Information for the Human Rights Committee's List of Issues Prior to Reporting concerning Bahrain

Second periodic review under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

146th session | 19 October–6 November 2026

Submitted by Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

August 2026

This submission may be published on the OHCHR website.

Introduction

Bahrain has made little meaningful progress since the Committee adopted its 2018 concluding observations. The Committee then identified concerns including discrimination against the Shia community; dissolution of opposition groups; reprisals and restrictions on expression, assembly and association; torture and ill-treatment; arbitrary detention; unfair trials; prison conditions; and use of the death penalty. ADHRB's 2022 follow-up assessment found that the principal reforms requested by the Committee had not been implemented, while subsequent reporting continued to document torture, ineffective oversight and impunity. [1] [2] [3]

This submission is intended to assist the Committee in preparing the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LoIPR) for Bahrain's second periodic review. Each substantive section follows an evidence-led legal-brief structure: it states a finding, identifies the relevant Covenant standards, sets out documented events in chronological order, and closes with a conclusion. Each section then proposes focused questions that the Committee may ask Bahrain, or use as a basis for its own questions. The report gives particular attention to discrimination against the Baharna and Ajam communities, imprisoned political leaders, Hassan Mushaima, children in detention, the death penalty, prison conditions and environmental harm.

Methodology

This submission draws on original reporting published by ADHRB, BIRD and ECDHR. That reporting is informed by an extensive network of interlocutors on the ground, including victims, relatives, human rights defenders and other persons with direct knowledge of alleged violations. Interlocutors document violations wherever and whenever they observe them, conduct victim interviews, preserve relevant photographic, video, audio and documentary material, and communicate developments to the organisations. Many have received training in victim interviewing, evidence collection and factual reporting.

Information is assessed for internal consistency, proximity to the reported event and corroboration by available material or additional accounts. Information is not used where credibility concerns cannot be resolved. Reporting, legal and advocacy teams then review the documentation against applicable human rights standards. Because victims and interlocutors may face reprisals, identifying information is withheld unless a person is already publicly identified or has consented to publication. The citations below are limited to material published by ADHRB, BIRD or ECDHR; the Covenant provisions stated in each section supply the legal framework.

1. Persistent discrimination against Baharna and Ajam communities

Finding

Bahrain's laws, institutions and public practices continue to disadvantage the Baharna and Ajam as Shia ethnic and religious communities, without transparent data or effective remedies capable of demonstrating equal protection.

Applicable Covenant standards

Articles 2(1) and 26 require equal enjoyment of Covenant rights and equal protection without discrimination, including on grounds of race, religion, national or social origin. Articles 18 and 27 protect religious practice and the

1 Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), "United Nations Human Rights Committee Releases Concluding Observations for Bahrain's First ICCPR Review," 30 July 2018, https://www.adhrb.org/2018/07/united-nations-human-rights-committee-releases-concluding-observations-for-bahrains-first-iccpr-review/.

2 ADHRB, "United Nations Human Rights Committee Follow-up Review: Bahrain," 26 July 2022, https://www.adhrb.org/2022/07/united-nations-human-rights/.

3 ADHRB, "Eight Years of Unfulfilled Promises: What ADHRB's Report to the Committee against Torture Reveals about Bahrain," 6 November 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/11/eight-years-of-unfulfilled-promises-what-adhrbs-report-to-the-committee-against-torture-reveals-about-bahrain/.

cultural life of minorities; articles 19 and 25 protect participation in public affairs and access to public service on general terms of equality.

Evidence and analysis

ADHRB reported in 2018 that the Baharna—an indigenous Arab Shia community—and the Ajam—a community of Persian descent, most of whom are Shia—experienced discrimination in public employment, the security sector, housing, education and scholarships. It also documented the exclusion of their culture and history from public narratives and particular citizenship and statelessness concerns affecting Ajam families. [4]

In 2022, ADHRB's joint submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination described intersecting ethnic and religious discrimination in public-sector and security employment, demographic policy, denaturalisation and access to public life. It also noted Bahrain's failure to publish sufficiently disaggregated data, which prevents independent assessment of whether apparently neutral policies have disparate effects on Baharna, Ajam and other Shia communities. [5]

Cultural and religious restrictions remain part of the same pattern. ADHRB reported in 2025 that 38 Shia mosques, together with shrines and hussainiyas, were demolished during the 2011 emergency and that numerous sites had not been restored in a manner that preserved their historical and communal significance. [6] In 2026, ADHRB and ECDHR documented a new escalation: since February, more than 600 people had reportedly been arrested or summoned in connection with Shia religious expression; more than 50 clerics, preachers, reciters and other religious figures had been arrested or prosecuted; and Ashura observances were restricted through the removal of flags and banners, prevention of gatherings, threats to organisers and arrests that included children. The organisations also reported secret hearings, denial of counsel, ill-treatment and coerced confessions in related cases. [7]

Conclusion

Taken together, the evidence indicates persistent, intersecting ethnic and religious discrimination, compounded by the absence of disaggregated public data, independent review and effective remedies. Bahrain should be required to explain both the disparate effects of state policy and the concrete measures taken to preserve Baharna and Ajam religious and cultural life.

