



## **Bahrain's Human Rights Crisis**

**July 5, 2011**

Since mid-March 2011 Bahrain has been carrying out a punitive and vindictive campaign of violent repression against its own citizens. This fierce repression has been characterized by widespread arbitrary arrests, credible allegations of torture and ill-treatment, apparently coerced televised “confessions,” unfair trials, and attacks on healthcare professionals and injured protesters, as well as politically-motivated mass dismissals of workers from jobs and students from university.

As western allies of Bahrain avert their eyes because of diplomatic convenience and deference to Saudi Arabia, there appears to be almost total impunity for serious human rights violations, such as extrajudicial killings and torture.

In mid-March Bahraini troops and riot police, backed by armed forces from Saudi Arabia, violently brought an end to several weeks of mostly peaceful pro-democracy and anti-government street protests. Since then authorities have carried out an unrelenting campaign of judicial and administrative retribution against demonstrators, opposition leaders, peaceful critics, and rights activists. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa declared an end to martial law on June 1, and some of the more than a thousand people arrested have been released. But hundreds of others remain in incommunicado detention and face unfair trials before special military courts, mostly on patently political charges rather than criminal offenses. The authorities have done little to address credible allegations of torture during interrogations.

The number of people killed in Bahrain may not compare to what we see in neighboring Arab states such as Syria, Yemen, and Libya – since mid-February, about 30 protest-related deaths and hundreds of injuries, some of them serious – but relative to Bahrain's population of about 525,000 nationals (and some 500,000 expatriate workers and their families), it is substantial, and greater than the casualties resulting from five years of protracted unrest in the 1990s. As in Bashar al-Asad's Syria, Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, and Egypt before President Mubarak was forced from power, Bahrain's ruling Al Khalifa family has been

carrying out a systematic and comprehensive crackdown to punish and intimidate government critics and to end dissent root and branch.

Bahrain's major western allies – the United States, the United Kingdom, and France – have pointed to a “national dialogue” due to begin in early July as the way out of the present crisis. But the ruling family has stacked the deck in a way that unfortunately makes a resolution highly unlikely. In place of Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the original proponent of the dialogue, King Hamad has appointed the speaker of the parliament, a proponent of the government crackdown, to convene and direct it.

Leading opposition figures essential to any successful dialogue have been sentenced to prison or are facing special military court trials simply for participating in peaceful demonstrations and criticizing the government, and even legally-recognized opposition parties have been completely marginalized. Al Wifaq, Wa'ad, and Democratic Minbar, three opposition societies that, combined, received over 55 percent of the popular vote in the October 2010 election, have reportedly each received five invitations out of a total of 297. Together, these three groups with a clear electoral mandate would make up just five percent of the participants in the dialogue – if all choose to participate.

Clearly, if Bahrain's western allies expect the dialogue to resolve the country's deep political crisis, they need to insist now – and not after the dialogue has failed – that Bahrain end its rampant human rights violations, release everyone arrested solely for exercising their rights to free expression and peaceful assembly, and investigate serious crimes and prosecute everyone implicated, including officials responsible for unlawful killings and abuses in detention.

Much more promising than the national dialogue, as proposed, is King Hamad's announcement on June 29 of an independent investigative commission headed by M. Cherif Bassiouni and including four other internationally-recognized human rights experts, among them Nigel Rodley, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. According to [“Royal Order No. 28 of 2011,”](#) the commission's mandate is to investigate “the events occurring in Bahrain February/March 2011, and any consequences arising out of the aforementioned events.”

## Arbitrary Arrests and Detentions

Since mid-March authorities have arrested well over a thousand people who participated in or were suspected of supporting the demonstrations. While some have been released, Human Rights Watch believes that at least several hundred people, and possibly many more, are still in detention, in addition to the more than 100 who have been convicted and sentenced by the special military court. And the arrests continue.

