



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

888 16th Street NW, Suite 800 • Washington, D.C. 20006 • (202) 650-5530 • www.adhrb.org • @ADHRB

ADHRB on the Two-Year Anniversary of the Uprising in Bahrain

On the two-year anniversary of the uprising in Bahrain, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) implores the United States Government to put substantial pressure on the Government of Bahrain to take action to fulfill the democratic aspirations and human rights of the Bahraini people.

“The fact that the Government of Bahrain is still able to intimidate, censor, detain, and torture its citizens is deplorable,” said ADHRB Director Husain Abdulla. “For two years, the United States has remained virtually silent while Bahrainis have suffered at the hands of their government. In the face of excessive force, torture, and death, the United States must support a stable democratic transition by demanding that the Government of Bahrain release political prisoners, prosecute those guilty of human rights violations, and recognize the aspirations of its citizens.”

With a new dialogue underway, there is potential for progress in Bahrain. However, while prominent human rights activists remain in prison instead of at the dialogue table, and security forces continue their brutal crackdown on peaceful protests, there is much skepticism about the sincerity of the Bahrain government to follow through on its promise to reform. The United States must demand that the Government of Bahrain swiftly enact reforms and take confidence-building measures, such as releasing prisoners of conscience and allowing peaceful protests to occur, to build the trust needed to ensure that the dialogue has a chance to succeed.

In his State of the Union address, President Obama said that the United States will “stand with citizens as they demand their universal rights, and support stable transitions to democracy.” However, the Government of Bahrain’s brutal repression of peaceful protests has been met with muted criticism from the United States. Since the uprising began, over 120 people have died as a direct result of excessive use of force by police and security forces. The most recent death was that of 16-year-old Hussain al-Jazeri, who died early this morning after being shot by riot police.

In his confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations late last month, then-Senator Kerry promised that he would “not hesitate” to address human rights concerns with U.S. allies. In keeping with his word, Secretary Kerry must make it clear to the Government of Bahrain that continuing human rights violations will be met with consequences—and then they must follow through on it.

“President Obama and Secretary Kerry have both expressed concern with the situation in Bahrain,” Abdulla said. “Having witnessed two years of extensive documentation of human rights violations in Bahrain, we know that ‘quiet diplomacy’ does not work. The United States must pursue a more robust policy toward Bahrain to ensure that the three-year anniversary of the February uprising takes place in a free and peaceful Bahrain.”