Questions for Bahrain

1. Provide disaggregated, current data on representation of Baharna, Ajam and other Shia citizens in ministries, the judiciary, security services, public-sector employment, public housing and state scholarship programmes, and explain the measures adopted to eliminate any disparities.
2. Identify every Shia mosque, shrine and hussainiya demolished or damaged since 2011; state which sites have been restored in consultation with their communities; and explain the legal basis, safeguards and remedies applicable to any remaining restrictions on Shia religious observance.
3. Explain the legal basis and status of every arrest, summons or prosecution connected to Shia religious expression since February 2026, including the number of children affected, access to counsel, investigation of ill-treatment allegations and remedies provided.

2. Imprisonment of political opposition leaders

Finding

Bahrain continues to imprison prominent opposition leaders for conduct protected by the Covenant, while legal restrictions on opposition activity foreclose meaningful political participation.

Applicable Covenant standards

Articles 9 and 14 prohibit arbitrary detention and require a fair, independent and public hearing. Articles 19, 21 and 22 protect expression, peaceful assembly and association. Article 25 protects the right to take part in public affairs, vote and be elected without unreasonable restrictions. Article 7 prohibits torture and article 10 requires humane treatment of all detainees.

4 ADHRB, "On International Day of the World's Indigenous People, ADHRB Calls for an End to Discrimination against Indigenous People in Bahrain," 9 August 2018, https://www.adhrb.org/2018/08/on-international-day-of-the-worlds-indigenous-people-adhrb-calls-for-an-end-to-discrimination-against-indigenous-people-in-bahrain/.

5 ADHRB, "Joint Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," 2022, https://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/INT_CERD_NGO_BHR_50597_E.pdf.

6 ADHRB, "The Destruction of Shia Religious Sites in Bahrain: A Case of Symbolic Violence," 20 June 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/06/the-destruction-of-shia-religious-sites-in-bahrain-a-case-of-symbolic-violence/.

7 ADHRB and the European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR), "Joint Statement: Bahrain Must End the Systematic Religious Persecution of Shia Citizens," 7 August 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/08/joint-statement-bahrain-must-end-the-systematic-religious-persecution-of-shia-citizens/.

Evidence and analysis

Following the 2011 protest movement, Bahrain imposed life sentences on senior political and civil-society figures, including Hassan Mushaima, Abdulwahab Husain and Sheikh Abduljalil al-Muqdad. It later dissolved the principal opposition societies Al-Wefaq and Wa'ad. BIRD's assessment of the 2022 parliamentary elections documented that former members of dissolved opposition groups remained excluded from political participation and that Sheikh Ali Salman and other leaders remained imprisoned, while calls to boycott the election could attract criminal sanction. [8]

In 2024, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found the detention of Mushaima, Husain, al-Muqdad and Sheikh Abdullah Isa Mahroos arbitrary under Categories I, II, III and V. ADHRB's account of the opinion records warrantless arrests, enforced disappearance lasting one to three months, torture and coerced confessions, denial of adequate legal assistance, unfair trials, medical neglect and discrimination based on political opinion. The Working Group called for their immediate release and reparations. [9]

The pattern remains current. In May 2025, BIRD and other organisations identified imprisoned leaders including Mushaima, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, al-Muqdad and Sheikh Ali Salman, and reported that royal pardons had largely excluded political prisoners. [10] In January 2026, opposition figure Ebrahim Sharif was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine following a television interview. [11] ADHRB reported in March 2026 that elderly leaders remained imprisoned and that a further pardon again excluded political prisoners. [12]

Conclusion

The continued detention of opposition leaders, together with dissolution and exclusion of opposition associations, converts criminal law and custodial power into barriers to protected political participation. Bahrain has not provided an effective remedy for detentions the Working Group found arbitrary.

