Human Rights Defenders from Participating in UN HRC 32,” ADHRB, 13 June 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/06/bahrain-authorities-prevent-civil-society-members-human-rights-defenders-participating-un-hrc-32/>



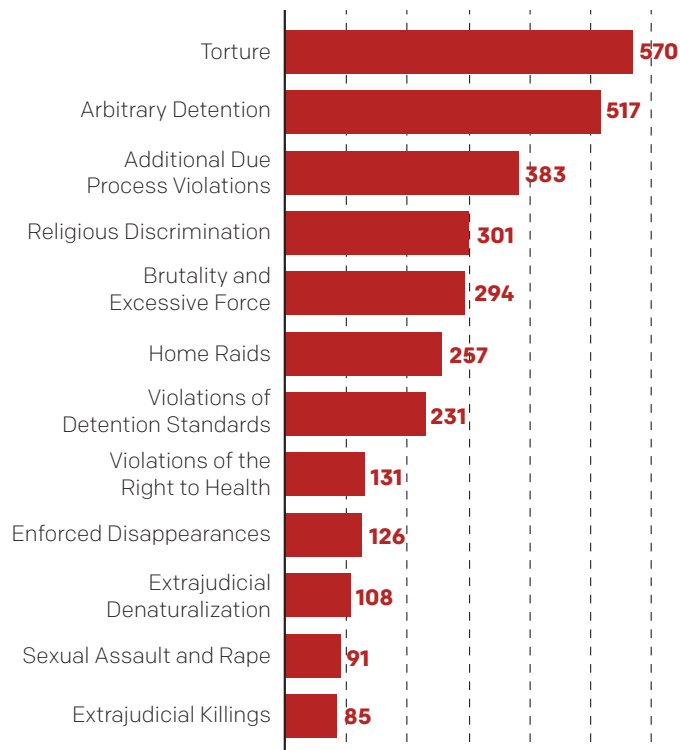
*A Policy of Repression:
Widespread and
Systematic Abuses*

The various agencies of the MOI coordinate to perpetrate widespread and systematic human rights violations, including arbitrary detention and warrantless home raids; enforced disappearance; torture; due process interference; substandard detention conditions; denial of healthcare; excessive force and police brutality; and religious discrimination. These are not isolated abuses – ADHRB has documented these crimes consistently through time, with roughly the same frequency from 2011 to 2017 and early 2018 – and are perpetrated by virtually every command level of the MOI. They could not occur without the knowledge and approval of the highest command echelon, up to Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan and Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah. Violating human rights is a necessary means to the MOI’s ultimate goal: enforcing compliance with the regime through state terror. Each repressive policy or violent assault is launched in the commission of a larger crime, with each subdivision of the MOI working together as part of the broader ministry-wide effort to suppress dissent.

A. ARBITRARY DETENTION AND WARRANTLESS HOME RAIDS

Together, arbitrary detention and warrantless home raids are the most common human rights violations committed in Bahrain, with the CID and SSFC the lead perpetrators. Home invasion and detention is arbitrary when the target is wanted for offenses that have no basis in international law – like “insulting the king” under Article 214 of Bahrain’s Penal Code – or when the authorities provide no warrant or related grounds for search and arrest. The CID and the SSFC, as well as the local governorate police forces, knowingly detain individuals solely for exercising basic human rights and they almost universally refuse to present legal grounds for their actions. Thousands of arrests related to nonviolent acts of expression, association, and assembly are documented every year in Bahrain, resulting in the arbitrary detention of peaceful demonstrators, political activists, journalists, religious leaders, and human rights defenders. Hundreds more are detained by the MOI in the absence of any documentation or reason for arrest, with coerced confessions extracted under torture providing retroactive justification. Arbitrary detention is strongly correlated with torture in Bahrain, and the arbitrarily detained are at an extremely high risk of experiencing other human rights abuses like enforced disappearance and unfair trial.¹⁰⁸

**MOI Human Rights Abuses:
Frequency by Type**



ADHRB’s documentation implicates the MOI in over 1,000 discrete cases of abuse, each of which typically involves multiple human rights violations (e.g., arbitrary detention and torture).

ADHRB has documented 517 arbitrary arrests and 257 home raids specifically attributable to the MOI. In addition to home raids, arbitrary arrests frequently occur at checkpoints, travel hubs, courts, hospitals, and other public spaces where MOI personnel maintain a presence. SSFC and local governorate personnel also routinely conduct mass arbitrary arrests while dispersing protests, such as in May 2017, when the MOI detained 286 individuals during a lethal raid on a peaceful sit-in in Diraz, violating their rights to free assembly (see Section 3.E for more information on excessive force).

Arbitrary arrests resulting from home raids are generally more targeted than other types of arbitrary detention, such as street arrests. In 2011, the BICI found that the “pattern of [home raid] arrests indicated the existence of an operational plan,” describing the standard attack as follows:

Security forces systematically raided houses in order to arrest individuals, and in so doing terrified the occupants. These arrests were performed during the night and in pre-dawn raids by hooded persons, who intentionally broke down doors, forcibly entered

108 “From the Ground: Arbitrary and Unlawful Arrests in Bahrain,” ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 10 February 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/02/8768/>

and sometimes ransacked the houses. This practice was often accompanied by sectarian insults and verbal abuse. Women and children and other family members frequently witnessed these events. In many of the reported cases, the women were asked to stand in their sleeping clothes, thus humiliating the women and other relatives present, and terrifying the children. The arrested persons were taken blindfolded to places of detention that at the time were unknown to the arrested persons.¹⁰⁹

In the seven years since, the MOI has continued to employ this same operational plan with little deviation. Homes are typically identified by the GDCIFS or the NSA and the raid is then centrally planned and executed by an MOI agency like the SSFC with local police support. Planned raids are conducted with clear intent to terrify the occupants: a mix of uniformed or plainclothes officers, usually with their faces covered to prevent identification, violently enter the property without notice late at night or in the early morning, kicking open doors, aggressively interrogating the homeowners, and confiscating personal items. The home is often surrounded, including with armored vehicles and helicopters. The target is invariably bound and beaten, while any family members or onlookers may be subject to additional abuse, intimidation, or harassment. In one case in 2013, the younger brother of an MOI target suffering from existing mental disabilities was so traumatized by a violent police raid on his home that he lapsed into a coma and required hospitalization for over 18 months. ADHRB has documented more than 70 cases – approximately 28 percent of all home raids – in which the target is blindfolded to cause further disorientation. Almost in no instances are family members told where the target is taken at time of arrest, though they are most frequently transferred to the CID for torture and interrogation. In some cases, the SSFC or other MOI personnel raid a target's place of work or apprehend them as they leave to return home; these are conducted in a similar fashion, though they largely occur during the day.

The pattern of home raids also reveals the personal vindictiveness of a small police state intent on demonstrating virtual omnipotence, particularly in the aftermath of the 2011 mass protests. Once a target is identified as a potential protester or dissident, MOI personnel are relentless in their pursuit, often conducting repeated warrantless home raids for years at a time. After the initial aftermath of the Arab Spring demonstrations and the BICI investigation,

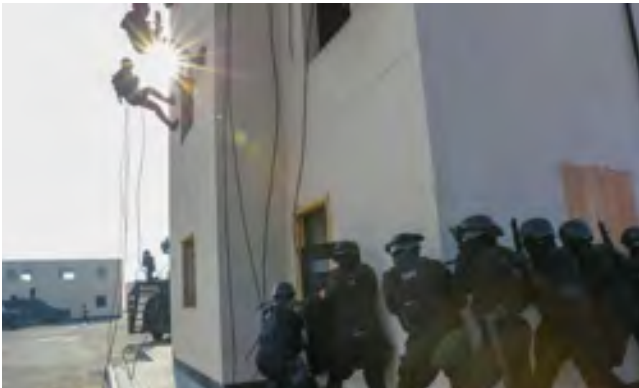
ADHRB has consistently documented MOI personnel renewing arbitrary manhunts against individuals active during the protests who avoided prolonged imprisonment. In many cases these pursuits verged on personal vendetta, with police recurrently raiding a target's familial home with full knowledge that the wanted individual is elsewhere, causing damage and frightening occupants. Sometimes they explicitly threatened to re-arrest individuals released in 2011 and early 2012, later making good on their promise. In the case of one individual whose original arbitrary arrest and torture was documented in the BICI report, the MOI proceeded to raid his family's home regularly from 2012 to 2016, breaking personal property and cutting off the electricity. One activist that went into hiding during the crackdown in 2011 saw his home raided more than 12 times within the next two years. In other cases, the MOI continued to raid a target's home even after he was detained and incarcerated simply to punish and intimidate the family.

Notably, while these raids follow a clear operational plan, GDCIFS and NSA intelligence is not perfect: in some cases documented by ADHRB, MOI forces admitted to raiding the wrong home. Even in these instances it is common for officers to arrest at least one occupant for interrogation and torture.

Between random street arrests and targeted home raids, the MOI also conducts mass home invasions in circumstances where their target is unidentified and they seek to collectively punish or intimidate a particular neighborhood. The MOI institutes this *de facto* policy in response to violent clashes with police forces or large protests that were dispersed without substantial arrests, cordoning off the entire area in which the incident occurred and systematically raiding every home in the vicinity. Police will commonly detain all teenage to middle-age males for interrogation and torture. Recent amendments to Bahrain's anti-terror law have effectively legitimated the MOI policy of collective punishment and imbued the police with additional powers to suspend human rights during supposed counterterror operations. The law, which virtually defines peaceful anti-government criticism as terrorism, now allows the MOI to "search individuals, stop and search vehicles, restrict the right of movement of vehicles, public transport or pedestrians, cut communications and messages sent from the scene of the crime and sites where anti-terror operations are taking place, for a period of up to 12 hours."¹¹⁰ In practice the

109 Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria al-Awadhi, Philippe Kirsch, and Mahnoush Arsanjani, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, <http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf>

110 "Bahraini Authorities Introduce Additional Oppressive Laws," ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 22 December 2015, <https://www.adhrb.org/2015/12/bahraini-authorities-introduce-additional-oppressive-laws/>



Clockwise from top left: SSFC personnel making arrest; SSFC and other MOI police officers kick down door in Diraz (2017); MOI house raid exercise with SSFC and Police Aviation personnel (2016); Riot officers pepper spray a detainee; SSFC raid simulated home during exercise (2016); SSFC personnel arrest youth

MOI is not bound by even these limits, however, and for over a year, from June 2016 until May 2017, it maintained a security cordon around Diraz from which it launched raids, restricted movement, and arbitrarily searched and detained inhabitants. Evidence suggests that the MOI or other government authorities also ordered Bahrain's major internet service providers (ISPs) to impose a daily blackout within the security perimeter – a form of internet interference condemned by the UN.¹¹¹

The MOI campaign of arbitrary detentions has contributed to the virtual dismantling of independent civil society in Bahrain, with dozens of leading human rights defenders, journalists, religious leaders, and opposition figures imprisoned. ADHRB has documented 111 cases of reprisal against such individuals for their work or activism that are directly attributable to MOI, including the arbitrary detention and abuse of high-profile prisoners of conscience like BCHR's Nabeel Rajab and Sheikh Ali Salman of the Al-Wefaq opposition group (see ADHRB's report, *Crushing Civil Society, for more information on reprisals*).¹¹²

B. ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Following initial arbitrary arrest by MOI personnel, detainees are at high risk of enforced disappearance, defined as the deprivation of an individual's liberty against their will by government authorities who fail to disclose the detainee's fate and whereabouts.¹¹³ Since 2011, the MOI – particularly the CID with support of the SSFC, governorate police forces and, increasingly, the NSA – have disappeared hundreds of individuals. From November 2014 to November 2015, for example, BCHR recorded 441 cases of enforced disappearance in Bahrain.¹¹⁴ In 37 percent of these cases, the victims were children under the age of 18.

ADHRB has so far documented 145 cases of enforced disappearance in Bahrain from 2010 to 2018, 126 of which specifically implicate police personnel or MOI facilities. Of the 145 total cases, 128 of the individuals disappeared are male and 17 are female, and the ages range between 13 and 48 years of age at the time of disappearance. In a minority of the 126 cases involving police personnel or facilities, the NSA appears as the lead perpetrator with the MOI in a support role; in the remaining 19 cases that do not explicitly implicate the MOI, the perpetrator is identifiable solely as the NSA, the BDF, or an unknown entity. Authorities typically conduct disappearances without a

NABEEL RAJAB

In June 2016, MOI personnel re-arrested leading human rights defender and president of BCHR Nabeel Rajab on charges that stemmed solely from his activism. In July 2017, he was sentenced in absentia to two years in



prison for giving media interviews in which he criticized Bahrain's restrictions on press freedom. The trial has been condemned as an unfair violation of due process and free expression by virtually all independent international observers, including the UN

High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the US Government. An appellate court confirmed the sentence on 22 November 2017. During this same period, Rajab was also prosecuted on charges stemming from Tweets in which he criticized the war in Yemen and documented torture in Bahrain's prison system"; he was sentenced to five years in prison on these charges in February 2018, and the ruling was upheld in June, and again in December. He has now exhausted all legal remedies to reverse the charges, and will remain in prison until 2023. Rajab is currently serving his sentences in Jau Prison after being held in pre-trial detention in the Southern Police Directorate's East Riffa facility. He has suffered degrading treatment in both facilities, including unhygienic conditions and interference in his medical care at East Riffa, resulting in emergency hospitalizations. In 2018, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued a formal opinion declaring Rajab's imprisonment unlawful.



MOI officer points teargas launcher at Nabeel Rajab

111 Bill Marzcek, "Time for some Internet Problems in Duraz': Bahraini ISPs Impose Internet Curfew in Protest Village," Bahrain Watch, 3 August 2016, <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2016/08/03/bahrain-internet-curfew/>

112 *Crushing Civil Society: Bahraini Government Reprisals for International Engagement*, ADHRB, June 2017, http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017.6.5_crushing-civil-society_web.pdf

113 See Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances Addendum, *Best practices on enforced disappearances in domestic criminal legislation*, A/HRC/16/48/Add.3 (28 Dec. 2010), para. 21.

114 *Bahrain: 2015, Human Rights Violations from Practice to Policy*, BCHR, 10 April 2016, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7786>

formal warrant (*see Section 3.A on arbitrary detention above*), making it difficult to determine the exact agency or agencies holding an individual. In many of these instances, it is still highly likely that MOI personnel or facilities were at least temporarily involved in the disappearance, and the disappeared usually resurface in MOI custody.

Bahrain's disappeared are most commonly taken to the CID headquarters or otherwise into CID custody, where they are prevented from communicating with the outside world. In many cases, they are repeatedly transferred to and from the CID to other MOI facilities, including local police stations, Dry Dock, Jau, or unofficial blacksites (*see below*). MOI officials refuse to disclose any information to the detainee's family during this period, often including acknowledgement of the detention itself. Disappearances are typically short-term, ranging from 12 hours to 90 days, however in some cases the detaining authorities have failed to reveal the whereabouts of a detainee for months.¹¹⁵ The average disappearance recorded by ADHRB is 14.6 days in length, excluding cases of indeterminate length as well as the long-term disappearances of defendants in the 2017 military trial of civilians – the first since the internationally condemned emergency tribunals of 2011. These latter cases, which implicated a variety of actors from the MOI to the BDF, ranged from 331 to 575 days, for an average of 448 days (*see below* for details). In 60 percent of disappearances recorded by ADHRB, authorities also subject the individual to torture or other ill treatment; one of these individuals, Ali al-Singace, was later executed after an unfair trial in January 2017 (*See Section 3.B.i below*).

The 2017 military trial disappearances demonstrate a disturbing trend toward the elongation of the practice, as well as a renewed point of coordination between the MOI and the BDF that had been largely suspended since 2011. The cases of two of the disappeared civilian defendants, Sayed Alawi Hussain al-Alawi and Fadhel Sayed Abbas Hassan Rahdi, are illustrative. On 24 October 2016, plainclothes police disappeared al-Alawi from his place of work without a warrant for arrest. After al-Alawi's family filed a missing person's report with the local police directorate, the MOI informed them that he was being held by the CID but that the family was not allowed to speak with him. The local police provided no other information regarding his wellbeing or whereabouts, but instructed the family to withdraw their missing person's report. Both the CID and Dry Dock Detention Center repeatedly denied custody of Al-Alawi in response to requests by his family, who subsequently filed a number of complaints throughout the following nine months

with the MOI's Ombudsman and the Special Investigations Unit of the PPO at the MOJ. Despite these complaints and several visits to various detention centers, al-Alawi's family continued to be denied information. His whereabouts were unknown for a total of 549 days.

Likewise, on 28 September 2016, SSFC riot police and plainclothes officers raided Radhi's home in Hamad Town and arrested him in the middle of the night. As soon as Radhi was detained, his family lost all contact with him and the authorities withheld all information on his location or condition. Radhi's family made numerous, weekly attempts to get information from the MOJ's PPO, but the authorities refused. Radhi was ultimately disappeared for 575 days.

In October 2017, al-Alawi and Radhi were formally transferred into BDF custody to be tried by the military court in a closed terrorism case. Despite reports of torture and due process violations including the denial of legal counsel, the military court sentenced both men to death on 25 December 2017; higher military courts confirmed the sentences in 2018 and while the king accepted the ruling, he ultimately commuted the sentences to life imprisonment. This is the first time the MOI and the Bahraini military have directly collaborated in the detention, disappearance, and torture of detainees since 2011. The UN Special Procedures mandate holders for arbitrary detention; disappearances; executions; freedom of opinion and expression; independence of judges and lawyers; human rights while countering terrorism; torture; and freedom of religion all issued a joint communication to Bahrain in February 2018 expressing grave concern over the case and condemning the dangerous precedent.¹¹⁶ Only after the highest military court upheld the sentences against al-Alawi and Radhi in April 2018 were their families permitted to see them.

C. TORTURE

Torture is systemic in Bahrain, and it is institutionalized within the MOI. It is the single most common human rights abuse in the kingdom, and it is used to extract false testimony and ensure convictions; punish perceived enemies of the state; and otherwise degrade dissidents in reprisal for activism and related offenses. It is the foundation for the "barrier of fear" that all police states build, and which protesters say was temporarily ruptured in Bahrain during the mass demonstrations of 2011.¹¹⁷ Torture and the MOI personnel who inflict it are integral to the reconstruction of this barrier, and the persistence of state terror in Bahrain.

115 "Bahrain: Events of 2015," Human Rights Watch, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/bahrain>

116 "GCC Cases Raised in the HRC 38 Special Procedures Joint Communications Report," ADHRB, 8 June 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/06/gcc-cases-raised-in-the-hrc-38-special-procedures-joint-communications-report/>

117 Anonymous Bahraini protesters, paraphrased in: Erika Solomon, "Thousands rally for reform in Bahrain," Reuters, 11 June 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain/thousands-rally-for-reform-in-bahrain-idUSTRE75A19G20110611>

ADHRB has recorded 570 discrete incidents of torture perpetrated by MOI agencies, chief among them the CID. Torture is ubiquitous across initial detention centers overseen by the CID and the local police directorates as well as GDRR facilities like the Jau and Isa Town prisons. Violence against detainees is casual and commonplace.

MOI personnel employ a range of torture methods varying in sophistication and cruelty – as one detainee put it in 2017, they are subjected to “every type of torture you can imagine.” The most common method, employed in 83 percent of all torture sessions, is beating with fists, weapons, or blunt objects. Other methods include forced standing, hanging, or stress positions (29 percent); electric shock (17 percent); and sexual assault, including rape (16 percent). ADHRB has recorded over 200 cases of MOI officials depriving detainees of water, food, sleep, and access to a toilet. In nearly a quarter of the cases documented by ADHRB, torture survivors report that security forces either prevented them from praying or subjected them to sectarian insults, hate speech, or some other form of religious discrimination; this is typically targeted at Shia Muslim detainees, as the MOI – and Bahrain’s security apparatus as a whole – is made up almost entirely of Sunni Muslims (*see Section 3.G below for more information on religious discrimination*). In several cases, MOI interrogators forcibly removed detainees’ toenails; forced them to drink urine; stabbed or lacerated them; pepper sprayed them; or forcibly injected them with a drug or unknown substance. In addition to direct abuse, ADHRB has recorded more than 100 cases in which MOI personnel threatened detainees and their family members with torture, sexual assault, or other harm, such as fabricated criminal charges. Officers often falsely inform detainees that their loved ones are already in custody, at imminent risk of rape, torture, or murder. A smaller amount of detainees report that MOI personnel directly threatened to kill them, including putting a gun to their head. Survivors of MOI torture sessions regularly suffer from persistent and lasting effects of the abuse, some of which result in permanent injury or death.

MOI personnel most frequently torture individuals during their initial detention at the CID or local police stations to extract confessions or forced testimony. Often, the individual is beaten during arrest and in transit to the initial detention location. It is standard practice for MOI personnel to forcibly disappear detainees or hold them *incommunicado* during the period of initial detention, either at official facilities or at black sites in order to



“[I’ve suffered] every type of torture you can imagine.”

– Bahraini political prisoner, 2017

disorient the individuals and prevent their family or legal counsel from intervening. MOI personnel sometimes intensify the effect of torture and enforced disappearance by repeatedly transferring detainees to and from different interrogation facilities and torture sites (*see Section 3.B for more information on enforced disappearances, and Section 3.D for more information on due process violations*).

GDRR officers also use torture as a form of control, punishment, and humiliation within the prison system, and they are increasingly implicated in initial interrogations. In 2017, for example, MOI personnel temporarily transferred 16-year-old Hussain Marhoon to Jau’s interrogation facilities after torturing him at Exhibition Police Station in Manama; at Jau, officers hung him by his arms and legs and proceeded to beat him until blood was streaming from his face.¹¹⁸ In other cases, GDRR personnel target whole groups of inmates for torture. One of the most severe cases of mass, punitive torture at Jau occurred over several months in spring 2015.¹¹⁹ In March, the authorities responded to unrest at the facility with excessive force and intensified torture. Although only a minority of the inmates participated in the riot, which began as a protest against the facility’s increasingly overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, the government collectively punished the entire prison population. SSFC units and other MOI personnel fired tear gas into enclosed spaces and beat inmates indiscriminately, including minors. Once they regained control of the prison, the authorities continued to torture the inmates, beating them and depriving them of food and sleep. Some inmates were specifically targeted and forcibly disappeared elsewhere in the prison. The authorities took many political prisoners and those suspected of instigating the unrest to Building 10, which incarcerated BCHR cofounder Abdulhadi al-Khawaja has described as “the torture building.”¹²⁰ At least 100 inmates were transferred to Building 10 in the weeks following the riot. Police who hesitated to abuse the prisoners were reprimanded and transferred. While the government claims to have installed some cameras in Jau, much of this abuse occurred in the lobbies, bathrooms, or solitary confinement cells where there is no official

118 “Profiles in Persecution: Hani and Hussain Marhoon,” ADHRB, 12 April 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/04/profiles-in-persecution-hani-and-hussain-marhoon/>
119 *Inside Jau: Government Brutality in Bahrain’s Central Prison*, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, May 2015, http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Inside-Jau-Report_Final.pdf
120 *Ibid.*

MOI BLACK SITE: KHAYALA

- Located in Budaiya, near Northern Police Directorate Facilities
- Active from at least 2012-2017
- Used for enforced disappearance and torture
- Linked to notorious CID officer Isa Awad al-Majali

The Interior Minister is said to be focused on evolving the ceremonial Mounted Unit of the Budaiya police into “one of the best in the region” and a symbol of the MOI’s supposed achievements.¹ Yet the Mounted Unit’s old stables are a literal manifestation of the MOI’s most egregious human rights violations like torture and enforced disappearance. Known as *Khayala* and located near the Northern Police Directorate’s Budaiya police station, the stables are one the MOI’s unofficial black sites: an unofficial torture chamber. Like other black sites, MOI personnel have used *Khayala* for particularly cruel or brutal torture sessions prior to transferring detainees to the CID for formal interrogation. While the use of torture – especially to extract false testimony – is a de facto policy for MOI agencies like the CID, black sites such as *Khayala* also appear to be utilized for less targeted abuse and even outright sadism: according to an opposition media report, police brought detainees for beatings at *Khayala* as a way of “celebrating” achievements.² ADHRB has documented several cases that reveal the types of human rights violations that take place at *Khayala*, including the arrest of photographer **Hussam Mahdi Suroor**.³

Hussam is an amateur photographer who has repeatedly risked government reprisal to publicize protests and human rights violations in Bahrain. On 4 September 2014, police stopped then 17-year-old Hussam’s car near Diraz and arrested him and a passenger. The authorities immediately took Hussam and his friend to *Khayala* where they subjected them to severe beatings. Hussam was effectively disappeared for five days, after which he was permitted to call his family and tell them that he had been transferred to the CID. Under Bahrain’s anti-terror legislation, Hussam was remanded into custody for 60 days without charge, pending investigation. Police had previously arrested and tortured Hussam in 2012 before releasing him without charges.



Mahmood Suroor



Hussam Mahdi Suroor

1 “Gallop, gallop and raring to go,” Gulf Weekly, August 2007,
2 “Bahrain: The Torturers Take “Selfie” with their Dangerous Capture: The Child Ahmed Al-Arab,” Bahrain Mirror, 2015, <http://bhmirror.myftp.biz/en/news/23889.html>
3 “Brothers Hussam and Mahmood Suroor Targeted for Freedom of Expression in Bahrain,” ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 28 October 2014, <https://www.adhrb.org/2014/10/brothers-hussam-and-mahmood-suroor-targeted-for-freedom-of-expression-in-bahrain/>

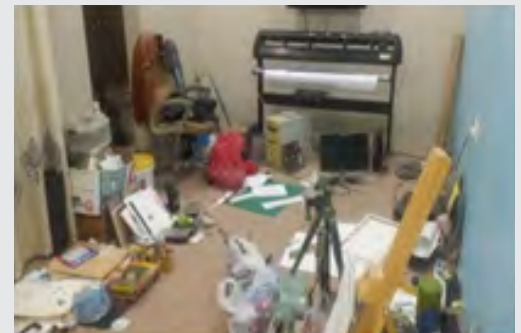
A month later, on 10 October 2014, MOI personnel launched a warrantless raid on the home of Hussam's brother, Mahmood Suroor. They also disappeared Mahmood, a 26-year-old artist, for five days before remanding him into pre-charge custody at Dry Dock Detention Center under the anti-terror law, though it is unclear if he was similarly tortured at Khayala. As is typical of MOI raids, the Suroor home was ransacked and police confiscated his phone, camera, laptop, and external hard drive.

ADHRB documented a similar case in July 2013: a large contingent of MOI personnel – including approximately 20 police cars, six armored vehicles, and a Police Aviation helicopter – raided a swimming pool and violently arrested Hasan,* almost running him over with a vehicle. MOI forces disappeared Hasan and between Khayala and the CID subjected him to extreme torture, including beating with sticks, pipes, and guns, as well as specialized falaka beating of the feet. CID officers placed him in “The Fridge,” an extremely cold room at their main facility, and prevented him from sleeping, using the toilet, and praying. They ultimately forced him to retroactively confess to involvement in a bombing, despite the fact that he was in custody at the time of the alleged incident. Hasan identified Isa al-Majali, an infamous CID officer, as the MOI official overseeing his abuse.

Khayala was active as recently as May 2017, when MOI personnel arrested a woman on allegations of harboring a fugitive and brought her to the black site for torture, including beating, sexual harassment, and threats of rape. The officers then transferred her to the CID for further abuse, including religious discrimination and time in “The Fridge.” There, they forced her to sign a confession she was prevented from reading, and she was ultimately sentenced to three years in prison at Isa Town.



The injuries Hussam sustained during his torture in 2012.



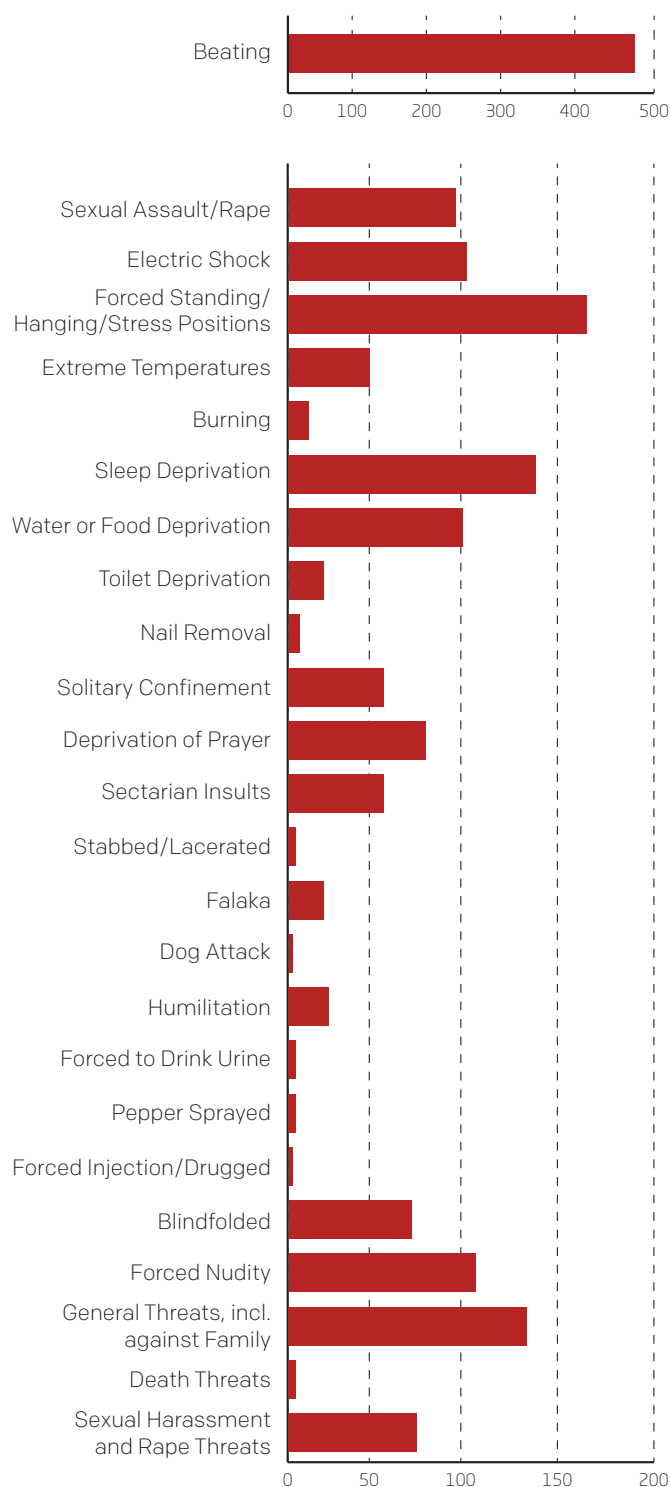
The Suroor home following the raid.

surveillance. On 15 April 2015, the UN Special Rapporteurs on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, human rights defenders, and torture, in conjunction with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, issued a joint communication to the Government of Bahrain in which they noted that the authorities' excessive response to the Jau unrest resulted in the injury of approximately 500 inmates.¹²¹ They also expressed concern that the authorities had rearrested human rights defender and BCHR president Nabeel Rajab after he documented cases of torture in Jau; Rajab is now imprisoned in Jau for that same offense.

In June 2016, a similar incident occurred at the Dry Dock Detention Center after 17 detainees reportedly escaped.¹²² According to the MOI, security forces immediately deployed dozens of police vehicles and set up checkpoints to search for the detainees. On 3 June, the day of the escape, a MOI spokesperson reported that the authorities had apprehended sixteen individuals who either escaped or "assisted in the planning and execution [of the escape]."¹²³ Six escapees reportedly remain at large. The authorities have not disclosed any details concerning the alleged escapees or the reasons for which they were incarcerated. ADHRB received reports from families of Dry Dock detainees, specifically those held in buildings used for the long-term detention of minors, claiming that the authorities have subjected inmates to increased abuse in retaliation for the alleged escape. According to the families, prison officials have blindfolded and physically beat the detainees and forced them to stand for long hours. They reportedly told the detainees that they deserved punishment because they did not report the escape attempt. Several inmates suffered injuries as a result of the torture. One detainee told his family that the authorities pulled him by his neck and hit his head on a wall. Guards reportedly forced a number of detainees to eat after they initiated a hunger strike several days into the reprisal campaign. Although many of the detainees' families have reported that they informed the MOI Ombudsman's Office of the abuse, it told several of the families that it was unable to intervene, citing difficulty communicating with the broader MOI in such cases (see Section 4 for more information on the obstacles to accountability).

MOI authorities have also targeted the close relatives of activists and torture survivors in attempts to cover up abuse or carry out further reprisals.¹²⁴ In some instances, officials have intimidated families in an attempt to dissuade

Torture Methods: Type and Frequency



121 "UA BHR 2/2015," UN OHCHR, Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 15 April 2015, [https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/30th/public_-_UA_Bahrain_15.04.15_\(2.2015\).pdf](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/30th/public_-_UA_Bahrain_15.04.15_(2.2015).pdf)

122 "Bahrain's Dry Dock Detention Center: Mass and Indiscriminate Punishment," ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, and ECDHR, 10 June 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/06/9905/>

123 Ibid.

124 "Champions for Justice: Victims of Government Reprisal," ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 7 January 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/01/champions-for-justice-victims-of-government-reprisals/>

SYSTEMATIC SEXUAL TORTURE: FROM CID TO JAU PRISON

The MOI has utilized the full range of torture techniques consistently and at largely steady rates through time: as with other types of abuse endemic to the MOI, ADHRB has documented cases and methods of torture at about the same frequency each year from 2011 to the present. This is true of even the most horrific acts of police brutality. ADHRB's documentation shows that MOI personnel commit acts of sexual torture (sexual assault and rape) at least 13 times a year, on average. This typically comprises beating and manipulation of genitals, or rape with an object, such as a baton or glass bottle. The majority of individuals subjected to sexual torture are men and boys, though the MOI has also sexually tortured women. Thirteen percent of sexual torture cases documented by ADHRB are minors, with the youngest just 13 years old. Those targeted include journalists, human rights defenders, religious leaders, medical personnel, political activists, and average protesters. Like other extreme forms of torture such as electric shock or removal of fingernails, MOI officers appear to specifically apply sexual torture as revenge against targets that have previously evaded detention. In the case of one individual wanted for protesting by the MOI since 2011, CID and Al-Hidd officers disappeared him in 2012 and proceeded to subject him to daily beatings, electric shocks, and sexual assault, including tying a rope around his penis to prevent urination. The CID is the most common perpetrator of sexual torture, as well as torture as whole, but ADHRB has recorded cases that implicate virtually all major MOI agencies and facilities, from the GDRR and the governorate police directorates to the NPRA. Inmates at Jau specifically allege that sexual torture is rife within the prison system. The statistical regularity of even the most heinous types of torture further demonstrate that these abuses are not random acts of violence, but part of standard MOI practice.

them from seeking accountability for the torture of their relatives.¹²⁵ MOI personnel have additionally coerced families into signing agreements that prevent them from protesting or publicly discussing relatives that have been tortured or killed, often under threat of further abuse.¹²⁶ In June 2016, the authorities likewise imposed a travel ban on the parents of two protestors killed by police, preventing them from attending the 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council to describe their experience of brutality

and excessive force.¹²⁷ In July 2016, activists reported that the fathers of two victims were detained by the MOI and awaiting transfer to the PPO for reasons unknown.¹²⁸

In other cases, the government has tortured individuals simply for being related to a human rights defender or opposition figure.¹²⁹ In 2015, for example, police arbitrarily arrested Ali Isa Ali al-Tajer, the brother of the human rights lawyer, Mohamed al-Tajer.¹³⁰ Police officials disappeared Ali al-Tajer for twenty-five days, tortured him, denied him proper legal counsel, and forced him to confess to charges of which he maintains his innocence. As is typical of torture cases in Bahrain, al-Tajer was prevented from receiving proper medical care for – and documentation of – the injuries he sustained under torture: when he finally saw a forensic doctor he was referred to three different medical specialists for a knee injury and a prolapsed disc in his spine, however the prosecutor in his case ultimately stated that the forensic doctor had not seen any signs of torture and rejected his claim. Al-Tajer remains in prison, and officials continue to deny his brother and attorney access to the interrogation records and medical reports. On 15 May 2018, the Fourth High Criminal Court sentenced Ali al-Tajer to five years in prison and denaturalization in a mass judgment of 138 people, after being held in pre-trial detention for more than two years; his conviction was based on a confession extracted from another defendant in the same case.¹³¹

D. DUE PROCESS

In combination with arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture, MOI police forces routinely interfere with the independence of judges and lawyers, undermine fair trials standards, or otherwise violate due process. Bahraini authorities operate with a presumption of guilt and typically arrest individuals without any evidence, with MOI personnel at times explicitly stating that detainees will be release only if they cannot prove anything against them. In virtually zero of the 570 MOI torture cases documented by ADHRB was the detainee able to access a lawyer within the first days of detention and interrogation. Almost always, if the MOI does eventually permit a detainee to access legal counsel, such communication occurs only following interrogation and the extraction of forced testimony. In addition to the 570 cases of torture, ADHRB has documented 383 cases of related due process

125 Ibid.

126 "Champions for Justice: Victims of Government Reprisal," ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 7 January 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/01/champions-for-justice-victims-of-government-reprisals/>

127 Tyler Pry, "Bahrain's Use of Travel Bans Are Reprisals Against Activists and HRDs," ADHRB, 25 July 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/07/bahrain-use-travel-bans-reprisals-activists-hrds/>

128 Maryam al-Khawaja, Twitter, 31 July 2016, <https://twitter.com/MARYAMALKHAWAJA/status/759786666542399488>

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/06/profiles-in-persecution-ali-isa-al-tajer/>



Nabeel Rajab examines torture wounds of released Jau inmate (2015)

abuses perpetrated by the MOI, including more than 200 cases of forced confessions or testimony.

