

2024

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT Bahrain

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Executive Summary

In 2024, Bahrain continues to face significant human rights challenges, marked by severe violations, ongoing concerns, and limited progress.

Severe violations include the ongoing practice of arbitrary detention by the Bahraini government. Political dissidents, human rights defenders, and opposition leaders remain imprisoned, with over 800 political prisoners still incarcerated despite a royal pardon in April 2024, which saw the release of more than 650 individuals. Prominent figures from the 2011 protests continue to be held, reflecting the government's persistent repression of political dissent.

Torture and ill-treatment, though less frequently reported, are still a significant issue. In Jau Prison, where conditions are particularly dire, detainees including human rights activists like Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja face harsh treatment. Allegations include inadequate medical care, prolonged solitary confinement, and denial of basic rights. While the number of reports may have declined, the remaining cases highlight the ongoing problems within Bahrain's prison system.

The death penalty remains a major concern in Bahrain, with 26 individuals currently on death row, many convicted in unfair trials reportedly involving torture. The execution of six individuals since 2017 illustrates the ongoing severity of this issue. Freedom of expression is also heavily restricted, with the government continuing to prosecute critics, particularly those expressing dissent on social media. Freedom of assembly is severely curtailed, and peaceful protests are often met with force.

Despite these violations, there has been some progress. The royal pardon in April 2024 was a significant, though limited, shift in government policy. The release of over 650 political prisoners was a positive step, but the continued imprisonment of key figures from the 2011 protests shows that further reforms are necessary. In response to a hunger strike by Shia prisoners protesting their treatment, authorities agreed to improve prison conditions, allowing more time outside cells and group prayers, marking a small but important improvement.

The Bahraini government has also implemented a National Human Rights Plan (2022-2026) aimed at improving human rights protections. However, the effectiveness of the National Institution for Human Rights remains in question. Critics argue that the institution lacks the independence necessary to fully address key recommendations from international bodies, raising concerns about its credibility.

Areas of ongoing concern include political repression, with laws still in place that prevent former opposition members from participating in politics, thereby stifling democratic expression. The independence and effectiveness of human rights institutions remain problematic, with calls for reforms to strengthen their credibility and adherence to international standards. Additionally, migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, continue to face exploitation and are deprived of basic labor protections, such as a minimum wage.

Recommendations for the Bahraini government include ending the practice of arbitrary detention and unconditionally releasing individuals imprisoned for exercising their rights to free expression and assembly. Improving prison conditions and providing adequate medical care, particularly for those with serious health issues, is also essential. Reforming human rights institutions to enhance their independence and effectiveness would further align Bahrain with international standards.

International bodies are encouraged to increase their scrutiny of Bahrain's human rights record and hold the government accountable through diplomatic channels and public statements. Supporting local civil society organizations and activists working to promote and protect human rights is also critical.

Civil society organizations should continue to advocate for legislative and policy reforms that protect human rights and ensure accountability for violations. Raising awareness of ongoing abuses and mobilizing international support for Bahraini activists and prisoners remains an essential part of the effort to bring about meaningful change.

In conclusion, while there have been some positive developments in Bahrain's human rights landscape, significant violations persist. It will require sustained efforts from both domestic and international actors to foster genuine reform and accountability.

Methodology

The methodology used in collecting data for human rights reports on Bahrain involves a combination of various data collection methods, including interviews, field research, and analysis of reports from local and international NGOs. Here are the key components of the methodology:

Sources of Information

1. Interviews:

Human rights organizations conduct interviews with victims of human rights abuses, witnesses, and activists. These interviews are crucial for gathering firsthand accounts of abuses such as torture, arbitrary detention, and violations of freedom of expression.

2. Field Research:

Researchers often engage in field research to observe conditions in detention facilities, attend trials, and monitor protests. This on-the-ground approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the human rights situation.

3. Reports from NGOs:

Data is also collected from reports published by local and international NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. These organizations compile extensive documentation on human rights violations, often based on their own investigations and findings.

4. Official Documents:

Analysis of legal documents, court records, and government reports provides context and evidence regarding the treatment of detainees and the legal framework surrounding human rights in Bahrain.

Data Collection Methods

Surveys and Questionnaires:

Some reports may include surveys or questionnaires distributed to affected populations to quantify experiences of abuse or discrimination.

