



Statement by NIHR on The United Nations' (UN) International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Manama, 26 June 2018

On 26 June, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the International Day in Support for Victims of Torture with the aim of the total elimination of torture and the effective implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT). Torture is a crime under the International Law. It is completely prohibited under all relevant instruments and cannot be justified under any circumstances. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment defines torture as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him/her or a third person information or a confession, punishing him/her for an act her/she or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him/her or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions".

The NIHR takes this opportunity to pay tribute to Bahrain's outstanding achievements in the area of combating torture under the Reform Project of His Majesty the King, may Allah protect him, as Article (19-d) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain stipulates that: "No person shall be subjected to physical or mental torture, or inducement, or undignified treatment, and the penalty for so doing shall be specified by law. Any statement or confession proved to have been made under torture, inducement, or such treatment, or the threat thereof, shall be null and void". Moreover, the Kingdom of Bahrain has acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) as per the Decree-Law No. (4) of 1998, as an indication of its support for human rights, which is placed within the policy aimed to activate international instruments at the national level, considering that the act of torture is a crime against human dignity, which must be completely prevented, opposed or eliminated. It also established the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Committee (PDRC) as an effective national mechanism.

It should be noted that the NIHR continuously makes a number of announced and unannounced field visits to Correction Institutions and Detention Centers, in order to monitor human rights situation, within the framework of its terms of reference as per the Law No. (26) of 2014 amended by the Decree-Law No. (20) of 2016 on the incorporation of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), which granted it more powers in promoting and protecting human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In this sense, the

NIHR stresses that there is no systematic torture policy in Bahrain, since the NIHR, with all transparency, deals seriously with the reports of human rights situations, whether national or regional, believing in the importance of respect for human rights and public freedoms. It also responds and interacts with the Special Investigation Unit of the Public Prosecutor's Office as a specialized and independent judicial unit to investigate the allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The NIHR affirms that it works with its broad mandate confirmed by its Incorporation Law as per the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions to pursue compliance with the international conventions and treaties ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain, with a view to develop ways to deal responsibly with all the issues related to combating torture and contribute effectively to the efforts exerted by national and regional mechanisms.