Such systematic due process violations are facilitated by the incestuously close relationship between the MOI and the MOJ's public prosecutors. Until 2002, what is now the PPO was under the direct supervision of the MOI,¹³² setting a structural precedent that has continued to undermine the judicial system's capacity to function impartially. Even after the 2002 constitution separated the prosecutorial function from the MOI and placed it under the authority of the MOJ, for example, most of the PPO's staff remained former employees of the security forces. Moreover, sixty percent of the SIU, which was explicitly established to prosecute government abuse independent of both the MOI and the broader PPO, was made up of former MOI personnel in 2013,¹³³ and its Chief Public Prosecutor previously worked in the MOI's GDCIFS and as Deputy Attorney General under the PPO chief.¹³⁴

The MOI and PPO have exploited these connections to manipulate evidence, fabricate cases, and generally infringe on the right to presumed innocence. ADHRB has documented 110 cases of MOI personnel coordinating directly with the PPO to violate due process rights. Most commonly, prosecutors are not only aware that detainees have been tortured, but also actively threaten to return the detainees to the CID or to another MOI agency for continued abuse if they do not confirm or elaborate on forced testimony. In some cases, the prosecutors have physically assaulted the detainee themselves. Many of these secondary confessions are filmed and broadcast on state

media, an act that clearly violates international standards and which earned states like Russia and Iran sanction in the US and Europe.¹³⁵ In 2018, this practice was further revealed when British regulator Ofcom fined Saudi media outlet Al Arabiya over \$170,000 after the broadcaster aired false testimony extracted from opposition leader Hassan Mushaima under torture in 2011.¹³⁶ ADHRB has additionally recorded incidents where the MOI worked with the PPO to manufacture false evidence, most commonly by transporting detainees to outside locations and forcing them to act out an alleged crime under threat of continued torture; these false reenactments are often submitted to the prosecution or broadcast on television as well. In one case in 2016, for example, MOI and PPO authorities brought a group of detainees accused of committing a crime to the alleged scene, closed off the surrounding roads, and then ordered the accused to "re-enact" the presumed events of the crime while authorities photographed and videotaped them – at least one of the accused was later sentenced to death. Likewise, in 2013, MOI personnel abducted an individual at gunpoint, drove him in a police bus to an abandoned house, beat him, and forced him to say that he had identified it to them as an illegal weapons cache. Later, a prosecutor threatened to beat the accused with a piece of office equipment if he denied charges. Furthermore, while the MOI has seized weapons caches from fringe militant groups, it is unclear what regulations are in place – if any – to secure any captured armaments and prevent their use in fabricating evidence; political detainees have raised consistent allegations of MOI personnel planting weapons during home raids or other incidents, including prominent prisoner of conscience Khalil al-Halwachi,¹³⁷ and police have been caught on film creating and throwing criminal devices like Molotov cocktails.¹³⁸

MOI personnel also coordinate directly with the PPO to inhibit the work of defense attorneys by failing to disclose a defendant's whereabouts or by providing misleading information as to his or her location. For instance, MOI forces routinely refuse to disclose to defense attorneys any information about defendants' place of detention for several weeks at a time, which further extends the period in which a defendant is brought before a judge. Enforced

132 "BCHR: Bahrain - The Public Prosecution and its Violations to Human Rights," BCHR, 30 October 2009, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/2965>

133 *Implementation by the Government of Bahrain of the Recommendations by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, US Department of State, August 2013, <http://adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/State-Report-on-Implementation-of-BICI-3-2.pdf>

134 "BCHR: Bahrain-The Public Prosecution and its Violations to Human Rights," BCHR, 30 October 2009, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/2965>.

135 Peter Dahlin, "When TV Takes Part in Human Rights Abuse," *New York Times*, 20 April 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/20/opinion/china-media-television-forced-confessions.html>

136 "Al Arabiya News fined £120,000 (\$170,000) for violating privacy of Bahraini torture survivor," ADHRB and BIRD, 25 January 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/01/al-arabiya-news-fined-120000-171556-for-violating-privacy-of-bahraini-torture-survivor/>

137 See: "Release and ensure rights of wrongfully convicted scholar-activist Khalil Al-Halwachi," ADHRB, BIRD, Scholars at Risk, Committee of Concerned Scientists, and the European-Bahraini Organisation for Human Rights, 7 June 2017, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/2017/06/release-ensure-rights-wrongfully-convicted-scholar-activist-khalil-al-halwachi/>; and "Profiles in Persecution: Khalil al-Halwachi," ADHRB, 30 March 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/03/profiles-in-persecution-khalil-al-halwachi/>

138 Marc Owen Jones, "For the Record: Police in Bahrain Throw Molotov Cocktails," Marc Owen Jones: Irreverence and Analysis on Bahrain, Disinformation and the Persian Gulf, 18 March 2012, <https://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/for-the-record-police-in-bahrain-throw-molotov-cocktails/>



SSFC and other MOI officers manning a checkpoint [Reuters]; Photos showing apparent manipulation of scene where Ali Abdulghani, 17, was fatally run over by an MOI vehicle (2016) [BIRD]

disappearance or purposefully misleading chains of custody also prevents attorneys from ensuring that their clients are brought to court hearings on time, causing them to miss important sessions. In other instances, authorities decline to provide defense attorneys with clear or timely information about court dates or interrogations, forcing them to check every floor, courtroom, and waiting hall at MOJ facilities in an effort to locate defendants.

MOI personnel also interfere by placing significant hurdles in the way of access to detention centers and courtrooms, or by denying access altogether. On some occasions, Bahraini security forces have set up physical barriers inside and outside the courtroom. Generally, these barriers require public visitors to provide identification and to disclose the purpose of their visit, with arbitrary refusals a common occurrence.

Furthermore, the police routinely interfere with defense attorneys' abilities to properly communicate and consult with defendants. In many instances, MOI forces refuse to bring defendants into the courtroom for their session, resulting *in absentia* convictions even when the detainee is in custody. In other instances, they allow the defendants to attend the session, but they place the defendants in a glass cell that acts as a sound barrier.¹³⁹ Consequently, defense attorneys are unable to properly communicate with the

defendants during the proceedings, and the defendants are prevented from hearing what is going on in the courtroom. At the conclusion of the session, police regularly forbid defense attorneys from consulting with defendants before they are returned to detention. It is common for MOI personnel to beat defendants in the police vehicles during transit between the court and the detention centers.

E. DETENTION STANDARDS AND DENIAL OF MEDICAL CARE

The MOI maintains poor detention standards across its facilities and ministry personnel regularly deny or otherwise interfere in medical care for individuals in their custody.

i. Detention Standards

In addition to routinized torture and physical abuse throughout Bahrain's detention centers (*see Section 3.C*), ADHRB has recorded 229 reports of severely substandard detention conditions within MOI facilities, including overcrowding, unhygienic environments, extended solitary confinement, and arbitrary interference in family visitation and communication.

Mass incarceration for political offenses has overwhelmed the GDRR prison system, and the chief long-stay facility – Jau – is particularly notorious for its inhumane living

139 On 19 July 2012, Bahraini security forces brought human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, who was sentenced to three months for comments made on Twitter, to court in handcuffs and placed him inside a glass cell for the duration of his appeal hearing. "Update: Bahrain: Leading human rights defender Nabeel Rajab imprisoned for three months over twitter," Bahrain Center for Human Rights, 12 August 2012, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/5352>.

conditions.¹⁴⁰ Despite continuous expansions, the prison is consistently overcrowded and sections of the facility are falling into disrepair, exacerbating the GDRR's general refusal to ensure cells are clean and sanitary. Jau typically holds more prisoners than beds or cells, and inmates are often forced to sleep on the floor and in hallways that are littered with waste. In 2013, for example, inmates in Jau Building 4 stated that cells made for six inmates each were forced to hold as many as 12 persons sleeping on the bed and floor. Death row inmates report that they are housed in even more cramped and unhygienic conditions, confined to beds that are only wide enough for one prisoner to sleep on his side. Other prisoners throughout Jau report being confined to their cell for more than 23 hours per day, with GDRR authorities only allowing them to leave during the day's hottest point. This has forced some inmates to eat inside their cells, attracting ants and cockroaches. ADHRB has received increasing reports that the Jau administration provides insufficient and poor quality water, forcing inmates to drink from emptied bottles of bleach as further punishment and humiliation. As a result of these unsanitary conditions, infectious diseases like scabies are quick to spread among the prison population, while the healthcare facilities are inadequate and ill equipped to deal with emergency situations.

Since an escape from Jau Prison in January 2017, resulting in the dismissal of top GDRR leadership, the MOI has escalated repressive control measures at the facility. Inmates report that GDRR personnel cancelled or severely limited family visits, including visitation between imprisoned relatives; ended sales from the prison shop; banned educational and Shia religious television channels; forced detainees to wear shackles when outside their cells; ignored detainee complaints; cancelled hospital appointments; and prevented detainees from accessing medical care unless they wore a uniform with shackles and consented to an invasive strip search. The authorities have also reportedly begun to lock the doors in Jau Building 6 for the majority of each day, preventing that building's inmates from accessing the toilet for extended periods of time. Other prisoners have reported hearing screams from inside Building 6 since the imposition of this new policy. During the periods immediately before and after the government executed three political prisoners on 15 January 2017, GDRR authorities additionally suspended prisoners' access to communication by arbitrarily prohibiting visits and phone calls, as well as banning

access to newspapers. In summer 2018, with Bahrain's temperatures hovering around 37 degrees Celsius and a heat index of 42 degrees Celsius, inmates reported that GDRR authorities arbitrarily and repeatedly denied them access to water, in some instances for more than a day at time. These cuts have also prevented prisoners from consistent access to the lavatories, which has particularly impacted inmates with digestive health issues.

High-profile prisoners of conscience known as the *rumūz* ("leading figures") – including the remaining members of the Bahrain 13, a group of human rights defenders and political activists who were tortured and imprisoned for their involvement in the 2011 pro-democracy movement¹⁴¹ – are regularly singled out for additional abuses by Jau prison staff. Since they arrived at Jau, the *rumūz* have been isolated from the general prison population and they are not allowed time to exercise in the prison yard. GDRR personnel rarely permit them to leave their cells, and they commonly deny them visitation rights for months at a time. When visits are permitted, guards scrutinize all communications.

The GDRR has gradually intensified restriction on the *rumūz*, and in recent years the Jau administration has denied them access to pencils, paper, and toilet tissue. Since March 2017, prison authorities have banned clothes, undergarments, soap, razors, and other hygiene products from outside the prison while simultaneously barring political prisoners from accessing the commissary to purchase such items, preventing them from accessing hygiene products or other essentials. Since October 2017, the prison administration has confiscated virtually every personal item belonging to the *rumūz*, including all books and writing materials. Some of the books taken included religious texts of personal significance to the prisoners, as well as the scholarly materials of Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, a prominent academic and human rights defender who has been pursuing a philological study of the roots of the modern Bahraini dialect of Arabic while in prison. Hassan Mushaima, a leading opposition activist, was likewise stripped of his phone credit card, which is required for calls out from the prison. Guards have also begun arbitrarily subjecting these inmates to invasive strip searches and forcing them to wear a prison uniform with full body shackles to attend medical appointments.¹⁴² In 2018, Jau authorities deprived human rights defender Nabeel Rajab and his cellmates from drinking water for over 36 hours,

140 *Inside Jau: Bahrain's Torture Hub*, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, March 2015, http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/file_attach/Inside-Jau.pdf

141 See: "Champions for Justice: The Bahrain 13," ADHRB, 8 May 2015, <http://www.adhrb.org/2015/05/may-champions-for-justice-the-bahrain-13/>

142 "High-Profile Political Leaders and Human Rights Defenders Face Ongoing Degradation, Punishment, and Restrictions on Access to Medical Care," ADHRB, BIRD, and ECDHR, 27 October 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/10/high-profile-political-leaders-and-human-rights-defenders-face-ongoing-degradation-punishment-and-restrictions-on-access-to-medical-care/>



Top: Road approaching Jau Prison Bottom row: Overcrowded corridors in Jau Prison [BIRD]; Dry Dock Detention Center

until another detainee lost consciousness. When Rajab was first transferred to Jau Prison in 2017, the guards targeted him for degrading treatment, including forcibly shaving his hair and arbitrarily raiding his cell at night.¹⁴³ GDRR personnel have since confiscated all of Rajab's personal items, including books and writing materials, after the European Parliament adopted a resolution¹⁴⁴ citing his case.¹⁴⁵

Dry Dock Detention Center and Isa Town Women's Prison suffer from similar problems of overcrowding, poor sanitation, and mistreatment. In 2014, inmates at Dry Dock reported that many cells were at twice their capacity, with around 24 prisoners in rooms built for 12.¹⁴⁶ Cells and personal items often become infested with insects, and lavatories are consistently filthy. As in Jau, the food

and water provided by the GDRR is unhygienic or of poor quality, forcing many detainees to purchase items from the facility's store; there is no recourse for those who cannot afford to do so. The PDRC has found that the cleanliness of the wings and overall maintenance at the Dry Dock require "urgent action."¹⁴⁷ In summer 2018, Dry Dock authorities followed their counterparts at Jau by arbitrarily cutting off water supplies to the inmates for extended periods during extreme heat.

Likewise, at Isa Town, prisoners have reported that as many as 15 women are forced to live in cells meant for 10, with women sleeping on dirty floors overrun with insects.¹⁴⁸ Unclean bathrooms and showers coupled with limited access to toilets contribute to a high number of urinary tract infections. Prisoners must also pay for soap

143 "Leading Human Rights Defender Nabeel Rajab Could Face Another 14 Cases as Appeal Postponed in Bahrain," ADHRB, 8 May 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/05/leading-human-rights-defender-nabeel-rajab-could-face-another-14-cases-as-appeal-postponed-in-bahrain/>

144 *European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab (2018/2755(RSP))*, European Parliament, June 2018, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P8-RC-2018-0281&language=EN>

145 "ADHRB Condemns Poor Conditions in Bahrain's Notorious Jau Prison & Prisoner Abuse," ADHRB, 27 June 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/06/adhrb-condemns-poor-conditions-in-bahrains-notorious-jau-prison-prisoner-abuse/>

146 "LOCKED INSIDE A NIGHTMARE: Voices from Bahraini Prisons," BCHR and the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR), 9 June 2014, <http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/Prison%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20II.pdf>

147 PDRC, Report No. 1, August 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

148 *Ibid.*

and toothbrushes from the prison store,¹⁴⁹ making basic sanitation products inaccessible to those who cannot afford them. Additionally, the crowded cells increase transmission of infectious diseases, including Hepatitis A and B.¹⁵⁰ The PDRC acknowledged in 2015 that Isa Town's cells were small, crowded, and exacerbated the risk of self-harm.¹⁵¹ As recently as 2018, Isa Town officials have specifically denied political prisoners access to books, including the Qur'an.¹⁵² Prisoners at Isa Town are subjected to daily verbal harassment, physical abuse, and threats of sexual assault from the prison guards. Political prisoners like Hajer Mansoor Hassan, the mother-in-law of human rights activist and BIRD Advocacy Director Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, report that guards have specific orders to make life "difficult" for inmates incarcerated on politically motivated charges.¹⁵³ According to BIRD, she was told "that the more she exposes the conditions of imprisonment for political prisoners, the more she will be punished."¹⁵⁴ After several inmates went on hunger strike in protest of the prison's conditions in 2018, the facility's commander, Major Maryam Al-Bardouli, interfered with their calls and visits with family.¹⁵⁵ BIRD reported in July 2018 that Maj. Al-Bardouli told Hajer Mansoor Hassan that she does not "care if people call me a torturer, but you must stop speaking out about what happens in the prison."¹⁵⁶ Isa Town personnel proceeded to cancel her ensuing family visits and mislead relatives about her whereabouts.¹⁵⁷

Visitation rights are extremely limited across the MOI's detention facilities, as GDRR authorities retain full control of when families are able to visit the detainees. Visiting families may arrive at the prison to find their relative has been denied permission to attend the scheduled meeting. It is common for GDRR personnel to harass visitors upon their arrival and prior to their departure. Inmates also report that authorities have gradually increased restrictions on family calls and visits and installed barriers in visitation rooms at Jau and Isa Town, preventing physical contact.

At times the MOI also holds individuals for extended periods at local governorate police stations. These facilities are not designed for long-stay detention and are typically cramped and unsanitary. After MOI personnel re-arrested Nabeel Rajab in June 2016, for example, they held him in the Southern Governorate Police Directorate's East Riffa station for over a year until his formal transfer to Jau Prison in October 2017. Riffa police held him in solitary confinement for months at a time in an unhygienic cell, violating Bahraini legal provisions meant to limit the use of isolation. Rajab's health deteriorated as a result and he was repeatedly hospitalized prior to his incarceration at Jau (*see more on denial of healthcare below*).¹⁵⁸

The Bahraini government claims that the MOI has instituted BICI recommendations to improve detention conditions, chiefly by installing cameras to deter and record abuse. By 2014, the MOI stated that it had "rolled out the monitoring equipment to all investigation and temporary detention rooms across all 22 police stations in Bahrain...All venues where police interviews of detainees take place – currently police stations and the Crime Investigation Directorate [CID] – now therefore have state-of-the-art audio-visual recording equipment in use,"¹⁵⁹ and in 2015 the government indicated that cameras were installed in the prisons as well.¹⁶⁰ However, MOI leadership has simultaneously acknowledged that this monitoring system does not in fact extend across all of the ministry's police facilities: discussing the planned roll-out in 2012, Chief of Public Security Tariq al-Hassan stated that "at least five riot police bases" – presumably SSFC facilities – are excluded from coverage because "they don't detain anyone, any arrests will be handed over to police."¹⁶¹ While it is standard practice for SSFC personnel to transfer arrestees into the custody of local police directorates or the GDCIFS, ADHRB has also documented a consistent pattern of SSFC personnel employing excessive force and torture in the apprehension of protesters or suspected dissidents. Without monitoring,

149 Ibid.

150 Farah Kader, "A Look Inside Isa Town Women's Prison," ADHRB, 18 June 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/06/look-inside-isa-town-womens-prison/>

151 *Unannounced Visit to the Women's Detention Center (WDC)*, PDRC, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2015, http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/ff5eab3f-b462-4426-80c1-fed95034150e_WDC-English%20edited.pdf

152 "ADHRB at HRC38 condemns detention of women activists in Bahrain's Isa Town Women's Prison," ADHRB, 2 July 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/07/adhrb-at-hrc38-condemns-detention-of-women-activists-in-bahraains-isa-town-womens-prison/>

153 "Mother-in-law of UK-based Bahraini Activist Declares Hunger Strike, as her Mistreatment Continues," BIRD, 20 March 2018, <http://birdbh.org/2018/03/mother-in-law-of-uk-based-bahraini-activist-declares-hunger-strike-as-her-mistreatment-continues/>

154 Ibid.

155 "BAHRAIN: Female Prisoner on Hunger Strike Hospitalised, as her Medical Condition Worsens," BIRD, 22 March 2018, <http://birdbh.org/2018/03/6148/>

156 "Reprisals Against Bahraini Female Prisoner Escalate, as Her Son-in-Law Sayed Alwadaei Engages With the UN and the UK Parliament," BIRD, 13 July 2018, <http://birdbh.org/2018/07/reprisals-against-bahraini-female-prisoner-escalate-as-her-son-in-law-sayed-alwadaei-engages-with-the-un-and-the-uk-parliament/>

157 Ibid.

158 Leading Human Rights Defender Nabeel Rajab Could Face Another 14 Cases as Appeal Postponed in Bahrain," ADHRB, 8 May 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/05/leading-human-rights-defender-nabeel-rajab-could-face-another-14-cases-as-appeal-postponed-in-bahrain/>

159 *Moving Beyond 2011*, BICI Follow-up Unit, Kingdom of Bahrain, February 2014, <http://www.biciunit.bh/reports/BICI%20Implementation%20report%20ENGLISH.pdf>

160 *CAT/C/BHR/3 - Third periodic report of States parties due in 2011*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 6 March 2016, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/BHR/CAT_C_BHR_3_29_E.pdf

161 Andrew Hammond, "Bahrain police install cameras to curb abuse," Reuters, 22 March 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-police-rights/bahrain-police-install-cameras-to-curb-abuse-idUSBRE82L0X20120322>

there are no safeguards preventing the SSFC or other MOI personnel from utilizing SSFC facilities as *de facto* black sites for torture and other abuse. The PDRC additionally found in 2016 that the NPRA's immigration detention centers are also excluded from coverage (*see Section 2.B.ii*). Even in facilities that have installed cameras, the systems never cover all of the possible interrogation areas, and ADHRB has consistently documented personnel simply taking detainees into bathrooms or other unmonitored locations within the prison system before torturing them.¹⁶² Inmates report that there are no cameras monitoring Jau Prison's solitary confinement cells, for example, and in 2017 ADHRB documented cases where guards turned out the power to cell blocks before raiding them and conducting random beatings.

The Bahraini government has not permitted any public independent inspection of the prison system since 2005 and it has repeatedly blocked visitation requests from the UN Special Procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on torture.

ii. Violations of the Right to Health

MOI personnel regularly prevent detainees from accessing adequate healthcare, and the ministry has increasingly dominated and securitized aspects of Bahrain's broader medical system. ADHRB has documented 129 violations of medical neutrality or the right to health attributed to the MOI, including denial of treatment and reprisals against medical professionals.

Denial of Healthcare

Both arresting officers and GDRR authorities routinely deny detainees proper medical care, with political prisoners typically targeted for specific interference or intensified restrictions on access. Many of these cases extend for years, with the victim experiencing denied or improper treatment from their initial arrest through to their incarceration, implicating numerous MOI agencies and facilities at every step in the process.

MOI detention centers are unsanitary and conducive to the spread of disease (*see Section 3.E.i above*), and GDRR health facilities are substandard. The clinic for Jau Prison, the largest detention center, cannot handle emergency situations and severe cases are often left untreated. The MOI Ombudsman found that the prison clinic lacks necessary

medical staff and functioning equipment.¹⁶³ Inmates with long-term illnesses that require regular medication have complained that medicine is rarely provided on time and often not provided at all, and authorities do not grant second opinions on diagnoses.

The prison administration has imposed particularly unreasonable and humiliating conditions on high-profile prisoners' access to medical care. Since 2017, prison authorities have prevented these inmates from attending medical appointments unless they submit to wearing a prison uniform and to shackling at the arms and legs. The guards also commonly demand strip searches. GDRR personnel have additionally limited the distribution of medication to these detainees as a means of forcing them to attend the clinic in shackles to receive their prescriptions instead of receiving refills in their cells. As a result, prisoners have been driven to ration and share medication dosages among those with the same conditions. Jau authorities have refused to provide imprisoned human rights and political activist Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, who suffers from post-polio syndrome, with replacement prescription crutches for months, causing him to slip and fall. Likewise, the administration has prevented opposition leader Hassan Mushaima from seeing a physician to monitor the remission of his cancer since September 2016, despite the need for regular screenings every six months. Before his transfer to Jau, Nabeel Rajab was regularly denied adequate healthcare for severe skin infections and chronic gallstones, among other ailments, by Southern Police, ultimately resulting in his repeated hospitalization for emergency treatment.

At Isa Town Women's Prison, inmates regularly report that guards deny them proper care and that staff are not adequately equipped to provide psychiatric evaluation and treatment for mental health. In 2016, for example, Isa Town authorities interfered in the medical treatment of political prisoner Taiba Darwish, who suffered from uterine fibroids. Though the authorities took her to a military hospital in April 2016, they did not allow her to receive a direct examination; instead, they instructed the doctor to use a police officer as an intermediary. Darwish was not provided with a medical report, and officials threatened to remove her uterus if her condition did not improve. She has since developed additional problems in her kidneys, but the GDRR authorities have denied her

162 BIRD, ADHRB, and BCHR, *Inside Jau: Government Brutality in Bahrain's Central Prison* (Washington, D.C.: self-published, May 2015) (available [online](#); P.D.F.), p. 22. The governmental Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) has noted that, similarly, "[t]here are surveillance cameras" at Dry Dock Detention Center, "but they do not cover all areas," and stated that installation of cameras "to cover all the facilities" on-site was a matter requiring "[u]rgent action." PDRC, *Unannounced visit to the Dry Dock Detention Center* (21-24 April, 2014), Report No. 1, August 2014 (available [online](#); P.D.F.), pp. 9, 18.

163 *Inside Jau: Bahrain's Torture Hub*, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, March 2015, http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/file_attach/Inside-Jau.pdf



MOI officer with inmate at hospital (2016) [BCHR]; X-Ray of fatal head wound suffered by 18-year-old Mustafa Hamdan (2017)

consistent medical treatment.¹⁶⁴ Zainab al-Khawaja, a human rights defender who was previously incarcerated along with Darwish, reported that prison officials used to specifically harass Darwish because she was a political prisoner.¹⁶⁵ More recently, in 2018, Isa Town authorities prevented Fawzeyya Mashalla, the oldest female political prisoner in Bahrain, from accessing necessary care for significant cardiovascular and digestive problems.¹⁶⁶

MOI health personnel are sometimes directly implicated in abuses like harassment, torture, and reprisal, and they consistently fail to properly examine injured detainees when tasked with investigating allegations of physical violence. There is evidence to suggest that these personnel coordinate with the police and prosecutors to cover up such violations. The MOI Ombudsman, meanwhile, regularly fails to satisfactorily resolve requests for assistance from prisoners requesting access to healthcare (*See Section 4 for more on impunity and the failures of the Ombudsman*).

The MOI's deprivation of proper medical care for prisoners has in some cases led to death. On 31 July 2016, the MOI announced that 35-year-old detainee Hassan Jassim Hasan al-Hayki had died after being transferred from the GDRR's Dry Dock Detention Center to Salmaniyya hospital for treatment of unknown ailments. Al-Hayki's family has confirmed that he did not suffer from any health issues

prior to his arrest and have alleged that he died from injuries sustained during torture at the GDCIFS' CID. They report that the authorities beat al-Hayki on his head and genitals, hung him from chains, and threatened him at gunpoint. The family also alleges that the authorities prevented al-Hayki from accessing a lawyer during the interrogations and forced him to sign a confession.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, nine days after it announced its investigation into the case, the PPO's SIU concluded on 10 August that it had ruled out "any criminal suspicion."¹⁶⁸ Photos appearing to show signs of torture on al-Hayki's body soon emerged, but the government claimed these were fabricated.¹⁶⁹ Four days after the investigation closed, the PPO charged the al-Hayki family's lawyer, Sayed Hashem Saleh, with "publicly spreading false information with the intention of influencing the judicial authority in charge of the case" after he allegedly disagreed with the SIU's findings, telling "a local newspaper that there were injuries and bruises on the body of the deceased that proved beyond any doubt a criminal suspicion."¹⁷⁰ The MOI Ombudsman's Office went even further than the SIU in its annual report, stating that "the examination of evidence raised no issues of concern."¹⁷¹

Another GDRR inmate, Mohammed Sahwan, reportedly died of cardiac arrest in March 2017 – making him the first political prisoner to die in Jau Prison since 2011. Sahwan never received adequate healthcare for injuries he

164 Zainab al-Khawaja, "My release is not a sign of change for Bahrain's regime," Middle East Eye, 13 June 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/bahrain-zainab-al-khawaja-1740899734>

165 "Bahrain Continues Arbitrary Imprisonment of Taiba Darwish Despite Reduced Sentence," ADHRB, 24 April 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/04/bahrain-continues-arbitrary-imprisonment-of-taiba-darwish-despite-reduced-sentence/>

166 "ADHRB at HRC38 condemns detention of women activists in Bahrain's Isa Town Women's Prison," ADHRB, 2 July 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/07/adhrb-at-hrc38-condemns-detention-of-women-activists-in-bahrain's-isa-town-womens-prison/>

167 *Annual Report: Bahrain 2016*, BCHR, 2017, http://bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/BCHR_AnnualReport_Web-REV-1.pdf?_ga=1.162212991.212364749.1473867427

168 "No criminal suspicion in detainee's death: SIU," BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 10 August 2016, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/739387>

169 «التحقيق الخاصة: حفظ قضية الحايكي لوفاته طبيعياً... ومحام: شبهة جنائية بوفاته», Al Wasat, 2016, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/news/1147366.html>

170 "Lawyer charged with disseminating false information," BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 14 August 2016, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/739869>

171 "Bahrain: Fourth Annual Report of Police Ombudsman Reveals Failure to Fulfill Mandate," ADHRB, 15 September 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/09/bahrain-fourth-annual-report-of-police-ombudsman-reveals-failure-to-fulfil-mandate/>

sustained during his arrest and torture, including multiple birdshot wounds. As of the Ombudsman's most recent annual report in September 2017, the office's investigation into the case appeared to remain open.¹⁷²

Securitization of Healthcare

The Bahraini government has gradually transferred control of the country's healthcare system from civilian administration to the military and the MOI police forces. Lieutenant General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa – the former defense minister – currently leads the kingdom's Supreme Health Council, to which the Ministry of Health is subordinate, and the BDF and the MOI directly operate some of the country's main health facilities. Since 2011, when authorities occupied Salmaniya Medical Complex – Bahrain's primary public hospital – and arrested more than 60 medical medics, security personnel have been omnipresent at public health facilities, where they monitor patients for signs of injuries that may have been inflicted by police and prevent medical professionals from providing care to perceived dissidents. Meanwhile, activists report that the MOI issued a directive to private hospitals instructing them to deny care to patients that appear to have been wounded at protests until police personnel can arrive on scene to interrogate them. This directive remains active. MOI authorities routinely accompany ambulances and medics on emergency calls, further ensuring that they are the first point of contact for potential victims of police violence and can control the patient's destination.

These trends have had a chilling effect on emergency medical care, with those wounded by police afraid to seek treatment for fear of arrest, torture, and prosecution. Injured demonstrators increasingly seek ad hoc first-aid services from amateur paramedics or from doctors in their private homes – practices the authorities have worked to suppress through criminal charges like “aiding a fugitive.” In January 2017, masked personnel believed to be NSA agents working in cooperation with MOI personnel manning the security cordon around Diraz fired live ammunition on the sit-in outside the home of Shia religious leader Sheikh Isa Qassim, shooting 18-year-old Mustafa Hamdan in the head. Though local paramedics attempted to treat him, Hamdan required immediate emergency care to survive.

A resident of Diraz rushed Hamdan to a private hospital, but staff there refused to admit him or to send for an ambulance to take him to a public hospital without an MOI official present. Eventually, Hamdan's brother arrived and took him to Salmaniya, but once there approximately 35 security personnel interrogated the family and delayed treatment. Hamdan ultimately died from his injuries. It later emerged that the NSA arrested a paramedic that treated Hamdan at the scene; his fate remains unknown.¹⁷³

In February 2018, the king issued a decree formalizing police control of the ambulance services by establishing a new “rapid response National Ambulance Centre” (NAC) to centralize ambulance operations for all four governorates under the MOI.¹⁷⁴ The NAC, which ultimately reports to the Interior Minister and is entirely funded by the MOI, comprises a network of more than 10 facilities “distributed among governorates and controlled through a control room”¹⁷⁵ and is directly linked to the MOI's Geographical Security System (GSS) – a centralized command-and-control platform that “aims to link all operation-related directorates of the Interior Ministry in one system for quick response to daily incidents, crisis management, and security information analysis.”¹⁷⁶ Sublimated to the GSS, the NAC constitutes the literal securitization of emergency healthcare, transforming the ambulance service into an extension of the PSF field police units that can be used to track and target perceived dissidents or political demonstrations for attack. When the GSS and the NAC are fully rolled out, public hospitals and ambulances will double as nodes in the MOI surveillance network, enabling more efficient arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and denial of care for ministry targets seeking treatment or the medical personnel who try to help them. The NAC is also empowered to propose its own legislation concerning the regulation of healthcare, allowing the MOI to directly influence the broader criminalization of impartial medical services in Bahrain.¹⁷⁷

Notably, Bahrain's foreign allies have played a critical role in the establishment of these systems: Bahrain signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the French government in 2015 for assistance in “training, drafting work procedure guideline and consultation[sic]” for the NAC,¹⁷⁸ and the GSS also incorporates the US-funded Coastal Surveillance System provided to the MOI Coast

172 Ibid.

173 Monica Zuraw, “Dispatch: Security Forces Continue to Threaten Medical Impartiality in Bahrain,” ADHRB, 15 March 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/03/dispatch-security-forces-continue-to-threaten-medical-impartiality-in-bahrain/>

174 “HM King issues laws 4 and 5/2018, decree 11/2018,” BNA, 20 February 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/826805>

175 “National Ambulance Project discussed,” BNA, 31 January 2016, <http://bna.bh/portal/en/news/708739>

176 “Full Systems Integration,” *Al-Amn*, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, February 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/60022>

177 Decree No. 11, 2018 *For the establishment and organization of the National Ambulance Center*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2018, Print. (Unofficial translation available upon request).

