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المؤسسة الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان
National Institution *for* Human Rights



Eighth Annual Report of the National Institution *for* Human Rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain

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**Eighth Annual Report
of the National Institution *for* Human Rights
in the Kingdom of Bahrain
2020**

“We renew our thanks and appreciation for the constant efforts of all frontline workers facing the pandemic, as they are the ones who have shown clear perseverance, courage and patience to overcome difficulties for the sake of a better tomorrow, which will lead to the road of recovery.

In this regard, we would like to announce that Bahrain will soon start implementing its national campaign to provide safe and licensed vaccinations to prevent the emerging Covid-19 virus, and we have directed that it be available free of charge to every citizen and resident, provided that it is optional for those who wish to take it. We hope that we will soon return to normal life, even better than it once was, God Almighty willing.”

A quote by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, on the occasion of the National Day Celebrations, 16 December 2020.

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INTRODUCTION

Since His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa acceded to the throne, the Kingdom of Bahrain has witnessed important transformations toward fostering greater democratic frameworks, entrenching the foundations of the rule of law, and building an integrated legislative and regulatory system, actual and practical practices, and public institutions that work to strengthen the human rights system. These are fundamental transformations aimed at advancing the course of human rights and public freedoms and ensuring that individuals fully enjoy such rights and freedoms.

The Eighth Annual Report of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) for the year 2020, comes at a time when the whole world, including the Kingdom of Bahrain, is experiencing special exceptional circumstances due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak, which has affected some fundamental rights and freedoms, especially the right to health, the right to work, and the right to education. This necessitates shedding light upon the efforts of the NIHR in the field of monitoring and following up on the human rights situation under such circumstances after the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with a review of the efforts and challenges facing the Kingdom in order to promote and protect human rights during this period, all in accordance with the provision of Article No. (21) of Law No. (26) of 2014 establishing the NIHR, as amended by Decree-Law No. (20) of 2016, which states that, **“the Council of Commissioners shall produce an annual report on the efforts, activities and other work of the Institution. It shall include a section explaining the level of progress on the human rights situation in the Kingdom, as well as any observations and comments within its competency, identifying any obstacles to the Institution’s performance and the solutions adopted to circumvent such. The Council of Commissioners shall present the report to the King, the Council of Ministers, the Council of Representatives and the Shura Council; in parallel, it shall also present the report to the public.”**

The Eighth Annual Report consists of **three chapters** preceded by an introduction. The **First Chapter** addresses the NIHR’s efforts and activities in protecting and promoting human rights during the Covid-19 pandemic. The **Second Chapter** includes a review of the efforts and activities of the NIHR in protecting and promoting human rights in general, while the **Third Chapter** sheds light upon the advisory opinions, which the NIHR has submitted to the constitutional authorities.

The NIHR regards this report and the previous reports as tools to enhance the human rights situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in a manner that is consistent with the Kingdom's obligations arising from its accession to international human rights instruments, or its submission of treaty reports to the Human Rights Council, in order to achieve best practices in the enjoyment of various public rights and freedoms.

CHAPTER ONE

Efforts and Activities of the National Institution for Human Rights in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights during the Emerging Corona virus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The provisions of Law No. (26) of 2014 on the Establishment of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), emphasize its role in the field of promoting human rights. Article (12) thereof, prescribes a set of competences for the NIHR for the purpose of achieving its goals in this regard, through its participation in developing and implementing a national plan for promoting human rights at the Kingdom's level, reviewing relevant human rights legislation and regulations in effect, recommending the amendments it deems appropriate, in particular with regard to the consistency of such legislation with the Kingdom's international human rights obligations, and recommending the introduction of new legislation pertaining to human rights.

Moreover, these provisions mandate the NIHR to hold conferences and to organize educational and training seminars and courses in the field of human rights, to conduct research and studies in this regard, to participate in local forums and in the meetings of regional and international organizations, as well as to issue bulletins, flyers, printed materials, data, and special reports and to post them on its website.

Hence, this chapter addresses two main topics, namely, the NIHR's efforts and activities in the field of human rights protection during the emerging coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and its efforts and activities in promoting human rights during the Covid-19 pandemic.

First Topic

Efforts and Activities of the National Institution for Human Rights in the Protection of Human Rights during the Emerging Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

This topic will address the NIHR's efforts and activities in the field of human rights protection during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak - within the period assigned for the report – covering in Requirement One the total announced and unannounced visits to correctional, rehabilitation, and detention centers, expatriate workers housing, and isolation and quarantine centers, while under Requirement Two is demonstrated the complaints received, the legal aid provided, and the cases detected.

Requirement One

The announced and unannounced visits to correctional, rehabilitation, and detention centers, expatriate workers housing, and isolation and quarantine centers

1. According to the mandated role of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) in the Kingdom of Bahrain under Article 12 – item g of its establishing Law No (26) of 2014 which stated that **“To conduct field visits in accordance with the applicable principles in order to monitor human rights situation in correctional institutions, detention centers, labor gatherings, medical and educational homes, or any other public place in which it is suspected that human rights violations are committed.”** The Committee on Visiting Detention Places and Facilities conducted field visits to several centers under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, and also to the isolation and quarantine medical centers under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, which the Kingdom allocated at various governorates to treat infected patients with coronavirus, follow up their condition, and the condition of those who were exposed to them. The Committee also visited the housing quarters of expatriate workers.
2. These visits reflect the expanding role of NIHR in implementing its tasks and assessing the availability of human rights under various situations and occasions, and that there are no violations of these rights, especially the right to health and the right to food. The isolation and quarantine centers and

expatriate workers housing areas were recently added to other places that NIHR has occasionally visited like correctional and rehabilitation centers, mental health hospitals, Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler), social welfare homes, among others.

First: Field visits to the Ministry of Interior centers

3. NIHR played a major role to protect human rights during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in fulfillment to its mandated tasks under the provisions of its establishing law. NIHR conducted field visits to several centers that follow the Ministry of Interior to check on the human rights and medical care conditions provided to the inmates, in accordance with the protective and precautionary measures undertaken to ensure health and safety for all, and to closely curtail the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).
4. NIHR commended the efforts exerted by the administrative authority of these centers to implement all the required standards to contain and prevent the spread of the virus amongst the inmates, without undermining their rights and preserving their health and safety. At the same time, NIHR called upon everyone not to spread rumors and inaccurate news, especially under these critical health circumstances that the country is passing through which requires upholding highest national affiliation.
5. As part of its ongoing follow up of the foreign inmates' conditions, NIHR visited the shelter and deportation centers for foreigners at the southern region (Alba) to follow up on the conditions of those who were granted royal pardon by H.M. the King of Bahrain- may God protect him- or those who completed their sentence and coordinating with their embassies and consulates to facilitate their departure to their countries. Furthermore, to oversee the measures undertaken by these centers in combating coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). These measures included precautionary measures to contain and limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst inmates, providing masks, sanitation tools, adhering to social distancing, amongst others. Also checking compliance with instructions and guidance provided by the concerned authorities to prevent spread of pandemic.
6. NIHR found out that these centers have complied with instructions and guidance, in order to protect the health of both the employees and the inmates. It noted that there was no crowding considering the existent absorptive capacity. Several of them expressed their satisfaction with the level of treatment rendered by the responsible management of these centers and acknowledged good quality and quantity of the food and services offered.
7. Prior to that, NIHR also conducted two field visits to the shelter and deportation centers for foreign women detainees to check closely what has been executed in facing coronavirus pandemic, and extent of adherence to human rights standards in dealing with the detained women. It was found out

that the procedures for departing were finalized for most of the detained women, but it was not possible to proceed because of the ban on flights and travel due to the corona pandemic. It was noted that the responsible management of the center took all needed measures and precautionary actions.

8. NIHR looked at the Ministry of Interior statement on the incident at the Deportation Center, whereby a number of deportee women, for cases related to the violation of residency rules, were infected with coronavirus, and the medical procedures taken to treat them according to the set treatment protocol, as well as the precautionary measures set in place at the site. In this regard, NIHR reiterates that its delegation had recommended during its visit to the Center to expedite the measures to deport the detainees. However, this did not happen as the international civil aviation was brought to halt under the coronavirus circumstances, and several countries refused to receive their citizens.
9. In this regard, NIHR expresses its utmost appreciation to the decision of H.E. the Minister of Interior regarding formulation of investigation committee on the incident of the infection of the detainee women at the Deportation Center with coronavirus. This step reflects the steady course of the Ministry of Interior in supporting human rights and dealing with credibility and transparency. Adding to that, NIHR confirms that the women detainees had received the needed medical attention according to set medical protocol, and that it followed the investigation results, as well as the measures that will be taken in this regard till their departure, witnessing that their health situation is stable and there was no reason to worry.
10. Based on its ongoing pursuit to support and protect human rights, a tweet was posted by the NIHR in which it portrayed the field visits by its Committee on Visiting Detention Places and Facilities in coordination with competent authorities, to both foreign men and foreign women deportation centers, examining closely the precautionary measures set in place by the centers management to ensure their safety while being detained, and to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, till the actual enforcement of their deportation.
11. During the field visit, the members of the Committee talked to the managers of the centers and met with several inmates from different nationalities who received deportation orders by law, and who expressed their satisfaction of the undertaken measures. NIHR intends to continue conducting field visits to other facilities within a planned visits timetable over the upcoming weeks.
12. A delegation from NIHR visited the Correctional and Rehabilitation Center. A tweet was posted afterwards, that showed that the visit to the Jau Correction and Rehabilitation Centre was conducted within its ongoing follow up for the measures that the correctional and rehabilitation centers under the

Ministry of Interior, undertake and services offered to inmates especially under the coronavirus circumstances. The delegation met several inmates and listened directly to their remarks that will be duly conveyed to the center's responsible management.

13. To ensure all inmates practice their religious rituals without undermining the precautionary measures, a delegation from NIHR conducted several visits to correctional, rehabilitation and detention centers, and remand prison during the Ashura's commemoration, in order to closely inspect if the inmates (males and females) are freely practicing their religious rituals. A tweet was posted indicating that after meeting inmates, assuring that they were fully granted the freedom of practicing religious rituals, in such a way that does not infringe or adversely impact the freedom and privacy of other inmates from other sects or religious right to practice their rituals, and observing the conditions and precautionary measures undertaken to protect from coronavirus.
14. NIHR clarified that the management of the centers allotted each group of inmates at a cell, in such a way observing precautionary measures, preventive steps and physical distancing; it also availed to them TV screens at their cells to listen to broadcasted religious speeches, allowed them to dress up and behold symbols related to the occasion, as well as provide meals and juice for after the conclusion of the religious ceremonies.
15. NIHR announced it is in the process of updating the unified instructions manual for field visits standards to correctional institutors, detention facilities, workers groupings, medical and educational houses, in addition to observing the work environment, in order to develop and foster the legal rights practice especially in the aftermath of introducing relevant international and national standards as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This will eventually contribute to facilitate the human rights status in various locations, and accordingly propose appropriate solutions and amendments pertaining to relevant national legislation as needed.



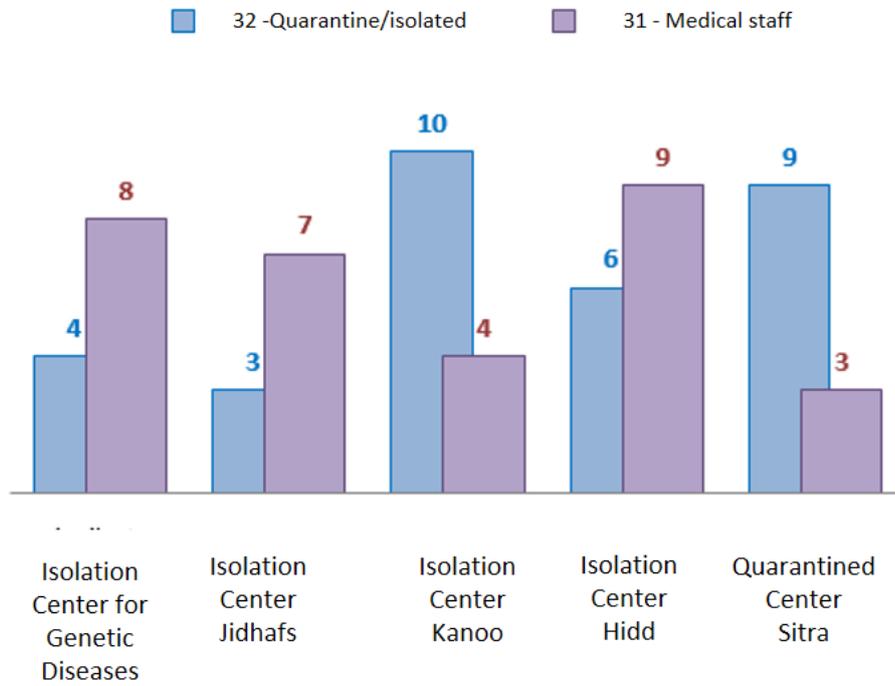
Part of the NIHR Delegation meeting with some inmates at the correctional and rehabilitation center.

Second: Field visits to isolation and quarantine centers

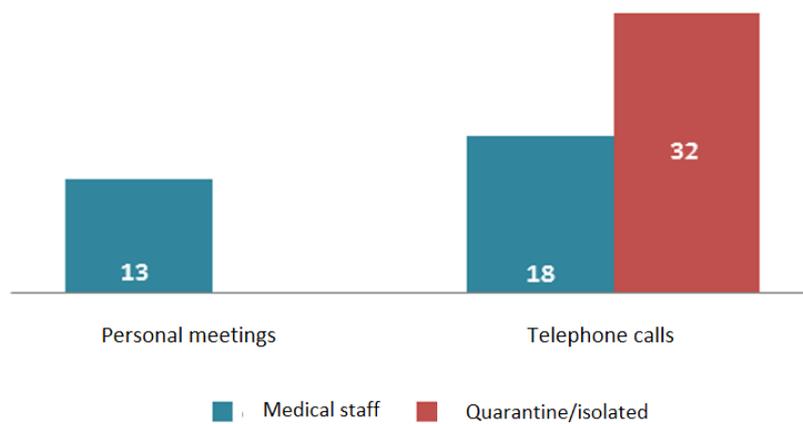
16. At the beginning of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) globally, the Kingdom of Bahrain formulated a national team to combat the spread of the virus. Several precautionary measures were implemented and started to establish a number of isolation centers for infected people, and quarantine centers for those who were exposed to them.
17. According to the mandated role of the National Institution for Human Rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain under Article 12 – item g of its establishing Law No (26) of 2014 which stated that **“To conduct field visits in accordance with the applicable principles in order to monitor human rights situation in correctional institutions, detention centers, labor gatherings, medical and educational homes, or any other public place in which it is suspected that human rights violations are committed.”**, and the tasks assigned to the Committee on Visiting Detention Places and Facilities at NIHR. The Committee conducted a number of field visits to the isolation and quarantine centers allocated by the authorities at various governorates to treat the coronavirus cases, and follow up their condition, and those that were exposed to them. The Committee prepared a special “survey” addressed to the people under isolation and quarantine and another one for the medical staffs. The survey was carried on during the period 8-20 April 2020 at two quarantine centers (Sitra Center and Al Hidd Center), and 4 isolation centers (Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler), Jidhafs Center, Kanoo Center, and Al Hidd Center).

18. These visits to the isolation and quarantine centers confirm the expanding role of NIHR in implementing its tasks and assessing the availability of human rights under various situations and occasions, and that there are no violations of these rights, especially the right to health and the right to food. These sites were recently added to other places that NIHR has occasionally visited like correctional and rehabilitation centers, mental health hospitals, Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler), social welfare homes, among others.
19. In order to abide by the precautionary measures under the current conditions and observing social distancing to curtail the spread of coronavirus, the Committee for Visiting Detention Places and Facilities at NIHR resorted to phone calls to complete the survey information amongst the quarantined and isolated people, focusing on attaining the aim of the field visit, namely, to detect if there any infringement of human rights in these places. The Committee made (32) phone calls for a random sample amongst the quarantined and isolated people, also made (18) phone calls to a random sample amongst the medical staff in these centers and met (13) of them and recorded their feedback in the survey.
20. NIHR released a tweet mentioning in it its role in following up the conditions of the people in isolation, treatment, and quarantine centers, as well as meeting with medical staffs, and communicating with those subjected to isolation or quarantine, in order to ensure the commitment of these centers with precautionary measures set in dealing with the coronavirus, the availability of human rights under these conditions. It affirmed that a suitable work environment was provided for all, observing hygiene and medical care according to international standards and the WHO protocols, as well as providing appropriate water and food around the clock.
21. As to the people under health isolation or quarantine, the “survey” focused on several questions pertaining to the general conditions in the isolation and quarantine centers, the treatment they received by the medical staff as of the moment they arrived to these centers, the kind of treatment they have received during their presence there, the quality of the services rendered be it healthcare or meals, ability to communicate with the external world, and any other remarks they like to add.

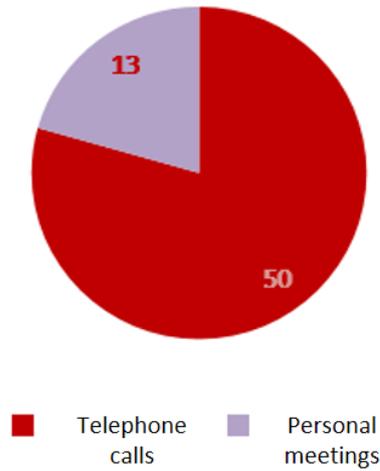
Health isolation and quarantine centers contacted and the number of quarantined and isolated persons and medical staff



The information was obtained through



The information was obtained through



22. As to the medical staff, the “survey” focused on how the administration dealt with them, how the isolated and quarantined people dealt with them, the services rendered to them by the administration, the precautionary measures implemented to prevent their infection by coronavirus (COVID-19) and their families upon their return home, and any other remarks they would like to add.

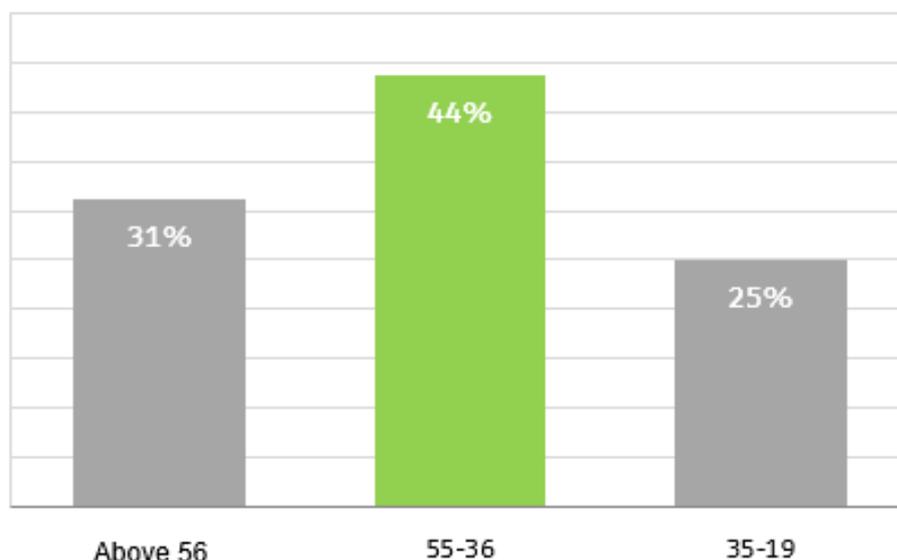
23. The “survey” results were compiled into the following three sections in the report, the first section covers the results of the survey amongst the isolated and quarantined people, the second section covers the results of the survey amongst the medical staff, and the third section displays the summary.

(a) Survey results amongst the isolated and quarantined people

24. The information was collected through phone calls to a random sample of (32) people, (19) of whom were quarantined, and (13) isolated.

25. The age group of the isolated and quarantined varied, as the majority (14) fell within the age group 36-55 years old, then (10) people 56 years old and above, and (8) people between 19-35 years old, consecutively.

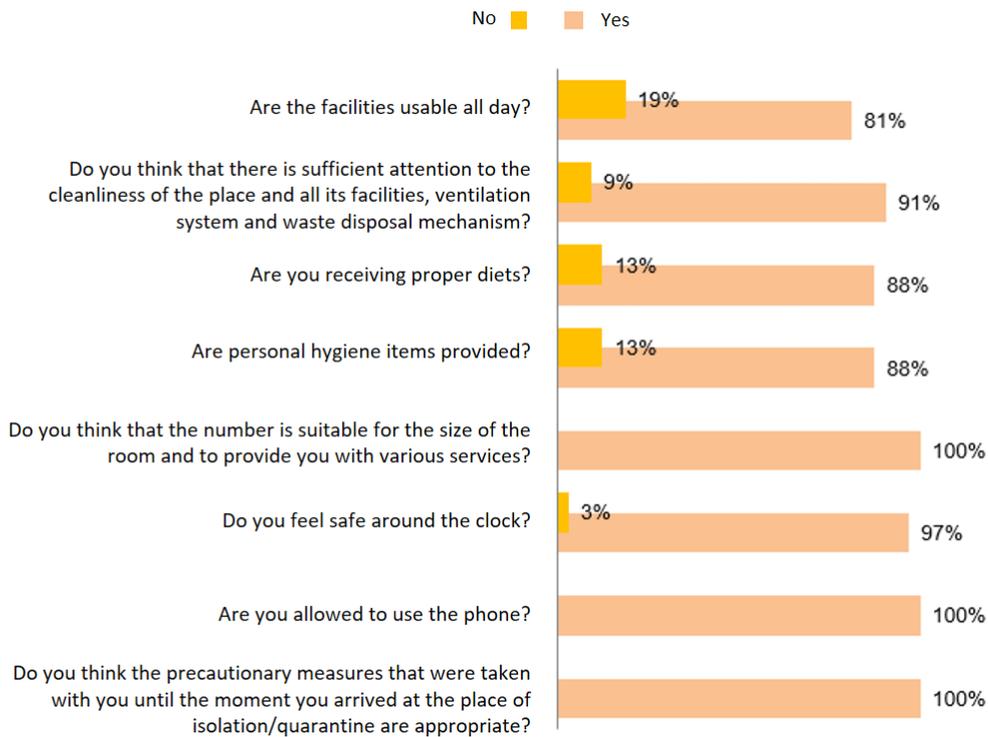
Age groups of the isolated and quarantined



Remarks obtained:

26. The participants in the survey were asked to answer the questions regarding how the medical staff dealt with them, the food provided, and most of the isolated and quarantined people responded that they were given the result of their tests was positive for the infected, whereas the others who were exposed, were placed in the medical quarantine centers.
27. All the participants in the survey unanimously stated that the precautionary measures undertaken with them from the moment they arrived at the isolation or quarantine center was adequate. The family members, relatives, and friends were not allowed to visit people in isolation who were infected with the coronavirus, to ensure their safety and that of their families. The people in the medical quarantine, were allowed to have visits if observed certain conditions including maintaining social distancing, refraining from any physical contact, keeping a distance not less than 10 meters. Around 60% of them mentioned that the timing and the duration of the visit was suitable. All the participants confirmed they were allowed to use their mobiles, communicating with external world freely, being provided with internet services through Wi-Fi routers. Around 96.9% of them expressed their feeling of being safe in that place around the clock.
28. All the participants stated that there was no crowding in terms of the number of people placed in the rooms in the isolation centers or in the tents in the

- quarantine center in Sitra. The number of people was suitable to the size of the room or the tent, and the service were adequate too. For example:
29. Rooms suitable for 4 people were assigned 3-4 people as at the Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler). Others stated that some tents were spacious for 10-12 people but only 6-12 people were placed in it at Sitra Center. Rooms fit to host 3 people had 2-3 persons in it at Al Hidd Center and 1-2 persons at Kanoo Center. A number of isolated people mentioned that they were placed in private rooms at their request as at Jidhafs Center.
 30. Around 87.5% of the surveyed participants responded that personal hygiene equipment and supplies were provided to them by the authorities of the isolation and quarantine centers. Around 91% of them stated that there was sufficient attention was directed to maintain the cleanliness of the premises, the ventilation system, and the waste disposal. Around 81.25% of the participants clarified that the premises remained clean and suitable for use all day.
 31. As to the meals, around 87.25% of the isolated and quarantined explained that it was adequate. Upon being asked if they have any information if the meals provided were healthy and supports the immune system, around 62.50% of them responded favorably, whereas 15.60% negatively and 21.90% were not sure. The majority confirmed that the right number of meals was provided, which included in addition to the main meals of meat and chicken, sweets, juice, tea, water bottles, and snacks in between.
 32. Around 78% of the isolated and quarantined totally agreed that they were receiving the right treatment in the designated times, and they were regularly informed of their health conditions, whereas 22% do not approve.



