



**Statement by the NIHR on the 2016 US Annual Report on Religious Freedom
and US Secretary of State's Statement on Religious Freedom in the Kingdom
of Bahrain**

Manama on August 16, 2017

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) reviewed the annual report on international religious freedoms of 2016 issued by the United States of America and the statement made by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Rex Tillerson, noting that the report and statement included unsubstantiated allegations from unreliable sources on religious freedom in the Kingdoms in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In this context, the NHRI in the Kingdom of Bahrain would like to make a number of observations as follows:

- I. In its monitoring of the human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the NIHR has not observed any kind of targeting of a particular religious sect or community based on religion or belief in the Kingdom.
- II. The NIHR considers that both the report and the statement are baseless because they relied on unreliable sources, in addition to being contrary to the report of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom on Human Rights and Democracy, 2016, Bahrain, which described Bahrain as the most advanced country in the region in the area of human rights reforms.
- III. Although the US Embassy in the Kingdom has communicated with the NIHR, just like previous years, no religious freedom issues have been

addressed and no queries have been made about the religious freedoms issue raised in the report.

The NIHR therefore hopes that the author of the report will be committed in the future to professionalism and be keen on communicating with the independent authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in particular the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), which is independent of the executive authority and accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and whose work is conformity with the Paris Principles. The aim is to verify the relevant allegations before they are included in any report, as the NIHR is fully prepared to cooperate in this regard.