178 “National Ambulance Project discussed,” BNA, 31 January 2016, <http://bna.bh/portal/en/news/708739>

Guard (see Section 5 for more information on foreign assistance to the MOI).¹⁷⁹

F. POLICE BRUTALITY AND EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLING

MOI security forces, and especially the SSFC, regularly use unnecessary or excessive force to apprehend targets and disperse protests. In many cases, the use of force appears purposefully calibrated to inflict injury or death on arrestees and demonstrators, amounting to torture or extrajudicial killing. The MOI's systemic denial of, or interference in, adequate medical care for detainees amplifies and aggravates the effects of widespread police brutality.

ADHRB has recorded 306 incidents of excessive force or police brutality committed by the MOI, as well as 86 extrajudicial killings. The vast majority of these cases occurred during MOI attacks on protests or other public gatherings, and in the process of effecting arrests (see Section 3.A for more information on use of force during arbitrary detentions and home raids).

i. Excessive Force

With peaceful assembly effectively banned in the kingdom, the riot police units of the SSFC routinely respond to demonstrations, funeral marches, and other peaceful gatherings with overwhelming force, including dangerous "crowd control" equipment and outright violence. Even when used properly, teargas, birdshot, baton rounds, and other purportedly non-lethal equipment can cause serious harm or death, but the SSFC and other police personnel typically deploy these munitions offensively to attack targeted assemblies – a process of "weaponizing" the equipment with intent to maximize the potential damage done.¹⁸⁰ Weaponization has enabled the MOI to employ deadly force against pro-democracy demonstrations under the guise of legitimate riot suppression.¹⁸¹

The most commonly weaponized pieces of crowd-control gear are birdshot and teargas. In the years since 2011, police have consistently fired shotguns loaded with birdshot ammunition directly at individuals' vital organs and at close range, for example, either negligently or deliberately

CRIMINALIZATION OF HEALTHCARE

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health has observed that Bahrain's legislation and law enforcement practices contravene "the spirit and meaning of Security Council Resolution 2286 [which condemned attacks on medical facilities and personnel] and runs contrary to established standards of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of mental and physical health." In a report issued by the mandate in 2018, researchers found that the Penal Code and the anti-terrorism law "have been used to criminalize the provision of healthcare," while agencies like the MOI engage in "arrest, harassment, assault, and administrative sanction for treating protestors." Drawing on ADHRB's documentation, the report concluded that the MOI are distinctly responsible for continued violations of the right to health.

See: "Open Statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health on the occasion of the 2nd Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 2286," OHCHR, UN, 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23225&LangID=E>



MOI and BDF officers inspect ambulance (2016)

increasing the likelihood of serious injury and death. In one case in May 2014, police fired birdshot at 14-year-old Sayed Mahmood Sayed Mohsen Sayed Ahmed during a funeral procession in Sitra; the pellets, shot from a range of 2-3 meters, penetrated his lungs and heart, killing him.¹⁸² Similarly, in January 2015, the authorities fired birdshot at two different demonstrations, wounding both participants

179 Sam Jones, "Dispatch: Loopholes in the US arms hold on Bahrain's Ministry of Interior," ADHRB, 10 January 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/01/dispatch-loopholes-in-the-us-arms-hold-on-bahraains-ministry-of-interior/>

180 Holly G. Atkinson, MD, FACP, and Richard Sollom, MA, MPH, *Weaponizing Tear Gas: Bahrain's Unprecedented Use of Toxic Chemical Agents Against Civilians*, Physicians for Human Rights, August 2012, <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/reports/weaponizing-tear-gas.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

181 "Bahrain Hopes of Reform Crushed Amid Chilling Crackdown on Dissent," Amnesty International, 2015 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/04/bahrain-hopes-of-reform-crushed-amid-chilling-crackdown-on-dissent/>

182 "Individuals Killed By Government's Excessive Use of Force Since 14 February 2011," BCHR, 6 February 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/3864>; and "Bahrain: 14 Year-Old Shot And Killed By Police," BCHR, 21 May 2014, <http://bahrainrights.org/en/node/6887>; and *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2014humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

and bystanders;¹⁸³ in one of the incidents, birdshot hit 14-year-old Mohammed Mahdi al-Sawad in the face as he was playing outside of his grandparent's house. Al-Sawad is blind in one eye as a result of the injury.¹⁸⁴ As the MOI specifically monitors healthcare centers to arrest individuals that appear to have been wounded in protests – in addition to targeting medical workers who provide aid to such individuals without first notifying the authorities – countless Bahrainis suffer from partially or improperly treated birdshots wounds, and many are left to carry pellets in their body indefinitely. Most of Bahrain's shotgun ammunition is of American, British, Cypriot, or Italian origin.¹⁸⁵

Police also regularly employ excessive amounts of teargas indiscriminately and in confined spaces, causing severe respiratory problems for those in the target area. This practice is particularly dangerous for children and the elderly: in just one month in 2013, MOI forces killed 87-year-old Habeeb Ibrahim and 8-year-old Qassim Habib after they launched tear gas rounds into the villages of Malkiya and Karbabad, respectively.¹⁸⁶ Both died of asphyxiation as a result of tear gas inhalation.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, like birdshot, the MOI has fired teargas canisters in such a way as to increase the risk of direct damage to the individual and inflict blunt physical trauma. In November 2014, police shot a man in the face with a teargas canister, dislodging his eye from its socket and leaving him with concussive injuries.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, on 23 February 2014, SSFC fired teargas canisters and birdshot at Abdulaziz al-Abbar during a funeral procession;¹⁸⁹ he later died due to “complications of splinter gunshot wounds in the face and head.”¹⁹⁰ Bahrain uses teargas produced in South Korea, South Africa, Germany, the US, the UK, Brazil, and France.¹⁹¹

In addition to crowd-control instruments, MOI personnel also effectively weaponize police vehicles to run over or otherwise batter targeted individuals. These vehicles include



MOI officers demonstrate the Geographical Security System during a weapons expo in Manama (2017)

armored cars of Turkish¹⁹² origin, as well as standard police cars. Seventeen-year-old Ali Abdulghani died from injuries sustained after MOI personnel from the Hamad Town station attempted to apprehend him in March 2016.¹⁹³ Courts had sentenced Abdulghani to five years imprisonment on charges related to his participation in demonstrations, and witnesses reported that security personnel ran him over twice with their car while making their arrest. Abdulghani reportedly got up to run away after he was initially hit by the security vehicle, but was then hit for a second time and fell to the ground. According to witnesses, Abdulghani got up again, running to another property approximately 200 meters away. A few moments later, the victim was photographed lying on the ground, bleeding from a serious head injury. Witness videos appeared to show security personnel tampering with the scene.¹⁹⁴

In February 2014, the Bahraini government issued Decree 24, which purportedly sought to augment the 2012 code of

183 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Bahrain*, DOS, US Government 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>

184 *Ibid.*

185 “Arms Watch,” Bahrain Watch, 2018, <https://bahrainwatch.org/arms/>

186 “Individuals Killed By Government’s Excessive Use of Force Since 14 February 2011,” BCHR, 6 February 2015, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/3864>

187 *Ibid.*

188 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Bahrain*, DOS, US Government, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2014humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>

189 *Ibid.*

190 *Ibid.*

191 “Arms Watch,” Bahrain Watch, 2018, <https://bahrainwatch.org/arms/>

192 The Turkish Otokar company seems to be the most popular among the MOI, but it may also purchase armored vehicles from a Dubai-based company known as Minerva Special Purpose Vehicles. See: Arms Watch,” Bahrain Watch, 2018, <https://bahrainwatch.org/arms/>; and Usman Ansari, “Pakistan faces tough competition in armored vehicles export,” Defense News, 19 October 2017, <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2017/10/19/pakistan-faces-tough-competition-in-armored-vehicles-export/>; and Bahrain,” Minerva Special Purpose Vehicles, 2018, <http://www.mspv.com/armoured-vehicles-bahrain/armoured-vehicles-bahrainbulletproof-cars-bahraincash-in-transit-vehicles-bahrainarmored-military-vehicles-bahrainarmored-personnel-carriers-bahrainarmoured-ambulance-bahrainarmoured-bus-bahrain>

193 “Immediate and Impartial Investigation Needed After Death of Teenager,” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, ECDHR, and JHRO, 4 April 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/04/immediate-impartial-investigation-needed-death-teenager/>

194 *Ibid.*



Top: SSFC fire tear gas canisters directly at protesters from close range (2011). Second row, left to right: Tear gas fired at journalists (2017); SSFC riot officer arbitrarily pepper sprays passersby. Third row, left to right: A group of SSFC riot police beat and harass a detainee (2017); SSFC officer prepares to fire tear gas at onlookers. Bottom row: SSFC officers firing shotgun at protest during funeral procession (2017)



Clockwise from above: Birdshot wounds from MOI gunfire (2017); Activists believe that riot police target protesters' feet when aiming to cause debilitating but non-lethal damage; Leg of protester hit with birdshot during 14 February demonstrations (2017)

conduct for police and further regulate the use of force.¹⁹⁵ The law limits the use of force by police to only those situations of “extreme necessity” such as self-defense where there is a serious threat to an officer’s life. It also states that force must be governed by the principles of “legitimacy, necessity, proportionality, and accountability.”¹⁹⁶ However, according to Amnesty International, the use of force in “situations other than those that qualify as legitimate self-defense” remains permissible “when it is authorized by a unit commander or a deputy head of a police station or officer of a higher rank” giving wide discretion to relatively low-level officers.¹⁹⁷ If improperly applied, this last provision effectively negates what positive language is included in the decree as it empowers commanders to waive the aforementioned restrictions and sanction the use of lethal force in a range of unnecessary circumstances, such as peaceful protests or funeral gatherings – especially when these events can be classified as terror offenses under Bahrain’s anti-terror legislation.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the decree explicitly includes “imminent risk to private or public property” among the cases of “extreme necessity” in which potentially lethal force may be lawful, granting police officers additional discretionary authority to use lethal force to disperse nonviolent demonstrations.¹⁹⁹

ii. Lethal Force

More than 100 people have died in connection with the government’s security campaign against the pro-democracy protest movement since 2011 – 86 of these constitute extrajudicial killings that implicate the MOI.²⁰⁰ The majority of these killings took place from 2011 to 2014 and they are linked predominantly to the SSFC and the weaponization of teargas and other crowd control equipment described above; a smaller number are linked to torture by CID personnel and/or denial of medical care in GDCIFS and GDRR custody. MOI personnel, along with the newly re-empowered NSA,

have intensified their use of excessive force in recent years, resulting in increased rates of extrajudicial killing. Four fatal incidents yielded at least six and as many as ten extrajudicial killings by MOI forces in 2017 alone, up from at least two in 2016.²⁰¹ These cases are described in detail below.

January 2017 Diraz Raid

In response to the government’s June 2016 decision to arbitrarily revoke citizenship from Sheikh Isa Qassim, the most prominent religious leader of Bahrain’s Shia community, supporters launched a peaceful sit-in around his home in Diraz. The MOI responded by surrounding the area, restricting freedom of movement, and cutting off access to services, such as the Internet. On the night of 26 January 2017, masked men armed with military-grade weapons entered the security cordon and fired live ammunition into the sit-in encampment, where demonstrators were sleeping. A teenager, Mustafa Hamdan, was shot in the back of the head and later died after security restrictions prevented him obtaining timely medical care. Witnesses and local activists report that some of the masked men appeared to be members of the NSA, the intelligence body re-empowered by the king several weeks earlier, and the weaponry reportedly matched that wielded by the SSFC. The NSA officially arrested a paramedic who provided treatment to Hamdan at the scene following a raid. Because the MOI expressly controlled who could enter and leave Diraz at any given time, it is unlikely any such individuals could penetrate the security cordon without authorization.²⁰²

May 2017 Diraz Raid

Two days after Sheikh Isa Qassim received a one-year suspended sentence on money-laundering allegations stemming from the Shia religious practice of khums on 21 May 2017, security forces launched a major operation to

195 *Bahrain: Behind the Rhetoric: Human Rights Abuses in Bahrain Continue Unabated*, Amnesty International, 16 April 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/1396/2015/en/>; and *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2014/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>; and *Shattering the Façade: A Report on Bahrain’s Implementation of the BICI Recommendations Four Years On*, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 16 November 2015, <http://www.adhrb.org/2015/11/shattering-the-facade-a-report-on-bahrain-implementation-of-the-bahrain-independent-commission-of-inquiry-bici-four-years-on/>

196 *Bahrain: Behind the Rhetoric: Human Rights Abuses in Bahrain Continue Unabated*, Amnesty International, 16 April 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/1396/2015/en/>; and *Shattering the Façade: A Report on Bahrain’s Implementation of the BICI Recommendations Four Years On*, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 16 November 2015, <http://www.adhrb.org/2015/11/shattering-the-facade-a-report-on-bahrain-implementation-of-the-bahrain-independent-commission-of-inquiry-bici-four-years-on/>

197 *Ibid.*

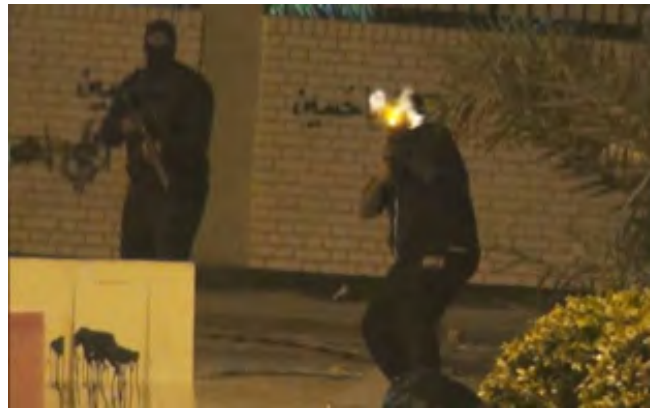
198 *Ibid.*

199 *Ibid.*

200 “Individuals Killed By Government’s Excessive Use of Force Since 14 February 2011,” BCHR, 4 April 2011 (Updated 15 January 2017), <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/3864>

201 Hasan al-Hayki died in Dry Dock Detention Center after reporting he was subjected to severe torture, and Ali Abdulghani, a minor, was killed after appearing to be run over by a police vehicle during an attempted arrest. The government declared there was no evidence of wrongdoing after a cursory 9-day investigation into al-Hayki’s death, and the authorities later charged al-Hayki’s lawyer for suggesting that “criminal suspicion” remained. The investigation in Abdulghani’s death reportedly remains open. “Independent and Impartial Investigation Needed into the Death and Alleged Torture of Detainee,” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, ECDHR, and Justice Human Rights Organization (JHRO), 1 August 2016, <https://www.adhrb.org/2016/08/10556/>; “Immediate and Impartial Investigation Needed After Death of Teenager,” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, ECDHR, and JHRO, 4 April 2016, <https://www.adhrb.org/2016/04/immediate-impartial-investigation-needed-death-teenager/>; “Bahrain: Fourth Annual Report of Police Ombudsman Reveals Failure to Fulfill Mandate,” ADHRB, 15 September 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/09/bahrain-fourth-annual-report-of-police-ombudsman-reveals-failure-to-fulfil-mandate/>

202 “18-year-old Mustafa Hamdan dies after security forces shooting,” ADHRB, 24 March 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/03/18-year-old-mustafa-hamdan-dies-security-forces-shooting/>



Top row: Unidentified attackers, believed to be NSA agents, passing through the MOI security cordon and firing live ammunition on Diraz sit-in (2017).
Bottom row: Casings from live rounds found at the scene of the January shooting in Diraz (2017)

permanently disperse the peaceful sit-in around his home, using excessive force to clear out the participants. Five demonstrators were killed, including an environmental activist and Mustafa Hamdan's older brother, and hundreds more were injured. In response to the violence, the High Commissioner for Human Rights called on the "Government to investigate the events of 23 May, in particular the loss of lives, to ensure that the findings are made public and that those responsible are held accountable."²⁰³ Five Special Procedures mandate holders later condemned the raid as "excessive" and "unlawful," concluding that "the reported use of tear gas, shotguns equipped with birdshot and lethal antipersonnel weapons by security forces to disperse a peaceful demonstration was neither necessary or proportionate and therefore excessive, qualifying the five deaths as unlawful killings. It is tragic that while security

forces are meant to protect life, their actions have shown otherwise."²⁰⁴

February 2017 Sea Raid

In between the two most violent Diraz raids, the MOI announced²⁰⁵ that on 9 February 2017 it launched a joint operation involving the Coast Guard, the SSFC, the GDCIFS, and the NSA,²⁰⁶ in which it intercepted a boat containing ten "escapees from Jau prison [attempting] to flee to Iranian waters." According to the MOI, security personnel killed three suspects in an exchange of gunfire, but independent academic observers have reported significant inconsistencies in the government's account.²⁰⁷ Though the MOI did not release photos of the deceased or allow for independent autopsies, leaked photos reportedly indicated that at least one body lacked a bullet wound

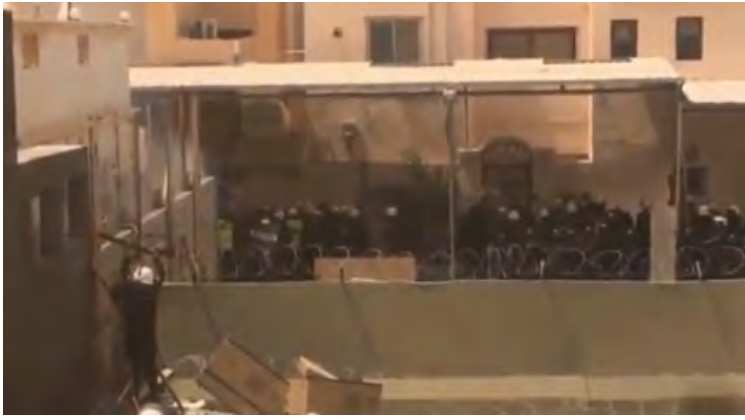
203 "U.N. rights chief calls for Bahrain probe into protester deaths," Reuters, 2 June 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-security-rights/u-n-rights-chief-calls-for-bahrain-probe-into-protester-deaths-idUSKBN18T22U>

204 "Bahrain must end worsening human rights clampdown, UN experts say," OHCHR, 16 June 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21762&LangID=E>

205 "MOI issues statement on Feb. 9 operations," Ministry of Interior, Government of Bahrain, 9 February 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/60161>

206 "Bahrain Restores Law Enforcement Powers to NSA, Reversing BICI Recommendation," ADHRB, 5 January 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/01/11571/>

207 Marc Owen Jones, "MOI'S KILLING OF THREE BAHRAINIS LEAVES LOTS OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS," 9 February 2017, <https://marcowenjoness.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/mois-killing-of-three-bahrainis-leaves-lots-of-unanswered-questions/>



Top row: Video stills showing a SSFC riot officer blind-firing a shotgun into residential areas during the May raid on the Diraz sit-in (2017)

Left: SSFC squad armed with submachine guns during the May 2017 raid on Diraz (2017)

and appeared to show signs of torture.²⁰⁸ The burial was restricted and the MOI reportedly prevented families of the deceased from attending.²⁰⁹ Additionally, in the days after the shooting, an Instagram account that allegedly belonged to an MOI officer posted messages claiming that the deceased had been physically abused and threatening to retaliate against activists for reporting on possible human rights violations.²¹⁰

February 2017 Death During Arrest

On 20 February 2017, 22-year-old Abdullah al-Ajooz died under suspicious circumstances as MOI police forces, under apparent direction from the GDCIFS,²¹¹ attempted to arrest him from a home in Nuwaidrat village. Al-Ajooz was wanted by authorities after escaping from Dry Dock Detention Center in June 2016, where he was held after receiving a life sentence on terror allegations linked to the February 14 Youth Coalition²¹² following a June 2013 arrest.²¹³ In response to the escape, the MOI established an *ad hoc* committee tasked with hunting down the detainees, and

Five Special Procedures mandate holders later condemned the raid as “excessive” and “unlawful,” concluding that “the reported use of tear gas, shotguns equipped with birdshot and lethal antipersonnel weapons by security forces to disperse a peaceful demonstration was neither necessary or proportionate and therefore excessive, qualifying the five deaths as unlawful killings. It is tragic that while security forces are meant to protect life, their actions have shown otherwise.”

208 Marc Owen Jones, “BURIAL OF THOSE ALLEGEDLY KILLED AT SEA ADDS TO SUSPICIONS OF MOI’S VERSION OF EVENTS,” 13 February 2017, <https://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2017/02/13/burial-of-those-allegedly-killed-at-sea-adds-to-suspicious-of-mois-version-of-events/>

209 Ibid.

210 Twitter feed of human rights activist S. Yousif Almuhafeeh, @SAIDYOUSIF, 15 February 2017, <https://twitter.com/SAIDYOUSIF/status/831968298241777664>

211 “Escaped convict dies while resisting arrest,” News of Bahrain, 21 February 2017, <http://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/30616.html>

212 Toby C. Jones and Ala’a Shehabi, “Bahrain’s Revolutionaries,” Foreign Policy, 2 January 2012, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/01/02/bahrains-revolutionaries/>

213 “عاجل... الداخلية: وفاة المحكوم بالمؤبد عبدالله العجوز متأثراً بإصابته جراء سقوطه بعد محاولته الهرب بالتويدرات” *Al-Wasat*, 20 February 2017, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/news/1212899.html>; see also “February 14 Terrorist Organization Exposed,” Bahrain News Agency, 13 June 2013, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/565326>

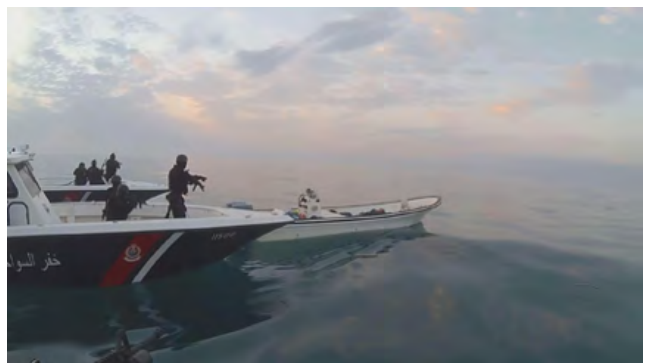
authorities at Dry Dock collectively punished the remaining inmates in reprisal for the prison break.²¹⁴ A statement on the Nuwaidrat operation issued by the MOI claimed that al-Ajooz sustained a fatal injury after falling off a building while attempting to flee. However, al-Ajooz’s family said that the building was surrounded and that he was killed by security forces during the arrest.²¹⁵ All reports suggest that al-Ajooz was unarmed. Though the MOI provided no other information, ultimately stating that their autopsy was “inconclusive” concerning cause of death,²¹⁶ pictures circulated on social media indicating that al-Ajooz suffered head trauma and fell from a height of less than ten meters.²¹⁷ The authorities forced the family to bury al-Ajooz the day after his death and they charged Ebrahim Sharif, a leader of the now-dissolved Wa’ad opposition group, with “inciting hatred against the regime” and against “factions of society” after he posted tweets questioning the official narrative surrounding the incident.²¹⁸ The government has launched no independent investigation into al-Ajooz’ death (*see Section A.E.ii for more information on denial of healthcare*).

G. RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

The MOI is a deeply sectarian institution that routinely targets Bahrain’s marginalized Shia Muslim community for particular abuse and repression. MOI hiring policies favor foreign recruits and discriminate against the Shia majority, ensuring that Bahrain’s largest population is vastly underrepresented in the makeup of its chief law enforcement agency. Simultaneously, and as an interrelated consequence, MOI personnel commonly exhibit explicit anti-Shia prejudice and systematically violate the religious rights of communities they are meant to serve.

i. Recruitment Practices

All of Bahrain’s security institutions are marked by severe sectarian discrimination, ranging from biased recruitment practices to the dissemination of radical anti-Shia training materials. Almost none of Bahrain’s security personnel are hired from the Shia population,²¹⁹ with the armed



Top to bottom: Coast Guard and SSFC personnel after the fatal shooting of three suspects (2017); Coast Guard and SSFC personnel approach target vessel following shooting (2017); MOI officers reportedly interfering with funeral for deceased following shooting (2017)

services drawing disproportionately on local and foreign Sunni recruits.²²⁰ The most recent independent national

214 “Bahrain’s Dry Dock Detention Center: Mass and Indiscriminate Punishment,” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, and ECDHR, 10 June 2016, <https://www.adhrb.org/2016/06/9905/>

215 Twitter feed of human rights activist Ala’a Shehabi, @alaashehabi, 20 February 2017, <https://twitter.com/alaashehabi/status/833660778649628672?lang=en>; See also Marc Owen Jones, “How a spate of killings in Bahrain has raised suspicions of state brutality,” *The Conversation*, 23 March 2017, <https://theconversation.com/how-a-spate-of-killings-in-bahrain-has-raised-suspicions-of-state-brutality-73644>

216 *BAHRAIN 2017 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT*, DOS, US Government, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277481.pdf>

217 Marc Owen Jones, “ANOTHER DEATH IN BAHRAIN RAISES ACCUSATIONS OF FOUL PLAY,” 21 February 2017, <https://marcowenjones.wordpress.com/2017/02/21/another-death-in-bahrain-raises-accusations-of-police-homicide/>

218 “Bahrain: Political Opposition Leader Ebrahim Sharif Charged With ‘Inciting Hatred,’” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, and ECDHR, 20 March 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/03/12050/>

219 The academic consensus is clear on this matter. For example, see: Staci Strobl, “The Roots of Sectarian Law and Order in the Gulf: Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and the Two Historical Disruptions,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.) *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.

220 2010 government statistics indicated that approximately 86,700 people (54,600 Bahraini citizens and 28,000 non-Bahrainis) work in “public administration and defense.” In 2006, defense analysts Anthony Cordesman and Khalid al-Rodhan reported that Bahrain’s overall defense/security sector manpower was 21,360. See K.T. Abdulhameed., “Bahrain’s Migrant Security Apparatus,” in Abdulhadi Khaladif, Omar al-Shehabi, and Adam Hanieh, *Labor Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, Pluto Press: 2015, Print.; Anthony Cordesman and Khalid R. al-Rodhan, *The Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric War*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 28 June 2006, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csifs/pubs/060728_gulf_bahrain.pdf; Maryam al-Khawaja, “Beneath Bahrain’s Shia-versus-Sunni narrative, only the tyrants benefit,” *The Guardian*, 27 October 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/27/bahrain-shia-versus-sunni-narrative>.

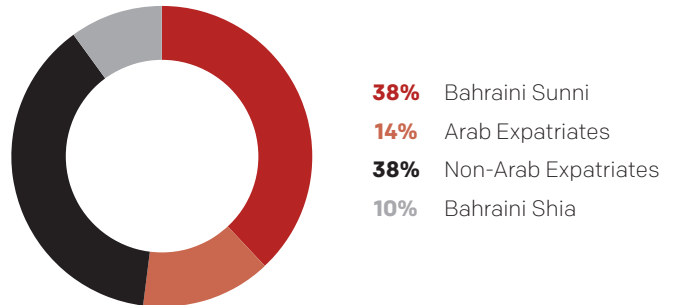


Left to right: Vigil where family believes al-Ajooz was killed by police (2017); Photos of al-Ajooz' body after "inconclusive" MOI autopsy

demographic survey, conducted by academic Justin Gengler in 2009, found that “not a single Shi’i [sic] of those randomly sampled for interview reported working for the police or armed services” compared to 17 percent of working Sunni male respondents.²²¹ In 2015, estimates placed Shia at approximately 2-5 percent of all security personnel²²² – MOI, BDF, National Guard, and intelligence agencies²²³ – contrasted with the country’s Shia population of between 58-70 percent.²²⁴

Though the MOI is nominally more inclusive than the military and intelligence services – likely a function of its sheer size – Shia still face extreme levels of discrimination. It is estimated that Shia account for just 10 percent of the MOI, and they are mostly relegated to purely administrative or low-level roles. In 2005, “among police occupying the top thirty positions of the Ministry of the Interior all were Sunni and fifteen of them were members of the royal family;”²²⁵ this largely remains the case.²²⁶ The government has declined to publicly release demographic information on MOI personnel, but there is evidence the MOI engages in “sectarian profiling,” with the ministry reportedly requiring job candidates to produce documents that indicate sect, and then additionally requiring that

Sectarian and Foreign Recruitment in the MOI*



*Primarily based on low-end estimates from the MOI in 2005; evidence suggests that the proportion of foreign Sunni recruits has increased substantially since 2011, further diminishing the proportion of Bahraini Shia.

Shia candidates produce “a certificate of good behavior.”²²⁷ Recent job advertisements for the MOI request that applicants submit their marriage certificates and those of their parents, for example; this is not a standard hiring practice in Bahrain, but marriage certificates are among the few documents that clearly display an individual’s sect.²²⁸ Moreover, a Shia applicant’s “certificate of good behavior” is then processed by the FSCID at the GDCIFS,

221 Justin Gengler, *Group Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf: Rethinking the Rentier State*, Indiana University Press: 2015, Print.

222 Ian Siperco, “Bahrain’s Sectarian Challenge,” Middle East Policy Council, 2015, <http://www.mepec.org/commentary/bahrains-sectarian-challenge?print=>

223 “Sectarian profiling and recruitment of foreign mercenaries have enabled the regime virtually to avoid recruiting Shias in the four main security agencies that are in charge of protecting the ruling elites and were hence directly involved in the repression of the 2011 uprising: the Bahrain Defense Force, the National Guard, the police forces depending on the Ministry of Interior and the National Security Agency [sic].” Laurence Louer, “Sectarianism and Coup-Proofing Strategies in Bahrain,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, May 2013, pg. 246, <https://americanuniversity.ares.atlas-sys.com/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=O035453420U&Action=10&Type=10&Value=86648>

224 Ian Siperco, “Bahrain’s Sectarian Challenge,” Middle East Policy Council, 22 October 2010, <http://www.mepec.org/articles-commentary/commentary/bahrain-s-sectarian-challenge?print=>

225 Staci Strobl, “The Roots of Sectarian Law and Order in the Gulf: Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and the Two Historical Disruptions,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.) *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.

226 Andreas Krieg, “Gulf Security Policy After the Arab Spring: Considering Changing Security Dynamics,” in Khalid S. Almezaini and Jean-Marc Rickli (Eds.), *The Small Gulf States: Foreign and Security Policies Before and After the Arab Spring*, Routledge: 2017, Print.

227 Staci Strobl, “The Roots of Sectarian Law and Order in the Gulf: Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and the Two Historical Disruptions,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.) *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.

228 Confidential source.



Left to right: MOI checkpoint outside mosque; The SSFC is estimated to be among the most segregated MOI agencies

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
 General Directorate of Crime
 Detection & Forensic Evidence
 Directorate of Criminal Information



مملكة البحرين
 وزارة الداخلية
 الإدارة العامة للمباحث والأدلة الجنائية
 إدارة المعلومات الجنائية

البيانات الشخصية لصاحب الطلب
PARTICULARS OF APPLICANT

صورة مقدم الطلب
 Photograph of Applicant
 5 x 4 cm

APPLICATION FOR:

Good conduct certificate
 Employment certificate
 Others (Specify)
 The purpose
 of extracting the certificate

سبب تقديم الطلب :

شهادة حسن السيرة والسلوك
 شهادة للتوظيف
 أخرى
 الغرض من استخراج الشهادة
 of extracting the certificate

Full Name _____ **الإسم الكامل**

Family Name _____ لقب العائلة
 Sex _____ الجنس Nationality _____ الجنسية
 Date of Birth _____ تاريخ الولادة
 Place of Birth _____ مكان الولادة
 Marital Status _____ الحالة الاجتماعية
 Level of Education _____ المستوى التعليمي
 Mother's Full Name _____ اسم الأم الثلاثي
 Husband / Wife Name _____ اسم الزوج / الزوجة

Address **العنوان**

Block _____ المجمع Avenue _____ الشارع Road/Lane _____ الممر Bldg. _____ المبنى Flat _____ الشقة
 P.O. Box _____ صندوق البريد Governorate _____ المحافظة Area _____ المنطقة

Initial form to submit for a "Good conduct certificate" application to the FSCID of the GDCIFS



Elite SSFC officers are often masked, evidence to some observers of the MOI's "loss of societal trust" [see Bertelsmann Stiftung's *Transformation Index – Bahrain*]

one of the MOI's single most abusive agencies (see Section 2.B.i for more on the GDCIFS) and an institution directly implicated in cases of explicit anti-Shia discrimination such as the use of hate speech during torture (see below for more details on violations of religious rights).²²⁹

Since 2011, the MOI has pledged to create thousands of new jobs in the Coast Guard, General Directorate of Traffic, and General Directorate of Civil Defence, among other divisions of the ministry, claiming that these hires would be drawn from a cross-section of the population.²³⁰ Again, however, the government refuses to release demographic information that could confirm the recruitment of Shia personnel. Further, as noted by the research collective Bahrain Watch,²³¹ even if Shia were successfully integrated into these divisions of the MOI, this would not rectify the imbalance in key law enforcement roles and senior

positions: the Coast Guard and General Directorate of Traffic play little substantive role in everyday policing, and the General Directorate of Civil Defence handles public safety issues like firefighting.

In 2012, the government announced plans to launch a new initiative for Bahrain's community police division, originally established in 2005, which would draw 500 recruits "from all communities."²³² According to the authorities, a total of 1,500 new community police had graduated from the Royal Academy of Police by 2015.²³³ While the US DOS reported in 2016 that its "contacts have confirmed that Bahraini Shia have been among those integrated into the community police and the police cadets," it found that this integration has not occurred "in significant numbers."²³⁴ Moreover, the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) determined that these new units play only a "marginal" policing role,²³⁵ thereby succumbing to the same problems as the ostensive integration programs for the Coast Guard, Traffic Directorate, and Civil Defense Directorate. Activists in Bahrain tell ADHRB that community police personnel are unarmed and typically operate under the strict supervision of standard security forces. Typically, community police fulfill more menial roles like manning checkpoints while armed MOI officers observe from nearby vehicles.

Aside from the limited number of Shia community police, there is no evidence to suggest that the government has taken further steps to incorporate Shia into the MOI or other security forces. Rather, the government has purposefully exacerbated this disparity by maintaining its longstanding policy of hiring foreign-born Sunni personnel.²³⁶ Over the past two decades – as hundreds of Shia have been arbitrarily denaturalized²³⁷ – Bahraini authorities have recruited and expedited citizenship for thousands of foreign Sunnis from countries like Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, and Pakistan.²³⁸ While many of these expatriates find employment in the judiciary or the school system, the vast majority serves in the security forces. As revealed by a former adviser to the Cabinet Affairs Ministry, Dr. Salah al-Bandar, in 2006,²³⁹

229 Ibid.; and Laurence Louer, "Sectorialism and Coup-Proofing Strategies in Bahrain," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, May 2013, <https://americanuniversity.ares.atlas-sys.com/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=O035453420U&Action=10&Type=10&Value=86648>

230 Eds. Ala'a Shehabi and Marc Owen Jones, *Bahrain's Uprising*, 2015, print.

231 "Government Inaction: Recommendation 1722," Bahrain Watch, 2016, <https://bahrainwatch.org/bici/1722e.php>

232 *Steps taken by the Government of Bahrain to Implement the Recommendations in the 2011 Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, US Department of State, 21 June 2016, <http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/State-BICI-Report.pdf>

233 Ibid.

234 Ibid.

235 "One Year Later: Assessing Bahrain's Implementation of the BICI Report," Project on Middle East Democracy, November 2012, <http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/One-Year-Later-Assessing-Bahrain's-Implementation-of-the-BICI-Report.pdf>, 13-14.