Monitoring of Social Media and Online Activity:

Given the restrictions on freedom of expression, researchers monitor social media and online activities to gather information about public sentiment and instances of government repression.

Collaboration with Local Activists:

Many reports rely on the insights and data provided by local human rights activists who have a deeper understanding of the context and can navigate the risks associated with documenting abuses.

Limitations and Challenges

1. Restricted Access:

Foreign journalists and independent human rights organizations often face significant barriers to accessing Bahrain. The government restricts entry and monitors the activities of those who do gain access, which limits the ability to conduct comprehensive field research[1][3].

2. Fear of Retaliation:

Individuals who provide information or participate in interviews may fear retaliation from the government, which can lead to underreporting of abuses and reluctance to speak out.

3. Government Censorship:

The Bahraini government employs censorship and surveillance tactics to control the narrative around human rights, making it difficult for researchers to obtain accurate and comprehensive data[2][5].

4. Legal and Political Repression:

The political environment in Bahrain is highly repressive, with laws that criminalize dissent and restrict freedom of assembly. This environment complicates the collection of data and the ability to conduct open interviews or surveys[3][4].

In summary, the methodology for collecting data on human rights in Bahrain is multifaceted, relying on interviews, field research, and NGO reports, while facing significant challenges such as restricted access and government repression. These factors can impact the completeness and accuracy of the information gathered.

Citations:

- [1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Bahrain
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- [5] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/bahrain>
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- [7] <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/bahrain/>
- [8] <https://www.mofa.gov.bh/en/national-human-rights-reports>

Human Rights Overview

The human rights situation in Bahrain in 2024 remains critical, characterized by ongoing political repression, limited civil liberties, and significant social challenges. This overview discusses the political, economic, and social contexts affecting human rights, highlighting significant events that have shaped the landscape.

Political Context

Bahrain's political environment continues to be dominated by repression against dissent and opposition. The government maintains strict control over political expression, assembly, and association. Elections are heavily manipulated, with opposition voices systematically excluded from the political process. Laws introduced in 2018, known as "political isolation laws," prevent former opposition members from participating in politics, effectively silencing dissenting voices[4].

Despite some gestures towards reform, such as the royal pardon in April 2024 that saw over 650 political prisoners released, many prominent figures from the 2011 pro-democracy protests remain incarcerated. Reports indicate that approximately 550 political prisoners are still detained, and the government continues to prosecute critics and activists, often under dubious legal circumstances[1][2].

Economic Context

Economically, Bahrain faces challenges that intersect with human rights issues. The country has been grappling with the effects of climate change, which has exacerbated social inequalities. For instance, domestic workers, who often lack adequate legal protections, are subject to low wages and poor working conditions. In July 2023, a proposed legal cap on domestic workers' salaries was set at BHD 120 (USD 320) per month, reflecting a lack of commitment to fair labor practices[2].

The government has also been criticized for its failure to address environmental issues, being one of the highest CO2 emitters per capita globally, and not implementing sufficient protections for outdoor workers against extreme heat [2].

Social Context

Socially, Bahrain's population continues to experience restrictions on freedoms, particularly among the Shia majority, who face discrimination and repression. Authorities have been known to block Shia Muslims from accessing places of worship, reflecting ongoing sectarian tensions[2][4].

The prison conditions for political detainees have drawn international condemnation, with reports of torture and inadequate medical care persisting. Although reports of torture have declined, the treatment of prisoners remains a significant concern, with many prisoners subjected to harsh conditions and punitive measures for protesting their treatment[2][4].

Significant Events

Several key events have influenced the human rights landscape in Bahrain in 2024:

Royal Pardon:

On April 8, 2024, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a royal pardon that released over 650 political prisoners, marking a notable shift in state policy. However, many significant figures from the 2011 protests remain imprisoned[1].

International Relations:

Bahrain's international relations, particularly with the United States and the United Kingdom, have continued to evolve. In September 2023, agreements were signed to enhance cooperation in various sectors, despite ongoing human rights abuses. Human rights organizations have urged these nations to leverage their diplomatic ties to advocate for the release of political prisoners[4][5].

Continued Repression:

Throughout 2024, the Bahraini government has continued to harass and prosecute critics, with numerous reports of arrests and detentions for peaceful expressions of dissent. This includes the detention of activists and clerics for their public statements and sermons[2][4].