Questions for Bahrain

1. List all persons currently detained or imprisoned for offences arising from peaceful political expression, association or assembly; provide the factual and legal basis for each detention; and state when each case will receive independent review consistent with articles 9 and 14.
2. What steps has Bahrain taken to implement the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's 2024 opinion concerning Mushaima, Husain, al-Muqdad and Mahroos, including immediate release, compensation, investigation of torture and accountability for perpetrators?
3. When will Bahrain repeal or amend laws and administrative practices that dissolve opposition societies, disqualify former members and criminalise peaceful election boycotts or criticism, so that political participation is consistent with articles 19, 22 and 25?

3. Hassan Mushaima

Finding

Hassan Mushaima, an elderly opposition leader serving a life sentence after an unfair mass trial, remains arbitrarily detained despite advanced age, chronic illness, prolonged isolation and repeated denial or obstruction of adequate medical care.

Applicable Covenant standards

Articles 7 and 10 prohibit ill-treatment and require respect for the dignity of detainees. Articles 9 and 14 prohibit arbitrary detention and unfair trial. Articles 19, 21 and 22 protect peaceful political expression, assembly and association. A State must provide medical care appropriate to a prisoner's condition and cannot make access contingent on unnecessary restraints or degrading treatment.

Evidence and analysis

Mushaima is a former Secretary-General of the Haq Movement and a prominent participant in Bahrain's peaceful opposition. He was arrested in March 2011 and sentenced to life imprisonment by a military court in the "Bahrain

8 Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), "The Entire Political Process Is Fraudulent: A Legal and Political Study of the 2022 Parliamentary Elections in Bahrain," November 2022, https://birdbh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/The-Entire-Political-Process-is-Fraudulent-A-Legal-and-Political-Study-of-the-2022-Parliamentary-Elections-in-Bahrain-%C2%A9BIRD.pdf.

9 ADHRB, "UN WGAD Finds the Detention of Four Elderly Bahraini Opposition Leaders Arbitrary," 25 March 2024, https://www.adhrb.org/2024/03/un-wgad-finds-the-detention-of-four-elderly-bahraini-opposition-leaders-arbitrary-and-subjected-to-torture-coerced-confessions-enforced-disappearances-unfair-trials-and-medical-neglect/ .

10 BIRD, "Bahrain: Joint Letter on Human Rights Situation to Member and Observer States of the United Nations Human Rights Council," 16 May 2025, https://birdbh.org/2025/05/bahrain-joint-letter-on-human-rights-situation-to-member-and-observer-states-of-the-united-nations-human-rights-council/.

11 ADHRB, "Criminalizing Opinion and Demands: An Overview of the Four Latest Waves of Repression of Freedoms in Bahrain," 13 February 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/02/criminalizing-opinion-and-demands-an-overview-of-the-four-latest-waves-of-repression-of-freedoms-in-bahrain/.

12 ADHRB, "ADHRB at HRC61 Calls for Immediate Release of Political Prisoners in Bahrain," 18 March 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/03/adhrb-at-hrc61-calls-for-immediate-release-of-political-prisoners-in-bahrain/.

13" case. ADHRB, BIRD and ECDHR reported in 2018 that his conviction followed proceedings marked by torture allegations and due-process violations, and that authorities had already restricted cancer screening and essential medication while requiring shackling for medical visits. [13]

ADHRB's updated 2024 profile documented that Mushaima had been held in effective solitary confinement at Kanoo Medical Centre since July 2021, before being transferred to the Muharraq Medical Centre in mid-2025. Although his cancer was in remission, he also had diabetes, hypertension, kidney, and nerve problems and chronic knee pain. Medication was inconsistent, appointments and PET scans were cancelled or delayed, food and canteen access were restricted, and he received minimal sunlight. The same year, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found his detention arbitrary and called for his immediate release. [14] [15]

His condition and the reprisals surrounding public concern intensified in 2025–2026. BIRD reported in May 2025 that the 77-year-old remained isolated with inadequate health care, sunlight and ventilation. [16] ADHRB reported that his health deteriorated sharply in December 2025. Peaceful prayer gatherings outside his family home were followed by summonses, arrests and threats against relatives and supporters, roadblocks, raids and the detention of dozens of people, including minors. [17] In March 2026, ADHRB warned that the 78-year-old's multiple chronic illnesses and recent deterioration placed him in imminent danger. [18]

According to the latest updates received from his family in August 2026, Mushaima's health complications continue to persist as he ages. He is currently suffering from instability in his diabetes condition, alongside recurring episodes of severe joint pain which necessitated a pain-relief injection approximately two weeks prior. Furthermore, while he was recently provided with a hearing aid, he is struggling to adapt to it, adding to his ongoing medical distress.

