

# ISSUE #39- JAN 2024

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## **Detainees Suffer While Authorities Turn a Blind Eye**

Political prisoners in Bahrain bear terrible detention conditions, including torture, medical negligence, cancelations of family visits... One of those prisoners is the 63-years-old Mohammad Al-Raml who has been calling for access to adequate medical care for months. Upon authorities' ignorance, Al-Raml resumed his hunger strike earlier this year, which led to a decline in his health. Moreover, he ensured that he wasn't taken to a planned surgery even though he is in excruciating pain.

The families of both detainees Hussein Mohammad Ahmad and Hassan Ali Abdul-Ethnayashar expressed their concerns for the lives of their sons as they are suffering from severe sickle seizures while not being referred to a specialist. The political prisoner Mohammad Hasan Radhi launched a hunger strike on 9 January demanding his legitimate rights of visits, visual contact with my family, and treatment. He was deprived of family visits, video calls, and access to medical treatment as a punishment for reciting an elegy in the ward's corridor. Mohammad received multiple promises of ending the punishment, but nothing changed, so he entered an open hunger strike.

Moreover, ill-treatment prompted 400 detainees to refuse breakfast on 10 January. Days prior to the refusal of meals, 2 political prisoners Ibrahim Al-Samahiji and Ahmad Shaker, were assaulted by criminal prisoners.

On the other hand, three political prisoners started a hunger strike on 15 January demanding access to continue their education. Mahmoud Meraj, Ali Muhammad Al-Dhaif, and Abdullah Al-Aradi were among hundreds of Jaw inmates who took part in a 36-day mass hunger strike between August and September of last year to protest against dire conditions. One of their demands was being granted access to continue their education, while it is still not met.

## **6 Minors Joined the Detained List Over Participating in Peaceful Marches**

The Bahraini authorities have also continued to take at least one of those measures against citizens who participate in peaceful marches, it may summon, arrest, interrogate, impose a travel ban over expressing opinions. During January 2024, multiple citizens were subjected to summons. Ali Muhanna was summoned for investigation on the first of January over allegations of his participation in marches in mid-December. He was briefly arrested, and then released. On the second day of his release, he was summoned again. This time, Muhanna was threatened to be detained if not ending participation in any kind of marches, which he refused, before being released.

On 6 January, a group of six citizens were ordered for questioning. They are Abdulmajeed Abdulla, Abdul Nabi Al-Hawaj, Ali Hammam, Ali bin Nasser, Ali Al-Jaziri, and Sayed Saeed Isa.

Moreover, at least 6 minors were arrested during January, most over their participation in peaceful marches calling for the end of genocide in Palestine, such as the cases of Bassem Mohammed Al-Hallal and Jaafar Ali Sanqur. However, the case of Kassem Al-Samea differs. Kassem was arrested when he tried to cross into Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah, along with his mother. Kassem's family insisted that he has a health problem and he stays most of his time at home, unless something is necessary, he goes outside with a family member. The family wondered about the charge brought against him. The arrest of Kassem coincided with the anniversary of his brother's Abbas execution, along with Ali Al-Singace & Sami Mushaima on 15 January.



## **Saudi Arabia was Criticized Over its Human Rights Record During UPR**

Multiple countries criticized the Saudi human rights record during the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva that occurred on 22 January 2024.

Although the Kingdom tried to mention some “fraudulent” reforms, dozens of countries were aware of its continued human rights abuses.

The German delegation highlighted the serious restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, assembly and freedom of the press. However, the United States in addition to Australia mentioned the crimes occurring on the border against migrants.

Human Rights Watch had previously stated in a report that “Saudi border guards have killed at least hundreds of Ethiopian migrants and asylum seekers who tried to cross the Yemen-Saudi border between March 2022 and June 2023.”

The U.S. ambassador to the Human Rights Council, Michèle Taylor, asked Saudi authorities to “undertake a comprehensive, transparent investigation of all allegations that Saudi security forces are killing and abusing migrants crossing the Yemeni border, cease any abuses, ensure accountability for any abuses or violations and issue a public investigation report.”



## **Spanish Football Super Cup was Held in KSA as a Part of Sportwashing**

As on 10 January 2024, the Spanish Football Super Cup was held in Saudi Arabia, talking about the Kingdom's use of sportwashing popped up again.

Human Rights Watch emphasized that Saudi authorities have been laundering their reputation by hosting major sport events that attract widespread, positive media attention, while diverting it away from the hosts' abuses for years.

From its side, Amnesty took advantage of Rafael Nadal's joining the Saudi tennis federation, by calling him to talk about the Kingdom's human rights violations. The organization urged Nadal to speak out about the Saudi poor human rights record after it was announced he had signed a deal with the Saudi Tennis Federation (STF).

Peter Frankental, the economic affairs director of Amnesty International UK, said: "Rafa Nadal's new role is just the latest chapter in Saudi Arabia's relentless sportwashing operation. From tennis to football, golf and boxing, the Saudi authorities have spent billions in their efforts to rebrand the country as a sporting superpower and deflect attention from an appalling human rights record. Under the rule of Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi authorities have jailed dozens of peaceful activists, carried out record numbers of executions and brazenly covered up the grisly murder of Jamal Khashoggi."



## Yemeni Artifacts in Apollo Auction in London

The Yemeni archaeology expert Abdullah Mohsen revealed the sale of a substantial collection of rare Yemeni artifacts at the renowned Apollo auction in London. He explained that a bronze camel, a marble tombstone of a man, and a pair of gold pendant earrings were sold on 28 January 2024 in the Apollo auction after being transported out of Yemen.

Mohsen disclosed in a post on his X account that the auctioned assortment of archaeological treasures comprises items from diverse ancient Yemeni civilizations. The Yemeni activist and expert emphasized that the collection features three cast bronze standing camels from the 2nd century BCE. Each camel exhibits raised ears, a single hump, and a short tail, adorned with a corroded surface patina in varying shades of blue, green, red, and brown.

At the same time, Abdullah Mohsen warned of a hemispherical plate of antiquities from Yemen, with a thick rim and a domed frieze depicting two armored warriors, each wearing broad-scale armor and a helmet, shooting a bow at a griffon attacking a deer will be added on sale in an auction will be held next April. He added that the plate is from the third century BC.

The phenomenon of smuggling Yemen antiquities is not recent. Mohsen has documented thousand of antiquities being displayed in multiple counties around the world.