In summary, the human rights situation in Bahrain in 2024 is marked by ongoing repression, limited political freedoms, and social inequalities. While some reforms have been attempted, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding the treatment of political prisoners and the rights of marginalized communities. The international community continues to monitor these developments, advocating for improved human rights practices in the country.

Citations:

[1]

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/30/bahrain-joint-letter-human-rights-situation-member-and-observer-states-united>

[2]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/bahrain/report-bahrain>

[3] <https://www.mofa.gov.bh/en/national-plan-2022-2026>

[4] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/bahrain>

[5] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/bahrain>

[6] <https://birdbh.org>

[7] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/bahrain>

[8] <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bahrain/freedom-world/2024>

Rights of Specific Groups

The human rights conditions for specific groups in Bahrain during 2024 reveal a complex landscape marked by both progress and ongoing challenges. This examination focuses on women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities, highlighting notable rights violations, legal protections, and advancements.

Women's Rights

In 2024, Bahrain made strides in women's rights through legislative reforms, particularly with amendments to Bahrain Law No. 36/2012, which enhanced gender equality in the workplace. This law ensures equal entitlements for men and women, including provisions for paid maternity leave and protections against dismissal due to marriage or maternity leave[4][5]. However, significant issues persist under the unified 2017 Family Law, which mandates that women must obey their husbands and restricts their ability to leave the marital home without a "legitimate excuse." Women also face challenges in matters of child custody and nationality rights, as they cannot confer their nationality to children born to non-Bahraini fathers[3].

Despite these legal advancements, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concerns about the shrinking space for women human rights defenders and reported instances of intimidation and violence against them. Additionally, the legal framework still allows for exemptions in rape cases if the perpetrator marries the victim, a provision that has drawn criticism from international bodies[3][5].

Children's Rights

Child marriage remains a significant concern in Bahrain, with national laws permitting girls to marry at 16, and even younger with court approval. This practice is exacerbated by socio-economic factors, including poverty and lack of education, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Although Bahrain has ratified international treaties aimed at eliminating child marriage, the existing legal framework does not align with these commitments, leaving girls vulnerable to exploitation[6].

LGBTQ+ Rights

The situation for LGBTQ+ individuals in Bahrain is precarious, characterized by legal ambiguity and social stigma. While same-sex sexual activity was decriminalized in 1976, the absence of explicit legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity leaves LGBTQ+ individuals vulnerable to harassment and arrest under vague laws against "indecentcy" and "immorality"[1][3][8].

In a notable incident in February 2024, the Ministry of Education initiated an investigation into a private school following a performance by students that included same-sex proposals, reflecting the societal backlash against LGBTQ+ expressions[1]. This incident underscores the entrenched homophobia in Bahraini society, where public sentiment remains largely

negative towards LGBTQ+ rights, despite a recent legal change allowing for same-sex marriage[7].

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Bahrain's ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Shiite population, continue to face discrimination and marginalization. The government has been criticized for its treatment of opposition voices and activists, many of whom belong to the Shiite community. Reports indicate that political dissent is met with repression, including imprisonment and torture, particularly for those involved in the 2011 pro-democracy protests[3][4].

In 2024, a case involving a student from the Achomi ethnic minority highlighted issues of cultural sensitivity and community backlash against minority expressions, raising questions about the treatment of such groups in Bahrain[1].

Conclusion

In summary, while Bahrain has made some legislative progress regarding women's rights and has recently recognized same-sex marriage, substantial challenges remain for women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities. The legal frameworks often fail to provide adequate protection, and societal attitudes continue to pose significant barriers to the realization of human rights for these groups. Continued advocacy and reform are essential to address these issues effectively.

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- [1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Bahrain
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- [6] <https://www.ecdhr.org/child-marriage-in-bahrain/>
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- [8] <https://database.ilga.org/bahrain-lgbti>

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

In 2024, Bahrain continues to experience considerable challenges in ensuring the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights, especially concerning the right to health, education, and adequate housing. Despite some governmental reforms, systemic discrimination against marginalized groups, including the Shi'a community, women, and migrant workers, remains a significant obstacle to fully achieving these rights.