Conclusion

Mushaima's detention is not only arbitrary in origin; its continuation under isolating and medically unsafe conditions creates a continuing risk of irreparable harm. His age and health reinforce the need for immediate release and independent medical care, not merely administrative transfer within the prison system.

Questions for Bahrain

1. When will Bahrain release Hassan Mushaima in accordance with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's opinion, quash the resulting conviction and sentence, and provide an enforceable right to reparation?
2. Will Bahrain immediately permit an independent medical team chosen with Mushaima's informed consent to examine him, obtain his complete medical file, prescribe treatment and ensure access to medication, specialist care, appropriate and well-adjusted medical devices, adequate diet, sunlight, ventilation and family contact without shackling?
3. Provide the names and legal status of all persons summoned, arrested or prosecuted in connection with peaceful gatherings concerning Mushaima since December 2025, and describe investigations and remedies relating to alleged raids, threats and the detention of minors.

4. Arrest, torture and detention of minors

Finding

Bahraini authorities continue to arrest children for peaceful expression and assembly, interrogate them without effective access to counsel or guardians, obtain confessions through ill-treatment and detain them in conditions that disrupt education, health care and family life.

Applicable Covenant standards

Children enjoy all Covenant protections. Articles 7, 9, 10 and 14 prohibit torture, arbitrary detention and unfair trial and require treatment appropriate to age and legal status. Articles 19, 21 and 22 protect peaceful expression,

13 ADHRB, BIRD and ECDHR, "NGOs Call for Release, Urgent Medical Care for Political Prisoner Hassan Mushaima," 23 August 2018, https://www.adhrb.org/2018/08/ngos-call-for-release-urgent-medical-care-for-political-prisoner-hassan-mushaima/.

14 ADHRB, "Updated Profile in Persecution: Hassan Mushaima," 5 September 2024, https://www.adhrb.org/2024/09/updated-profile-in-persecution-hassan-mushaima/.

15 ADHRB, "UN WGAD Finds the Detention of Four Elderly Bahraini Opposition Leaders Arbitrary," 25 March 2024, https://www.adhrb.org/2024/03/un-wgad-finds-the-detention-of-four-elderly-bahraini-opposition-leaders-arbitrary-and-subjected-to-torture-coerced-confessions-enforced-disappearances-unfair-trials-and-medical-neglect/.

16 BIRD, "Bahrain: Joint Letter on Human Rights Situation to Member and Observer States of the United Nations Human Rights Council," 16 May 2025, https://birdbh.org/2025/05/bahrain-joint-letter-on-human-rights-situation-to-member-and-observer-states-of-the-united-nations-human-rights-council/.

17 ADHRB, "Criminalizing Opinion and Demands: An Overview of the Four Latest Waves of Repression of Freedoms in Bahrain," 13 February 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/02/criminalizing-opinion-and-demands-an-overview-of-the-four-latest-waves-of-repression-of-freedoms-in-bahrain/.

18 ADHRB, "ADHRB at HRC61 Warns of Imminent Danger to Prisoners of Conscience in Bahrain," 5 March 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/03/adhrb-at-hrc61-warns-of-imminent-danger-to-prisoners-of-conscience-in-bahrain-amid-escalating-regional-war/.

assembly and association. Article 24 requires special measures of protection for every child, and article 26 guarantees equal protection. Detention must be exceptional, lawful, reviewable and attentive to education, health and family contact.

Evidence and analysis

A royal pardon in April 2024 included almost 40 minors, but arrests soon resumed. ADHRB reported in March 2025 that approximately 38 minors were then held at Dry Dock Detention Centre, including 14 allegedly arrested without warrants. Its review of 11 cases recorded torture or ill-treatment, coerced confessions, and interrogation without counsel or family members. It also reported denial of education, health care, religious practice and adequate family contact, together with repeated postponement of proceedings. [19]

Formal legal reforms have not prevented these practices. ADHRB's December 2025 assessment of the juvenile justice framework found that children continued to be interrogated without guardians or lawyers and that detention and alternative-sentence provisions were applied in ways that did not prevent politically motivated prosecution. [20]

In an opinion adopted in November 2025 and published in 2026, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the detention of Abbas Juma, Ali Matrook Abdulla, AbdulAziz al-Hammadi and Aqeel Juma—aged 15 to 17 when arrested—was arbitrary under Categories I, II, III and V. The children, all school students, had participated in peaceful pro-Palestine demonstrations. ADHRB's account records warrantless arrest, incommunicado detention, torture, coerced confessions, denial of counsel and restrictions on education, medical care and family visits. [21] ADHRB also documented the November 2025 arrests of 15-year-old Hasan Ali Matar and 17-year-old Ahmed Abdulla Abbas, their alleged enforced disappearance and torture, consecutive sentences totaling three years for Hasan and two years for Ahmed, and denial of education; Hasan was later reportedly beaten and pepper-sprayed after complaining of chest pain. [22]

