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Bahrain

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Political Prisoners Are Not
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BAHRAIN

**HUNGER STRIRKE
FOR DIGNITY**

A Silent Protest: The Power of Hunger Strike

Although Jaw Prison's warden was changed, no changes were recorded regarding prisoners' treatment. The same approach of violating political prisoners rights was kept. Political prisoners are deprived access to basic human rights, such as communication with their families and outside world, practicing religious rituals, etc.

In early February, prisoners housed in Jaw prison building 3 were banned from making phone calls, and their family visits were abruptly canceled as a punitive measure for marking a religious occasion. Families arriving for scheduled visits were informed that they would not be permitted to see their loved ones.

The punishment widens to include storming the cells, transforming a number of prisoners to solitary confinement, and carrying out intrusive cell searches. They also had their religious books confiscated and are being denied access to the prison courtyard.

The prisoners responded to the ongoing violation with their peaceful weapon, "hunger strike." A group following another entered the strike until hundreds joined protesting against inhumane conditions and abusive practices. Most of the political prisoners housed in buildings 2 and 3, along with several death row inmates, joined the strike.

On 19 February, the prisoner Mohammad Abdulhadi Al-Ojaimi fainted as a result of his hunger strike. He was taken to the prison clinic, where he was treated for severely low blood sugar. Moreover, on 22 February, three prisoners, Ali Nasser, Ali Al-Tawil, and Jaafar

Radhi, suffered severe drops in their blood sugar. They were warned that their worsening condition could be life-threatening.

The hunger strike was suspended on 24 February after authorities agreed to address the demands of the political prisoners. They were assured that they would be permitted to gather for communal prayers and that the situation of isolated prisoners would be reviewed. Additionally, the restrictions on their access to the prison courtyard and communication with family members were promised to be reconsidered.

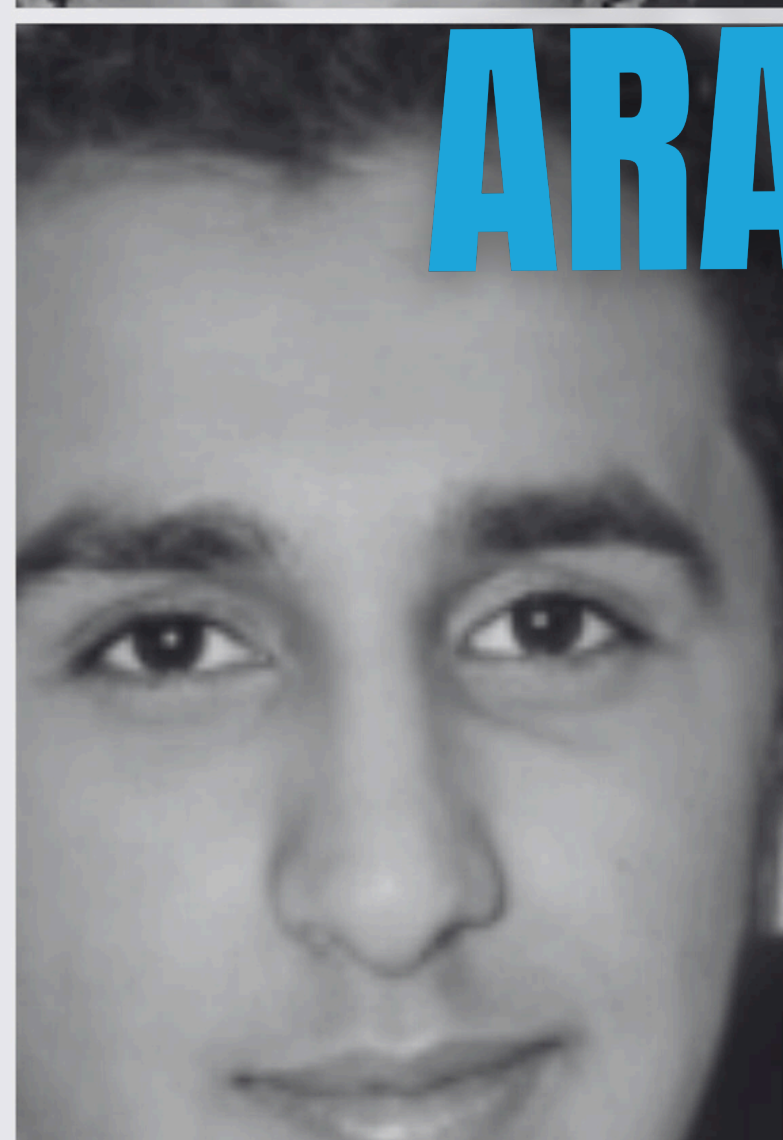
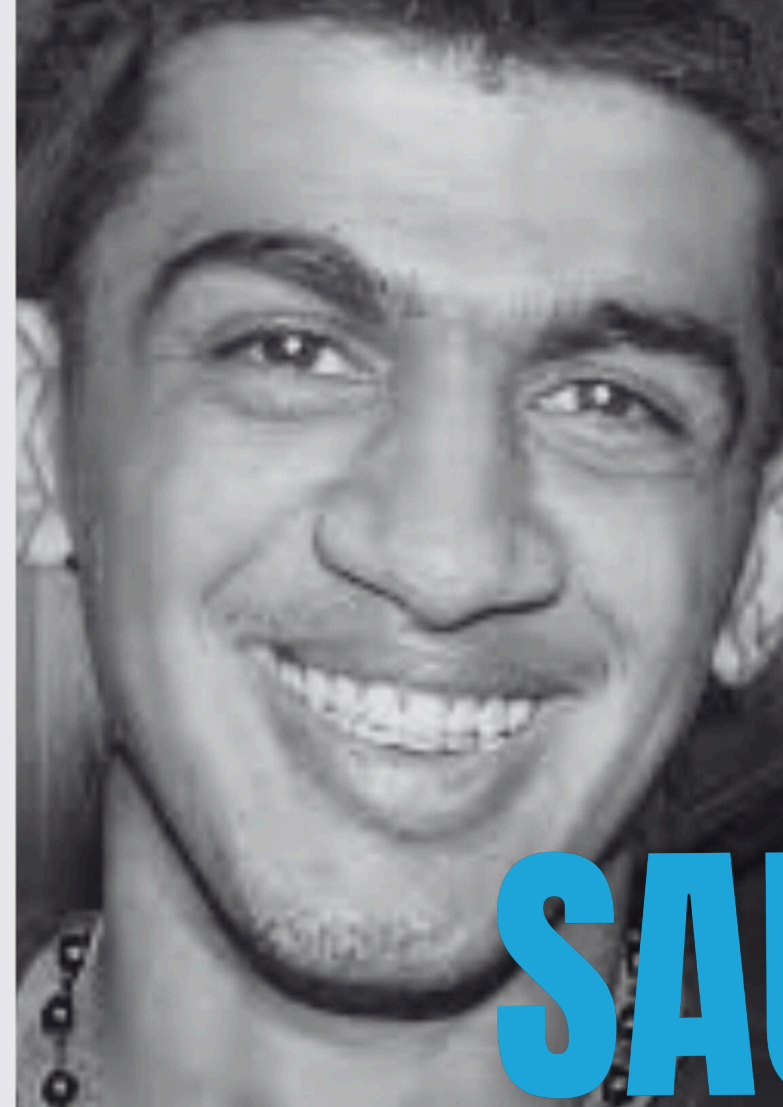
Ongoing Struggle for Human Rights: 15 Years of Authorities' Intransigence