Remarks by the isolated and quarantined people on their presence in the medical isolation and quarantine places:

33. The isolated and the quarantined people extended their thanks to the wise leadership, the medical and nursing staff, and the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) members for the medical and professional treatment received. They also thanked NIHR for conducting field visits and the “survey” within its designated mandate to perform visits and check on services rendered, as well as investigating the availability of human rights in such conditions. They confirmed that they had received sufficient attention and follow up by all the medical staff, and that everyone was cooperative, and provided good supervision to their health conditions. One of them mentioned that he had an x-ray and Electrocardiography (ECG), also he is receiving excellent follow up on his condition keeping a check on his blood pressure and hematology routinely, and the food provided was generally good. ON another side, the freedom to move and walk in the vicinity of the quarantine or isolation places was granted basically by taking care of their health condition.

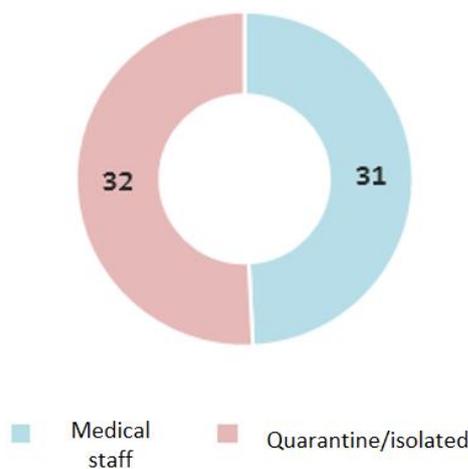
Conditions of expatriate labor in medical quarantine and isolation centers:

34. NIHR would like to mention that a number of infected expatriate laborers commended the services offered to them in the Kingdom, which they do not get in their home countries. On the other hand, NIHR received some complaints from expatriate laborers in the medical quarantine and isolation centers, which was discussed and communicated with responsible authorities in these centers to find effective solutions. For example, one of the expatriate workers reported that he was infected with coronavirus (COVID-19), and was referred to Sitra Center along with 9 others, where some of them claimed their health conditions were inappropriate: no tests were performed for them nor were they given the necessary medication; food was offered after waiting in line for a long time; only a 200 ml water bottle was given with each meal; both the bathrooms and the rooms were not clean and untidy; no one responded to their inquiries about medicine and their request for bed blankets; no water for showering. The complainant appealed to be transferred to another more suitable place where their needs are better met.
35. Immediately, the Head of Committee on Complaints, Monitoring and Follow-up, contacted the concerned authorities to investigate these complaints. As such, 3 liters of water were daily provided to each patient at the Center, in addition to 200 ml water bottle with each meal. Also, it was ensured that hygiene supplies were provided. The expatriate workers staying at the medical isolation and quarantine centers were receiving awareness instructions to abide by the health and procedural measures like lining up to receive meals and water; because of their large number, it took a rather long time till everyone got the supplies. In addition, there were broad differences amongst them in their culture, traditions, and spoken languages which increased the difficulties in communicating with them and making them understand the requirements. The Head of the Committee was informed that the responsible authorities at these centers were working to facilitate procedures and find solutions for their problems. It was clarified that some of the residents at the isolation and quarantine centers, upon checking out when completing their quarantine or isolation time, took their bed blankets, which created temporary shortages till replacements were provided. As to their request to be transferred to other places, NIHR would like to clarify that this is the prerogative of each center's management, and it cannot interfere in the allocation of facilities, as medical and administrative factors rest on the concerned authorities' judgment.

36. NIHR received a call from a foreigner representing himself and four others, whereby he claimed that their workplace had tested them for coronavirus, and the result was negative, however they were transferred to Sitra Center. He added that after a week passed, they were re-examined and once again the result was negative. However, they still remained in the quarantine center, although none of them showed any symptoms and till now they do not know the final result of their situation. He expressed their desire to be deported to their countries of origin, and their respective embassies are willing to deport them. Immediately, NIHR contacted (444) phone line dedicated to providing assistance for coronavirus (COVID-19) issues. The respondents were helpful and they were forthcoming and cooperative. After they took all the needed information, and cross checked it, they informed NIHR that in less than 24 hours this person and the four others tested positive to coronavirus, and that their treatment has already started. They explained that sometimes the infected patient is asymptomatic, however the lab tests proved their infection with coronavirus and their treatment is ongoing.

(b) Survey results amongst the medical staff

37. The information was collected from a random sample of (31) medical staff in the isolation and quarantine centers, through personal meetings and direct phone calls.

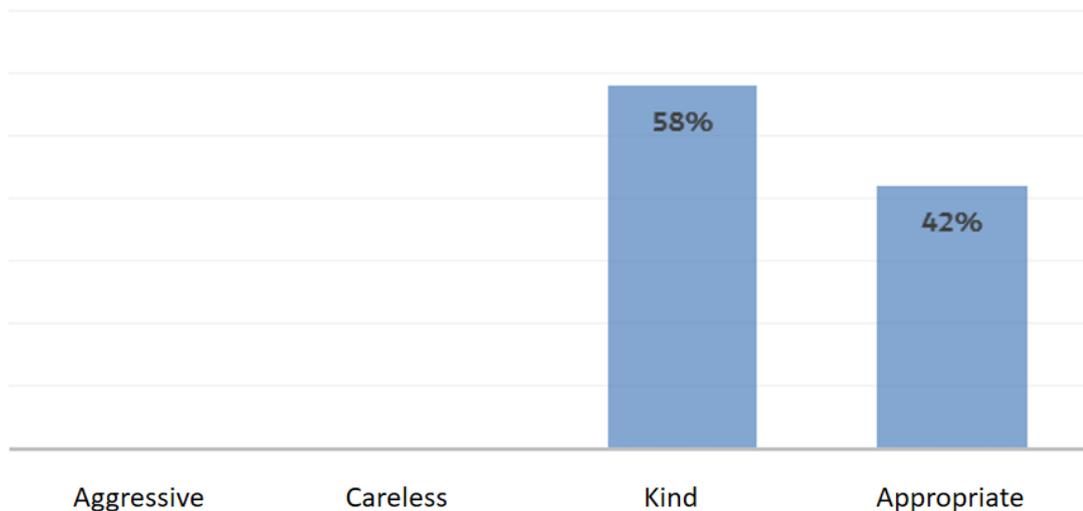


38. All the participants in the “survey” amongst the medical staff responded that the maximum health protection was provided for them to avoid being infected with coronavirus. They said that the working hours at the isolation and

quarantine centers were suitable to perform their duties optimally. Some mentioned that the working hours were longer because of the exceptional circumstances and work pressures like in the Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler), whereas around 93.6% of them considered that the number of medical staff was appropriate to the total number of infected or quarantined people, and that the shift system was used to ensure providing best services. One of them said that the number of the medical staff needs to be increased like in the Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler), whereas another one commented that the number must be based on a ratio to the total patients in the Sitra Quarantine Center. Replying to the question of the kind of protection the Ministry of Health should provide to them and the various logistics services and whether it is proportional to the special efforts exerted, 96.80% responded positively, and 3.20% responded negatively.

39. As to the question whether care was given to ensure that meals contain food that supports the immune system, around 90.30% replied positively, while 9.60% responded negatively, and 0.10% said that the meals are the same every day and it has no or low nutritious value, and there was no special meal for certain cases like patients with chronic diseases.
40. Regarding the question on how they can describe the way those in the isolation and quarantine centers acted towards them as medical and service staff, they unanimously agreed their behavior was kind and appropriate.

How would you describe the treatment of those in isolation/quarantine with the medical staff?



Comment by the medical staff on the protection provided to avoid infection by coronavirus:

41. The participants in the “survey” amongst the medical staff stated that their condition was monitored and assessed regularly, they were also informed about coronavirus and how to deal with the infected and those exposed to them. They explained that their inquiries were answered by the management, and they were shown how to use different kinds of medications and were provided with needed personal protective equipment (PPE) from coronavirus such as disposable overalls, masks, and gloves, sanitizers, disinfectants, protective shields, and head cover. They added that a mandatory weekly test to all the medical staff was performed to ensure they are not infected, explaining to them the importance of being extremely cautious when dealing with patients.
42. They mentioned that special places were designated for workers, rooms for the staff to rest outside the hospital, and rooms for changing clothes, like in Jidhafs Center; in other places like in Genetic Blood Diseases Center (Sickler), external “cabins” outside the building were provided with 2 bedrooms and one bathroom each; three meals were distributed daily for all the shifts.

Comments of medical staff on performing their duties under exceptional circumstances:

43. The medical staff extended their thanks to the wise leadership, and to the role assumed by the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), indicating that all their requirements and needs were provided for, the volunteers were governed by special rules according to their tasks, and all of them worked hard and with full dedication. They mentioned that several foreign patients commended the services rendered to them in the Kingdom, which they cannot get at their own home countries. The medical staff members noted that the medical management exerted all the needed efforts to support and assist them. Some of them expressed their pride to be part of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and requested that more instructions and guidance to be given to the public to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as referring to WHO’s acknowledgment of the Kingdom’s protective system at the isolation and quarantine centers.

(c) Summary

44. NIHR is proud of the Bahraini National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince

Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, may God protect him, and the intensive efforts exerted by all the ministries, institutions, authorities, government apparatus, and the civil society, that clearly contributed to curtail the spread of the disease, and decreased the infected cases, which primarily reflected their main concern to ensure human rights for all the citizens and expatriates in general, and their human right for health and medical care in particular.

45. NIHR commends the generous initiative adopted by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa - wife of the beloved HRH the King of Bahrain, President of the Supreme Council for Women(SCW)- whereby the SCW launched the campaign (Together for Bahrain's Safety), in cooperation with the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), to pay back the debts of Bahraini women who were convicted and received judiciary sentences and their names appeared in the Ministry of Interior published lists on "Fael Kheir" application.
46. NIHR also commends the humanitarian initiative launched by HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF), to raise funds through "Feena Khair" campaign to assist the adversely impacted Bahraini families by that coronavirus pandemic. Appreciating the contributions of all parties involved to the success of this campaign, which portrays the societal empathy and solidarity, and fosters the concepts and principles of human rights for all members of the community.
47. In this respect, NIHR would like to extend sincere thanks to HE the Minister of Health for her appreciated cooperation with NIHR to arrange and facilitate all the matters related to its work. Further thanks are extended to the head and members of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19) for their efforts to place precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as all the frontline people working round the clock to face this crisis.
48. More thanks are extended to the responsible authorities of the isolation and quarantine medical centers which NIHR visited and communicated with, for all their exerted efforts to support NIHR in performing its tasks, and who continued to cooperate and stay in contact till filling the "survey" completely. NIHR acknowledges the significant role performed by all the volunteers who participated in precautionary measures and assisted the medical staff in doing their job in various specializations.
49. The field visits conducted by NIHR to the isolation and quarantine medical centers affirmed its main role as stated in its establishing law regarding conducting announced and unannounced field visits to monitor the human rights conditions in the correctional and detention places, workers gatherings,

health and education homes, and any other suspected places of potential violation of human rights. On another hand, it aimed to observe on the ground the quality of the services and facilities provided for the quarantined and isolated cases in quarantine and isolation centers, to preserve their health and that of their families, and on a third hand to follow up the availability of various human rights that should be there under these circumstances in accordance with the international treaties and conventions.

50. There is no doubt this report will add a new success to the Kingdom of Bahrain successes in the field of protection and promotion of human rights in general, and in health and food in particular. At the same time, it also reiterates the continuation of NIHR steady path it intended for its work ensuring being present in various situations, and committing to transparency and neutrality in its work to fulfill the various principles of human rights.
51. As a result of the above, NIHR prepared model survey questionnaires to be answered by the quarantined and isolated persons and the medical staff, to monitor through them various rights and duties that should be available at the quarantine and isolation centers, like the right to health, the right to food, and the right to freely communicate with the external world through modern channels. To ensure neutrality and transparency, the quarantined and isolated people as well as the medical staff who were contacted, were allowed the freedom to reply to the survey questions as mentioned in this report above.
52. Regarding the isolation and quarantine medical centers that were visited and communicated with their residents being patients or medical staff, as a result of the answers received on the survey questions and the various points tackled for this purpose, NIHR would like to clarify the following issues:
53. There was a unanimous agreement on the adequacy of the precautionary measures undertaken for the people staying in the isolation and quarantine medical centers. Furthermore, the majority of the isolated and quarantined people considered that other organizational measures were also adequate pertaining to the spacious place and suitable furnishings, providing daily personal hygiene supplies, organizing all matters relating to the family and relatives visits to the quarantined people, providing various services to enable the isolated and quarantined people to communicate by phone around the clock, cleanliness of the quarantine and isolation places and facilities, quality and variety of meals and offering snacks between meals, receiving needed medication and treatment, and maintaining contact with the external world by using their mobile phones.
54. From their side, the medical staff commended the leadership and significant role performed by the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), They also commended the efforts of their brothers and sisters the volunteers, and the good follow-up of the responsible authorities and the

provision of all the needed work requirements, protective gear from the disease, organizing awareness lectures pertaining to how to deal with the disease and the patients and the quarantined cases of all types, and how to deal with various medications, as well as the notable cooperation between the administration and the nursing staff during their shifts, thus facilitating all the matters connected to performing their tasks.

55. NIHR noticed that special attention was given to the elderly who were present at the isolation and quarantine centers and providing services to them. Also special attention to raise health awareness through distributing informative flyers (brochures), providing laptops for university students to resume their university studies, providing internet Wi-Fi services in all the centers, noting that hot drinks and water bottles were available all the time, and the daily meals were well varied.
56. On another side, NIHR sees the need to increase the level of cleanliness and hygiene in general in the isolation and quarantine centers; speed up the needed medications for patients with chronic diseases; enhance health awareness especially when the patients first arrive to the isolation or quarantine places; add to the meal variety to cater for those with a chronic disease and the elderly; intensify the awareness lectures and short courses for medical staff on how to deal with these diseases and the equipment, appliances, and medications related to them; adding to that, the Sitra quarantine center is located in an open area which caused dust storms that seriously annoyed the people there.



Part of the visit of the Foundation's delegation to the isolation and quarantine centers

Third: Field visits to expatriate workers housing

57. Based on the NIHR plan to follow up the implementation of the standards relating to the protection and enhancement of human rights in worker housing places according to the authorities entrusted to it, it conducted field visits to several large industrial companies, in order to observe on the ground how the usual known human rights were enacted, such as the right to adequate housing and the right to health. A total of four (4) visits were conducted this year of the report, one visit to Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard Company (ASRY), one visit to NASS Group worker housing, two visits to Aluminum Bahrain (Alba) worker housing.

(a) Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard Company (ASRY)

58. To activate its monitoring role stated in its establishing law, and based on its plan to follow up the fulfillment of the human rights standards at the collective housing for workers according to the authorities entrusted to it, a delegation from NIHR conducted a field visit to the premises of the Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard Company (ASRY), to check on the precautionary measures undertaken by the company against coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) in particular, and to observe on the ground how the established human rights are addressed, such as the right to adequate housing and the right to health, which are considered two basic human rights, and other human right, in general.

59. NIHR appreciated the comprehensive program prepared by the company, adopting transparency and clarity in conveying information to the delegation. The visit included looking at some of the facilities of the company, like restaurants, medical center, workers housing area; whether they are enrolled staff at this company or in other companies that cooperate with it. It was noted that the company had taken preemptive measures to combat the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst workers. Around the clock operations room was established, supplied with an electronic program to follow-up on the conditions of workers. Several residential apartments outside the company premises were leased for medical quarantine. Furthermore, a guide on means to combat the spread of the virus was published, as well as a number of instructional posters in various foreign languages. Continuous medical tests for workers were carried out and the required personal protective equipment (PPE) was provided. It was noted that the workers' rooms were kept clean, with safety measures in place and emergency exists, and the meals given to the workers were varied. Several number of workers, met by

the NIHR delegation, commended, in general, the level of care and the various services offered, in particular during this pandemic.

(b) NASS Group workers housing (Al Eker)

60. As part of NIHR ongoing efforts to support and protect human rights, a number of members of NIHR Council of Commissioners visited the NASS group workers housing at Al Eker area, to monitor the workers' rights there.
61. The NIHR delegation checked on the services provided by the company to the workers, aiming at protecting their health and safety, and to ensure that the precautionary measures are undertaken to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The delegation's field visit covered all the facilities of the company, particularly the rooms, kitchen, restaurant, and the nurse's room, as well as checking on the recreational plans and programs.
62. During the visit, NIHR delegation met with a number of the company's workers and got to know their views on the various services offered to them by the company. Few remarks were recorded. A tweet was posted covering the above at the conclusion of the visit.

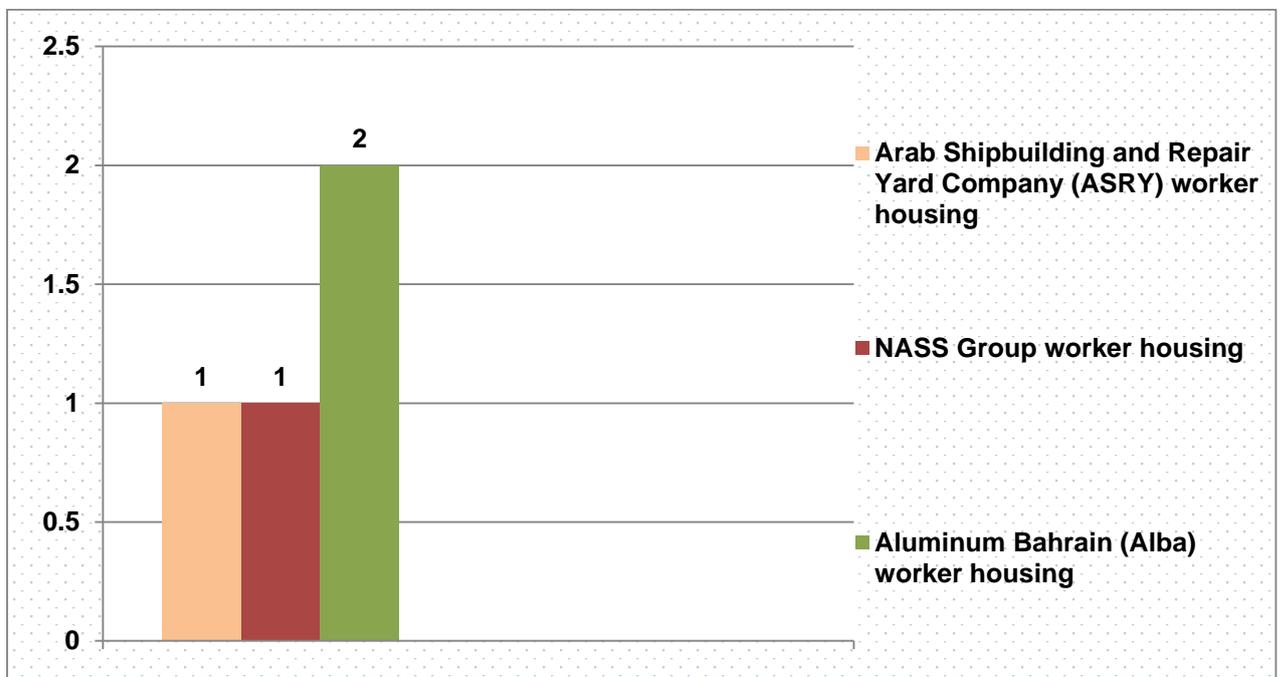
(c) Aluminum Bahrain (Alba) workers housing

63. Following NIHR efforts to support and protect human rights, especially for expatriate workers as a priority care category, a number of members of NIHR Council of Commissioners visited the Aluminum Bahrain (Alba) workers housing premises as well as the housing of the workers of the companies that it cooperates with, aiming at checking if the workers received all the rights granted under the relevant national legislations and international standards.
64. The NIHR delegation checked all the services provided to the workers of Alba Company and those of the companies it cooperates with, and ensured that the precautionary safety measures to prevent spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst workers are taken. A field visit to all the premises of Alba Company especially change rooms, cafeteria, laundry area, Alba medical center followed. Meetings were held with officials to discuss the various services offered.
65. In addition, the visiting delegation checked the housing premises of workers of companies cooperating with Alba, as well as meeting with Alba workers and those working for the companies it cooperates with to listen to their remarks about the services provided to them. Some remarks were recorded, and the Company will be informed about them.
66. NIHR posted a tweet after the visit covering the above, mentioning that members of the Detention & Facilities Visitation Committee and the General Rights and Freedoms Committee visited Alba Company, checking the precautionary measures the Company took to provide a suitable working

environment for its workers and staff, the health and logistics services the Company provides to its staff in general and the workers in particular for their safety according to the precautionary measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

- 67. The NIRH delegation also made a field visit to the premises of the Company, especially change rooms, laundry rooms, cafeteria, medical center, as well as workers housing premises.
- 68. During the visit, the NIHR delegation met with a number of workers who expressed their approval of housing, meals, and recreational facilities, as well as other varied services.

