

**The International Center
for Supporting
Rights and Freedoms**



**المركز الدولي
لدعم الحقوق والحريات**

The International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms

The eleventh Annual Report

The Conditions of Human Rights Defenders in GCC Countries

**Monitored, Documented and Collected by Horyat (Freedoms) Network
of Human Rights Defenders**

**Prepared by
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The Head of ICSRF**

**The International Center
for Supporting
Rights and Freedoms**



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Human Rights Defenders in GCC Countries

The word of the Head of the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms (ICSRF)

Welcome to all those interested in learning about the human rights situation in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

This is the eleventh annual report covering the period from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

During 2023, the persecution of activists, opponents and human rights defenders in the Gulf Cooperation Council region increased, to lead the world in the most dangerous regions Even just opening your mouth to express an opinion.

During this period, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries exploited the political, economic and social crises, especially after the world's attention was completely drawn to the war in the Middle East, which led to a further deterioration in the human rights situation in the region .

The GCC countries believe that the global economy is now exhausted and everyone is looking for security, food and energy, and that this is much more important than human rights.

The GCC countries also continued their policy of marketing very modest improvements that do not satisfy human rights organizations as great human rights achievements, such as a country that granted a partial and special amnesty to those accused in opinion and expression cases, or a country that issued a law for the conditional release of detainees who have served three-quarters of their prison sentence, or a country that allowed women to drive, or a country that allowed parties and cultural, entertainment and tourism events, or that gender segregation no longer exists in public places, or that strict dress codes for women have been abolished, or that women have the right to work like men, or that a woman has been appointed as an ambassador or minister, or that a country has tried official officers who killed a journalist inside their country's consulate. The fact that the Gulf authorities and media organizations filmed and photographed the travel of a king, prince, sheikh or crown prince to a European country and received the head of the democratic country is a new page in human rights criticism and at the same time a strong blow to human rights organizations and international bodies that continue to criticize the status and condition of human rights. This year, the countries that obtained international positions and centres continued their fierce war against human rights organisations and activists.

Gulf diplomatic efforts to recover opponents and human rights defenders who fled to different countries have not stopped, and unfortunately have sometimes succeeded. In addition, Bahrain has continued to exploit its seat in the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to harm human rights defenders and organizations requesting consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and has continued to fabricate cases against human rights defenders, activists and opponents. The suppression of peaceful protests in Bahrain has continued, and unlawful detention has continued in all GCC countries, including women and children, in addition to physical and psychological torture of opponents. Moreover, a large number of human rights defenders have continued to be deprived of travel and freedom of movement. The clear violation this year 2023 is the push for activists to emigrate and leave the GCC countries to become refugees outside their countries after being restricted, especially in the matter of work and earning money.

Regarding the continuation of revenge series against the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms (Swiss Association) in the NGO Committee in New York in regarding to holding the consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council, the Kingdom of Bahrain continues to use its position in the NGO Committee to take revenge against ICSFR and a large number of human rights organizations that monitor human rights conditions within GCC Countries and Yemen as well. We must note that the NGO committee works as one team and they are compatible and cooperating the most and are satisfied and are in solidarity in the questions asked, as the question that hinders the human rights organization from holding the consultative status is sent with the name of the committee, and although the country that asked the question is known, the committee always stresses that we should not send the answer and direct your speech to the country, but send the answer directing your speech to the whole committee.

The item no. 1 in the document no. A/HRC/RES/31/32 which was issued in the 31st session of the Human Right Council states that:

The Human Rights Council affirms that everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to advocate and seek to protect all human rights and fundamental

freedoms and their work in accordance with the declaration without being subjected to revenge series or fearing the occurrence of such actions.

The file of the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms does not have any reason, something is missing, should be completed or a document that the committee is waiting for to be delayed for all these years. Also the questions raised by the committee are very trivial, very poor and repeated such as what are your latest activities or what are your activities in the Human Rights Council? Or the questions are fabricated such as requesting information about a festival we organized or a competition we held, and the respected country, a member of the committee, could not take minutes to review our file to be sure that we are a human rights organization and not a 'circus' that holds festivals, celebrations and competitions.

The International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms has monitored and documented human rights violations in Bahrain since 2011. It also submitted a UPR report in 2016 and submitted a follow-up report on human rights conditions in Bahrain to the UN Human Rights Committee in 2022, in addition to submitting UPR on human rights conditions in Bahrain in 2022. This is in addition to the eight annual reports available on the center's website, most of which are in the library of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Suspending the center without any reason is a clear public Bahraini revenge for these reasons, and there is no country within the NGO Committee that has an interest in harming the center except Bahrain for the aforementioned reasons.

It is stated in article 1 of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Bodies of Society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms within the national judiciary, which stated that (Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to advocate and seek to protect and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels).

We affirm that the Kingdom of Bahrain publicly and clearly violates the objectives of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The center thanks, greets and appreciates the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs for following up on the center's file.

A reference should be to what is stated item 29 of the document A/HRC/45/36 issued by Human Rights Council in its session no. 45:

Successive reports have addressed the obstacles that impede individuals and organizations from speaking out in United Nations forums. Reports continue to be received about attempts by representatives of countries to disrupt or delay the accreditation of some representatives of civil society. Similarly, there are still reports of cases of taking pictures of individuals without their consent or recording their movements and data without their consent in meetings of the United Nations.

The International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms has monitored the increasing brutal human rights violations committed by the authorities of GCC countries which are summarized as follows:

- As a clear example of disregarding human right to life Saudi Arabia ended the lives of 81 people on one day in the largest death penalty execution this year.
- Bahrain uses its position as a member of the NGOs Committee in revenge against the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms and against the human rights organizations that it is not satisfied with.
- In the year 2023 a large number of human rights defenders and activists in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries became refugees. In the year the Gulf Cooperation Council countries introduced a policy of impoverishing activists, restricting their work and earning money, and besieging their trade.
- The way the Omani Special Department deals with activists has not changed despite the change of a large number of officials, headed by the Sultan of Oman during the last ten years and the good development of a number of legislation and laws and the Sultanate's joining to the important international charters and treaties. During this year, a number of tweeters and defenders of human rights were abused, but the Omani judiciary did justice to them by sentencing them innocent.
- In Kuwait, the illogical revenge campaigns against human rights defenders continued such as the claim of a civilian (who is believed to be working in the interest of security) and there is no evidence of any relationship with the human rights defender, so that the investigations referred the case to the prosecution quickly without examination, and the human rights defender was taken from his work several times to come to the detectives and the public prosecution for investigation.

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- Although Qatar will host the World Cup 2022 this year, and it is good that it appears as a country that respects human rights, it has violated all expectations, and only during this year, it committed human rights violations two times as much as it did since the Arab

Spring, and despite the requests of human rights organizations, it is almost the most prominent gulf state in obstinacy, non-retreat and insistence on doing mistakes.

- The governments of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait have exerted great efforts to bring back activists, opponents and human rights defenders residing abroad to take revenge against them.
- The Gulf Security Agreement, which was approved by the GCC countries in the period from 24th to 25th December 2012 in the Kingdom of Bahrain within the incidents and events of 33rd session, is still valid. We believe that one of the goals of this agreement is to eliminate the human rights movement.
- We always repeat what was stated in the statement of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon at the high-level panel discussion about revenge series - New York 2011: (the United Nations cannot do its invaluable work in favor of human rights without those who cooperate with us, and when they are intimidated and targeted for revenge, they are victims, but we all become less secure and when there is more restrictions on their cooperation, our work in the field of human rights is at risk).

The International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms continues to provide assistance and support all time, despite the difficult challenges committed by governments that have violations in the human rights file.

On 16th June 2015, in the opening statement of 29th session of the Human Rights Council, the former high commissioner the prince Zin Bin Raad Al Hussien said:

Let the message spread that we will defend the victim, the voiceless, the minorities, the immigrant, the blogger and the human rights defender. Let the world know that we will do this without fear or partiality, regardless of the name of the victim or the characteristics of the perpetrator."

Ahmed Aly
A Lawyer

The Head of the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms (Swiss Association)

Firstly: Abstract

This is the eleventh annual report prepared by the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms (Swiss Association) in which it documents the conditions of human rights defenders in GCC Countries (Saudi Arabia, Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman).

ICSRF uses human rights mechanisms, monitors and documents many violations in GCC Countries daily, sends investigation missions and issued many urgent action reports which had an impact in shedding light on the violations to form pressing public opinion. In 2012, ICSRF submitted UPR of the United Arab Emirates in participation with number of human right organizations. In addition, in 2016 ICSRF submitted its report on Bahrain. In 2022, ICSRF submitted its report to the Human Rights Committee about human rights conditions in Bahrain. Also the second, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth annual reports were published in Arabic and English on the library of the High Commission of Human Rights.

The International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms is still paying the price of its work in monitoring and documenting human rights violations in GCC Countries in general and Bahrain in particular. ICSRF is one of NGOs that are not been satisfied with in these countries. Consequently, ICSRF has requested the consultative status for many years, and Bahrain has suspended it, taking advantage of its position as a member in the NGO Committee in New York by asking illegal and repeated questions, the last of which was in May 2024, as one question may suspend getting consultative status for one year. The continued lack of crystallization of a clear vision for Arab governments towards developing strategies that can be practically implemented to protect human rights defenders. The governments protect specific human rights defenders whom they know and allow them to work, and persecute and abuse real human rights defenders through their various authorities, and also after the clear complete disregarding of the international treaties and charters.

The item 1 in the document no. A/HRC/RES/31/32 which issued in 31st session of Human Rights Council states that:

The Human Rights Council affirms the right of every person individually and jointly with others to advocate and seek to protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms and applying them in accordance with the declaration without being subjected to revenge or fearing the occurrence of such actions.

Summary

Results of The International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms

Kingdom of Bahrain

The most prominent violations were the continued persecution of political opponents who fled Bahrain in fear for their lives after participating in the protests that erupted in February 2011. The same approach did not change in 2023 in all cases, with the judiciary issuing long prison sentences in absentia. Then came the role of security in sending information to Interpol, and then the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy in retrieving opponents. Throughout this year, Bahrain further exploited its position as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, and reprisals included human rights organizations that monitor human rights violations in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and other Yemeni organizations. Medical neglect in prisons, arbitrary arrests, fabricated charges against opponents and human rights defenders, the arrest of children, the pursuit of a policy of impunity, arrests for expressing opinions, and interference in the appointment of board members of human rights associations and organizations continued.

Item 5 in the document no. A/HRC/RES/31/32 issued in 31st session of the Human Rights Council states:

The Human Rights Council strongly condemns the revenge and violence actions directed against any individual, including human rights defenders, and targeting, criminalization, intimidation, torture, disappearance and killing them because of their reporting of human rights violations and their seeking to obtain information about them or because of their cooperation with national, regional and international mechanisms.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ICSRF and great number of human rights organizations all over the world see that justice has not been achieved yet in the crime of killing the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Also Arbitrary detention continued for years for the simplest reasons, such as for example, tweeting on Twitter, for human rights work, participating in the foundation of organizations or communicating with international bodies and organizations. In addition, ICSRF monitored the continued overcrowding in prison with opponents and human rights defenders who are detained without trial and live in poor conditions.

The item 104 in the document no. A/HRC/47/35 issued in 47th session of the Human Rights Council states:

Overcrowding in prisons affects human rights in all circumstances, but is particularly dangerous in the context of the pandemic, as it dramatically increases the risk of infection among persons deprived of liberty and prison staff.

Also arrests and detentions continued against activists including women because of opinion expression through social media websites. In addition, Saudi Arabia gives the utmost importance to bring activists and opponents back from abroad for revenge.

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates continues to abuse the only voice left in Emirates, as the security authorities arrested human rights defender Ahmed Mansour with charges related to his human rights work and the right to freedom of opinion and expression, who was working in bad conditions. In September 2014, the continuing current law no. 7 of 2014 was issued to combat terrorist crimes, and he is now living in harsh conditions inside a prison. Moreover, The UAE continues its policy in regard to keeping the convicted person for some time before his immediate release at the end of the period. This is in addition to the continued climate which criminalize human rights work and which prevents the existence of independent human rights defenders or human rights organizations which monitor violations for fear of laws and security pursuit. Now there is no method to follow up human rights conditions in Emirates except through the Human Rights Council and UPR reports. Also arresting people who finished their prison sentences after their entitlement to release continued.

Qatar

Qatar appears this year 2023 as one of the most prominent countries in the Arab world which violates human rights. Violations varied from amending legislation racially, arresting opponents, bringing them to trial, and sentencing them to long prison periods, banning travel for a large number of human rights defenders and opponents, arresting those seeking to lift the travel ban, arresting founders of human rights groups and organizations, and arresting them for expressing their opinion in tweets on Twitter or using camera to monitor and document human rights violations.

Kuwait

The problems of stateless people are still there, despite the protests of groups of them this year and their hunger strike. People with opinions and expressions are still sentenced to long prison periods, and human rights defenders continue to be harassed by civilians, but they are responsible and punished, and the public prosecution summons political opponents and human rights defenders because of the reports of government bodies and ministries complaining about tweets they do not like also A large number of activists were forced to leave Kuwait in 2023 after their lives were restricted and they became refugees.

Sultanate of Oman

Still the applicable policies that suppress freedom of opinion and expression and human rights work exist they have been eleven years ago. Also the special station of the Oman police is still used as a 'stick' to strike any climate for freedom of opinion and expression and to occupy and involve human rights defenders in cases that take months from investigations and trials, and in the end a sentence of innocence is issued. We think that this is with the aim to silence any voice, human rights movement, or legitimate demands, despite the instructions of the current Sultan of Oman to listen to young people.

Secondly: States Reports

Kingdom of Bahrain

Main UN Conventions which Bahrain joined:

Bahrain has joined six of the seven main United Nations human rights conventions which are: The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1990), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2002), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment” (1998), Convention on the Rights of the Child” (1992), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2006), the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2007). Bahrain also joined the two optional protocols of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in regard to involving children in armed conflicts and selling children and using them in prostitution and pornography (2004).