236 *Apart in Their Own Land: Government Discrimination Against Shia in Bahrain, Vol. I*, ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, April 2015, <http://www.adhrb.org/2015/03/adhrb-bird-and-bchr-publish-new-report-on-shia-discrimination/>

237 "Bahrain's Third Cycle UPR: A Record of Repression," *Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, Bahrain Institute for Rights & Democracy, Bahrain Center for Human Rights*, 2016, accessed 19 April 2017, http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2017.2.28_Web-Version_ADHRB_BCHR_BIRD_Bahrain-3rd-Cycle-UPR-Assessment.pdf

238 Maryam al-Khawaja, "Beneath Bahrain's Shia-versus-Sunni narrative, only the tyrants benefit," *The Guardian*, 27 October 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/27/bahrain-shia-versus-sunni-narrative>.

239 "Al-Bandar Report: Demographic engineering in Bahrain and mechanisms of exclusion," BCHR, 30 September 2006, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/528>; The al-Bandar papers, leaked by a civil servant, revealed an inter-ministry plan to employ foreign Sunni nationals and grant them citizenship at a fast rate, thereby proportionally reducing the Shia demographic from a majority to a minority.



Left to right: Community police are typically unarmed and relegated to low-level roles; SSFC officer at checkpoint

the government has granted citizenship to at least 100,000 foreign Sunnis in the last 15-20 years, with an accelerated pace of naturalization since 2011.²⁴⁰ The path to expedited political naturalization for security officers – often earned through demonstrated loyalty to the monarchy – remains a key hiring incentive that “is virtually impossible for other migrants in the country”²⁴¹ who typically face significant hurdles to access even basic social services.

In 2005, the MOI itself admitted that “14 percent of the police force were Arab expatriates and an additional 38 percent were non-Arab expatriates, making the Sunni expatriate foreign penetration into policing a sizable 52 percent, or over half of all officers.”²⁴² Just before the 2011 protest movement, the government-linked media outlet Gulf Digital News reported similar statistics, noting that approximately 40 percent of MOI employees were foreign nationals.²⁴³ This proportion appears to have only increased during the state of emergency between March and June, when the government recruited over 2,500 former soldiers from Pakistan for service in both the MOI’s SSFC riot police and the National Guard.²⁴⁴ According to Al-Jazeera, this move represented a 50 percent increase in the strength

of these two units.²⁴⁵ None of the new recruits were Shia.²⁴⁶ Around the same time, media reports indicated that SSFC riot police personnel were “mostly Pakistani”²⁴⁷ nationals that did not speak Arabic, and contemporaneous US DOS documents confirmed that SSFC units deployed to Afghanistan with American Marines possessed “language capability (many of the officers speak Pashtu) and cultural expertise [that] had an immediate positive impact” on interactions with Afghan locals and suspected Taliban fighters.²⁴⁸ Advertisements for positions in Bahrain’s security forces were seen in Pakistan in 2014, and a Pakistani newspaper reported that over 10,000 Pakistani nationals were serving in them that same year.²⁴⁹ It is estimated that Pakistanis alone make up a third of the MOI police force.²⁵⁰ Similarly, leaked documents listed the names and salaries of 499 Jordanian police officers employed by the MOI in 2014, and other concurrent reports estimated that up to 2,500 former Jordanian policemen were working in the Bahraini security services at the time.²⁵¹ *The Guardian* reported in 2011 that the MOI and Bahrain’s other security services even recruited an unknown number of Iraqi Ba’athist officers that served in Saddam Hussein’s regime.²⁵²

240 Justin Gengler, “Bahrain Drain: Why the King’s Sunni Supporters are Moving Abroad,” *Foreign Policy*, 5 September 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-09-05/bahrain-drain>.
 241 K.T. Abdulhameed, “Bahrain’s Migrant Security Apparatus,” in Abdulhadi Khalaf, Omar al-Shehabi, and Adam Hanieh, *Labor Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, Pluto Press: 2015, Print.
 242 Staci Strobl, “The Roots of Sectarian Law and Order in the Gulf: Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and the Two Historical Disruptions,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.) *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.
 243 “Police jobs chance for Bahrainis,” Gulf Digital New, 1 February 2011, <http://archives.gdnonline.com/NewsDetails.aspx?date=04/07/2015&storyid=297440>
 244 Mujib Mashal, “Pakistani Troops Aid Bahrain’s Crackdown,” Al Jazeera, 30 July 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/07/2011725145048574888.html>
 245 Ibid.
 246 Confidential Source.
 247 Ian Black, “Bahrain security forces accused of deliberately recruiting foreign nationals,” *The Guardian*, 17 February 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/17/bahrain-security-forces-sunni-foreign>
 248 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/158268.pdf>
 249 “King of Bahrain vows to enhance military cooperation at JSHQ,” Dawn, 20 March 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1094257/king-of-bahrain-vows-to-enhance-military-cooperation-at-jshq>
 250 Zoltan Barany, *The Bahrain Defence Force: The Monarchy’s Second-to-Last Line of Defense*, Center for Strategic International Studies, 9 December 2016, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/161214_Bahrain_Defence_Force.pdf
 251 Nazgol Kafai & Ala’a Shehabi, *The Struggle for Information: Revelations on Mercenaries, Sectarian Agitation and Demographic Engineering in Bahrain*, JADALIYYA, 29 May 2014, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/17912/the-struggle-for-information_revelations-on-mercen
 252 Ian Black, “Bahrain security forces accused of deliberately recruiting foreign nationals,” *The Guardian*, 17 February 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/17/bahrain-security-forces-sunni-foreign>

ADHRB's documentation corroborates these trends, as we have recorded repeated cases of Jordanian, Yemeni, Pakistani, and Syrian personnel perpetrating abuses during MOI operations or within MOI facilities, particularly at the GDRR's Dry Dock Detention Center and Jau Prison.

ii. Hate Speech, Profiling, and Violations of Religious Rights

There is also evidence that Bahrain's security forces directly propagate extremist materials and hate speech, and some personnel have left the services to join extremist groups. The military has disseminated religious pamphlets that call for violence and discrimination against Shia Muslims, and ADHRB has documented nearly 300 cases in which MOI personnel used similar sectarian hate speech or otherwise engaged in religious discrimination in the course of their operations, particularly during arbitrary arrests and torture. These abuses include systematic prevention of prayer during detention at the CID and GDRR; forced verbal repudiation of religious beliefs under torture at the CID; and arbitrary prohibition or confiscation of religious materials within GDRR facilities. Inmates generally report that guards treat Shia detainees worse than their Sunni counterparts, and that all Shia religious texts are banned within the prison system. In December 2016, ADHRB received reports that detainees at Jau Prison had announced a hunger strike after guards assaulted inmates for participating in a mass prayer. The reports indicated that the guards had specifically beaten Sheikh Mohammed al-Mansi for leading prayers. At the Isa Town Women's Prison, guards have punished women for celebrating religious occasions and have reportedly harassed and separated Sunni and Shia inmates that attempt to pray together. Human rights defender Zainab al-Khawaja observed naturalized security forces subject Shia women to hate speech during her arbitrary incarceration at Isa Town; in one case, a guard described a Bahraini Shia prisoner as one of the "disgusting terrorist Iranian people."²⁵³ That prisoner, Rabab Mohammed, had been arrested after she spoke back to a squad of SSFC riot police that called her a "dirty Shia whore."²⁵⁴

While the MOI employs arbitrary detention, torture, and other unlawful repressive measures against all perceived dissidents, regardless of religious affiliation, Bahraini Shia are subject to profiling and remain disproportionately



Policemen in Bahrain circa 1950

targeted for abuse. After the government's initial attacks on the protest movement in 2011, the authorities erected dozens of roadblocks around majority Shia areas and police began questioning persons with Shia names, arresting anyone with signs of injury.²⁵⁵ Police often conduct seemingly random raids in Shia areas, dispersing gatherings or detaining individuals from homes without any warrant or reason provided. During repeated raids on one family's home throughout 2012-2016, MOI personnel also arbitrarily cut electricity to the house, saying "the reason we cut off your electricity was because you are not paying your electricity bills, because I know that you Shiites do not pay your electricity bills" (see *Section 3.A for more on arbitrary arrests and home raids*).

MOI personnel have also directly targeted Shia religious traditions and symbols for attack, infringing on the community's rights to free belief, assembly, and association. In the immediate aftermath of the 2011 protests, security forces damaged or destroyed at least 53 Shia mosques and religious institutions.²⁵⁶ Of these, at least 28 were entirely demolished, and the government has still failed to fully rectify the situation more than seven years on. MOI personnel routinely disturb Shia religious ceremonies during the Islamic calendar month of Muharram, despite formally taking responsibility for the security of these

²⁵³ *Locked Inside a Nightmare: Voices from Bahraini Prisons*, BCHR and BYSHR, 9 June 2014, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/sites/default/files/Prison%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20II.pdf>

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Richard Sollom, "Do No Harm: A Call for Bahrain to End Systematic Attacks on Doctors and Patients," Physicians for Human Rights, 2011, <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/reports/bahrain-attacks-on-doctors-2011-04-22.html>

²⁵⁶ *Submission for Bahrain's List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR) under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, ADHRB, July 2017, http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ADHRB-CERD-LOIPR_July-2017.pdf

community events. In recent years police have arrested Shia clerics for leading processions or delivering critical sermons; torn down religious placards marking Ashura (or the Day of Remembrance); and suppressed funerals and demonstrations with excessive force. In 2015, for example, police removed flags and banners from more than 30 villages in the first two weeks of Muharram, and they raided a Shia religious hall, or matam, in Karzkan village.²⁵⁷ The MOI stated that its personnel removed “political slogans that do not represent Ashura,”²⁵⁸ while local residents reported that these same flags had been displayed for years. Moreover, the MOI justified its decision to violently disperse worshippers –resulting in several cases of near-suffocation, bodily injury, and private property damage – as necessary to “ensure traffic safety.” Multiple clerics and a youth group were interrogated over sermons and a prayer gathering. The MOI has also issued arbitrary denaturalization orders against Shia religious leaders, such as Bahrain’s most prominent Shia cleric, Sheikh Isa Qassim (*see Section 2.C.ii for information on the NPRA and citizenship revocation policies*).

The kingdom’s most prominent human rights defender, Nabeel Rajab, has warned that the security forces are an “ideological incubator” for violent extremism after a number of personnel defected to join terror groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or Daesh).²⁵⁹ Rajab’s tweets referenced the appearance of a former MOI police lieutenant, Mohammed Isa al-Binali, in ISIS propaganda films urging Bahraini security personnel to join and fight with the group.²⁶⁰ The MOI later stated that al-Binali, who is a member of a “wealthy and important Sunni family with close ties to the Al Khalifa rulers,”²⁶¹ was fired for “failure to appear at work.”²⁶² In June 2017, the US DOS formally classified al-Binali as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), listing him as a “senior” member of ISIS



SSFC personnel hold up weapons and a portrait of King Hamad at conclusion of a training exercise

that continues to specifically work to recruit members of Bahrain’s security services.²⁶³ Rajab, meanwhile, is currently serving seven years in Jau Prison for criticizing the government on social media.

According to scholar and activist Ala’a Shehabi, “there is a direct link between IS and Bahrain’s security services,” and the government has admitted that more than 100 Bahrainis had left to join the extremist group in 2014.²⁶⁴ Turki al-Binali, a leading ISIS cleric from the same family as Mohammed Isa al-Binali,²⁶⁵ is said to have traveled and preached freely in Bahrain until 2013;²⁶⁶ before he was reported killed by the US-led coalition, some analysts expected him to succeed the extremist group’s current leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.²⁶⁷ In December 2017, ISIS propaganda threatened to increase the organization’s activity in Bahrain, specifically calling for supporters to attack both the kingdom’s Shia community and American personnel stationed at the US naval base in Manama. According to the Associated Press, the “video listed 14 purported fighters from the island who IS says died as suicide bombers or fighters in Iraq and Syria.”²⁶⁸

257 “Attacks on Muharram Ceremonies in Bahrain,” ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, 29 October 2015, <http://www.adhrb.org/2015/10/attacks-on-muharram-ceremonies-in-bahrain/>
 258 “الداخلية: مخالفات «عاشوراء» التي أزالها الأمن تتعلق بالأماكن والمضمون والسلامة العامة»,” *Al Wasat*, 23 October 2015, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/news/1038173.html>
 259 “Bahrain’s Prominent Human Rights Activist Arrested for Criticizing Police Defectors Who Joined ISIS,” *Global Voices*, 1 October 2014, <https://globalvoices.org/2014/10/01/bahrain-prominent-human-rights-activist-arrested-for-criticizing-police-defectors-who-joined-isis/>
 260 “Bahrain: Rights Activist Detained,” HRW, 3 October 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/03/bahrain-rights-activist-detained>; and أبو سفيان السلمي في اعتصام أمام السفارة الأمريكية، YouTube, 17 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CKv56mqPBU#t=70>; and Justin Gengler, *Group Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf: Rethinking the Rentier State*, Indiana University Press: 2015, Print.
 261 Georgio Cafiero, “Meet the likely successor of Islamic State’s Baghdadi,” *Al-Monitor*, 14 September 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/turki-binali-bahrain-islamic-state-successor-baghdadi.html#ixzz4SwbqCUSv>
 262 “Bahrain: Rights Activist Detained,” HRW, 3 October 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/03/bahrain-rights-activist-detained>
 263 “State Department Terrorist Designations of Mohammad Shafi Armar, Oussama Ahmad Atar, and Mohammed Isa Yousif Saqar Al Binali,” US Department of State, 15 June 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/06/271921.htm>
 264 Ala’a Shehabi, “Why Is Bahrain Outsourcing Extremism?” *Foreign Policy*, 29 October 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/29/why-is-bahrain-outsourcing-extremism/>; Justin Gengler, *Group Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf: Rethinking the Rentier State*, Indiana University Press: 2015, Print.
 265 *Ibid*
 266 Georgio Cafiero, “Meet the likely successor of Islamic State’s Baghdadi,” *Al-Monitor*, 14 September 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/turki-binali-bahrain-islamic-state-successor-baghdadi.html#ixzz4SwbqCUSv>
 267 *Ibid*.
 268 Jon Gambrell, “IS calls for attacks on US bases in uneasy island of Bahrain,” *Associated Press (AP)*, 8 December 2016, <https://apnews.com/418581186b0d43bb91ec0f720b67250c/calls-attacks-us-bases-uneasy-island-bahrain>

THE MOI'S NATIONALISM COMMITTEE: INSTITUTIONALIZING EXCLUSIONARY NARRATIVES



Sectarian and exclusionary rhetoric is not limited to individual MOI units and officers, but it is increasingly propagated from top commanders and official publications. As criminologist Staci Strobl finds, “even after the BICI report, the public relations arm of the national police apparently saw no problem with thinly disguised sectarian tracts in their *Al-Amn* magazine, constructing Gulf nations as (only) their Arab (Sunni) regimes, with threats against them (in particular) equated to attacks against the countries (at large).” In 2013, Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah admitted that “the threat to Arab regimes in the Gulf remains our main concern,” dispensing with any pretense that the MOI’s primary responsibility was to protect and serve Bahraini society. Strobl similarly critiques two *Al-Amn* articles from then Lieutenant Colonel, now Assistant Chief of Public Security for Community Police and Supervisor of the Police Media Directorate Brigadier Mohammed Bin Daina for blaming unrest “on ‘the parties claiming to call for freedom and democracy’ who have a ‘selfish mindset’” and calling for “the criminalization of ‘the abusers of the social media who sing out of tune.’”

The ministry-wide project to equate regime security with public safety – often at the direct expense of the marginalized Shia community – has since been formalized, with Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah establishing a “Committee to Reinforce Loyalty and National Values” in 2018. Also referred to as the “Nationalism Committee,” the 16-person panel is chaired by the Interior Minister and tasked with promoting “the spirit of nationalism.” In a speech announcing the committee, Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah defined Bahraini nationalism as “a vote for Arabism,” and juxtaposed it in explicit opposition with the peaceful human rights and pro-democracy movement: “Bahrain is a state with faith in nationalism. I am talking about the nationalism ... that overcame chaos and reverted to order in 2011. Bahrain that voted for its parliamentarians after the resignation of those who wanted to disrupt our democratic ethos.” Likewise, in a series of tweets, he stated: “The primary issue that I want to focus on, owing to its direct relation with our security and stability, is our national identity ... Our Bahraini identity was affected in the aftermath of the 2011 incidents and had its implications for social relations.” It is as yet unclear exact role the Committee will play, but it is tasked with developing “legislation and rules, curriculum, publications, public relations campaigns, and national programmes,” as well as a patriotism award. The project threatens to further imbue the MOI with the authority to define and enforce “national identity,” a prospect that is particularly problematic given its fundamental orientation around sectarian discrimination that targets and excludes Bahrain’s majority population. The Committee will likely reinforce and aggravate street-level police violations of religious rights, as well as the MOI’s broader zero-tolerance policy toward non-violent dissent.

See: Staci Strobl, “The Roots of Sectarian Law and Order in the Gulf: Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and the Two Historical Disruptions,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.) *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.

“HE Interior Minister announces 16-member panel to promote national values,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 20 March 2018, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/80489>

Naser Al Wasmī, “Bahrain to focus on ‘national identity’ to address terror threats,” *The National*, 22 January 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/bahrain-to-focus-on-national-identity-to-address-terror-threats-1.697573>

“Drive to encourage ‘spirit of national belonging’ launched,” *Gulf Digital News Online*, 22 January 2018, <http://www.gdnonline.com/Details/303995/Drive-to-encourage-%E2%80%99spirit-of-national-belonging%E2%80%99-launched>



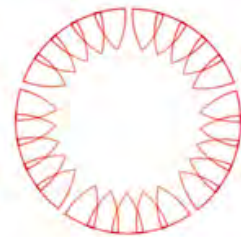
*Failure to Reform:
Perpetuating the
Cycle of Abuse*

In 2011 and 2012, the Bahraini government accepted two major reform packages that included proposals aimed at stemming the tide of abuse perpetrated by the MOI and transforming its agencies into professional law enforcement institutions: the recommendations of the BICI and the recommendations of its second UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle, respectively. It has refused to fully implement any of these recommendations. The MOI has continued to commit the same severe human rights violations specifically cited in these reform proposals – arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, and excessive force, chief among them – while the government has intensified the restrictions on basic human rights that MOI personnel are tasked with enforcing. More still, the MOI has explicitly failed to fully implement BICI and UPR recommendations to end impunity for police abuse through the creation of its internal Ombudsman’s Office. No senior officials have been convicted, and only in extreme circumstances are low-level officers even prosecuted – when they are, it is invariably on charges that are incommensurate with the offense, or which are quietly dismissed on appeal. Ultimately, many of these same officers and their commanders not only escape punishment, but are actually promoted to coveted posts elsewhere in the ministry or the government. The interconnected, self-reinforcing structure of impunity and reward sends a clear signal to security personnel that violating human rights will – at worst – yield a minor penalty likely to be overturned, and – at best – advance their careers. In this way the MOI and the Bahraini leadership have not just abandoned real reform efforts, but are actively incentivizing the cycle of abuse.

A. IMPUNITY

In 2011, the BICI found that the MOI’s Inspector General was incapable of impartially investigating police malfeasance and issued Recommendation 1717 “to place the office of the inspector general...as a separate entity independent of the ministry’s hierarchical control, whose tasks should include those of an internal ‘ombudsman’s office.’”²⁶⁹ Although Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid announced as early as June 2013 that the “Interior Ministry has gone beyond the Implementation of the Recommendations of BICI,”²⁷⁰ the authorities only partially implemented this

الأمانة العامة
للتظلمات
OMBUDSMAN
وزارة الداخلية



MOI Ombudsman Nawaf Mohammed al-Maawda

proposal from the outset: the ministry retained the office of the Inspector General as a disciplinary body under the direct authority of the Interior Minister, while establishing a parallel Ombudsman’s Office in 2012.²⁷¹ The Ombudsman is tasked with investigating reports of abuse committed by MOI personnel, including primarily through the receipt of complaints from victims, their families, or their representatives. It does not have the authority to charge or prosecute officers suspected of wrongdoing: if a complaint is found to have merit or evidence of malfeasance is otherwise uncovered, the Ombudsman is to refer the case to the Inspector General or Interior Ministry Undersecretary for internal disciplinary action, or to the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) of the MOI’s PPO for criminal prosecution. The government additionally established the PDRC in 2013, which is chaired by the MOI Ombudsman and operates as a subsidiary agency focused specifically on detention conditions.²⁷² It has the same referral authority.

Together, these institutions claim to adhere to a number of international standards, including those of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI); the Paris Principles on the role of national human rights institutions;²⁷³ the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); and

269 Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, Nigel Rodley, Badria al-Awadhi, Philippe Kirsch, and Mahnoush Arsanjani, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, <http://www.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf>

270 “Shaikh Rashid Bin Abdullah: Interior Ministry has gone beyond the Implementation of the Recommendations of BICI,” BNA, 14 June 2013, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/565551>

271 See: Decree No. 27/2012 Concerning the Office of the Independent Ombudsman at the Ministry of Interior, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2012, www.ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/legal/en/Decree-No-27/files/assets/downloads/publication.pdf

272 *Fundamentally Flawed: Bahrain’s Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission*, ADHRB and BIRD, 2 September 2015, <https://www.adhrb.org/2015/09/bird-and-adhrb-publish-report-on-prisoners-and-detainees-rights-commission-fundamentally-flawed/>

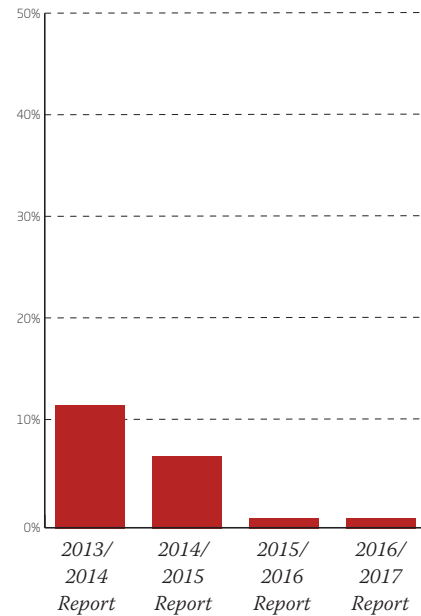
273 To note, Bahrain maintains a separate national institution for human rights, which is specifically subject to the Paris Principles; it has received only a B accreditation with the international body that assess such institutions, and it remains deeply flawed, with the European Parliament recently castigating it for “repeatedly justified the human rights violations undertaken by the Bahrain government, including the imprisonment of Nabeel Rajab,” for example. See: “European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab,” European Parliament, 2018, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P8-RC-2018-0281&language=EN>; and *Analysis of the Fifth Annual Report of the Bahraini National Institution for Human Rights*, ADHRB, 20 April 2018, <http://www.adhrb.org/2018/04/bahrain-nihr-ignores-government-violations-endorses-abuses-in-2017-report/>

the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), among others. These obligations were further cemented in 2012, when the Bahraini government accepted 11 UPR recommendations to combat impunity and ensure accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations, as well as 15 to complete the implementation of the BICI program.²⁷⁴ Five years later, during its third UPR cycle, Bahrain received 16 additional recommendations to end impunity and improve its accountability mechanisms, as well as four to finally institute the BICI reforms, demonstrating the government's persistent failure to properly address the problem.

Bahrain's oversight institutions remain in violation of these standards. In its May 2017 Concluding Observations on Bahrain,²⁷⁵ the UN Committee against Torture found that the entire accountability system established since 2011 remains deeply flawed – precisely because of its close connection to the MOI:

While noting that persons deprived of their liberty can file complaints about torture or ill-treatment with a number of bodies created pursuant to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry such as the Office of the Ombudsman ... of the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate of Internal Investigations of the Ministry of the Interior, the General Directorate of Reform and Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Interior, the Ombudsman's Office of the National Security Agency, the Special Investigation Unit in the Public Prosecutor's Office, the National Institution for Human Rights and the Prisoners' and the Detainees' Rights Commission, the Committee is concerned that these bodies are not independent, that their mandates are unclear and overlapping and that they are not effective given that complaints ultimately pass through the Ministry of the Interior. It is also concerned that little or no outcome regarding their activities has been provided by the governmental authorities. The Committee is also concerned about the loopholes in the existing complaints mechanisms whereby prison inmates have to submit complaints regarding torture or ill-treatment through prison wardens, the prison Director or Deputy Director, which do not guarantee the outcome of the transmittal of such complaints to the competent authorities ([violating CAT] arts. 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

MOI Ombudsman Serious Referral Rates per Reporting Period



Likewise, in June 2018, the European Parliament expressed explicit “regret” that the European Union’s Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the Gulf Cooperation Council Region was jointly conferred on the MOI Ombudsman and the National Institution for Human Rights in 2014, citing the fact that the organizations have “repeatedly justified the human rights violations undertaken by the Bahraini Government” and failed to live up to the standards of the award.²⁷⁶

At the core of these broader failures are the MOI’s disciplinary bodies, led by the Ombudsman, which have all fallen short of their mandate and their international commitments. At times, they have contributed directly the ministry’s broader pattern of abuse.

i. Failures

The Ombudsman is fundamentally hamstrung by its enabling legislation, which grants the MOI undue influence over its operations and prevents it from independently pursuing disciplinary action.²⁷⁷ Under Article 7 of the establishing law – Royal Decree No. 27/2012, amended

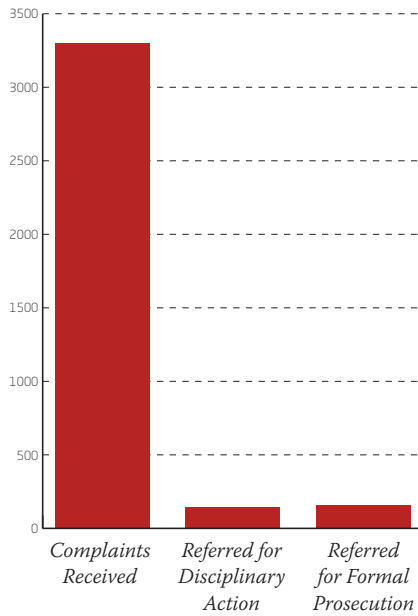
274 There is some overlap between the two groups of recommendations; see: “Bahrain,” UPR Info, 2018, <https://www.upr-info.org/en/review/Bahrain/Session-13---May-2012>; and *Bahrain’s Third Cycle UPR: A Record of Repression*, ADHRB, 7 March 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/03/11848/>

275 CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3, *Concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain*, Committee Against Torture, OHCHR, UN, 29 May 2017, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fBHR%2fCO%2f2-3&Lang=en

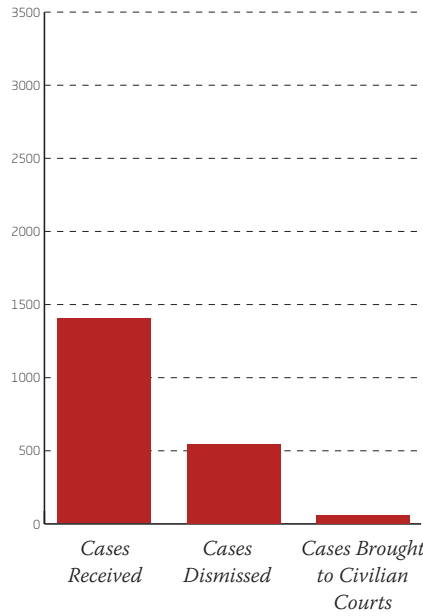
276 “NGOs Welcome European Parliament Resolution on Nabeel Rajab and Bahrain,” ADHRB, BIRD, and ECDHR, 14 June 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/06/ngos-welcome-european-parliament-resolution-on-nabeel-rajab-and-bahrain/>; and *European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab*, European Parliament, 14 June 2018, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P8-RC-2018-0281&language=EN>

277 *Subservient and Unaccountable: A Shadow Report on the Bahraini Ministry of the Interior’s Ombudsman and Bahrain National Institute for Human Rights*, ADHRB and BIRD, 2014, http://birdh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ADHRB_Mechanism_Final-0814_Web.pdf

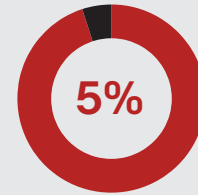
MOI Ombudsman Complaint & Referral Rates 2013-2017



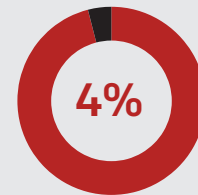
SIU Prosecution Rates for MOI Abuse Cases



IMPUNITY IN BAHRAIN: BY THE NUMBERS



Just **5%** of Ombudsman complaints are referred for potential civilian prosecution



And just **4%** of the cases referred to the SIU actually make it to court for potential conviction

by Royal Decree No. 35/2013²⁷⁸ – the Interior Minister and the Prime Minister are permitted to dismiss the Ombudsman and his deputy if they are determined to be unsatisfactorily fulfilling the institution’s mandate, while Article 16 empowers the Interior Minister to apportion the Ombudsman’s budget. As noted by the UN Committee against Torture, complaints are necessarily filtered through the MOI or otherwise vulnerable to interference from MOI personnel, further undermining the Ombudsman’s autonomy as well as the safety and efficacy of the process.²⁷⁹ These policies directly contravene both the Paris Principles and articles 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(h) of the IOI Bylaws, which hold that the work and appointment processes of an ombudsman’s office must not in any way be influenced by the public authorities which they are tasked with investigating. In Bahrain, the MOI leadership cadre exercises far more than an advisory roles wielding both formal and informal influence over the appointment and operation of the Ombudsman and the Office’s staff, compromising their independence from the ministry personnel they are meant to investigate.

As a result, the Ombudsman’s Office suffers from many of the same problems as the Inspector General, and it has been unable or unwilling to eliminate the culture of impunity within the MOI. Its rates of criminal or disciplinary referrals are extremely low, and the Ombudsman’s Office itself has reported that the PPO’s SIU, the Inspector General, and other MOI agencies have repeatedly blocked its investigations.²⁸⁰

According to data presented in the Ombudsman’s annual reports, the Office has received a total of 3,298 complaints from its first year of operation in 2013 to its most recent reporting date, 30 April 2017;²⁸¹ roughly 60 percent of these are requests for assistance concerning issues such as family prison visits or phone calls, while the remaining 40 percent are complaints requesting investigations into serious allegations of criminal wrongdoing. Of these complaints, just 305 – or nine percent – were referred for potential disciplinary action or prosecution. Worse, about half of these referrals were sent to the Inspector General or the Security Courts, the internal judicial system under the authority of the Interior Ministry Undersecretary

278 CAT/C/BHR/3, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention pursuant to the optional reporting procedure*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 16 June 2016, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fBHR%2f3&Lang=en

279 Ibid.

280 *First Annual Report 2013/2014*, Ministry of the Interior, Office of the Ombudsman, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2014, <http://ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/pdf/610-First%20Annual%20Report%20%202013-2014-2812251.pdf>

281 *Fourth Annual Report 2016-2017*, Ministry of Interior, Office of the Ombudsman, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, <http://www.ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/magazine/en/2016-2017/#1>



MOI Ombudsman visiting GDRR facilities (2015)

that, in 2012, the government purportedly restricted from prosecuting cases of “torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or deaths linked thereto” over ostensive concerns of partiality and opacity.²⁸² This means that only the 159 cases referred to the PPO and the SIU constitute formal attempts to secure accountability for the most severe MOI abuses – just five percent of the total complaints received by the Ombudsman’s Office throughout its first four years of operation.

In fact, while the Ombudsman’s criminal referral rates are already abysmally low – at an average annual rate of only six percent – they have remained in precipitous decline since the Office’s establishment. Despite an overall increase in complaints, rates of referral to the PPO or SIU have dropped from 12 percent in 2013/2014²⁸³ to 6 percent in both 2014/2015²⁸⁴ and 2015/2016,²⁸⁵ down to just one percent in 2016/2017.²⁸⁶ According to the Office’s most recent annual report,²⁸⁷ covering the period of 1 May 2016 to 30 April 2017, it received 1,156 complaints for the year, of which 465 were allegations of severe abuse rather than requests for assistance. Just 16 of the total 1,156 complaints were referred for potential prosecution, or approximately one percent. These figures suggest that even as the

Ombudsman’s Office is receiving more evidence of abuse, it is actually taking fewer steps to ensure MOI personnel face justice for their crimes.

The Ombudsman’s failures – coupled with the fundamental absence of necessary political will within the Bahraini government – have resulted in the vast majority of perpetrators evading punishment for severe human rights abuses, with literally no senior MOI officers yet held accountable. Since its establishment, the PPO’s SIU “has received 561 allegations of torture and 839 allegations of ill-treatment and excessive use of force by members of the Public Security Forces,” including 153 from the Ombudsman. Of the 1,400 total, the

Of the few MOI officers who received criminal convictions for violent abuse, literally none received more prison time than BCHR president Nabeel Rajab, who was sentenced to a total of seven years for simply discussing human rights violations.

SIU dismissed 541 and referred just 56 to civilian courts – meaning that only 4 percent of cases that make it to the SIU are actually forwarded for trial.²⁸⁸ Conviction data is even less clear than referral rates, but they undoubtedly account for a fraction of the 120 personnel involved in the 56 cases brought to court. According to information transmitted by Bahraini authorities to the US State Department, by the end of 2013, the SIU had secured the convictions of 13 security personnel.²⁸⁹ An indeterminate number were convicted in 2014²⁹⁰ and 32 MOI officers were reportedly serving prison sentences by 2015,²⁹¹ but just 10 of these were convicted in the standard court system of more serious offenses. By 2016,

282 CAT/C/BHR/3, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention pursuant to the optional reporting procedure*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 16 June 2016, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fBHR%2f3&Lang=en

283 *First Annual Report 2013/2014*, Ministry of the Interior, Office of the Ombudsman, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2014, <http://ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/pdf/610-First%20Annual%20Report%202013-2014-2812251.pdf>.

284 *Second Annual Report 2014-2015*, Ministry of Interior, Office of the Ombudsman, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2015, <http://ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/pdf/Annual%20Report%20English%202015.pdf>

285 *Third Annual Report 2015-2016*, Ministry of Interior, Office of the Ombudsman, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2016, <http://www.ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/pdf/862-Ombudsman%20Annual%20Report%20E%202015-2016%20L.R-120350.pdf>

286 *Fourth Annual Report 2016-2017*, Ministry of Interior, Office of the Ombudsman, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2017, <http://www.ombudsman.bh/mcms-store/magazine/en/2016-2017/#1>

287 *Ibid.*

288 CCPR/C/BHR/Q/1/Add.1 *List of issues in relation to the initial report of Bahrain - Replies of Bahrain to the list of issues*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 22 February 2018, <http://undocs.org/en/CCPR/C/BHR/Q/1/Add.1>

289 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/220560.pdf>

290 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236806.pdf>

291 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253131.pdf>



“Laws cannot be applied to you. No one can touch this bond. Whoever applies these laws against you is applying them against us. We are one body,”

– Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa to an MOI commander accused of torture, 2013



Bahrain's PM (C) with Mubarak bin Huwail (L), a GDCIFS officer implicated in torture

41 police officers were reportedly serving prison terms.²⁹² However, at the end of 2017, just three officers remained in prison²⁹³ – less than one percent of all MOI personnel.²⁹⁴

Full data is not yet available for 2018, but the Bahraini government announced in May that the SIU had secured the conviction of 10 out of 13 “public security affiliates.”²⁹⁵ This case appears to match that of 13 personnel referred by the SIU to the courts in January 2018²⁹⁶ over their involvement in the mass torture and collective punishment of the Jau Prison population in March 2015, more than two full years after a court convicted 57 prisoners on charges stemming from the same incident in January 2016.²⁹⁷ The MOI personnel were sentenced to just six months in prison²⁹⁸ on minor charges, while the 57 inmates received

additional 15-year prison terms.²⁹⁹ The disparity in both length of investigation and severity of penalty highlights the separate and unequal judicial treatment of security personnel in Bahrain.