On 14 February, citizens of Bahrain commemorated the 15th anniversary of the peaceful uprising by engaging in non-violent marches and demonstrations. Protests occurred in various locations, including Manama, Duraz, Sitra, Karzkan, and Musala, among others. More than a dozen participants were taken into custody during these events.

This anniversary coincides with the continued imprisonment of numerous political prisoners. Additionally, notable peaceful activists such as Sheikh Ali Salman and Hasan Mushaima, along with human rights advocates like Abdulhadi Al Khawaja and Abduljalil Al Singace, are still serving lengthy sentences.

Brain Dooley of Human Rights First said that Bahrain locked itself into the past by jailing those men in 2011 and keeping them there

until now. He added that the kingdom's image is largely stuck back in 2011, partly because the men ruling the country and responsible for the crackdown then are still in power. The king is still the king, his son is still the crown prince (and is now also the unelected prime minister).



SAUDI ARABIA

UN Experts: Five Individual Arrest is Illegal

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention reviewed the cases of five individuals—Jalal Labbad, Jawad Qureiris, Abdullah Al-Derazi, Yusuf Al-Manasif, and Hassan Al-Faraj—who received death sentences in Saudi Arabia for actions allegedly committed during their minority. The group determined that their detention was arbitrary, lacking a legal foundation, stemming from their exercise of rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and infringing upon their right to a fair trial. Furthermore, the UN experts concluded that their deprivation of liberty was motivated by their affiliation with the Shia minority, indicating that the actions taken against them were discriminatory.

In assessing the legality of the arrests, the Working Group noted that the five minors were not presented with arrest warrants and were denied the opportunity to promptly contest the legality of their detention in court. The experts also observed that the five endured incommunicado detention and extended periods of solitary confinement, which violated Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Additionally, the group pointed out that three of the individuals faced charges and sentences under the 2014 Counter-terrorism Law, which is criticized for its lack of legal clarity and its vague, expansive definition of terrorist offenses.

Beyond Release: Former Political Prisoners Are Not Free

Saudi Arabia has quietly increased its efforts to release political prisoners in recent weeks after their sentences ended as a part of whitewashing its image. However, dozens are still stuck behind bars with unfair trials.

Salma Al-Shehab was released on 10 February after serving a 4-year imprisonment sentence. Despite her release, she continues to face restrictions, as she is prohibited from traveling for an additional four years.

In February, other political prisoners were also released, including Mansour Al-Rokiba, Zainab Al-Rabea, Asad Al-Ghamdi, Ahmad Al-Bidawi, and Abdulaziz Al-Oda. While their release represents a positive development, it remains insufficient, as they endured significant violations following their unjust trials merely for voicing their opinions. They deserve compensation for their suffering, and those responsible for infringing upon their rights must be held accountable.