However, Bahrain violated all of these conventions, as well as the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which they must respect as a member of the international community. Bahrain also did not respect its position as a member of the Human Rights Council and betrayed its position as a member of the NGO Committee in New York, which turned it into a Bahraini security headquarters to take revenge on human rights defenders and the human rights organizations that disturb it, the matter which comes in violation of the UN principles, the rules of law, diplomatic rules, the principles of morality and honesty. In addition, prisons in Bahrain are still full of political opponents and human rights defenders who participated in Bahraini revolution and who were arrested by the Bahraini authorities, and who also were subjected to torture and unfair trials and were sentenced to long prison periods.

On 10th September 2012, and on her opening word in the 21st session of the Human Rights Council, Ms. Navi Pillay, the former High Commissioner, said:

Bahrain had referred to the harsh prison sentences issued by the Court of Appeal on 4th September against 20 prominent activists in the field of human rights, in addition to opponent figures, seven of whom face life imprisonment. I am unconvinced with the consideration of fair trial procedures, especially the reliance on confessions got under torture.

In 2023, icsrf continued to exert legal pressure to lift human rights violations in Bahrain in general.

Examples

-ICSRF demanded the King of Bahrain to issue a decree for the health release of the prisoner of opinion Osama Al Sagher, after the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Bahrain. ICSRF expressed its fear that he and other detainees may lose their right to life.

An audio clip of Mr. Al Sagher has spread on social media websites, which he succeeded to pass from his jail, in which he talked about his suffering from inhuman treatment inside Jo Central Prison. He has been in isolation for six months, and he is not allowed to practice his religious rituals, and he suffers in general from brutal treatment. At the same time, ICSRF

reviewed reports confirming that his family was unable to communicate with him since 21st December 2021.

In general, Mr. Al Sagher suffers from medical neglect. In September 2019, he made a phone call to his family, summarizing his suffering when he was detained in Al Hawd Al Jaf, where he said to them (I am freezing from cold, and I need a blanket and medical care, deliver my voice to the world). In June 2021, he was infected with Covid -19 and did not recover quickly and remained positive for a long time until he recovered.

Mr. Al Sagher had previously entered into an open hunger strike for several days, starting on 11th September 2019 in protest of the deprivation of a number of rights contained in the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Because of the strike, the prison administration punished him with solitary confinement instead of responding to his requests. Mr. Al Sagher went on hunger strike at that time for two reasons; firstly, he was asking for treatment, as he was still suffering from the spread of shotgun bullets throughout his body, and the second reason was that he was asking for a special visit to his sick mother.

Referring to the information in ICSRF's archive, it was found that Mr. Al Sagher was arrested on 23rd May 2016 during the attack on the peaceful Daraaz sit-in and was kept for several days in the criminal investigation department, where he was abused and then presented to the public prosecution, which referred him to trial on charges with political background that were always directed to the opponents. He was sentenced to 46 -years imprisonment.

During his arrest, investigation and sentencing, Mr. Al Sagher was wounded by the internationally prohibited shotgun fired by the Bahraini security forces on the peaceful protesters in the Daraaz.

ICSRF emphasized that Bahrain is obligated to protect his basic human right, which is the right to life.

-ICSRF emphasized that it is one of the responsibilities of the public prosecution to inspect places of detention and to ensure that these places are free from any inhumane treatment. It is also the responsibility of the public prosecution to ensure that these places provide a human life for detainees. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Red Cross to visit places of detention as soon as a complaint received from relatives of detainees. ICSRF considers this report as a notification.

ICSRF received a report confirming that a great number of detainees in building 14, in Jo Central Prison, suffer from high body temperature, pain in the abdomen and head, as well as nausea and vomiting.

Incidents of medical negligence in Jo Central Prison are frequent. For example, on 15th July 2021, ICSRF saw the content of an audio clip that spread on social media websites, in which the speaker reported that he and 40 other political prisoners are deposited in building 5 who had requested health care after the death of the two prisoners, Abbas Mal Allah and Hussein Barakat. But the administration of Jo Prison, headed by the prison director itself, did the opposite in revenge for them, which is putting them with other prisoners who suffer from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis C virus, as of 7th July 2021 deliberately, in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Standard Rules of Minimum Treatment for Prisoners.

ICSRF repeated its demand that the Bahraini authorities allow the visit of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on torture.

-ICSRF called the King of Bahrain to issue a decree for the health release of the detainee Ahmed Essa Ghanem,

The health condition of Mr. Ghanem is bad, as he mainly suffers from chronic allergies and acute infections in the eyelids, which cause him to have constant headache and chronic problems in the colon. He needs to follow up with a specialized doctor, which is forbidden by the administration of Al Hawd Al Jaf Prison.

ICSRF felt sorry when it received a confirmed report that his health condition had further deteriorated because of medical negligence and deprivation of his rights as a detainee, which were stated in the Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The report stated that Mr. Ghanem was transferred to building 16 in Al Hawd Al Jaf Prison, which is designated to isolate patients suffering from infectious diseases, and it is a terrifying building, where prisoners prefer to live with their pain for fear of isolation in this building and catching more infectious diseases. Also, on 12th December 2021, he was exposed to an incident inside the prison that resulted in a broken toe, but it was treated after a period of claims and appeals. In addition, his family complained that contact with him has been cut off and they cannot be reassured him.

Referring to information in ICSRF's archive, it was found that Mr. Ghanem is from the Maqabaa. He is one of the citizens whom the country is not satisfied with because of his participation in the Bahrain protests on 14th February 2011. For this reason, he was chased by the security body for four years until he was arrested on 24th July 2017, and was kept in the criminal investigation building where he was subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment to force him to sign confessions condemning him. Then he was brought in front of the public prosecution, which brought charges against him of a political background, and then he was referred to the small criminal court, which issued a sentence of eight years in prison. He was deposited in Al Hawd Al Jaf Prison, and the prison administration deprived him several times of some of the rights stated in the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, such as the right to medical treatment.

-ICSRF called the Bahrain prosecution to open an immediate criminal investigation into the crime of hacking the phone of the female human rights defender Ebtisam Al Saegh, through the Pegasus spy program, to identify the perpetrator and refer him to an urgent trial.

In a new investigation by Front Line Defenders Organization, which was revealed in a press conference on the morning of Monday 17th January 2022, it was stated that the phone of the female human rights defender Ibtisam Al Saegh was hacked with the Pegasus program developed by the Israeli NSO Group.

Researchers at Front Line Defenders Organization examined the Mrs. Al Saegh's mobile phone to provide technical assistance and found that her iPhone was hacked at least eight times between August and November 2019 and that the hacking process was carried out by the aforementioned Pegasus spy program.

The security body at Bahrain International Airport had previously confiscated the phone of Mrs. Al Saegh for several hours before returning it to her when she returned from Geneva to Bahrain after her participation in the 34th session of the Human Rights Council. She was interrogated and accused by an officer of making false statements in Geneva about Human rights violations in Bahrain.

The prominent female human rights defender Ms. Ibtisam Al Saegh was subjected to torture and sexual assault after the aforementioned incident in order to stop her human rights work.

-ICSRF demanded to ensure a fair trial of the political opponent Ahmed Jaafar. On 24th January 2022, the Bahraini Ministry of Interior announced that it had managed to recover and recall one of the wanted men, Ahmed Jaafar Mohamed Ali, from one of the friendly countries to carry out sentences of three life sentences and a fourth sentence of ten years' imprisonment for crimes committed in the period from 2012 to 2015. The Bahraini Ministry of Interior has completed the news by narrating the accusations attributed to him and that he was chased by the Interpol by putting his name in the international red notice.

However, the Ministry of Interior did not mention that all the sentences issued against him in absentia and that he did not escape from prison, but rather he is an opponent who has escaped from the hell of their prisons because he participated in the Bahraini revolution in February 2011.

It is true that Serbia violated international law by delivering one of the asylum seekers, who was detained from November 2021 before deciding on his case, which was scheduled on 25th January 2022, and also despite the decision of the European Court of Human Rights which bans extradition, Bahrain is obliged, after receiving him on 24th January 2022, to give him a fair trial in accordance with the law.

All judgments issued against Mr. Ahmed Jaafar are in absentia, and therefore procedures should be taken for a retrial of the accusations against him, but what happened with him is that up on his arrival in Bahrain, he was arrested at the airport and taken to the notorious criminal investigation building and was investigated without a lawyer. Then he was detained on 25th January in Al Hawd Al Jaf Prison.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is professional in the methods of returning opponents fleeing from the hell of their prisons, and Mr. Ahmed Jaafar is not the first, but he was preceded by, for example but not limited to:

- The opponent artist Sadiq Al Shaabani, the Sultanate of Oman handed him over to Bahrain on 27th January 2014.
- The activist Ali Haroon delivered him from Thailand to Bahrain on 19th December 2014.
- The activist Fadel Abbas: Bahrain failed to return him to it from Armenia in 2016 after the intervention of several international organizations, including ICSRF.
- The activist Hussein Al Shehabi handed over by the Sultanate of Oman to Bahrain on 24th February 2018.
- The activist Ali Mohamed Al Showekh handed him over to Bahrain on 20th October 2018.

All of the aforementioned opponents were arrested upon their arrival and abused (except for the activist Fadel Abbas) and they were sentenced for long prison periods. ICSRF is very much concerned and worried that the Bahraini authorities' failure to activate the International Law.

-ICSRF called the Bahraini authorities to activate and apply the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to release the child Al Sayed Reda Baqer in order to ensure his future and to be able to continue his study.

ICSRF has reviewed a shocking report as it was decided that the child will be released on conditional basis, but he was re-arrested on 28th January 2022, and transferred to the young convicts' department in Al Hawd Al Jaf Prison.

ICSRF assures that there are previous reports asserting that the child Al Sayed Baqer was subjected to brutal physical torture after his arrest on 16th January 2020 in the criminal

investigation building when he was 15 years old, where he was beaten, electrocuted and blindfolded to force him to sign a confession that he was among a group of 18 defendants who participated in the committing crimes.

But the accusations brought against him were three years before his arrest, i.e. at the age of 12 when he was a student who committed to go and attend at school daily. On 31st January 2021, he and the group, with whom his name was added, were imprisoned for 15 years for each one of them, after an unfair trial. Also they were not allowed to meet with a lawyer of his/her choice, in addition to being a child and does not understand what is happening.

After placing in the young convicts' department in Al Hawd Al Jaf Prison, his health condition deteriorated and he was infected with skin diseases until his eyes were affected. The prison administration deliberately did not treat him or give him the medicines. In an audio clip he sent from his prison, he said that the Solmanya Hospital had refused to give him the medicines, which pushed him to enter into a hunger strike on 31st October 2021.

-ICSRF called the King of Bahrain to issue a decree for the health release of the blind detainee Jaafar Ali Maatouq. ICSRf's staff assures that the story of Mr. Maatouq is a realistic message that shows how much the Bahraini authorities are bloody, ugly, sever and hating in their dealings with the human rights file.

On 17th April 2014, the Bahraini judiciary sentenced Mr. Maatouq to 10 years in prison after the Bahraini public prosecution charged him with accusations of inciting hatred against the regime. Jaafar Maatouq's health condition is basically deteriorated, and he deserves health release from the first day in prison, because he suffers from blindness and is unable to move on his own without a companion's help. On 17th April 2014, he was sentenced to ten-year imprisonment after the Bahraini public prosecution charged him with accusations of inciting hatred against the regime. In addition, he needs medical care since he was put in detention till now, as his sick condition preceded his trial and imprisonment. ICSRf also received reports stating that he was repeatedly deprived of his rights stated by the Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. For example, in March 2018, he was deprived of communicating with the outside world and his family was unable to visit him. ICSRf emphasized that Bahrain is obligated to protect his basic human right, which is the right to life, as the percentage of Mr. Maatouq to be infected with COVID -19 is extremely high.

The case of Mr. Maatouq dates back to January 2014, when he was transferred after his arrest to the Solmanya Medical Hospital, while he was unconscious and unable to move. Then he lost his sight and had injuries all over his body. His lawyers and family did not know the reasons for his injury. His lawyer immediately submitted complaints to the Ombudsman Service (which Bahrain considers an internationally promoted achievement) to consider the circumstances of his arrest and that he must be deposited in a hospital to receive the necessary treatment (as requested but it was in vain, which is wasting his right to humane treatment).

ICSRF had previously issued a report for urgent action on 5th March 2014, after which a judicial decision was issued to allow Jaafar Maatouq Ali to see a specialist doctor to exactly indicate his health condition since May 2014, yet this decision was not implemented.

ICSRF assures that Jaafar Ali Maatouq is a prisoner who cannot live alone without special care and without close assistance by a companion because he is blind and unable to move, and his health conditions do not enable him to serve his sentence and live with it inside Bahraini prisons. In addition, his suffering has increased after the spread of COVID-19 epidemic inside Bahrain prisons.

-ICSRF declared that on 15th April 2022, it submitted its report to the Human Rights Committee, in which it raised Bahrain's exploitation of its membership in the NGOs Committee; the matter which that violates the goals and purposes of the United Nations.

The head of ICSRF, Mr. Ahmed Omar, assures that Bahrain's practices within the NGO Committee are retaliatory practices against organizations that monitor violations of human rights and reach the level of racism, according to article 28 of the Durban Declaration, which stated (we recall that the practice of persecution against any group, category or sect based on racial, national, ethnic or other reasons which are universally recognized as impermissible under the International Law).

-ICSRF called the King of Bahrain to issue a decree for the health release of the detainee, Mortada Mohamed Abd Al Reda.

ICSRF's staff assured that the story of Mr. Abd Al Reda is a realistic message that shows how bloody, ugliness, severity and the Bahraini authorities' hatred of human rights have reached, and its path towards undermining the right of political detainees to life.

The Bahraini judiciary has issued a sentence on Mr. Abd Al Reda to ten -year imprisonment after the Bahraini public prosecution charged him with accusations with political background. He also - years

was arrested when he was 17-years old child.

Mr. Abd Al Reda's health condition is basically deteriorated and he deserves health release from the first day in detention. He suffered from a fracture of the fifth and sixth vertebrae after falling on his back nearly a year ago inside Jo Central Prison. He was not allowed to see a specialized doctor, which caused severe infections in the back, and with the lack of treatment, his health deteriorated. Mr. Abd Al Reda was transferred to the Solmanya Medical Hospital, while he was unconscious and unable to move for five months. He was expected to undergo a surgical operation, as his

health condition deteriorated due to the neglect of Jo Central Prison, which resulted in damaging some of the vertebrae of the backbone due to the spread of pus. This coincided with his infection with tuberculosis. So he now is needing his backbone to be cleaned of pus first, and then stents are installed in the vertebrae.