Even if all of the annual figures above are combined, yielding a total that is certainly larger than the real number of MOI officers convicted, the proportion of MOI employees convicted of serious misconduct still falls below one percent and accounts for just a fraction of the violations documented by ADHRB. Only 120 officers were ever even tried, let alone found guilty. This data not only reveals extremely low rates of conviction for MOI personnel – especially when compared with the MOI’s rates of abuse – but also indicates that nearly all convicted police officers receive exceedingly short prison terms, often less than five years. No officer has ever been sentenced to more than seven years in prison.³⁰⁰ Ultimately, a significant portion of even these few convicted officers will see their judgments overturned or their sentences greatly reduced on appeal. Moreover, these statistics are based solely on official information communicated by the Bahraini government to the UN and US State Department, both of which have noted concerns over the veracity of Bahrain’s data and whether MOI personnel – who reportedly serve their prison terms in “special” detention facilities “reserved for security officers” – actually complete their sentences or are even expelled from the ministry.³⁰¹ Coupled with the Ombudsman’s low referral rates, the PPO’s equally poor

Though the SIU claims independence from the MOI, sixty percent of the unit’s employees were former MOI personnel as of 2013, and its Chief Public Prosecutor previously worked in the MOI’s GDCIFS.

292 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/265704.pdf>

293 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017: Bahrain*, US Department of State, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277481.pdf>

294 Calculated using the estimated overall strength of 30,000 (including armed and civilian personnel).

295 “Special Investigation Unit outlines cases,” BNA, 2 May 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/839288>

296 “SIU Refers 13 Policemen to Trial over 2015 Jau Prison Events,” Bahrain Mirror, 12 January 2018, <http://bahrainmirror.com/en/news/44147.html>

297 Sam Jones, “Bahrain Sentences 57 Jau Prisoners to Additional Jail Terms,” ADHRB, 25 January 2016, <https://www.adhrb.org/2016/01/bahrain-sentences-57-jau-prisoners-to-additional-jail-terms/>

298 “Special Investigation Unit outlines cases,” BNA, 2 May 2018, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/839288>

299 Sam Jones, “Bahrain Sentences 57 Jau Prisoners to Additional Jail Terms,” ADHRB, 25 January 2016, <https://www.adhrb.org/2016/01/bahrain-sentences-57-jau-prisoners-to-additional-jail-terms/>

300 *CCPR/C/BHR/Q/1/Add.1 List of issues in relation to the initial report of Bahrain - Replies of Bahrain to the list of issues*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 22 February 2018, <http://undocs.org/en/CCPR/C/BHR/Q/1/Add.1>

301 See the State Department’s 2013 and 2014 reports, above.

The officer told him that complaining to the Ombudsman was useless and that he would die in his prison cell.

conviction rates represent yet another layer of impunity to ensure almost no police face criminal punishment, and the MOI as a whole evades scrutiny.

ii. Direct Abuses

The Ombudsman's deficient independence from the MOI and the leadership's consequent influence over its operations also have a direct, negative impact on the individuals that utilize its complaint mechanisms. ADHRB has documented repeated incidents of Ombudsman's Office violating international standards like the IOI bylaws, including by assigning personnel accused of wrongdoing to process complaints; abusing its authority to interrogate complainants and their families; endorsing abusive policies; and otherwise failing to protect or exposing complainants to reprisal by MOI personnel, including the Ombudsman's own staff.

After MOI personnel detained and tortured Husain Ali al-Sahlawi in 2010 and 2012, for example, an official from the Ombudsman's Office was sent to investigate al-Sahlawi's allegations that he was denied medical treatment for his injuries during his subsequent incarceration in Jau Prison.³⁰² The officer later explicitly misrepresented al-Sahlawi's statements, incorrectly reporting that he had received medical care. Subsequently, a different officer from the Ombudsman's Office coerced al-Sahlawi into signing documents that he was unable to read. The same officer threatened to kill al-Sahlawi or subject him to further reprisal if he and his family did not stop submitting complaints. The officer told him that complaining to the Ombudsman was useless and that he would die in his prison cell.

In another case, the Ombudsman's Office intimidated and failed to protect a complainant from reprisal over potential communication with the Office after he spoke with a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in September 2017. After the ICRC left, Jau Prison officials of the GDRR coerced the inmate to sign a document stating that he chose not to go to the hospital, threatening to beat him if he refused. They specifically threatened to beat him if he communicated any information about his ill treatment during an impending visit from the Ombudsman,



King Hamad presents Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah with an award

forcing him to comply out of fear. In 2018, officials claiming to be from the Ombudsman's Office forced the prisoner to sign and fingerprint another set of papers, this time without allowing him to read the contents. Throughout all this, the inmate continued to be subjected to ill treatment by prison staff and denied adequate medical care.

In some cases the Ombudsman's Office has even interrogated complainants about their relationship with international human rights organizations like ADHRB rather than investigating the substance of the complaint. In 2018, after ADHRB submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman on behalf of a detainee, the Office summoned his father to answer questions about the allegations. The officer asked him a number of questions concerning his relationship to ADHRB, including how he received the power of attorney form provided by ADHRB, and the name and whereabouts of the individual who sent him ADHRB's information. He was particularly interested in whether or not this individual was located in Bahrain. The Ombudsman's focus on independent interlocutors like ADHRB rather than credible reports of torture, misconduct, and maltreatment underscore the Office's lack of impartiality.

Ultimately, the Ombudsman's Office is dangerously ineffective and its complicity in ongoing human rights violations belies its function as the MOI's chief accountability mechanism. Its failures provide further evidence that Bahrain's increasingly labyrinthine arrangement of internal and pseudo-independent oversight bodies, each with complex and varied authorities, is at base intended not as a means of securing accountability for perpetrators, but of further obscuring near-absolute immunity for security personnel. To reiterate the findings

302 "Profiles in Persecution: Husain Ali al-Sahlawi," ADHRB, 6 October 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/10/profiles-in-persecution-husain-ali-al-sahlawi/>



Left to right: GDCIFS commander Brig. Abdulaziz Mayoof al-Rumaihi at the UN; Brig. Abdulrahman Sinan, former GDCIFS chief and current Assistant Undersecretary at the NPRA

of the Committee against Torture, rather than create one effective accountability mechanism, the government has established an overarching superstructure of dysfunctional, semi-redundant institutions: Inspector General, Ombudsman, PDRC, SIU, the regular PPO, as well as the NIHR and NSA's own specific ombudsman. This superstructure is convoluted by design, intended to distract from the simple, underlying system of impunity. In many many cases, the Ombudsman and the other MOI disciplinary bodies have abandoned even this role and directly enlisted in the ministry's overall campaign of repression.

B. INCENTIVES

Against the backdrop of systemic impunity for human rights violations, commanders of the MOI's most abusive units have received continuous promotions throughout the ministry. Virtually immune from prosecution, mid-level and senior officers at the GDCIFS, GDRR, SSFC and other notorious agencies rise through the ranks at a rapid pace, and are typically only reprimanded for failing to effectively suppress dissent rather than violating the rights of Bahraini citizens. Most of these appointments and promotions are explicitly approved by the king, prime minister, or Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah, constituting a direct endorsement of repressive policing from the highest levels of Bahraini leadership, and ensuring abusive practices are proliferated and institutionalized across the MOI.

i. GDCIFS

Nearly every senior officer identified as part of the GDCIFS leadership during the period of abuse documented by ADHRB has been promoted. The current commander of the GDCIFS, Director-General Brigadier Abdulaziz Mayoof al-Rumaihi, was appointed by the king when he was still a colonel in July 2016,³⁰³ after serving as director of the CID in 2015. He was first accused of human rights violations by opposition groups as early as 2010.³⁰⁴ ADHRB has documented more than 60 cases of severe abuse directly linked to the GDCIFS since al-Rumaihi assumed command, and he was implicated in the February 2017 death of unarmed suspect Abdullah al-Ajooz.³⁰⁵ Al-Ajooz' family and other observers believe that he was extrajudicially killed during an attempted arrest by MOI personnel; ADHRB knows of no independent investigation into the incident. (See Section 3.E for more information on the death of Abdullah al-Ajooz, extrajudicial killings, and excessive force.) By 2018, al-Rumaihi was further awarded for the GDCIFS's violations with a promotion to brigadier, two ranks below that of the Interior Minister.³⁰⁶

Brigadier Abdulrahman Sinan (also known as Abdulrahman Saleh Sultan al-Senan), the former Director-General of the GDCIFS in 2013,³⁰⁷ was promoted in July 2016 and now serves as the Assistant Undersecretary for Exits, Investigation, and Follow-up at the NPRA, putting him in charge of enforcing Bahrain's residency laws and regulations.³⁰⁸ ADHRB has documented more than 100 cases of arbitrary detention and torture directly implicating the GDCIFS in 2013 alone, including the abuse of minors by CID personnel. Since 2016, under Brig. Sinan's command, the NPRA's Exits, Investigation, and Follow-up division has forcibly deported individuals made stateless through Bahrain's denaturalization policies, in contravention of international law, and he is responsible for the violations of detention standards at the NPRA Removal Centers (see Section 2.C.ii for more on the NPRA). He is now one step removed from heading the entire NRPA as a full undersecretary.

Likewise, the former Deputy Director-General of the GDCIFS in 2015, Colonel Jasim Faihan al-Doseri (also known as Jassim Faihan Al Dossary; Jassim Fayhan Saleh Al-Dossary), was promoted to Assistant Undersecretary

303 "HM the King issues four decrees," BNA, 13 July 2016, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/735810>

304 "To evade prosecution of involvement in crimes against humanity: Concealment and Rotation of Torturers in Security Establishments," BCHR, 28 January 2010, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/3040>

305 "Escaped convict dies while resisting arrest," News of Bahrain, 21 February 2017, <http://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/30616.html>

306 Hani Alamouh, "Winning the War: Bahrain marks day against drug abuse," Al-Amn, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, July 2018, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/83071>

307 "Forensic Science Directorate Achieves ISO Certification," BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 16 July 2013, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/571056>; and "Director-General of Criminal Investigation & Forensic Science warns against phone scams," Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 14 July 2014, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/34337>

308 "HM the King issues four decrees," BNA, 13 July 2016, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/735810>



Clockwise, from top left: Lt. Col. Adnan Bahar (right), acting commander of Jau Prison; Imprisoned human rights defender Najji Fateel; Images that appear to show torture wounds suffered by Najji Fateel in Jau Prison (2013) [Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights]

for Planning and Organization in July 2016 by the king. ADHRB has documented 75 severe human rights violations perpetrated by the GDCIFS in 2015, as well as several additional cases where the sub-agency was unidentified but the GDCIFS was the most likely perpetrator. Directly below Interior Ministry Undersecretary, Col. al-Doseri's appointment to Assistant Undersecretary gives him authority over the general development of the MOI, including procurement of future systems.

ii. GDRR

Most of the GDRR's leaders have been directly implicated in abuses like torture before and after their promotions to more senior command positions. Though the government dismissed the agency's top leadership after several prisoners escaped from Jau in January 2018, these officers received promotions prior to their removal despite

overseeing rampant ill treatment and inhumane living conditions within Bahrain's prison system. Yussef Hassan Al-Arabi, the Director-General of the GDRR from 2016 to 2018, advanced from colonel to brigadier by the time of his dismissal, despite systematic torture and at least one alleged extrajudicial killing occurring in GDRR facilities during this period. He is reported to have previously served as a major in the CID, where he was accused of overseeing torture and the extraction of forced testimony as early as 2010.³⁰⁹

The replacements for Brig. al-Arabi's cohort are career MOI officers with equally poor human rights records, chosen not to reform GDRR policy but to ensure their uninterrupted implementation. The new acting head of Jau Prison, for example, Lieutenant Colonel Adnan Bahar, was identified as a lead perpetrator of torture by BCHR as early as 2005.³¹⁰ In 2008, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture

309 "To evade prosecution of involvement in crimes against humanity: Concealment and Rotation of Torturers in Security Establishments," BCHR, 28 January 2010, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/3040>

310 *In Bahrain: Victims of Torture are still suffering No Impunity for Torturers*, BCHR, 11 May 2005, http://www.bahrainrights.org/files/Presentation_Torture_in_Bahrain.pdf

IMPUNITY AND INCENTIVES: THE CASE OF BRIG. MUBARAK BIN HUWAIL



Many of the MOI's most notorious officers have not only escaped justice – they have been rewarded for their crimes. Mubarak bin Huwail al-Merri, who has risen through the ranks since torturing medical staff in 2011, is only one of the most egregious examples of how the monarchy has combined a culture of impunity for

security personnel with a system of incentives designed to encourage human rights violations. Though he is the most senior official to ever face prosecution in Bahrain, bin Huwail has since advanced to some of the MOI's highest positions – and reports of abuse have followed him every step of the way.

Director of Anti-Narcotics, GDCIFS | Major 2011-2012

There is extensive evidence that Major¹ bin Huwail oversaw the torture of at least six medical personnel that were arbitrarily detained in retaliation for treating wounded pro-democracy protesters in 2011. Dr. Rula al-Saffar, who served as president of the Bahrain Nursing Society and assistant professor at the College of Health Science in Manama, named Major bin Huwail as the “principal investigator” when she was summoned to the CID and blindfolded, beaten, threatened with rape, and subjected to electric shock. She reported that Major bin Huwail “humiliated, intimidated and degraded” her and the other detainees in order to extract false testimony: “he wrote whatever he wanted to write and then took our signatures on the false statements by beating us.”² A security tribunal known as a National Safety Court used the false testimony extracted by Maj. bin Huwail to convict Dr. al-Saffar, through a civilian court later overturned the ruling.

Director of Anti-Narcotics, GDCIFS | Lieutenant Colonel 2012-2014

Following his involvement in the MOI's reprisal campaign against healthcare workers during the crackdown on the 2011 protest movement – as well as his direct responsibility for arbitrary detention, torture, and severe due process violations – bin Huwail was promoted rather

than reprimanded. By 2012, presumably while under investigation for torture, state media reports indicate that bin Huwail had reached the rank of lieutenant colonel and continued to lead Bahrain's drug enforcement efforts. In July 2013, Bahrain's Third Criminal Court acquitted Lt. Col. bin Huwail of all charges stemming from the 2011 abuses, and Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa extended his assurances of continued impunity: in a video circulated online, Prime Minister Khalifa can be heard thanking bin Huwail for his “patience and good work” and guaranteeing that “laws cannot be applied to you. No one can touch this bond. Whoever applies these laws against you is applying them against us. We are one body.”³

Director of Anti-Narcotics, GDCIFS | Colonel 2014-2016

By March 2014, bin Huwail would be promoted to full colonel. That same year, three officials under his command at the Anti-Narcotics Directorate tortured a prisoner to death in Jau Prison. The inmate, Hasan Majeed al-Shaikh, was serving a 10-year sentence for alleged drug offenses and was detained in solitary confinement for reportedly possessing a mobile phone at the time of the incident. He was temporarily removed from solitary confinement by the Anti-Narcotics officials, beaten severely, and then left to die in his cell. Inmates reported hearing al-Shaikh screaming until his death, when they saw guards arrive to remove his body; they also reported that other prisoners were beaten in connection with the incident.⁴ Al-Shaikh's skull and jaw appeared broken, and his kidneys ruptured. According to al-Shaikh's family, Col. bin Huwail had previously told al-Shaikh that he would never leave prison alive. He was the first prisoner to be killed in Jau since 2011.

As a result of the incident's high profile, the MOI Ombudsman investigated and referred the case to the SIU. This led to the conviction of the three Anti-Narcotics officials – a lieutenant, a lower-level policeman, and a civilian instructor employed by the directorate – as well as three additional prison personnel. While a rare case of successful SIU prosecution, not one of the six officials was actually found guilty of torture leading to death, which carries life imprisonment, but instead convicted of lesser offenses that resulted in sentences ranging from one to five years.⁵ Moreover, an appellate court ultimately rejected the convictions of the Jau personnel

1 E/CN.7/2011/INF/3 - List of Participants, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Economic and Social Council, UN, 4 January 2012, https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_54Reconvened/CND54thReconvened_LoP_2011.pdf

2 See: “Stories from Bahrain's Crackdown: Dr. Rula Al-Saffar,” Human Rights First, 7 April 2014, <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/blog/stories-bahrains-crackdown-dr-rula-al-saffar>; “We were Blindfolded, Handcuffed, and Tortured: Bahraini Medica,” Muscat Daily, 4 October 2011, <https://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Opinion/We-were-blindfolded-handcuffed-and-tortured-Bahraini-medics>

3 Marc Owen Jones, “Bahrain's prime minister tells loyalists that they are above the law,” Bahrain Watch, 10 July 2013, See: <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2013/07/10/bahrains-prime-minister-tells-loyalists-that-they-are-above-the-law/>

4 This is corroborated in semi official media: <http://www.newsofbahrain.com/bahrain/17514.html>

5 Bahrain's PDRC claims that the SIU charged two of the Anti-Narcotics officials with this more serious crime, which the PDRC's own evidence corroborates, but the US State Department reports that they were in fact charged with lesser crimes, explaining the outcome.

and lightened the sentences further for the Anti-Narcotics officials, to just two years. The government's own PDRC produced evidence that the Anti-Narcotics Directorate had perpetrated other acts of torture in 2014, including coercing a detainee into confessing to drug trafficking, but it is unclear if the five officials identified were ever held accountable.⁶ There is no indication that Col. bin Huwail was investigated or otherwise reprimanded for the torture and extrajudicial killing that occurred under his command.



Bin Huwail representing the MOI at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland

Director-General, Southern Governorate Police Directorate | Brigadier 2016-2018

Within two years, bin Huwail was promoted to brigadier and appointed to the one of the most senior positions in the MOI: General-Director of the Southern Governorate Police Directorate. The July 2016 appointment placed him in command of one of only four governorate-wide police forces in Bahrain – and particularly the governorate that is home to Jau Prison, where just two years earlier bin Huwail's Anti-Narcotics officers had tortured an inmate to death. Abuse remained widespread in Jau and the governorate's other detention centers during Brig. bin Huwail's tenure, including at the police stations under his direct command. From June 2016 to April 2017, MOI personnel arbitrarily detained leading human rights defender Nabeel Rajab at the Southern Governorate's East Riffa Police Station on charges explicitly linked to free expression and human rights activism. Officers interfered with Rajab's access to legal counsel and held him in extended solitary confinement for periods that violated both Bahraini and international law. The station's detention conditions were so poor that Rajab's health severely deteriorated, resulting in repeated hospitalization prior to his conviction and transfer to Jau Prison in October 2017. Rajab continued to suffer ill treatment and harassment at Jau, where he is serving a total of seven years. In May 2017, Brig. bin Huwail received an award for his work in the Southern Governorate.⁷

Security Attaché, Embassy in Saudi Arabia | Brigadier 2018 – Present

In 2018, after more than seven years of ruthlessly suppressing dissent at the GDCIFS and Southern Governorate Police Directorate, Brig. bin Huwail was rewarded with a coveted diplomatic post as Security Attaché with Bahrain's Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He retains his rank of brigadier and leads Bahrain's cooperation with Saudi security institutions, some of which remain deployed back across the King Fahd Causeway.

⁶ http://www.pdrc.bh/mcms-store/pdf/c0c77248-5000-4f98-832d-d3ac3c60b1ae_Investigation%20-%206.pdf

⁷ "بلدية الجنوبية" تكرم مدير عام مديرية شرطة المحافظة الجنوبية" Al-Wasat, 12 May 2017, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/news/1203239.html>



Former SSFC commander Maj. Gen. Abdullah al-Zayed in his new role as Deputy Chief of Public Security (2018)

documented severe cases of torture and sexual violence overseen by Lt. Col. Bahar when he was still a sergeant:³¹¹

On 10 February, Mr. Mohammed Abdullah al Sengais was handcuffed and dragged from his cell to the yard where he was beaten with an iron rod and sexually assaulted by two security agents named “Moftah” and “Parvis” in the presence of Sergeant Adnan Bahar. He is suffering from back pain as a result of the assault. He is detained in a cell measuring 1 x 2 metres, which is both dirty and infested with insects. Mr. al Sengais previously complained of severe headaches and was

referred to a psychiatric hospital for treatment on 24 February, but due to the postponement of the detainees’ court-hearing, this was rescheduled for 28 February. Naji Ali Fateel and Hassan Abdulnabi Hassan were subjected to beatings when they protested the treatment of Mr. al Sengais. The three men are forced to share their cells with people suffering from hepatitis, who are spitting blood in their presence. CID officials threatened that they will sexually assault Mr. Hassan Abdulnabi Hassan’s wife. One of the detainees was sodomised with a wooden stick and subjected to electrocution on different parts of his body, including his genitals.

Naji Fateel, one of the torture survivors included in the Special Rapporteur’s communication, is a prominent human rights defender and leader of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights. MOI personnel again arrested and abused him in 2012 and 2013, and he was ultimately sentenced to 15 years in Jau Prison on politically motivated charges. Though he was not involved in the 2015 unrest at the facility, GDRR officials transferred him to Building 10, which is colloquially referred to as the “torture building” by prisoners, where he was beaten and denied medical care.³¹² He is among the 57 Jau inmates who were later sentenced to additional 15-year terms for in January 2016.³¹³ Now, Lt. Col. Bahar, the same officer who oversaw Fateel’s torture in 2008, is running the prison where he is set to remain incarcerated for a total of 30 years.

iii. SSFC

In January 2018, the king appointed the SSFC’s longtime commander, Abdullah al-Zayed, Deputy Chief of Public Security and promoted him to major general.³¹⁴ Maj. Gen. al-Zayed’s promotion comes less than a year after SSFC riot police led the most violent protest raid in Bahrain since the 1990s, leaving five protesters dead and hundreds wounded in Diraz. Throughout his tenure as the head of the SSFC, the agency developed into one of Bahrain’s most feared security institutions, responsible for hundreds of arbitrary home raids and protest attacks. The SSFC is implicated in the vast majority of extrajudicial killings perpetrated by Bahraini security forces – more than any other service – and it is the single most militarized MOI agency (see Section 3.E.ii for more information on extrajudicial killings, and Section 2.B.iii for more information on the SSFC). As Deputy Chief of Public Security, Maj. Gen. al-

311 A/HRC/10/44/Add.4, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Manfred Nowak, Human Rights Council, General Assembly, UN, 17 February 2009, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/special-rapporteur-report-20090217.pdf>

312 Rachael Diniega, “Prisoner Profile: Naji Fateel,” ADHRB, 9 February 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/02/11708/>

313 “Bahrain: On 7th anniversary of beginning of popular movement, NGOs call for end to systematic targeting of human rights defenders and journalists,” CIVICUS, 14 February 2018, <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/media-releases/3074-bahrain-on-7th-anniversary-of-beginning-of-popular-movement-ngos-call-for-end-to-systematic-targeting-of-human-rights-defenders-and-journalists>

314 Habib Toumi, “Bahrain re-structures interior ministry,” Gulf News, 7 January 2018, <https://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-re-structures-interior-ministry-1.2153190>



Left to right: Former General-Director of the Southern Police, Maj. Gen. Khalifa bin Ahmed (right); Director-General of the Northern Police Brig. Abdullah Khalifa al-Jairan; Brig. Khalid Mohammed al-Thawadi, Director-General of the Capital Police; Director-General of the Muharraq Police Brig. Fawaz Hassan al-Hassan

Zayed now helps to oversee all of the MOI field units and is poised to take over the entire PSF from the current chief, Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan, upon further restructuring. The promotion is a clear reward for Maj. Gen. al-Zayed's successful suppression of dissent and the appointment puts him in prime position to bring the SSFC's brutal, paramilitary policing tactics to the rest of the MOI's security forces.

iv. Governorate Police Directorates

Many of the four governorates' most abusive police officers have advanced to leading regional and national positions. From as early as 2011³¹⁵ to 2016, Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa served as Director-General of the Southern Governorate Police, reaching the rank of brigadier. Under his command, Southern Police participated in reprisals against human rights defenders like Dr. Saeed al-Samahiji, an ophthalmologist and activist wanted by the authorities for posting tweets critical of Saudi Arabia's execution of political prisoners. Southern Police arrested him from his home in Isa Town in January 2016, confiscating his phone and ultimately detaining him at Dry Dock. Dr. al-Samahiji was sentenced to one year in Jau Prison in April 2016 on charges of "insulting a neighbouring country for the purpose of threatening national security", "publicly inciting to non-compliance with the laws and institutions in Bahrain" and "publicly calling for participation in unlicensed demonstrations and marches" on social media, in clear violation of his right to free expression.³¹⁶ Brig. Khalifa also participated in the collective punishment of

inmates at Jau Prison, which is located in the Southern Governorate, in March 2015. Prisoners report that the director-general personally presided over some of the torture sessions at Jau, with one inmate being repeatedly kicked by six guards while the officer looked on. Brig. Khalifa allegedly told the guards "hurt him, but don't kill him," and they proceeded to strip the prisoner naked, chain him to an iron bed, and continue beating him, including on his genitals.³¹⁷

No charges were brought against these officers or the director-general. Instead, in 2016, Brig. Khalifa was appointed Deputy Chief of Public Security,³¹⁸ making him second-in-command of all four governorate police directorates as well as national units like the SSFC and the Coast Guard. His tenure accounted for some of the PSF's most violent incidents in recent years, including repeated extrajudicial killings throughout 2017 (*see Section 3.E.ii above*). This accelerated his career, and in January 2018, the king promoted him to major general and appointed him Deputy Inspector General.³¹⁹ Maj. Gen. Khalifa is now tasked with assisting the Inspector General in processing complaints referred by the Ombudsman and holding MOI personnel accountable for abuses – the same personnel he himself directed to arrest human rights defenders and torture prisoners.

As early as 2017, the king promoted the Director-General of the Northern Governorate Police, Abdullah Khalifa al-Jairan, to brigadier despite the fact that the Northern Governorate has some of Bahrain's highest rates of abuse. Since he assumed commander of the district as a colonel

315 "Dangers of drug abuse in focus," Al-Bawaba - Al Hilal Publishing & Marketing Group, 2011, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/>

Dangers+of+drug+abuse+in+focus.-a0270705903

316 "Detention of Saeed al-Samahiji," Frontline Defenders, 2017, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/detention-saeed-al-samahiji#case-update-id-725>

317 Confidential source.

318 "Deputy Public Security Chief visits Northern Governorate Police Directorate," Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 31 August 2016, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/55512>

319 Habib Toumi, "Bahrain re-structures interior ministry," Gulf News, 7 January 2018, <https://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/bahrain/bahrain-re-structures-interior-ministry-1.2153190>

in July 2016, al-Jairan has presided over dozens of severe abuses documented by ADHRB. He specifically oversaw almost all of the 11-month security operation to isolate and collectively punish the Northern Governorate town of Diraz after thousands of Bahrainis launched a peaceful sit-in around the home of Shia religious leader Sheikh Isa Qassim in June 2016. Police immediately surrounded Diraz, which is home to 20-30,000 people, and blocked all but two entrances, preventing residents without Diraz identification documents from entering the area and detaining suspected protesters if they attempted to leave.³²⁰ In apparent accordance with orders from the MOI or other security authorities, all major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) enforced a daily Internet shutdown in Diraz.³²¹ MOI personnel conducted mass arrests of individuals attending Friday prayers in Diraz or participating in the demonstrations, with dozens of clerics, poets, singers, and activists ultimately charged with “illegal gathering.”³²² In 2017, police, SSFC, and NSA personnel began launching violent raids on the sit-in, culminating in the 23 May raid that largely dispersed the assembly, leaving five protesters dead and hundreds injured.³²³ The MOI arrested 286, some of which were later abused custody.³²⁴ After the raid, which was condemned by five UN human rights experts³²⁵ and the High Commissioner for Human Rights,³²⁶ Brig. Al-Jairan declared “things returned back to normal gradually in Duraz streets after the removal of roadblocks put by terrorist elements [sic].”³²⁷ The brigadier made no mention of violence or extrajudicial killings, despite the fact that the use of lethal force to remove alleged “roadblocks” in and of itself violates the MOI’s Code of Conduct and relevant Bahraini legislation. Brig. Al-Jairan was praised by the Northern Governor for his actions in Diraz,³²⁸ and he remains in command of the Northern Police.

Likewise, the current Director-General of the Capital Governorate Police, Khalid Mohammed al-Thawadi, has steadily risen through the ranks over the last decade

even as the police under his command have consistently engaged in serious human rights violations like torture, enforced disappearance, and reprisals against human rights defenders. By the time he assumed command in 2013, he had been promoted from major to colonel, and he reached brigadier as early as 2014. While he has reported a continuous decline³²⁹ in overall crime rates in the Capital Governorate, Brig. al-Thawadi has nevertheless overseen constant and even increasing police abuse. In March 2016, for example, Capital Police initially detained Zainab al-Khawaja, a prominent human rights defender and daughter of BCHR cofounder Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, at the al-Hoora police facility after she was convicted for tearing a photo of the king and “insulting a public official.”³³⁰ Personnel held her there for more than five hours with her then 15-month-old son, denying the child access to food. She was ultimately released from government custody amid international pressure, but forced into exile following further threats of reprisal. In March 2017, Capital Police were implicated in the brutal torture and arbitrary detention of three brothers, one of whom suffers from a mental disability.³³¹ Security personnel in unmarked cars and civilian clothing stopped Khalil, Jaafar, and Mahdi Kuwaid while they were driving and forced them to exit their vehicle at gunpoint. Officers beat Jaafar Kuwaid in street until he lost consciousness, focusing on a pre-existing ribcage injury after he begged them not to. The officers then seized the youngest brother, Mahdi, from the car. Mahdi has a developmental disability of which Khalil informed the officers, but the officers proceeded to beat him. Khalil attempted to defend his brother, and the officers beat him as well, re-opening stitches in his stomach from a previous surgery. The brothers were transported to the al-Hoora station, where police handcuffed Mahdi to a chair and forced him to watch them beat Khalil and Jaafar every ten minutes. Khalil and Jaafar were also forced to stand for two days. The officers tortured Mahdi and Khalil into confessing to participating in rallies and possessing

320 “Diraz: A Community Under Siege,” ADHRB, BCHR, BIRD, ECDHR, and JHRO, 13 July 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/07/10390/>

321 Ibid.

322 “Bahrain Escalates Arrests of Protesters at Duraz Sit-in, Continues to Criminalize and Threaten Freedom of Assembly,” ADHRB, BCHR, and BIRD, ECDHR, and JHRO, 10 August 2016, <http://www.adhrb.org/2016/08/10631/>

323 “Bahrain Police Raid Duraz Sit-in, Killing Five and Injuring Dozens,” ADHRB, BIRD, and ECDHR, 23 May 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/05/12478/>

324 For example, see: “Profiles in Persecution: Mohamed Yusuf AlAjmi,” ADHRB, 2 March 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/03/profiles-in-persecution-mohamed-yusuf-alajmi/>

325 Bahrain must end worsening human rights clampdown, UN experts say,” OHCHR, 16 June 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21762&LangID=E>

326 “U.N. rights chief calls for Bahrain probe into protester deaths,” Reuters, 2 June 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-security-rights/u-n-rights-chief-calls-for-bahrain-probe-into-protester-deaths-idUSKBN18T2U>

327 “Duraz residents delighted after roadblocks removed,” BNA, 1 June 2017, <https://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/788548>

328 Ibid.

329 See: “Crime in Bahrain down nearly 10% last year, shows data,” Gulf Digital News, 17 January 2018, <http://www.gdnonline.com/Details/303221/Crime-in-Bahrain-down-nearly-10-last-year-shows-data>; and “Capital Police Director-General highlights decline in crime rate,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2 August 2014, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/34616>

330 “Bahrain: ‘Their freedom is their right’ campaign announces Zainab Al-Khawaja as the prisoner of the month in April 2016,” Gulf Centre for Human Rights, 6 April 2016, <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1225>

331 “Profiles in Persecution: The Kuwaid Brothers,” ADHRB, 12 January 2018, <https://www.adhrb.org/2018/01/profiles-in-persecution-the-kuwaid-brothers/>

weapons, as well as testifying that Jaafar attacked a police station. All of the Kuwait brothers later received prison sentences based on these coerced confessions, and Khalil and Jaafar were denied medical care for the injuries they sustained during their torture.³³²

Likewise, Fawaz Hassan al-Hassan, the current Director-General of the Muharraq Governorate Police, has received continuous promotions despite being implicated in numerous abuses. By 2014, al-Hassan had advanced from major³³³ to colonel and assumed command of the Muharraq security station within the governorate's police directorate.³³⁴ During this time, ADHRB documented numerous severe human rights violations perpetrated by Muharraq police personnel or explicitly within the Muharraq facility under Col. al-Hassan's leadership. In August 2015, for example, a mix of plainclothes and uniformed MOI officers raided the home of Ahmed* without a warrant and transported him to the Muharraq station. There, as well as in CID custody, personnel tortured him, including with electric shocks and beating with wires. They deprived him of food, sleep, and water and forced him to stand. Ultimately, they forced him to make a confession with the authorities then broadcast on television ahead of the trial, in violation of international standards. Likewise, police raided the home of Wa'ad opposition leader Ebrahim Sharif in July 2015 and arbitrarily detained him at the Muharraq station in reprisal for a speech he gave; the GDCIFS later confirmed that it had arrested Sharif for criticizing the government, and he received a one-year prison sentence.³³⁵

The Muharraq security complex is notorious for doubling as a NSA facility, and evidence of collusion between local police and NSA agents in the commission of arbitrary detention and torture has mounted since the king appointed al-Hassan General-Director of the entire police directorate in July 2016.³³⁶ After the king reinstated the NSA's full law enforcement authority in January 2017, reversing BICI Recommendation 1718, MOI and NSA officials have specifically used the Muharraq station for conducting reprisals against activists. Prominent woman



GDAES Director-General Col. Bassam Mohammed al-Muraj

human rights defender Ebtessam al-Saegh was summoned for interrogation at the Muharraq station in January 2017 and NSA officers told her that her work gave Bahrain a "bad image," warning that her next visit would be different. In May 2017, after al-Saegh returned from the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, she was summoned to the Muharraq office and tortured by NSA officials. While in custody she was blindfolded and made to stand for seven hours while she was physically, mentally, and sexually abused. Her Shia faith was insulted, she was photographed undressed, and she was brutally beaten. The officers threatened to release the photos of her unclothed, threatened to rape and kill her, and threatened to imprison or kill her family members, with all of the potential murders made to "look like an...accident."³³⁷ All of the torture al-Saegh endured was linked to the demand that she stop her human rights work,³³⁸ and her case has been cited by the UN³³⁹ as a clear act of reprisal.³⁴⁰ Likewise, in April 2017, NSA personnel tortured and sexually assaulted Najah Ahmed Yousif, a former civil servant in Bahrain's Labour Market Regulatory Agency (LMRA), at the Muharraq facility after she posted critical social media posts; she was ultimately forced to sign a prepared confession and sentenced to three years in prison for her posts.³⁴¹ They subjected lawyer Ibrahim Jawad Abdullah Sarhan to similar treatment in May 2017,

332 Ibid.

333 "PM appoints Interior Ministry directors," BNA, 7 May 2006, <https://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/399576?date=2011-05-3>

334 "Community police to act against beggars in Muharraq," Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 11 June 2014, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/33685>

335 "NGOs Condemn Arrest of Opposition Leader Ebrahim Sharif," ADHRB and BIRD, 13 July 2015, <http://birdbh.org/2015/07/ngos-condemn-re-arrest-of-bahrain-13-opposition-leader-ebrahim-sharif/>

336 "HM the King issues four decrees," BNA, 13 July 2016, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/735810>

337 *UA BHR 9/2017*, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 13 July 2017, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=23218>

338 "Profiles in Persecution: Ebtessam Abdulhusain al-Saegh," ADHRB, 11 July 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/07/profiles-persecution-ebtessam-abdulhusain-al-saegh/>

339 *UA BHR 9/2017*, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 13 July 2017, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=23218>

340 "UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Cites Bahrain as 'Egregious' Perpetrator of Reprisals," ADHRB, 22 September 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/09/un-assistant-secretary-general-for-human-rights-cites-bahrain-as-egregious-perpetrator-of-reprisals/>

341 "Sexually Assaulted Bahraini Female Activist Sentenced to Three Years in Prison over Facebook Comments Criticizing Formula One Race in Bahrain," BIRD, 25 June 2018, <http://birdbh.org/2018/06/breaking-sexually-assaulted-bahraini-female-activist-sentenced-to-three-years-in-prison-over-facebook-comments-criticizing-formula-one-race-in-bahrain/>

including beatings, sexual assault, and electrocution.³⁴² According to some estimates, at least 15 people were tortured at the Muharraq facility in 2017,³⁴³ and ADHRB has so far documented 13 separate incidents at the station that year, as well as two arbitrary detentions so far in 2018.