Bahraini authorities systematically target minors through arbitrary arrests, courtroom detentions, harsh sentencing, and deliberate medical neglect. Demonstrating this pattern, 14-year-old Ali Abdullah Juma and 15-year-old Ali Hani were forcibly seized from court during their appeal hearings and sent to juvenile detention. Furthermore, the judiciary stacks excessive charges on children, as seen in July 2026 when 15-year-old Mahdi Al-Muadhin was sentenced to a cumulative six years across two cases, and 15-year-old Hussein Al-Haiki to three years. Most alarmingly, authorities endanger children's lives by denying critical medical care, exemplified by refusing release for 14-year-old Qasim Al-Mowali despite his urgent need for emergency surgery. These cases offer undeniable proof of Bahrain's violation of international juvenile justice standards and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Conclusion

The evidence shows a recurring process—arrest for protected conduct, isolation during interrogation, coerced confession, procedurally defective prosecution and harmful detention—that legal reforms and pardons have not ended. The recurrence requires case-level disclosure, independent investigation and structural safeguards.

Questions for Bahrain

1. Provide current, disaggregated data on every person under 18 arrested, detained, prosecuted or sentenced since January 2024, including age, alleged offence, length and place of detention, access to counsel and a guardian, educational provision, outcome and use of alternatives to detention.
2. What independent investigations have examined allegations of torture, enforced disappearance, coerced confessions, in-court detentions, and the denial of adequate medical care—including emergency surgeries—in cases involving minors arrested and detained, and what remedies and accountability followed?
3. What binding safeguards will ensure that no child is questioned without counsel and a guardian, that statements obtained through coercion are excluded, and that peaceful expression or assembly is not used as a basis for arrest or prosecution?

5. Death penalty

Finding

Bahrain retains and imposes the death penalty following proceedings in which torture allegations and coerced confessions are not effectively investigated, including for offences that do not meet the Covenant's "most serious crimes" threshold.

19 ADHRB, "Bahraini Children Torn from Classrooms, Thrown into Prisons," 6 March 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/03/bahraini-children-torn-from-classrooms-thrown-into-prisons/.

20 ADHRB, "Juvenile Justice and Child Detention in Bahrain: A Crisis behind the Walls," 18 December 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/12/juvenile-justice-and-child-detention-in-bahrain-a-crisis-behind-the-walls/.

21 ADHRB, "UN WGAD Finds the Detention of Four Bahraini Minors Arbitrary," 25 March 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/03/un-wgad-finds-the-detention-of-four-bahraini-minors-arbitrary-and-subjected-to-torture-coerced-confessions-incommunicado-detention-unfair-trials-and-denial-of-education-family-visits-and-medical/.

22 ADHRB, "ADHRB at HRC61 Highlights Torture and Arbitrary Detention of Bahraini Minors," 16 March 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/03/adhrb-at-hrc61-highlights-torture-and-arbitrary-detention-of-bahraini-minors/.

Applicable Covenant standards

Article 6 limits the death penalty in retentionist States to the most serious crimes and prohibits arbitrary deprivation of life. A death sentence imposed after a trial that violates article 14 is arbitrary. Article 7 prohibits torture and use of its fruits; article 26 requires equal protection. Where credible torture allegations arise, the State must investigate promptly, independently and effectively and exclude coerced evidence.

Evidence and analysis

Bahrain resumed executions in January 2017, when Sami Mushaima, Ali al-Singace and Abbas al-Samea were executed after trials in which torture and coerced-confession allegations had been raised. [23] BIRD and Reprieve later found that at least 51 death sentences were imposed between 2011 and 2020, compared with seven in the preceding decade, and that at least six people were executed. Thirty-one of the 51 sentences concerned terrorism offences; torture was alleged in 20 of those cases. The report also documented death sentences for non-lethal drug offences. [24]

The risk remains immediate. In February 2025, BIRD and other organisations reported that 26 people were on death row and again highlighted Mohammed Ramadan and Hussain Moosa, sentenced in 2014 following proceedings marred by torture allegations. [25] In May 2025, BIRD reported that 11 of the 26 had been convicted after unfair trials relying solely or primarily on confessions allegedly obtained through torture. [26] On 9 March 2026, Bahrain's Public Prosecution said that it had requested death sentences against several defendants for their alleged involvement in espionage.[27] ADHRB's 2022 follow-up assessment had already concluded that Bahrain had neither established a moratorium nor confined capital punishment to the most serious crimes. [28]

Conclusion

The combination of an expanded capital regime, death-eligible non-lethal offences, inadequately investigated torture claims and unfair proceedings creates a foreseeable risk of arbitrary execution. A moratorium and independent review of every death sentence are necessary safeguards while abolition is pursued.

