



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Bahrain

Bahrain – BHR39737 – 14 February 2011
Protests – Treatment of Protesters –
Treatment of Shias – Protests in Australia
Returnees –
30 January 2012

- 1. Please provide details of the protest(s) which took place in Bahrain on 14 February 2011, including the exact location of protest activities, the time the protest activities started, the sequence of events, the time the protest activities had ended on the day, the nature of the protest activities, the number of the participants, the profile of the participants and the reaction of the authorities.**

The vast majority of protesters involved in the 2011 uprising in Bahrain were Shia Muslims calling for political reforms.¹ According to several sources, the protest movement was led by educated and politically unaffiliated youth.² Like their counterparts in other Arab countries, they used modern technology, including social media networks to call for demonstrations and publicise their demands.³ The demands raised during the protests enjoyed, at least initially, a large degree of popular support that crossed religious, sectarian and ethnic lines.⁴

On 29 June 2011 Bahrain's King Hamad issued a decree establishing the Bahrain Independent Commission of Investigation (BICI) which was mandated to investigate the events occurring in Bahrain in February and March 2011.⁵ The BICI was headed by M. Cherif Bassiouni and four other internationally recognised human rights experts.⁶

¹ Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p.2
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

² Gengler, Justin 2012, Bahrain's Sunni awakening, *Middle East Report Online (MERIP)*, 17 January (CISNET Bahrain CX280200); Johnston, Cynthia 2011, 'Analysis – Radicalism has little role in Bahrain uprising', *Reuters*, 23 February (CISNET Bahrain CX259300); International Crisis Group 2011, *Popular protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain revolt*, 6 April <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/bahrain/105-popular-protests-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-iii-the-bahrain-revolt.aspx> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CIS 20466)

³ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.162 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴ The demands expressed during the earlier demonstrations related mainly to political and constitutional reform, which was to pave the way for greater popular participation in governance, equal access to socio-economic opportunities and development, action against corruption, and termination of the alleged practice of political naturalisation. These demands were supported across the board, and did not reflect sectarian or ethnic characteristics. Few of the protestors who took to the streets on 14 February called for changing the ruling regime in Bahrain, or directed criticism at HM King Hamad or the ruling family. Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.162
<http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁵ Established 29 June 2011. Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.6
http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁶ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.6
http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

On 23 November 2011 the BICI released their findings. The Commission report provides an account of the protests that occurred on 14 February 2011, including location and time of the protests, approximate number of participants and the response of the authorities. The BICI provides the following account of the events of Monday 14 February 2011:

Demonstrations and political rallies erupted throughout Bahrain. No applications were made for permission to demonstrate on 14 February. Nonetheless, police were deployed in various areas of Manama and neighbouring villages in anticipation of demonstrations. These protests varied in size and political orientation. Some were confined to specific locations in Manama and other cities, while others took the form of street marches and rallies that began in certain neighbourhoods and moved towards the main roads near those areas. The numbers of people participating in these protests ranged from tens of persons to over 1,000 persons. The total number of protesters participating in demonstrations throughout the country that day was estimated to be over 6,000. The slogans raised during these demonstrations varied, with some focusing on political grievances and others adopting socio-economic demands.

The earliest recorded demonstration began at 05:30 in Nuwaidrat. It was reported to have started at the Sheikh Ahmad Mosque and moved towards the main road. As the demonstration proceeded, the number of participants reached around 300. At this point, upon determining that the demonstration was unauthorised, riot police began taking measures to disperse the demonstrators. A number of demonstrators were wounded and one was hospitalised.

Meanwhile, around 30 people gathered at a roundabout in Nuwaidrat with posters calling for constitutional and political reform. Police did not confront these demonstrators.

As the day proceeded, protests increased in size and spread to various parts of Bahrain. Police continued to confront unauthorised demonstrations and attempted to disperse them. These included a gathering of around 150 people in Al Diraz, which clashed with police leading to the hospitalisation of three demonstrators. Similarly, one demonstrator was wounded when police blocked a rally of around 200 demonstrators in Sanabis. Demonstrations of varying sizes were also reported in other villages and neighbourhoods. These included the following: 200 demonstrators in Sheikh Ali Salman Street; 40 demonstrators in Maqsha; 100 demonstrators in the vicinity of Jidhafs; 150 demonstrators in Karbabad; and 140 demonstrators in Abu-Saiba. Later in the afternoon, more demonstrations were reported in numerous areas of Bahrain, some of which witnessed limited incidents of violence. For example, at 16:00 police dispersed a demonstration of around 400 demonstrators in Nabi Saleh after garbage dumpsters were set on fire. Similarly, when police units blocked a protest of around 1,000 people in Sitra, demonstrators started throwing rocks and other objects at police vehicles and personnel.