- Many were pulled out of their homes at night by armed masked men, some in uniforms and others in civilian clothes, [and transferred to unknown locations](#). Others were arrested at their workplaces or pulled out of cars at checkpoints. [Many were beaten during the arrests](#).
- Many have spent weeks, in some cases months, in incommunicado detention. They have had no contact with lawyers except when they were presented before the special military court, and at most a very brief phone call with their families. In many cases their whereabouts and well-being, weeks and months later, remained unknown, raising concern that they have been forcibly disappeared, a serious human rights violation.
- Those held in incommunicado detention include teachers, doctors, at least one defense lawyer, and leaders of legally-recognized political opposition societies. Ibrahim Sharif, a Sunni who heads the secularist National Democratic Action Society, was one of the first arrested, in his house in [a pre-dawn raid on March 17](#). Matar Ibrahim Matar and Jawad Fairouz, who were elected to the lower house of parliament in October but resigned in protest after the army opened fire on protesters in mid-February, [were detained on May 2](#). They represented Al Wifaq, a Shia party that made up the largest opposition bloc in the parliament. They spent weeks, and in Sharif's case months, in incommunicado and at times solitary detention, with no access to lawyers or family members prior to their first appearances before the special military court, which the government calls the "Court of National Safety."
- The government has provided very little information about the number of people arrested or, in most cases, their whereabouts and well-being, and has stated reasons for arrest only when detainees have been presented to the special military court. Authorities have denied requests for visits to detention facilities by

independent human rights and humanitarian organizations as well as UN human rights mechanisms.

## **Torture, Ill-Treatment and Abuse**

The widespread use of incommunicado detention raises serious concern about torture and ill-treatment in detention. Human Rights Watch has documented the systematic use of torture and ill-treatment by Bahraini security officials since 2007, and is looking into allegations of abuse and ill-treatment of those detained since mid-March.

- In April, four people died in custody, some apparently [as a result of torture and others from medical neglect](#). Ali Isa Ibrahim Saqer was one of those who died in custody and whose body – seen by Human Rights Watch at the time of his burial – bore unmistakable signs of torture.
- When Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, a human rights and political activist, appeared before a special military court on May 8, he had facial fractures and head injuries, apparently the result of severe beatings he sustained since authorities [detained him on April 9](#). Several other co-defendants in the courtroom showed signs of possible abuse or ill-treatment.
- In February and March Human Rights Watch met with nine of the 23 opposition leaders and activists who had been arrested between mid-August and early September 2010 and were released on February 23. They described lengthy interrogation sessions during which they were blindfolded and subjected to both physical and psychological abuse, some of which amounted to torture. The abuse included threats, humiliation, solitary confinement, beatings to the head, chest, and other sensitive areas, beatings on the soles of feet with sticks or hoses, sleep deprivation, denying access to the bathroom, and electric shocks. Some said they were sexually harassed or assaulted. Many of the 23 were rearrested early in the March crackdown, and held incommunicado, with their whereabouts unknown, until they were brought before the special military court. They remain in detention. At least three went into hiding in mid-March to avoid arrest.
- At the initial special military court hearing for 48 doctors and nurses on June 6, the defendants alleged that they had been subjected to torture or ill-treatment to coerce confessions.

## Unfair Trials in Special Military Courts

After the declaration of martial law by King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa on March 15, which the government termed a “State of National Safety,” authorities established by decree a special military court, called the “Court of National Safety,” to try protesters, opposition leaders, rights activists, and people who supported or are perceived as supporting the street protests. A military judge presides over the court, along with two civilian judges, all of them appointed by the Bahrain Defense Force commander-in-chief, Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa. The cases [are prosecuted by the military public prosecutor](#).

- On April 27 Bahraini officials announced that authorities had referred 405 detainees to the special military courts and released 312 others. Among these defendants are 48 doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals whose trial started on June 6, and the former members of parliament, Matar and Fairouz, whose trial started on June 13. Charges have ranged from participating in an illegal gathering or “expressing hatred” of the government to actual crimes, such as murder and destruction of property.
- On April 28 the special military court sentenced four defendants to death and three others to life in prison for their alleged involvement in the murder of two police officers. The seven defendants, ages 19 to 24, whose trial and sentencing lasted less than two weeks, were the first to be convicted in the special military courts. Their chief defense counsel, Mohamed al-Tajer, was himself arrested on April 15, the day before the trial was scheduled to begin, and other attorneys [were not permitted to meet with the defendants](#) before the first hearing. On the day the sentences were issued, Bahrain TV broadcast televised confessions of the defendants, including Ali Isa Ibrahim Saqer, who had been arrested in connection with the deaths of the police officers and who had earlier died in detention, apparently as a result of torture. [All of the defendants had pleaded not guilty](#). Two of the death sentences were upheld by the Appeals Court of National Safety, while the other two were changed to life imprisonment.
- On May 8 authorities brought 14 protest leaders before the special military court. The charges ranged from plotting to overthrow the government – apparently based on the calls by some to transform the monarchy into a republic, although most protesters were demanding a constitutional monarchy – to specious offenses such as “spreading false news” and “harming the reputation” of the country. Those on

trial included Sharif and al-Khawaja. Seven others were tried in absentia in the same case and on similar charges. On June 22 the special military court sentenced eight of the 21 to life in prison and the others to sentences ranging from five to 15 years. Their appeal is scheduled for September 11.