Chart showing the number of field visits conducted by NIHR regarding expatriate workers during 2020



Requirement Two

Received complaints, legal assistance, and monitored cases

First: Received complaints

69. Based on NIHR keenness to reach the maximum level of protection and promotion of human rights, communication mechanisms were developed with citizens and residents through the service of the Complaints & Call Center. In line with the circumstances and precautionary measures undertaken by the Kingdom of Bahrain to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19), and abiding by the instructions and directives of the official authorities, as well as maintaining public health and safety, NIHR received all the complaints online through its smart phone application for receiving complaints (NIHR Bahrain), or its website (www.nihr.org.bh), or e-mail (complaint@nihr.org.bh), or the free hotline (80001144).
70. Based on its extended mandate on human rights protection, NIHR dealt during 2020 with three complaints related to coronavirus (COVID-19), which varied amongst them in terms of the rights being violated. NIHR received a complaint about transferring a prisoner to solitary confinement after a voice recording circulated criticizing the precautionary measures regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) undertaken by the management of the correctional and rehabilitation center. NIHR posted a tweet in this regard, mentioning the visit it made to the aforesaid center, the meeting with the inmate personally, and the assessment of his humanitarian situation. It was found out that these allegations are contradictory to what was inspected and confirmed on the ground, as the prisoner shared a cell with other inmates, and was receiving all his stated rights like other inmates at the center and in accordance with the implemented measures. Furthermore, the inmate made a video call with his parents, which the NIHR has witnessed and confirmed.
71. NIHR affirmed that it firmly deals with any infringement or violation of human rights according to the stated tasks of its establishing law, and in such a way that complies with the binding obligations to the relevant international treaties to which the Kingdom of Bahrain has acceded to or ratified.
72. The other complaint was related to claiming not being guaranteed a fair trial, by preventing a detained person to be interrogated because he was infected with coronavirus, despite the fact he recovered. NIHR directly communicated with the competent authorities and found out that the allegations were incorrect as the detained person was referred to interrogation, and the designated judge issued the decision to renew his detention for interrogation.

73. The third complaint related to the allegation that a prisoner did not receive his right for medical treatment and health care and was not referred to the examining doctor to receive the suitable treatment because of coronavirus conditions. The NIHR directly communicated with the competent authorities, and found out that actually the prisoner had an appointment with the center clinic, and was booked an appointment online with a specialized doctor in Al Sulaymaniyah Medical Clinic through video conferencing.

Second: Legal assistance provided relating to human rights

74. Based on the provisions of Law No. (26) of 014 establishing the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), as amended by Law No. (0) of 2016, NIHR assumes its role in providing legal assistance to individuals or other parties, be it in case the submitted complaint falls beyond its specialization, or when there is a request for legal assistance, through enlightening them on procedures that must be followed and helping them undertaking it before they resort to NIHR, while clarifying the need to utilize all possible venues for seeking relief, and administrative or legal grievances according to the state of matters, or submitting a request to open a case at competent authorities, or addressing another specialized entity of relevance.

75. In this regard, NIHR provided a total of (32) legal assistance during 2020, some of it related to requests to change the type of alternative punishment after the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), or issues where the discretionary power is granted to the competent authorities, such as releasing convicted or detained persons or alternate the remaining punishment period for fear of being infected with the virus; facilitate departure of expatriate workers after the decision to suspend air travel flights temporarily; consider changing the place of medical quarantine; consider alternative solutions after social centers, where parents visitation to their children takes place based on ruling of the competent court, were closed; or consider providing personal hygiene equipment in the isolation and quarantine medical centers. The NIHR communicated with the competent authorities regarding some of these issues for humanitarian reasons.

Third: Monitoring conditions of human rights

a. Monitoring conditions of human rights relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

76. Within the context of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) scope of work, and its plan to follow up the implementation of the standards related to the protection and promotion of human rights, especially under the current conditions of combating coronavirus (COVID-19), NIHR detected a news item

that stated there are large gatherings of workers in the streets and shops of the Capital governorate, in violation of the precautionary measures that were set in place by the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

77. The NIHR appealed to all the citizens and residents in the Kingdom to follow all the measures and instructions issued by the competent authorities to protect the right of all to the highest health levels, which is one of the most important pillars of human rights in all the international treaties and conventions, as it relates closely to human life in general and the daily practices and activities in particular, and it is further reflected on life within the family, relatives, and the society. If some people chose not to abide by the instructions that aimed to contain the virus, this would have adversely affected the rest of the society and would undermine their rights of health.
78. The NIHR hailed the significant attention extended by the Kingdom, through availing various types of medical equipment and qualified medical staff, providing the necessary treatment and various medications to confine the spread of the disease. The NIHR also praised the high level of transparency and professionalism that the competent authorities exhibited in providing all the information related to coronavirus or prevention mechanisms, or by releasing the number of infected, exposed, and recovered cases. The NIHR affirmed that it was acting within its extensive mandate as stated in its establishing law to follow instructions and measures announced by the competent authorities for the purpose of protecting and promoting human rights in line with the relevant international conventions and treaties.
79. In the same context, the NIHR monitored claims about negligence in medical care and services provided to the isolated patients at Abdullah Kanoo Medical Center for quarantine, who were subjected to precautionary measures to confine the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). In this regard, the NIHR contacted the competent authorities immediately, whereby they stated that they have also received a number of remarks and complaints from some patients, but they had dealt with it all and resolved it. A “survey” was prepared to detect the extent of their satisfaction about the medical services offered and the result was excellent, and also other issues were followed up with utmost concern and full keenness to provide top level service.
80. Based on this, the NIHR posted a tweet covering the subject and the visit details, commending in it the efforts exerted by the National Taskforce for Combating Covid-19, reiterating its willingness to continue following up undertaken measures to ensure that everyone received their full rights and best services.
81. The NIHR monitored the claim that some individuals did not receive treatment and medical care, besides the poor living conditions in the isolation and

quarantine center set in Sitra area. On its turn, NIHR raised the issue to the competent authorities for their consideration.

82. The NIHR documented its efforts in following up the conditions of human rights during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and tasks performed in following up the precautionary measures set by the Kingdom of Bahrain to combat the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) posted on its website (<http://www.nihr.org.bh/CoronaNews>).

b. Monitoring national efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain in combating coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

83. Implementing the directions of HRH the King of Bahrain- may God protect him- to consolidate national efforts at the local level to encounter the implications of the spread of coronavirus globally, to ensure the health and safety of citizens and resident in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and based on the core responsibility that the NIHR is committed to follow, it continued to follow-up and monitor national efforts for combating coronavirus (COVID-19).
84. The first national efforts were reflected in establishing the National Taskforce for Combating Covid-19 based on a Council of Ministers decision taken on 3 February 2020, led by HRH the Prime Minister and to be headed by the President of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH), to prepare strategies, plans, and medical protocols to prevent the spread of the virus and protect from it.
85. Within NIHR mandate to incessantly protect human rights, especially during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), it reviewed all the legislation and decisions taken, as well as monitored the measures and efforts implemented to combat the pandemic, ascertaining at the same time that the Kingdom of Bahrain was consistent in selecting balanced measures in a way that guaranteed individual rights and at the same time protected the public safety in line with the calls of the UN Commission on Human Right (UNCHR) in its report published on 27 April 2020, and the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO). The NIHR confirms that the Kingdom of Bahrain was keen not to enforce any unnecessary or disproportionate restrictions.
86. The government of the Kingdom of Bahrain - through the Ministry of Health- was keen to provide free medical care and services to all the citizens and residents equally for the cases recorded, in compliance with the directions of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who informed the Ministry of Health to be responsible for providing all the medical care and health services to all the citizens and residents in the Kingdom.
87. Based on Paragraph (a) of Article No. (8) of the Constitution which stated that “Every citizen is entitled to health care. The State shall concern itself with public health and shall ensure the availability of means of prevention and

treatment by establishing various types of hospitals and health care facilities”, the NIHR monitored the news about freezing the charges and fees for health services provided to foreign patients in the government medical centers as well as halting the collection of the general medical consultation fee set at BD 7 for non-Bahrainis.

88. Thus, the NIHR values the issuance of Decision No. (27) of 2020, on freezing medical consultation fees and Decision No. (2) of 2017, concerning health services fees for non-Bahrainis, affirming that the Decision of the Minister of Health regarding freezing the fees for the healthcare services provided for foreign patients in the government medical centers enhances the Kingdom’s measures to combat coronavirus (COVID-19), and indicates the concern and commitment of the Ministry of Health to preserve the safety of all the patients, be it Bahrainis or residents.
89. The NIHR commends the concern of the Ministry of Health to organize a number of field visits to the testing, isolation, and treatment centers, in order to check work progress, and the quality of services offered within the national efforts exerted for combating coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
90. On another note, the NIHR monitored the decision issued by the Ministry of Health requiring all passengers arriving to the Kingdom of Bahrain through Bahrain International Airport, as of 12:00 am of Tuesday dated 21 July 2020, to be subjected to a compulsory PCR test for coronavirus upon their arrival to the airport at their own expense with the cost of BD (30), payable through the application “Be Aware Bahrain”, before they board their flights heading to the Kingdom to expedite completing all the procedures, in addition to the stands at the airport that enables cash or electronic payments through debit or credit bank cards; excluded from this are the airplane crew, diplomats, passengers travelling for official missions, and returnees from treatment trips. The competent authorities in the civil aviation will coordinate this along with airlines and operators at the airport.
91. The Ministry added that the arriving passengers are obligated as well to be subjected to precautionary medical quarantine for 10 days, and to take a PCR test after the quarantine period ends, with the passenger bearing the cost of the test at BD (30). All the arriving passengers must download the application “Be Aware Bahrain”, and register in it to complete all the procedures stated in the “medical data” form and required by the precautionary measures set in place in dealing with coronavirus.
92. The NIHR commends the directions of the Head of the Royal Medical Services, Deputy Head of the National Medical Team for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), for the ongoing efforts to implement precautionary and protective measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the Military Hospital, to guarantee the safety of the patients, the visitors, and the medical and nursing staff operating at the hospital, as mobile isolation rooms,

equipped with state of the art technology, are available to isolate the suspected cases of coronavirus.

93. In the same context, the NIHR monitored the news about the expansion project of the emergency department at Salmaniya Medical Complex. This is an integral part within the Ministry of Health plan to preserve the health and safety of all patients coming to this vital department, ensuring highest standards of safety for emergency cases or for patients with suspected or confirmed coronavirus. The project is composed of two main sections, each one contains two units. The first section is called Zone A, with the capacity of 50 beds; the second section is called Zone B, with the capacity also of 50 beds and is dedicated exclusively to coronavirus cases. All the supplies needed for medical care are provided such as central oxygen supply points for each bed. Fourteen (14) beds, fully equipped with the needed medical supplies, are dedicated for dialysis patients. In addition, a unit is dedicated for intensive care (ICU) with 6 beds, central oxygen supply, and monitoring devices for each patient, with an emergency entrance for moving urgent and critical cases outside the building.
94. The NIHR conducted an inspection visit, in accordance with its mandates stated in its establishing law, to the Emergency Department (ER) at Salmaniya Medical Complex to ensure that the Ministry of Health and its workers are implementing the maximum degree of commitment to human rights standards. At the same time, the NIHR commended the measures undertaken by the Ministry of Health in adopting all needed precautionary and protective measures to maintain health and safety of people coming to this department.
95. The NIHR affirms that it operates within the mandate of its establishing law, to follow-up the directives and measures issued by the competent authorities aiming to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights in accordance with the relevant international conventions and treaties.
96. Furthermore, the NIHR values the role of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in reaching a recovery rate of (97.404%), which is one of the highest rates in the world. In addition, the Kingdom of Bahrain conducted more than 2 million PCR tests until 31 December 2020.
97. The NIHR commends opening registration and sign-ups for volunteering opportunities to take part in the third phase of the COVID-19 inactivated vaccine clinical trial pre-qualified by the World Health Organization (WHO), and through the National Volunteer Platform starting from 11 August 2020. The Ministry of Health revealed that volunteering will be available for 6,000 volunteers in the age group above 18 years. Six weeks after the announcement was made, the Ministry declared the completion of the third phase of the COVID-19 inactivated vaccine clinical trial pre-qualified by the

World Health Organization, indicating that 6,000 volunteers participated in the clinical trial from different nationalities and ethnic groups.

98. The Kingdom of Bahrain announced its participation in the third phase of the clinical trial in August 2020, with participants increasing to 7700 in the third phase to reach the intended goals. The total number of vaccinated people till 31 December 2020 reached more than 50,000 persons amongst the citizens and residents. The NIHR values the opening of the registration for volunteers for the clinical trial of Covid-19 vaccine, noting the importance of maintaining solidarity and empathy amongst citizens to ensure the best outcome for the Country.
99. On another note, the NIHR monitored how the Ministry of Health provided rapid coronavirus test service which is part of an initiative by the National Taskforce for Combating Covid-19 to develop the techniques used for testing the virus and making it easier. The NIHR commends the significant attention given by the National Medical Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus (COVID-19) to follow up on the emerging international developments and incorporate modern techniques in the area of diagnosis and treatment to prevent the spread of coronavirus.
100. The NIHR looked at the total occupancy rates in the quarantine, isolation and treatment centers, where the capacity in isolation and treatment centers reached around 7,080 beds on 21 October 2020, but the occupancy rate was 764 beds comprising around 10.8% of total capacity. The recovered cases reached around 95.61% of total existing cases, while the mortality rate reached 0.39% of total existing cases; 2,375 cases of the total existing cases were under optional home quarantine (self-quarantine) as they were asymptomatic according to the protocols of this type of quarantine.
101. The NIHR affirms that - based on its stated mandate by its establishing law- it will follow-up the occupancy rate in the said centers for the objective of protecting the rights of patients in accordance with relevant international conventions and treaties.
102. On another level, the NIHR monitored the decision imposing wearing face mask on everyone going to public places, commercial and industrial locations, and all places that deal with customers and visitors till further notice. Violators of this decision will be fined BD 20 on the spot by the competent law enforcement officer, who will record it in the violation report and give a receipt to the violator as a proof of payment of the fine. If the violator abstains from paying the amount of the fine, the law enforcement officer will take the necessary measure and refer the violator to the public prosecutor.
103. The NIHR highly appreciates the efforts exerted by the competent authorities in setting precautionary and preemptive measures and implementing them to contain and prevent the spread of coronavirus in the

Kingdom of Bahrain, in such a way that does not adversely impact human rights, while preserving the health and safety of everyone.

104. The NIHR considers that the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain under His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa - the Crown Prince - Prime Minister, followed the highest international standards and rules pertaining to human rights in providing health care and medical services for testing, quarantine, and treatment for all citizens and residents in the Kingdom, indicating that the Kingdom has adopted the humanitarian approach, which is a pillar for reform and development in a country of institutions and law.

c. The National Vaccination Campaign (Covid-19 Vaccine)

105. In the context of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) continuous endeavor to protect human rights, the NIHR monitored on November 3, 2020, the announcement by the Minister of Health, stating that the Kingdom of Bahrain approved the emergency use of the “Covid-19” vaccine, and made it optionally available to the frontline healthcare workers dealing with patients infected with the coronavirus in order to provide them with safety means and protect them from any potential hazard they may be exposed to due to the nature of their work.
106. The NIHR also took notice of the initiative of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of the Country - may God protect and preserve him - to receive the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. The NIHR commends the humanitarian initiative of His Majesty - may God protect him – for the positive effect it has on how citizens and residents view the vaccine of the coronavirus (COVID-19). It also highly values his royal directives to provide free vaccine to citizens and residents, which come out of His Majesty's keenness and great interest in the health of all.
107. In the same context, the NIHR appreciates the responsible awareness of citizens and residents alike in registering to receive the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, while stressing that taking the vaccine is a national duty, as the number of those vaccinated, as of 31 December 2020, reached (58,643) citizens and residents.
108. Emanating from the national responsibility of the NIHR, the members of its Board of Commissioners and most employees of the NIHR General Secretariat took the initiative to receive the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, stressing at the same time that the national vaccination plan includes all citizens and residents regardless of their identity, especially people with chronic diseases, the elderly and people with disabilities.

d. The right to education during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

109. With regard to the right to education, the NIHR took notice of the speech of His Majesty the King - may God protect and preserve him- addressed to students of schools, institutions, and universities in a video call to the “Conscious Society” program, which was broadcast on Bahrain TV on April 12, 2020, where His Majesty sent a paternal message to the students, and was reassured of their education and academic achievement, expressing his satisfaction in this regard, knowing that their academic matters are fine.
110. On a related level, the NIHR monitored the procedures and decisions related to the safety of students and educational staff, represented in the suspension of studies in all public and private higher education institutions, in addition to government and private schools for a period of two weeks, starting Wednesday, February 26, 2020, followed by a decision issued on March 5, 2020, allowing administrative and educational staff in public and private schools, public and private higher educational institutions and kindergartens - to return to work as of Sunday, March 8, 2020, in order to achieve the goals of the school year, and reduce the effects of the temporary suspension of studies in educational institutions.
111. Based on a thorough study of the developments of coronavirus (COVID-19) during that period, a decision was issued on March 5, 2020, extending the period of suspension of studies in public and private schools, public and private higher education institutions and kindergartens for an additional two weeks ending on 29 of March this year. On March 17, 2020, a decision suspending studies in public and private schools, government and private higher education institutions, and kindergartens was issued, with the continuation of the work of administrative and educational staff and urging the implementation of remote work whenever the possibility exists. It also directed the Ministry of Education to take the necessary measures to prevent the educational process from being adversely affected through coordination with the concerned parties.
112. In this regard, the NIHR took notice of the order of His Royal Highness, the Prime Minister - may his soul rest in peace - dated March 29, 2020, to draw up a plan for a quick return of Bahraini students stranded abroad and ensure their return home as soon as possible to avoid any risks to them due to the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19).
113. On a related level, the NIHR took notice of medical examinations conducted by the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, for coronavirus for all members of the administrative, educational and technical bodies in government schools, at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Center, which continued according to a specific

schedule, and to be completed before School employees return to their workplaces, in preparation for the start of the first semester 2020-2021.

e. The right to work and the right to an adequate standard of living during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

114. Aiming to enhance and ensure various economic, social, and cultural rights, are relished, the Kingdom of Bahrain announced, on March 17, 2020, the launch of a 4.3 billion Bahraini dinars economic financial package in support of citizens and the private sector. It included guaranteeing the salaries of insured citizens in the private sector for a period of three months, starting April 2020, the government also guarantees the payment of electricity and water bills of all subscribers, individuals, and companies for a period of three months starting April 2020, and waived rental payments for government owned industrial lands for a period of three months starting April 2020. It also doubled the size of the cash fund to 200 million BD, exempting touristic facilities from related fees for a period of three months starting April 2020, and raising the lending capacity of banks by the equivalent of 3.7 billion dinars to postpone installments or to provide additional financing to customers.
115. In the same context, financial grants were provided by the labor fund “Tamkeen” to the affected companies, with the allocation of two portfolios, one to support taxi drivers, public transport drivers, and bus drivers for a period of three months, and the second to support driving instructors for a period of three months, provided that they do not have a commercial registry or a pension; also, all labor fund (Tamkeen) programs, were redirected to supporting the affected companies and restructuring of loans supported by them.
116. Furthermore, and in compliance with the Royal Directives of His Majesty, the King of the Country - may God protect and preserve him, to unify national efforts at the local level to confront the repercussions of the spread of the coronavirus globally, in a manner that preserves the health and safety of citizens and residents, and in parallel with the continuation of the State’s programs and its operation in order to achieve sustainable development endeavors for the benefit of citizens, the Council of Ministers decided that the government would pay 50% of the salaries of insured Bahrainis in the private sector in the most affected sectors for a period of three months, starting October, which benefited 23,000 Bahraini employees and 4,000 establishments.
117. In this regard, the Council of Ministers approved a draft law adding a new clause, No. (5) to Paragraph (C) of Article (8) of Decree-Law No. (78) of 2006 regarding unemployment insurance and recommended to issue it pursuant to Article (38) of the Constitution. The Council of Ministers also agreed to pay 50% of the salaries of a total of 524 female workers in kindergartens and nurseries who are not insured, for a period of three months starting October 2020. It also decided to extend the wage support provided by the Labor Fund

(Tamkeen) for a period of three additional months starting October 2020, at a rate of 150 dinars per month, to support 950 taxi drivers, drivers of shared transport and buses, and 829 uninsured driving instructors. The Council of Ministers also decided to exempt touristic establishments and facilities from paying tourism fees for an additional three months starting October 2020.

118. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of the Country - may God protect and preserve him- issued Decree Law No. (30) of 2020 adding a new clause, No. (5) to Paragraph (C) of Article (8) of Decree-Law No. (78) of 2006 regarding unemployment insurance, which states, "Paying a percentage of the wages of Bahraini employees insured under the Social Insurance Law promulgated by Decree-Law No. (24) of 1976, up to a maximum of (50%) of the insured wage, in companies most affected by the repercussions of the emerging coronavirus (COVID-19) that are registered with the Ministry in accordance with conditions and regulations determined by the Minister, and the payment shall be for a period of three months starting October 2020, subject to Paragraph (e) of this Article".
119. In light of the issuance of Decree-Law No. (30) of 2020 adding a new clause to the Decree-Law on Unemployment Insurance, to pay a percentage of the wages of Bahraini employees insured under the Social Insurance Law, up to a maximum of 50% of the insured wage, in establishments most affected by the repercussions of the emerging coronavirus (COVID-19) that are registered with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, in accordance with the conditions and regulations determined by the Ministry, and that the payment shall be for a period of three months starting October 2020. Following the coordination and consultation with the relevant official parties, His Excellency the Minister of Labor and Social Development issued an executive decision defining the sectors most affected by the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic, which are eligible for financial support for the wages of Bahraini employees, namely: travel, aviation, tourism and hotel services sector, the entertainment sector, cinemas, organization of conferences, exhibitions and event halls, local newspapers, transport companies and car rental companies, education, rehabilitation and training such as nurseries, kindergartens, training and education institutes, rehabilitation centers for the disabled, in addition to the retail sector (other than the sale of food and household stuffs, and the restaurant sector).
120. The NIHR took notice of how the Inspection Department at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism exercises its monitoring role based on an integrated inspection system that aims to enable various commercial establishments to abide by laws and regulations in a manner that enhances the quality of the business environment in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Inspection Department role since the start of the coronavirus pandemic has included ensuring that the shops that were issued a decision to close were closed, and to ensure that restaurants' operations were limited to takeout and delivery, in addition to ensuring that the standards of social distancing are observed in commercial establishments and markets, and adherence to wearing masks, in addition to making sure that the first hours of shopping are

allocated to the elderly. The Inspection Department also visited construction sites and ensured that the workers there abided by the precautionary measures.