Al-Hassan, meanwhile, was promoted to brigadier and remains Director-General of the Muharraq Governorate Police. Other Muharraq officers have also advanced their careers at the directorate amid allegations of severe abuse. Several detainees, including minors, named the current Head of Investigations for the directorate, Captain Yousef Mulla Bakhit, as the officer in charge of their arbitrary detention and torture at Muharraq's Samaheej facility in 2013. They claim Bakhit told them his name as he and other officers beat them with a pipe and with the *falaka* method, forcing them to make false confessions to arson and illegal gathering. Capt. Bakhit is regularly interviewed in the MOI's Al-Amn promotional magazine,³⁴⁴ and he is now on track to become a senior officer in the governorate.

V. GDAEES

The most abusive support agencies like the GDAEES also benefit from this perverse incentive system. Bassam Mohammed al-Muraj, the longstanding Director-General of the GDAEES, has steadily advanced through the ranks as he built the agency into the MOI's principal instrument of illegal surveillance. Bahrain's king first appointed Al-Muraj to the prestigious position in January 2013,³⁴⁵ even after evidence emerged that he personally oversaw torture sessions during his previous post at the GDCIFS CID. An investigation conducted by Human Rights Watch found that between 2007 and 2010, then Captain al-Muraj was among four chief torturers at the CID, and that the government had taken no action to address complaints about their abusive behavior.³⁴⁶ Multiple detainees provided contemporaneous testimony to BCHR naming al-Muraj as the lead supervisor of their torture sessions: "Bassam Al-Muraj asked Al-Budayia policemen to leave and let me alone with him. They

took me to a room where they started beating me. Kicking, hitting and other things. It lasted five minutes. Then they removed my handcuffs, wrapped my hands with a strip of cloth in order to hang me. They made me stand on a chair and hanged [sic]."³⁴⁷ A separate detainee told BCHR that al-Muraj threatened to sexually assault his wife: "Bassam Al-Muraj himself said to me, 'I swear [to] God I will bring your wife here, in front of you, and I will remove her clothes in front of you.' I then fell."³⁴⁸

ADHRB has received evidence that al-Muraj has continued to torture dissidents since assuming control of the GDAEES. In 2013, MOI personnel arbitrarily arrested Hussain Hubail, an award-winning photojournalist, and al-Muraj personally oversaw his interrogation. Al-Muraj threatened to rape him, his wife, and his mother, as well as to let him die in custody. When al-Muraj rang a bell, his subordinate Lieutenant Fawaz al-Sameem, an officer at the GDAEES Cybercrime Directorate, beat and spat on Hubail along with another group of policemen. Al-Muraj subjected Hubail to this treatment for days in an effort to extract a forced confession to criminal activity.³⁴⁹ Hubail was ultimately sentenced to five years in prison for "illegal gatherings, inciting hatred against the regime, inciting people to ignore the law, and misuse of social media" in connection with his coverage of the protest movement. ADHRB additionally documented three other incidents of abuse that explicitly implicated al-Muraj's subordinate Lt. Fawaz al-Sameem, all of which were reprisal attacks against activists for expressing peaceful criticism of the government; in at least one case, Lt. al-Sameem oversaw the beating, electric shock, and sexual assault of the detainee.

Despite evidence of systematic torture and other human rights violations under his authority at the GDAEES – including reprisals against human rights defender Nabeel Rajab – al-Muraj quickly advanced from captain to major³⁵⁰ and then lieutenant colonel by 2014.³⁵¹ He remains in command of the general directorate at the rank of full colonel.³⁵²

342 *UA BHR 11/2017*, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 31 October 2017, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=23422>

343 Phill Miller, "Britain Trained a Bahraini Police Chief Who Presided Over Abuse of Political Dissidents," *Vice News*, 6 April 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/43b4k9/britain-trained-a-bahraini-police-chief-who-presided-over-abuse-of-political-dissidents

344 See Issue 95: <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/65408>; and Issue 104: <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/82435>

345 "HM the King issues Three Decrees for the year 2013," *BNA*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 28 January 2013, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/543818>

346 *Torture Redux*, Human Rights Watch, 8 February 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/02/08/torture-redux/revival-physical-coercion-during-interrogations-bahrain>

347 "Bahrain: Police Officer Accused of Torture is Rewarded with Promotion to High Government Position," *BCHR*, 4 February 2013, <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/5628>

348 *Ibid.*

349 "Follow-up information to Letter of Allegation of 15 December 2013 concerning the detention of journalist Mohammed Hassan, photographer Hussain Hubail and cameraman Qassim Zain Aldeen (Bahrain)," Media Legal Defence Initiative, ADHRB, Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, BCHR, Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights, Gulf Centre for Human Rights, Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada, PEN International, and Reporters Without Borders, 4 June 2014, <http://www.lrwc.org/ws/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/20140604-Update-of-Letter-of-Allegation-Hassan-Hubail-Zain-Aldeen-FINAL.pdf>

350 Neil Halligan, Bahrain official arrested over bribery claims," *Arabian Business*, 19 August 2014, <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahrain-official-arrested-over-bribery-claims-561865.html>

351 "Interior Minister Receives Officers," *BNA*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 29 January 2013, <https://bna.bh/portal/en/news/544040>

352 "Public Security Assistant Chief patronises workshop," *BNA*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 23 May 2017, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/787396>



*Foreign Assistance:
American and
International Support*

The MOI's systematic human rights violations are facilitated and exacerbated by arms transfers, training programs, and other forms of international assistance from countries like the US, UK, Canada, and the member states of the European Union (EU), as well as regional patrons like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At its best, this backing emboldens the Bahraini government to intensify repression while providing fodder for state propaganda to whitewash abuses and tout surface reforms. At its worst, such support not only contributes directly to the MOI's crimes, it enhances its efficacy as a tool of state terror. In the words of Deputy Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Abdulla al-Zayed, the former commander of the SSFC, MOI units like the riot police are acquiring "state-of-the-art security equipment" from foreign countries, making the "security men very efficient since they make optimal use of modern technology."³⁵³ For the SSFC, Bahrain's leading perpetrator of protest raids and extrajudicial killings, such international security assistance is explicitly "enabling it to do more."³⁵⁴ This is true across the ministry. As the MOI continues to upgrade its arsenal in the campaign against peaceful protest and dissent, Bahrain's allies become more deeply complicit in its crimes.

A. UNITED STATES

i. Background and Current Restrictions Regime

The US and Bahrain have a deep and longstanding security partnership, most prominently represented by the American Fifth Fleet base in Manama, the bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) signed in 1991, and former President George W. Bush's decision to designate the kingdom a major non-NATO ally (MNNA) in 2002.³⁵⁵ Both the Obama and Trump administrations have maintained this relationship to varying degrees, providing approximately \$159 million in security aid³⁵⁶ and issuing notifications for more than \$5 billion in arms sales since 2009.³⁵⁷ According to the Congressional Research Service, it is currently estimated that roughly 85 percent of Bahrain's defense materiel is of US origin.³⁵⁸ US agencies

regularly and extensively engage with the MOI to provide guidance and implement programs.

In the aftermath of the 2011 crackdown on pro-democracy protests, the US temporarily suspended assistance to the kingdom's major security and defense institutions, purportedly in order to pressure for reform and prevent the further use of American weapons in attacks on demonstrators. The DOS specifically stated that assistance for the MOI would continue only on a limited basis, as "while the MOI will have completed various [Antiterrorism Assistance] courses and training, they will not yet be a fully capable security and law enforcement agency."³⁵⁹ DOS reporting for FY2013 took an even stronger position, indicating that the US "foreign assistance posture toward Bahrain is designed to advance our commitment to a strong security partnership while pressing Bahrain to embark on meaningful reform, particularly in the security sector... pending progress on implementation of BICI recommendations, the U.S. government has withheld licenses and sales of a range of security items, including items with internal applications or that would significantly enhance external defense capabilities." The administration explicitly tied "the sustainability of ... the decades-long security partnership" between the US and Bahrain to the BICI reform package, the end of systematic police abuse, and the "political aspirations of the Bahraini people."³⁶⁰

Though restrictions briefly intensified in 2014 following the Bahraini government's expulsion of US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Tom Malinowski after he met with opposition leader Sheikh Ali Salman, by 2015 the Obama administration lifted general constraints on the BDF and National Guard and resumed further counterterrorism coordination with the MOI.³⁶¹ As grounds, the administration cited Bahrain's membership in the anti-ISIS coalition and several nominal reforms that the Bahraini government soon reversed, such as the temporary release of political opposition leader Ebrahim Sharif. With the explicit exception of the Coast Guard, the US has continued to maintain restrictions on weapons transfers to the MOI due to its direct role in the suppression of dissent. Specifically, these restrictions are intended to apply to

353 Hani Al Amoush, "May the force be with you," *Al-Amn*, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/77817>

354 Ibid.

355 In November 2017, the Trump administration decided to again extend the DCA with Bahrain. The pact is classified, and details are difficult to ascertain, though it is suspected to contain terms for a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), basing access, joint operations, and training programs, among other items.

356 "Bahrain: Security Aid Pivot Table – Programs," Security Assistance Monitor, 2018, <https://securityassistance.org/data/program/military/Bahrain/2009/2019/all/Global/>

357 "Bahrain: Arms Sales Dashboard," Security Assistance Monitor, 2018, <https://securityassistance.org/content/arms-sales-dashboard>

358 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

359 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/158268.pdf>

360 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185015.pdf>

361 See: Michael R. Gordon, "Expelled U.S. Official to Return to Bahrain," *The New York Times*, 2 December 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/03/world/middleeast/bahrain-us-human-rights-official-tom-malinowski.html>; and Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>



Left to right: Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah presenting former commander of the US Navy Fifth Fleet Admiral John Aquilino with a commemorative plaque (2018); Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah meets with US Secretary of Defense James Mattis, former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, and then Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly in Washington, DC (2017)

new sales of “small arms, light weapons, and ammunition,” and funding for “tear gas, small arms, light weapons, ammunition, or other items for crowd control purposes for foreign security forces that use excessive force to repress peaceful expression, association, or assembly in countries undergoing democratic transition [with reference to Bahrain].”³⁶² Throughout this period, however, the Obama administration maintained funding for the MOI through DOS Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR), including for the SSFC.

The Trump administration has indicated that human rights concerns will not impact arms sales, and it has dropped existing reform conditions from weapons transfers to the Bahraini military while greatly increasing the amount of arms on offer. As of March 2018, DOS stated that “restrictions on assistance to the Ministry of Interior remain in place,”³⁶³ but the administration actually appears to be boosting engagement with the MOI. Budget documents for 2017-2019 show that US is reviving NADR-ATA funding and developing a comprehensive training plan for MOI development, marking a new era of American support for the ministry and risking deeper US complicity in its abuses. (See Section 5.A.ii below).

The Bahraini government, meanwhile, has intensified efforts to undermine the remaining restrictions and extend American ties to the MOI. In November 2017, the crown prince, accompanied by MOI Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan, traveled to Washington, DC to meet with the president and sign a formal extension of the DCA.³⁶⁴ The delegation followed a high-profile visit from Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah, who in July 2017 met with then Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly; Secretary of Defense James Mattis, and then Acting Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Andrew McCabe; among other unnamed “security officials in the US administration.”³⁶⁵ The minister also met with several legislators, including House Speaker Representative Paul Ryan; Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Representative Ed Royce; and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Senator John McCain. Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah is reported to have explicitly raised the issue of arms sales and pushed for the US to “modernize” and “reinforce” security cooperation with the MOI on counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and transnational organized crime. Both of these delegations were organized by Bahrain’s new ambassador to the US, Abdullah Bin Rashid Al Khalifa – the former governor of the Southern Governorate and the son of Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah.

ii. Status of Assistance, Links to Abuse, and the Limits of US Restrictions

The vast majority of Bahrain’s military and security equipment is procured from the US, and the MOI continues to employ American weaponry and training in the commission of human rights violations. Though most MOI agencies are barred from acquiring new American armaments, the restrictions generally do not apply to other types of security assistance, and the US remains a key trainer and adviser to some of the MOI’s most abusive agencies.

a. Arms and Equipment

Prior to the current restrictions regime, the US transferred large amounts of weaponry and crowd control gear to Bahrain that the MOI has and continues to use against protesters and dissidents. This includes: tear gas and other chemical irritants produced by US manufacturers

362 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

363 “U.S. Security Cooperation With Bahrain,” Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, DOS, 23 March 2018, <https://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2018/279536.htm>

364 “President Trump Ignores Bahrain’s Abuses, Extends Military Cooperation,” ADHRB, 30 November 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/11/president-trump-ignores-bahrain-abuses-extends-military-cooperation/>

365 “US Must Maintain Restrictions, Push for Reforms Following Bahrain Interior Minister Visit,” ADHRB, 14 July 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/07/us-must-maintain-arms-restrictions-following-bahrain-interior-minister-visit/>



SSFC training, promotional, and parade images displaying US-made assault rifles (2013-2016)



SSFC exercises including US-made Humvees and Hummers (2016)



SSFC officer holding US-made rifle during 23 May raid on Diraz sit-in (2017)

Another SSFC officer armed with a US-made rifle standing over the body of protester killed during the 23 May Diraz raid (2017)

NonLethal Technologies and Defense Technology/Federal Laboratories, in collaboration with the UK-based BAE Systems; shotgun ammunition produced by UK-based Gambore, owned by the American Kent Gambore company; 9mm and 11mm (.45 caliber) pistol ammunition produced by American manufacturers like Remington; and M4 and M4A1 assault rifles, produced by American manufacturers like Colt (with variants produced by other US companies like Remington and Bushmaster).³⁶⁶ The MOI's M4 and M4A1 stores match several US military contracts approved in 2008, which indicated that a total of 1,800 M4A1s would be split amongst a domestically based American unit and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) approved for the Panamanian security forces and the Bahraini security forces, in addition to a specific order of 14 M4s for Bahrain.³⁶⁷ DOS documents for FY2008 indicate that the US sold at least 44 unspecified small arms to Bahrain valued at \$52,117, as well as ammunition, "tear gases and riot control agents," and related components for another \$4,114,061.³⁶⁸ Other contemporaneous FMS to Bahrain include several hundred more M4 and M4A1s (split between Bahraini forces and a non-FMS order for US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement), as well as ammunition and scopes for these rifles.³⁶⁹ In total, the orders were valued in excess of \$4 million. Additionally, although the ministry claims they are unarmed,³⁷⁰ the MOI's Police Aviation helicopter fleet is said to be exclusively US-made, with at least eight aircraft produced Bell Helicopter Textron Inc. flying support missions for the Public Security Forces.³⁷¹ Throughout, DOS has continued to allocate NADR-ATA programming to build MOI capacity with "equipment supplied with previous ATA funds."³⁷²

SSFC

The precise distribution of US-made equipment across the MOI and other Bahraini security institutions is unknown, but it is clear that certain MOI agencies like the SSFC continue to use American arms. MOI promotional videos show SSFC personnel armed with M4A1 rifles, for example,

and these images match photos of MOI personnel engaged in violent operations, such as the lethal May 2017 raid on the Diraz sit-in. Photos from the raid show SSFC personnel indiscriminately firing tear gas and other weaponry into residential areas. Hundreds of protesters were injured and five were killed, including a prominent environmental activist and the older brother of a demonstrator who was shot dead during an earlier raid on the same sit-in (see Section 2.B.iii for more on the SSFC, and Section 3.F for more on excessive force and a full description of the Diraz raids). Though restrictions on sales of militarized vehicles like Humvees to the MOI ostensibly remain in place – despite the removal of such restrictions to the BDF and National Guard in 2015³⁷³ – police promotional imagery shows the SSFC driving and training with both standard Humvees and civilian Hummers in recent years. MOI personnel continue to "weaponize" such vehicles against protesters, with evidence suggesting 17-year-old Ali Abdulghani was run over and killed by police in 2016 – precisely the reason vehicle transfers were restricted by the US Government after the events of 2011. In September 2017, AM General, the manufacturer of the Humvee, announced a \$2.2 billion contract to build additional vehicles for at least nine countries, including Bahrain.³⁷⁴

Coast Guard

Since the imposition of the restrictions regime in 2011, the US has limited weapons sales and related support for the MOI, with the exception of the Coast Guard. As a result, the Coast Guard are the MOI's primary beneficiary of Bahrain's MNNA status, which grants the kingdom a variety of unique military benefits including increased defense cooperation, access to Department of Defense (DOD) research, authorization to purchase depleted uranium munitions, approval for the country's corporations to bid on DOD contracts, and priority procurement of Excess Defense Articles (EDA). EDA is surplus equipment provided via a grant or at a substantially reduced price, and MNNA countries like Bahrain are prioritized to receive

366 "Arms Watch," Bahrain Watch, 2018, <https://bahrainwatch.org/arms/>

367 Daniel Watters, "The 5.56 X 45mm: 2008," The Gun Zone, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100104174625/http://thegunzone.com/556dw-18.html>

368 *Commercial Exports Licensed or Approved Under the Arms Export Control Act Part I – Authorized Defense Articles, FY 2008*, DOS, 2010, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/124296.pdf>

369 Daniel Watters, "The 5.56 X 45mm: 2008," The Gun Zone, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100104174625/http://thegunzone.com/556dw-18.html>

370 "Bahrain 2012: Police Aviation emerges from the shadows," Arabian Aerospace, 20 January 2012, <https://www.arabianaerospace.aero/bahrain-2012-police-aviation-emerges-from-the-shadows.html>

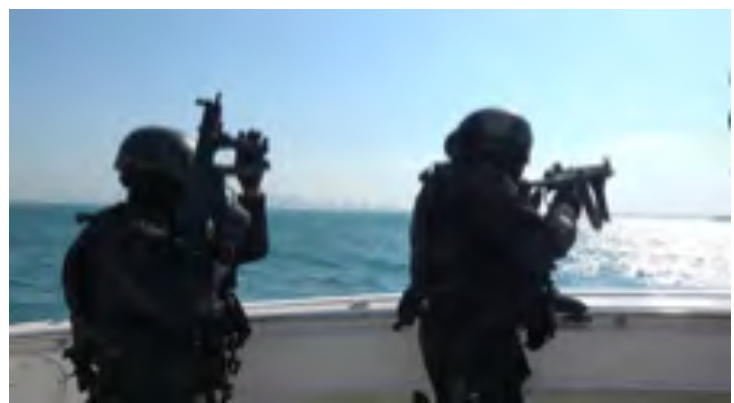
371 "Police copters meant only for search, rescue and monitoring," Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/7245>

372 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2015 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/224070.pdf>; and

Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2019 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 2, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/279517.pdf>

373 See: "U.S. lifting holds on security assistance to Bahrain: State Department," Reuters, 29 June 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-bahrain-assistance/u-s-lifting-holds-on-security-assistance-to-bahrain-state-department-idUSKCN0P92R520150629>; and Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

374 Todd South, "Humvee company ups foreign sales, announces orders from nine countries," Military Times, 28 September 2017, <https://www.militarytimes.com/land/2017/09/28/humvee-company-ups-foreign-sales-announces-orders-from-nine-countries/>



Top row, left to right: SSFC officer armed with US-made rifle (center-right) on US-made Fountain Patrol Coast Guard vessel during 9 February shooting (2017); MOI boat show prominently display American origins of Coast Guard vessels (see bottom of poster). Bottom row: Armed SSFC aboard Coast Guard patrols

MADE-IN-AMERICA: ALLEGED EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS BY BAHRAIN'S COAST GUARD

Even as the US has openly deepened its relationship with the Coast Guard due to the latter's supposed distance from domestic repression, the agency has been directly implicated in human rights abuses and has conducted operations with other units subject to American arms restrictions. On 9 February 2017, the MOI announced that a joint operation involving the Coast Guard, the GDCIFS, SSFC, and the NSA – Bahrain's notorious intelligence service – intercepted a boat containing ten "escapees from Jau prison [attempting] to flee to Iranian waters." According to MOI, Coast Guard personnel exchanged gunfire with the vessel in question, killing three suspects, but independent observers have reported significant inconsistencies in the government's account of the incident. Though the MOI did not release photos of the deceased or allow for independent autopsies, leaked photos indicated that at least one body lacked a bullet

wound and appeared to show signs of torture. The burial was restricted and the MOI reportedly threatened and prevented family members of the deceased from attending. Additionally, in the days after the shooting, an Instagram account that allegedly belonged to an MOI officer posted messages claiming that the deceased had been physically abused and threatening to retaliate against activists for reporting on possible human rights violations.

Images of the attack show that US-manufactured patrol boats were used to carry out the MOI's joint operation. In the government's official video of the incident, the English logo of Fountain Patrol, a defense division of a US recreational boat company, is visible on the authorities' patrol boats. These appear to be the same patrol boats provided to the MOI Coast Guard as EDA – a direct benefit of Bahrain's special status as an MNNA.

these armaments “to the maximum extent feasible over... other countries.”³⁷⁵ Much of the EDA received by Bahrain – which is valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars – is intended for use by the military, but the MOI Coast Guard has also received critical materiel for its operations through the program according to the Congressional Research Service, including harbor patrol boats.³⁷⁶ ADHRB determined that the MOI Coast Guard has been operating several patrol boats produced by Fountain Patrol, the defense division of an American recreational boat company, as recently as February 2017, which may match these past EDA requests.³⁷⁷ In April 2017, the US disclosed that Bahrain would be receiving five American-made Mark V patrol boats by August that same year, and these shipments appear to correspond to two previous Bahraini EDA requests that were approved in 2015 and 2016; it is unclear if these deliveries were intended for the MOI Coast Guard, the Bahraini navy (which already possesses Mark V craft), or to be divided between the two, but both the US Coast Guard and the US Navy have deployed the Mark V for patrol and interdiction missions.³⁷⁸ According to the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the total EDA acquisition value of the five craft, which are typically outfitted with machine guns or grenade launchers, is approximately \$27 million, while the total current value is approximately \$2.7 million.³⁷⁹ Similarly, DOS budget documents for FY2008 state that Bahrain was authorized to purchase eight “patrol craft without armor, armament or mounting surfaces for weapon systems more significant than .50 caliber machine guns and auxiliary vessels” with related equipment valued at a total of \$32,913,328, yet it is again unspecified if they were received by the Coast Guard, navy, or some combination thereof.³⁸⁰

The Coast Guard has also been the primary MOI recipient of US Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for Bahrain, which funds specific procurement projects for partner forces. Though FMF to Bahrain has declined in recent years, the US has applied the program to the MOI Coast Guard as recently as 2017, funding its general development – “operational training, professionalization, spares, and

sustainment”³⁸¹ – and its Coastal Surveillance System, which is used to monitor the island’s maritime traffic.³⁸² According to DOS, “the upgrade will allow the [Coast Guard] to detect irregularities in Bahrain’s littoral waters and quickly interdict threats with small boats.”³⁸³

The Congressional Research Service additionally reports that the US has allocated money for Bahrain through Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of FY2006, amounting to five programs administered by DOD from 2006 to 2015 and totaling approximately \$65 million; at least two of these programs were used to provide the MOI Coast Guard with additional patrol boats and to “equip new coastal surveillance sites.”³⁸⁴ Other Section 1206 programs were used to “equip and train Bahrain’s special forces,” though it is unclear if this refers to the MOI’s SSFC, the Royal Guard Special Forces of the BDF, or both.³⁸⁵ In its Congressional Budget Justification for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, DOS reported that the US is currently “expanding [its] partnership with the Bahraini Coast Guard,”³⁸⁶ despite serious concerns over the Coast Guard’s own abuses and its extensive cooperation with other MOI agencies restricted from American weapons procurement (*see below for more information on US training programs for the MOI, as well challenges facing US restrictions on security assistance*).

b. Training and Coordination

Even with restrictions on new arms sales to the majority of the MOI, the US continues to fund, train, and coordinate with agencies across the ministry. As recently as 2018,³⁸⁷ DOS reports reveal that the US “engages regularly with MOI personnel from various divisions to discuss operational and organizational needs in evaluating MOI performance in its law enforcement and security missions.”³⁸⁸ Unlike weapons transfers, this support is not limited to the Coast Guard. According to both the American and Bahraini governments, the US remains a key partner to the MOI on issues of counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and transnational organized crime, and it supports the efforts of agencies like the SSFC, GDCIFS, and GDAEES.

375 22 U.S. Code § 2321j - Authority to transfer excess defense articles, US Government, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/2321j>

376 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

377 “Bahrain: US must ensure military patrol boat transfer does not facilitate abuse,” ADHRB, 19 April 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/04/bahrain-us-must-ensure-unrestricted-transfer-military-patrol-boats-not-facilitate-abuse/>

378 Ibid.

379 “EDA DataBase,” US Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, 2018, <http://www.dsca.mil/programs/excess-defense-articles-eda>

380 *Commercial Exports Licensed or Approved Under the Arms Export Control Act Part I – Authorized Defense Articles, FY 2008*, DOS, 2010, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/124296.pdf>

381 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2017 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252734.pdf>

382 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

383 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2017 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252734.pdf>

384 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

385 Ibid.

386 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2019 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 2*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/279517.pdf>

387 Ibid.

388 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2017 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252734.pdf>

Coordination varies across both American institutions and sub-divisions of the MOI, and it takes different forms: DHS and the MOI have a formal but entirely classified relationship, for example, having signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2007 that was reaffirmed during Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah's meeting with then Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly in 2017.³⁸⁹ There is no publicly available information about the agreement and DHS has failed to respond to relevant ADHRB requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for over a year. DOS, meanwhile, reported in its FY2019 budget request that it “engages regularly with MOI personnel” on matters “of interagency communication, adjustments to different attack methodologies, maritime interdiction capabilities, and greater use of advanced forensics investigations.”³⁹⁰ According to DOS, this close relationship has at times involved “weekly engagement” between the US and the MOI.³⁹¹

Excluding direct weapons transfers, the most longstanding and predominant means of engagement between the US and the MOI is through NADR-ATA programs and relevant follow-up activities. Dating back to the 1980s, this US-funded support for the MOI has cost the American taxpayer approximately \$6.9 million between 2007 and 2017. As acknowledged by DOS, NADR-ATA programs are usually not provided to the interior ministries of “most U.S. counterterrorism partners,”³⁹² but in Bahrain “the Bahraini Ministry of Interior (MOI) has been designated the lead for counterterrorism activities and operations”³⁹³ with “the Bahrain National Security Agency providing intelligence support.”³⁹⁴ According to the US Government, NADR-ATA support enhances the counterterror capabilities of the MOI – and at least indirectly the NSA – while ensuring and promoting human rights:

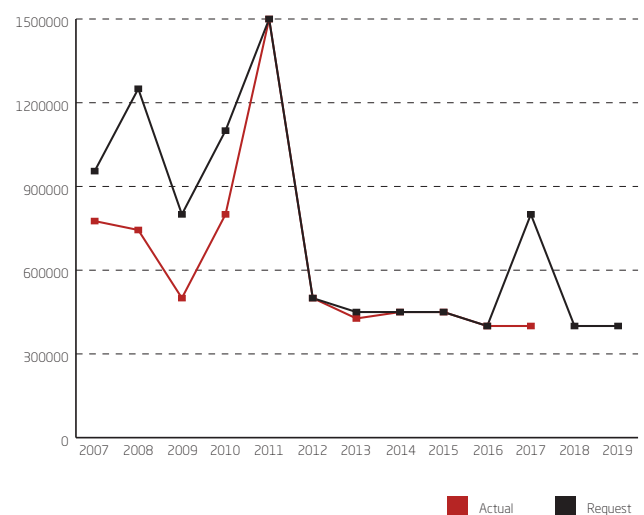
U.S. assistance will enable Bahrain to more effectively counter and prevent violent activities, and includes a focus on adhering to international human rights standards when confronting threats. Ongoing political and social unrest underscores the need for the Bahraini government to address its citizens’ demands for reform in order to assure Bahrain’s long-term domestic stability and prosperity. The United States continues to encourage Bahrain’s leadership

to implement reforms that adhere to human rights standards.³⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the same DOS documents indicate that NADR-ATA support is almost entirely provided to the kingdom’s most violent and repressive units: the SSFC and the “investigative” bodies, i.e. the GDCIFS. These programs have decidedly failed to achieve their stated goal of a Bahrain that “Effectively Anticipates and Responds to Domestic Security and Terrorist Threats in a Consistent, Transparent, and Balanced Manner that Views Human Rights and the Rule of Law as Vital Components of Ensuring Security,”³⁹⁶ leaving instead a decades-long legacy American complicity in escalating police brutality and repression.

While DOS “condemned” Bahraini government violence in 2011 and reportedly launched a review of NADR-ATA funding for the MOI as well as enhanced “end-use [monitoring] of security assistance...to ensure that no prior-year support was used against protestors,”³⁹⁷ programming for the SSFC and other MOI units has continued. For FY2013, DOS provided \$427,000 in NADR-ATA training for the MOI that reportedly included “security sector reform components” and

US NADR-ATA Funding for Bahrain’s MOI Over the Last 10 Years



389 “US Must Maintain Restrictions, Push for Reforms Following Bahrain Interior Minister Visit,” ADHRB, 14 July 2017, <http://www.adhrb.org/2017/07/us-must-maintain-arms-restrictions-following-bahrain-interior-minister-visit/>
390 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2019 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 2*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/279517.pdf>
391 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2016 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238222.pdf>
392 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/158268.pdf>
393 *Ibid.*
394 *Bahrain Country Report on Terrorism 2015*, US Department of State, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257517.htm>
395 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2017 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252734.pdf>
396 *Ibid.*
397 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/158268.pdf>



Riot police raiding a home in Diraz (2017)

“mandatory human rights training components” due to “ongoing concerns about MOI performance” and its ability to meet the BICI recommendation package, “a core U.S. Government priority for the Bahraini security forces.”³⁹⁸ By FY2014, however, human rights was markedly deemphasized in DOS reporting on Bahrain’s NADR-ATA requests: there are no references to the BICI reform package or its implementation status, and the DOS concludes that “going forward, ATA programming will focus on supporting MOI capacity building in forensics, counterterrorism, terror investigations, and prosecutions involving cases management and interview techniques.”³⁹⁹ Though nearly all planned NADR-ATA programs for 2014 were cancelled due to the MOI’s failure to meet Leahy Law vetting requirements (*see below*), DOS continued to request funding for similar MOI programming through FY2015, FY2016, and FY2017. In the NADR-ATA requests for FY2018 and FY2019, DOS completely omitted human rights and security sector reform altogether, focusing solely on counterterrorism, “forensic investigations,” and “attack methodologies.”⁴⁰⁰

The Trump administration has now proposed a wide-ranging training program based on a July 2017 NADR-ATA country assessment of the “MOI Police force capabilities and vulnerabilities.” According to DOS, “this comprehensive review has enabled [the US Embassy] to develop a training plan through 2019 with ten specific courses identified,” wherein “ATA course administrators [will] regularly hold follow-up visits, conferring with

relevant [Government of Bahrain] officials, and reviewing MOI implementation of materials, tactics, equipment, assets.”⁴⁰¹ DOS does not detail the exact content of these courses, but the training plan appears to constitute the most extensive framework for US-MOI coordination in years. Judging by the history of NADR-ATA programming for the kingdom, this assistance will directly support the MOI’s most abusive agencies at a time when they remain systematically engaged in gross violations of human rights.

On 30 April 2011, MOI personnel identified as SSFC used excessive force to disperse protests in Sitra, blanketing the area in teargas and killing six-year-old Mohammed Abdulhussain Farhan.

During a media interview that same day in Afghanistan, Marine Commander Col. Mike Sweeney commented: “[The SSFC] are extremely well trained. They are very, very good at what they do.”

“Marines and our guys have great relationships,” SSFC Lance Cpl. Yasirakhtar Hussain said in the same interview. “We are like brothers.”

SSFC

The SSFC has received funding and training from DOS throughout the entire period of abuse documented by ADHRB. The MOI and the SSFC are first mentioned by name in the DOS foreign operations budget documents for FY2012, just following their lead role in the suppression of the 2011 pro-democracy protests, but the reports make it clear that the ministry, in general, and the SSFC, in particular, have been the chief beneficiaries of NADR-ATA support for years.⁴⁰² In DOS’ estimation, the MOI and “primarily the MOI Special Security Force Command (SSFC), rely exclusively on U.S. Government-provided antiterrorism

398 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2013 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185015.pdf>

399 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2014 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/208291.pdf>

400 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2019 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 2*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/279517.pdf>

401 *Ibid.*

402 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/158268.pdf>



Top row: SSFC training exercise (2016); SSFC training with US-made rifles. Second row: SSFC Company 2 transfers authority to Company 3 at US Marine base in Afghanistan (2010); SSFC officers train US Marines in baton techniques at Camp Leatherneck (2011). Third row: US Marines take a break and play volleyball with SSFC personnel in Afghanistan (2011). Bottom row: US Marines award SSFC personnel for their tour in Afghanistan (2011)



Left to right: SSFC raid on a school (2013); SSFC make violent arrest (2017)

Between US Marine training in Afghanistan and State Department Antiterrorism Assistance, the vast majority of the SSFC has received some type of American training despite consistent gross human rights abuses.

assistance for specialized training.⁴⁰³ For FY2005, DOS reported that a NADR-ATA program “established the Interior Ministry’s first counterterrorist response team by training 24 police officers;” though no sub-agencies are identified, these were likely SSFC personnel.⁴⁰⁴ The team received “a course on advanced crisis response” in FY2011 for \$1.5 million.⁴⁰⁵

From 2009 to 2014, DOS allocated NADR-ATA funds to train multiple SSFC companies of approximately 125 personnel⁴⁰⁶ that deployed on rotating tours to Afghanistan with US Marines at Camp Leatherneck, in Helmand Province.⁴⁰⁷ SSFC provided “base security” for the Camp Leatherneck facility while the Marines engaged in combat operations and, in addition to NADR-ATA programming, they undertook joint training courses with US troops. In late January 2011, for example – less than a month before SSFC units violently crushed the Arab Spring protest encampment at Bahrain’s Pearl Roundabout – the SSFC’s

Company 3 held “a five-day baton” crowd control course for Marines at the camp. One of the SSFC instructors, Sgt. Maj. Mohammed Abdullah Murtaza, made it clear that they also received instruction from US military personnel: “We learn from the Marines, so [in return] we want to teach them.”⁴⁰⁸ This relationship has clearly contributed to the SSFC’s violent, militarized style of policing, and some of the Marines appeared to mistake the law enforcement unit for a branch of Bahrain’s army.⁴⁰⁹ In April 2011, while Company 3 and the Marines were relaxing from training with “tea and volleyball games” in Afghanistan, SSFC units were directly implicated in at least two extrajudicial killings in Bahrain, including the killing of a six-year-old boy. At the end of Company 3’s tour in June 2011, the Marines held an award ceremony for SSFC officers where they were presented with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) medal and certificates;⁴¹⁰ that same month, in Bahrain, the MOI committed at least five extrajudicial killings, four of which implicated the SSFC.