By sunset, demonstrations had spread to other neighbourhoods that had been calm earlier in the day. These included the areas of Al-Balad Al-Qadeem, Al-Ekr Al-Gharby, A'Ali Roundabout, Hamad Town, Barbar, Al Hajar, Malkiyya, Bani Hamza and Bab Al Bahrain. The sizes of these gatherings ranged from 10-20 to 500-700 demonstrators. No serious injuries requiring hospitalisation were reported during these demonstrations.

At around 20:00, Mr Ali Abdulhadi Almeshaima was fatally shot while police were attempting to disperse a demonstration in Daih. This was the first death to be recorded during the events of February/March. Accounts of the circumstances leading to the death of Mr Almeshaima varied. According to investigations undertaken by the MoI, Mr Almeshaima was participating in an unauthorised demonstration of around 800 people, which attacked a police patrol of eight police officers, using rocks and metal rods. When

the demonstrators came within a few metres of the police unit, which had exhausted its supply of tear gas and rubber bullets, police resorted to firing one shotgun round and struck Mr Almeshaima in the back. The family of the victim contested this account of events. They denied that there were any demonstrations in the area and claimed that Mr Almeshaima left his residence at 20:00 and was shot by a police patrol shortly thereafter for no apparent reason. The victim was taken to SMC [Salmaniya Medical Complex] where, despite attempts to resuscitate him, he was pronounced dead at 20:20. On 15 February, the MoI ordered an internal investigation into this incident.

On the evening of 14 February, several hundred individuals gathered at SMC. Most of those stood in the car park adjacent to the Emergency Section. Others, including some protesters and journalists, entered the recovery room in the Emergency Section where they reportedly took photographs of injured individuals and interviewed the family of Mr Ali Almeshaima.

Further demonstrations were recorded later that night, including gatherings of around 200 demonstrators in Karzakan and around 300 in Damistan. The first gathering at SMC was reported at approximately 21:00 involving around 200 demonstrators. Meanwhile, at 23:20 a rally marched down the Salmaniya and King Faisal Roads towards the GCC Roundabout [previously called Pearl Roundabout], where numerous police had been deployed. When protesters refused to halt their procession, police arrested 24 individuals.

According to one estimate, a total of 55 protests of various sizes took place in Bahrain on 14 February... In addition to the death of Ali Almeshaima and injuries suffered by other protesters, noted above, there were reported attacks by protesters against police personnel, vehicles and security patrols that had been dispatched to disperse unauthorised demonstrations.⁷

A number of international media outlets reported the events of 14 February 2011. The *Wall Street Journal* reported a gathering of around 200 protesters 'in a main traffic circle on the outskirts of Manama'.⁸ According to the report, riot police responded by firing tear gas and rubber bullets. The article also noted that the GCC (Pearl) roundabout in Manama had been cited by protesters as a possible place to demonstrate and that 'police manned each corner in a show of force'. The article also reported the following events:

... protests gained momentum through the day with larger groups simultaneously protesting in several locations on the outskirts of the capital as people finished work midafternoon. Protesters continued to gather after nighfall, with police units maintaining a heavy presence and helicopters circling the capital.

Security forces had stepped up their presence across the capital and in the Shiite Muslim-dominated villages that surround it, as the country's opposition called for Monday demonstrations.

Protests in some Shiite villages started immediately after morning prayers on Monday, eyewitnesses said. Checkpoints sealed off villages, while police units patrolled shopping malls and other public areas Sunday.

⁷ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.68-70 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁸ Parkinson, Joe, 2011, 'Bahrain police strike back at protesters', *Wall Street Journal*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258489)

In the Shiite village of Sitra, a few miles from the capital, armed riot police patrolled networks of side streets. Local men, women and children marched to protest immediately after morning prayers but were blocked before they reached a nearby highway, eye witnesses said.

Those who refused to disperse were shot at with tear gas, sound bombs and rubber bullets, with some exhibiting injuries, witnesses said.