ICSRF asserts that Mortada Mohamed Abd Al Reda is a prisoner who cannot live alone without special care and without a close assistance by a companion because he is unable to move and his health conditions do not enable him to serve his sentence and coexist with it inside Bahraini prisons. ICSRF has demanded his health release.

-The International Center for Rights and Freedoms confirmed that Bahrain is no less than Russia in its disregard for human rights and called for the suspension of its membership in the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in New York.

The center called on the United Nations General Assembly not to stand idly by to watch this tampering with the law, as the appeals of human rights organizations are present in their reports and on their websites, and on United Nations TV, and that member states must vote on the decision to suspend Bahrain's membership in the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

ICSRF Recommendations

- 1- Activating the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary.
- 2- Implementing the recommendations of ICSRF to the Kingdom of Bahrain in the report of the universal periodic review that was discussed at the 27th session in Geneva - Switzerland

from 1st to 12th May 2017, and in the report of the universal periodic review that was submitted in 2022.

- 3- Redressing the victims of the crime of torture and bringing the perpetrators to an urgent trial.
- 4- Not to use its position as a member of the NGO Committee in New York in order to take revenge on human rights organizations that it is not satisfied with.
- 5- Stop applying the death penalty immediately.
- 6- Stop withdrawing the nationalities of activists, opponents and human rights defenders, and granting Bahraini citizenship to the children of opponents.
- 7- Stop the security, judicial and media targeting of political opponents and human rights defenders.
- 8- Withdrawal from the security agreement among the GCC countries.
- 9- Activating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights within the national judiciary.
- 10- Stop pursuing political opponents and human rights defenders who fled abroad to protect themselves from Bahraini revenge.
- 11- Stop monitoring the phones and computers of political opponents and human rights defenders and stop sending malicious software.

On 16th June 2015, in the opening statement of the 29th session of the Human Rights Council, the former High Commissioner, Prince Zeid Bin Raad Al Hussein, said:

The biggest shameful factor is the complete denial of human rights. Denial of the right to life brings shame without reservation. Also murder on a large scale is astonishingly inexcusable. Denial of human dignity brings shame; torture also brings shame. Rape brings shame. We say the disgrace of states, wherever it is, is the one they have attached on themselves.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Main UN Conventions Joined by KSA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has joined four of the seven main United Nations human rights conventions: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1997), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2000), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or

Degrading Treatment (1997), and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1996).

In 2023, Saudi Arabia continued to implement the death penalty, and our monitoring systems indicated that a number of them were sentenced to death after trials that did not respect fair trial standards and due process guarantees, and for crimes that do not appear to be among the most serious crimes as stipulated by international law. We are deeply concerned about some of the death sentences that appear to be related to the ongoing armed conflict in Yemen. International human rights law and international humanitarian law prohibit executions after trials that do not provide the required fair trial guarantees, and may amount to war crimes. Saudi Arabia also continued its policy of silencing activists, fabricating cases, issuing prison sentences for a large number of activists, not releasing activists after the end of their prison terms, re-arresting them, and deliberately neglecting their medical care in detention centers. Therefore, we confirm that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in general, does not respect the charters and agreements to which it has acceded.

In 2023, icsrf continued to exert legal pressure to lift human rights violations in Saudi Arabia in general.

Examples

-ICSRF stressed on its demand to the Saudi authorities to release the writer Dr. Sultan Al Jumari immediately and unconditionally.

Dr. Al-Jumari is the former editor-in-chief of the electronic newspaper "Al Taqir" ("The Report"), which was stopped in 2015. He has a large number of published articles and researches, and he holds PHD in software engineering from Canada.

Dr. Al Jumari was arrested on 12th September 2018, upon his return from Canada. There is no information about his place of detention or whether he has been referred to the judicial authorities or not.

Mr. Al Jumari had opinions and writings, which certainly angered the Saudi authorities, such as (the very optimistic of us is the one who says we have a margin for freedom).

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release Dr. Sami bin Abd Al Aziz Al Majed immediately and unconditionally.

Dr. Al Majed was arrested within an extensive campaign of arrests carried out by the Saudi security that began in September 2017, which included a large number of university professors, religious men, media personnel, poets, writers, activists, opponents and human rights defenders. He was arrested on 24th September 2017.

Dr. Al Majed is an academic and former faculty member in the Islamic Sharia Department at Imam Mohamed bin Saud University.

The Saudi authorities are detaining him without legal basis, investigation or trial. There is no information about him or his health condition, especially during the outbreak of COVID-19 epidemic.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release the young man, Zaid Al Rouqi, immediately and unconditionally.

Mr. Al Rouqi was arrested in November 2019 and there is no information about his place of detention or whether he has been referred to the judicial authorities or not.

Mr. Al-Rouqi had videos which criticize the Saudi regime in its handling of the unemployment crisis, which he posted on his accounts on social media websites. He also participated in the hashtag of the Saudi unemployed, and also demanded his right to get a job, which angered the Saudi authorities, which decided to arrest him.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the tweeter Abo Mohamed Al Banakhi.

According to the reports reviewed by ICSRF, he had opinions on various issues that he posted on his accounts on social media websites. But he was arrested immediately after tweets on Twitter at the end of September 2017.

Mr. Al Banakhi criticized the well-known royal advisor Saud Al Qahtani, as well as tackling the issue of the siege of Qatar in videos.

-ICSRF called the King of Saudi Arabia to issue orders to the competent authorities to drop the accusations and the subsequent rulings directed to Dr. Mohamed Al Hadeef, and to release him immediately and unconditionally.

The Saudi authorities have imprisoned Dr. Mohamed Al Hadeef for a number of charges, including harming the unity of the country, insulting a friendly country (the UAE), publishing articles hostile to the policy of the state, and communicating with bodies hostile to the state. ICSRF stresses the demand to the Saudi authorities to drop the charges against him and to release him immediately and unconditionally.

Dr. Al Hadeef holds PhD in journalism and worked as a professor in the Department of Media at King Saud University. He had a large number of television interviews in which he spoke about topics that angered the Saudi authorities, such as raising the case of his brother Abd Allah, when he mentioned that perhaps the cause of the killers inside the prison was torture. He also explained the authorities' revenge against him before because of his call for reform and his previous arrest. Before his trial, he was imprisoned for several months between Al-Haeir and Al Malz Prisons. On 2nd May 2018, his judicial trial began, and he was sentenced to imprisonment for thirteen years and a travel ban. Dr. Al Hadeef's health is deteriorated and needs medical care.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release the engineer Abd Allah Al Khudidi immediately and unconditionally. According to the reports reviewed by ICSRF, he had criticized some government figures, which he posted on his Twitter account. He also had tweets about the unemployment crisis and the lack of opportunities for qualified people. In addition, he criticized the policies of the Kingdom, he was arrested in July 2018, and there is no information about him or his fate.

Mr. Al Khudidi is an ambitious young man who studied electrical engineering from a university in Canada and graduated with excellence, and although he suffers from heart diseases and disability in the right hand, he was fully ready to serve his country.

ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to reveal the fate of the writer Jamil Farsi and to release him immediately and unconditionally.

Mr. Farsi was arrested on 25th September 2017, and his fate is still unknown. According to reports reviewed by ICSRF, before his arrest, he had many announced opinions, which violate the policies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and had previously criticized the government.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release the young man Abd Al Rahman Al Dawish and to release him immediately and unconditionally.

The young man Abd Al Rahman Al Dawish, born in 2001, and is the son of the forcibly disappeared preacher Soliman Al Dawish, who was arrested by the Saudi authorities on 22nd April 2016. There is no information about him since that time, such as the place of his detention, the

charges brought against him, whether he was trialed or not, or information about his health condition.

On 18th October 2021, the young Abd Al Rahman was arrested because he called the public prosecution to inquire about his father's fate and was deposited in Malz prison. There are reports that he was tortured inside his prison in order to approve records containing confessions which condemn him, such as preparing and storing things that would harm the public system, defamation, and violating private life through a mobile device. So he was referred to criminal court and was deprived from having a lawyer.

-ICSRF condemned the Saudi authorities' continued imprisonment of the human rights defender Mohammed Al Daraan Al Wadani. ICSRf assured that Saudi Arabia cannot challenge the International Humanitarian Law and demanded his release.

Mr. Al Wadani was sentenced to a strict 15-year imprisonment and is now in one of prisons after he was arrested in March 2011. Human rights reports say that he has been exposed to all forms of torture inside one of detention places and that he was seen with signs of torture. Then he was referred to the public prosecution and then to trial, which lacked the minimum level of fair trial stated in articles 14 and 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is considered the international custom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al Wadani was abused because of posting a video, before his arrest in 2011, on social media, in which he expressed his opinion about monarchy and inheritance. He also demanded to stop injustice against political detainees who are subjected to psychological and physical torture.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release the lawyer and human rights defender Essa Al Nukhafi, who is being deposited in Al-Haeir Prison in Riyadh.

The Saudi security forces arrested Mr. Al Nukhafi on 18th December 2016 after being summoned by the general investigation department because of his human rights work and his public disclosure for corruption cases, in addition to his tweets on his Twitter account, including the demand for the release of human rights activists in the Association for Civil and Political Rights and the establishment of a popular parliament.

About a year after Mr. Al Nukhafi's arrest, his trial before the specialized criminal court began on 21st August 2017. The charges against him included "disrupting the social structure/system and national unity", communicating with and receiving funds from foreign groups hostile to the state, and using telephone and internet to store and transmit information affecting the public system. In February 2018, the specialized criminal court sentenced Mr. Al Nukhafi to six years in prison and banned him from traveling and using social media for a period of six years, based on the provisions of the anti-cybercrime law. On 7th April 2018, the court of appeal confirmed the sentence issued against him and he was then imprisoned in Makkah General Prison. According to reports reviewed by ICSRF, he was exposed to all forms of physical and psychological torture. In April 2019, his request to be transferred to Jizan prison was rejected so that his elderly mother could visit him, and in July 2019 he was subjected to physical torture. In March 2021, he went on a hunger strike to protest the repeated ill-treatment against him.

Mr. Al Nukhafi was previously abused in 2012, when he was arrested and accused by the Saudi authorities of being not good citizen and of violating state security through online calls to organize protests. Mr. Al Nukhafi had launched a campaign in defense of the villagers who had been evicted from their homes near the Saudi border during the clashes that took place between Saudi Arabia and Houthi rebels in Yemen at the end of 2009. Mr. Al Nukhafi was treated inhumanely in his prison at that time. He went on a hunger strike on 30th September 2012 in protest against not setting a date for his trial. But after a period he spent in prison without justification, his trial began for the previous reasons, and he was sentenced to three years and eight months in prison. He completed his sentence and was released on 6th April 2016. After about one year and half, he was re-arrested in the current case.

-ICSRF recalled the Saudi authorities to drop the charges against the humanitarian worker Abd Al Rahman Al Sadhan, who is put in Al Haeir Prison, and to release him immediately.

On 12th March 2018, a security force from the Saudi investigations arrested him from his workplace at the Red Crescent in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. He was taken to one of the security headquarters without presenting the arrest warrant. On 13th March 2018, a security force also raided his house and terrified its residents and took his computer and some of his belongings and his car.

The Saudi authorities referred him to trial on charges related to his human rights activities using his Twitter account. According to information posted on social media websites by his family, a secret session was held for his trial before the specialized criminal court in Riyadh on Monday, 22nd March 2021. Mr. Al Sadhan did not know about it until after it ended. His lawyer did not attend this trial session to defend him. The session was postponed to Thursday, 25th March 2021. In the session on 5th April 2021, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison, and after his release, he is banned from traveling for another 20 years. On 5th October 2021, the court of appeal in Riyadh upheld the sentence.

The arrest of Mr. Al Sadhan was illegal, and the place of his arrest was unknown. After several complaints submitted by his family to the National Society for Human Rights to know his fate, they received a response on 25th November 2018 that he was detained in Al-Haeir Prison. ICSRF has received reports assured that he was subjected to a trial that lacks fair trial guarantees, such as the right to defense and having a lawyer of his choice.

-ICSRF expressed its resentment with the Saudi legal system's adoption of a series of penalties, which are considered cruel, humiliating and degrading penalties. Among these penalties is the death penalty, which Saudi Arabia expands in its application to a group of crimes and even violations, that do not conform to the gravity of this punishment.

The death penalty applied by Saudi Arabia is not only violating the international conventions, but also violates the provisions of Islamic Sharia, which restrict the application of such penalties to the narrowest possible scope, and for very serious crimes. ICSRF also calls the Saudi authorities to stop the execution of the death penalty within the Saudi judiciary immediately after it carried out the largest mass killing in one day with legal cover for 81 people, including tens who were accused of participating in demonstrations in the Eastern province in the period between 2011 and 2012. Saudi Arabia carried out this execution on 12th March 2022, and it is the largest mass murder it has carried out, days after the statement of the Saudi Crown Prince on 3rd March 2022 as he said "the death penalty is no longer executed except for one category, which is mentioned in Qur'an, and we cannot do anything with it).

According to reports received by ICSRF, at least 41 people were executed after the Supreme Court in Riyadh upheld the death sentence issued by the specialized criminal court in Riyadh after they

were accused of participating in demonstrations in the Eastern Province between 2011 and 2012. Human rights reports confirm that the trials were not fair.

Saudi Arabia applies Islamic law as a basic law in the country, and in Islamic law, there is no single text, evidence, or even indication that participating in demonstrations, disloyalty to the ruler, launching slogans against the state, inciting citizens to demonstrations, smuggling weapons and causing riots and chaos are among the reasons for sentencing a Muslim or a non-Muslim and condemning him to death.

On 12th March, the Ministry of Interior published a statement and said that 81 were executed after being convicted of crimes including murder, links with groups, surveillance of a number of officials and delegations and targeting them, smuggling weapons to destabilize security, causing riots, chaos, and laying mines.

