



Statement by National Institution for Human Rights to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Human Rights and Democracy Report - 2016

Manama, 27 July 2017

The NIHR welcomes the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Human Rights and Democracy Report - 2016 about the Kingdom of Bahrain, which described Bahrain as the most progressive country in the region in relation to human rights reforms.

NIHR also welcomes the British Government appreciation of establishing important Human Rights and oversight institutions such as the NIHR, Ombudsmen, Prisoner and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) and Special Investigation Unit (SIU), to work as safeguarding, protecting and promoting human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Meanwhile NIHR appreciates the technical assistance rendered by the British Government. It hopes that such assistance would increase for NIHR, during the current fiscal year.

On the issues raised by the report, NIHR would comment on the following:

Case of Mr. Nabeel Rajab

As a citizen of Bahrain Mr. Nabeel Rajab's case was followed closely by NIHR, In fact commissioners of NIHR attended his trial regarding the case of "Broadcasting news, statements and false rumors about the internal situation in Bahrain through the social networking services (Twitter)"

NIHR attendance was to observe and monitor the proceedings to ensure that a fair trial was being provided and that all legal guarantees were afforded to the defendant. Mrs. Jaleela AlSayed and Mr. Mohammed Aljishi were present as defense lawyers at the trial as well as representatives of some diplomatic missions including (US, British and German Embassies).



Case of Sheikh Isa Qassim

NIHR monitored and was present at the trial of three religious clerics including Sheikh Isa Qassim accused of raising funds and money laundering without authorization.

NIHR observed that the proceedings of the trial were consistent with legal guarantees stipulated in article 20 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

NIHR observed that the judiciary granted the defendants the right to appeal within the legal period, which was not used by the defendants.

Concerning the revocation of citizenship, NIHR wishes to refer to article 17, clause "a" of the constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain which provides as follows: "Bahraini nationality shall be determined by law. A person inherently enjoying his Bahraini nationality cannot be deprived of his nationality except in case of treason and such other cases as prescribed by law."

Case of Alwefaq Society

NIHR attended the administrative trial of Alwefaq which resulted in a verdict to dissolve Alwefaq Society.

During the trial NIHR monitored the trial and wish to ascertain that a team of lawyers for Alwefaq were present during the trial despite their withdrawal at a certain time.

The Administrative Court decided to dissolve Alwefaq because it committed acts of violations of law number 26 of 2005, concerning political societies.

Final Remark

By this statement, NIHR is presenting a factual report on procedural issues of certain cases that were mentioned in the FCO report. NIHR cannot comment on the verdicts of these cases out of respect of the independence of the Judiciary.□

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