121. In continuing to implement the Royal Directives through the financial and economic package to mitigate the repercussions of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on citizens and the national economy, and in support of national efforts, and in the framework of cooperation and coordination with the legislative authority, the government decided to cover electricity, water bills and municipal fees, for all first time homeowner citizen subscribers, for a period of three months, starting October 2020, provided they don't exceed the bills for the same period of the previous year for each subscriber.
122. In a related context, the Council of Ministers directed the Central Bank of Bahrain to urge all banks to postpone loan payments to citizens affected by the coronavirus pandemic until the end of this year in a manner that does not affect the banks' liquidity and solvency.
123. In the same framework, the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism also sought to verify the compliance of shops with the specified prices following the issuance of a series of decisions by His Excellency the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism during the months of March and April 2020, with the aim of strengthening preventive and precautionary measures, by setting prices for hand sanitizers and disinfectants, as well as medical masks.
124. In this context, the NIHR values the Royal Directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa - may God protect and preserve him - to launch the financial and economic package providing necessary liquidity to the private sector to deal with the effects of the pandemic, and to direct the government to ensure the payment of electricity and water bills for all subscribers, individuals and companies, exempting government industrial lands from paying rents, doubling the size of the liquidity fund, exempting touristic establishments and facilities from paying tourism fees, and other directives of His Majesty in support of national efforts to confront the coronavirus (COVID-19) at the local level, in a manner that preserves the health of and safety of citizens and residents.

f. The right to practice religious rites during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

125. With regard to exercising the right to perform religious rites, and based on what was issued by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs regarding the gradual return to practicing of mass worships within the necessary regulations and precautionary measures, and in compliance with what was stated in the decisions and instructions issued by the competent authorities in the Kingdom regarding the precautionary measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), and based on the recommendations of the National Medical Team dealing with the coronavirus, the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments decided to gradually open mosques, for

dawn prayers only, starting Friday, August 28, 2020, as follows: Opening mosques for the dawn prayers only in all regions and according to the readiness of each of them, and maintaining the suspension of Friday prayers, except for the mosque of the Ahmed Al-Fateh Islamic Center for a limited number, and limiting the opening of mosques to dawn prayers for men only, prohibiting opening them for any other purpose, and provided that the opening of mosques will be under the supervision and control of the concerned Endowments administration and in accordance with health requirements; noting that prayers in mosques that do not comply with health and regulatory requirements and which represent a threat to public health will be suspended.

126. Emanating from the role and responsibilities of the National Medical Team to address coronavirus (COVID-19) that calls for protecting lives and maintaining public health and safety, by adhering to the necessary precautionary measures, in order to enhance national efforts to limit the spread of the virus, and based on the announcement of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs to extend suspension of mass worships and religious gatherings until experts decide that the required decline in the indicators of the spread of the pandemic has been achieved.
127. With reference to the precautionary measures approved by the National Medical Team to address the coronavirus (COVID-19) during the joint meeting with the Jafari Endowments, the National Medical Team commends the commitment shown by the heads and officials of the funerals in implementing the necessary precautionary measures, explaining that after reviewing the proposals of heads of funerals in light of the review of commitments, and taking appropriate measures regarding the preventive regulations and measures that must be adhered to during the Ashura season, and after studying the matter and emphasizing that adherence to the precautionary measures is the basis for preventing this virus, it was approved that the attendees shall sit, while reading the sermon on chairs outside the funeral, in rows spaced “two meters between chairs in the horizontal and vertical directions” according to the available space in the vicinity of the funeral, provided that the audience are committed to lamentation in their places.
128. The team noted that if the Husseinii Processions Authority, the funeral directors, or the relevant organizing committees deem it a possibility, then a Husseinii procession may be organized within the perimeter of the funeral, while adhering to social distancing, to ensure the health and safety of the participants, with the required precautions in place, and with follow-up from the funeral committees. A funeral committee should see to it that precautionary measures are applied, including: wearing face masks, social distancing, the necessary disinfection procedure, as well as prohibiting the entry of children, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases, and providing disinfectants, which contain at least 70% alcohol in different locations of the site, plus the provision of paper tissues, and the commitment of the attendees to mourn in their designated places and at their specific funerals, so that their

movement does not contribute to spreading the infection, in addition to prohibiting the distribution of food and water.

129. It was also decided to open mosques for noon prayers as of Sunday, November 8, 2020, after completing the necessary preparations for the implementation of the disinfection mechanism, completing the preparation of mosques, and ensuring their readiness to receive worshipers twice a day for the obligatory prayers, dawn and noon prayers, in accordance with the health instructions established in this regard.
130. This was followed by a decision to open mosques for afternoon prayer as of Sunday, December 6, 2020, based on the directives of the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments regarding the necessary arrangements to ensure compliance with the implementation of health measures approved by the National Team to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19).
131. The NIHR considers temporary closure of places of worship to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) a non-violation of the right of individuals to perform religious rites; the NIHR commends the decision because of its positive effects and impact on public health and safety. The NIHR also values the vision of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs concerning the gradual return of mass worshipers in line with precautionary regulations and measures aimed at containing the spread of coronavirus.

g. Monitoring the human rights situation during the coronavirus pandemic in the centers affiliated with the Ministry of Interior

132. On various occasions, the NIHR monitored the conditions of inmates in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center related to the coronavirus pandemic. The NIHR took notice of an allegation that the Correction and Rehabilitation Center management had transferred sixty (60) convicts to a camp adjacent to the Correction and Rehabilitation Center in (Jau) due to their suspected infection with the Covid-19 virus. Immediately, the NIHR contacted the concerned parties in the Correction and Rehabilitation Department, and it was found that the allegations reported were incorrect.
133. Regarding the allegation that visits to inmates and detainees were suspended, the NIHR confirms that the decision to suspend visits to inmates of detention, correction, and rehabilitation centers, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, is only a temporary precautionary measure, that does not affect their rights and the rights of their families, realizing at the same time the importance of increasing the number of weekly contact hours.
134. Regarding monitoring the situation related to the right to health, the NIHR continuously followed up on the precautionary measures and regulations undertaken by the Correction and Rehabilitation Center. It tweeted in this regard that it had noticed, through communication with some inmates that treatment, health care, and consultation services are provided as needed. It turned out that inmates are checked by doctors on an ongoing basis, with more than one hundred and ninety (190) inmates receiving checkups by doctors in various specialties on June 30. The NIHR urged the correction and

- rehabilitation centers to increase the number of inmates who are checked up by medical consultants through remote video communication technology.
135. On a related level, the NIHR monitored an allegation that medical appointments for some inmates at the Correction and Rehabilitation Center had been canceled. The NIHR immediately contacted the concerned authorities and the inmates' medical appointments went through.
 136. The NIHR also monitored an allegation that an inmate suffered a fractured arm while playing sports in one of the buildings of the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, and no medical treatment was extended to him due to the current conditions aimed at containing the coronavirus. It immediately contacted the concerned authorities, and it turned out that the inmate's health condition is stable and he received treatment and full medical care.
 137. Within the same context, the NIHR monitored news of negligence in the treatment of an inmate at the Center. The NIHR visited the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, met with the inmate, and reported that he was receiving treatment and health care, and that the subject monitored was baseless.
 138. The NIHR took notice of an appeal by the mother of an inmate in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center to release him on suspicion of being infected with the coronavirus (COVID-19). The NIHR immediately visited the Center and met the inmate personally, where he stated that he did not file any complaint with any external party, nor does he know the source of the news. He said he was suffering from fever and was examined in the Center's clinic the second day, to find out that he had seasonal flu. He was given the necessary treatment and was worried that incorrect news about his health situation will cause concern to his family.

Second Topic

The National Institution for Human Rights Efforts and Activities to Enhance Human Rights during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The Second Topic is dedicated to showcase the efforts and activities exerted by the NIHR in the field of enhancing human rights during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemics - during the report period - and NIHR's follow up for the supporting efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the relevant NIHR efforts to protect and promote human rights during the same period in the following two requirements.

Requirement One

Efforts of the National Institution for Human Rights in the field of enhancing all human rights during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

First: TV, Radio, and Journal Interviews

1. In resuming its effective communication established with the community, NIHR conducted a number of TV, radio, and journal interviews to cover all the updates relating to human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In this regard, NIHR issued several announcements covering various measures that the Kingdom of Bahrain has undertaken under these exceptional circumstances of the spread of coronavirus, particularly those aiming to protect the elderly.
2. In addition, an announcement was issued on launching electronic litigation, which is considered a leap forward in the justice ecosystem in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The NIHR also issued an announcement on coronavirus infections among detained foreign women, reiterating the importance of complying with the precautionary measures, and to refrain from spreading rumors on social media in this regard. Another announcement was issued by NIHR in which it affirmed the right to health, as well as the other human rights, calling for imposing disciplinary measures against violators of the health instructions. It also issued an announcement commending the decision of the Minister of Health regarding the conditions of collective workers housing; a further announcement was issued to congratulate the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation on the occasion of being awarded the "Best Correctional Institution in the Middle East in implementing and complying with the international health protocols, safety, and hygiene against coronavirus".

3. An announcement was also issued on “NIHR’s field visits to the isolation and quarantine medical centers”; in addition to an announcement commending the health and safety measures followed during vaccinating the public to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The NIHR also issued an announcement reiterating that health care is provided to the inmates in the reform and correction center as well as detention facilities. Another announcement was issued to confirm that the Royal pardon settles the deeply rooted human rights values in the Kingdom and fosters national unity. In addition, a press release was published on the “follow up of implementation of critical precautionary measures put into practice by the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation to ensure the health and safety of the inmates within the national efforts to combat coronavirus” confirming that the health care for the inmates at the reform and correction center and detention facilities continued and did not stop.
4. As part of its contribution to contain the spread of coronavirus in cooperation with all segments of society, and to closely oversee the undertaken measures in this regard, Bahrain TV prepared a full report on NIHR’s field visit to the Reformation and Rehabilitation center (Jau) and published segments of the video of NIHR participating in the National Campaign for Combating coronavirus #Team Bahrain. A TV interview was conducted on “the right to education under coronavirus pandemic”, and another interview on “excellence of the Kingdom of Bahrain in human protection and preserving their rights during coronavirus pandemic”. In addition, Bahrain TV held an interview with NIHR for the program “Be Aware Community” on its participation via webcast in the panel discussion on “Impact of coronavirus on human trafficking”, and in the same program, the NIHR took part in a discussion on “measures undertaken by the Kingdom of Bahrain to protect the human and preserve their rights during coronavirus pandemic”.

Second: Organizing Activities and Training Programs

5. The NIHR organized an online roundtable titled “The Bahraini experience and its role in the protection and promotion of the rights of expatriate workers under coronavirus pandemic”, to shed light on the impact of the pandemic on the conditions of expatriate workers, and the concerted efforts of competent authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain to adequately deal with this to match the advanced position of Bahrain in protecting human rights in general, and the right to health for everyone in particular. The participants included officials from various relevant ministries, entities, and institutions, along with representatives of the relevant civil society organizations.
6. During this event, the role of the NIHR under coronavirus pandemic was tackled, and discussed the impact of the pandemic on expatriate workers

along with the efforts exerted by the competent authorities in the Kingdom in dealing with it, touching upon the regulations regarding workers housing and the appropriate conditions to avoid crowding and provide a healthy environment in the future.

7. The event shed light on the main challenges facing expatriate workers under the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and discussed the optimal means to strengthen the partnership between the relevant official entities and the civil society organizations, and the impact of the precautionary measures on enjoying human rights in general, and the expatriate workers rights in particular.
8. The NIHR roundtable concluded with a number of recommendations and suggestions aiming at articulating solutions to the challenges facing expatriate workers under the pandemic such as following up on their conditions, raising their awareness on their basic freedoms and rights, in addition to conducting field studies on the most affected sectors and workers.
9. In order to raise awareness on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the NIHR organized, in cooperation with Shaikha Hessa Girls School, an online lecture on “The Rights of the Child under the coronavirus pandemic”, which was attended by a number of the School’s teaching staff, observing the precautionary measures undertaken by the Kingdom to combat the spread of coronavirus through avoiding crowds, gatherings, meetings, and maintaining social distancing.
10. During the lecture, a detailed explanation was provided on the concepts, articles, and principles of the rights of the child in the international treaties and conventions, as well as the role of the NIHR in the field of protecting and promoting human rights, and the Kingdom of Bahrain efforts in the health and psychological care for children under coronavirus pandemic.
11. On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, the NIHR organized an online event on “Achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Human Rights Field”, to shed light on the distinguished role assumed by the Kingdom of Bahrain in dealing with coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, the national efforts to support empowerment of Bahraini women, and the values of peace, tolerance, and openness to others, personified by the Kingdom of Bahrain, and particularly the role of issuing the Bahrain Declaration on Religious Tolerance in 2017, whereby it affirmed what HRH King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa stated that the NIHR is a hub for expertise and consultancy, and that it was established for the benefit of all on this good earth, to contribute in ensuring human rights and freedoms for all citizens and residents, in accordance with the constitution and legislation. It was affirmed that the concerted efforts are crucial to settle, protect, and promote human rights for realizing the goals for which NIHR was established, and to make the culture of human rights part of the lifestyle for all.

12. During the event, it was assured that organizing such an event serves the principles and values conveyed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and transfers them into initiatives for development and preserving human dignity and safety. In addition to enhancing policies, developmental practices and permanent values exemplified in equality, justice, and human dignity to guarantee attaining the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by consolidating efforts and attaining more cooperation and coordination amongst all stakeholders be it the local or international entities relevant to human rights, to enable people to exercise their rights and enjoy them without any discrimination.
13. During the first theme of the event, the Ministry of Health confirmed the distinguished status of the Kingdom of Bahrain, through the efficient national efforts exerted and the high sense of responsibility in dealing with the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. Another issue tackled was the wisdom portrayed by the political leadership in managing, coordinating, and cooperating between the leadership and various stakeholders, proposing mechanisms to control the pandemic, building capabilities and medications, developing vaccines, and sustaining basic health services. During the second theme of this event, a briefing was presented on the national efforts carried on for sustaining progress in empowering Bahraini women. The third and last theme covered the values of peace and tolerance in the Bahrain Declaration on Religious Tolerance in 2017.
14. At the conclusion of the event, the NIHR extended appreciation and thanks for the intensive efforts and dedicated achievements for all the entities that helped in building the ecosystem of human rights and public freedoms. It was affirmed that “we all work hand in hand to build our nation, raise it high, elevate its institutions and shine its successes, so our flag remains bright in various fields of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural aspects”.
15. This event was organized as part of the strategy, action plan, and tasks of the NIHR for promoting and disseminating the culture of human rights by holding lectures, training and awareness programs, for various segments in the society on issues related to human rights. The participants included officials from various relevant ministries, entities, and institutions, along with representatives of the relevant civil society organizations, as well as the Head and members of the NIHR Council of Commissioners.



NIHR event titled “Achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Human Rights Field” on 13 December 2020

Third: Tweets and Public Awareness Messages in Social Media Channels

16. The right to health is considered one of the most important human rights, granted significant priority by all treaties and conventions because it closely relates to human life in general, and the human’s daily functions and activities, in particular, besides its reflection on the life within the family and the society. The Kingdom of Bahrain paid appropriate attention to this right, by availing qualified medical equipment and staff, as well as providing the required treatment and various medications.
17. In this context, the NIHR paid significant attention to educate the society and to raise awareness on coronavirus (COVID-19) disease in order to preserve the health and safety of citizens and residents by sending a number of public awareness announcements through various social media channels, posting video segments of its participation in the National Campaign for Combating coronavirus #TeamBahrain, and publishing awareness messages as follows:
 - The NIHR calls upon the citizens and residents to comply with social distancing to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in such a way that does not tarnish human dignity or prohibit individuals from enjoying their rights and freedoms.
 - Calling for cooperation with competent authorities for addressing the persons with special disabilities to protect them from the danger of being

infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) and cascade the precautionary measures in a suitable way with their disability.

- Enhancing cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the parents of the students during the precautionary measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), to ensure the continuation of the educational programs.
- Importance of finding equitable and fair solutions to guarantee the continuation of the educational programs during the precautionary measures undertaken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in such a way that guarantees educational future of the students is not adversely impacted.
- The importance of concerted societal efforts to raise awareness of the parents of the persons with disabilities who are unable to take care of themselves to follow the precautionary measures undertaken to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The importance of developing a full ecosystem for remote learning for all educational stages, without exception, in such a way to ensure the continued enjoyment of the right to education under all circumstances and at all times.
- The NIHR called for special protection of the elderly, because they will be subjected to serious threats if they were infected with coronavirus (COVID-19) variants and asked the elderly and their families to re-examine their daily health habits, in such a way to ensure their safety and protect them from being infected from the virus.
- The specialized international indices and reports on healthcare confirmed the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the highest international standards relating to raise the health awareness of the citizens and the residents, which is in synch with the significant attention the Kingdom of Bahrain assigns to attain the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly Goal 3 relating to “Good Health & Wellbeing”
- The NIHR called for the importance of raising the awareness of children in an easy and simple manner on all precautionary measures to protect them from, and prevent the spread of, coronavirus variants (COVID-19), in relevance to the provisions of the Child Law No. (37) of 2012, which guarantees the right of every child in several aspects, including the provision of adequate health care and social welfare.
- The communication strategies should include sign language in TV announcements to ensure that persons with disability are not excluded from receiving the health information, as well as websites easy to access and view by persons with various disabilities, and telephone services with text options for the deaf or hearing impaired persons.

- Preventing the gathering of more than 5 people in public spaces, as well as prohibiting gatherings in recreational facilities (parks) and public beaches was not instated to curtail the freedoms of individuals to move around but rather to curtail the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The NIHR called up the owners of commercial businesses to control prices and refrain from monopolistic practices especially for basic items during the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Be aware to get the news and information regarding coronavirus variant from the official accounts of the competent authorities, and avoid spreading rumors or false news that would harm the national efforts aimed at curtailing the spread of coronavirus variants.
- Do not ever hesitate to contact the NIHR through electronic communication channels in case any of your rights is offended or violated especially health and living rights linked to the current situation.
- The NIHR affirms the necessity to comply with the international protocols recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), and follow the implementation of all the adopted measures for the people in preventive quarantine, isolation and treatment facilities established to contain and prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) to ensure health and safety for all.
- The NIHR commends the frontline medical staff combating coronavirus variant (COVID-19), acknowledging their exerted efforts and noble sacrifices in all the glorified humanitarian duties they are performing, asserting the necessity to provide adequate protection and safeguard them and their families.
- The NIHR appeals to the persons in home quarantine to abide by the instructions issued by the official authorities, to protect themselves, their families, and society from the risk of transmission of the coronavirus variants (COVID-19) and calls on them to notify the competent authorities if they monitor any violation of the official instructions regarding combating coronavirus variant (COVID-19) in order to take action to protect them and their loved ones.
- Do not spread rumors about coronavirus variant (COVID-19), and seek official sources for the right health information.
- All the citizens and residents in the Kingdom of Bahrain have the right to receive the needed treatment and adequate health care.
- The NIHR will continue receiving the complaints and requests for help through different electronic means, via its free hotline (80001144), or mobile phone application (NIHR Bahrain).
- Forbidding visits to the inmates at detention centers is considered a temporary precautionary measure, and it does not offend or violate their

rights or their families' rights, while increasing their weekly phone call hours.

- Every citizen and resident is entitled to enjoy health care, and the country must protect public health and provide means for protection and treatment.
- Social distancing and self-isolation could be difficult for some persons with disabilities; thus it is a must to raise their awareness and their families' awareness on different means of protection and prevention from transmission of coronavirus.
- Guarantee your rights by contacting the NIHR through different electronic means, via its free hotline (80001144), or email (complaints@nihr.org.bh), or the mobile phone application (NIHR Bahrain).
- Provision of the right to health is considered a fundamental principle to be enjoyed among other rights, and the collaboration of all society members will contribute to maintain these rights by following the instructions and protocols issued by the competent authorities.
- Contribute to curtail the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) by not going out of the house except when needed, and complying by not attending public gatherings to protect the rights of everyone.

Fourth: Participation in Local and External Events

18. The NIHR was keen to attend and be locally and externally represented in various local, regional, and international forums of relevance to its work and stated tasks through participation in several seminars, workshops, training programs, and conferences. The NIHR participated in the 25th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF), held virtually (online) from the premises of the Forum in Sidney, Australia. The meeting was attended by members of all the national institutions in the APF. The NIHR delivered a presentation on its role in following precautionary measures that the Kingdom had undertaken to prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), and its impact to promote human rights, in addition to monitor its impact in ensuring that expatriate workers are enjoying their rights, expressing its willingness to share its experience in that area with the other members of the APF, offering to provide assistance and exchange know-how, to ensure everyone is receiving their right to health and medical care.

19. During the meeting, the budget of the APF was discussed and approved, and the APF role as a member of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), concerned with promoting human rights, also discussed preparations to convene the Coalition's annual meeting

virtually (online) in upcoming October, after it was postponed from last March because of coronavirus pandemic, and the current deliberations to determine a date for holding the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) remotely.