- The special military court has convicted and sentenced people for a variety of crimes ranging from the serious – killing policemen – to the vague – disturbing public security – and the specious – offending public officials, possessing literature and leaflets “expressing hatred of the regime.” The sentences have ranged from one year to five for purely political offenses, considered misdemeanors, while convictions for felony offenses have included at least 10 life sentences and four death sentences, two of which were upheld on appeal. Human Rights Watch opposes the death penalty in all circumstances because it is an inherently cruel and inhuman punishment.
- Lawyers defending suspects on trial before the special military court have had extremely limited access to their clients and have not been able to prepare their clients’ defenses adequately. Several prominent defense lawyers have themselves been summoned for questioning by the military prosecutor, including al-Tajer. Authorities eventually brought charges against him, essentially for exercising his right to freedom of expression during the protests. In several recent cases known to Human Rights Watch, the defendant contacted a close family member the day before he or she was to appear in court and asked the family member to engage a lawyer. One lawyer told Human Rights Watch that he and colleagues were able to meet with their clients only twice: immediately before the trial began and again briefly before the final hearing. One businessman, Ghazi Farhan, who was arrested by plain-clothes officers on April 12, was only able to meet with his lawyer on June 21, after he was convicted and sentenced to three years in prison.
- As of June 27 Human Rights Watch had information about 124 cases in which people were tried to verdict in the special military court and several dozen pending cases. Of the 124, 16 were acquitted in full, and seven others were acquitted of some charges but convicted of others. As of June 27, 264 cases were pending.
- In at least some of the trials, one or two close family members have been permitted to attend and in some cases to meet with their loved ones. Although Bahraini officials contend that international human rights organizations are allowed to attend the trials, this has happened in only one hearing of one case, to Human Rights

Watch's knowledge. With the exception of the Bahrain Human Rights Society, other purported human rights groups reportedly in attendance are not independent and adopt the government's perspective regarding human rights violations. Some representatives of foreign embassies have observed high-profile trials, such as for doctors and nurses.

## **Attacks on Medical Centers; Arrests of Medical Professionals and Injured Protesters**

Since the outbreak of anti-government and pro-democracy protests in mid-February, Human Rights Watch has documented numerous violations by authorities, including restrictions on provision of off-site emergency care, sieges at hospitals and medical centers by security and military forces, arrests and beatings of people with protest-related injuries, and arrests of doctors and medical staff.

- In the pre-dawn February 17 raid on Pearl Roundabout protesters, in which four were killed, police attacked a volunteer medical tent, [beating and arresting nurses and doctors](#). In response to this attack and to allegations that authorities had prevented the dispatch of ambulances to attend to wounded protesters, demonstrators gathered outside the emergency facilities of Salmaniya Medical Complex, with the support of some of the medical staff. From mid-February until mid-March the grounds outside the complex, the country's largest public hospital, became the staging ground for anti-government demonstrations, with posters, tents, blown-up photos of wounded protesters, and speeches by opposition leaders.
- Government allegations that during this period Shia doctors refused to treat Sunni patients, or brought in weapons, or used the hospital's blood supply to simulate more grievous protester injuries appear to be untrue. Human Rights Watch had regular access to Salmaniya hospital between February 17 and March 16 and did not see evidence or hear allegations at the time that would corroborate the government's accusations. Moreover, none of these allegations surfaced before the government took over the hospital in mid-March, despite the fact that the government had effectively remained in charge of Salmaniya and other health centers throughout the protest period. Human Rights Watch wrote to the acting health minister on April 21 requesting information about these and other allegations but has received no response.