In Beni Jamra, another Shiite district a few miles west of Manama, 300 to 400 people, mainly young men and women, walked up a long street chanting “Release the Prisoners.” They were stopped by police, firing tear gas.⁹

Reuters reported that protesters had been due to gather in Manama but that ‘it remained quiet as security forces patrolled Shiite areas’.¹⁰ According to the report, ‘while tension pervaded Shi’ite villages, in Manama government supporters honked car horns and waved Bahraini flags to celebrate the 10th anniversary of a national charter introduced after unrest in the 1990s’.¹¹ *Reuters* also noted that more than 20 people had been hurt, one of them critically, in clashes in Shi’ite villages that ring the capital.¹²

On 14 February 2011 *The New York Times* reported that while organisers had hoped to join in one large demonstration at the Pearl roundabout, police prevented them from doing so by pouring into the circle in Land Cruisers and firing tear gas canisters. The article states that, instead of one large protest, demonstrators were restricted to villages around the capital city, with a few ‘scattered protests in the city center’.¹³ According to the report, ‘it appeared that all of the protests on Monday were in Shiite communities’.¹⁴

Amnesty International noted that pro-government rallies, led mainly by Sunni groups, were also organised.¹⁵ The ICG reported that the protest movement was ‘largely non-violent’.¹⁶

The following map of Al Manamah (Capital governorate) shows the reported sites of protest in, or close to, Manama on 14 February 2011.

⁹ Parkinson, Joe, 2011, ‘Bahrain police strike back at protesters’, *Wall Street Journal*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258489)

¹⁰ Richter, Frederik 2011, ‘Protester killed in Bahrain “Day of Rage” – witnesses’, *Reuters*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258471)

¹¹ Richter, Frederik 2011, ‘Protester killed in Bahrain “Day of Rage” – witnesses’, *Reuters*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258471)

¹² Richter, Frederik 2011, ‘Protester killed in Bahrain “Day of Rage” – witnesses’, *Reuters*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258471)

¹³ Slackman, Michael and Nadim Audi 2011, ‘Clashes erupt in Bahrain as tumult ripples across Mideast’, *The New York Times*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258493)

¹⁴ Slackman, Michael and Nadim Audi 2011, ‘Clashes erupt in Bahrain as tumult ripples across Mideast’, *The New York Times*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258493)

¹⁵ Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p2 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁶ International Crisis Group 2011, *Popular protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain revolt*, 6 April, Executive Summary <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/bahrain/105-popular-protests-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-iii-the-bahrain-revolt.aspx> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CIS 20466)



Map 1: Al Manamah (Capital governorate) and some of the reported protest sites in or near the governorate, including GCC Roundabout, SMC, Meqsha, Jid Hafs, Bilad Al Qadeem, Karbabad, Sanabis.¹⁷

The reaction of the authorities:

The BICI account above details the response of the authorities at various demonstrations that occurred on 14 February 2011. The BICI report provides further information concerning the organisation, management and conduct of the Bahraini authorities. According to the report, ‘the calls to organise demonstrations starting on 14 February and the ongoing popular protests in other Arab countries led the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to take precautionary measures in anticipation of any protests that might be organised in Bahrain’.¹⁸ These steps included ‘increasing the preparedness of police units; deploying more patrols in various neighbourhoods; and heightening security at important locations such as government offices, diplomatic premises, banks, religious sites and public works facilities’.¹⁹

According to BICI, four Bahraini government agencies undertook law enforcement and security operations during February and March 2011. These were the MoI, the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), the National Guard and the National Security Agency [NSA].²⁰ Within the MoI, the Public Security Forces (PSF) is assigned the primary responsibility of maintaining order, peace, and security in Bahrain. During the events of February and March

¹⁷ ‘Al Manama’ 2012, *Google Maps* <http://maps.google.com.au/> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹⁸ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.67 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁹ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.67 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²⁰ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.257 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

2011, the PSF was ‘the government agency that was the most involved in confrontations with demonstrators and in responding to incidents of violence committed by individuals’.²¹ From 14 to 19 February 2011, the MoI deployed large numbers of troops to confront and disperse the demonstrations that took place in various areas of Bahrain. According to the BICI report, ‘most PSF riot control operations were conducted in towns and villages outside Manama’.²²

According to information collected by the BICI from MoI investigations, human rights organisations, witness statements, site visits and videos submitted by individuals, PSF riot control operations ‘followed a discernible pattern’. The Commission found:

Once protests were reported to be taking place at a certain town or village, the PSF would deploy riot control units, which usually arrived in SUVs or buses. These units were usually armed with batons, shields, tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and shotguns. The PSF personnel would first block the main entryways into the villages or neighbourhoods in which a protest were taking place. This was to prevent protesters from leaving these neighbourhoods and joining other demonstrations that might be occurring elsewhere. Police personnel would then begin engaging protesters using tear gas and sound bombs. The usual practice of PSF units was to use excessive amounts of tear gas to disperse protesters. On a number of occasions, PSF units fired tear gas canisters at and into residences. If protesters did not disperse, police personnel would usually begin approaching the protesters and firing rubber bullets and, in some cases, shotgun rounds.²³

The BICI found that BDF units were first deployed on the morning of 17 February 2011 for the purposes of clearing of the GCC Roundabout.²⁴ No allegations of human rights violations committed by National Guard units were submitted to the BICI.²⁵

NSA personnel were not involved in any riot control operations. The only field operations conducted by NSA units related to the execution of arrest warrants issued by the Military Attorney General.²⁶ According to the BICI, the NSA did not arrest any individuals during the period 14 February – 15 March 2011.²⁷

2. Is there any evidence to suggest that protest activities had taken place on 14 February 2011 near the Municipality of Manama, the Diplomatic area or the Dower area?

The reports detailed in question one note a number of demonstrations or gatherings that occurred in the municipality of Manama on 14 February 2011 including in Bab al Bahrain (Manama souk), the GCC Roundabout and the SMC. However, sources suggest that protests in Manama were scattered and that police were deployed in anticipation of demonstrations.

²¹ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p260 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²² Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p260 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²³ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.260 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²⁴ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.262 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²⁵ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.263 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²⁶ See Chapter VI, Section C on Manner of Arrests. Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²⁷ The NSA was responsible for gathering intelligence information and analysing the unfolding situation in Bahrain. Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.54 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

No reports were located of protests in the Diplomatic area of Manama on the 14 February 2011. The Dower area could not be located.

The BICI report notes that ‘by sunset’, demonstrations had spread to neighbourhoods that had been calm earlier in the day, including Bab Al Bahrain. *Google Maps* indicates that Bab al Bahrain is located near the Manama souk, close to the Diplomatic area. According to BICI, the size of these later gatherings ranged from 10-20 to 500-700, although it does not specify the size of the demonstration at Bab al Bahrain. According to BICI, no serious injuries requiring hospitalisation were reported during these demonstrations.²⁸

Protests also occurred at the Salminiya Medical Complex in Manama. The SMC is located in the Salminiya district and is about two kilometres from the GCC Roundabout.²⁹ The BICI report states that during the evening of 14 February 2011, injured individuals began to gather in the parking lot in front of the SMC Emergency Section. At around 20:45, Mr Ali Mushaima died at SMC due to police shotgun pellet wounds sustained earlier during protests. A group of several hundred individuals gathered at SMC. The first gathering at SMC was reported at approximately 21:00 involving around 200 demonstrators.³⁰ Some of these individuals, including journalists, entered the recovery room of the Emergency Section and took photographs of the admitted cases. Media interviews were conducted with the family of the deceased and other individuals. Anti-government chants were heard.³¹

Additionally, the BICI report notes that at 23:20 on 14 February 2011 a rally marched down the Salmaniya and King Faisal Roads towards the GCC Roundabout, where numerous police had been deployed. When protesters refused to halt their procession, police arrested 24 individuals.³²

As noted in question one, *Reuters* reported that Manama ‘remained quiet as security forces patrolled Shi’ite areas’ whilst the *New York Times* reported that there were ‘a few scattered protests in the city center’.³³ The *Wall Street Journal* reported a gathering of around 200 protesters in ‘a main traffic circle on the outskirts of Manama’ which was dispersed by riot police on several occasions. The article also noted that riot police manned Pearl roundabout ‘in a show of force’.³⁴

The following map identifies cited areas of protest in Manama on 14 February 2011 including the GCC Roundabout, SMC, King Faisal Highway and Bab al Bahrain. The Diplomatic Area is also identified.