20. The NIHR participated in the seminar held virtually on “Human rights dimensions of COVID-19: role and experiences of National Human Rights Institutions”, organized by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Permanent Mission of Norway and the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations in Geneva. The discussions tackled the roles and experiences of the national institutions for human rights in mitigating the impact of coronavirus pandemic on human rights and compared the preliminary results of the research conducted by the Global Alliance and the High Commission for Human Rights.
21. In the same context, NIHR participated in a seminar held virtually via the internet organized by the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa – OHCHR on the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on human trafficking, where a number of presidents and members of the national institutions for human rights around the world participated.
22. The seminar discussed the impact of the current pandemic on human trafficking and means to mitigate its impact on trafficking victims by member countries and other stakeholders. In addition, the seminar also discussed the essential requirements for measures taken to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, and impact on human rights.
23. On another hand, the NIHR participated in the seminar organized remotely (online) by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (Social Affairs Division – Human Rights Department) covering the role of national human rights institutions at the times of crisis, attended by a number of presidents and representatives of institutions, councils, commissioners, authorities, and the national institutions for human rights in the member states of the Arab League.
24. The seminar discussed the current effort at the level of the League of Arab States to understand the social and economic implications of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the mechanisms to settle the impetus to overcome the crisis through a collaborative process that includes government authorities, national institutions, civil society organizations, private sector, and academic researchers, in addition to regional and international partners.
25. The NIHR delivered a presentation on its role during the coronavirus pandemic, by participating in raising awareness and educating the citizens

- and expatriates on the importance of adhering to the precautionary measures, in addition to conducting regular field visits to the correction, rehabilitation, isolation, and quarantine centers, and briefing on the utilization of alternative punishment which the Kingdom adopted.
26. The seminar included two themes, the first tackled the awareness, educational, and capacity building programs, focusing on the educational and advocacy role of the national institutions in addition to portraying the status of training and exchange of experiences at these institutions in crisis management. The second theme covered the future outlook and coordination mechanism between official authorities and its measures and the national human rights institutions and other competent entities.
 27. In addition, the NIHR participated virtually (online) in the annual meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), and related events, with the participation of all the national human rights institutions in the four regional groups: Asia Pacific, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. The meeting was held during the period 30 November to 4 December 2020.
 28. During the annual meeting, inaugurated by the President of the Global Alliance, Head of the Ecuador National Human Rights Institution, the Global Alliance Annual Report and Financial Report for the year 2019, and the Strategic Plan for 2020-2022 were approved. Two events were held during the Annual Meeting, focusing on “Knowledge Exchange and Good Practices: Implementing the mandate of national human rights institutions and their functions during the Covid-19 pandemic.”
 29. In the NIHR presentation, it was affirmed that the National Institution for Human Rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain, was and still is very active, working on monitoring the attainment of citizens and residents to receive adequate testing and treatment. The Kingdom accommodated the rights of expatriate workers exceptionally well by testing them and providing treatment as well as other health services always and free of charge. During the coronavirus pandemic, the NIHR also conducted several announced and unannounced field visits to quarantine and isolation centers, met with a number of medical staff and patients, and visited the correction, rehabilitation, and detention facilities, and met a number of inmates and detainees, whereby it looked at the measures taken by competent authorities to prevent the transmission of coronavirus. It also conducted a number of visits to expatriate workers housing to check the health measures adopted by the business owners to ensure a safe and healthy environment for them. During the meeting, a link to the report on the NIHR efforts during the covid-19 pandemic, which is available on its website, was sent to all the participants.

Table on the Number of Events Organized by the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) and the Number of Beneficiaries during 2020

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| No. of Events | 56 |
| No. of Beneficiaries | 1600 |

Table on Gender (Male/Female) Participation in the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) Organized Events during 2020

| Gender | Percentage (%) |
|---------|----------------|
| Males | 44% |
| Females | 56% |

Table on Types and Numbers of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) Organized Events during 2020

| Type | Number |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Awareness lectures | 43 |
| Workshops | 2 |
| Participation in local events | 1 |
| Competitions | 1 |

| Type | Number |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Roundtables | 1 |
| Training programs | 5 |
| Awareness campaigns | 1 |
| Celebrations | 2 |
| Total | 56 |

Table on the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) Organized Events and its Relevance to SDGs (Agenda 2030) during 2020

| SDGs | Number of Events |
|---|------------------|
| SDG 3: Good Health & Wellbeing | 8 |
| SDG 5: Gender Equality | 11 |
| SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation | 3 |
| SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities | 17 |
| SDG 16: Peace, Justice, & Strong Institutions | 9 |
| Partnerships for the Goals | 8 |
| Total | 56 |

Table on Number of Events and their Relevance to the Strategic Goals of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) during 2020

| Strategic Goal | Number of Events |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Environmental Impact on Human Rights | 7 |
| 2. Human Rights for Sustainable Economic Development | 7 |
| 3.The Right to Equal Opportunities | 9 |
| 4. Promotion of Human Rights Principles | 33 |
| Total | 56 |

Requirement Two

NIHR follow-up of strengthening efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the face of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

1. When the global spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) started, the Kingdom of Bahrain quickly established a national team to combat its spread. Several precautionary measures were put in place to limit the spread of the coronavirus, and a number of health isolation centers for the infected with the virus were established, in addition to a few other quarantine centers for those in contact with them.
2. All precautionary measures and decisions were issued by the Coordinating Committee headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa – the Crown Prince - Prime Minister, may God protect him, and came within the framework of combating the coronavirus (COVID-19), with the aim of preserving the health and safety of citizens and residents in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
3. All measures and decisions taken by the Country's supreme leadership in the context of combating the coronavirus were in line with international human rights standards, what the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called for, and the recommendations of the World Health Organization. They received a positive response from the Bahraini society, which played a major role in the success of societal partnership aimed at reducing the spread of the coronavirus.
4. The Kingdom of Bahrain has consistently selected balanced measures to a degree that guarantees the rights of individuals and protects the safety of society in line with what the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Bahrain has been keen not to impose any unnecessary and disproportionate restrictions. Rather, the Kingdom has motivated citizens and residents to stay home and away from gatherings by offering random financial rewards to those who adhere to safety and prevention measures without imposing a curfew throughout the Kingdom.
5. The government, represented by the Ministry of Health, has taken it upon itself to provide the necessary free medical care and services to all citizens and residents alike for confirmed observed cases, in implementation of the Royal Directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa - the King of the Country - may God protect and preserve him, where he directed the Ministry of Health to ensure the provision of medical care and health services for examination, quarantine and treatment to all citizens and residents in the Kingdom.

6. Activating the NIHR oversight role as its establishing law stipulates, and within its plan to follow up on the application of standards related to the promotion of human rights, especially considering the current circumstances, the NIHR monitored the activities and awareness campaigns carried out by the Kingdom of Bahrain in this regard.
7. The National Campaign to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19) issued a poster about the health requirements to be applied in facilities that contain beaches to limit the spread of the virus. Within the same matter, a comprehensive guide to the coronavirus has been issued, as well as an awareness poster about health requirements to be applied in facilities that contain pools and swimming pools, and an awareness poster about the health requirements to be applied in restaurants and coffee shops to contain and prevent the spread of the virus, and another poster about the return of sports activities, in addition to announcing the entry procedures for arrivals via the King Fahd Bridge, and issuing an awareness poster on "health requirements to be applied while shopping," and a poster on "preventive measures to be taken when purchasing some goods from commercial and industrial stores to contain and prevent the spread of the coronavirus."
8. Several awareness, indicative and illustrative posters were issued, namely: "Thank you for your commitment to wearing a mask"; "Thank you for your commitment to limiting community contact outside the same family"; "What should I do when I receive any shipment through delivery services?"; "What should I do in case symptoms such as fever, coughing and shortness of breath appear?"; "What should I do after I finish the voluntary home quarantine period?"; "What should I do if I want to go out for a bike ride or jogging?"; "What can I do to get health centers consultation remotely?"; "Methods to limit the spread of harmful viruses,"; "The need to follow awareness instructions"; "What do I do when sterilizing the house?"; "The precautionary measures to be followed in the workplace"; "Continuing adhering to the precautionary measures after taking the vaccination is a necessity, in order to preserve public safety"; "Household isolation guidelines"; and an awareness poster on "Health requirements to be applied when holding celebrations and family gatherings in homes."
9. The Kingdom of Bahrain has also provided all the necessary and awareness-raising instructions on various information platforms to enhance the culture of awareness toward vaccination and everything relating to the vaccine. The Kingdom of Bahrain intensified awareness campaigns, and communication with expatriate workers in their languages, through the Community Service Police that played an effective awareness role in this regard.
10. In a related context, and to promote the right to health considering the coronavirus pandemic, the Kingdom of Bahrain participated in the sixty-seventh session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional

Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, which was held virtually under the chairmanship of the Egyptian Minister of Health and Population, after being unanimously elected by the Committee. Ministers of Health, high-level representatives from twenty-two countries, partner and civil society organizations took part in the meeting.

11. The Kingdom of Bahrain also participated in the second meeting of the Facilitation Council of the initiative to accelerate the availability of tools to combat COVID-19, ACT-Accelerator, launched by the WHO with the aim of supporting research in the field of developing vaccines, anti-epidemic, and diagnostic drugs, in the presence of their Excellencies the Ministers and members of the Facilitation Council
12. The Kingdom of Bahrain also participated, via video conference, in the ninth meeting of the Advisory Technical Committee of the Council of Arab Health Ministers, where several important topics were discussed and reviewed, including the repercussions of the new coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on the health sector of the Arab region , the field of exchanging experiences, and exchanging national know-how on response to the novel coronavirus, in addition to the need for a multilateral response to the post COVID-19 pandemic.
13. In addition, the Kingdom of Bahrain participated in the official launch of the electronic training course entitled “Primary Health Care Practices”, prepared by the Regional Office of WHO for the Eastern Mediterranean and the partners represented in the World Organization of Family Physicians, and United Nations agencies, via virtual communication technology, in the presence of the regional directors of United Nations agencies, heads of other participating organizations, and ministers of health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The training aimed to support the efforts of primary health care staff to maintain basic services and to effectively assist in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The training came within the framework of the special regional action plan implementation of the global action program for the third goal of the sustainable development goals on the enjoyment of healthy lifestyles and prosperity for all; in addition, it focused on four main areas: maintaining basic health services, preventing (COVID-19) by supporting effective public health measures, diagnosing cases of coronavirus and ensuring their appropriate transfer , and the existing management of mild and moderate cases.
14. This primary health care training course was launched at a time where health systems in the region and outside are facing many challenges, including the real need to combat the coronavirus, and it came in line with the need to fully integrate primary health care into national response plans to COVID-19, which includes a holistic approach, where all levels of care are mobilized to complement each other.

CHAPTER TWO

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) General Efforts and Activities in the Field of Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

The provisions of Law No. (26) of 2014 establishing the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), reiterates the role of the NIHR in the field of protection and promotion of human rights. This chapter tackles the efforts and activities of NIHR in the field of protection and promotion of human rights in general along two topics, the first covers NIHR's efforts and activities in the field of protection of human rights and the second covers the efforts and activities exerted in the promotion of human rights.

First Topic

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) General Efforts and Activities in the Field of Protection of Human Rights

This topic demonstrates the efforts and activities exerted by NIHR in the field of protection of human rights in general – during the report period -by exhibiting an overview of total visits, announced and unannounced, which NIHR conducted to correction, rehabilitation, and detention centers under requirement one, while requirement two tackles the received complaints and the legal assistance provided and monitoring cases.

Requirement One

Announced and Unannounced Visits to Correction, Rehabilitation, and Detention Centers

1. The provisions of Law No. (26) of 2014 establishing the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), reiterates the role of NIHR in the field of protection of human rights by receiving the complaints relating to human rights, conducting field visits to monitor conditions of human rights in all the places susceptible to witness potential violations of human rights, as well as monitoring incidents of violations of human rights, and carry on the needed investigation about them.
2. Concerning the field visits, as one of the available monitoring means to NIHR, according to item (g) of Article (12) of the said law regarding its tasks in **“To conduct field visits in accordance with the applicable principles in order**

to monitor human rights situation in correctional institutions, detention centers, labor gatherings, health and education centers, or any other public place in which it is suspected that human rights violations are committed.”

3. This text confirms the need to expand tasks in the field of protection of human rights in a way that complies with international decisions in this regard. The protection required goes beyond receiving complaints, extending to systematic follow up of the case representing the situation of the human rights and document it in different ways and means, because monitoring is necessary to ensure the extent and degree of the Country’s respect to its legal or international commitments related to human rights.
4. In order to execute these tasks stipulated by the law, the NIHR played a major role in the protection of human rights by conducting announced and unannounced field visits to monitor human rights conditions. To focus on NIHR task to conduct visits, and to intensify the visits, a Detention & Facilities Visitation Committee was formulated composed of a number of members from the Council of Commissioners. A total of (23) visits were conducted as follows:

| # | Entity Visited | Day | Date |
|---|--|----------|------------------|
| 1 | Police Directorate of Southern Governorate | Sunday | 12 January 2020 |
| 2 | Temporary Detention Center | Monday | 10 February 2020 |
| 3 | Detention Center Temporary | Thursday | 26 March 2020 |
| 4 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Monday | 6 April 2020 |
| 5 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Tuesday | April 2020 |
| 6 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Sunday | 5 July 2020 |

| # | Entity Visited | Day | Date |
|----|---|-----------|-------------------|
| 7 | Shelter and Deportation Center (foreign Men) | Tuesday | 7 July 2020 |
| 8 | Shelter and Deportation Center (foreign Women) | Tuesday | 7 July 2020 |
| 9 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Saturday | 25 July 2020 |
| 10 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Wednesday | 26 August 2020 |
| 11 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center (Women) | Wednesday | 26 August 2020 |
| 12 | Temporary Detention Center | Wednesday | 26 August 2020 |
| 13 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Friday | 28 August 2020 |
| 14 | Temporary Detention Center- convicted section (young offenders) | Friday | 28 August 2020 |
| 15 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Saturday | 29 August 2020 |
| 16 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center (Women) | Saturday | 29 August 2020 |
| 17 | Temporary Detention Center | Saturday | 29 August 2020 |
| 18 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Saturday | 29 August 2020 |

| # | Entity Visited | Day | Date |
|----|--|-----------|-------------------|
| 19 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Sunday | 20 September 2020 |
| 20 | Shelter and Deportation Center (foreign Men) | Monday | 21 September 2020 |
| 21 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Monday | 19 October 2020 |
| 22 | Correction and Rehabilitation Center | Monday | 23 November 2020 |
| 23 | Shelter and Deportation Center (foreign Women) | Wednesday | 30 December 2020 |

5. A delegation from the NIHR monitored the general conditions of these centers and met with some convicted or detained persons – according to availability- and listened to their demands. The delegation also discussed their conditions with the responsible officers on duty in these centers. The NIHR was keen to monitor and follow up all the matters with relevant parties at the Ministry of Interior.

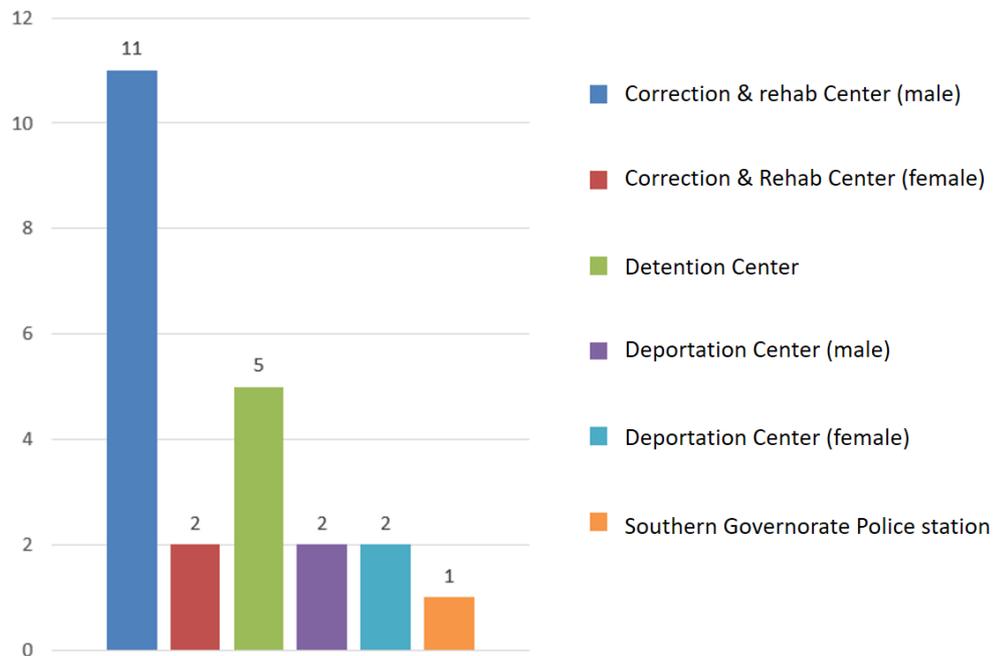


Diagram for Number of Visits conducted by the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) to Correction, Rehabilitation, and Detention Centers during 2020

Requirement Two

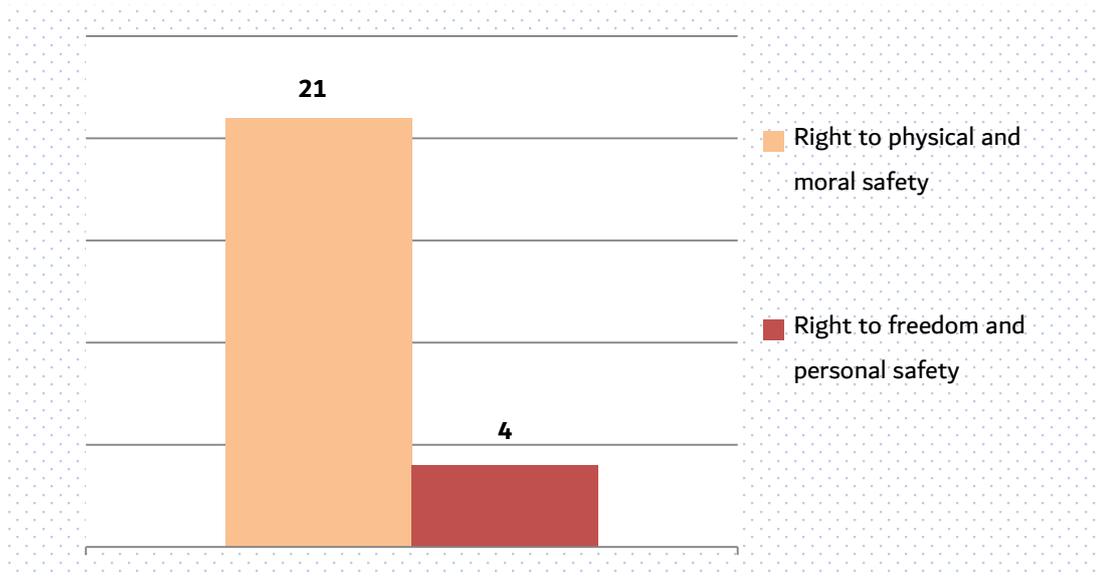
Complaints Received, Legal Aid Extended and Monitored Cases

First: Complaints Received

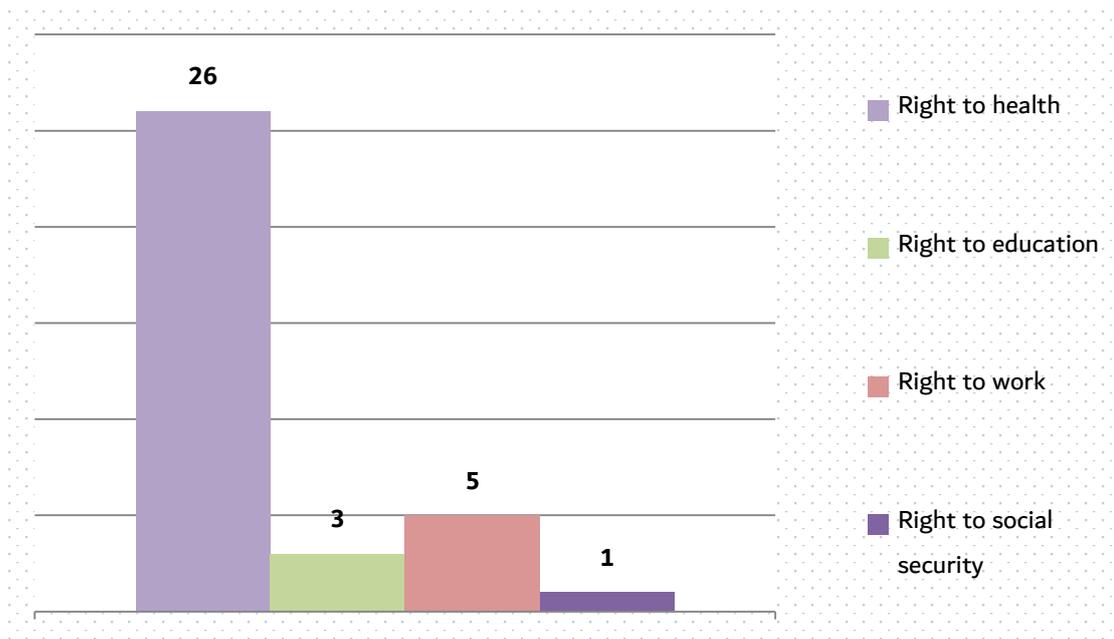
- Article No. (12) of the provisions of Law No. (26) of 2014 establishing the NIHR, as amended by Decree-Law No. (20) of 2016, in paragraph (E) thereof stipulates the NIHR is competent to: **“Monitor cases of human rights violations, conduct the necessary investigation, and draw attention of the competent authorities to them, while submitting proposals related to initiatives aimed at putting an end to these cases, and, when necessary, expressing opinion on the position and reactions of those bodies.”** Also, Paragraph (f) of the same article states its authority to **“receive complaints related to human rights, studying and researching them and referring what the institution deems to be referred to the competent authorities with effective follow-up, or informing those concerned of the**

procedures to be followed, and assisting them in taking them, or assisting, with the concerned parties, in settling them.”