- Security forces took [control of Salmaniya on March 16](#), including patient wards, and restricted entry to and exit from the complex. The hospital became a torture site: Human Rights Watch, Doctors Without Borders, and Physicians for Human Rights separately [documented numerous cases](#) in which security forces arrested and severely beat patients with protest-related injuries, moving those requiring urgent medical care to restricted areas within the hospital that became improvised detention areas.
- Security forces also raided other health care facilities, including those in Aali, Ibn Sina, Isa Town, and Sitra. During these raids the security forces interrogated and arrested doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals. Protesters wounded by security forces told Human Rights Watch they were afraid to seek professional medical care, though some had serious wounds, for fear of arrest and abuse in detention.
- According to Physicians for Human Rights, Bahraini authorities have arrested more than 80 doctors and other medical professionals, of whom about 20 were later released. On May 4 officials announced that 150 doctors and nurses had been suspended pending investigations. The military prosecutor has brought charges against 48 doctors, nurses, and paramedics that include embezzling funds, possessing weapons and ammunition, inciting sectarian hatred, dissemination of false news, and participation in unauthorized rallies and meetings.

## **Summary Workplace and University Dismissals**

Since late March, according to the independent General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions (GFBTU), more than 2,000 workers have been summarily dismissed from their jobs as of June 29. In most cases the stated reason for dismissal has been absence from work during and immediately after street protests, but the dismissals appear to have been carried out in violation of Bahraini law, which requires that such absences be for at least 10 consecutive days and that workers receive written warnings after five consecutive absences. The government itself has fired or suspended hundreds of employees from ministries and other official bodies.

Human Rights Watch interviewed 18 workers fired from six companies. All said they were given no advance warning and the companies did not conduct independent investigations to determine that they had violated company or government regulations before they were



dismissed. Those fired include 22 local union leaders and six members of the GFBTU executive board. The US trade union federation, the AFL-CIO, has petitioned the US government to notify Bahrain of its intent to suspend the Bahraini-US Free Trade Agreement for violation of ILO conventions prohibiting violations of freedom of association. The Brussels-based International Trade Union Confederation, for its part, has called for the establishment of an ILO Commission of Inquiry into Bahraini violations of ILO Convention No. 111, prohibiting discrimination in hiring and firing for reasons of, among other things, political opinions.

On April 19 the Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reported that the University of Bahrain had dismissed 200 students, academics, and other employees in connection with protests and clashes on the campus in March. On May 25, according to the BNA, Education Minister Majid al-Nuaimi confirmed that some students in Bahrain and abroad who participated in anti-government protests had lost their government scholarships – which for many students would be tantamount to expulsion. The minister also said that “students who showed... that they were directly involved with these operations [would be required] to sign a pledge not to return to such offenses and not to harm the Kingdom of Bahrain at home or abroad.” The BNA separately said that scholarships for about 100 students were affected “temporarily.” The independent Bahrain Center for Human Rights reported that it had received 166 complaints of dismissals from students at Bahraini universities, the great majority from the University of Bahrain. The university announced in April that it had expelled 120 students. The statement also requires the students’ parents to sign the pledge, and notes that this will be the “last warning.”

The University of Bahrain separately required all students to sign a loyalty pledge before they could re-enroll when the university reopened in early May. According to a May 12 post on its official Facebook page, the university’s Council of Trustees adopted a mandatory loyalty pledge for all students before they could return to school.

## **Impunity for Serious Human Rights Violations**

[Approximately 33 people have been killed](#) by security forces since February 14 as a result of protest-related violence, most of them demonstrators or bystanders. Hundreds have been injured. Prior to King Hamad’s June 29 decree establishing an independent investigative commission comprising five international experts, the government had opened no independent, transparent, and impartial investigations into the circumstances of what in many cases appear to be unlawful killings. On May 12 the government announced that

authorities had begun investigations into the roles of several security officials alleged to be responsible for Saqer's death in custody in April.

