



High Representative/ Vice President  
Josep Borrell Fontelles

Brussels, 20 December 2021

Dear High Representative Josep Borrell,

As Members of the European Parliament, we are writing to express our deepest concern over the systemic ongoing political oppression and human rights violations in Bahrain and understand your strategy to urge the Bahraini government to comply with international standards of human rights.

Ten years after the violently repressed waves of protests in 2011, human rights violations and the culture of impunity have continued unabated in Bahrain. The rights of freedom of expression and assembly have been heavily restricted by the Bahraini government, and human rights defenders face ongoing systematic targeting, harassment, detention, torture, intimidation, travel ban and revocation of citizenship. Between 2011 and 2020, Bahrain has sentenced to death approximately 50 people, and independent observers report that, in the majority of recent executions, Bahraini authorities have extracted confessions through torture, and defendants have not been granted fair trials. These violations were denounced by the European Parliament in the 11 March 2021 resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain.

The EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders highlight the fact that the EU Missions abroad should seek to adopt a proactive policy towards human rights defenders. In Bahrain, many prominent political activists are still, to this day, unfairly imprisoned. **Hassan Mushaima** is a political leader of the opposition, that has been on and off from prison for decades without real motive. He is 73 years old and suffers from many worrying health conditions, that have been left untreated by the prison administration and that have worsened due to him being submitted to torture. **Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace** is another important figure of the Bahraini opposition as well as a renowned scholar, who has been sentenced to life in prison for solely exercising his right to freedom of expression. He is currently on hunger strike to protest the ill-treatment he is suffering in prison and has lost a lot of weight. Two EU citizens, **Abdulhadi al-Khawaja** (Danish) and **Sheikh Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad** (Swedish), are also spending their lives in prison in Bahrain for having called for democratic reforms in the country.

We believe that the European Union must hold Bahrain accountable for the systematic human rights violations. The European Union holds strict human rights standards and must retain such standards for its allies. We express our deep concern on the violent policy led by Bahrain on its citizens endangering the country's future.

We would like for the European External Action Service to answer the following questions to address the situation:

- Are you taking actions to address the government of Bahrain's systemic human rights violations against its own citizens?
- Did you put pressure on the government to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and opposition leaders such as Hassan Mushaima and Dr. Abduljalil Al Singace?
- Have you pressured the authorities to unconditionally and immediately release Mr. Abduljadi Alkhawaja and Shaikh Mohammad Habib Almiqdad, two European citizens imprisoned in Bahrain?
- Have you considered Global Magnitsky Act authority or other sanctions authorities against members of the government of Bahrain responsible for serious human rights violations, especially from members of the Bahraini Ministry of Interior?
- Are you taking into consideration the fact that any official EU-Bahrain Cooperation Agreement will have to be part of the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024?
- Have you urged the Bahraini authorities to fully comply with its international commitments such as those undertaken within the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Constitution of Bahrain?

As Bahraini authorities continue to commit massive and systematic violations of human rights, the EEAS, in light with its commitment to international human rights and democracy, must demonstrate that such disrespect for human rights and international obligations will not be tolerated. Bahraini authorities must be held accountable for their actions and repressive policy, and international allies of Bahrain, such as the European Union, must put pressure on the government to do so.

The EEAS has a central role in ensuring that international diplomatic pressure will be applied from across the international community to put an end to those practices which are in breach of international law. As Members of the European Parliament, we remain committed to the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of all human rights in Bahrain.

We urge you to promote reform and respect for human rights in Bahrain and look forward to your prompt response.



Your sincerely,

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