Right to Health

Bahrain's healthcare system, while developed, is marked by disparities largely influenced by sectarian and socioeconomic differences. The Shi'a community often faces discrimination, experiencing restricted access to healthcare services, including fewer facilities and reports of preferential treatment for Sunni citizens. These inequalities were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the existing disparity in health outcomes among different groups .

Although the government has launched initiatives such as opening health clinics in underserved regions, these efforts are hampered by persistent political and social discrimination. Many Shi'a citizens may avoid seeking medical help due to fears of bias or mistreatment .

Right to Education

Education in Bahrain is free at the primary and secondary levels, and the government has made efforts to improve access to higher education. However, there are significant barriers for women and Shi'a students. Women, while comprising a large part of the student body, often face societal challenges that restrict their full participation in education and career opportunities. Similarly, Shi'a students are subjected to discrimination, which affects their academic success and access to scholarships or higher-level educational opportunities .

The government's educational reforms have not effectively addressed these inequalities. Shi'a students are still underrepresented in higher education, with limited access to leadership roles and academic institutions .

Right to Adequate Housing

Bahrain's housing sector is under strain, especially for low- and middle-income households. Although the government has recognized the housing shortage and initiated various programs to address it, many of these initiatives are delayed or poorly implemented. Sunni citizens often benefit more from housing programs, reflecting broader patterns of sectarian discrimination .

Additionally, the reduction of government subsidies on essential goods has worsened the financial strain on many families, making it increasingly difficult for low-income households to secure adequate housing. These economic challenges, coupled with rising living costs due to austerity measures, have further deepened Bahrain's housing crisis .

Conclusion

In summary, despite some government efforts to promote economic, social, and cultural rights, significant challenges persist. Discrimination, particularly against the Shi'a community, continues to affect access to healthcare, education, and housing. For meaningful progress, comprehensive reforms that address these systemic inequalities and promote equity for all citizens are critical.

Citations:

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Refugees and Migrants

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Bahrain

Bahrain is not a primary destination for refugees and asylum seekers, with limited numbers present in the country, mainly from Syria, Iraq, and Yemen[1]. The lack of a legal framework for refugee protection poses significant challenges. Bahrain is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, and as a result, asylum seekers face barriers in accessing fair procedures and securing legal status[1].

Migrant Workers in Bahrain

Migrant workers make up a large portion of Bahrain's workforce. As of 2024, about 1.7 million migrants live in Bahrain, representing around 63% of the total workforce[5]. The majority of these workers come from South Asian and Southeast Asian countries, including India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka[5].

Kafala System

Bahrain operates under the kafala (sponsorship) system, which ties migrant workers' visas to their employers. This restricts workers' ability to change jobs or leave the country without their employer's consent. Workers who leave their employer without permission can be charged with "absconding," facing fines, detention, or deportation[4].

Living and Working Conditions

Migrant workers in Bahrain often face harsh living and working conditions, including excessive working hours, lack of rest days, and substandard housing. Common issues include:

- Withholding of wages by employers
- Passport confiscation
- Overcrowded and unsanitary accommodations
- Limited access to healthcare and essential services[5]

Exploitation and Abuse

Migrant workers, particularly those in domestic roles, are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuse, including:

- Physical, sexual, and psychological abuse
- Forced labor
- Debt bondage and human trafficking for sexual exploitation[8]

Government Response

The Bahraini government has initiated steps to combat exploitation, including:

- Opening shelters for abused migrant workers and trafficking victims
- Implementing a National Plan of Action to combat human trafficking since 2002
- Training officials of the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) to improve the identification and protection of vulnerable workers[5]

However, significant issues remain. The kafala system continues to restrict workers' rights, and domestic workers are excluded from certain labor protections[4].

International Response

International organizations have repeatedly called on Bahrain to improve its treatment of migrant workers and address human rights concerns. Human rights groups urged the White House to address the case of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, a prominent human rights activist in Bahrain, reflecting broader concerns over Bahrain's human rights record[4]. Additionally, the UK has faced criticism for supporting reform programs in Bahrain through the Gulf Strategy Fund, which is linked to institutions accused of human rights violations[4].

Conclusion

While Bahrain has taken steps to address the exploitation of migrant workers, significant challenges remain. The kafala system continues to be a significant obstacle to migrant workers' freedom and rights. Comprehensive reforms are necessary to improve conditions for these workers, particularly those in domestic roles who remain unprotected by labor laws.