ICSRF believes that the accusations of smuggling weapons and laying mines were intended for seven Yemenis, who were also executed, among the 81 who were executed.

ICSRF reminds the Saudi authorities that it had joined the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1997 and committed to it.

-ICSRF affirmed that human rights defenders who insist on confronting human rights violations are paying a great price that includes imprisonment, torture and death. ICSR F also condemns the continued imprisonment of human rights defenders by the Saudi authorities, who are Dr. Abd Al Karim Al Khader, Mr. Mohamed Al Qahtani, Mr. Fawzan Al Harbi, Mr. Mohamed Saleh Al Bajadi, Mr. Abd Al Aziz Al Shubaili, Mr. Omar Al Said, Dr. Abd Al Rahman Al Hamid and Mr. Essa Al Hamid, the founders of the Association for Civil and Political Rights (Hassam). ICSR F stresses that Saudi Arabia cannot challenge the International Humanitarian Law.

Everyone received aggravating prison sentences and similar years of travel ban, writing ban, and flogging for working in the field of human rights. All were charged with false charges, regarding participating in the establishment of Hassam Association, calling for demonstrations and inciting to violate public system, and accusations against the security forces of practicing torture and repression, insulting the ruler and his capacity, seeking to stir up sedition, calling for demonstrations, challenging the members of the Council of Senior Scholars, defaming the authority of the judiciary and slandering judges, describing the regime as arbitrary and police, trying to incite public opinion against the security bodies, joining a suspicious and unauthorized

organization, preparing and storing data that would prejudice public system, filming some gatherings aimed at inciting public opinion and broadcasting it on the internet, and promoting false and malicious news on the internet to offend the state. In addition, their trial lacked the minimum level of fair trial stated in articles 14 and 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is considered the international custom of Saudi Arabia.

In its session on 10th January 2017, the Saudi judiciary established a prison sentence for human rights defender Abd Al Aziz Al Shubaily for 8 years. The sentence also included a ban from writing on social media websites and a ban on travel for another 8 years, starting after the prison sentence ends. Mr. Al Shubaily is a founding member of the Association for Civil and Political Rights (Hassam). The specialized criminal court had previously punished him on 29th May 2016 with eight years in prison, a ban on writing on social media websites, and a ban on travel for another eight years, starting after the end of his prison sentence. This was after the authorities formally accused him of charges including participation in (Hassam) Association, calling for demonstrations and incitement to violate public system, and accusing the security forces of practicing torture and repression.

On 18th June 2012, the trial of human rights defender Dr. Mohamed bin Fahd bin Muflih Al Qahtani (who was infected with COVID-19) began before the Primary Court of Riyadh on several charges, including also participating in the establishment of the Association for Civil and Political Rights (Hassam), and he was sentenced to ten years in prison and a travel ban for another ten years.

On 28th April 2013, the security services summoned the human rights defender Omar Al Said for investigation, and he was arrested and then referred to the criminal court in Buraidah. His trial began on 10th June 2013 when he received a four-year prison sentence, 300 lashes and a four-year travel ban. Then the specialized criminal court aggravated this sentence on 5th September 2016, and the sentence was amended to a seven-year prison term, followed by a ten-year travel ban because of his work in the field of human rights and his membership in the Hassam. These are the reasons; however, the Saudi authorities accused him of a number of charges to justify his arrest, including disobeying the ruler, belonging to an unlicensed organization, calling for demonstrations and promoting false and malicious news on the internet to offend the state. His trial lacked the minimum fair trial stated in articles 14 and 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

On 25th June 2014, human rights defender Fawzan Al Harbi was sentenced to a severe punishment, which is imprisonment for ten years, followed by ten years of travel ban on several charges, all related to practicing human rights work, including disobeying the ruler, inciting demonstrations and participating in the establishment of NGO (Hassam Association).

On 5th March 2015, human rights defender Mohamed Saleh Al-Bajadi was sentenced to eight years in prison, followed by a two-year travel ban on several charges, including the organization of the Hassam Association.

On 19th October 2015, the Saudi Specialized Criminal Court issued cruel sentences against human rights defender Dr. Abd Al Karim Al Khidr, a member of Hassam, which is a ten -year prison sentence followed by a ten-year travel ban.

On 13th October 2015, the human rights defender Dr. Abd Al Rahman Al Hamid was sentenced to nine years in prison and a nine-year travel ban on several charges, including signing a letter to the Association for Civil and Political Rights (Hassam).

On Thursday, 1st December 2016, the Court of Appeal increased the prison sentence for the human rights defender Essa Al Hamid, member of the Association for Civil and Political Rights (Hassam) from 9 to 11 years for practicing human rights work. Although he is a human rights defender, he was trailed before the Anti-Terrorism Court. In April 2016, the Anti-Terrorism Court sentenced him to 9 years in prison because he had published several articles in which he spoke on topics such as freedom of demonstration in the Saudi Arabia, where he urged the Saudi authorities to open an investigation into human rights violations. The Saudi authorities officially accused him of charges including spreading false news and insulting the image of the country.

ICSRF assures that the work of human rights defenders is internationally guaranteed by the international conventions and treaties, and that no country in the world can fight human rights defenders, and so it demanded their release.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to reveal the fate of Dr. Lina Al-Sharif immediately.

In May 2021, a force of state security men broke into the home of the family of her, in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, and after terrorizing its residents, they arrested her and she was taken to an unknown place. According to reports that ICSRF has seen, before her arrest, he had many opinions, which she posted on her accounts on social media, that violated the policies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Lina Al Sharif specializes in gastroenterology and is diligent in her work. She was arrested just because she posted her opinion in public policies on social media websites, in addition to her opinion in homeland issues and defending human rights issues.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to immediately reveal the fate of the brave female human rights defender Assma Al Subaie.

Although Saudi Arabia was known to be one of the dangerous places for human rights defenders to work in, the human rights defender Assma Al Subaie continued to defend women's rights and support women who are subjected to domestic violence. She also had human rights claims and opinions through social media websites, but the Saudi security was monitoring her, as it broke into her family's house, and after intimidating its residents and seizing her electronic devices, they arrested her and took her to an unknown place in June 2021.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to immediately reveal the fate of the brave female human rights defender, Yasmine Al Ghafaili. The courageous female human rights defender Yasmine Al Ghafaili, was born in 1995, she had human rights claims and opinions on social media websites, and she advocated the oppressed and revealed human rights violations while she was inside Saudi Arabia, but the Saudi security was monitoring her, as they broke into her family's home in Al Rass City in Al Qassim region, after intimidating its residents and seizing her electronic devices. Then she was arrested and taken to an unknown place in May 2021. ICSRf has called for her release immediately.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to immediately reveal the fate of the brave female human rights defender Rina Abd Al Aziz. She is no younger than 21 years old and had human rights claims and opinions on social media websites. She supported the oppressed and revealed human rights violations while she was inside Saudi Arabia. She demanded the release of prisoners of opinion and defended the rights of the unemployed and advocated the Palestinian case, but the Saudi security was monitoring her when, as it broke into her family's house in Al Rass city in Al Qassim region, and after intimidating its residents and seizing her electronic

devices, they arrested her and took her to Al Rass prison on 13th May 2021 without a fair trial or any legal procedure. ICSRF has called for her release immediately.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release the courageous female journalist Maha Al Rafidi immediately.

The female journalist, Maha Al Rafidi, has a Bachelor degree in media and communication and was working in the Saudi newspaper "Al Watan" as a trainee journalist. She was arrested on 28th September 2019 when Saudi security men raided her home and confiscated her books and electronic devices. After she was arrested and detained, human rights reports revealed that immediately after her arrest, she was held in solitary confinement for two months and was tortured physically and psychologically before being transferred to the general prison. Maha wrote on her Twitter account when it was activated and working, the hashtags for freedom for prisoners of opinion and normalization is a betrayal, because she was one of the strongest supporters of prisoners of opinion and the Palestinian case. Also she had demands and human rights opinions through social media websites, and she advocated the oppressed and uncovered human rights violations while she was inside Saudi Arabia. ICSRF has called for her release immediately.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to release the brave female citizen Halima Al Hwaiti immediately.

In 2020, the Saudi authorities began forced displacement for members of the Al Huwaitat tribe because they needed the lands on which they resided to establish the project of the future city of Neyom on the Red Sea (the Saudi Crown Prince's project according to vision of 2030), the matter which angered the tribe, especially as it is an ancient and proud Bedouin tribe and they live on this land, on the Saudi Jordanian border, hundreds of years ago.

In November 2020, the Saudi security arrested Ms. Al Hwaiti because she expressed her opinion and refused to leave her place of origin, her land and her home. Till now, her fate is still unknown, and there is no information about her place of detention or whether or not she was presented to the judiciary, and so there is no information about her health condition. ICSRF has called for her release immediately.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to reveal the fate of the brave female activist Amani Al Zein and to release her immediately. She was arrested on 17th May 2020 from Jeddah after posting a hashtag by people who are safe from punishment inciting her on Twitter.

Ms. Al Zein, the female activist, was one of the strongest supporters of prisoners of opinion, and she had human rights claims and opinions through social media websites. She also advocated the oppressed and uncovered human rights violations while she was inside Saudi Arabia. ICSRF has called for her release immediately.

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to drop the charges against Dr. Khaled Al Odah and to release him immediately.

Dr. Khaled Al Odah was arrested on 12th September 2017, and his trial began before the specialized criminal court in Riyadh in October 2018, which ended with a sentence of 5 years in prison and 5 years of travel ban.

Dr. Khaled Al Odah is the brother of the Saudi Islamic preacher who is also currently detained, Sheikh Salman Al Odah.

The Saudi authorities arrested Dr. Khaled Al Odah, not because he is an opponent or human rights defender, but his arrest came one day after he posted a tweet on Twitter on 11th September 2017, in which he sympathized with his brother Salman, where he said "it may take a little or a lot, then the truth will become clear and he will come out with his head held high. What is the situation of those who condemned him, incriminate him, and burden him with what is impossible?"

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to reveal the fate of the activist Mohamed Al Rabiaa and to release him unconditionally.

Mr. Al Rabiaa was arrested in May 2018, and he and a large number of male and female activists have been temporarily released, but his fate is still unknown.

On 23rd March 2021, ICSRF reviewed reports stating that he had been subjected to brutal torture, such as electric shocks and beatings with sticks.

The Center assures that Saudi Arabia has to answer two questions: the first one is "what is the basis for his detention from May 2018 to March 2021?" The second one is "did the competent authorities take measures after reports that stating his exposure to physical torture?".

-ICSRF called the Saudi authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the activist and writer Nayef Al Hindas.

Mr. Al Hindas was arrested during the first week of April 2019 and the Saudi authorities usually keep silent about the reasons for this kind of arrests because the arrest conditions are usually in violation of Saudi local law and the International Law, and there is no information until now about whether he will be referred to the judiciary or not.

Mr. Al Hindas is a writer and human rights activist and has tens of articles tackling women and society issues. ICSRF believes that this is a sufficient reason for his arrest.

ICSRF Recommendations

- 1- Issuing legislations to protect human rights defenders and activating all international charters and treaties that have been ratified by Saudi Arabia within the national judiciary.
- 2- Activating the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Community Organs to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary.
- 3- Stop targeting human rights defenders and political opponents immediately, in addition to releasing all detainees, stop illegal, defamation and hate campaigns on social media websites, which are led by bodies that the Saudi authorities are silent about.
- 4- Finding legislation that makes the use of a lawyer obligatory for the accused.
- 5- Stop the death penalty immediately.
- 6- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 7- The Saudi government must know that preventing any forms of treatment between men and women, prevent holding entertainment and tourism events, non-appointing women as ministers or ambassadors, and allowing them to drive cars are normal services

provided by countries to their citizens, but what is meant by human rights in this report are the rights contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

On 2nd March 2015, in the opening statement of 28th session of the Human Rights Council, the former High Commissioner, Prince Zeid bin Raad Al Hussein said:

"The only true measure of a government's value is not its position in the formal arena of grand diplomacy, but it is how much it considers the needs - and protects the rights - of its citizens and other persons who are within its jurisdiction, or over whom it has material control."

United Arab Emirates

The Main United Nations Conventions UAE joined:

The UAE has joined three of the seven main United Nations conventions on human rights: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1974), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2004), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child "(1997).

Still there is a very few information on the human rights situation in the UAE, and there is no information about places of detention and detainees, except for information received from the detainees' families. The reason for this is due to the strong security control and the activation of laws restricting freedom of opinion and expression and anti-terrorism laws, which made human rights work within the country an impossible matter. In March 2017, the UAE authorities silenced the only remaining voice of independent human rights defenders, which is the voice of Mr. Ahmed Mansour, who was arrested by the authorities. But still the situation and vision of UAE regarding human rights issues can be monitored through its presence in the Human Rights Council in Geneva and its discussion of the reports of the universal periodic review In 2023, icsrf continued to exert legal pressure to lift human rights violations in UAE in general.

Examples

- ICSR asked the UAE to ensure a fair trial for opposition figure Dr. Khalaf Al Rumaithi
On Wednesday, May 17, 2023, the UAE authorities announced that they had received Dr. Khalaf Al Rumaithi from Jordan in order to retry him on charges of belonging to an organization that aims to oppose the founding principles of the UAE government.

A UAE Supreme Court had issued a ruling in absentia sentencing him to fifteen years in prison in 2013 on charges of establishing and founding a secret organization that aims to oppose the basic principles on which the UAE's ruling system is based.

The UAE authorities consider Dr. Khalaf Al Rumaithi an opponent of their policies, and when his circumstances in the UAE became difficult, he left for Turkey and began his life from there, obtaining Turkish citizenship and becoming a successful businessman and investor in Turkey. However, the UAE, like all other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, cannot forget its opposition figures, activists and human rights defenders, as they consider the issue of repatriating those who fled their country a top priority and are busy using diplomacy and intelligence agencies to bring them back.

-On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the deprivation of the right to freedom of the human rights defender Ahmed Mansour, ICSRF issued a humanitarian appeal to Sheikh

Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, to issue orders for the healthy release of the human rights defender Ahmed Mansour, who is in prison Al Sadr in Abu Dhabi.

