

Statement by NIHR on the Announced Visit to the Women's Reformation and Rehabilitation Center in Isa Town

Manama on October 1, 2018

Following what has been published in the media and social media, and the complaints received by a number of international organizations of allegations of violations of the rights of three of a total of 205 inmates of the Women's Reformation and Rehabilitation Center (WRRC) in Isa town, which revolved around the Restrictions they face on receiving medical care, practicing religious rites and other rights related to visits and telephone calls, the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) made two announced visits to the WRRC in Isa town, the most recent of which was on Sunday 30 September 2018, in light of NIHR's human rights duty and jurisdiction to follow-up on the human rights situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The delegation of the NIHR reviewed the prisoners' health file, telephone calls and visits file, disciplinary sanctions file and the judgments against them, in a completely transparent and independent manner, where the questions and queries were adequately answered regarding the allegations, supported by audio and visual recordings at the Center. In addition, the delegation met with the prisoners individually, listened to their statements and verified the allegations made about them, each individually without the presence of alternate Center staff.

The NIHR's delegation found that the prisoners' complaints that they were not allowed to practice their religious rites were incorrect and contrary to reality, as they were allowed to practice and express religious rites in accordance with the procedures of WRRC's Executive Regulation, which preserves the security and safety of all the members of the Center, including staff and prisoners. This was evident from the WRRC's video records, where the NIHR's delegation reviewed the practice by other women prisoners of their religious rituals freely.

With regard to the alleged mistreatment of a prisoner by the WRRC staff on 16 September 2018, the NIHR's delegation reviewed the video records about how the staff treated this prisoner. It was evident that the treatment was within the limitations of the legal use of force, which ensures preventing the prisoner from causing any harm to herself or others.

The NIHR's delegation also reviewed the system of visits, calls and additional privileges that the prisoners claimed to be deprived from, which turned out to be in compliance with the WRRC's Executive Regulation, and the basic rights to visits and calls were carried out according to the system without any deprivation or arbitrariness.

During the meeting of the NIHR's delegation with the prisoners individually, we received some observations regarding the health care and daily life of the prisoners, which were directly referred in full detail to the competent authority in the WRRC's administration, in order to preserve the prisoners' privacy, immediately after the meeting with the prisoners.

The NIHR's delegation also urged the prisoners to actively cooperate with the WRRC's administration in order to upgrade the reformation and rehabilitation process culturally and socially, and respect its rules, in order to enable them to make maximum use of the social cultural and rehabilitation programs, as while their presence in the Center necessitates their full enjoyment of their rights, they must also fulfill their obligations.

Finally, the NIHR's delegation urged the concerned prisoners to directly communicate with the NIHR via the toll-free hotline (80001144) or through personal attendance of their representatives, which will enable the NIHR to carry out its assigned role in a professional method pursuant to the relevant regulations and resolutions.