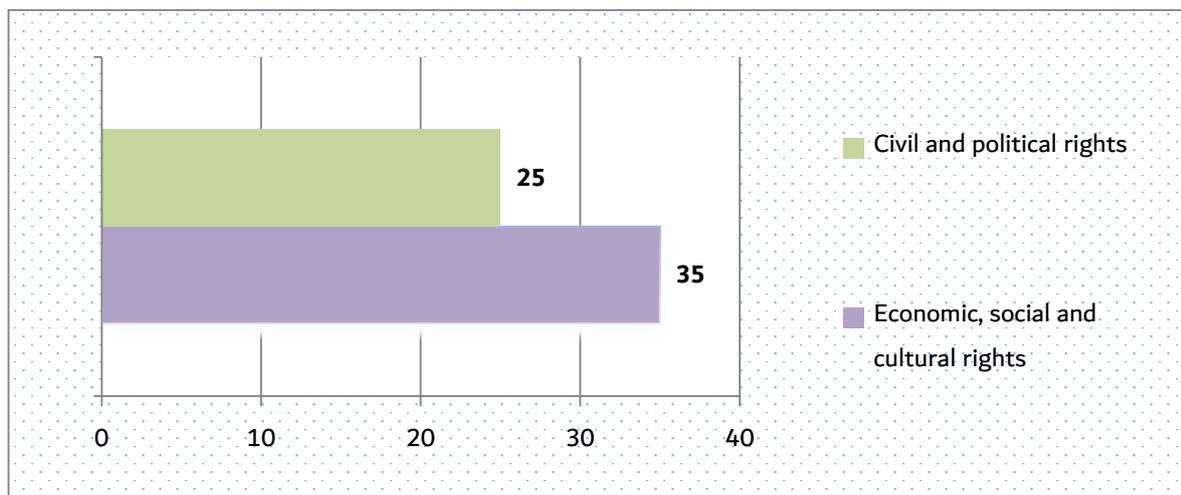
7. The NIHR paid great attention to receiving and studying all kinds of complaints related to human rights, referring what it deems to be referred to the competent authorities, with effective follow-up on its part; or informing the concerned parties of the procedures to be followed, assisting in taking these procedures, or helping with the concerned authorities in settling them. In the year 2020, the NIHR dealt with (53) complaints that varied from rights alleged to have been violated and claims of more than one right being violated. The total number of allegations of rights not applied amounted to (60) allegations in the year 2020.
8. Complaints relating to civic and political rights totaled (25), of which (21) complaints related to the right of physical and moral safety, one about fair trial guarantees, and four complaints concerning the right to freedom and personal security.
9. Complaints relating to economic, social and cultural rights, received by the NIHR amounted to (35) complaints, of which (26) were about the right to health, (5) relating to the right to work, (3) concerning the right to education, and one relating to the right to social security.



Graph of the number of complaints received by the NIHR relevant to civic and political rights during the year 2020



Graph of the number of complaints received by NIHR relating to economic, social, and cultural rights during the year 2020



Graph of the number of complaints received by the NIHR relating to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights

Second: Legal aid relating to human rights extended

10. Based on the provisions of Law No. (26) of 2014 establishing the NIHR, as amended by Decree-Law No. (20) of 2016, the NIHR plays a role in providing legal aid to any individual or party, be it filing a complaint showing the NIHR's lack of competence in its view, or requesting such legal aid in the beginning, by providing insight into the procedures to be followed and assisting in taking them before resorting to the NIHR, explaining the necessity of exhausting all avenues of redress and administrative or legal grievance, as warranted, submitting a report to the competent authorities, or resort to another authority with established jurisdiction in considering the request.
11. In this regard, the NIHR extended legal aid to (564) cases, some relating to personal issues or disputes between individuals, topics considered before a judicial or administrative investigation authority, some in which the competent authority has discretion as issues of nationality, residence, releasing convicts or detainees, replacing the remainder of their sentence, examining whether or not the accusation has been proven true, or issues that the NIHR has no jurisdiction over as they occurred outside the territorial borders of the Kingdom. Communication was established with the concerned authorities with regard to some of them for humanitarian reasons.
12. Among the aid provided by the NIHR, was a request by a Bahraini woman, custodian of her children from her non-Bahraini ex-husband who resides outside the Kingdom, to help her complete the legal procedures with the competent authorities, which require the presence of her ex-husband, so that she can obtain the subsidy provided by the Kingdom for electricity and water services.
13. Through its human rights website, and from a purely humanitarian standpoint, the NIHR contacted the Information and e-Government Authority to find an appropriate solution, as the Authority showed great deal of responsible cooperation, which led to the success of the efforts of both parties.
14. In a tweet on the subject, the NIHR valued the efforts of the Information and e-Government Authority employees, their fast response and constructive cooperation, which reflects the extent of the authority's interest and keenness to protect human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
15. The NIHR affirmed its continued constructive cooperation with all in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and its steadfast approach to work to protect and promote human rights.

Third: Monitored Cases

a. [Monitoring human rights situation in the centers affiliated with the Ministry of Interior](#)

16. On different occasions, the NIHR monitored inmate conditions in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, which related to allegations that some inmates did not receive treatment and health care. As a result, the NIHR communicated with those concerned in the center, and it was emphasized that all inmates receive treatment and health care without any discrimination.
17. In the same regard, the NIHR monitored the allegations circulating on some social media sites about an inmate, (A.A.A), at the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, not receiving treatment and health care.
18. About that, the NIHR tweeted that it had tweeted twice on the same allegation, on January 22, and February 13, and that it conducted immediate contact with those concerned in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center.
19. The response received from the Center stated that the inmate was examined in the Center's infirmary, as he was complaining from pain and swelling in one foot. Pain killers were prescribed to the inmate, and he was transferred to radiology where an X-Ray showed he had no injury.
20. The NIHR stresses the importance of resorting to official channels that have jurisdiction in such allegations, and not to circulate unreliable information and stir up public opinion.
21. The NIHR also monitored an allegation about a strike by several detainees in the pre-trial detention center (Dry Dock), due to reducing the hours of sun exposure time to one hour per day. The NIHR contacted the concerned authorities and conducted a field visit to the Center, and tweeted that the claim was inaccurate, as it became clear to the NIHR, after its visit to the Center, and after conducting several personal interviews with some of the detainees - in private - that what was circulated on social media is incorrect, as the NIHR verified that sun exposure rights were granted. The detainees in the pre-trial detention center enjoy the right to be exposed to sun for the period stipulated by the organizing internal regulations, as it has not been reduced as claimed. The NIHR indicated in its tweet what it saw during its visit, and that no restrictions were placed on the detainees during their practice of sports in the period of exposure to sun.
22. One of the monitored cases revolved around the allegation that several inmates in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center (Jau District) refused to communicate with their families due to their deprivation of religious rites and the failure to provide them with treatment and hygiene materials. Immediately, a delegation from the NIHR visited the Center to ensure that inmates enjoy their rights and are not subjected to ill-treatment, and that their treatment meets the United Nations minimum Standards for the treatment of prisoners, and the executive regulations for Correction and Rehabilitation Centers. Several protesting inmates were interviewed, where it appeared that

they were not subjected to any violations, ill-treatment, or deprivation of the stipulated public rights. Several inmates who met with the NIHR's delegation expressed their satisfaction with the level of services and facilities provided by the administration of the Center to ensure that the inmates continue practicing their religious rites.

23. On the other hand, the NIHR monitored allegations that several inmates in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center are not permitted to practice religious rites. It contacted the concerned parties immediately and posted a tweet stressing that inmates are free to practice their religious rites without discrimination in accordance with the principles and foundations avowed in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the relevant laws and legislations, and in line with the organizational and executive regulations of the correction and rehabilitation centers.
24. During the visit, the NIHR's delegation was briefed on previous documentation of inmates practicing rituals in a manner that does not harm or infringe on the freedom and privacy of other inmates of all religions and sects to practice their rituals, and in a way that ensures the preservation of the security and safety of inmates and employees.
25. The NIHR's delegation also contacted the dermatology consultants at the Al-Salmaniya Medical Complex, who confirmed inmates were constantly examined by them, and treatment would be given to them according to each case, explaining that there were no skin diseases such as scabies, and that cases do not exceed eczema or usual skin allergies. The inmates valued the precautionary measures taken to limit the spread of the coronavirus, especially the provision of video communications in the previous months. The NIHR's reports of the visits confirm that necessary measures were taken to examine about 925 inmates by doctors and consultants, whether in the medical infirmary in (Jau) or through medical consultations via video conferencing.
26. In the same context, the NIHR monitored the allegations circulated on some social media platforms that several inmates of the Correction and Rehabilitation Center suffered from a skin disease and were transferred to the isolation center without being treated. Through its human rights website, and emanating from its supervisory responsibility, the NIHR immediately communicated with those concerned at the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, who confirmed that several inmates had a skin disease and confirmed that they were all referred to medical consultants at Al-Salmaniya Medical Complex, where they were examined, and the appropriate treatment was given to them.
27. The NIHR, while affirming that the right to receive treatment is one of the basic rights guaranteed to inmates, called on the inmates with skin disease

to follow the instructions of the treating physicians in order to achieve the required benefit from the treatment.

28. The NIHR also tweeted that those 925 inmates from the Correction and Rehabilitation Center in the Jau District were examined by doctors during the period from 9 to 15 July 2020, and appropriate medicines were dispensed to them. Required health services were given to (22) inmates who are diabetic, and (34) inmates suffering from skin problems or allergies were examined by consultant doctors from Al- Salmaniya Medical Complex and were given the appropriate treatment.
29. The NIHR noted that doctors are the only ones who decide the treatment plan and medical care according to the diagnosis and the medical protocol followed for each case and confirmed that it will continue to meet directly with the inmates, listen to their observations, receive requests for assistance from them, and coordinate directly with the management of the Center to ensure the right to health for all.
30. On a related level, the NIHR monitored allegations circulated on some social media platforms about an increase in the local communication tariff at the inmates Correction and Rehabilitation Center, in addition to a claim that some inmates were deprived of their right to communicate with the outside world through phone calls with their families. Immediately, the NIHR contacted the concerned authorities to establish the facts of the allegations. It was found that there were no changes in the tariff for local communications and that communications take place as scheduled and at the assigned times, and that it was planned according to a new administrative system that simulates what is in place in most of the correction and rehabilitation centers around the world, where a set of phone numbers of persons the inmate wishes to communicate with is specified in advance.
31. In this regard, the NIHR noted that, by viewing CCTV surveillance cameras in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, it monitored a group of inmates vandalizing and destroying communication devices available for use by everyone, which casts a shadow on the right of the rest of the inmates to communicate with the outside world.
32. The NIHR called for peaceful and civilized means in expressing the objection of some inmates to the new communication system, through direct dialogue with the administration of the Correction and Rehabilitation Center without resorting to vandalism, which makes them accountable for their actions and deprives the rest of the inmates of their right to communicate.
33. The NIHR also stressed the importance of resorting to official channels that have jurisdiction over such allegations, and not to circulate unreliable information and stir up public opinion.
34. The NIHR also monitored an allegation about depriving an inmate from visitation rights without explaining the reasons. At the time, the NIHR

contacted the concerned authorities, and it was found that the inmate had an administrative ruling depriving him of visitation rights for two times for assaulting another inmate and inflicting injuries on him. The NIHR posted a tweet on the matter.

35. The NIHR has also monitored what was reported on social media about an inmate going on a hunger strike due to his transfer to solitary confinement. As a result, the NIHR contacted the concerned authorities in a timely manner, and it was found that the inmate was transferred to solitary confinement for two days as a disciplinary penalty for not following the internal procedures and regulations of the center, which are stipulated in the Law of the Correction and Rehabilitation center and the accompanying executive regulations.
36. One of the monitored cases was circulated on social media and revolved around an audio recording of one of the inmates, claiming that he was denied adequate treatment and health care. Acting on that, the NIHR contacted those concerned in the management of the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, where it was found that the inmate was checked up in the center's internal clinic. He will also undergo all necessary medical analysis, and then transferred to a specialized surgery and endoscopy doctor in one of the public hospitals in the Kingdom.
37. Regarding that, the center's management confirmed that the inmate visited the center's clinic three times, public hospitals four times and the Public Security Center's clinic once. The NIHR stressed that it will firmly deal with any allegations relating to violations of individuals' rights, fulfilling its legal duty and its broad mandate.
38. An allegation was also made that one of the inmates had dental problems and that no treatment was provided to him. As a result, the NIHR contacted the management of the Correction and Rehabilitation Center, where on-duty doctor ascertained inmate's health condition, while the Center's health affairs department stated that the inmate visited the clinic on October 25, 26 and 27, 2020, and was examined by the dentist and the necessary treatment was extended to him.
39. In the same context, the NIHR monitored an allegation that an inmate with a knee injury was denied treatment. But considering insufficient data on the claim, the NIHR called on the inmate's relative through a tweet to communicate directly with the NIHR via the free hotline and provide it with information on the inmate's case, so that it can follow-up on his status with the competent authorities. His family interacted with the NIHR's tweet and contacted it via the Call and Complaints Center to complete the inmate's data. Accordingly, the NIHR contacted those concerned at the Correction and Rehabilitation Center to enquire about the inmate's health status, where it

was confirmed that he was examined in the internal clinic of the Center, and the necessary treatment was dispensed to him.

40. On the same subject, the NIHR tweeted its thanks to the family of (H.A.), the inmate with knee injury for its fast response to the NIHR's call on them to complete the relevant information concerning his health status. The NIHR made sure that the inmate was examined in the Center's internal clinic where treatment was dispensed to him. He was transferred to the Police clinic where he was examined by an orthopedic doctor. The inmate's mother was contacted and briefed about her son's status where she confirmed that he's receiving treatment and thanked the NIHR for its efforts in this regard.
41. The NIHR also dealt with an allegation that the management of the Correction and Rehabilitation Center failed to provide an inmate with rubber supports for his crutch. Immediately, the NIHR contacted those concerned in the Correction and Rehabilitation Center's management, where it was found that despite the presence of an assigned person in all wards, whose responsible for following up on the health conditions of the inmates and their requests, the aforementioned inmate did not request anything from the management of the Center in this regard, and that as soon as the NIHR communicated the matter to the management of the Center, procedures began to provide an alternative to the rubber supports for the inmate.
42. In another tweet, the NIHR called upon inmates to submit requests for assistance directly to the management of the Center, so the necessary services could be provided to them directly, stressing continuation of its constructive cooperation with everyone, and its steadfast approach to working to protect and promote human rights.
43. One of the monitored cases focused on allegations circulated on some social media platforms about the poor quality of food provided to inmates in the Jau Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, as well as its lack of variety, and insufficient quantity. From its human rights position, and emanating from its oversight responsibility, the NIHR immediately paid a field visit to the Center during mealtime. Food provided was inspected to determine the validity of the allegations made.
44. The NIHR found that some meals need special measures, whether when distributing or serving them, so that their quality is not affected before they reach the inmates. Also, the NIHR met several inmates, representatives of the wards, whose demands were mainly limited to increasing the quantity of food allocated to each inmate, improve its quality, and reconsider the way meals are served.
45. The NIHR stressed the importance of securing a healthy environment for inmates which requires provision of healthy and sufficient food, which is considered a priority in the NIHR's work in the field of human rights protection.

It met with those concerned in the Center and informed them of the need to take the necessary action regarding the quality and quantity of food.

46. Complementing its role in following up on the evolvement of the issue, the NIHR conducted another field visit during the time of serving the main meal, to find out whether the previous visit made a difference and inspect the meals to ensure that the situation was addressed, to secure a healthy environment for the inmates and provide appropriate healthy food.
47. The NIHR noticed an improvement in the quality of the food provided, a change in the way food is preserved and offered so that it will not become spoiled, an increase in the amount of food allocated to each inmate, and the provision of special healthy meals in an appropriate manner for the inmates. It also met with some of the inmates who confirmed the change in terms of quality, quantity, and method of serving food.
48. The NIHR posted on its twitter account allegations circulated on some social media about the poor quality of food served to inmates at the Correction and Rehabilitation Center (Jau Prison). It visited the Center to inspect the food, where met with a group of inmates who are representatives of the wards to learn about their requests. After that, it communicated with those concerned in the Ministry of Interior, where they showed remarkable and responsible cooperation, noting that they followed up on the improvement of the quality of food provided to inmates with suppliers and the competent authorities, to achieve a satisfactory result for all parties.
49. In a related context, the NIHR monitored another allegation about flooding of the sewers in one of the buildings of the Reform and Rehabilitation Center. It immediately contacted the management of the Reform and Rehabilitation Department to clarify the situation; it turned out that there was a problem in the pipes and work was underway to solve it.
50. One of the monitored cases concerned the detention of a child less than 10 years of age. The NIHR immediately communicated with the relevant authorities (Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments - Public Prosecution) and concerted efforts resulted in the release of the child.

b. Monitoring allegations of external organizations regarding the human rights situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain

51. The NIHR took notice of allegations and media statements made by several non-governmental organizations abroad regarding the human rights situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which were broadcast on the Qatari Al-Jazeera channel, in addition to the allegations of these organizations, which lack credibility and moderation, about democracy, economic conditions, and freedom of expression and opinion in Bahrain.
52. Emanating from its human rights and oversight role, and its broad powers confirmed by its establishing law, and in addition to its commitment to

transparency, responsibility and credibility in monitoring and transferring information on human rights situation in Bahrain, inside and outside detention centers, the NIHR confirms that the Kingdom of Bahrain has become a role model in political and democratic reform, respect for human rights and public freedoms, and the consolidation of the rule of law and constitutional institutions under the prosperous covenant of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa - the King of the Country, may God protect and preserve him, amid regional and international praise for its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development as part of its national program. Since the launch of the reform project in 2001, His Majesty the King affirmed that the approach to respecting human rights is Bahrain's strategy in strengthening the state of institutions and law in accordance with well-established national constants, which exist and are well-established throughout history and since the establishment of the modern state.

53. The NIHR believes that the precautionary and proactive measures and procedures taken by the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa – the Crown Prince - Prime Minister, to preserve the health and safety of society by raising the degree of preparedness to confront the coronavirus since its spread, and the launch of a wide package of decisions, precautionary measures and preventive measures that took into account all human rights, contributed greatly to reducing the negative damage caused by this virus, and reflected the deep belief of the political leadership in human dignity, its respect for human rights and its commitment to protecting them, sparing no effort to maintain, respect and promote these rights.
54. The interest and commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the promotion and protection of human rights is genuine, constant, and continuous, as national legislation reflects respect of rights and freedoms, especially legislation relating to freedom of opinion and belief, guaranteeing the rights of national and expatriate workers, supporting associations and unions and criminalizing trafficking in persons.
55. The NIHR calls on those organizations once again - and as it has many times before - to adhere to the lofty values and principles of human rights, apply the standards and controls set by the United Nations as a framework in accordance with the community partnership system, obtain information from reliable sources, and adhere to the principles that befit sincere human rights work far from political interests.
56. The NIHR confirms that it firmly deals with any infringements or violations of human rights in accordance with the terms of reference entrusted to it in the law of its establishment and in a manner that is consistent with the obligations of the Kingdom of Bahrain resulting from its accession or ratification of the relevant international conventions. And at the same time, it calls on all the

bodies making these misleading allegations to commit to professionalism and full accuracy, and to be keen on communicating in the future with independent authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain, especially the NIHR, as it is an independent entity of the executive authority, and a national mechanism approved by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, to verify any allegations before including them in their reports and statements. The NIHR is fully prepared to cooperate with all parties and organizations with the aim of revealing the truth and protecting human rights.

c. Monitoring the human rights situation related to migrant workers

57. Within the framework of the NIHR's efforts to protect the rights of expatriate workers, the NIHR monitored a hotel exploiting a Thai woman and forcing her to work in the field of prostitution. The NIHR contacted the concerned parties in the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT), affiliated with the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA). Subsequently, she was transferred to the Authority's shelter center.

58. In the same context, the NIHR monitored an allegation of a foreigner, claiming the death of his brother while working in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and that legal measures were not taken. Immediately, the NIHR contacted those concerned in the Public Prosecution and the response came that the accused responsible for the incident is known, and legal measures were taken against him. The case was referred to the competent court.

d. Monitoring the human rights situation relating to the rights of persons with disabilities

59. As part of the NIHR's efforts to protect the rights of people with disabilities, it monitored an allegation of a person neglecting his disabled son. The NIHR subsequently addressed the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to consider his situation, but it did not receive a response until the reporting period.

e. Monitoring the human rights situation relating to the right to health

60. The NIHR monitored the news on the death of a resident in the Kingdom of Bahrain because of the refusal of a private hospital to admit him and provide him with appropriate health care. From its human rights standpoint and its supervisory responsibility, the NIHR confirmed that it is actively following the developments of the incident and the results of the investigation with the relevant authorities, expressing at the same time its appreciation of health professions and services, and valuing the (LMRA) fast response to the case by opening an investigation into the incident.

61. Another case concerned an allegation of a violation of the privacy of a patient in the Al- Salmaniya Medical Complex. As a result, the NIHR established

immediate contact with the concerned persons in the Al- Salmaniya Medical Complex, and it was found that the administration had taken the necessary measures on the matter.

62. Activating the NIHR's oversight role in following up on human rights situation, specifically the right to health, the NIHR tweeted the death of two twins at Al-Salmaniya Medical Complex, in which it stated that the NIHR followed up the sad news about the death of the newborn twins, and the circumstances and developments of the tragic incident, and offered sincere condolences and sympathy to their family. The NIHR also stressed its close follow-up of the investigations with the concerned authorities until truth is reached and justice achieved.
63. The NIHR noted the importance of preserving the rights of the child, especially the right to primary health care and the right to life, stressing the need for everyone to be responsible, as human rights are indivisible, and an infant has full rights that do not differ from the rights of any other human being.

f. [Monitoring the human rights situation relating to the right to an adequate standard of living](#)

64. Within the framework of the NIHR's continuous endeavor to protect human rights, in particular the right to an adequate standard of living being one of the most important requirements for achieving human dignity for the individual, represented in the right to obtain adequate housing, the NIHR played an important role by monitoring the living conditions of citizens and residents, as it monitored eleven (11) cases that varied between families on housing waiting lists for many years, some of whom live in dilapidated homes, and others supporting sons with disabilities. The Ministry of Housing was contacted about them, but the NIHR is yet to receive a response from them.
65. On a related level, the NIHR monitored news about the presence of two women in a house belonging to heirs, and that power supply was cut off for 30 days due to a family feud. Accordingly, the NIHR contacted the two women and informed them of the procedures to be followed in such cases.
66. In addition, the NIHR monitored an allegation about the existence of sewage problems in one of the areas of the Northern Governorate. Accordingly, the NIHR addressed the Ministry of Works and Municipalities Affairs to investigate the matter. The Ministry responded and indicated that the mentioned areas will be connected to the sewage networks as soon as the tender is awarded. The Ministry affirmed its endeavor to provide its quality services to all citizens.
67. The NIHR also monitored on a social media site news that an Omani widow whose housing application was put on hold since the death of her Bahraini

husband, on the pretext that her children have not yet reached the legal age to transfer the housing application to them.