On 31st December 2018, the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court confirmed the ruling issued against him by the Federal Court of Appeal in Abu Dhabi on 29th May 2018, with a ten-year prison sentence and a fine of one million dirhams.

At midnight, on 20th March 2017, The UAE security service raided the house of Mr. Mansour in the Emirate of Ajman, where his house was raided by not less than ten people who intimidated its residents and seized his electronic devices. On 21st March 2017, he was referred to the information technology crimes prosecution, which detained him provisionally on pending investigations as being accused of using social media websites to spread false information, rumors and false news about the UAE, which harms social harmony and unity in the Emirates.

ICSRF confirms that Mr. Mansour is almost the only human rights defender in the United Arab Emirates, and he continued to practice his work courageously until his arrest. He was able to monitor and document violations through social media websites, and all followers of his writing testify that he was only monitoring and documenting human rights violations, which is understood by the security services as spreading false information and news, in addition to promoting false ideas.

On 20th March 2018, Mr. Ahmed Omar, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms, Mr. Ahmed Omar, spoke at 37th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland about the fate of Mr. Al -Shahi. ICSRF has received confirmed reports stating that Mr. Mansour's health is not good, as he was unable to walk according to what was narrated by his family after one of the visits. Mr. Mansour had entered into an open hunger strike for five months that started in September 2019 due to the deprivation of some of the rights contained in the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, as well as in protest against the conditions and causes of his detention.

-ICSRF received a report confirming that there are a number of people, including political opponents and opinion holders, who have finished their prison terms in the UAE prisons, but

they are still detained, such as Abd Allah Ibrahim Al Helou, who was imprisoned for 3 years and on 22nd April 2017, his sentence ended, Abd Al Wahed Hassan Al Badi Al Shahi, who was imprisoned for 5 years and on 26th March 26, 2018, the term of his sentence ended, Khalifa Rabia, who was imprisoned for 5 years, and his sentence ended on 23rd July 2018, Abd Allah Abd Al Qader Al Hajri, who was imprisoned for 7 years, and on 16th July 2019 his sentence ended. This is in addition to Mahmoud Hassan Al Hosani, who was imprisoned for 7 years, and on 16th July 2019 his sentence ended, Omran Ali Al Radwan Al Harthy, who was imprisoned for 7 years, and on 16th July 2019, his sentence ended, Fahd Abd Al Qader Al Hajri, who was imprisoned for 7 years, and on 2nd March 2020, his sentence ended, Ahmed Ghaith Al Suwaidi, who was imprisoned for 10 years, on 26th March 2022, his sentence ended, Ahmed Yousef Al Zaabi, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and on 26th March 2022, his sentence ended, and Ibrahim Hassan Al Marzouki, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and his sentence ended on 26th March 2022, Shaheen Abd Allah Al Hosani, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and on 26th March 2022, his sentence ended, Mohamed Abd Al Razzaq Al Siddeq, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and on 9th April 2022, his sentence ended, Hassan Munif Al Jabri, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and on 9th April 2022, his sentence ended, and Hussein Munif Al Jabri, who was imprisoned for 10 years and on 9th April 2022 his sentence ended, Hussein Ali Al Najjar Al Hammadi, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and whose sentence ended on 9th April 2022, Sultan bin Kayed Al Qasimi, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and on 20th April 2022, his sentence ended and Salem Abd Allah Al Suwaidi, who was imprisoned for 10 years, and whose sentence ended on 30th April 2022.

ICSRF calls for the release of the aforementioned detainees and reminds the UAE that it violates the text of article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that (no person may be arbitrarily arrested, detained or exiled).

ICSRF Recommendations

- 1- Issuing legislations to protect human rights defenders and activating all international charters and treaties that have been ratified by UAE within the national judiciary.
- 2- Activating the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Community Organs to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary.
- 3- Stop targeting human rights defenders immediately.

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- 4- If the process of monitoring and documenting human rights violations is impossible, the UAE authorities should issue monthly reports in which they voluntarily disclose the human rights reality and conditions of detention places and allow international organizations to access and review these reports, make visits to places of detention and listen to detainees' complaints.
 - 5- Ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
 - 6- Immediate release of persons whose sentences have ended.

The document no. A/HRC/RES/28/14, which was issued on 29th April 2015 in 28th session of HRC, stated that:

The Human Rights Council is urging states to recognize the importance of the contribution of civil society and human rights defenders in the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and to create a safe environment that enables them to work

Qatar

The Main UN Conventions joined by Qatar

Qatar has ratified six of the seven main United Nations human rights conventions: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1976), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2000), The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2009) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995). It joined the First and Second Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002), the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2001), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2018) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2018). Despite Qatar's ratification of the two covenants in 2018, it is racing time to fill any gap that allows freedom of opinion and expression and is amending its legislations to be in line with this policy, such as its amendment of article 136 (bis) of the

Penal Code while keeping the terrorism law in 2020. Therefore, freedom of opinion and expression is absolutely not available and unallowable Qatar. During this year 2023, ICSRF has monitored the continued underestimation for human rights and the failure to respond to the requests of human rights organizations despite its hosting of the World Cup 2022. ICSRF mentioned that the conditions of detainees, places of detention, and the human rights situation are completely vague, and there is no way to know the human rights situation inside except by following up on the reports of the universal periodic review that are submitted to the Human Rights Council in Geneva and discussed by states and human rights organizations. Till issuing this report, ICSRF does not even know the reason for which Qatar has joined and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Facts monitored and documented by ICSRF

-icsrf re-condemned Qatar's continuing war on human rights defenders, as the Qatari authorities, represented by its Attorney General, Essa bin Saad Al Jafali Al Nuaimi, continue to place the human rights defender, the lawyer Dr. Najeeb Al Nuaimi, the former Minister of Justice, on the lists of travel bans without any legal basis.

The Capital Security Department, a department affiliated to the Qatari Ministry of Interior, notified Mr. Al Nuaimi on 26th June 2017 of the renewal of the travel ban decision, despite having a sentence from the Qatari Court of Appeal to cancel the travel ban decision, as the

Qatari Court of Appeal had sentenced on 30th May 2017 to cancel the decision issued on 8th January 2017.

In a statement issued by Mr. Al Nuaimi on 28th April 2018, he said; "the Attorney General, with government approval, continued their severe violation of the principles of the constitution and Qatari laws, and their violation of human rights for which they hold international conferences in Qatar, and applied a siege on me that exceeds the siege imposed on Qatar".

Dr. Najeeb Al Nuaimi was the former Minister of Justice and is now a lawyer and human rights defender, and recently he was the lawyer and defender of the poet Mohamed bin Al Dhib Al Ajami, who was released in 2016 and who had been sentenced to 15 years in prison, because of a poem he recited, that the Qatari authorities considered as offensive to the ruling family. In addition, he has been accused of inciting to overthrow the regime. Dr. Al Nuaimi also has often criticized Qatari policies and has previously demanded the dismissal of the former Qatari Attorney General Ali bin Fates Al Marri.

ICSRF confirmed that preventing Mr. Al Nuaimi from traveling is a revenge due to his human rights work and demanded that to allow him to access his right to freedom of movement.

-ICSRF denounced Qatar's continued travel ban and freedom of movement of the opponent and former prisoner of opinion Abd Allah Ahmed Ibrahim Bomatar Al Mohannadi since 1st September 2013, which represents an unacceptable disregard of activating the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the Qatari government ratified in 2018 and became a national law.

By searching for the reasons for this cruel treatment of Qatar, it was clear that Qatar considered that Mr. Al Mohannadi works against the security of the Qatari state and also committed the crime of high treason because he sent emails to the ruling Qatari Prince disclosing the practices of some officers.

Qatar has enacted a dangerous law called the "community protection law" with the aim of silencing the voices of opponents, banning the work of human rights defenders and human rights organizations and suppressing freedom of opinion and expression. We did not imagine that who sends an e-mail to clarify the facts to the ruler of the country may put himself/herself under this law.

This law is still in force despite the Qatari government's pride that it joined the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2018.

Mr. Al Mohannadi has now been released, but after spending a period in prison with exposing to the worst forms of torture to the extent that some believed that he died of severe physical torture. Now the Qatari authorities are preventing him from the right to freedom of movement with severe security restrictions that materially harmed him and his major company in the

field of contracting and trade. ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to allow him to enjoy his right to freedom of movement.

-Sheikh Mohamed bin Abd Al Rahman bin Mubarak Al Thani, who is a member of the ruling family and identifies himself on his Twitter account as a Qatari columnist in the Qatari newspaper "Al Raya" Currently suspended and a legal advisor in the Ministry of Justice, has been banned from traveling since 2018 after publishing an article entitled (Raising the Blame on the Scientists of the Sacred Country), where he expressed his opinion that the Gulf crisis and the siege on Qatar at that time was a political crisis only and had nothing to do with the scientists of the Sacred Country (Saudi Arabia) after the Qatari media attacked religious scientists in Saudi Arabia.

ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to reverse the decision to ban him from traveling and allow him to move freely in order to promote human rights.

-Sheikh Abd Al Aziz bin Mohamed bin Saud bin Abd Al Rahman Al Thani, who is a member of the ruling family and is nicknamed the "Emir of Time", has been banned from travel since 17th June 2017, the same day when the Qatari State Security Service demanded him to return to Qatar immediately, where they took him by private plane from the Sultanate of Oman to Qatar and then restricted his freedom for no reason. He is not wanted in any case and is not wanted for investigation. In addition, he has never been detained. He is also a successful and well-known businessman in the Gulf, and there is no legal justification to ban him from travelling.

ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to reverse the decision to ban him from traveling and allow him to move freely in order to promote human rights.

-The citizen Essa Mardi Jahim Al Junaidi Al Shammari has been deprived from his right to freedom of movement since October 2014 till now.

Mr. Al Shammari's suffering began when he went at the aforementioned time to complete documents in one of the government bodies, but they told him that they had found a problem

while working in his documents, and he had to go to the General Administration of Qatari Passports, where one of the passport officers asked him to hand over his passport and ID. According to the videos he posted on his account on Twitter that the officer told him to search himself for the cause of his problem and to solve it.

Mr. Al Shammari found that this procedure taken against him was for no reason. He is not required for any case and is not required for investigation in any body. He inquired about all parties, such as the public prosecution, the judiciary, security in all kinds, electronic crime investigations and drug investigations, and he did not find a legal justification for withdrawing his passport. Since the aforementioned date his freedom has been restricted, in addition to the fact that he cannot work or deal with government bodies nor banks, and he cannot even marry, as his civil ID and passport are withdrawn.

ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to reverse the decision to prevent him from traveling and allow him to move freely in order to promote human rights.

-Sheikh Saud Khalifa Ahmed Al Abd Al Rahman Al Thani is banned from traveling since 18th April 2016 without a legal justification, while he is not required for any party, despite taking all legal ways. But ICSRF believes that all parties are ultimately subject to the state security apparatus and its decisions, such as the National Committee for Human Rights.

Mr. Al Thani has posted a large number of videos revealing his problem, in addition to his distress, which he published through a speech at the Human Rights Council, which has not received a response until now.

ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to reverse the decision to prevent him from traveling and allow him to move freely.

-The oppressed Qatari citizen Mohamed Yousef Al Sulaiti has been residing in USA since 2015. He is a successful businessman and he ran two commercial foundations in America. But on 17th July 2018, he was unlucky as the plane stopped (transit) at Hamad International Airport in the Qatari capital Doha, when he was going to Turkey, and he never imagined that one day the Qatari security apparatus would lie in wait for him to arrest him and detain him for five months without charge, without judgment and without legal justification.

After that he was released from prison and decided to return to America, but he was surprised that he was banned from traveling. But he spoke about his oppression and narrated his story on his Twitter account until the Qatari authorities got worried. On 29th September 2020, his Twitter account was seized and removed, which was as a platform for him to express his oppression. On 4th October 2020, a force from the security apparatus went to and broke into his house and arrested him and detain him for a while.

He was released after the second arrest and submitted several requests to allow him to travel, but the security apparatus felt annoyed with him. According to confirmed reports received by ICSRF, they decided to confiscate his complete freedom in 2021 and charges were brought against him with a political background. He was referred to trial and sentenced to life imprisonment, and he is now in the Qatari central prison.

ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally and to allow him to leave Qatar.

-ICSRF called on the Qatari authorities to reveal the fate of social activist Dr. Abdulaziz bin Ali Al-Khazraj Al-Ansari immediately. During the last half of this month, multiple allegations and hashtags spread on social media sites, all of which concluded that he was detained by the Qatari authorities without reason and outside the framework of the law. There are other allegations that he was arrested for a period and then released, but in any case he is now prohibited from expressing his opinion or participating in social media sites. Dr. Al-Ansari is an expert and consultant specialized in the social and family field and marriage matters. He is the General Manager of the Community Projects Organization Center in Qatar. He specializes in providing lectures and training courses in the family and social field, raising children and students, educating those about to get married, and solving family problems. He has dozens of videos on his YouTube channel called Al-Mujtama, where he raises a social topic and explains it. @Almojtama_1

In addition to the conflicting news about his arrest, everyone noticed that he suddenly stopped posting his videos and communicating with his followers. We found that his last video was titled “A Hot Comment on the Kidnapping of a Saudi Citizen in Lebanon,” published on his Al-Mujtama channel on May 31, 2023.

-The lawyer Rashid bin Ali Abo Sherida Al Marry is being held in a solitary prison cell within the state security apparatus because he expressed his opinion and criticized Al Jazeera channel in a video posted on social media websites because it did not send a reporter to convey to the world the gathering of Al Murra tribe who protested peacefully after the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani approved the issuance of law no. 6 of 2021 on 29th July 2021, regarding the issuance of a system for the election of Al Shura Council. This law, which includes 58

articles, in article no. 2 limits the right to vote to those who have original Qatari citizenship, or who have acquired Qatari citizenship on condition that his grandfather should be Qatari and born in Qatar. As for article no. 10, it sets a strict condition for whoever is entitled to nominate for membership in Al Shura Council, which is that his original nationality should be Qatari. A number of Al Murra tribe held peaceful protests against the aforementioned law, which were met by the Qatari authorities by raiding the homes of tens of them and arresting a large number of them. On 12th January 2022, Mr. Al Marri's brother has posted on his Twitter account information about his entry into an open hunger strike.