Questions for Bahrain

1. Will Bahrain establish an immediate official moratorium on executions, commute all existing death sentences and take steps toward ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant?
2. Provide a complete list of persons under sentence of death, the offence and date of final judgment in each case, execution status, allegations of torture or coercion, evidence independent of the contested confession, and the outcome of any investigation or retrial.
3. When will Bahrain restrict capital punishment to offences involving intentional killing, abolish it for non-lethal terrorism and drug offences, and require courts to exclude evidence whenever the prosecution cannot prove that it was obtained without torture or ill-treatment?

6. Prison conditions, medical neglect and deaths in custody

Finding

Conditions in Bahrain's detention facilities—including medical neglect, punitive isolation, collective punishment and ineffective complaint mechanisms—continue to expose prisoners to ill-treatment and prevent timely, independent accountability for deaths and serious injury.

Applicable Covenant standards

Article 10 requires all persons deprived of liberty to be treated with humanity and respect for inherent dignity. Articles 6 and 7 require the State to protect life, prevent torture and ill-treatment, provide necessary medical care and investigate potentially unlawful deaths. Article 18 protects religious observance. Investigations and complaint mechanisms must be independent, effective and capable of producing accountability and remedy.

23 BIRD, "Bahrain Executes Three Stateless Torture Victims Following King Hamad's Authorisation," 15 January 2017, https://birdbh.org/2017/01/bahrain-executes-three-stateless-torture-victims-following-king-hamads-authorisation/.

24 BIRD and Reprieve, "From Crisis to Execution: The Death Penalty in Bahrain, Ten Years on from the Arab Spring," July 2021, https://birdbh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Reprieve_BahrainDeathPenalty_23.07.2021_.pdf.

25 BIRD, "Bahrain: 31 Rights Groups Urge the EU to Push for the Release of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Mohammed Habib Al-Muqdad," 17 February 2025, https://birdbh.org/2025/02/bahrain-31-rights-groups-urge-the-eu-to-push-for-the-release-of-abdulhadi-al-khawaja-and-mohammed-habib-al-muqdad/.

26 BIRD, "Bahrain: Joint Letter on Human Rights Situation to Member and Observer States of the United Nations Human Rights Council," 16 May 2025, https://birdbh.org/2025/05/bahrain-joint-letter-on-human-rights-situation-to-member-and-observer-states-of-the-united-nations-human-rights-council/.

27 Hani Al Fardan, "Bahrain | Public Prosecution Requests Death Penalty for Defendants in Espionage Case," Instagram, 9 March 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/DVqYE52DOdb/?igsh=MWdhMjg2bDk0MW9oOQ%3D%3D.

28 ADHRB, "United Nations Human Rights Committee Follow-up Review: Bahrain," 26 July 2022, https://www.adhrb.org/2022/07/united-nations-human-rights/.

Evidence and analysis

On 5 December 2024, 41-year-old political prisoner Hussain Aman collapsed in the yard at Jau Prison and died. BIRD reported allegations of delayed or inadequate emergency response and identified his death as the second custodial death that year. [29] ADHRB subsequently reported that protests following Aman's death were met with beatings, prolonged handcuffing, solitary confinement and restrictions on outdoor time, food, water, showers and clothing; detainees also reported skin disease and confiscation of religious materials. [30]

In December 2025, ADHRB's reporting on the Committee against Torture's review described persistent torture and ill-treatment, poor sanitation, water and electricity outages, food shortages, inadequate medical care, prolonged isolation and restrictions on family contact. It also reported that the Ombudsman and Special Investigation Unit lacked effective independence and accountability outcomes, while independent monitors remained unable to access prisons. [31] A separate ADHRB assessment documented denial of specialists, hospital transfers and medication, long-term physical and psychological effects, retaliation for complaints and complaint bodies institutionally tied to the Ministry of Interior. [32]

Sayed Mohamed Almosawi, aged 32, died in custody in March 2026. BIRD reported that his body showed signs of torture and that interviews with eight sources and photographs reviewed by an independent medical expert were consistent with repeated blunt-force trauma. The Special Investigation Unit later charged one security official with assault causing death, while the safety and whereabouts of co-detainees remained a concern. [33] The case illustrates both the gravity of custodial abuse allegations and the need for investigation beyond a single lower-level actor, including command responsibility and institutional practice.

