



4 March 2019

Human Rights Watch
For the attention of Ms Aya Majzoub

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy
For the attention of Mr Sayed Alwadaei

And the other signatories to your letter of 6 February 2019

By email

Dear Ms Majzoub, dear Mr al Alwadei

Najah Ahmed Yousif

Thank you for your letter dated February 6, and your subsequent correspondence, in relation to the case of Ms Najah Yousif.

Formula 1 is committed to respecting internationally-recognised human rights in its operations globally and we take all such responsibilities seriously. A full copy of our policy statement commitment to respect human rights can be found at www.Formula1.com.

As part of that commitment, we obtain from every national promoter of a Formula 1 Grand Prix its commitment to respect internationally recognised human rights. While it is the duty of law enforcement agencies in any host country to protect national security and ensure public safety, we seek assurances that the highest standards of professionalism will be used in relation to the policing and security of an event. Further we make clear our expectation that commentators who may wish to use the occasion of an event to express opinions peacefully will be able to do so without punitive action before, during or after the event.

Additionally, as part of our commitment we seek to understand and monitor through our due diligence processes the potential human rights impacts of our activities, to consider practical responses and to engage in meaningful consultation in relation to any issues raised in our due diligence. In line with this policy I thought it might be useful to set out our actions in relation to Ms Yousif's case.

After originally being contacted by BIRD about the case of Ms Yousif, we made enquiries in Bahrain in an attempt to understand the reasons for Ms Yousif's arrest and detention.

It is our understanding that Ms Yousif was convicted on June 25, 2018, and that she appealed her conviction. Her appeal was unsuccessful and was rejected on October 29, 2018. We understand Ms Yousif

had a further right of appeal to the Supreme Court (exercisable within 30 days of the decision) which she chose not to exercise.

Following the citation in a court judgment of Ms Yousif's comment on social media opposing the staging of the 2017 Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix, we made clear that this was of concern to us and raised those concerns with our counterparties in Bahrain. We also sought assurances that no punitive measures would be taken against Ms Yousif in relation to any expression of peaceful opposition to the event and that no punitive measures will be taken against any other activists for publishing similar comments or pictures in peaceable opposition to the event.

Following responses to questions in Parliament in which the UK Government indicated it was aware of the case, we also wrote to the British Embassy in Bahrain seeking to establish if they could provide any further insight or information on this case.

As you are aware, the Kingdom of Bahrain has clearly stated that the charges and conviction of Ms Yousif have "absolutely no relation to the F1 race" and have provided a detailed response in relation to concerns around the case.

The UK Government subsequently referred to this statement in an answer from Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad to a question from Lord Scriven, in January this year. The Government placed a copy of the document in the Library of the Houses of Parliament. As a result, we have written again to the British Ambassador in Bahrain, following Lord Ahmad's response to Lord Scriven, seeking further information.

Our dialogue with both the British Government and the Bahraini's is ongoing. Indeed, as recently as yesterday, and following further representations from Formula 1, we received additional information and assurances from the Bahraini authorities in relation to this case.

We were assured that Ms Yousif's detention, the charges she faced, her trial and her subsequent conviction had nothing to do with peaceful protest around the Bahrain Grand Prix. Rather, the charges related to events that pre-date the 2017 Grand Prix and cover issues unrelated to Formula 1 or the Bahrain Grand Prix.

Furthermore, we asked for assurances that punitive measures including arrest, prosecution, detention and charging in relation to any person, including Ms Yousif, for singularly peaceful criticism of the Grand Prix, was not and never would be exercised by the authorities in Bahrain. In response we were assured that anyone who merely criticised or continues to criticise Formula 1 in Bahrain is free to do so, can say whatever they want, and would be left alone to do so.

We also continue to engage with the promoters of the Bahrain Grand Prix – as we do with all race promoters ahead of every event – on our commitment to respecting internationally recognised human rights, which of course includes freedom of expression.

I hope you will agree that the steps we have taken demonstrate very clearly our ongoing commitment to our responsibilities under the OECD's guidelines for multinational enterprises. In addition, you may be aware that we are meeting on March 13th with Lord Scriven to discuss Ms Yousif's case in detail. However,

you will also appreciate that as a sporting organisation it is not our place to interfere in the judicial system or indeed in the legal process of any country in which we operate.

Thank you again for raising the case with us.

Yours sincerely

[Signature Redacted]

Sacha Woodward Hill
General Counsel
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