ICSRF declares its full solidarity with the lawyer Rashid bin Ali Abo Sherida Al Marri and with all detained opponents and human rights defenders, and called the Qatari authorities to release him immediately for the advancement of human rights.

-The citizen Mohamed bin Mahras Al Marry is being held in solitary cell prison because he used the camera to take photo of the gathering of the Al Murra tribe who protested peacefully after the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has approved law no. 6 of 2021 on 29th July 2021, regarding the issuance of a system for the election of Al Shura Council and he posted the video on social media websites.

ICSRF declares its full solidarity with the citizen Mohamed bin Mahras Al Marri and with all the detained opponents and human rights defenders, and calls the Qatari authorities to release him immediately.

-Dr. Abd Allah Al Salem Al Marry is being put in solitary prison because he used his Twitter account and posted several tweets. He never intended to offend, but anger, psychological pain and feeling of provocation that he experienced after the prince of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has approved law no. 6 of 2021 on 29th July 2021 regarding the issuance of Al Shura Council election system; the matter which pushed him to post this tweet, which was not originally insulted anyone.

Dr. Al Marry is one of the Qatari citizens who protested peacefully, and ICSRF announced its full solidarity with Dr. Abd Allah Al Salem Al Marry and with all detained opponents and human rights defenders. In addition, ICSRF calls the Qatari authorities to release him immediately for the advancement of human rights.

-On 9th August 2021, the Qatari authorities arrested the human rights defender Dr. Hazzaa bin Ali Sherida Al Azba Al Marry, who is one of the prominent voices in the Al Murra tribe and one of the most prominent defenders of the rights of the Al Murra tribe. He was placed in the state security apparatus outside the framework of the judiciary.

In a quick tweet by Dr. Hazzaa on his account on Twitter at the time of his arrest, he said "the criminal investigation is with me now, they are asking me to go with them and I will go fortified by God first, then the sons of the Al Murra tribe, the citizens, then the constitution and the law". Dr. Hazzaa appeared in a video while he was getting in the car of the security that came to arrest him, and while his supporters gathered around the car, trying to prevent his arrest.

The beginning of the incident was after the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has approved law no. 6 of 2021, on 29th July 2021, regarding the issuance of a system for the election of Al Shura Council, which excludes the Al Murra tribe from the first elections. After that, Dr. Hazzaa protested and strongly defended the rights of his tribe and conveyed their voice to the authorities, but he was arrested immediately. ICSRF announced its full solidarity with the human rights defender Dr. Hazzaa bin Ali Sherida Al Azba Al Marry and with all the detained opponents and human rights defenders, and called the Qatari authorities to release him immediately in order to advance human rights.

-ICSRF confirmed that a large number of migrant workers responsible for the construction of World Cup 2022 facilities were either delayed or did not receive their salaries in periods ranging from two to five months, as they work in private contracting companies operating under the jurisdiction of the Qatari Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs. Many workers have submitted official complaints to the authorities, but without any effect, and even private companies have given the workers the option to either continue working or have more discounts or dismissal, forcing a large number of them to terminate their contracts and leave Qatar without getting their dues.

ICSRF stresses that while the Qatari government must ensure that migrant workers receive their wages, it is not doing its duty and even ignoring the official complaints submitted to the Ministry of Labor and the Qatari police. The National Committee for Human Rights also plays the role of 'spectator' as migrant workers have no right to join unions or syndicate that defend their interests, and there is nothing left for them to do except repeated peaceful protest, the last of which was on March 2022.

ICSRF said that any external attempt to talk to migrant workers annoys the Qatari authorities. In May 2015, the Qatari security service arrested four people affiliated to the BBC for doing work that falls within the framework of defending human rights, as they were trying to see the living conditions of workers at the construction sites of hosting the World Cup 2022, and they were detained for 24 hours.

-On 8th January 2020, the prince of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, issued a decree that included amendments to the text of article (136 bis) of the Penal Code to be as follows: "shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years and a fine not exceeding (100,000) one hundred thousand riyals, or by one of these two penalties, whoever engages in any way publicly inside or outside the public affairs of the state, or broadcasts, publishes or

republishes news, data, false, malicious rumors or exciting propaganda, and that would stir public opinion, shake confidence in the performance of state institutions or those in charge of them, or harm national interests, or prejudice the social system of the state, or prejudice the public order of the state, and the penalty stipulated in paragraph is doubled, if the crime occurred in time of war". ICSRf called the Qatari authorities to grant the right to freedom of opinion and expression and to cancel legislations that prohibits freedom of opinion and expression in the country.

-ICSRf confirms that any wanted person from one of the Gulf countries or on the black lists is impossible to be safe from any security practices such as arrest, extradition or deportation in light of the continuation of working with law no. 17 of 2002 regarding the protection of society. Article no.1 is an exception to the provisions of the Criminal Procedures Law no. 5 of 2003.

The Minister of Interior may, in crimes related to the security of the state, or that violate honor or morals, decide to detain the accused, if it is proven that there are strong justifications that require this, based on a report of the incident submitted by the General Director of Public Security.

With this law, Qatar violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights , to which it joined in 2018 and became a national law. In clause 2 of article 2, each state party to this covenant undertakes, if its existing legislative or non-legislative measures do not actually guarantee the implementation of the rights recognized in the Covenant, to take, in accordance with its constitutional procedures and the provisions of this Covenant, whatever legislative or non - legislative measures are necessary for this implementation.

ICSRf has called for the need to cancel the aforementioned law.

-ICSRf called the Qatari government to amend its legislation to conform to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which it joined in 2018.

-ICSRf assured that Qatar is an active and diligent member in implementing the provisions of the Gulf Security Agreement, which violate the International Law.

On Wednesday, 24th May 2017, the human rights defender Mohamed Abd Allah Al Otaibi went to Doha Airport to travel to Oslo, the capital of the Kingdom of Norway, where he had been granted the right to asylum, but after examining his name, he was told by an officer that he was not allowed to travel. He was arrested and detained until 28th May 2017 to deport him to Saudi Arabia and already Qatar has handed him over to the Saudi authorities through Salwa border port.

Mr. Al Otaibi was forced to flee from Saudi Arabia to Qatar in March 2017, because the Saudi authorities were prosecuting him through the General Investigation Service because of his human rights activities.

While he was in Doha, Mr. Al Otaibi, sought political asylum in Qatar, but his request was rejected, but he was able to communicate with the Norwegian authorities and obtained political asylum and then a visa to enter Norway, after which he obtained the document, but Qatar decided to change his fate and instead of allowing him to travel to Norway, it forcibly deported him to Saudi Arabia. According to the International Law, the forcible return of any individual to a country whose return represents a danger to his life, his right to bodily integrity or his right to security and safety is considered a prohibited act, as the principle of non-forcible return is expressly stipulated in the provisions of the International Humanitarian Law and the International Law for refugees. Qatar has violated its constitution as article no. 58 states that handing over political refugees is prohibited.

-ICSRF affirmed that Qatar should respect the rules of a fair trial and retrial Mr. Abd Allah Abhis, the former Director of Communications of the Supreme Committee for Projects and Legacy.

ICSRF has reviewed reports confirming that Mr. Abhis has defended the rights of workers who construct buildings that host the World Cup 2022, which is being placed in Qatar, and criticized the treatment of striking workers in August 2019.

A group of state security and criminal investigation officers arrested Mr. Abhis from his workplace on 12th November 2019, and he was placed in a security center in the Duhail area for 9 days without contacting with the outside world and deprived of meeting his lawyer. During this period, he was under the jurisdiction of state security men and during the period before presenting in front of the Public Prosecution Office, he said that pressure was put on him to sign a confession that he was taking a bribe and misusing public money and causing damage to the Supreme Committee for Projects and Legacy which organizes the World Cup 2022. By this confession, he was referred to State Security Prosecution, but on 21st November 2019, his wife was able to appoint a lawyer for him, and Mr. Abhis met him, and after investigations, he was released on financial warranty on 21st December 2019.

A session was set for his trial before the Primary Court. When Mr. Abhis was asked about his confession, which he signed, he retracted it and said that his confessions were under threat and force, but the court ignored his words and did not open an investigation into his words. Rather, his confessions were considered evidence of conviction, and on 29th April 2021 it issued a sentence of 5-year imprisonment and a fine of 150,000 Qatari riyals. On 15th December 2021, the Court of Appeal upheld the prison sentence, but the prison years were reduced to 3 years instead of 5 years, ICSRf believes that the trial of Mr. Abhis in this manner cannot be fair and that the real reasons for his abuse were to defend the rights of workers assigned to construct buildings for the World Cup 2022 after their strike in August 2019.

-ICSRf confirmed that tweets in which the writer expresses his opinion, but which angers the Qatari security, may cost him many months imprisoned in a solitary cell before legalizing his arrest and accusing him of big accusations that are empty of content, such as communicating with neighboring countries, forming a political organization and calling for demonstrations...etc . In April 2022, the Qatari authorities legalized the arrest of Dr. Abd Allah Al Salem Al Marry, as the Criminal Court sentenced him to four years in prison after the Qatari Public Prosecution charged him with accusations of the aforementioned type.

Dr. Al Marry was held in solitary prison for more than six months before his arrest was legalized in April 2022 because he used his Twitter account and published numerous tweets. He never intended to offend, but the anger, psychological pain and feeling of provocation that he experienced pushed him to these tweets, which were not offending or insulting anyone, who is one of those who protested peacefully after the Prince of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, on 29th July 2021, approved law no. 6 of 2021 regarding the issuance of Al Shura Council election system and published it on social media websites.

-ICSRf demanded the dropping of the life imprisonment sentence issued against the poet Mohamed Rashid Hassan Al Ajami because of his expression of opinion. On 10th May 2022, a 41- page judgment was issued in the name of the Prince of Qatar in felony no. 49 of 2022, accusing

the prominent poet and others of a large number of accusations all because of expression of opinion. For example, on page 8 of the judgment it came in it (then the third accused, the poet Mohamed bin Al Zib, gave a video speech while he was in the plane and posted it on Twitter and YouTube, this speech raised public opinion, especially the Al Murra tribe, where it called for a boycott of the elections because of its racist laws). He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

-ICSRF demanded that the case of human rights defender Hazzaa bin Ali bin Hazza bin Salem Abo Sherida to be ended and that the life imprisonment sentence be dropped and that he be released immediately. On 10th May 2022, a 41-page judgment was issued in the name of the Emir of Qatar in felony no. 49 of 2022 accusing him and others of a large number of crimes. The accusations all were around expressing an opinion. For example, on page 2 of the judgement, it was stated that among the accusations against him, he was accused of (by publicly using social media means and appearing before the public to appeal and reject the laws and decisions approved by His Highness the Emir and issued as contained in the investigations) and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

On 9th August 2021, the Qatari authorities arrested human rights defender Dr. Hazzaa bin Ali Sherida Al Athba Al Marry, who is one of the prominent voices in the Al Murra tribe and one of the most prominent defenders of the rights of the Al Murra tribe. He was deposited in the state security apparatus.

-ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to end the case of the lawyer Rashid bin Ali bin Hazzaa bin Salem Abo Sherida, drop the life sentence and release him immediately. On 10th May 2022, a 41-page judgment was issued in the name of the Emir of Qatar in felony no. 49 of 2022 accusing him and others of a large number of cases, they all were around expressing an opinion. For example, on page 2 of the judgement, it was stated that among the accusations against him, he was accused of (by publicly using social media means and appearing before the public to appeal and reject the laws and decisions approved by His Highness the Emir and issued as contained in the investigations) and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The lawyer Al Marry was detained for more than 200 days in a solitary cell within the state security apparatus because he expressed his opinion and criticized Al Jazeera Channel in a video posted on social media websites because it did not send a reporter to convey to the world the

gathering of the Al Murra tribe who protested peacefully after the prince of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, on 29th July 2021, approved issuing of law no. 6 of 2021 regarding the issuance of a system for the election of Al Shura Council.

-ICSRF called the Qatari authorities to end the case of the Million Poet Mohamed Hamad Mohamed Fetais Al Marry and to drop the 15-year prison sentence that was issued against him. All accusations were around expressing an opinion. For example, on page 2 of the judgment, it was stated that among the accusations, he was accused of (through social media means and appearing before the public, appealing and rejecting the laws and decisions approved by His Highness the Emir and issued as contained in the investigations). He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

On 20th March 2007, the poet Mohamed Al Marry won the Million Poet Award, and he has the title of the Million Poet. After crowning the title, he announced waiving the entire value of his prize of one million dirhams equally between children with special needs in Qatar and the children of Palestine.

The poet Al Marry expressed his opinion and is one of those who protested peacefully after the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, on July 29, 2021, approved law no. 6 of 2021 regarding the issuance of a system for the election of Al Shura Council.

ICSRF Recommendations for Qatar Government

- 1- Issuing legislation to protect human rights defenders and activating all international charters and treaties that it has ratified within the national judiciary.
 - 2- Activating the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Community Organs to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary.
 - 3- Immediately stop targeting those who practice their right of expression.
 - 4- Activating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights within the national judiciary.
 - 5- Cancellation of travel bans for human rights defenders and opponents.
 - 6- The Qatari authorities must issue monthly reports in which they voluntarily disclose the human rights situation and conditions of places of detention and allow international
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organizations to access and examine these reports, make visits to places of detention and listen to detainees' complaints.

The document no. A/HRC/RES/34/41, in the 34th session of Human Rights Council, states that **The Human Rights Council, while reaffirming that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of peoples in determining their political, economic, social and cultural systems, and on their full participation in all aspects of their lives.**

Kuwait

Main UN Conventions which Kuwait joined

Kuwait has joined six of the seven main United Nations conventions in the field of human rights, which are: "the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (1996), "the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" (1968), "the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (1994), "the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment" (1994), and "the Convention on the Rights of the Child" (1991). It also joined the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004). ICSRF has monitored the Kuwaiti authorities' violation of most of these conventions, and also monitored the security authorities' cooperation with people who may work under the security mandate, who submitted illogical reports against human rights defenders until they were referred to the public prosecution for investigation, where the security authorities escalated these reports without verifying or analyzing them.