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- [8] U.S. Department of State. (2024). 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Bahrain. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/bahrain/>

Legal Framework and Accountability

Bahrain's International Relations and Human Rights in 2024

In 2024, Bahrain continued to engage with various international bodies and organizations on human rights issues, though concerns remained about the country's domestic human rights record.

Engagement with the UN and Other International Organizations

- Bahrain held its 7th Human Rights Dialogue with the European Union in Brussels in October 2023, discussing topics such as freedom of expression, rule of law, and the death penalty. The EU welcomed progress on women's rights and interfaith dialogue in Bahrain[1].
- In May 2024, ahead of the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council, over 30 civil society organizations urged member states to raise concerns about Bahrain's human rights situation, particularly the arbitrary detention of activists and opposition leaders[2][4].
- Bahrain presented its second periodic report on human rights to the Arab Charter Committee in 2024, led by Ambassador Dr. Yousif Abdulkarim Bucheeri[8].
- During the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2024, 80 of 92 member states praised Bahrain's endorsement of the National Plan for Human Rights and its achievements in areas such as alternative sentencing and legislative reforms[3].

International Pressure and Sanctions

- In September 2023, Bahrain's crown prince and prime minister signed the Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA) with the United States, aimed at enhancing cooperation in defense, security, trade, and investment. However, several human rights organizations urged the White House to push for the release of activist Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja[5].
-
- The UK government continues to fund Bahrain-led reform and capacity-building programs for agencies involved in human rights violations through the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF), despite concerns raised by human rights groups[5].

Impact on Domestic Human Rights Situation

- While Bahrain has made some progress, such as the release of over 650 political prisoners in a royal pardon in April 2024, an estimated 550 political prisoners remain behind bars, and many activists and opposition leaders continue to face arbitrary detention[2][4].
-
- Restrictions on expression, assembly, and association persist, with many opposition members, activists, bloggers, and human rights defenders imprisoned for their roles in the 2011 protests and recent political activism[5].
-
- As of September 2023, 26 individuals remain on death row in Bahrain, with their appeals exhausted. Since 2017, Bahrain has executed six people[5].

In conclusion, while Bahrain has engaged with international bodies on human rights issues and made some reforms, significant concerns remain about the country's domestic human rights situation, particularly regarding the arbitrary detention of activists and opposition leaders, restrictions on civil liberties, and the use of the death penalty.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings from 2024 regarding the human rights situation in Bahrain, the following specific recommendations are proposed to the government of Bahrain, international bodies, and civil society organizations. These recommendations aim to address the identified human rights violations and promote accountability and reform.

Recommendations to the Government of Bahrain

1. Immediate Release of Political Prisoners:

Unconditionally release all individuals imprisoned solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association. This includes high-profile political prisoners such as Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace and Hassan Mushaima, who have been unjustly detained for over a decade^{[1][4]}.

2. End Arbitrary Detention Practices:

Cease the use of arbitrary detention and ensure that all legal proceedings comply with international fair trial standards. This includes retrials for individuals convicted under unfair conditions, particularly those sentenced to death based on coerced confessions^{[1^][4^]}.

3. Reform Political Isolation Laws:

Repeal the political isolation laws enacted in 2018 that prevent former opposition members from participating in public life. This will restore the political rights of affected individuals and promote a more inclusive political environment^[4].

4. Guarantee Freedom of Expression and Assembly:

Lift restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Allow peaceful protests and ensure that civil society organizations can operate without fear of reprisal. This includes providing access to independent media and foreign journalists^{[1][4][5]}.

5. Address Torture and Ill-treatment:

Investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment within the penal system. Establish independent oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses within detention facilities^{[4][5]}.

6. Healthcare Access for Prisoners:

Ensure that all prisoners, particularly political prisoners, have access to adequate medical care and are treated humanely. This includes addressing the health needs of those with chronic conditions and ensuring timely medical treatment^{[3][4]}.

Recommendations to International Bodies

1. Raise Concerns at International Forums:

Use platforms such as the United Nations Human Rights Council to publicly raise concerns about the human rights situation in Bahrain. Advocate for the immediate release of political prisoners and address individual cases of human rights defenders who remain detained[1][4].