Ali Muhana, 57-year-old activist and former political prisoner, continues to face medical neglect in prison despite his deteriorating health. His family submitted three complaints requesting appropriate medical care, including specialist examination and necessary scans, yet he was not examined by a specialist and his scans were delayed for more than a month. He was also placed in a smoking cell despite being a non-smoker, causing repeated coughing, while being held in a cell with a squat toilet despite a previous pelvic and coccyx fracture.[34]

In July 2026, ADHRB reported further deterioration at Jau Prison amid an open-ended hunger strike by dozens of political prisoners following an assault on detainee Ahmed Jaafar. It reported repeated fainting and continued medical neglect and denial of necessary medication, restrictions on food and water, denial of family visits and participation in funerals, and political prisoners being forced to share cells with criminal prisoners who had previously assaulted them.[35]

Conclusion

The recurring sequence of deteriorating conditions, retaliation, delayed care and contested deaths demonstrates that internal oversight has not provided effective prevention or remedy. Independent access, medical autonomy, protection for complainants and transparent investigation of every custodial death are required.

Questions for Bahrain

1. Permit unannounced access to all detention facilities by independent international monitors and publish current facility-level data on occupancy, sanitation, water and electricity interruptions, outdoor exercise, isolation, medical referrals, complaints, disciplinary measures and deaths.
2. What independent investigations have examined the deaths of Hussain Aman, Sayed Mohamed Almosawi and every other person who died in custody since January 2024, including possible medical neglect, torture, supervisory responsibility and retaliation against witnesses; and what prosecutions and remedies resulted?
3. How will Bahrain establish a prison health service and complaint mechanism independent of the Ministry of Interior, guarantee confidential access to doctors and records, protect complainants and witnesses, and end collective punishment and restrictions on religious practice?

---

29 BIRD, "Bahrain: Tragic Death of Political Prisoner Fuels Fears of Unrest in the Prison," 6 December 2024, https://birdbh.org/2024/12/bahrain-tragic-death-of-political-prisoner-fuels-fears-of-unrest-in-the-prison/.

30 ADHRB, "ADHRB at HRC58: Stop Bahrain's Systematic Abuse of Political Prisoners," 14 March 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/03/adhrb-at-hrc58-stop-bahrains-systematic-abuse-of-political-prisoners/.

31 ADHRB, "During Its Session on Bahrain, the Committee against Torture Expressed Deep Concern over Ongoing Torture and Violations inside Prisons," 2 December 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/12/during-its-session-on-bahrain-the-committee-against-torture-expressed-deep-concern-over-ongoing-torture-and-violations-inside-prisons-amid-the-absence-of-effective-accountability/.

32 ADHRB, "From the Cell to after Release: The Impact of Prisoner Mistreatment and Systematic Medical Neglect in Bahrain," 11 December 2025, https://www.adhrb.org/2025/12/from-the-cell-to-after-release-the-impact-of-prisoner-mistreatment-and-systematic-medical-neglect-in-bahrain/.

33 BIRD, "Bahrain Watchdog Charges Security Official over Torture Leading to the Death of Sayed Mohamed Almosawi," 17 April 2026, https://birdbh.org/2026/04/bahrain-watchdog-charges-security-official-over-torture-leading-to-the-death-of-sayed-mohamed-almosawi/.

34 ADHRB, "Bahrain: Continued Detention of Ali Muhana Reveals a Systematic Pattern of Targeting Activists and Families of Political Prisoners," 17 July 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/07/bahrain-continued-detention-of-ali-muhana-reveals-a-systematic-pattern-of-targeting-activists-and-families-of-political-prisoners/

35 ADHRB, "ADHRB expresses concern over the serious escalation at Jau Prison," X, 28 July 2026, https://x.com/ADHRB/status/2082036810612375648?s=20.

7. Environmental harm and access to information

Finding

Bahrain has not demonstrated that industrial pollution, coastal development and related health risks are being assessed and remedied through transparent information, community participation and effective protection of affected communities.

Applicable Covenant standards

Article 6 requires protection against reasonably foreseeable threats to life, including life-threatening environmental degradation. Article 17 protects the home and private life against unlawful or arbitrary interference; article 19 protects access to information necessary for public scrutiny and participation; and articles 2 and 26 require equal protection and effective remedy without discrimination.