Facts Monitored and Documented by ICSRF

in2023

-ICSRF clarified that prison sentences were for a total of eight hundred and fifty-eight years, six months and ten days issued against the tweeters, and on 22nd February 2022, the Criminal Court added to Mr. Abd Allah Al Saleh (resident outside Kuwait) a ten-year prison sentence and added to Mr. Musab Al Flekawi (resident outside Kuwait) was

sentenced to five years in prison on charges of publishing false information and news outside the country, including insulting the judiciary.

ICSRF has assured that prison sentences due to posts on social media websites are in violation of the international commitments of Kuwait.

ICSRF has called the Kuwaiti authorities to:

Firstly: amend the articles of the law that state a prison sentence for which tweeters are trailed because of posts on social media websites, and for which they are subject to trial and imprisonment.

Secondly: In order for the legislation to be amended, ICSRf demands the Emir of Kuwait Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah to issue an order to stop the prison sentences against the opinion prisoners.

Thirdly: ICSRf also calls the Kuwaiti authorities to immediately stop all forms of persecution, whether security, judicial or legislative, against human rights defenders, and to guarantee the rights of activists in their work that are protected by the international conventions and treaties.

-ICSRf confirmed that the Amiri Decree of Pardon No. 8 of 2023, which included 34 people, did not include the name of the tweeter Abdullah Al-Rassam, although his case was due to his peaceful expression of opinion, and therefore he will not be able to return to his homeland, Kuwait, unless a comprehensive pardon is issued for him. The suffering of the tweeter Abdullah Al-Rassam

The suffering of Mr. Al-Rassam began when the Kuwaiti State Security arrested him on April 27, 2015, while he was on his way to complete a mission for the daughter of the patient in a manner close to kidnapping, as his car was intercepted and he was forcibly removed from it. Then he was referred to the Public Prosecution, which charged him with insulting the Emir, challenging the powers of the Emir, and encroaching on the position of the Emirate through his tweets on his Twitter account. It decided to detain him in pretrial detention for ten days, which was renewed several times, reaching two months, except for a few days, until the date of his trial session before the Criminal Court. He was placed in the Central Prison. In the session of June 24, 2015, the Criminal Court issued its ruling to imprison him for one year and eight months, with 500 dinars to suspend the execution of the sentence for three years. Mr. Al-Rasam left his homeland, Kuwait, in 2016 after he was fed up with the restrictions, surveillance, and security prosecutions, as well as the sentence that would keep the sword hanging over him. On April 11, 2016, the Kuwaiti Court of Appeal upheld the sentence of one year and eight months in prison. On April 14, 2019, the

Court of Cassation rejected an appeal and upheld a sentence of one year and eight months in prison with hard labor and a bail of 500 dinars to suspend the sentence for three years, and that he pledge to conduct himself well.

-ICSRF confirmed that women in Kuwait may be exposed to unjustified security violence as a result of the fact that Kuwaiti legislation does not provide protection for them in the first place. The result of this was the prevention of Dr. Mona Kareem from entering Kuwait and her deportation from the country on January 3, 2023.

The center also expresses its surprise at the behavior of the Kuwaiti authorities with Dr. Mona Kareem, as she only intended to visit her family.

Dr. Mona Kareem had left Kuwait in 2011 for the United States of America to study and obtained the academic degree she was struggling for and obtained American citizenship.

-ICSRF expressed its dissatisfaction with the Kuwaiti legal system's adoption of a series of penalties that are considered harsh, humiliating and degrading, including the death penalty, which Kuwait is expanding its application to a group of crimes that do not match the seriousness of this penalty. On July 27, 2023, the Kuwaiti Public Prosecution announced that it had supervised the implementation of death sentences in the Central Prison against Abdulrahman Sabah Eidan Saud, Abdulaziz Nidaa Rashid Al-Mutairi, Jamal Kamal Ibrahim, Ahmed Fawzan Shabram and Judy Ravendraco Barbera. The death penalty applied by Kuwait is not only outside international conventions, but also outside the provisions of Islamic law, which limits the application of such penalties to the narrowest possible scope, and for extremely serious crimes. The Center also demands that the Kuwaiti authorities immediately stop implementing the death penalty (execution) after carrying out a large-scale mass killing operation in one day under legal cover for five people.

- icsrf monitored and documented the assault on human rights activist Anwar Al-Rasheed while he was performing his work. On February 12, 2023, Mr. Al-Rasheed posted a video in which he recounted what happened to him the previous day while covering a protest by residents of the Surra area against the removal of the memorial to the region's martyrs, and that he was verbally assaulted by a member of the Surra Cooperative Society's board of directors who opposed this protest.

-ICSRF confirms that unless Kuwait completes the issuance of comprehensive amnesty decisions for political refugees because of their opposition or expression of opinion on social media websites, the decisions taken on 13th November 2021 are racist.

On 13th November 2021, the Emir of the country, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, issued two Emir decrees pardoning and reducing the sentence imposed on 35 persons. On the same day, 20 detainees in the central prison, accused of what is known as the "Al Abdli Cell" Case, were released.

-ICSRF stressed that the government of Kuwait must find a solution to the problem of the Kuwaiti Bedoon, which has been exacerbated for years by granting them Kuwaiti citizenship.

Tens of thousands of Kuwaiti Bedoon are struggling to obtain Kuwaiti citizenship, especially as they are Arabs born in Kuwait before Kuwait's official independence in 1961.

In the past, the Bedoon Kuwaitis did not know the importance of applying for citizenship because the state was not doing its duty to introduce the importance of citizenship and the human right to obtain citizenship due to the lack of social media and the scarcity of media means, in addition to the fact that the state was newly established and it was not even easy to obtain television and radio at that time and it was not also available to everyone.

Kuwait considers them illegal residents, and this represents an obstacle to their access to civil documents and social services, and weakens the right to health, marriage, education and work. In 2010, Kuwait established the Central Agency for illegal residents' status, with the purpose of determining the cases eligible for citizenship. But ICSRF, after reviewing the work of that agency, confirms that it is the government's tool to punish the Kuwaiti Bedoon.

Kuwaiti Bedoons continue to protest because of their deteriorating living conditions, such as the protest on Friday, 12th July 2017. On that day, the Kuwaiti authorities arrested a large number of Bedoon activists, the first of whom is the human rights defender Abd Al Hakim Al-Fadli, whose house was broken into by Kuwaiti security forces, destroyed its contents, and arrested him on the background of the peaceful gathering of the Bedoons in Al Erada Square. Kuwait's disregard for the demands of the Kuwaiti Bedoons also pushes them to commit suicide, as Mr. Ayad Hamad Mudath, a Kuwaiti Bedoon, committed suicide after his suffering.

-ICSRF monitored and documented the human rights events in the State of Kuwait and called on the authorities to issue a comprehensive pardon for the prominent journalist Fouad Al-Hashem, who is one of the most famous writers in the State of Kuwait and has been known to everyone since 1981, as he is the writer of the (Exclamation Mark) column in the Kuwaiti Al-Watan newspaper. In 2009, he launched a television program entitled "Exclamation Hour", adding to his media work experience as well. The Kuwaiti Criminal Court issued a harsh ruling in absentia against Mr. Al-Hashem, sentencing him to seven years in prison with hard labor in the case called insulting the State of Qatar, against the backdrop of a case filed against him by the former Prime Minister of Qatar, Hamad bin Jassim. The Public Prosecution charged him at the time with insulting the head of a sister country via Twitter, but Mr. Al-Hashem had left Kuwait before the ruling was issued in 2017 for treatment in the United States of America. He is now a refugee in the United Arab Emirates, and his health is deteriorating. He is 71 years old and cannot return to Kuwait because of the ruling issued against him in absentia until the Emir of the

State of Kuwait issues a third decree pardoning him.

-icsrf confirmed that the Amiri Decree of Amnesty No. 8 of 2023, which included 34 people, was issued for a number of opinion makers and politicians who were partially pardoned for some cases and not completely to include all cases. Therefore, a number of refugees were unable to return to Kuwait, including the writer Rania Al-Saad, who was only partially pardoned for some cases without the other cases. Therefore, she will not be able to return from her exile to Kuwait unless a comprehensive pardon is issued for all cases. The Kuwaiti writer Rania Al-Saad immigrated to London on June 10, 2014, where she left Kuwait after multiple political, security and judicial prosecutions and harassment due to her peaceful participation in a number of regular political demands and movements and her peaceful expression of opinion, such as supporting women's political right to run for office and vote, demanding the amendment of the number of electoral districts, and demanding the dismissal of the Prime Minister at the time. The Ministry of Information banned one of her novels from publication in 2013. She also criticized Saudi Arabia, which led to an arrest warrant being issued against her after a complaint from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2017, the center criticized a judicial ruling. On March 27, 2017, the Kuwaiti judiciary issued a ruling to imprison her for three years on charges of insulting Saudi Arabia. Because of her expression of opinion, Kuwait issued heavy prison sentences against her that prevent her from returning to her country, despite the aforementioned amnesty, which was issued with a partial amnesty only for some cases and not others.

-icsrf confirmed that the Kuwaiti Public Prosecution decided on July 16, 2023 to detain the well-known tweeter \ Hamed Turki Bu Yabes for 21 days in an opinion case. He was being held in the Central Prison. On July 16, 2023, Mr. Bu Yabes posted a tweet on his Twitter account @HBuyabes in which he said:

I just received a call from an officer from the State Security Service asking me to come to the Service building. Currently, I headed to the Service headquarters in the "Al-Zahraa" area, armed with the words of God Almighty in verse (64) of Surah "Yusuf": {So Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.} On the same day, July 16, 2023, he was referred to the Public Prosecution, which decided to detain him for 21 days pending investigation into the case of insulting a sister country, and he was placed in the central prison.

The basis of the problem is a tweet published by Mr. Bouyabes on July 15, 2023, in which he criticized the Saudi Minister of Interior and customs employees in Saudi Arabia.

This is not the first problem that Mr. Bouyabes has been exposed to because of his expression of

an opinion. On January 8, 2018, the Kuwaiti Criminal Court ruled to imprison him for two years, suspended for three years, after the Public Prosecution charged him with insulting the Emir of Kuwait, defaming his powers, and challenging the status of the emirate, based on tweets on his account, but he denied all the accusations attributed to him and confirmed at the time that they were untrue.

-ICSRF confirmed that the Amiri Decree of Pardon No. 8 of 2023, which included 34 people, did not include the name of the tweeter Abdulrahman Talib Fawzan Al-Ajmi, although his case was due to his peaceful expression of opinion, and therefore he will not be able to return to his homeland, Kuwait, unless a comprehensive pardon is issued for him. Mr. Al-Ajmi's suffering began on March 19, 2015, when Kuwaiti security forces arrested him immediately after a complaint from the Saudi embassy in Kuwait. The authorities stated at the time that his arrest was due to his misuse of social media (Twitter), in which he insulted the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He was then referred to the Public Prosecution, which detained him pending investigation after accusing him of insulting the Emir, committing a hostile act against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and broadcasting false news. His detention continued until the Criminal Court issued a ruling to imprison him for four years, but Mr. Al-Ajmi appealed the ruling in the case, which bore the number 16 of 2015, State Security Felonies, and the Court of Appeal ruled his innocence. After that, he decided to leave Kuwait, as he was fed up with the many security and judicial prosecutions that made his life miserable, and he emigrated from Kuwait in 2017. However, the Kuwaiti Court of Cassation was not satisfied with the Court of Appeal's ruling to acquit Mr. Al-Ajmi, and in its session on February 16, 2017, it again sentenced him to four years in prison with hard labor on charges of insulting the Emir, committing a hostile act against Saudi Arabia, and broadcasting false news.

-icsrf confirmed that the Amiri Decree No. 8 of 2023 granting amnesty to Kuwaiti opposition figure Mohammed Salman Al-Mail did not grant a full amnesty, but rather a partial amnesty for four out of thirteen cases, despite Interpol's acknowledgment that there was no red notice against him on October 7, 2022, which is a date prior to the Amiri Decree issued in January 2023, and he will not be able to return to his homeland, Kuwait, unless a full amnesty is issued for him. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) confirmed on October 7, 2022 that there was no red notice against Mr. Al-Mail. After the partial amnesty was issued, a legal team contacted one of the Kuwaiti authorities to inquire, and they informed them that he was wanted under a red notice. The legal team then contacted Interpol again, and they received a second

confirmation on June 29, 2023 that he was not wanted.

The suffering of opposition figure Mohammed Al-Mail

-ICSRF confirmed that despite Kuwait's knowledge of Interpol's official announcement that Musaed Al-Musaileem will not be subject to any criminal proceedings, the Amnesty Decree No. 8 of 2023 did not grant him a comprehensive amnesty to return to his homeland. The Amiri Amnesty Decree No. 8 of 2023, which included 34 people, included the name of the blogger Musaed Abdullah Othman Al-Musaileem among those who were issued a partial amnesty only for the freedom-restricting penalties in some cases without the freedom-restricting penalties in the rest of the other cases. Therefore, he will not be able to return to his homeland, Kuwait, unless a comprehensive amnesty is issued for him. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) announced on May 13, 2022 that Kuwaiti blogger Musaed Al-Musaileem will not be subject to any criminal proceedings. This is considered a rejection of Kuwait's request, which it has been adhering to since April 2018, after it issued a series of heavy, unjust rulings in absentia, imprisoning him for decades due to the human rights activist's work and expression of opinion on social media. The suffering of human rights defender Musaed Al-Musaileem

-icsrf confirmed that Mr. Abdullah Al-Saleh has been exiled outside Kuwait since 2017 and cannot return to his homeland because the Kuwaiti authorities issued sentences against him totaling 74 years on charges of insulting Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Bahrain and Oman, in addition to insulting the Emir and insulting the judiciary. The last sentence issued against him was a ten-year prison sentence on February 22, 2022, on charges of publishing false information and news from outside the country that included insulting the judiciary, but the truth is simpler than these major accusations and historical sentences, and the matter does not go beyond expressing his opinion on his Twitter account.

-ICSRF condemned the silence of the Kuwaiti authorities and their satisfaction with the exposure of the Kuwaiti human rights defender Anwar Al Rasheed to illegal campaigns and incitement to cause harm by some parties opposed to human rights work (which may be operating under the jurisdiction of security agencies).