- Security forces used excessive force, including live ammunition, against largely peaceful protesters. They also fired birdshot pellets, rubber bullets and teargas in a manner that caused a significant number of protester deaths and injuries. These attacks have continued since authorities formally lifted the state of emergency on June 1.
- In February the government announced the formation of an investigative committee of three government officials headed by a deputy prime minister to investigate the protest-related deaths. The committee lacked transparency, and members refused to discuss their methodology with Human Rights Watch. Other government officials told Human Rights Watch in March that they did not know what the committee had done, if anything. It appears that the committee did not resume its work after the mid-March crackdown. On June 8 the official Bahrain News Agency announced that the investigative committee would resume its work and would bring on several new members. The announcement also said that the committee would “forward its final report to His Majesty” by August 10.
- On March 1 then-Health Minister Nezar al-Baharnah called for a second investigative committee to look into alleged government abuses against medical professionals at Salmaniya hospital and elsewhere during the first round of violence in mid-February. Al-Baharnah resigned as minister on March 16, and authorities have since arrested several people on the committee, including Dr. Ahmed Jamal, then the president of the Bahrain Medical Society (BMS). In April authorities removed Dr. Jamal from his position, suspended the group's board of directors, and appointed Dr. Nabeel al-Ansari to head it.
- Human Rights Watch documented attacks by unknown assailants and gangs on March 13 on South Asian migrant workers. At least one was killed, and several others seriously injured. Human Rights Watch interviewed some of the injured workers, criticized the attacks during interviews at the time with media outlets, and discussed these attacks with government-supported Bahraini human rights groups. Authorities subsequently initiated several cases in the special military court against individuals allegedly involved in killing or harming South Asian migrant workers. The South Asian victims of the March attacks included two civilians killed by security forces, and at least one member of Bahrain's security forces.

## Restrictions on Freedom of Information and Official Misinformation

During the crisis in Bahrain, the authorities have increasingly tightened restrictions on the right to freedom of information. The government has banned numerous websites, including those of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and the Bahrain-On-Line discussion forum, as well as publications, including those of legally-recognized opposition political societies. Authorities have arrested journalists and bloggers, and forced the resignation of the editors of the country's one independent newspaper, *Al Wasat*.

Authorities charged the founding editor of *Al Wasat*, Mansoor al-Jamri, along with two other former editors, with “publishing fabricated news and made up stories... that may harm public safety and national interests.” At a trial session before a criminal court on June 19, al-Jamri said that the six fabricated or misleading news items had all been sent to his newspaper from a single internet service provider (ISP) in Saudi Arabia at a time when normal vetting procedures had been disrupted following [violent attacks on Al Wasat offices by unknown persons](#).

The government is also preventing international journalists and independent human rights organizations and nongovernmental organizations either from entering the country or from reporting without restrictions. On May 24 the government ordered Frederik Richter, who had been the only international journalist based in Bahrain for the previous three years, to leave the country within the week.

Bahraini television is state-run, and the print media are almost uniformly pro-government. The media regularly publish opinion and purported news pieces that attack and disparage the Shia community, who constitute a majority of the local population, as well as the protest movement, frequently using words such as “terrorist” to refer to the movement and citing its “malicious agenda.” Al Wifaq, the largest opposition political society, is systematically vilified in the media, accused of being beholden to Iran. The government has failed to produce any evidence, in the courts or in the court of public opinion, to support its allegations that Iran instigated and directed the protest movement. Billboards in and around the capital feature large portraits of jailed opposition leaders accompanied by a large hanging noose.

Although Human Rights Watch had been able to enter Bahrain without difficulty and had been granted access to high-level government officials, the government since late April has severely curtailed Human Rights Watch's efforts to monitor the human rights situation in the

country. In mid-April authorities refused to renew the visa of a Human Rights Watch researcher and ordered him to leave the country within 24 hours. On May 4 Human Rights Watch's legal consultant travelled to Bahrain to observe trials before the special military court, but was turned away at the airport. On May 12 the government of Bahrain informed Human Rights Watch that its deputy Middle East director was no longer welcome in the country. The government has not responded to requests of other Human Rights Watch researchers for visas to visit the country.

Bahraini officials have also blatantly falsified reports of their meetings with UN human rights officials in Geneva. Following a meeting on June 3 between Navi Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights, and Fatima al-Balooshi, Bahrain's social development minister, the official Bahrain News Agency reported that Pillay had acknowledged receiving false information about the human rights situation in Bahrain, and quoted her as saying, "Certain information that we received about the developments in Bahrain are untrue." The news agency's story was picked up by other news outlets. On June 7 the high commissioner's spokesperson issued a statement saying that the news agency's report had "grossly misrepresented" the meeting, noting that it was not present at the meeting. Pillay's spokesperson said that she was "disturbed by the blatant distortion of her words" and that she would formally ask al-Balooshi and the other Bahraini officials who attended the meeting to issue a correction.