68. The NIHR considers that the right to an adequate standard of living is one of the main rights, which the State must take the initiative to grant to individuals by providing adequate and decent housing, adequate water and food, in addition to enjoying a clean environment, and to improving the infrastructure of sewage networks, roads, and bridges to ensure their good health and well-being, and that of their families.
69. Accordingly, the Bahraini Constitution guarantees access to the right to housing as an element of the right to an adequate standard of living, as Paragraph (f) of Article No. (9) stipulates that, **“the state shall work to provide housing for low-income citizens,”** while Paragraph (g) stipulates that, **“the state shall take the necessary measures to achieve the productive cultivation of arable lands...”** and Paragraph (h) states that, **“the state shall take the necessary measures to preserve the environment and preserve wildlife.”**
70. This was followed by national legislation, where Decree-Law No. (10) of 1976, amended by Law No. (7) of 2009 regarding housing, and Resolution No. (909) of 2015 regarding the housing system, regulated all issues related to housing services provided by the State.

g. Monitoring the human rights situation relating to the right to freedom and personal security

71. The NIHR has followed with great interest the issue of the suffering of Bahraini fishermen and sailors because of the Qatari Coast Guard patrols pursuing them while they are fishing in different areas of the territorial waters of the Kingdom of Bahrain. These pursuits resulted in physical, moral, and material harm that constituted risk to their lives depriving them of their freedom and personal security, and inflicting great deal of material losses resulting from cutting off their only source of livelihood and the livelihood of their families.
72. The NIHR regretted these actions carried out by the Qatari authorities, which violate all humanitarian principles and values sanctioned by international conventions, as well as violating the most important humanitarian principle, which is the principle of good neighborliness, and violating a set of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the most important of which is the right to life and the right to personal security, the right to work and freedom of movement within the territorial borders of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which are guaranteed by international human rights covenants.

73. Accordingly, the NIHR emphasized the importance of respecting human rights based on the principles contained in international human rights instruments and covenants, as what happened, and its continuation constitutes a clear violation of human rights endangering the lives of innocent people. The NIHR called on the concerned authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain to take all measures aiming at protecting the rights of Bahraini fishermen and seafarers and to provide a safe environment for them to exercise their right to work and fish in the territorial waters of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

h. Attending court hearings to ensure fair trial guarantees

74. In the same context relating to the protection of human rights, the NIHR attended twenty (20) court hearings, including four (4) hearings of defendants in the case of forgery of prescriptions and trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances. The NIHR also attended a court session of a female defendant accused of public defamation, dissemination of false news and misuse of means of communication, in addition to attending the hearing of the request for reconsideration submitted to the Court of Cassation regarding two convicted in the case of killing a policeman and attempted murder of other police officer by carrying out a terrorist bombing, as a final verdict had already been issued against them. However, the Court of Cassation referred the case to the Court of Appeal to consider it again after accepting a request for reconsideration submitted by the Public Prosecution in accordance with the legal procedures followed in this regard.

75. The NIHR also attended four (4) hearings for the purpose of observing its course and the availability of fair trial guarantees for the parties to the case in general. In addition, the NIHR attended four (4) sessions in the case of forging official documents and kidnapping a child, five (5) hearings in the case of giving and inciting false testimony, three (3) sessions of the hearings of three doctors and a nurse in the case of wrongfully causing the death of the twins.

76. In this regard, the NIHR affirms that its attendance at the trial sessions comes for the purpose of reviewing and verifying the validity of the judicial procedures and providing fair trial guarantees for the accused. The NIHR believes that the procedures of the competent court and its interaction with the course of the trial - in the cases it attended - took into account the basic principles of human rights and established legal controls, in addition to activating fair trial guarantees, as the sessions were public, and the defense team was allowed to attend and question and cross question witnesses, and their requests and statements were heard, in addition to allowing the accused to speak before the court.

77. The NIHR noted though, that the presence of the representative of the Public Prosecution during the trial sessions in an alleviated position from the defense, near the court, and sitting throughout the trial period, while the accused and defense bodies were standing before the court, may be considered a form of inequality between parties, and impartiality between opponents.
78. The NIHR considers the right to a fair trial as a standard of international human rights law, aimed at protecting people from derogation of their rights related to their legal status before the judiciary, and an essential pillar of the fair trial pillars stipulated in international instruments starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article No. (1/1) stating that: "... he (i.e. the opponent) shall be ensured the necessary guarantees for his defense," and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in Article No. (1/1) stipulating that: "All people are equal before the judiciary. In deciding any criminal charge against him or his rights and obligations in any civil action, every individual has the right to have his case heard in a fair and public manner by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law."
79. That was followed by Paragraph No. (3/b) of the Declaration stipulating "that he be given enough time and facilities to prepare his defense ...". The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain also affirmed the right to defense in Article No. (20/C) by stipulating that: "... guarantees necessary for the exercise of the right of defense shall be provided to him."

Second Topic

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) General Efforts and Activities in the Field of Promotion of Human Rights

This topic covers the NIHR efforts and activities performed in the field of promoting human rights in general – during the report period – by listing the announcements issued on the occasion of celebrating various international, regional, and national days in the first requirement, followed by detailing the TV, radio, and journal interviews in the second requirements, followed by presenting in the third requirement all the various events and training programs conducted by the NIHR; and finally dedicating requirement four to showcase the NIHR participation in different local and external events related to human rights.

Requirement One

Information on International, Regional and National Days

1. The NIHR was fully engaged with occasions and international and regional days related to promoting human rights, as such it issued during the year 2020 a total of 23 announcements for its celebrations of various international, regional, and national days, to raise awareness on these days and occasions and show their importance, as follows:

| Occasion | Date |
|--|-------------------|
| International Days | |
| International Women Day | 8 March 2020 |
| International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination | 21 March 2020 |
| World Autism Awareness Day | 2 April 2020 |
| World Health Day | 7 April 2020 |
| Labor Day | 1 May 2020 |
| World Press Freedom Day | 3 May 2020 |
| World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development | 21 May 2020 |
| World Environment Day | 5 June 020 |
| World Day against Trafficking in Persons | 30 July 2020 |
| International Day of Democracy | 15 September 2020 |
| International Day of Older Persons | 1 October 2020 |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| International Day of the Girl Child | 11 October 2020 |
| United Nations Day | 24 October 2020 |
| International Children's Day | 20 November 2020 |
| International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women | 25 November 2020 |
| International Day of Persons with Disabilities | 3 December 2020 |
| Human Rights Day | 10 December 2020 |

| Regional | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Arab Day for Human Rights | 16 March 2020 |

| National | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| A Day for Prayers (NIHR announcement) | 14 May 2020 |
| Bahraini Women's Day | 1 December 2020 |

Requirement Two

TV, Radio, Journal Interviews, and Announcements

2. In continuation of the NIHR's effective communication with the community, it conducted several TV, radio and press interviews on all developments relating to human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
3. Valuing the great efforts of the police force in the Kingdom of Bahrain, aimed at enforcing the law and all standards relating to human rights, the NIHR issued a press release on Bahrain Police Day, in which it reaffirmed the great role played by the police in achieving security and stability in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

4. The NIHR also issued a statement on “the establishment of the Trafficking in Persons Prosecution” on October 19, 2020, which reflects the progress of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the field of human rights, and another statement confirming that “the efforts of the Ministry of Interior in combating trafficking in persons have contributed to the progress the Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved and its leadership, at regional and global levels in this field.” The NIHR also issued a statement confirming that human dignity and respect for all rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain are guaranteed in all circumstances; this stemming from the wise belief of the leadership in the importance of human rights, and it reflects its commitment to all international human rights instruments. The NIHR also issued a statement on the “report issued by the US Department of State for the year 2020 on trafficking in persons” dated June 27, 2020, praising the tireless efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain to enhance the work environment, and providing appropriate conditions to help victims access and obtain justice. In addition to that, the NIHR issued a statement praising the role of the Ministry of Interior and the Labor Market Regulatory Authority in combating the phenomenon of trafficking in persons.
5. On a relevant level, the NIHR participated in several television and radio interviews, aiming at promoting human rights culture and raising awareness of the role entrusted to the NIHR in the field of enhancing and protecting human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
6. In this regard, the NIHR conducted several TV and radio interviews on a number of topics during the period from February to July 2020, the most important of which are: “The Royal Pardon for (901) of those convicted on humanitarian grounds” and “The Kingdom of Bahrain’s participation in International Day of Democracy”, “visits organized by the NIHR to Correction and Rehabilitation Centers”, “The NIHR launching of the initiative to monitor the noon work ban for the second year”, “The Kingdom of Bahrain continued lead of the first category in combating trafficking in persons”, and “Replacing the prison sentence for convicts, with alternative penalties, the “Penal Code and Alternative Measures, its expansion and its effectiveness,” the “Occasion of the National Action Charter,” and “Launching a campaign to help them reach.”

Requirement Three

Organizing Events and Training Programs

First: Distance training program in the field of human rights

7. Based on its establishing law, mandating the NIHR to spread the culture of human rights among the various segments of society in accordance with national and international standards, through proposing projects and initiatives aimed at transforming knowledge of human rights into scientific skills and daily practice by individuals in society, in their work and in their private lives, and in response to and implementation of the precautionary measures taken by the state to combat the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), based on which studies were suspended in universities, institutes, government and private schools and kindergartens, and to avoid gatherings, meetings and working on social distancing, it became mandatory to organize training programs on how to remotely use electronic means and advanced technology.
8. Accordingly, a distance training program in the field of human rights was organized for university students, whether studying in the Kingdom of Bahrain or abroad, who have the desire to perform practical training related to their academic requirements during the period extending from June to December 2020, and for employees of some government agencies, individuals and researchers who possess a desire to know the mechanism of the NIHR's work (analysis and study of complaints and assistance provided, monitoring, follow-up to public comments and statements of treaty bodies and special procedures, the mechanism of writing reports and advisory opinions, and research on human rights), where a series of lectures were presented to the participants within the program, who were admitted in groups throughout the year. Among the most prominent topics under focus were the role of the NIHR in the field of promoting and protecting human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain, international human rights instruments, and standards for announced and unannounced visits to reform and rehabilitation centers, and the tasks and competencies of permanent committees of the Board of Commissioners.



Participants in the remote training program in the field of human rights, July 27, 2020

Second: Organizing a workshop on “Green Information and Communication Technology”

9. The NIHR - in cooperation with the Supreme Council for the Environment - organized a workshop entitled “Green Information and Communication Technology” during the month of August 2020, in which a number of public and private sector employees, members of civil society organizations and government and private universities participated, through videoconference technology, and in line with the precautionary measures taken by the Kingdom of Bahrain to combat the spread of the Corona virus by avoiding mixing, gatherings and meetings, and social distancing.
10. Two working papers were presented during the workshop. The first dealt with the topic of "Green Information and Communication Technology and the Supreme Council for the Environment's endeavors in this field". The paper contained the concept of green communications and its role in achieving sustainable development and reviewed the most important initiatives of the Supreme Council for the Environment and the Kingdom's achievements in this field. The second working paper focused on the issue of the legal basis and international mechanisms for environmental protection, in which the Regional Coordinator of Science Programs at the United Nations Environment Office for Western Asia, addressed the definition of the legal basis and international mechanisms for environmental protection in the field of green information and communication technology, in addition to a review of international environmental agreements.

11. This event took place within the NIHR's strategy and action plan, specifically the first strategic objective on environmental impact on human rights, to enhance community partnership in the field of green information and communications technology, and to raise awareness of the most important international laws and instruments concerned with environmental protection in the field of information technology.



Workshop on "Green Information and Communication Technology," August 18, 2020

Third: brief presentation to the Muharraq Governorate on the role of the NIHR in dealing with the human rights situation at the local and international levels

12. Within the framework of strengthening communication with all segments of society, clarifying the foundations and principles of human rights, and the goals for which the NIHR was established, a brief presentation was made during the NIHR's visit to Muharraq Governorate in February 2020. The visit addressed the NIHR's role in dealing with the situation of human rights at the local and international levels, through constant communication with the relevant authorities to find out the most important facts and processes, to ensure the continued success of the process of human rights, democracy, and development in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Fourth: The Legal Clinic and Human Rights Program at the University of Bahrain (NIHR's Section)

13. In activation of the memorandum of understanding with the University of Bahrain to support the Legal Clinic and Human Rights Program, which aims to add a number of practical skills to students of the Faculty of Law through

practical training that enables them to link academic education with practical reality, and to develop their legal and human rights capabilities, the NIHR effectively contributed to the “Legal Clinic and Human Rights” program for the first semester of 2020-2021 for the College of Law at the University of Bahrain during the period from October to December 2020, which is a practical training program for students of the College of Law to acquire skills in the field of human rights, through workshops and visual presentations on “The Role of the NIHR in the promotion and protection of human rights”. The program spanned over ten weeks, and dealt with several topics, the most important of which are: general information on human rights and fundamental freedoms, national, regional, and international mechanisms for the protection of human rights, the role of the NIHR in protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the role of the NIHR in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. All topics of the program were linked to economic rights which are the focus of the program for this semester.



The NIHR's lectures within the Legal Clinic Program and Human Rights for the Faculty of Law at the University of Bahrain, October 5, 2020

Fifth: Building NIHR employee capacities

14. Emanating from its role in building capacities and preparing a national cadre specialized in the field of human rights, the NIHR held a workshop on “Procedures for announced and unannounced visits to correctional and rehabilitation centers, pre-trial detention and the role of health and social care homes” during January 2020, for members of the Board of Commissioners

and employees of the General Secretariat in the NIHR. This workshop comes within the mandate in the NIHR establishing law, to activate its role in the protection and promotion of human rights.

15. The NIHR was also keen to build the capacity of its employees through their participation in several local workshops and training courses, including the training course on “fair trial guarantees between international conventions and national legislation”; the training course “the foundation course specialized in conducting tenders, auctions, procurement and government sales”; the training course “The Importance of Internal Auditing in Ministries and Governmental Entities”, in addition to the training course “Needed Skills for Internal Auditors to Detect Cases of Corruption”, as well as a remote seminar: “Bahraini Women in Crises... A Story for Reflection and Evaluation”; the remote training program "Political Skills", and the "Principles of Combating Trafficking in Persons" workshop.



Part of the lecture "Procedures for announced and unannounced visits to correctional and rehabilitation centers, pre-trial detention and health and social care homes", January 29, 2020

Sixth: The remote training program in the field of human rights for members of the National Intelligence Service

16. In activation of the memorandum of understanding concluded between the NIHR and the Office of the Inspector General of the National Intelligence

Service, the third edition of the training program in the field of human rights for employees of the National Intelligence Service was launched remotely through Zoom. The program included three educational lectures that ran from August to October 2020, focusing on topics dealing with fair trial guarantees in addition to the penal code and alternative measures, as well as the rights of the convict during the serving of his sentence. This program came within the NIHR's strategy and action plan to train law enforcement personnel affiliated with the security services.



The remote training program in the field of human rights for members of the National Intelligence Service - August 12, 2020

Seventh: Organizing lectures on "The Role of the National Institution for Human Rights in Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain"

17. To enhance relations of legal and cultural cooperation, and contributing towards reaching common human rights concepts, the NIHR organized a lecture on "The Role of the NIHR in the Field of Promotion and Protection of Human Rights" at the Royal College of Command, Staff and National Defense, where a detailed explanation was given of the NIHR's competencies in consideration of the applicable legislation and regulations related to human rights, its cooperation mechanism with national mechanisms and regional and international bodies and organizations, as well as mechanisms for receiving complaints, providing legal aid and monitoring the human rights situation in the Kingdom.
18. In the same context, the NIHR organized an introductory lecture on its role in promoting and protecting human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain, for a delegation of Master's program students of the Royal Police Academy in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in cooperation with the Officers Training

College of the Royal Police Academy, as part of their visit program to the Officers Training College in the Kingdom.



An introductory lecture on the role of the NIHR in promoting and protecting human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain, for a delegation of master’s program students of the Royal Police Academy in the sisterly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – January 15, 2020

19. In addition, the NIHR presented an introductory lecture on the NIHR and its role, during the presentation of a “specialized certificate in the field of human rights” by the Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies in its first session, via a live video broadcast targeting the diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Eighth: Education programs for children and the youth

20. As part of its strategic plan to spread and promote a culture of human rights, the NIHR participated, during the month of August 2020, in the annual Bahrain Summer Festival in its twelfth edition for the year 2020, which bears the slogan “Closer from a Distance”, in conjunction with the Bahrain Authority

for Culture and Antiquities program for the mentioned year entitled “Delmon where the density”. Moreover, given the exceptional circumstance the world is witnessing as a result of the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), the festival was organized through the virtual cyberspace, which made it reach all parts of the world through social media. The festival included a variety of activities, like concerts, educational and creative workshops, tours, and publishing books on children's rights.

21. During its participation in the month-long festival, the NIHR published a coloring book about children's rights, which is characterized by talking to children about their rights in a simple language and with beautiful drawings that combines entertainment and education, and everyone was able to obtain their copy of the coloring book by visiting the Festival link.
22. The NIHR also organized an awareness lecture entitled “Children’s Rights” for primary school girls at Al-Safa Primary School for Girls during February 2020, with the aim of enhancing their cultural understanding of children’s rights stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the first international legal instrument that defines civil, political, cultural, and social rights for children. This event came within the NIHR's program to promote and disseminate a culture of human rights in general, and children's rights, which would contribute significantly to refining the child's personality.
23. As part of its role aimed at spreading and promoting awareness of human rights principles for all segments of society, and in implementation of its strategy and action plan, the NIHR organized an awareness lecture entitled “No to Cyber-bullying” for students of Sheikha Hessa School for Girls, with the aim of enhancing their understanding of the dangers of this behavior and ways to prevent it. The lecture, held at the school premises, focused on making the students aware of the concepts of cyber-bullying, its types, the legal texts that criminalize it, the dangers of online crimes, and their negative effects on the individual and society, as well as how to reduce this behavior, while informing the students of the competent authorities to report these crimes to.



An awareness lecture entitled "Children's Rights" for primary school students at Al-Safa Primary School February 5, 2020

Ninth: Research Fellowship Program in the Field of Human Rights

24. Out of the keenness of the NIHR to contribute to the research and intellectual movement, promote awareness of human rights principles, and in activation of Article (12) of its establishing law regarding conducting research and studies, the NIHR launched the “Research Fellowship in the Field of Human Rights” program for individuals who have the desire to prepare independent research on topics related to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights. This program aims to develop skills in critical thinking and analysis in the field of human rights, support and develop skills of innovation and creativity, find the best ways to promote and protect human rights, and strengthen partnership with international organizations and universities working in the field human rights through the exchange of experiences in the field of human rights.
25. The Research Fellowship Program, which ranged in duration from two to twelve weeks, targeted academics, university students, human rights advocates, and all those interested in conducting research in the field of human rights. Several students and those interested in preparing research in the field of human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain participated in the 2020 research fellowship program. The research topics presented by the participants varied, the most prominent of which revolved around: climate change and its impact on human rights, the information revolution, and the right to privacy.

Tenth: Organizing events with civil society organizations concerned with human rights

26. In conjunction with the Kingdom of Bahrain's celebrations of the nineteenth anniversary of voting on the National Action Charter (NAC), the Al-Marsad Society for Human Rights held the human rights symposium "The National Action Charter... Renaissance and Achievements", in the presence of several deputies, experts, academics and researchers from various governorates of the Kingdom. During the human rights symposium, the NIHR presented two lectures: the first shed light on the "legal value of the National Action Charter and jurisprudential opinions regarding the value of rights charters and declarations issued by states." The second lecture was entitled "The National Action Charter's relationship to human rights and its role in promoting them."
27. The Al-Marsad society for Human Rights also organized the second human rights forum under the slogan "Human Rights and Their Applications in the Field of Artificial Intelligence", in contribution to raising awareness of the concept of artificial intelligence and its applications in the fields of life, and to show its impact on human rights, as well as to propose and discuss legislation supporting it. It was attended by several deputies, experts, academics, and researchers from different governorates of the Kingdom. During the forum, the NIHR presented a working paper on "The future of human rights in the age of artificial intelligence."

Eleventh: Organizing an awareness lecture for the employees of Bahrain Aluminum Company, (Alba)

28. The NIHR organized an awareness lecture for the employees of Bahrain Aluminum Company, (Alba)), on "the role of the NIHR in promoting and protecting human rights in general, and the rights of private sector employees in particular", in activation of the NIHR's role in promoting and disseminating a culture of human rights among all segments of society, and developing awareness of national, regional, and international standards related to human rights.
29. The lecture dealt with the law establishing the NIHR, the efforts and activities undertaken by it, the services it provides to citizens and residents, in addition to defining other national mechanisms related to the protection of human rights, as well as displaying its strategy and action plan, and the most prominent achievements it has attained in the field of human rights at the local, regional, and international levels.

Twelfth: Launching Awareness Initiatives

30. For the second year in a row, the NIHR launched the initiative to report noncompliance relating to workers, whose nature of work requires being under the sun and in open places, in the period between twelve noon and four in the afternoon during the months of July and August. It comes in implementation of the decision of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development No. (3) of 2013 regarding the two-month noon outdoor work ban.
31. Whereas advocating the prevention of occupational hazards and enhancing the health conditions of workers is an integral part of the role entrusted to the NIHR, within the framework of its work in the field of promotion and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, stipulated in its establishing law, specifically in Article No. (12) thereof, and among those rights being the right to decent work in a safe environment from all risks, and in line with the procedures and circulars issued to limit the spread of the coronavirus, the NIHR called on employers in the private sector to provide protective face masks, and oblige all workers to use them in work sites in order to limit the spread of infection among workers. The NIHR also stressed the importance of the employers, or their representative's taking the temperature of all workers when they enter and leave work sites, and when they leave the residences designated for them; if fever is detected for any of the workers, then the employer or his representative must immediately isolate the worker and take the relevant procedures.
32. The NIHR also called on employers to reduce close contact and maintain physical distancing at work sites and lower the number of workers, especially in rest rooms, waiting rooms, workers' changing rooms, and vehicles for workers transport within the facility, to and from work sites. In addition, it called on employers to take all the precautions and requirements to be observed in workers' housing, because of its great importance and direct impact on the health and safety of its occupants, especially with regard to reducing the number of workers in the same room in workers' housing, and increasing the space allocated for each worker to the maximum extent possible, so that physical distancing is achieved. The social distancing is achieved when there is two meters at least between one worker and another, bearing in mind that according to the requirements and specifications of workplaces, the space allocated to each worker must not be less than four square meters of the free space in the rooms designated for workers' housing.
33. The NIHR believes in the importance of concerted efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy all their rights on an equal footing with others and without discrimination between them. It launched the #Let's help access campaign in February 2020, in which it called on the public, and persons with

disabilities to report and monitor public facilities or private property intended for public use whose design or surrounding physical environment prevents this category from enjoying their right to access and use those facilities on an equal basis with others.





