

NIHR Opinion on the proposal with desire that the honorable Government prepares a comprehensive national strategy that includes the mechanisms, procedures and plans required for dealing with the HR reports issued on the Kingdom of Bahrain

The National Institution for Human Rights hereby confirms its commendation of the efforts exerted by the esteemed Council of Representatives in relation to the issues related to human rights and considerations of the public interest sought by the proposed desire that: **"The honorable Government prepares a comprehensive national strategy that includes the mechanisms, procedures and plans required for dealing with the HR reports issued on the Kingdom of Bahrain"**. In this regard, the NIHR is pleased to express the following opinion:

The National Institution for Human Rights hereby supports the existence of a comprehensive national strategy for human rights within the State because it is one of the necessary bases that have an impact on the efforts made for enhancing, improving and protecting human rights. This strategy identifies some main objectives of interest and combines Government and non-government efforts (legislative authority, National Institution for Human Rights, civil society organizations) to achieve such objectives on the ground through real and concrete practices in this regard.

It is necessary that the national strategy of human rights shall be comprehensive, so that the scope thereof is extended to include all policies of execution of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights from one side and the creation of a clear formula in area of cooperation with the international mechanisms for human rights protection by developing a plan for coordinating and formulating the reports to the conventions bodies mechanism of the comprehensive periodic presentation.

Moreover, the scope of comprehensiveness extends to the creation of cooperation between the international organizations and regional authorities operating in field of human rights; especially, aspects of cooperation in preparing the replies to the statements, inquiries and requests of sending delegations to the Kingdom.

Whereas, the High Coordination Committee for Human Rights is headed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is re-formed by virtue of resolution issued by Council of Ministers No. (14) of 2014, as Article No. "3" of the same resolution stipulates the mandates entrusted to the committee, include among others the following:

- "1. Developing a coordination mechanism that ensures the achievement of the best policies for dealing with the issues related to Human Rights.**
- 2. Preparing a national plan for Human Rights at level of the Government and presenting the same to the council of ministers for approval.**
- 3. Coordination in preparing the replies to the statements and inquiries issued by the organizations and societies inside and outside the kingdom in relation to the human rights".**

Therefore, regarding the objectives sought by the proposal with desire in relation to the preparation of a comprehensive national strategy comprising the mechanisms, procedures and plans required for dealing with the HR reports, provided it shall include integral plans for confronting the fallacies mentioned in such reports and showing the facts in the kingdom; the NIHR hereby finds that these objectives are achieved theoretically through the mandates entrusted to the Higher Coordination Committee for Human Rights.

However, the NIHR thinks that the proposal with desire under review implies a call based upon a keen concern for the public interest in terms of the necessity to accelerate the preparation of a comprehensive national plan or strategy for human rights in the kingdom. Such a plan or strategy shall combine the efforts of all parties including relevant Governmental authority or other authorities and entities; e.g. the Legislative Authority two chambers: Council of Representatives and Shura Council. The NIHR adopts the Paris Principles as a legal reference in the incorporation thereof as well as the civil society institutions operating in field of human rights. We cannot overlook the role played by labor unions and professional associations; especially those categories requiring care the most (women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities). This strategy should depend on community consultation, due to the utmost importance thereof in shaping the main objectives of this plan because they are entities concerned directly or indirectly with the human rights.

Moreover, it is important to develop mechanism to deal with specific elements related to the events and developments related to the human rights, so that there will be no excuse or pretense to issue reports or statements damages the image of the Kingdom by clarifying everything related to any criticism transparently and realistically through the following:

- Verification the credibility of the occurrence of the violation through collecting the evidence and communication with the official authorities concerned in the Kingdom to obtain the details of such incident.
- If it is proved that the violation didn't occur, the determined mechanism shall be able to refute such violation by presenting the evidence that it didn't occur.
- If it is proved that the violation did occur, the facts and event developments should be shown as well as the remedied made; especially, the measures taken to prevent the reoccurrence of the violations and the actions taken by those concerned through law enforcement against the committers thereof. The international organizations are concerned with the remedy and interested in the procedures that prevent repetition of the violation and have no desire to hear justifications. Here, it is necessary to refer to the real fact on the ground and to show the procedure that has been taken, because the confession of the committed violations, working on correcting the situation and the presentation of those who have committed these violations to the court enhances the creditability and weakens the subsequent claims, when they are utilized for human rights purposes and objectives.
- It is important to confirm that the combination of all government and non-government efforts in the Kingdom is the only way to protect human beings dignity and enhance and protect their rights. This seriously requires the formulation of a national strategy for human rights to show the achievements made by the Kingdom in the last decades and to enhance what is required to maintain the rights and freedoms for future generations of the people of this generous country at all levels.