Mr. Al Rasheed is a prominent human rights defender who has harsh criticism against the government's policies on his Twitter account, which aim at reform. He also has human rights activities in the field, such as covering the protests in Al Erada Square, such as the group calling for medical freedom, which was rejecting forced vaccination against COVID -19 and a group of the families of the displaced Kuwaitis who were demanding their pardon and their

return to Kuwait. Finally, a few days ago, his coverage of the peaceful strike of the Kuwaiti Bedoon group in Al Sulaibiya area.

Because of his human rights work, Mr. Al Rasheed posted on his Twitter account on Sunday, 10th April 2022 important information that there are people who indirectly sending threatening messages to him and other human rights defenders saying (your names are on the list, be careful and you must take this warning seriously and reduce your activity, and that the next stage will be a difficult one).

ICSRF contacted Mr. Al Rasheed to inquire about the total of the names on the list, and we made sure that what was meant by the sentence was that the names were on the list of arrest and detention.

ICSRF believes that there is a high probability that these illegal campaigns are issued by people affiliated with one of the security agencies that do not like the work of human rights defenders. The Kuwaiti authorities must open an investigation and stop these illegal campaigns that constitute incitement to hatred and violence.

ICSRF Recommendations

- 1- Issuing legislation to protect human rights defenders.

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- 2- Activating the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Community Organs to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary.
 - 3- Immediately stop targeting stateless persons and defenders of their rights.
 - 4- Canceling security policies by preventing entry of human rights defenders and allowing human rights activities and trainings to be held.
 - 5- Activating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights within the national judiciary.

In the 26th session of Human Rights Council, document no. A/HRC/RES/26/12 was issued and which states that

The Human Rights Council affirms that the same rights that people enjoy outside the internet must also be protected on the internet, especially freedom of expression, and this applies without regard to borders and to any of media means one chooses in accordance with article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 19 of the International Covenant on civil and political rights

Sultanate of Oman

UN Main Conventions which Sultanate of Oman joined:

The Sultanate of Oman has joined six of the seven major United Nations human rights conventions: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1996), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2003), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (2006). It has also acceded to the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2020) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Treatment or Punishment Inhuman or degrading treatment (2020) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2020).

Facts Monitored and Documented by ICSRFin 2023

-ICSRF monitoring and documentation team followed the account of the brave human rights defender and journalist Mukhtar Al-Hanai on Twitter @MukhtarOman for eight months and the shocking result was that he has completely stopped working as a journalist.

A center official contacted Mr. Al-Hanai because it is unusual or unknown for him to stop working voluntarily as he is one of the most active journalists in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, but he completely refused to disclose the reason for stopping working. As a human rights organization specialized in defending human rights defenders, we understand that he is under pressure whose source we do not know, but this pressure prevents him from working and speaking, even though he publishes normal posts and tweets on his account, but they have nothing to do with his work. It is true that there is no official decision to prevent him from working or an administrative decision to dismiss him, for example, or a resignation on his part, but we know of the unofficial and unannounced decisions, recommendations and security orders that target retaliatory action against opponents, activists, human rights defenders and their human rights organizations.

The center has known Mr. Al-Hanai since 2012, when he was unjustly arrested due to publishing cases. He received a royal pardon in 2013, after which he devoted himself to regular journalistic work, where he wrote for the Omani newspaper Athir and published news of public opinion issues and his press coverage on his aforementioned Twitter account until 2022, when the Omani prosecution referred a government complaint filed against him to the Muscat Criminal Court of First Instance, so that the court could sentence him to imprisonment in accordance with Article 249 of the Omani Penal Code. According to this article, the prison sentence is not less than one month and does not exceed two years, and the fine reaches 100,000 Omani riyals, approximately 260,000 US dollars.

-icsrf has reviewed a report stating that the respected businessman Hani Al-Sarhani was detained by the Special Section since the morning of August 9, 2023. If the report is true, the Omani authorities must release him immediately and unconditionally. Mr. Al-Sarhani is considered one of the most prominent social activists in Omani society today. He is a prominent businessman with many projects that provide services to Omani society. He is always holding dialogue spaces on his Twitter account, as well as publishing videos that talk about general and economic conditions. He always aims for reform. The news of his re-arrest is consistent with his exposure to similar violations by the Omani authorities.

ICSRF confirmed that the Omani police continue to arrest and humiliate anyone who has a human rights activity or exercises his right to freedom of opinion and expression. On August 16, 2023, the Omani security arrested the Islamic preacher Sheikh Masoud Al-Maqbali from his home and placed him in solitary confinement without referring him to the judicial authorities. The Islamic preacher,

lecturer and reciter Sheikh Masoud Al-Maqbali is a distinguished, famous and very respected figure in Omani society. He is one of the most famous religious men and preachers known in the Arab world and has thousands of followers. Social media was abuzz after his arrest and the launch of a campaign under the hashtag #Freedom for Sheikh Masoud Al-Maqbali. Many Omani citizens called on the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman to intervene to release him. The center has reviewed multiple reports confirming that the arrest of Sheikh Al-Maqbali was due to his expression of opinion, as he criticized social conditions in Oman and criticized the Omani government. The Center affirms that a respectable personality like Sheikh Al-Maqbali has been materially and morally affected by the damages caused to him by the Omani police. He was arrested and his freedom was confiscated since August 16, 2023 for nothing. The simplest principles of justice and democracy require his immediate release, an apology to him, and justice by opening an urgent investigation into what he was exposed to, and referring the negligent to an urgent trial with material compensation, as he has the right to file a civil compensation lawsuit before the competent judiciary. In general, the directives of the Sultan of Oman came to meet with the youth, involve them, and listen to their opinions, concerns, and aspirations.

-ICSRF stressed that the Sultanate of Oman must take real steps to protect women from violence. As it has not noticed that reassuring steps have been taken to prevent the recurrence of violence against women, ICSRF had received with great concern reports of repeated deaths and injuries of Omani women as a result of societal violence. The center had also previously monitored government violence against a Hala FM radio presenter.

On December 7, 2022, lawyer Amal Al-Abri was killed in front of the Primary Court in the Omani city of Seeb (which is one of the areas of the Omani capital, Muscat). Her ex-husband killed her as a result of disagreements after he stabbed her fatally with a knife during the day on the street.

It is true that the Omani police announced the arrest of the killer and taking legal action against him, but this did not prevent another crime from occurring a few days later.

On December 11, 2022, student Ibtisam Al-Maqrashi was killed in the Wilayat of Ibri after a man chased her in a car, stopped her, broke her car window and stabbed her several times. According to reports reviewed by the center, the attack on her was because the girl's family refused this man to marry their daughter. The Omani police also announced the arrest of the perpetrator and taking legal action.

There are many forms of violence against Omani women other than killing and wounding. There is a form of government violence against women and restricting their freedom of opinion and expression. In the first week of December 2021, a decision was issued in a call from the Ministry of Information and the radio administration was informed verbally to suspend the prominent Omani broadcaster, Khuloud Al-Alawi, presenter of the All Questions program, which is broadcast on Hala

FM Radio, from work.

Ms. Al-Alawi had hosted a member of the Omani Shura Council, Mr. Muhammad Al-Zadjali, in a radio interview on her aforementioned program. During the conversation, he touched on criticism of the presidency of the Shura Council and the Ministry of Information. It is true that Mrs. Al-Alawi returned to her work, but the fact remains that she is a woman who was subjected to government violence. The Sultanate of Oman joined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2006, but this is not enough, as violence against Omani women has sometimes reached the point of murder, and it seems that what is hidden is greater.

-icsrf confirmed that the Omani police continue to arrest anyone who exercises their right to freedom of opinion and expression. Citizen Talal bin Ahmed bin Ali Al Salmani was summoned hours after posting a video at the end of September 2023 on social media demanding that the Omani government provide a decent life for citizens. Reports indicate that he is still being detained. Mr. Al Salmani is known in Omani society for his peaceful activity on social media, where he provides advice and awareness to young people by posting videos such as raising awareness of the dangers and harms of smoking. This is not the first time Mr. Al-Salmani has been arrested. He was previously arrested hours after submitting a request to the Director of Bousher Police Station on Monday, August 9, 2021, to hold a peaceful demonstration to close liquor stores. He followed the law and submitted a request to the Director of Bousher Police Station to approve a peaceful gathering to be held on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, at five o'clock in the afternoon, to demand the closure of liquor stores. He also announced the event via a video posted on social media, but he was arrested.

-icsrf called on the Omani authorities to drop the charges against the respected businessman Hani Al-Sarhani and release him immediately, as his trial sessions began on October 19, 2023, after he was arrested by the Special Section on the morning of August 9, 2023. His current and previous arrests were due to his expression of opinion, and his previous trial was related to his expression of opinion. According to the understanding of the International Center for Supporting Human Rights and Freedoms, it commends the way Mr. Al-Sarhani expresses his opinion on his account on the X website (formerly Twitter) @AlsarhaniHani. He expressed his opinion in a manner that is fully consistent with international law, as his expression of opinion does not affect the rights or reputation of others, nor does it affect national security, public order, public health, or public morals, as his opinions do not go beyond talking about high prices, economic conditions, and those who are unable to pay loans due to economic conditions.

-ICSRF called on the Omani authorities to drop the charges against the respected businessman Hani Al-Sarhani, as the Muscat Court of First Instance issued a harsh ruling against him on October 19, 2023, sentencing him to two years in prison after he was accused of inciting public opinion and

violating some articles of the Anti-Information Technology Crimes Law. However, Mr. Al-Sarhani appealed the ruling and paid a bail of 600 Omani riyals to stop the execution.

ICSRF Recommendations

- 1- Issuing legislation to protect human rights defenders and activating all international charters and treaties that it has ratified within the national judiciary.
- 2- Activating the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Community Organs to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary.
- 3- Immediately stop targeting those who exercise their right of expression.
- 4- Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 5- To stop handing over activists legally residing on its territory to countries known for their bloody human rights record.

In HRC's 42nd session, the document A/HRC/RES/42/22, clause H in item 5 states that:

The Human Rights Council encourages all states to do the following: Providing safeguards that protect against unlawful or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whatever the form of detention

Conclusion

The GCC countries continued during 2023 their violations of all treaties that protect human rights, and they also deprived human rights defenders and activists of all their civil and political rights. Many of them left their homelands and became refugees and exposed to the possibility of committing crimes of human trafficking, forced labor, and sexual exploitation against them. As for those who remained in the homeland, they either left human rights work or were sentenced to long prison terms on fabricated charges, then trials that lacked the minimum level of a fair trial. The security services in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries were also mobilized to monitor social media sites to track any opinion or opposition to the government or even a like or retweet to arrest the perpetrator of this crime. Yes, we regret that the conditions in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in 2023 have reached the point where an opinion or hint of an opinion opposing the state's policies is considered a crime, even retweets and likes are crimes to the point that activists or ordinary individuals have become afraid to even publish news about the arrest or detention of an opinion holder, and they have become dependent on human rights organizations from outside the Arab world to help them.

Here we should refer to what is stated in item 27 of the document no. A/HRC/51/13

Another major concern highlighted was the use of online surveillance technology against journalists and human rights defenders, including the use of the Pegasus mobile phone

monitoring app, as well as the increasing use of other types of surveillance technology to enforce quarantine and other COVID-19 response measures.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is still revenging against the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms because of the Universal Periodic Review report that it submitted to the twenty-seventh session in 2016 and 2021.

Bahrain could not forget that ICSRF had previously submitted a UPR report on human rights conditions in Bahrain. Therefore, it is taking advantage of its membership in the NGOs Committee, which consists of 19 delegates representing their countries by disabling ICSRF annually from obtaining consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council. That committee, which includes representatives of their countries and very cooperators among them, asks illegal questions, some of which are fabricated, on an ongoing basis with the aim of disrupting, and respectively, ICSRF is obligated to answer and we know that it is basically a Bahraini act of revenge, as there is no interest for any country within the committee to harm ICSRF except Bahrain.

On this occasion, we repeat what has been stated by item 29 of the document no. A/HRC/45/36 Successive reports have addressed the obstacles that hinder individuals and organizations from speaking out in United Nations forums. Reports continue to come in about attempts by representatives of countries to disrupt or delay the accreditation of some representatives of civil society. Similarly, there are still reports of cases of taking pictures of individuals without their consent or recording their movements and data without their consent in meetings of United Nations. We do not know when these revenge acts against us will stop.

Here we should refer to what has been stated by the document no. A/HRC/RES/22/6, and which was issued by HRC's 22nd session on 12th April 2013, item 13

The Human Rights Council (Reaffirms the right of everyone, individually or in association with others, to have unhindered access to and communication with international bodies, in particular the United Nations and its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, including the Human Rights Council, its special procedures in regard to UPR and treaty bodies, as well as regional human rights mechanisms).

Article 1 of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the national judiciary states that “Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to advocate and strive for the protection and implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms on national and international levels).

Finally, we must refer to what Prince Zeid bin Raad Al Hussein, the former High Commissioner, said in his annual report, which he presented during the 31st session of the Human Rights Council: I am also disturbed by the widespread practice of what can be called (the adornment of the window of human rights). The ratification of treaties and conventions and the acceptance of recommendations emanating from the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations are not, in and of themselves, achievements in the field of human rights. There must be follow-up and real change to achieve greater freedoms and dignity for people.

Unless it has an impact on the level of individual rights in the work we do, it will remain bureaucratic, or even theatrical.

International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms
Swiss Organization

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- 3- Document no. A/HRC/51/13 issued by HRC's 51st session.
- 4- Document no. A/HRC/RES/31/32 issued by HRC's 31st session.
- 5- Document no. A/HRC/RES/28/14 issued by HRC's 26th session.
- 6- Document no. A/HRC/RES/34/41 issued by HRC's 34th session.
- 7- Document no. A/HRC/RES/47/3 issued by HRC's 47th session.
- 8- Document no. A/HRC/RES/42/22 issued by HRC's 42nd session.
- 9- Document no. A/HRC/46/19 issued by HRC's 46th session.
- 10- Document no. A/HRC/47/35 issued by HRC's 47th session.
- 11- Document no. A/HRC/47/45 issued by HRC's 47th session.
- 12- Document no. A/HRC/45/36 issued by HRC's 45th session.