Campaign to monitor violations of the noon work ban - July and August 2020



The campaign to equip public or private facilities for public use, whose design or surrounding physical environment prevents people with disabilities from enjoying their right of access #let's help access - February 2020

Requirement Four

Participating in Local and External Events

34. In the field of partnership with relevant local, regional, and international bodies, the NIHR held consultative encounters and meetings with a number of ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as with international organizations, bodies and mechanisms concerned with human rights issues, in addition to a group of regional and international expert houses working in the field of human rights, and clubs of foreign communities. These meetings discussed several topics, the most prominent of which is the Kingdom of Bahrain's special interest in the human rights issue since the launch of the reform project of His Majesty the King of the country - may God protect and preserve him, which was represented in the establishment of many human rights institutions and associations most notably, the NIHR.
35. In these meetings, the establishment of the NIHR, its legal framework and its role in the promotion and protection of human rights were also discussed, as well as the role of these human rights institutions and associations and their activities in various issues related to human rights, ways of support and joint cooperation between the two parties, and the NIHR's readiness to provide expertise in the field of training and education on human rights issues and building capacities of the employees of these institutions on the various international human rights instruments, and the obligations arising from them on the part of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in addition to the relevant international mechanisms of the Human Rights Council.
36. The NIHR also participated in the consultative meetings held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the presence of relevant civil society organizations working in the field of human rights, for the purpose of discussing and evaluating the recommendations of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council, and to indicate the recommendations that have been achieved. The NIHR referred its views on all recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
37. The NIHR participated in the introductory meeting organized remotely by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for members of the National Network for International Affairs, in the presence of members of the Coordination and Follow-up Committee between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and United Nations agencies, the resident representative of the United Nations Development Program in the Kingdom, the legal auditor and editor of the Strategic Cooperation and Sustainable Development Framework document (2020 - 2022) between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations agencies, which was held in August 2020.

38. In this meeting, the document of the Framework for Strategic Cooperation and Sustainable Development for the years (2020-2022) was reviewed, which is an amendment to the Strategic Partnership Framework signed in October 2017, between the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and sixteen UN agencies, to ensure that it continues to keep pace with the government's Action Program, Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Six new UN agencies expressed their desire to join the revised framework.
39. On the other hand, the NIHR participated in an online panel discussion on "The Future of Education in the Arab Region", organized by the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions and the Arab Institute for Human Rights, in which representatives of national human rights institutions in the Arab region presented the reality of the situation, the problems of education, and recommendations for the future of education 2050.
40. During the discussion session, the most important challenges facing education in the region were discussed, along with proposals for development. The meeting focused on main themes dealing with the process of rethinking the concept and standards of development and progress, in addition to formulating new visions of education in multiple realities and knowledge as a global public good, redefining education framework, in addition to adopting humanistic frameworks for education and development, as well as an explanation of the UNESCO Global Initiative and the high-level international commission reimagining the future of education by 2050.
41. In the field of expanding the frameworks of cooperation to promote and protect human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the NIHR participated in presenting a theoretical lecture entitled "Applications of Human Rights Agreements in Bahraini Law" within the basic training course for new lawyers (12th batch) organized by the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies. The lecture dealt with a number of themes, the most important of which are: the legal basis for international human rights conventions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, international conventions on human rights that the Kingdom of Bahrain has acceded to or ratified, and mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Kingdom of Bahrain's international conventions on human rights. The NIHR gave a lecture entitled "Human Rights in Exceptional Circumstances", which was organized by the Bahrain Institute for Political Development.
42. The NIHR also participated in the virtual lecture organized by the Bahrain Institute for Political Development in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the House of Representatives, as part of a parliamentary skills program for members of Parliament; where the NIHR presented a lecture entitled "Human Rights in Bahraini Laws and International Agreements", which aimed to develop the skills of the members of Parliament in the field of human rights.

The concept of human rights and national legislations mentioned in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the section on public rights and duties were discussed, in addition to the constitutional and legal framework for human rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

43. The NIHR also participated in the third forum of the Bahraini Federation for People with Disabilities through video communication technology, which was organized by the Bahrain Federation for People with Disabilities with the participation of several official authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain and specialists in this regard.
44. In the forum, a working paper was presented entitled “National Legislation for Persons with Disabilities, and the Role of the National Human Rights Institution in the Protection and Promotion of their Rights”, which dealt with the most prominent national legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities and shed light on the role of the NIHR in the field of promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The forum aims to identify the most important challenges, obstacles and needs of people with disabilities to work on solving them in coordination with the relevant authorities.
45. In addition, the NIHR participated in the fourth workshop of the National Action Plan for Human Rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain entitled “The Role of National Institutions and Civil Society Organizations in Promoting and Developing Human Rights”, which was held via electronic video communication, with the participation of a large number of specialists, including the United Nations Resident Coordinator to the Kingdom of Bahrain, experts, academics, the press and media, heads of diplomatic missions abroad, as well as social and cultural associations and clubs.
46. The NIHR’s address included three main themes, an overview of the NIHR’s work was presented, its role in the National Human Rights Plan, and the NIHR’s strategy and work plans. It was also emphasized that the NIHR works to achieve, promote, and protect human rights, consolidate its values, spread awareness of it, and contribute to ensuring its practice. It was pointed out that the NIHR is an independent institution that handles all matters related to human rights, enjoys a legal personality that is financially and administratively independent, and exercises its functions in complete freedom and impartiality.
47. The speech also highlighted that the NIHR is free to comment on any human rights issue and take up any human rights situation as it deems appropriate, and that, under its establishing law, specifically Article No. (12) thereof, it, “participates in preparing the national plan for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Kingdom”. In addition, the most prominent points and visions that were contained in a proposal for the preparation of the national action plan for human rights were reviewed, including that it be a national

project in which everyone participates, applicable, transparent, public, and concerned with the international dimension, among others.

48. The NIHR also participated in the first meeting of the Employers' Advisory Committee on Quality and Academic Accreditation Affairs of the College of Law at the University of Bahrain, which was organized remotely, in which the study plan for the bachelor's program at the College of Law was reviewed, and the college's outputs in its three programs and objectives were reviewed, in addition to the extent to which the college graduates had achieved these outputs. In the meeting, the proposed new programs were also discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

Advisory Opinion Submitted from the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) to the Constitutional Authorities

Preamble & Segmentation

Advocating for the ratification or accession to international and regional conventions, and ensuring it is implemented effectively, is a main task entrusted to national institutions for human rights. It is not confined to that but extends to show the extent of compliance of the state party of its regional and international obligations emanating from ratification or accession, as well as proposing legislation or systems or practices of amending existing ones in accordance with relevant international and regional standards.¹

Reverting to the provisions of Law No. (26) of 2014 establishing the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), Paragraph (b) of Article (12) stated that the NIHR is designated **“To examine legislation and regulations enforced in the Kingdom which are related to human rights, and recommend amendments as it deems fit, particularly in connection with the consistency of such regulations with the Kingdom's international obligations in the human rights field. The NIHR shall be empowered to recommend enacting new legislation related to human rights”**, as these tasks interpret the “Paris Principles” and the general observations of the GANHRI Sub-Committee for Accreditation (SCA).

To activate these tasks, the NIHR presented its opinion on a number of incoming requests regarding the draft laws referred to it by the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives. The number of opinions submitted to the Shura Council were only one (1), whereas the number of opinions submitted to the Council of Representatives reached (12) ones.

Thus, this chapter will demonstrate the advisory opinions that the NIHR has submitted to the constitutional authorities along two topics: the first topic presents opinions referred to the Shura Council, and the second topic covers the opinions referred to the Council of Representatives, touching upon issues that infringes or have direct impact on human rights and basic freedoms, taking into account the provisions of the Constitution, and relevant international and regional conventions and standards,

¹ Paris Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights - Terms of Reference and Responsibilities - Paragraph (3) p. 5 / General Note (1-3) Encouraging ratification of or accession to international human rights instruments - p. 91.

First Topic

Advisory Opinions submitted from the NIHR to the Shura Council

The NIHR submitted to the Shura Council during the reporting period one advisory opinion, as follows:

Draft law to promulgate Corrective Justice Law for children and their protection from ill-treatment, pursuant to Royal Decree No. (20) of 2019.

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion on the draft law promulgating the Corrective Justice Law for children and their protection from maltreatment, which is comprised of (90) articles, especially the articles relating to or affecting or directly impacting human rights and basic rights. The NIHR commended the value added of such legislation in the overall legal ecosystem, especially in the juvenile courts and legal protection of children.
2. The core of the NIHR opinion was focused on some terminology used in Paragraph (10) of Article No. (12), for fear it might trigger broad divergence in views and legal interpretation explaining it. The text mentioned the term (bad conduct) and (defiant), however the NIHR preferred to reconsider these two terms, and showed the legal description of these behaviors in a clear, accurate, and disciplined manner.
3. As to Article (84), the NIHR concluded that it would be advisable to reconsider the wording of the paragraph relating to the child's criminal record, and the rulings that may be shown in it. The NIHR affirmed its opinion of the necessity to articulate a clear text that prohibits looking at the records of the convicted children, except for the persons directly concerned with disposing of the case in question, or other duly authorized persons, with a mandatory judgment report that entails deleting the names of convicted juveniles automatically from criminal records once the child completes (18) years of age, in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile (The Beijing Rules).

Second Topic

Advisory Opinions Submitted from the NIHR to the Council of Representatives

The NIHR submitted to the Council of Representatives - during the reporting period - twelve (12) opinions, as follows:

First: Proposed draft law to amend Article No. (310-bis) of the Penal Code issued pursuant to Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion on the proposal law to amend Article (310-bis) of the Penal Code Decree Law No. (15) of 1976, composed of two articles and a preamble, in which the first Article replaces the text of Article No. (310-bis) of the Penal Code Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976, to increase the penalty for the crimes of witchcraft, sorcery, or fortune telling, and the second Article is executive.
2. The text of Article No. (310-bis) in the proposed law states the following: **“A prison sentence of a maximum 5 years and a fine not less than BD 500 and does not exceed BD 5,000 or both sentences shall be imposed on any person who practices as a profession for gaining money acts of witchcraft, sorcery, or fortune telling, and is considered as such doing actions or saying words or using means to disillusion or deceive the victim of their power to tell them what is in their mind or help them get a need or desire or good or evil in violation of the scientific and legal foundations.”**
3. The NIHR concluded that the proposal brought about amendments in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant international and regional standards, to provide protection for the families and preserve their unity, within the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the relevant international and regional conventions on human rights.

Second: Proposed draft law to amend Article No. (13) of Law No. (11) of 1975 regarding Passports

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion on the proposed law to amend Article No. (13) of Law No. (11) of 1975 regarding passports, composed of two articles and a preamble, where the first Article thereof contained Article No. (13) of Law No. (11) of 1975 regarding passports grants passports to the underage (minor) with the approval of the custodian mother, and the second Article is executive.
2. Article No. (13) of the proposed law states **“Minors are not issued separate passports except with the approval of their legal custodians; the**

custodian mother approval could be accepted to grant passports to children under her custody.”

3. The NIHR concluded that the proposal provides optimal protection to children under mothers' custody guaranteeing their entitlement to their rights and freedoms and is in accordance with the Constitution and the international and regional standards relevant to human rights. The NIHR suggested studying granting the right to all custodians in general, including instances where the custodian is not the mother, as it influences allowing custodians to enjoy their rights and freedoms in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant international and regional standards.

Third: Proposed draft law to amend some provisions of Decree Law No. (48) of 2012 regarding the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion on the draft law for amending some of the provisions of Decree Law No. (48) of 2012 regarding the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry, composed of four Articles and a preamble. The first Article covered the replacement of the definition of the member as in Article No. (1), and Articles No. (2) Paragraph (4), No. (3), No. (27), No. (32), and No. (39). The second Article covered replacing the schedule for specifying the number of votes each member in the Chamber is assigned in voting proportional to his/her capital. The third Article added two new Articles No. (10- bis), and No. (51-bis), and the fourth Article is executive.
2. The NIHR concluded that the proposal includes amendments relating to the internal organization for the operations of the Chamber, which has independent judgment, scope, and relevance of implementing provisions of the stated draft law. The NIHR does not see in any of these texts any direct infringement of human rights and basic freedoms. However, in the matter of structuring the number of votes for members, it affirmed the importance of subjecting any order of voting to the considerations of complying with justice, transparency, nondiscrimination, suitability, and participation. The NIHR deems - legally- to incorporate the principle of equality amongst all members of the Chamber in the voting system structure in accordance with the relevant international and regional standards.

Fourth: Proposed draft law regarding the protection of informants, witnesses, and experts in corruption and embezzlement of public funds cases

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion on the proposed law for the protection of informants, witnesses, and experts in corruption and the embezzlement of public funds cases. It concluded that it agrees with the essence of the proposed law for the protection of informants, witnesses, and experts in corruption and the embezzlement of public funds cases, as this protection provides the cornerstone of the efforts for combating corruption, protecting, and preserving the public funds.
2. The NIHR urged to reconsider the provisions decided in the proposed law objectively and structurally (linguistically), in accordance with principles of legal drafting needed for procedural texts, and in such a way where the protective measures for the categories included in the proposed law are clear, specific, and binding within legally known controls, and that would not result in any violations of human rights and other basic freedoms. The description of the crimes under the protection domain must be defined legally, with no ambiguity or vagueness, taking into account - when being reconsidered - to comply with the provisions of protection stated in Article No. (127-bis) of the Penal Code in force, in line with the essence of the proposed law.

Fifth: Proposed draft law to add a new Article No. (261-bis) to the Penal Code issued by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion on the proposed draft law to add a new Article No. (261-bis) to the Penal Code Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976, composed of two articles and a preamble. The first Article thereof adds a new Article No. (261-bis) to the Penal Code Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976, that includes possibility to pardon the offender in the crimes that uses the seals, signatures, stamps, imprints, public signs, metal plates, and forged postal stamps, if he reported the crime to the judicial or administrative authorities.
2. The text of Article No. (62-bis) in the proposed draft law should state: "If there were multiple offenders in one of the crimes specified in this Chapter, and if one of the perpetrators reports the crime to the judicial or administrative authorities before using the seals, signatures, stamps, imprints, public signs, metal plates, and forged postal stamps, and before the commencement of the preliminary investigation, it shall be considered a mitigating excuse, and he may be exempted from the penalty if the Judge perceived it suitable. The same judgment ruling extends to the offender who enables the authorities during investigation to arrest the other perpetrators of the crime."
3. The NIHR concluded its agreement with the direction of the proposed draft law, to encourage perpetrators in some crimes to report it to the authorities

and consider this reporting a mitigating excuse or exemption of penalty. Also, the addition of the new article in the proposed draft law does not result in any violation or infringement of human rights and basic freedoms, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, conventions, international and regional treaties relevant to human rights.

Sixth: Proposed amendment of Paragraph (A) of Article No. (8) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion regarding the proposal to amend Paragraph (A) of Article (8) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which consists of two articles, in addition to the preamble, where the first article included replacing the text of Paragraph (A) of Article No. (8) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain that establishes the right of every citizen to free health care, and the second is an executive article.
2. The text of Paragraph (A) of Article No. (8) in the proposal reads as follows: **“Every citizen has the right to free health care. The State is concerned with public health and means of prevention and treatment is guaranteed through the establishment of various types of hospitals and health institutions.”**
3. The NIHR concluded that it favors retaining the text of Paragraph (A) of Article No. (8) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, given that the current (effective) text achieves the same goals and objectives as the proposal to amend the Constitution aims to achieve, in addition to the fact that the current (effective) text is in compliance with international human rights instruments, particularly the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which the Kingdom of Bahrain acceded under Law No. (10) of 2007, and the general comments issued by the Committee on Interpretation of the relevant provisions of the International Covenant.

Seventh: Proposed law to amend Article (391) of the Code of Criminal Procedure promulgated by Decree-Law No. (46) of 2002

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion regarding the proposed law to amend Article No. (391) of the Code of Criminal Procedure promulgated by Decree-Law No. (46) of 2002, which consists of two articles, in addition to the preamble, where the first article included replacing the text of Article (391) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, to increase the cases in which the convict must be rehabilitated, and the second is an executive article.
2. The text of Article No. (391) of the draft law reads as follows: **“In order to restore rehabilitation:**
 - a. **The penalty must be fully served, or official pardon has been issued, or it has expired with lapse of time.**

- b. It shall take place immediately upon completion of serving of the sentence for the convict with a misdemeanor penalty, taking into consideration the provisions of Article No. (399) of this Law.
 - c. A period of one year has elapsed from serving the sentence or a pardon for the convict sentenced to a criminal penalty (felony) is issued; and this period is doubled in two sentence cases for recurrence and the expiry of the penalty.
 - d. A period of one year has elapsed from the date of serving the penalty or the issuance of the pardon for the convict with a misdemeanor penalty, when the judgment considered the convict to be a recidivist, and this period shall be doubled in the event of the expiry of the penalty by lapse of time.”
3. The NIHR concluded that it agrees with the objectives and principles of the proposed law, as it is conducive to the speedy integration of the convict into society and the erasure of what has befallen to the offender in relation to the future, by reducing the period of rehabilitation stipulated in the law, which is consistent with the general principles of the law international human rights.

Eighth: A draft law repealing Article (353) of the Penal Code promulgated by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976

- 1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion regarding the draft law to repeal Article (353) of the Penal Code promulgated by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976, which consists of two articles, in addition to the preamble, where the draft included an article canceling Article No. (353) of the Penal Code according to which the perpetrator of the crime of rape is exempted from punishment if a valid marriage was concluded between him and the victim. The second article, it is an executive one.
- 2. Article No. (353) of the original law states: **“A person who commits one of the crimes stipulated in the previous articles shall not be sentenced to a penalty if a valid marriage is concluded between him and the victim. If a final judgment is issued against him before the marriage contract, its implementation shall be suspended, and its criminal effects shall be terminated.”**
- 3. The NIHR concluded that it is necessary to determine the appropriate punishment for the perpetrator of the crime of rape, given that this crime constitutes a blatant attack on the safety of society and the security of its members, which is why it is imperative that the perpetrator of the crime of rape should not be exempted from the prescribed punishment simply for concluding a valid marriage contract with the victim. It is also consistent with the conclusions of international and regional resolutions, and the relevant obligations of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Ninth: Proposed law on public conduct

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion regarding the proposed law on public conduct, which concluded that it is, in principle, consistent with the objectives and principles on which the proposed law is based and which aims - as stated in its explanatory memorandum - to preserve and protect the family, give the necessary care to the upbringing of the child in a suitable environment, instilling religion, morals and patriotism in it, in addition to protecting members of society from any psychological or social exploitation or neglect.
2. It favored a study of the provisions contained in the proposed law, especially about the legal formulation contained therein, in addition to the fact that the objectives of the same proposal are achieved in several places of the Penal Code in force, plus the fact that the issuance of the current proposal in its current form means a move back by the Kingdom of Bahrain from its international and regional commitments related to human rights.

Tenth: Proposed law to add a new Article No. (369 bis) to the Penal Code, promulgated by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion regarding the proposed law to add a new Article No. (369 bis) to the Penal Code, promulgated by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976, which consists of two articles, in addition to the preamble, where the first article thereof included the addition of a new Article No. (369 bis) to the Penal Code, including criminalizing acts of bullying, while the second article is executive.
2. The text of Article (369) in the draft law is as follows: **“A penalty of imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months and a fine of not less than three hundred dinars and not more than three thousand dinars, or either of these two penalties, shall be imposed on any person who commits, by any means of publicity, an act of bullying, in words or by indication or via social media sites, or using racist or degrading statements, isolating or neglecting them, or by any other means, for the purpose of imposing control, ridicule or laughter. The penalty will be a fine not exceeding two hundred dinars if the crime is not committed in public.”**
3. The NIHR concluded that it is in agreement with the goals and principles on which the proposed law is based, which aims to confront the phenomenon of bullying, by including some acts in the criminalization cycle, describing the act of bullying as a form of violence towards others, that aims to social exclusion, and suggested identifying acts constituting the criminal behavior of bullying, and the explicit inclusion of bullying acts that occur by means of information and communication technology.

4. The NIHR indicated the importance of making the necessary amendments to Law No. (27) of 2014 promulgating the Child Law, to include within it the punishment of acts of bullying against children, as they are the most vulnerable group, while providing social measures to ensure that the behavior of the offender child is straightened in a way that limits committing bullying acts in the future, without neglecting to address any negative effects that may have occurred on the victim if he/she is of the same category.

Eleventh: A draft law adding a new Article No. (350 bis) to the Penal Code, promulgated by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976

1. The NIHR expressed its advisory opinion regarding a draft law adding a new Article No. (350 bis) to the Penal Code, promulgated by Decree-Law No. (15) of 1976, which consists of two articles, in addition to the preamble, where the first article thereof included the addition of a new Article No. (350 bis) to the Penal Code, including the criminalization of imitating the opposite sex or showing in an indecent appearance contrary to public morals and customs, in public places, while the second article is executive.
2. The text of Article No. (350 bis) in the draft law is as follows: **“A penalty of imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year and a fine not exceeding one thousand dinars, or either of these two penalties, for every male or female who publicly shows in a public place imitating the appearance of the opposite sex, or shows in an inappropriate appearance that is contrary to the morals and customs observed in the Kingdom.”**
3. The NIHR concluded that the text contained in the draft in its current wording was loose, because it does not specify the behavior that is imitating the opposite sex, and that the text in this form is inconsistent with the general principles in the drafting of criminal legislation, and international and regional resolutions related to human rights. The NIHR stressed the need to consider, when discussing the draft law, the physical and psychological aspects that the relevant person may be suffering from.

Twelfth: A draft law amending some provisions of Law No. (11) of 1975 regarding passports

1. The NIHR stated its advisory opinion regarding a draft law amending some provisions of Law No. (11) of 1975 regarding passports. It concluded that the issue of granting some groups diplomatic or special passports is, in principle, not related to human rights, or to the competences of the NIHR, for it is a sovereign act that belongs to the State, which is competent to organize and evaluate it in light of its sovereign and discretionary authority.

“[The United Nations General Assembly] Urges Member States to enable all countries to have unhindered, timely access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnosis, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, and essential health technologies, and their components, as well as equipment, for the COVID-19 response.”

Para 12, UN general Assembly resolution no. A/RES/74/306

“Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” – 15 Sep 2020

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