## **Recommendations to the Government of Bahrain**

- Immediately and unconditionally release everyone detained solely in connection with pro-democracy and anti-government political protests unless the government has evidence that they may have been responsible for recognizable criminal offenses. Participation in demonstrations, criticizing the government, and calling for a change of government should not be grounds for detention or prosecution.
- Stop holding people arrested in connection with anti-government protests in incommunicado detention.
- Ensure that anyone remaining in detention is promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offense and is able to have confidential consultations with lawyers well in advance of any court proceedings, as well as at the time of formal interrogation by the office of the military prosecutor.

- Immediately make public the names of everyone detained at any time since the Declaration of National Safety on March 15, as well as information about the present status of their cases, dates of release or trial, and their whereabouts since arrest.
- Conduct impartial, transparent, and independent inquiries into all deaths in custody and allegations of torture or ill-treatment in detention, and of enforced disappearances.
- Promptly sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and adopt legislation and regulations to comply with its terms, including the independent monitoring of detention centers.
- Investigate and remedy the summary dismissals of hundreds of workers, and the suspension of university students and faculty, apparently as punishment for having participated in or otherwise supported pro-democracy demonstrations, in violation of Bahraini laws as well as international standards.
- Issue invitations to the UN special human rights mechanisms to visit Bahrain and investigate allegations of serious human rights abuses, including the special rapporteurs on torture, on freedom of expression and opinion, on peaceful assembly and association, on the independence of judges and lawyers, on the right to education, and on freedom of religion and belief, as well as the Working Groups on Arbitrary Detentions and on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.
- Allow independent international human rights organizations to visit Bahrain and report on alleged serious human rights violations.
- Allow independent Bahraini human rights organizations, including the Bahrain Human Rights Society, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and the Bahrain Youth Human Rights Society, to monitor and report on human rights violations; cease all campaigns of intimidation against Bahraini human rights defenders, and investigate and prosecute all attacks on the person and property of Bahraini human rights defenders.

## **Recommendations to Saudi Arabia and Other Gulf Cooperation Council Member States**

- Urge the government of Bahrain, publicly as well as privately, to end serious violations of human rights such as torture and arbitrary detention, release everyone jailed solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and hold accountable officials responsible for serious abuses.
- Make continued participation in any security deployments in Bahrain contingent on concrete steps by Bahraini authorities to end these serious abuses and hold accountable those responsible.

## **Recommendations to the United States and the European Union**

- Publicly affirm that all security assistance, including commercial sales of military and policing equipment and ammunition, has been halted and will remain suspended until Bahrain takes concrete and measurable steps to address the country's serious human rights crisis.
- Press the government of Bahrain, in public as well as through private diplomacy, to meet its obligations under international human rights law; publicly raise cases of people persecuted for their political views and their efforts to exercise their right to peaceful assembly; and criticize specific human rights violations, including torture, arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention, targeting of medical personnel, and rampant impunity.
- Call publicly for the government of Bahrain to release immediately and unconditionally everyone detained solely in connection with pro-democracy and anti-government political protests unless the government has evidence that they may have been responsible for recognizable criminal offenses
- Press the government of Bahrain to open impartial, transparent, and independent inquiries into all deaths in custody and allegations of torture or ill-treatment in detention, and of enforced disappearances.

- Publicly urge the government of Bahrain to make available the names of everyone detained at any time since the “Declaration of National Safety” on March 15 as well as information about the present status of their cases, dates of release or trial, and their whereabouts since arrest.
- Urge Bahrain to allow representatives from Human Rights Watch and other independent human rights organizations to visit Bahrain and conduct research there.

### **Recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council**

- Address, in a regular or special session during 2011, the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain.
- Request the government of Bahrain to transmit to it the report of the independent investigative commission set up in accordance with Royal Order No. 28 of 2011.
- Urge Bahrain to set dates promptly for a visit of the UN high commissioner for human rights, and ask the high commissioner to report back to the council following her visit.
- Urge Bahrain to welcome visits from the special mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, including the special rapporteurs on torture, on freedom of expression and opinion, on peaceful assembly and association, on the independence of judges and lawyers, on the right to education, and on freedom of religion and belief, as well as the Working Groups on Arbitrary Detention and on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.