It is unclear precisely how many companies the SSFC maintains, but in 2017 its commander indicated that it consisted of at least two “brigades,” suggesting a total strength of approximately 12 companies.⁴¹¹ If one SSFC company rotated into Afghanistan every six months from 2009 to 2014, it is likely 10 companies, or the vast majority of the force, received training or other experience with the US marines – all while raiding hundreds of protests and killing dozens back in Bahrain despite purported restrictions on US security assistance. According to DOS

403 Ibid.

404 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2011 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/137937.pdf>

405 Ibid.

406 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2012 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/158268.pdf>

407 Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS), is a division of Defense Media Activity, which is itself a division of the Defense Department. See: Lance Cpl. Katherine M. Solano, “Bahraini Special Security Forces Award Ceremony,” YouTube, DVIDS, Regional Command Southwest, US Marine Corps, US Department of Defense, 17 June 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npAwrQ7JLU>

408 Master Sgt. Brian Jones, “Camp Leatherneck Marines complete Bahraini baton training,” DVIDS, Regional Command Southwest, US Marine Corps, US Department of Defense, 21 January 2011, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/63913/camp-leatherneck-marines-complete-bahraini-baton-training#.TzGr8MU9W3B>

409 Ibid.

410 Lance Cpl. Katherine M. Solano, “Bahraini Special Security Forces Award Ceremony,” YouTube, DVIDS, Regional Command Southwest, US Marine Corps, US Department of Defense, 17 June 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npAwrQ7JLU>

411 Hani Al Amoush, “May the force be with you,” *Al-Amn*, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, December 2017, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/77817>



Top row: SSFC K9 training has been funded by the US Government (2016); SSFC inside Jau Prison during March 2015 unrest, where inmates report they directed police dogs to attack them (2015). Bottom row: SSFC squad with K9 officer during exercise (2016); SSFC riot police on patrol with K9 unit [AFP]

reporting for FY2011, NADR-ATA explicitly “developed the capabilities Bahraini police are using in Afghanistan and in Bahrain.”⁴¹²

DOS has continued to authorize training courses for SSFC units in Bahrain. In its Bahrain Country Report on Terrorism for 2014, DOS notes that “the U.S. Embassy was able to assist with the delivery of an ATA K9 Train the Trainer course that graduated two trainers and eight trainees.”⁴¹³ What is known colloquially as the “K9 unit” in Bahrain is a subdivision of the SSFC founded in 2005 that breeds and deploys dogs for “supporting the operations related to the maintenance of order and fighting riots, vandalism, crimes, terrorism and trafficking...search and rescue operations and VIP protection.”⁴¹⁴ Much like the SSFC’s experience with the Marines in Afghanistan, soon after the K9 unit completed this training course with the US Embassy, the MOI deployed it to violently subdue the inmate population at Jau Prison. Throughout March 2015 and the ensuing months, SSFC, GDRR, Southern Police, and other MOI personnel collectively punished the prisoners regardless of their involvement in the unrest.

“
The ATA K9 program appears to have directly contravened the language of US restrictions on funding for “crowd control purposes for foreign security forces that use excessive force to repress peaceful expression, association, or assembly in countries undergoing democratic transition,” contributing to the SSFC’s ongoing suppression of these rights.

Multiple inmates reported that the SSFC were present in the prison as early as February 2015 and that they loosed K9 dogs within the facility to attack prisoners. Minors and adolescent prisoners in Building 3 and Building 6 of Jau report that the unit specifically targeted them, and several inmates identified an SSFC lieutenant as the commander

412 Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2011 – Foreign Operations: Annex Regional Perspectives, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/137937.pdf>

413 Bahrain Country Report on Terrorism 2014, US Department of State, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239407.htm>

414 “Chief of Public Security inspects K9 Unit,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/64488>

of the dog attacks. Another prisoner, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his involvement in the 2011 protest movement, has alleged that MOI personnel intermittently raided his cell with police dogs over the last seven years to scare and humiliate him. Beyond these documented attacks, the SSFC itself states that it routinely deploys the K9 unit against “riots” and “vandalism” as well as in the general “maintenance of order” – vague categories that include criminalized acts of free assembly like peaceful protest that are protected under international law. As a result, the ATA K9 program appears to have directly contravened the language of US restrictions on funding for “crowd control purposes for foreign security forces that use excessive force to repress peaceful expression, association, or assembly in countries undergoing democratic transition,”⁴¹⁵ contributing to the SSFC’s ongoing suppression of these rights.

GDCIFS and GDAEES

Though the SSFC is the only MOI subdivision explicitly named in DOS budget documents, NADR-ATA support for “forensic investigations,” “terror investigations,” and “chain of custody” training is almost certainly allocated for the GDCIFS – the MOI’s chief investigative agency – and the GDAEES – its main surveillance body with authority over countering terrorist financing. Since 2013, the DOS has prioritized NADR-ATA funding to assist the MOI in these functions, specifically focusing on “case management and interview techniques” aimed ostensibly at reducing torture and other due process violations during GDCIFS interrogations. All reporting from FY2014 to FY2019 has emphasized “advanced” forensic investigations and first-response crime scene management, with an increasing focus on explosive and “complex” counterterrorism investigations. These operations are the purview of the GDCIFS with support from the GDAEES (*see Section 2.B.i for more information on the GDCIFS, and Section 2.C.i for more information on the GDAEES*).

NADR-ATA programming for FY2015 and FY2016 claimed that this support would include a “strong human rights focus” and that “ATA programming will also focus on training the MOI to use more effective interview techniques, which are deemed critical as the Government of Bahrain continues to move from confession-based to

evidence-based prosecutions.”⁴¹⁶ However, the documents themselves indicate that the US was not only aware that the MOI pursues “confession-based” prosecutions through torture as a matter of policy, but that it continued to fund and train the MOI’s investigatory bodies – namely the GDCIFS – despite their complete failure to curb these abuses. The FY2015 budget documents actually boast that “NADR-sponsored training” in how to “collect evidence, and ensure the proper chain of custody” has resulted in higher “arrest rates for those committing violent acts” – rates that, in a “confession-based” system, very likely correspond to rates of arbitrary detention and torture.⁴¹⁷ ADHRB alone documented more than 100 incidents of severe abuses – predominantly torture, arbitrary detention, and forced confessions – implicating the CID in 2015 and 2016. NADR-ATA requests since 2016 have abandoned language on “evidence-based” reforms altogether, ensuring that DOS programming for the MOI will be further responsible for rising GDCIFS abuse rates.

Other forms of direct support for the GDCIFS and GDAEES have grown under the Trump administration. In August 2018, the Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT) at the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) held a three-day “workshop on the best practices in investigating terrorist crimes and terror-financing” with the MOI’s Directorate of Training and Joint Anti-Terrorism Center under the Chief of Public Security.⁴¹⁸ GDAEES personnel participated in the training and the US Ambassador to Bahrain, Justin Siberell, was pictured sitting with the GDAEES Director-General Col. Bassam al-Muraj – a senior MOI commander repeatedly implicated in torture and other abuses since 2007 (*see Section 4.B.v for more information on Col. al-Muraj*). According to MOI promotional materials, Ambassador Siberell “praised the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Interior and other security services” and “thanked the Minister of Interior for guiding the event and the police chief [Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan] for his patronage.”⁴¹⁹ The workshop’s course material included “understanding the ideology of a terrorist, building a case using informants and cooperators, current trends in terrorist financing, exploitation of social media to establish gang and criminal organization membership and collecting evidence in terrorism financing and social media related cases [sic]” as

415 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

416 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2015 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/224070.pdf>; and *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2016 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/238222.pdf>

417 *Congressional Budget Justification Fiscal Year 2015 - Foreign Operations: Appendix 3*, DOS, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/224070.pdf>

418 “Public Security Chief opens counter-terror workshop,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 27 August 2018, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/84295>; and “Counter-terrorism workshop concludes,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 August 2018, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/84381>

419 “Following best practices: Terrorism financing discussed at key event,” *Al-Amn*, Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, September 2018, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/84588>

well as “tips and techniques on interviewing suspects...and to investigate and interview women in terrorism cases.”⁴²⁰ Notably, this US-sponsored training in pursuing “social media related cases” comes just months after the interior minister announced an expanded campaign against online dissent criminalized under charges like “misuse of social media,” and as the GDAEES continues to monitor and arrest nonviolent activists like Nabeel Rajab for sharing critical information on the internet (*see Section 2.C.i for more on the GDAEES and suppression of online criticism*).

Similarly, in early September 2018, the FBI launched a four-day training course in combatting terrorism and human trafficking with the GDCIFS, the Public Security Training Directorate, the Joint Anti-Terrorism Center, the MOJ, and the PPO. The workshop was held in explicit partnership with GDCIFS Director-General Brig. Abdulaziz Mayoof al-Rumaihi – the former CID chief who has overseen hundreds of severe human rights abuses during his command and who was personally accused of torture as early as 2010 (*see Section 4.B.i for more information on Brig. al-Rumaihi*).⁴²¹

With DOS assistance, the DOJ has provided direct and indirect “capacity-building” support to Bahrain in the past,⁴²² but this appears to have primarily focused on the kingdom’s MOJ and PPO rather than the police, such as US-funded American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative programs for the judiciary.⁴²³ The last confirmed DOJ project with the MOI was a International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) that offered training in “crime scene investigation and forensic DNA analysis” for MOI units and the Royal Academy of Police in 2013;⁴²⁴ ICITAP assistance continued until at least 2015,⁴²⁵ but exact beneficiaries in Bahrain are unspecified. DOJ and DOS have failed to respond to repeated ADHRB FOIA requests for details on such programs for over a year. The current counter-terror and human trafficking training courses launched by DOJ and the FBI appear to be among the first to explicitly and openly benefit the GDCIFS and GDAEES, however, confirming that the US



US Ambassador Justin Siberell (center left) during the August 2018 training course with GDAEES Director-General Col. Bassam al-Muraj (far right), an MOI commander accused of repeatedly torturing detainees

is deepening its support for these abusive agencies across multiple departments and programs under the Trump administration.

Additional Challenges and Violations

Though US administrations have consistently requested at least \$400,000 worth of NADR-ATA programs for the MOI in recent years, many have been cancelled due to “Leahy vetting challenges” – the process by which the US DOS and DOD assess the human rights record of potential foreign recipients of security aid to ensure compliance with the Leahy Laws that prohibit the use of “funds for assistance to units ... where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights (GVHR).”⁴²⁶ As described by DOS, the “U.S. government considers torture, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, and rape under color of law as GVHRs when implementing the Leahy law.”⁴²⁷ As recently as 2014, the US found that the MOI was sufficiently implicated in these GVHRs as to preclude “nearly all” NADR-ATA programs besides the SSFC K9 course.⁴²⁸ The DOS reported that Bahrain received one ATA program in 2015 “that graduated approximately 20 officers,”⁴²⁹ though the US has not specified which units were included in the course, and while it reported a NADR budget of \$400,000 in 2016, it has so far declined to specify what programs were implemented.⁴³⁰

420 Ibid.

421 “Head of Criminal Investigation inaugurates course on human-trafficking,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2 September 2018, <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/84432>

422 “OPDAT – Near East,” DOJ, US Government, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-opdat/worldwide-activities/near-east>

423 See: “Middle East & North Africa Regional Programs,” American Bar Association, 2018, https://www.americanbar.org/advocacy/rule_of_law/where_we_work/middle_east/mena_regional_programs.html; and “American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative,” Devex, 2018, <https://www.devex.com/organizations/american-bar-association-rule-of-law-initiative-3519>

424 “ICITAP – Africa and the Middle East,” DOJ, US Government, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-icitap/africa-and-middle-easthttps://www.justice.gov/criminal-icitap/africa-and-middle-east>

425 “ICITAP Field Offices & Funded Countries,” DOJ, US Government, 30 September 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-icitap/file/786781/download>

426 “Leahy Fact Sheet,” Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, 9 March 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2018/279141.htm>

427 Ibid.

428 *Bahrain Country Report on Terrorism 2014*, US Department of State, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239407.htm>

429 *Bahrain Country Report on Terrorism 2015*, US Department of State, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257517.htm>

430 *Bahrain Country Report on Terrorism 2016*, US Department of State, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272232.htm>; *Congressional Budget Justification Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs for Fiscal Year 2018*, US Department of State, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271013.pdf>

Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/spp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

Under the Trump administration, however, the government has requested \$400,000 in NADR-ATA funding for both FY2018 and FY2019 to train MOI personnel, and the DOJ is openly conducting trainings for explicitly abusive agencies like the GDCIFS and GDAEES, suggesting that the government will pursue an exception to the Leahy Laws. To do so, the DOS or DOD must determine that “the government of the country is taking effective steps to bring the responsible members of the security forces unit to justice” – a claim that is demonstrably false of Bahrain and the MOI (*see Section 4 on impunity and incentives for abuse*) – or that the “otherwise Leahy-ineligible unit” will show improved “respect for the rule of law and human rights.”⁴³¹ In the latter case, specially authorized under NDAA FY2015, assistance is still restricted from individual members of the unit implicated in GVHRs, which should render much of the SSFC, GDCIFS, GDRR, GDAEES, and governorate police force ineligible.⁴³² The SSFC and the GDCIFS, in particular, have for at least the last five years received funding through NADR-ATA programs that included provisions aimed at improving “respect for the rule of law and human rights.” Both agencies have consistently violated the rule of law and human rights despite this training, and the fact that they only began to fall short of Leahy vetting processes in 2014 is a testament to the shortcomings of the current vetting regime.

It is equally problematic that while DOS has at times acknowledged that Bahrain’s legal counterterrorism framework criminalizes basic human rights⁴³³ and that the “potential politicization of terrorist finance and money laundering issues threatens to conflate legitimate prosecutions of militants with politically-motivated actions against mainstream, nonviolent opposition and Shia community,”⁴³⁴ it refuses to recognize that continuous support for the chief enforcement agencies only makes them more effective at undertaking this repressive mission. Nowhere in the NADR-ATA budget documents does DOS attempt to reconcile or even note the core problem: that providing counterterrorism support within this context

consolidates rather than reforms a criminal justice system that equates terrorism with dissent.

B. UNITED KINGDOM

As the colonial power in Bahrain prior to the kingdom’s independence in 1971, no foreign country has had more influence over the initial development of the Bahraini police force than the UK. The British are largely responsible for growing the Al Khalifa family’s slave bodyguards⁴³⁵ and feudal militia, known as the *fidawiyah*, into a modern police force, and many of the MOI’s abusive policies – from brutal crowd control tactics to discriminatory recruitment practices – can be traced back to this colonial foundation. The *fidawiyah* were predominantly made up of “Baluchis, slaves of African origin, and ‘stray’ Arabs (mwalis) who had no clear tribal affiliation”⁴³⁶ or “non-tribal Sunnis,”⁴³⁷ and the British eventually demobilized or transitioned these forces into a colonial Levy Corps, which coalesced around 100-200 Baluchi personnel recruited from Oman.⁴³⁸ Setting a precedent that persisted throughout British reforms and into the modern kingdom, the Al Khalifa’s *fidawiyah* “actively enforced Shia subordinate relations,” “demanded bribes,” and “violently treated wrongdoers,” with their “repeated excess earn[ing] the animosity of the people.”⁴³⁹ After the UK reorganized the Bahraini government in the 1920s, the Levy Corp and, later, the smaller Bahrain Police Force of “about fifty-four former Indian Army Punjabis headed by a British officer,” became the primary agents of state authority, but these abusive structures remained. Bahrain’s first nominally “local” police force was not established until 1932,⁴⁴⁰ and even then the security forces continued to hire large amounts of foreign officers, with African personnel specifically targeted for recruitment throughout the middle of the century.⁴⁴¹ As documented in Fuad I. Khuri’s definitive sociological study of the Bahraini state prior to independence – a book which remains banned in the kingdom⁴⁴² – less than a quarter of the police were of Bahraini origin in the 1960s; “the rest were Baluchis, Yemenis, Mascatis, Pakistanis, Yagais, Iraqis,

431 “Leahy Fact Sheet,” Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, 9 March 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2018/279141.htm>

432 Ibid.

433 “Bahrain: US State Department Documents Decline in Terrorism Last Year, Continued Rights Concerns,” ADHRB, 21 July 2017, <https://www.adhrb.org/2017/07/bahrain-us-state-department-documents-decline-terrorism-continued-rights-concerns/>

434 “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016,” DOS, US Government, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/index.htm>

435 Ash Rossiter, “Britain and the Development of Professional Security Forces in the Gulf Arab States, 1921-71: Local Forces and Informal Empire,” University of Exeter, 2014, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/20486368.pdf>

436 Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 5 June 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/95-1013.pdf>

437 Kristin Smith Diwan, “Ruling Strategies and Sectarianism in Bahrain,” in Ed. Lawrence G. Potter, *Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf*, (2014), Print, 143-177.

438 Fuad Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*, (1980), Print; and Ash Rossiter, “Britain and the Development of Professional Security Forces in the Gulf Arab States, 1921-71: Local Forces and Informal Empire,” University of Exeter, 2014, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/20486368.pdf>

439 Staci Strobl, “The Roots of Sectarian Law and Order in the Gulf: Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and the Two Historical Disruptions,” in Frederic Wehrey (Ed.) *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East*, Oxford University Press: 2017, Print.

440 Fuad Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*, (1980), Print, 114.

441 Ibid.

442 Justin Gengler, *Group Conflict and Political Mobilization in Bahrain and the Arab Gulf: Rethinking the Rentier State*, Indiana University Press: 2015, Print.



Top row: British colonial advisor inspects police in Bahrain circa 1950-1960. Bottom row: SSFC snipers have received training from the UK Royal Marines

and so on, in this order of frequency.”⁴⁴³ The emphasis on foreign recruits generated language barriers that continue to undermine policing in Bahrain, with the “standard argot of the force ... an inefficient mixture of Baluchi, Urdu, and English – never Arabic.”⁴⁴⁴

The reliance on British colonial expertise and foreign manpower continued through independence in 1971,⁴⁴⁵ with the police force supervised by British expatriates, such as Ian Henderson – a former colonial officer who violently put down the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya and was known as the “Butcher of Bahrain” for his systematic use of torture.⁴⁴⁶ With Henderson’s help, the first Interior Minister, Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, founded the MOI just after independence, creating a “praetorianized”⁴⁴⁷ police force that, like its colonial predecessors, was made up

almost entirely of foreign recruits and Sunni Bahrainis with either familial ties or demonstrated loyalty to the ruling family.⁴⁴⁸ In the 1990s, Henderson and the interior minister crushed the precursor to Bahrain’s Arab Spring uprising, honing the policies of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, excessive force, and extrajudicial killing that would return under Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid Al Khalifa and the modern MOI from 2004 on.

Exacerbating the colonial legacy of violent divide-and-rule policing, the UK has directly supported the current MOI more than any other Western ally with the possible exception of the US. The UK has sold fewer arms to the Bahraini security forces than the US, with transfers largely limited to tear gas and shotgun ammunition of British or joint British-American origin, but the British government

443 Fuad Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*, (1980), Print.

444 Ash Rossiter, “Britain and the Development of Professional Security Forces in the Gulf Arab States, 1921-71: Local Forces and Informal Empire,” University of Exeter, 2014, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/20486368.pdf>

445 According to Khuri, the army was formed in 1968, with around 2,000 recruits. See: Fuad Khuri, *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*, (1980), Print, 122.

446 Ibid. See also: Eds. Ala’a Shehabi and Marc Owen Jones, *Bahrain’s Uprising*, 2015, print.

447 Laurence Louer, “Sectarianism and Coup-Proofing Strategies in Bahrain,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, May 2013, <https://americanuniversity.ares.atlas-sys.com/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=O035453420U&Action=10&Type=10&Value=86648>

448 *Sectarian Discrimination and Extremism in Bahrain’s Security Forces: Questions for US Policy*, ADHRB, 30 November 2017, http://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017.Sectarianization-of-Security-Forces_White-Paper.pdf

has contributed large amounts of funding and training assistance to the MOI and its disciplinary bodies. As of 2017, the UK has provided approximately £5 million to Bahrain's MOI and MOJ.⁴⁴⁹ Since 2011, much of this support has had the stated goal of improving police discipline, bringing MOI policies in line with international law, and combatting impunity, but it has had no discernible impact on the ministry's rates of abuse or the efficacy of Bahrain's accountability mechanisms. British training programs have reportedly included expert consultations with the MOI Ombudsman and the PDRC;⁴⁵⁰ instruction to MOI officers on how "to show more restraint [regarding use of force], to use less teargas and birdshot, and to improve transparency;"⁴⁵¹ guidance for the unarmed community police;⁴⁵² and courses for at least 400 GDRR personnel on improving detention standards.⁴⁵³

Investigations by British and Bahraini human rights organizations like Reprieve and BIRD have found that these programs are not just ineffective, but are predominantly used to whitewash or otherwise obscure the MOI's persistent refusal to undertake reform. In 2014, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons visited the CID facility only months after MOI personnel tortured Sami Mushaima and Abbas al-Samea, two prisoners who later executed in January 2017 after a patently unfair trial; the Inspectorate's report omitted these abuses entirely.⁴⁵⁴ In 2015/2016, the UK Foreign Office awarded more than £900,000 to Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas Ltd (NI-CO), a state-owned company that trained MOI personnel directly implicated in torture – presumably officers with the GDCIFS and GDRR – as well as the Ombudsman. According to Reprieve, the "NI-CO is embedded in Bahrain's internal security apparatus: a victim could be abused by NI-CO trained police [Governorate Police Directorates and GDCIFS], tortured in prison by NI-CO trained guards [GDRR], and then have their torture allegation investigated and dismissed by the NI-CO trained

ombudsman."⁴⁵⁵ Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the NI-CO claimed that there were no "serious human rights concerns" in Bahrain during its trainings.⁴⁵⁶ The British Royal Marines, meanwhile, have trained the SSFC in sniping techniques as recently as 2015, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons has visited the CID and provided the PDRC with purported inspection assistance. Both the Marines and the Inspectorate failed to raise any of the countless high-profile reports of abuse committed by the SSFC or CID, which include torture and extrajudicial killing.⁴⁵⁷

The UK has also allowed British companies to transfer surveillance technology to Bahrain that has been used in the MOI's campaign against dissent. In 2014, leaked data revealed that, despite repeated denials, technology company Gamma International UK was officially "selling ... [Finfisher spyware] to people using their software to attack Bahraini activists"⁴⁵⁸ and that Bahraini officials had even reached out for tech support, complaining that they were "losing targets daily" due to a glitch.⁴⁵⁹ MOI agencies like the Cybercrime Unit at the GDAAES have used these methods to target dissidents, obtain private information, manipulate personal accounts, and attempt to blackmail individuals into silence. Authorities specifically used the program to target UK-based and US-based political activists, as well as those located in Bahrain.⁴⁶⁰ A leaked communication between the Bahraini government and Gamma International suggested that as early as 2011 authorities were using FinFisher on 30 active targets, referring to successful intrusions as having "caught the fish."⁴⁶¹ Since then, more dozen⁴⁶² human rights defenders, media figures, lawyers, and political activists have been attacked with FinFisher, including ADHRB Executive Director Husain Abdulla; journalist and campaigner Moosa Abdali; and Bahrain Watch cofounder Ala'a Shehabi. The rights organization Privacy International issued a

449 "Britain's cash and Bahrain's firing squads – 5 things we've learned," Reprieve, 2017, <https://reprieve.org.uk/update/britains-cash-bahrains-firing-squads-5-things-weve-learned/>

450 *Steps taken by the Government of Bahrain to Implement the Recommendations in the 2011 Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, US Department of State, 21 June 2016, <http://pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/State-BICI-Report.pdf>

451 Ibid.

452 *Belfast to Bahrain: The Torture Trail*, Reprieve, September 2016, <http://www.reprieve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BelfastToBahrain.pdf>.

453 Ibid.

454 "Britain's cash and Bahrain's firing squads – 5 things we've learned," Reprieve, 2017, <https://reprieve.org.uk/update/britains-cash-bahrains-firing-squads-5-things-weve-learned/>

455 *Belfast to Bahrain: The Torture Trail*, Reprieve, September 2016, <http://www.reprieve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BelfastToBahrain.pdf>.

456 Ibid.

457 Mark Townsend, "Fresh fears over UK links to Bahrain's 'torture prisons,'" *The Guardian*, 14 January 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jan/14/uk-links-bahrain-torture-prisons-yarls-wood>

458 Joseph Cox, "Bahraini Activists Claim They Were Targeted by FinFisher Surveillance in the UK," Motherboard, 13 October 2014, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/d73x3v/bahraini-activists-claim-they-were-targeted-by-government-surveillance-in-the-uk

459 Kim Zetter, "Bahraini Activists Hacked by Their Government Go After UK Spyware Maker," *Wired*, 13 October 2014, <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/bahraini-activists-go-after-spyware-source/>

460 Joseph Cox, "Bahraini Activists Claim They Were Targeted by FinFisher Surveillance in the UK," Motherboard, 13 October 2014, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/d73x3v/bahraini-activists-claim-they-were-targeted-by-government-surveillance-in-the-uk

461 "FinFisher – Database: Communication BDE8F987," *WikiLeaks*, 2014, https://wikileaks.org/spyfiles4/database.html#support_request

462 Kim Zetter, "Bahraini Activists Hacked by Their Government Go After UK Spyware Maker," *Wired*, 13 October 2014, <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/bahraini-activists-go-after-spyware-source/>



Left to right: Accreditation Canada renewing their endorsement of the MOI (2018); MOI Directorate of Health and Social Affairs Headquarters; X-ray of Mohammed Sahwan's birdshot wounds; he died of cardiac arrest in Jau Prison in 2017

complaint to the UK that “asks for an investigation into the surveillance, which they claim is unlawful under the UK’s Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)” and arguing that “Gamma is liable as an accessory to the surveillance, for supplying the technology and technical support to the Bahraini authorities.”⁴⁶³

The UK has taken no steps to suspend its involvement with the MOI.

C. CANADA

While there is no indication that the Canadian government directly arms and trains the MOI police forces, it has approved the sale of surveillance technology to Bahrain that is either utilized by MOI personnel or enhances its ability to target dissident activity online in coordination with the government’s telecommunications regulators. In August 2016, the Bahraini authorities issued new online safety regulations that require ISPs to use a centralized filtering system run by the government’s Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), allowing it to more extensively monitor and censor Internet content. This filtering system appears to match Bahrain’s purchase of a “National Website Filtering Solution” from Canadian technology company Netsweeper⁴⁶⁴ for approximately \$1.3 million (Canadian

dollars).⁴⁶⁵ In September 2016, Internet research group Citizen Lab found that Netsweeper “helped the Bahraini government block opposition party websites, various news websites and content critical of Islam” and is “being rolled out across the country of Bahrain” – contravening Canada’s official “position on human rights internationally” and international standards for freedom of information.⁴⁶⁶ The technology was used to block the website of Bahrain’s largest political opposition group, Al-Wefaq, for example, which was dissolved by the government in 2016, and the MOI’s GDAEES regularly detains individuals simply for “misusing” social media and the Internet (*see Section 2.C for more information on GDAEES abuses*).

Additionally, though Canada is not a major weapons supplier for the MOI, it has sold armored vehicles to Saudi Arabia that are reportedly deployed as part of the Peninsula Shield Force presence in Bahrain,⁴⁶⁷ and it continues to sell weapons to GCC armed forces fighting in Yemen, including the BDF.⁴⁶⁸ Further, Canadian investigators have found that the government failed to close a loophole that could allow the US – the chief recipient of Canadian defense materiel – to quietly transfer Canadian-made equipment to Bahrain.⁴⁶⁹ The Canadian government claims that its “export controls are among the most rigorous in the world”⁴⁷⁰ and that it “closely controls” the export of security materiel to, among

463 Joseph Cox, “Bahraini Activists Claim They Were Targeted by FinFisher Surveillance in the UK,” Motherboard, 13 October 2014, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/d73x3v/bahraini-activists-claim-they-were-targeted-by-government-surveillance-in-the-uk
 464 Laura Wright, “Canadian tech company Netsweeper helped Bahrain censor websites, says report,” CBC News, 21 September 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/netsweeper-bahrain-government-internet-censorship-1.3769803>
 465 *Report on Exports of Military Goods from Canada – 2016*, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/report-rapports/mil-2016.aspx?lang=eng#fnb19>
 466 For more information, see: Jakub Dalek, Ron Diebert, Bill Marczak, Sarah McKune, Helmi Noman, Irene Poetranto, and Adem Senft, *Tender Confirmed, Rights At Risk: Verifying Netsweeper in Bahrain*, Citizen Lab, University of Toronto, 21 September 2016, <https://citizenlab.org/2016/09/tender-confirmed-rights-risk-verifying-netsweeper-bahrain/>; and Laura Wright, “Canadian tech company Netsweeper helped Bahrain censor websites, says report,” CBC News, 21 September 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/netsweeper-bahrain-government-internet-censorship-1.3769803>
 467 Neil Macdonald, “Canada’s review of arms sales to Saudi Arabia runs into a bit of a snag: Neil Macdonald,” CBC News, 24 August 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/canada-arms-sales-1.4259338>
 468 *Report on Exports of Military Goods from Canada – 2016*, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/report-rapports/mil-2016.aspx?lang=eng#fnb19>
 469 Brendan Kennedy and Michelle Shephard, “Canada’s dual role in Yemen: Arms exports to Saudi coalition dwarf aid sent to war-torn country,” The Star, 30 April 2018, <https://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/2018/04/30/canadas-dual-role-in-yemen-arms-exports-to-saudi-coalition-dwarfs-aid-sent-to-war-torn-country.html>
 470 *Report on Exports of Military Goods from Canada – 2016*, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/report-rapports/mil-2016.aspx?lang=eng#fnb19>

others, “countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population,”⁴⁷¹ but Bahrain clearly fits these criteria. Surveillance technology exports like Netsweeper’s filtering system are designed to be utilized against civilians, in this case by demonstrably abusive agencies within the MOI. Sales to the BDF and the rest of the GCC militaries – as well as the US loophole – further violate these controls, as they increase the risk of Canadian weaponry being used to against civilians in both Yemen and Bahrain, contravening any restrictions intended to “ensure...Canadian exports are not prejudicial to peace, security or stability in any region of the world or within any country.”⁴⁷² Canada has previously rejected export licenses for states implicated in human rights abuses,⁴⁷³ and in February 2018 the government announced that it would intensify controls to prevent an export “if there were a substantial risk that it could be used to commit human rights violations,”⁴⁷⁴ but it has yet to explicitly restrict sales to Bahrain.

Beyond weapons and technology transfers, the Canadian government has also funded programs to develop the MOI’s medical facilities that have entirely failed to address systematic violations of the right to health perpetrated by police personnel. In May 2018, Accreditation Canada – a non-profit⁴⁷⁵ that receives funding from the Canadian Ministry of Health⁴⁷⁶ to assess and certify health facilities around the world – renewed accreditation for the MOI’s Directorate of Health and Social Affairs and awarded it a “Gold Standard” evaluation⁴⁷⁷ for the fourth consecutive year.⁴⁷⁸ According to the MOI’s Police Media Center, Accreditation Canada’s International Accreditation Executive Director, Katherina Tarasova, praised the MOI for “maintaining high standards in all its facilities.” While the Gold Standard is the baseline level for accreditation, Tarasova said that the MOI could reach “Platinum” or even “Diamond” status – the highest ranking – by 2019. Moreover, she announced that Accreditation Canada

has decided to extend the MOI’s accreditation from one year to three years, exempting it from annual reviews. The Director of Health and Social Affairs Fatima Omar Abdulrahman, who reports to the Assistant Undersecretary for Administration Affairs and ultimately to the Interior Ministry Undersecretary, indicated that the accreditation applied to the directorate’s “Public Security Health Centre and seven clinics” as well as “new standards” that are to be launched in 2019, and that the MOI would coordinate directly with Accreditation Canada to implement a “detailed plan to improve facilities” provided by the non-profit.⁴⁷⁹

Accreditation Canada’s assessment of the MOI’s health services is negligent and inaccurate. Though some of the MOI’s health facilities may offer quality care to ministry personnel and their families, they routinely deny proper treatment for individuals in government custody and are often the site of torture. ADHRB has documented 129 violations of medical neutrality or the right to health attributed to the MOI, including the denial of or interference in care. Many of these cases extend for years, with the victim experiencing denied or improper treatment from their initial arrest through to their incarceration, implicating numerous MOI agencies and facilities at every step in the process (*see Section 3.E for more information on violations of international detention standards and the right to health*). One of these cases occurred at a GDRR facility in May 2018 – the same month Accreditation Canada was visiting the MOI. The “Public Security Health Centre,” also known as the Al-Qala’a clinic, is particularly notorious for neglecting or interfering in the treatment of prisoners, and ADHRB has documented more than 30 cases of abuses at that health facility alone, including denial of care and torture. Poor detention conditions and inadequate medical care has led prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab to repeated hospitalizations at Al-Qala’a as recently as 2017, for example, and his health has continued to deteriorate.⁴⁸⁰ MOI health personnel are sometimes directly implicated in abuses like harassment,

471 *Export Controls Handbook*, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, Government of Canada, August 2017, <http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/assets/pdfs/documents/Export-Controls-Handbook-2017-eng.pdf>

472 *Report on Exports of Military Goods from Canada – 2016*, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/report-rapports/mil-2016.aspx?lang=eng#fmb19>

473 Canada rejected exports of small arms to Thailand over human rights concerns in 2016, for example, and it rejected sales to Ukraine that same year due to “regional conflict.” It is unclear why “regional conflict” does not also disqualify sales to states active in the Yemen war. See: *Report on Exports of Military Goods from Canada – 2016*, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/report-rapports/mil-2016.aspx?lang=eng#fmb19>; and David Webster,

“Canada’s checkered history of arms sales to human rights violators,” *The Conversation*, 13 February 2018, <https://theconversation.com/canadas-checkered-history-of-arms-sales-to-human-rights-violators-91559>

474 David Ljunggren, “Canada says will clamp down on arms exports amid rights concerns,” *Reuters*, 8 February 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-arms/canada-says-will-clamp-down-on-arms-exports-amid-rights-concerns-idUSKBN1FS3E7>

475 <https://accreditation.ca/intl-en/about/our-history/>

476 <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/branches-agencies.html>

477 <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/81770>

478 “Report highlights Bahrain police achievements,” *Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain*, 14 December 2017, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/77897>

479 <http://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/al-amn-magazine/al-amn-magazine/81770>

480 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/26/bahrain-detained-activists-health-worsens>

torture, and reprisal, and they consistently fail to properly examine injured detainees when tasked with investigating allegations of physical violence; there is evidence to suggest that these personnel coordinate with the police and prosecutors to cover up such violations. The Ombudsman, meanwhile, regularly fails to satisfactorily resolve requests for assistance from prisoners requesting access to healthcare.