Evidence and analysis

ADHRB documented in 2016 that land reclamation and coastal development damaged marine ecosystems and traditional fishing livelihoods. Its reporting focused particularly on Ma'ameer, a largely Shia community located near an oil refinery and a dense concentration of industrial facilities, where residents and children were exposed to reported air pollution, chemical waste and oil spills. It also identified the absence of sufficient public environmental-health information and called for transparent disclosure of chemical agents used by security forces. [36]

ADHRB returned to these concerns in a 2021 Human Rights Council submission addressing environmental violations and the State's obligations to affected communities. [37] ADHRB has also emphasised that environmental protection depends on the safety of human rights defenders who collect and disclose environmental information. [38] At COP26, BIRD criticised the gap between Bahrain's international climate commitments and domestic rights practice, stressing that the right to a healthy environment requires public participation, access to information and access to justice. [39]

Bahrain's role as a host to foreign military infrastructure and strategic energy facilities also raises concerns for communities living near industrial and logistical sites. Recent attacks targeting energy and strategic infrastructure in the Gulf have highlighted the potential risks to civilians living in proximity to refineries, industrial zones and related facilities. This reinforces the need for transparent information on environmental and health risks and effective safeguards for affected communities.[40] Additionally, Bahrain's BAPCO Energies refinery was affected by missile strikes, highlighting the risks posed to critical energy infrastructure and nearby civilian communities.[41]

The available reporting leaves material questions unanswered: current facility-level emissions and water-quality data are not presented in a form that permits affected communities to evaluate exposure; there is no public, independent longitudinal health assessment for Ma'ameer and similarly situated areas; and the cumulative effects of reclamation on fisheries, food security and livelihoods are not transparently remedied. These evidentiary gaps are themselves relevant to articles 6 and 19 because communities cannot protect health, challenge permits or obtain remedy without timely, usable information.

Conclusion

Bahrain's climate commitments do not answer the Covenant question. The Committee should seek measurable domestic evidence concerning exposure, health effects, consultation and remedy, with particular attention to communities that may bear a disproportionate burden.

Questions for Bahrain

1. Publish current, facility-level data on air emissions, water quality, oil and chemical releases and related health indicators, and explain how independent experts and affected communities can obtain underlying data, challenge permits and secure remedies.
2. What independent health and environmental-impact assessments have been conducted for Ma'ameer and other communities near industrial facilities or reclamation projects, and what time-bound measures address cumulative exposure, coastal loss and damage to fishing livelihoods?

---

36 ADHRB, "The Government of Bahrain's Failure to Protect Children from Environmental Degradation," 14 September 2016, https://www.adhrb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016.09.14_ADHRB-CRC-Environment-Written-Statement-Final-draft.pdf.

37 ADHRB, "HRC46 Written Statement: Environmental Violations Committed by the Government of Bahrain," 11 March 2021, https://www.adhrb.org/2021/03/hrc46-written-statement-environmental-violations-committed-by-the-government-of-bahrain/.

38 ADHRB, "UN HRC Adopts Resolution Highlighting Role of Environmental Human Rights Activists," 1 April 2019, https://www.adhrb.org/2019/04/un-hrc-adopts-resolution-highlighting-role-of-environmental-human-rights-activists/.

39 BIRD, "UK MPs Call Out Bahrain 'Greenwashing' at COP26," 9 November 2021, https://birdbh.org/2021/11/uk-mps-call-out-bahrain-greenwashing-at-cop26-as-war-in-yemen-rages-and-jailed-academic-reaches-120-days-on-hunger-strike/.

40 ADHRB, "Selective Neutrality in the Gulf: How Strategic Partnerships Endanger Civilians Amid Regional Escalation," 15 April 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/04/selective-neutrality-in-the-gulf-how-strategic-partnerships-endanger-civilians-amid-regional-escalation/

41 ADHRB, "The Hydrocarbon Paradox: How Fossil Fuel Dominance Became the Gulf's Greatest Vulnerability," 4 August 2026, https://www.adhrb.org/2026/08/the-hydrocarbon-paradox-how-fossil-fuel-dominance-became-the-gulfs-greatest-vulnerability/

3. What legal safeguards protect environmental defenders, journalists, fishers and residents who document pollution or criticise environmental policy from surveillance, arrest, prosecution or reprisal, and how are they consulted in climate and development decisions?

Requested action

ADHRB respectfully requests that the Committee incorporate the proposed questions, or questions directed to the same evidentiary gaps, into Bahrain's List of Issues Prior to Reporting. This requires answers supported by disaggregated data, case-level information, implementation dates, and verifiable accountability outcomes.