2. Impose Targeted Sanctions:

Consider imposing targeted sanctions against Bahraini officials responsible for human rights violations, particularly those involved in the arbitrary detention and torture of political prisoners[2][4].

3. Support Civil Society Initiatives:

Provide support to Bahraini civil society organizations and human rights defenders through funding, capacity-building initiatives, and advocacy for their protection against government repression[4][5].

4. Monitor Human Rights Developments:

Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring of human rights developments in Bahrain, ensuring that violations are documented and reported to the international community[1][4].

Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations

1. Advocate for Human Rights Reforms:

Engage in advocacy campaigns that highlight the plight of political prisoners and the need for systemic reforms in Bahrain's legal and political framework. Collaborate with international organizations to amplify these messages[1][3].

2. Document Human Rights Violations:

Continue to document and report on human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions, torture, and restrictions on freedoms. This information is crucial for raising awareness and pushing for accountability[4][5].

3. Support Victims of Human Rights Violations:

Provide legal and psychological support to victims of human rights abuses, particularly those who have been released from detention. This support is essential for their reintegration into society[1][3].

4. Engage in International Advocacy:

Work with international human rights organizations to lobby foreign governments to take a stronger stance on Bahrain's human rights violations, emphasizing the need for accountability and reform[1][4].

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to improving the human rights situation in Bahrain and fostering a more just and equitable society.

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- [3]: [Article 19 - Bahrain Formula One](<https://www.article19.org/resources/bahrain-formula-one-must-investigate-human-rights-violations/>)
- [4]: [Human Rights Watch - World Report 2024](<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/bahrain>)
- [5]: [Amnesty International](<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/bahrain/>)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the human rights report on Bahrain for 2024 underscores a persistent and troubling human rights crisis marked by significant challenges to fundamental freedoms. The report reveals that, despite minor reform gestures, the core issues of political repression and arbitrary detention remain severe. The Bahraini government's restrictive measures against freedom of expression, assembly, and association continue to suppress dissent, with many political activists and opposition figures still imprisoned under harsh conditions. The exclusion of prominent figures from recent pardons and ongoing reports of torture and medical neglect highlight the depth of the problem.

Judicial injustices further exacerbate the situation, with unfair trials and coerced confessions leading to unjust convictions and a troubling death row of 26 individuals facing imminent execution. Systematic discrimination against the Shia majority, including targeted actions against Shia clerics and restrictions on religious practices, compounds these concerns.

The report calls for sustained international scrutiny and action, urging global leaders and human rights organizations to persist in advocating for the unconditional release of political prisoners and addressing Bahrain's human rights abuses in international forums. The importance of continued monitoring and intervention cannot be overstated, as it is vital to ensure that fundamental rights are respected and that all citizens' voices are heard. Persistent advocacy and pressure are crucial to drive meaningful change and foster an environment where human rights are upheld and protected for all Bahrainis.

Appendices

Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues

1. Arbitrary Detention and Imprisonment

- Over 550 political prisoners remain incarcerated as of April 2024, despite a royal pardon that released more than 650 individuals.
- 26b individuals are currently on death row, with many facing allegations of torture and unfair trials.

2. Torture and Ill-treatment

- While there has been a reported decline in torture and ill-treatment cases, incidents persist, particularly in detention facilities like Jaw Prison, where inmates have faced punitive measures and inadequate medical care.

3. Freedom of Expression

- Numerous activists, bloggers, and journalists have been imprisoned for their expression. Specific cases, such as the imprisonment of journalists like Ali Mearaj and Hassan Qambar, highlight ongoing repression.

4. Religious Freedom

- The Shia majority continues to face discrimination, including restrictions on religious gatherings and the detention of clerics for their sermons that criticize government policies.

5. Political Repression

- Political opposition remains systematically excluded from elections, and laws enacted in 2018 have prevented former opposition members from participating in political processes.

Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms

Arbitrary Detention:

The arrest or confinement of individuals without legal justification or due process.

Torture:

Severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, intentionally inflicted on a person to obtain information or as punishment.

Political Prisoner:

An individual imprisoned for their political beliefs or actions, often without fair trial processes.

Freedom of Expression:

The right to express one's opinions and ideas without fear of government retaliation or censorship.

Death Penalty:

A legal penalty where a person is sentenced to death by the state as punishment for a crime.