The MOI's deprivation of proper medical care for prisoners has in some cases even led to death. In July 2016, Hasan al-Hayki, a 35-year-old detainee at the GDRR's Dry Dock Detention Center, died amid credible allegations of torture and denial of medical care. ADHRB called for an independent investigation into al-Hayki's death and, although both the Ombudsman and the SIU reportedly examined the case, they ultimately dismissed the allegations. Another inmate, Mohammed Sahwan, died in March 2017 - the first political prisoner to die in Jau Prison since 2011. He reportedly died of cardiac arrest, but never received adequate healthcare for injuries he sustained during his arrest and torture, including multiple birdshot wounds. As of the Ombudsman's most recent annual report in September 2017, the office's investigation into the case appeared to remain open (*see Section 3.E.ii for more information on these cases*).⁴⁸¹

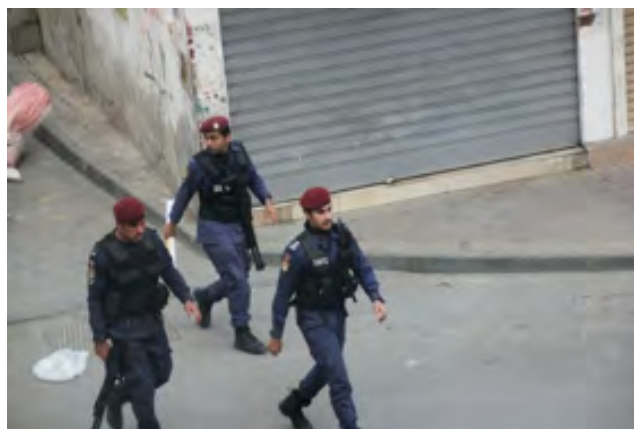
According to the MOI, "Accreditation Canada's philosophy of quality improvement is based on the involvement of the entire organization [under assessment]. As part of that, they assess all aspects of an organization and provide an accreditation award that recognizes its entire organization and not just a specific programme." If this is the case, Accreditation Canada completely failed to fulfill its role, and it is currently endorsing an institution guilty of routinely violating the right to health.

D. EUROPEAN UNION

EU member states like France and Italy also provide varying levels of support to the MOI.

i. France

The French government has consistently sold Bahrain millions of euros in weapons and equipment, including materiel that the MOI has utilized against peaceful protests.



Top: Protester wounded by birdshot (2017). Bottom: SSFC patrolling with shotguns (2017)

Although France officially "halted all of the exportation of law enforcement products to Bahrain ceased on the 17th February 2011," Bahrain Watch has uncovered evidence that sales may have quietly resumed by 2014.⁴⁸² In 2012, the French government indicated that it had sold €250,000 worth of "toxic chemical and biological agents and riot control equipment"⁴⁸³ to Bahrain, and transfers of these agents swelled to a value of €43,073,610 in 2015, the most recent year for which data is available.⁴⁸⁴ Government documents also indicate that Bahrain purchased nearly €2.5 million worth of large caliber weaponry, explosives, ground vehicles, aircraft, and electronic equipment from France in 2013, however the recipient security institutions are unspecified.⁴⁸⁵ France's export controls claim to assess "the potential consequences of the goods exported concerning regional peace and security, the internal situation in the

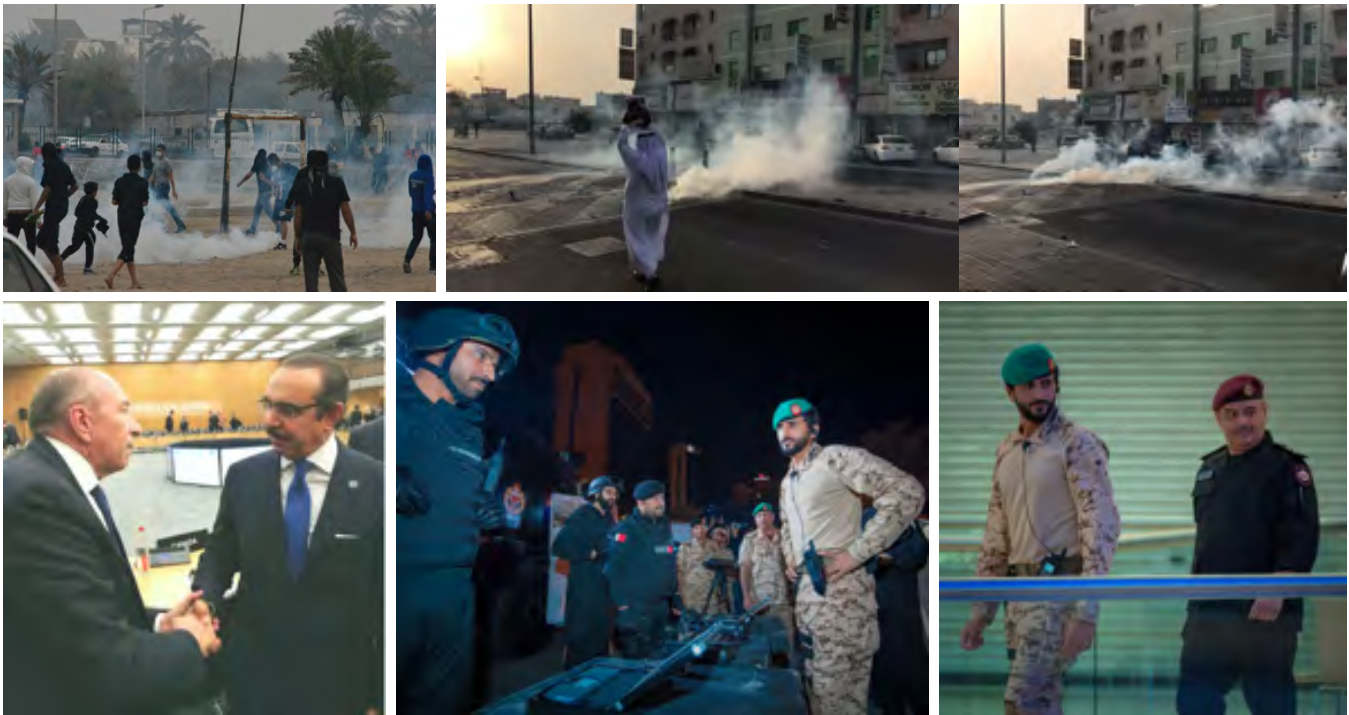
481 Ibid.

482 Nazgol Kafai, "Has France Resumed Tear Gas Sales to Bahrain?," Bahrain Watch, 17 March 2014, <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2014/03/17/did-france-resume-tear-gas-sales-to-bahrain-amid-ongoing-human-rights-violations/>

483 Ibid.

484 *FRANCE AND ARMS TRADE CONTROL 2016 (FY 2015)*, Government of France, 2016, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/france_report_2016_fy_2015_eng.pdf

485 *FRANCE AND ARMS TRADE CONTROL 2015 (FY 2013)*, Government of France, 2015, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/france_report_2015_fy_2013_eng.pdf



Top row: Teargas attack near funeral procession (2017); Teargas fired at peaceful protester (2017). Bottom row: Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashid bin Abdullah meeting with counterpart in France for a counterterrorism conference (2018); BDF Brig. Nasser bin Hamad meeting with SSFC personnel and Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan during Kingdom's Guard 1 (2017)

end-user country and its practices as regards respect of human rights, [and] the risk of diversion to non-authorized end users,” and adhere to the UN Arms Sales Treaty as well as the EU Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, both of which include provisions to restrict arms transfers that could facilitate serious human rights violations.⁴⁸⁶ However, French support for the Bahraini security forces in general, and teargas sales for the MOI in particular, clearly contravene these principles and obligations.

In 2015, the French government signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with Bahrain directing the Parisian emergency services, known as Services d'Aide Médicale Urgente (SAMU), to provide assistance for the development of the MOI's NAC, a centralized national ambulance project.⁴⁸⁷ According to MOI Chief of Public Security Maj. Gen. Tariq al-Hassan, French officials assist in “training, drafting work procedure guideline and consultation [sic]” for the project in coordination with MOI personnel and King Hamad University Hospital, which is run by the military. While it is unclear how the French government's support for the project has fully manifested over the years, the NAC was legally established in 2018 and is soon to be operational, officially transferring

emergency services from the Ministry of Health to the MOI. The NAC ultimately reports to the Interior Minister; it is entirely funded by the ministry; and it is directly linked to the MOI's Geographical Security System for tracking incidents and targets, incorporating the ambulance service into the broader police surveillance structure. MOI and other security authorities already interfere in the delivery of emergency medical care and exploit treatment centers to track and detain protesters, and French support will now enable the police to extend total control over traditionally civilian ambulance and paramedic functions. Moreover, with the NAC permitted to develop and recommend healthcare legislation, even the French government's “consultation” role will implicate it in any MOI efforts to further restrict impartial medical treatment or violate the right to health in Bahrain.⁴⁸⁸

France also provides the MOI with counterterror support. In 2013, Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa met with his French counterpart in Paris where they agreed to “activate cooperation and coordination between security authorities of both countries... to fight organized crimes and terrorism,” despite the former's false attempt to the reassure the French

486 *FRANCE AND ARMS TRADE CONTROL 2016 (FY 2015)*, Government of France, 2016, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/france_report_2016_fy_2015_eng.pdf

487 “Bahrain, France sign agreement, MoUs,” BNA, Kingdom of Bahrain, 8 September 2015, <http://www.bna.bh/portal/en/news/685624>

488 *Decree No. 11, 2018 For the establishment and organization of the National Ambulance Center*, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2018, Print. (Unofficial translation available upon request).

LETHAL SMALL ARMS FROM GERMANY AND BELGIUM

SSFC and other MOI personnel often wield German and Belgian submachine guns in addition to rifles and shotguns of American and Italian make. While official transfer records are unclear (though the Bonn International Center for Conversion confirms the presence of such weaponry),¹ MOI promotional imagery clearly indicates that the SSFC's preferred submachine models are the German-manufactured MP5 of Heckler & Koch and the Belgian-manufactured FN P90 of FN Herstal.

Both weapons use live ammunition, with the MP5 firing 9mm rounds – the same caliber as the shells found at protest raids like the lethal January 2017 attack on Diraz. SSFC personnel can be specifically identified wielding MP5s during the May 2017 assault on Diraz that left five protesters dead, as well as the February 2017 Coast Guard shooting.

1 *SALW Guide Global distribution and visual identification – Bahrain Country Report*, Bonn International Center for Conversion, <https://salw-guide.bicc.de/pdf/countries/025/bahrain.min.en.pdf>

MOI promotional photos showing SSFC officers wielding FN P90s (left) and HK MP5s (Right)



SSFC officers armed with MP5s in Diraz (left) and with the Coast Guard (right) (2017)

government that “Bahrain police [do not] face protesters but individuals who are involved in rioting, vandalism and terrorism.”⁴⁸⁹ The minister has regularly traveled to France to reaffirm this cooperation, including as recently as April

2018, when he and his French counterpart again agreed to coordinate on “counter-terrorism financing...[and] security cooperation.”⁴⁹⁰

In 2017, French advisors – along with their American and

489 “HE Interior Minister Visits France and Participant in the Milipol Paris Security Exhibition,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 19 November 2013, <http://policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/29624>

490 “HE Interior Minister takes part in counter-terrorism financing conference in France,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 26 April 2018, <https://www.policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/81545>

British counterparts – attended a major “joint counterterrorism exercise” called Kingdom’s Guard 1, in which MOI personnel simulated an anti-terror operation in coordination with the BDF and National Guard.⁴⁹¹ The exercise, which was led by two of the king’s sons, Royal Guard commanders Brigadier Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Major Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa – both of whom are implicated in either torture in Bahrain and/or potential war crimes in Yemen – was intended to highlight “the dedication of developed countries to fight all forms of terrorism through international legal framework ... [and how Bahrain benefits] from the expertise of those countries, such as the US, UK and France.”⁴⁹² The full extent of French guidance and assistance for the MOI, but it is likely that any counterterror support is coordinated through the SSFC, which doubles as the ministry’s lead anti-terror agency and its most lethal weapon against peaceful protest. With basic acts of nonviolent dissent such as “insulting the king” criminalized under broad anti-terror legislation in Bahrain, counterterror assistance is inevitably subsumed within the MOI’s wider attack on critical civil society activism.

ii. Italy

Similar to Gamma International in the UK and Netsweeper in Canada, the Italian government has allowed Italian technology company Hacking Team to sell spyware technology to Bahrain for use by the MOI, NSA, and BDF. Leaked documents in 2015 confirmed that the MOI purchased spyware from Hacking Team through an Emirati intermediary in 2014.⁴⁹³ Records explicitly indicate that Bahrain’s intermediary paid €210,000 for a one-year pilot program with the GDAAES’ Cybercrime Directorate, in addition to separate arrangements between Hacking Team and the NSA and BDF. Like FinFisher, Hacking Team’s programs are used to monitor or gain unauthorized access to electronic devices to “steal files, read emails, take photos and record conversations.”⁴⁹⁴ In 2012, when the British-German company Gamma International began to receive criticism for providing FinFisher spyware to Bahraini authorities, “Hacking Team’s account manager sent around the link [to a news article about the story] with a smiley

face: ‘rumor has it, there’s an opportunity in Bahrain...’⁴⁹⁵ While the Italian government froze Hacking Team’s exports in 2015 over human rights concerns, the ban was soon lifted⁴⁹⁶ and the company has endured with financial support from a “mysterious investor” in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁹⁷

Italy has also sold the MOI birdshot ammunition, specifically V3 Feltro cartridges from CP Pegoraro and PL32 cartridges from Fiocchi Munizioni SPA.⁴⁹⁸ Ostensibly a non-lethal crowd control tool, MOI forces have weaponized birdshot – which is effectively live ammunition – to inflict horrific wounds on peaceful demonstrators and deter protests. Fired at close range, birdshot can be fatal, with a number of MOI extrajudicial killings directly linked to its excessive or purposeful misuse (*see Section 3.F for more information on crowd control “weaponization,” excessive force, and extrajudicial killings*).

iii. Germany

The Germany government’s connections to the MOI are limited, but German-British company Gamma International has supplied Bahrain with surveillance technology (*see Section 2.D.i for more information on surveillance and see section 5.B for more information on the UK and Gamma International*) while German-South African company Rheinmetall Denel Munition Ltd. provides the police with teargas, flashbang grenades, and a vehicular launch system. Like teargas, flashbang grenades can be deployed to disperse crowds, but excessive use can cause serious injury. Bahrain Watch has found that the company is deepening ties to Bahrain: “In December 2014, the Bahrain Economic Development Board supported a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Bahrain National Institute for Industrial Training and the Education Center of Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles in Kassel, Germany. A statement from the EDB at the time said that ‘the MOU is part of a wider plan between NIIT and Rheinmetall Education Center that also incorporates planning an apprenticeship and training center in Bahrain, and implementation of the apprenticeship pilot project joint workshops and seminars, and to participate in fairs

491 “Royal Guard Commander, Kingdom’s Guard 1 Commander attend drill,” Police Media Center, MOI, Kingdom of Bahrain, 6 December 2017, <http://policemc.gov.bh/en/news/ministry/77735>

492 Ibid.

493 Reda al-Fardan, “How The Government of Bahrain Acquired Hacking Team’s Spyware,” Bahrain Watch, 13 November 2015, <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2015/11/13/how-the-government-of-bahrain-acquired-hacking-teams-spyware/>

494 Cora Currier and Morgan Marquis-Boire, “A DETAILED LOOK AT HACKING TEAM’S EMAILS ABOUT ITS REPRESSIVE CLIENTS,” The Intercept, 7 July 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/07/07/leaked-documents-confirm-hacking-team-sells-spyware-repressive-countries/>

495 Ibid.

496 Ibid.

497 Lorenzo Franceschi-Bicchierai, “Hacking Team Is Still Alive Thanks to a Mysterious Investor From Saudi Arabia,” Motherboard, 31 January 2018, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/8xvzyp/hacking-team-investor-saudi-arabia

498 “Arms Watch,” Bahrain Watch, 2018, <https://bahrainwatch.org/arms/>

and conferences”⁴⁹⁹ (see Section 3.F for more information on crowd control “weaponization,” excessive force, and extrajudicial killings).

iv. Cyprus and Czech Republic

Smaller EU states like Cyprus and the Czech Republic have also sold ammunition used by MOI personnel. Pistol rounds from Czech manufacturer Sellier & Bellot have been found in the aftermath of attacks on protests and villages, and Victory Starlight cartridge from the Cypriot company G&L Calibers Ltd. have been directly implicated in extrajudicial killings.⁵⁰⁰ In 2011, police shot 32-year-old Hani ‘Abdelaziz’ Abdullah Jumaa three times with Victory Starlight shotgun ammunition, leaving him to die. Though an officer received a seven-year prison term in relation to the incident, the sentence was later dropped to six months.⁵⁰¹

v. EU Export Controls

The second criterion of the EU Common Position on arms exports provides that states must assess and ensure “Respect for human rights in the country of final destination as well as respect by that country of international humanitarian law.”⁵⁰² All of the weapons transfers and assistance described above contravene this criterion, as Bahrain – and specifically the MOI – repeatedly and routinely flout international human rights standards. In 2018, the European Parliament (EP) explicitly addressed the deeply problematic provision of surveillance technology to Bahrain in a resolution adopted on the case of Nabeel Rajab: “[The EP] regrets the fact that surveillance technologies are being exported by European companies to Bahrain, and emphasises the need for the EU export control authorities to take human rights criteria into account before granting an export licence to a third country.”⁵⁰³ It additionally called on all “EU Member States to strictly observe the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, and in particular to halt all transfers of weapons, surveillance and intelligence equipment and material that can be used by Bahrain in its ongoing crackdown on human rights.”⁵⁰⁴ This should amount to a blanket ban on security assistance to the MOI.



Cypriot Victory Starlight birdshot pellets and wounds



SSFC commando and riot training.

499 “Arms Watch: New Emirati Armoured Vehicle Used in Latest Attack on Protesters. Brazilian, French and South African/German Teargas and Flashbang Used,” Bahrain Watch, 21 December 2016, <https://bahrainwatch.org/blog/2016/12/21/arms-watch-new-emirati-armoured-vehicle-used-in-latest-attack-on-protesters-brazilian-french-and-south-africangerman-teargas-and-flashbang-used/>

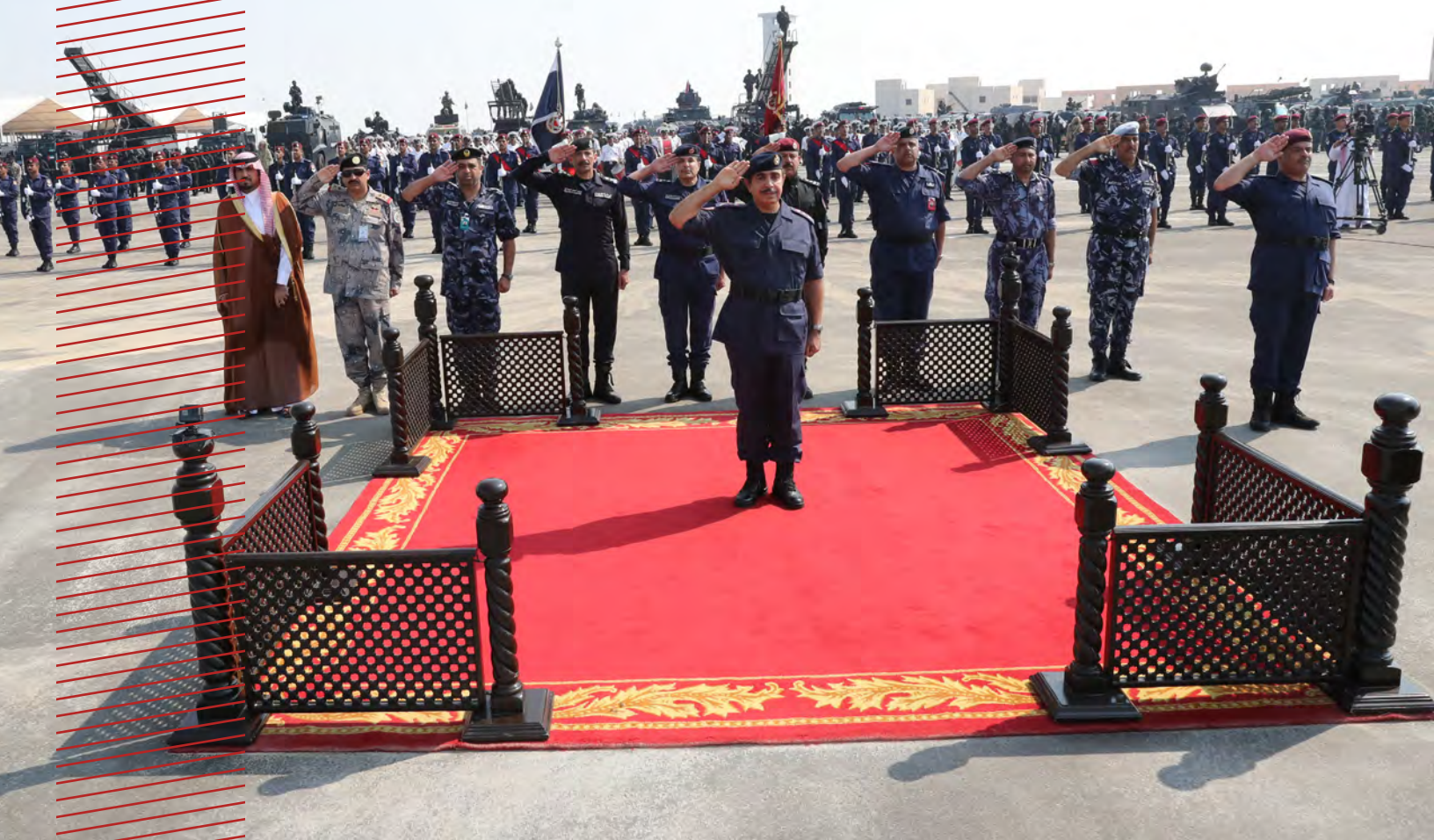
500 “Arms Watch,” Bahrain Watch, 2018, <https://bahrainwatch.org/arms/>

501 Ariel Plotkin, “7 stories of shocking injustice: Bahrain after the ‘Arab Spring,’” Amnesty International, 11 February 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/02/7-stories-shocking-injustice-bahrain-after-arab-spring/>

502 COUNCIL COMMON POSITION 2008/944/CFSP, EU, 8 December 2008, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:335:0099:0103:EN:PDF>

503 European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab (2018/2755(RSP)), EU, 13 June 2018, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P8-RC-2018-0281&language=EN>

504 Ibid.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Bahrain's chief law enforcement agency is the most prolific criminal enterprise in the kingdom. The MOI perpetrates heinous human rights abuses as a matter of policy and its very mission – to enforce a set of draconian restrictions on fundamental freedoms – contravenes international law. No amount of incremental reform or training will fix the Bahraini MOI so constituted, because it is not broken. Every dissident tortured by the CID; every protester shot dead by the SSFC; every teenager disappeared off the street by the patrolman meant to protect him – this is the system working as designed.

Small-scale reforms are technically implemented, worked around, and ignored. A few low-level officers might endure reluctant prosecution for the cameras, but an ultimate acquittal – and maybe even a promotion – awaits them for their sacrifice. International security assistance, meanwhile, only improves the MOI's perverse skillset and enhances the efficiency of its repressive policies. The system works.

Eight years after the Arab Spring protests of 2011, Bahrain has learned every wrong lesson. A brittle police state is mistaken for stable civil society, and deepening repression for durable security. The MOI has led this devolution, and it must be stopped.

The international community – and especially those Bahraini allies explicitly backing the MOI – is alone capable of pressuring the kingdom to reverse course. Bahrain is a small country with rapidly mounting financial worries⁵⁰⁵ – the continued expansion of the MOI's massive police infrastructure is neither economically nor political sustainable. It is rendered outright impossible without the support of Manama's key security partners from Washington to London and Ottawa to Paris. The rot is too deep and too widespread across the ministry. There is no choice but to cut ties and push for change, or directly endorse the new Bahraini police state.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

ADHRB therefore calls on the international community to:

- 1** Impose sanctions on key perpetrators of gross human rights violations or related malfeasance across MOI agencies and command echelons, up to and including Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa and Public Security Chief Tariq al-Hassan;
- 1.a** Sanctions should conform to specific legal mechanisms like the American Global Magnitsky Act and include measures such as visa bans and asset freezes with a view toward curbing abuse, securing accountability, and compelling reform.
- 2** Suspend all assistance to the Bahraini MOI – including training, weapons sales, and equipment transfers – until such time as tangible and independently verifiable progress has been made toward fundamental reforms adhering to international human rights standards, such as the BICI and UPR recommendations (see below);
- 3** Confirm any assistance provided to other Bahraini security institutions is properly vetted and subject to enhanced end-use monitoring – with public reporting requirements – to ensure that it is not accessible to the MOI and used to facilitate human rights violations;
- 4** Call on Bahrain to ratify all international treaties, particularly the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- 5** Press Bahrain to allow the UN Special Rapporteurs to access the kingdom through country visits – especially the Rapporteurs on Torture, Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Assembly and Association, Opinion and Expression, and Human Rights Defenders – and to engage constructively with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to transparently implement the recommendations of the independent experts;
- 6** Conduct annual high-level bilateral human rights consultations with Bahrain to identify progress as well as persistent challenges, and to outline and underscore expectations;

⁵⁰⁵ See: Davide Barbuscia, "Bahrain counts on fintech, Saudi ties to revive indebted economy," Reuters, 15 March 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bahrain-economy-recovery/bahrain-counts-on-fintech-saudi-ties-to-revive-indebted-economy-idUSKCN1GR0JC>

- 7** Urge Bahrain to reform the MOI disciplinary bodies and its national accountability mechanisms to ensure full independence and successful execution of their mandates under international standards;
- 8** Push the security sector to de-sectarianize and build up a new law enforcement and military cadre that reflects the country's demographics;
- 9** Demand that the Bahraini government and legislature reform legal frameworks that systematically restrict human rights and fundamental freedoms, including by repealing or fundamentally amending abusive legislation like the 2006 anti-terror law; and
- 10** Hold Bahrain accountable for implementing and reporting progress on BICI and UPR recommendations concerning criminal code and security sector reform, particularly:

BICI Recommendation 1716 - Establish independent, impartial mechanism to determine accountability of those in government, including those in the chain of civil and military command, who have committed unlawful or negligent acts resulting in the deaths, torture and mistreatment of civilians to bring legal and disciplinary action against those found to be responsible under international standards of superior responsibility

BICI Recommendation 1717 - To place the office of the Inspector General in MoI as a separate entity independent of the Ministry's hierarchical control, whose tasks should include those of an internal "ombudsman's office", such as that which exists in many other countries. The new Inspector's General's office should be able to receive individual or organisational complaints, protect the safety and privacy of the complainants, carry out independent investigations and have the authority to conduct disciplinary and criminal proceedings as required by CAT, the ICCPR and the Bahrain Criminal Code to the Prosecutor General. The office should also promulgate and enforce police professional standards and carry out legal and sensitivity training for police officers

BICI Recommendation 1719 - To adopt legislative measures requiring the Attorney-General to investigate claims of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to use independent forensic experts. Such procedures should guarantee the safety of

those raising such claims. Furthermore, the legislation should provide for remedies for any person claiming retribution for having raised a claim of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

BICI Recommendation 1720.a – To conduct effective investigations in accordance with the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions of all the deaths that have been attributed to the security forces. Likewise, all allegations of torture and similar treatment be investigated by an independent and impartial body, following the Istanbul Principles. The investigation of both types of alleged violation should be capable of leading to the prosecution of the implicated individuals, both direct and at all levels of responsibility, with a view to ensuring that punishment be consistent with the gravity of the offence.

BICI Recommendation 1720.b – To establish a standing independent body to examine all complaints of torture or ill-treatment, excessive use of force or other abuses at the hands of the authorities. The burden of proving that treatment complies with the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment should be on the State.

BICI Recommendation 1720.c – To implement an extensive program of public order training for the public security forces, the NSA and the BDF, including their private security companies, in accordance with UN best practices. To ensure future compliance with the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, the security forces should be trained in the human rights dimensions of detention and interrogation, and in particular the obligation to refuse to participate in any actions involving torture and other prohibited ill-treatment.

BICI Recommendation 1720.d – To avoid detention without prompt access to lawyers and without access to the outside world for more than two or three days. In any event, all detention should be subject to effective monitoring by an independent body. Moreover, every person arrested should be given a copy of the arrest warrant and no person should be held incommunicado. Arrested persons should have access to their legal counsel and family visits in the same way as any person detained

under the Bahrain Code of Criminal Procedure.

BICI Recommendation 1720.e – The Commission recommends that the GoB establish urgently, and implement vigorously, a programme for the integration into the security forces of personnel from all the communities in Bahrain.

BICI Recommendation 1720.f – To train the judiciary and prosecutorial personnel on the need to ensure that their activities contribute to the prevention and eradication of torture and ill-treatment.

BICI Recommendation 1720.g – There should be audiovisual recording of all official interviews with detained persons.

BICI Recommendation 1720.h – To review convictions and commute sentences of all persons charged with offences involving political expression, not consisting of advocacy of violence, or, as the case may be, to drop outstanding charges against them.

UPR Recommendation 114.39 - Continue to strengthen the Office of the Ombudsman of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ombudsman of the National Security Agency and the Special Investigations Unit, so they can fulfil their mandates effectively (New Zealand).

UPR Recommendation 114.49 - Strengthen education for law enforcement personnel on international human rights laws, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (South Korea).

UPR Recommendation 114.50 - Improve the capacity and training of the security forces in the area of human rights and moderate use of force, both in their response to peaceful protests and in places of detention (Spain).

UPR Recommendation 114.52 – Continue the training programmes for magistrates and law enforcement officials in accordance with international standards and human rights principles (Lebanon).

UPR Recommendation 114.57 - Take urgent steps to facilitate the work of civil society and human rights defenders, and guarantee protection of all

persons from intimidation or reprisals for seeking to cooperate with the United Nations (Ireland).

UPR Recommendation 114.69 - Ensure that counter-terrorist measures are fully consistent with Bahrain's international human rights obligations (Brazil).

UPR Recommendation 114.70 – Review the anti-terrorism law and its implementation in order to ensure it cannot be abused for harassment, detention and prosecution of dissenters (Czech Republic).

UPR Recommendation 114.71 - Amend the 2006 law on protecting society from terrorist acts to avoid imposing statelessness on individuals and minimize the negative impact on the families of those affected (Germany).

UPR Recommendation 114.74 – Abolish the death penalty, and commute all death sentences to prison terms (Sweden).

UPR Recommendation 114.83 - Ensure the independence, impartiality and effectiveness of the Special Investigations Unit and other relevant human rights institutions in investigating all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, unlawful killings and deaths in custody (Finland).

UPR Recommendation 114.94 – Ensure that all allegations of enforced disappearances, torture or any other form of ill-treatment are independently, promptly and thoroughly investigated, and perpetrators are brought to justice in accordance with international rule of law standards (Germany).

UPR Recommendation 114.97 – Avoid the intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organizations, lifting the restrictions imposed on them and allowing them to freely exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly (Spain).

UPR Recommendation 114.99 - Rescind impediments to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly (New Zealand).

UPR Recommendation 114.98 - Adopt a law to protect human rights defenders that includes special protection for vulnerable groups of defenders, including women defenders and those who express themselves through the Internet and social media (Mexico).

UPR Recommendation 114.100 – Release as soon as possible all individuals, including human rights defenders, having been imprisoned solely due to the exercise of their fundamental rights of expression and assembly (Norway).

UPR Recommendation 114.103 – Review convictions, commute sentences, or drop charges for all persons imprisoned solely for non-violent political expression (United States of America).

UPR Recommendation 114.110 – Modify the legislation to repeal criminal responsibility for activities that fall within the legitimate exercise of the freedom of expression, particularly on the Internet and Twitter (France).

UPR Recommendation 114.102 – Release all persons detained solely for the exercise of their right to freedom of expression or their right to peaceful assembly and repeal all legislative provisions criminalizing the exercise of these rights (Switzerland).

UPR Recommendation 114.111 – Repeal or amend all laws that restrict the freedoms of expression, association or assembly, including decree No. 31 of 2013, Law No. 34 of 2014, and Law No. 26 of 2015 (Germany).

UPR Recommendation 114.112 – Immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience imprisoned only for exercising their right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly (Iceland).

UPR Recommendation 114.113 – Implement relevant legislation for the full exercise of the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association (Italy).

UPR Recommendation 114.115 – Respect the legitimate rights of all its citizens to freedom of assembly, expression and participation in political societies (Australia).

UPR Recommendation 114.116 – Reduce restrictions on peaceful assembly and association, allow individuals to participate freely in independent political societies, consistent with the Constitution and national action charter, and cease unwarranted legal action against Wefaq and Wa'ad for engaging in protected activities (United States of America).

UPR Recommendation 114.119 – Adopt appropriate measures to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, journalists and members of the political opposition from acts of aggression and intimidation and abstain from taking any restrictive measures or reprisals against human rights defenders, notably those who cooperate with the Human Rights Council (Luxembourg).

UPR Recommendation 114.121 – Remove undue restrictions on the organization of peaceful protest in opposition to the Government, and repeal the application of criminal penalties to peaceful participation in unauthorized protests (Canada).

UPR Recommendation 114.124 – End immediately the reprisals against human rights defenders and lift restrictions on civil society (Estonia).

UPR Recommendation 114.125 – Take effective measures to raise awareness of the rights stipulated in the conventions it has acceded to concerning the judiciary and law enforcement officials (Qatar).

UPR Recommendation 14.175 – End the practice of revocation of citizenship, adopt legal and institutional safeguards to prevent discrimination against members of religious minorities and provide effective remedy for victims of arbitrary arrest, detention, summons or travel bans (Czech Republic).

UPR Recommendation 114.176.2 – End the practice of arbitrarily revoking citizenship, especially where this renders individuals stateless and forces them into exile (Belgium).



A comprehensive look at the core security agency driving Bahrain's human rights crisis, *Anatomy of a Police State* is the first full analysis of the Ministry of Interior's integral role in the kingdom's repression of dissent. It reveals that the ministry has led Bahrain's catastrophic devolution into a police state even as it has received millions of dollars from countries like the United States, presenting overwhelming evidence of gross human rights violations perpetrated as a matter of government policy.