



6 September 2019

Chief Teresa McHenry
Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section
Department of Justice
1301 New York Ave NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Chief McHenry,

We at Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) have [previously notified](#) the United States (US) Department of State (DoS) of multiple individuals in Bahrain's Ministry of Interior (MOI) – including **Brigadier Abdulaziz Mayoof al Rumaihi**, **Brigadier Mubarak bin Huwail al-Merri**, **Colonel Bassam Mohammed al-Muraj**, **Lt. Fawaz al-Sameem**, **Lt. Col. Adnan Bahar**, and **Major Maryam Al-Bardouli** – who have been allegedly involved or complicit in gross violations of human rights (GVHR). As high-ranking officers within the Ministry of Interior of Bahrain, we believe these individuals fall under 18 U.S.C. § 2340, which allows for the prosecution of individuals who are alleged to have committed acts of torture. As such, we ask this office to investigate these allegations and coordinate with other relevant agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to bar these individuals from entry to the United States.

The Torture Act (18 U.S.C. § 2340) asserts jurisdiction over any alleged offender who is a US national or any alleged offender within the territory of the US, regardless of the nationality of the victim or the alleged offender. As such, in light of the following information, we urge this Department to collaborate with other US agencies to bar these individuals from entering the US, on the basis that they have allegedly perpetrated acts of torture in violation of the U.S.C. and international law. Barring entry to the US to these individuals would be in line with the obligations of the Human Rights and Special Prosecution Section, which “investigates and prosecutes cases against human rights violators and other international criminals.”

Brigadier Abdulaziz Mayoof al-Rumaihi has been the Director-General of the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science (GDCIFS) since July 2016, and previously was director of the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID). He has been [accused](#) of human rights violations as early as 2010 and ADHRB has documented more than 60 cases of severe abuse directly linked to the GDCIFS since al-Rumaihi assumed command. He also was [implicated](#) in the February 2017 death of unarmed suspect Abdullah al-Ajooz, whose family and other observers believe was extrajudicially killed during an attempted arrest by MOI personnel. As Director-General, al-Rumaihi is responsible for the actions of his inferior officers. He is thus responsible for refusing to prevent and punish torture, ill treatment, and extrajudicial killings by his subordinates. As such, we believe there is credible evidence that he has been involved and/or complicit in GVHR and should be barred entry to the US.

Brigadier Mubarak bin Huwail al-Merri, currently the Security Attaché with Bahrain's Embassy in Riyadh, was Director-General of Southern Governorate Police Directorate from 2016 to 2018, and was the Director of Anti-Narcotics from 2011 to 2016. There is [extensive evidence](#) that he oversaw the torture of at least six medical personnel that were arbitrarily detained in retaliation for treating wounded pro-democracy protesters in 2011. Dr. Rula al-Saffar, who served as president of the Bahrain Nursing Society and assistant professor at the College of Health Science in Manama, named Mubarak bin Huwail as the “principal investigator” when she was summoned to the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) and blindfolded, beaten, threatened with rape, and subjected to electric shock. She reported that bin Huwail “humiliated, intimidated and degraded” her and the other detainees in order to extract false testimony. Because al-Merri was definitively identified as a perpetrator of torture, we believe there is credible evidence that he has been involved in GVHR and should be barred entry to the US.



Colonel Bassam Mohammed al-Muraj was appointed by the king to Director-General of General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, Economic, and Electronic Security (GDAEES) in 2013, despite evidence emerging that he had directly overseen torture at his previous position at the CID. An [investigation](#) conducted by Human Rights Watch found that between 2007 and 2010, al-Muraj was identified as one of four chief torturers at the CID, and that the government had taken no action to address complaints about their abusive behavior. Al-Muraj has reportedly continued to torture dissidents since assuming control of the GDAEES. Additionally, al-Muraj's subordinate, **Lieutenant Fawaz al-Sameem**, has been [implicated](#) in at least three instances of abuse, all of which were reprisal attacks against activists for expressing peaceful criticism of the government. In at least one case, Lt. al-Sameem allegedly oversaw the beating, electric shock, and sexual assault of the detainee. Because al-Muraj has been definitively identified by multiple victims of torture as one of the main perpetrators of torture across multiple units in the MOI, we believe there is credible evidence that he has committed GVHR, and should be barred entry to the US.

Torture and abuse do not just occur during arrests and interrogation, but continue during incarceration. Bahrain's prison system is notorious for its poor living conditions, denial of adequate health care, and rampant abuse against inmates. **Lt. Col. Adnan Bahar** has been [identified](#) as a lead perpetrator of torture starting as early as 2005. In 2008, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture documented severe cases of torture and sexual violence overseen by Lt. Col. Bahar when he was still a sergeant, prior to his position as Acting Head of Jau Prison. **Major Maryam Al-Bardouli**, who is the commander of Isa Town Women's Prison, has also [reportedly](#) beaten and assaulted detainees.

In addition to these individuals who we have previously flagged to DoS, there are several others we have identified in our 2019 report, [Anatomy of a Police State](#), who have played a role in, or oversaw, severe rights abuses – including Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Tariq al-Hassan, Abdullah al-Zayed, Ebrahim Habib al-Ghaith, Abdulsalam Yousef al-Oraifi, Abdullah Khaifa al-Jairan, Sheikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. We believe these individuals should also be barred entry to the United States as leaders of units which have been implicated in GVHR.

We call on you, in your capacity as Chief of the Human Rights and Special Prosecution Section, to hold those involved in gross violations of human rights accountable and collaborate with other US agencies to bar these individuals from entering the US. Individuals implicated in torture and other abuses should not be allowed in the United States. We therefore urge you to ensure that the above mentioned individuals are unable to enter the US.

Sincerely,

Husain Abdulla
Executive Director
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

An electronic copy of this letter was sent to the Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Unit at hrrtips@usdoj.gov.