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A photograph of Ebrahim Sharif, a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a light blue shirt and a black and white patterned scarf. He is speaking at a podium with a microphone. The background is a red banner with white Arabic text, including the word 'قاوم' (Qawm) and a quote symbol. A red arrow points from the text below to his chest.

**Ebrahim Sharif's Arrest is Another Violation
of Freedom of Speech**



ONGOING MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE IN DETENTION FACILITIES

Medical negligence and lack of adequate medical care has been a permanent trend in detention facilities. December was no different from its predecessor months in that trend, where it witnessed an ongoing medical negligence for several detainees.

One of those cases refers to the jailed opposition figure, Hasan Mushaima, who endured for years from medical negligence. Mushaima was recently informed that he is nearing end-stage kidney failure, with no further details. He and his family have been denied access to his medical record for years.

His family pointed out that his conditions worsened after his diabetes medications were changed in mid-November and the new medications are causing him to have unstable blood sugar levels, according to his doctor. In a phone call, Hasan Mushaima confirmed that he has not been provided with an insulin pump or another medical device to regulate his insulin levels.

Another case of medical negligence is for the jailed human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, who was denied access to proper healthcare for most of 2023, as multiple medical appointments were canceled. This methodology ended up with his health deteriorating and suffering from heart palpitations every now and then. Abdulhadi suffered, on 19 December from “heart palpitations which continued for over 20 minutes” and was then transferred to the military hospital, which is the same hospital he was previously tortured in, according to his daughter Maryam.

Moreover, the political prisoner Ayoub Adel Ahmad was urinating blood and suffering from severe abdominal pain. However, his request to address a doctor was ignored for days. Finally, Ayoub was transferred to the hospital where he was admitted to intensive care upon his arrival for 21 days due to the delay in providing health care to him, which led to kidney failure and other diseases, according to the diagnosis of the treating doctor.



The political prisoner Jassim Khalil Al-Saffar announced his launching a hunger strike, on 13 december, as a protest against medical negligence. Khalil suffers from a chronic skin disease and other health complications, but he is being denied access to prescribed medication, and isn't taken to doctor's appointments.

EBRAHIM SHARIF'S ARREST IS ANOTHER VIOLATION OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

On 20 December, the Bahraini authorities arrested the political activist and human rights defender Ebrahim Sharif over posting about his refusal of the authorities' decision to be in the coalition to defend Red Sea shipping. His detention lasted for 7 days, before being freed, however, prior to his arrest, Sharif wondered about the authorities' decision to join the coalition without any regard for the stance of the Bahraini people, who strongly support Palestinian people.

Arresting Sharif is a flagrant violation of human rights, as it's over expressing his opinions on social media platforms. Sharif's arrest is a part of Bahraini authorities' attempt to silence dissent, especially as it is associated with 10 other arrests over participation in peaceful marches to show solidarity with Palestine.

Brian Dooley, Senior Advisor at Human Rights First, sees that Ebrahim Sharif's arrest is another intimidating act against anyone who criticizes the ruling family. He further added that "We have documented for many years how the Bahraini authorities have targeted Sharif and other opposition leaders, and how Washington's response has too often been muted. The Biden administration should immediately and publicly call for any charges against him for these posts to be dropped."



ECONOMIC INTERESTS ARE ABOVE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WHEN DEALING WITH SAUDI ARABIA

A recent published article by the Guardian, talking about sportswashing in Saudi Arabia, mentioned that “the reason Saudi Arabia’s sportswashing efforts are so effective isn’t because they are particularly novel or clever. They are effective because an awful lot of people in the west are desperate to take the kingdom’s money without it being too awkward.”

This means that western countries are caring for their economic interests, at the expense of human rights. Those countries see the Kingdom as the biggest exporter of oil, however, they turn a blind eye to violations of human rights. Moreover, the article spotted the light on the billions of dollars UK and US acquire from arm sales to Saudi Arabia.

The article brings up arm sales issues as news is circulating about the preparation of US authorities to relax restrictions on some weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. The New York Times mentioned that some lawmakers are likely to oppose the move, but officials said that the Biden administration has noted the kingdom’s de facto cease-fire with Yemen. However, none has mentioned yet the siege imposed on Yemen, or the destruction left in the country.

The ban was imposed two years ago amid concerns that US weapons were being used against civilians in Yemen, where thousands of people have died from airstrikes, disease and hunger.



MORE THAN 170 WERE EXECUTED IN KSA DURING 2023

Saudi Arabia is one of the world's top executioners, where Saudi authorities executed 172 people during 2023, including 6 women. December was the bloodiest, where 39 men and 3 women were executed. May followed December with 23 executions done during it, and June ranked the third with 19 executions.

Executions were not only carried out against Saudis, but went beyond that, as the authorities executed 36 foreigners, including 3 women. They included 8 Yemenis and 8 Bangladeshis.

Moreover, 47 executions were carried out in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom, where most Shia citizens live there. Al-Riyad region ranks the second, while Makkah occupies the third ranks with 32 executions.

The execution punishment in Saudi Arabia has 3 types, the first is called Hadd, which is fixed and defined by Shari'a. The second is Qisas, which means retaliation, and is used for punishable crimes. The third is Ta'zir, where the court is allowed to use its discretion in regard to the form and measure in which such punishment is to be inflicted. In other words, Hadd and Qisas rely on fixed rules and laws, however, Ta'zir relies on the whims of the judge. During 2023, 69 executions were Qisas, 51 Ta'zir, 50 Hadd, and 2 not mentioned.

It is important to note that the numbers above are for the announced executions, however, from experiencing the Saudi authorities through the past years, we can say that the number of executions is likely to be more, where dozens would be executed without any announcement, and the only one who knows their names and cases are the Saudi authorities.



83 CHILDREN CASUALTIES OF LANDMINES DURING 2023

After nine years of war on Yemen, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) described it as having one of the world's highest rates of contamination with landmines and other deadly explosives. This widespread contamination resulted in the fall of hundreds of civilians, most of them children and women.

Every single month, new victims are added to the statistics. The number of children victims in the statistics is shameful. During 2022, one child was killed or injured on average every two days by landmines or other explosive devices, according to a report of Save the Children. Moreover, child casualties from landmines or unexploded ordnance during 2022 was 199.

Year 2023 witnessed a decrease in those casualties, however, it is still a high rate. During 2023, a total of 38 civilians died, and 97 others injured as a result of landmines and other deadly explosives. Those include 83 children, where 32 children died, and 51 others were injured. This increased the number of child casualties from the beginning of the war till the end of 2023, to 1968, including 627 killed and 1341 injured.

The situation may worsen ahead, especially with the continued stopping of funding clearance and remnants disposal activities by the United Nations. The fact that the contaminated areas remain without any clearance activities of remnants prevents the displaced from returning to their homes and villages to practice their daily lives and carry out their agricultural, grazing and firewood tasks safely, and even represents a direct threat to their lives and to all means of decent living in the various contaminated areas.