²⁸ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.167 & 215 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

²⁹ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.171 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

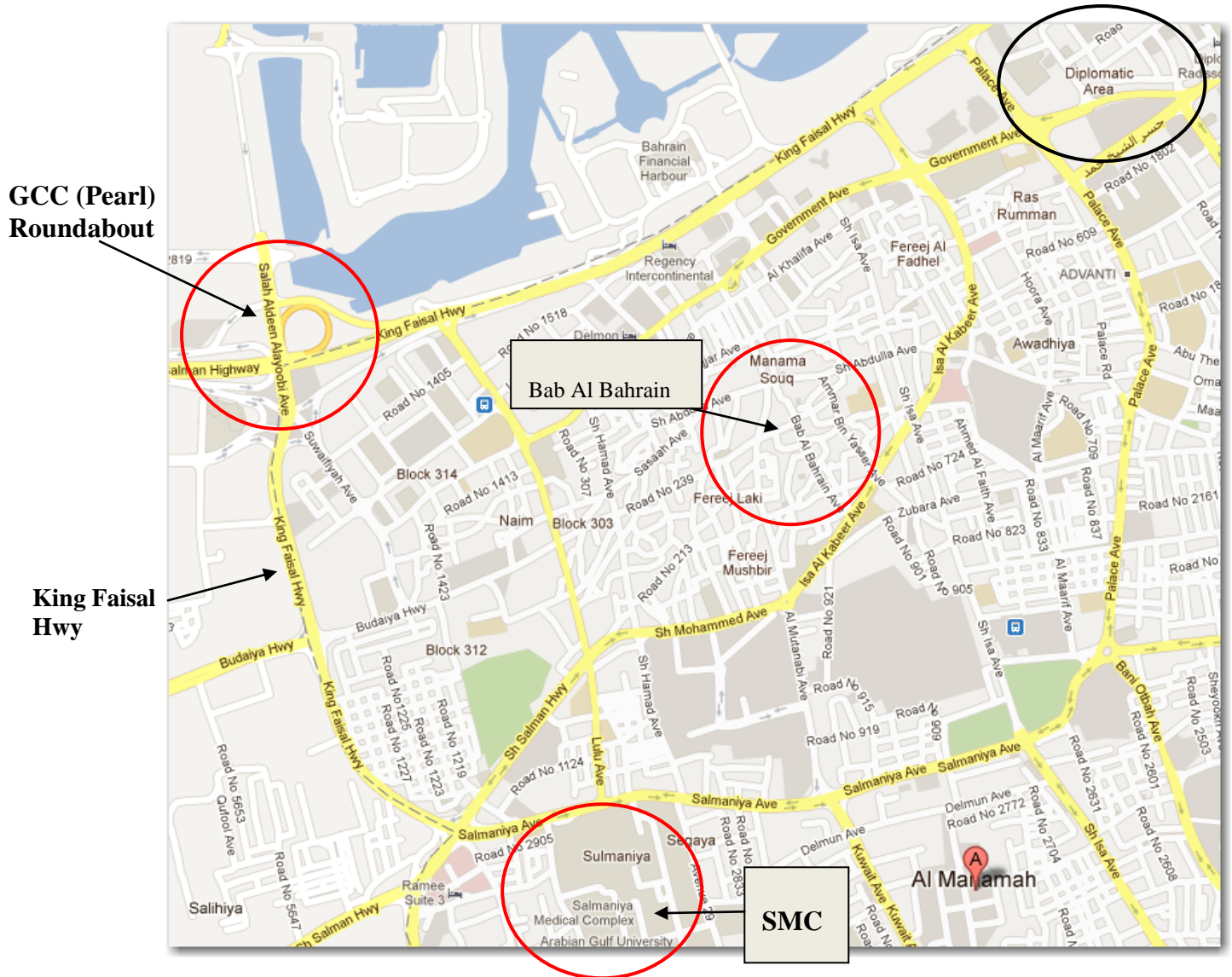
³⁰ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.69 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

³¹ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.171 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

³² Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.69 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

³³ Richter, Frederik 2011, ‘Protester killed in Bahrain “Day of Rage” – witnesses’, *Reuters*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258471); Slackman, Michael and Nadim Audi 2011, ‘Clashes erupt in Bahrain as tumult ripples across Mideast’, *The New York Times*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258493)

³⁴ Parkinson, Joe, 2011, ‘Bahrain police strike back at protesters’, *Wall Street Journal*, 14 February (CISNET Bahrain CX258489)



Map 2: Municipality of Manama and reported protest sites. Map also shows Diplomatic Area.³⁵

Diplomatic area

In anticipation of the 14 February 2011 protests, the Bahraini authorities reportedly heightened security at important locations including government offices and diplomatic premises.³⁶ No reports were located of protests in the Diplomatic area on 14 February 2011. Demonstrations appear to have affected such strategic locations in Manama from the 19 February 2011. The BICI report states that a ‘notable feature’ of the demonstrations that occurred after the reopening of the GCC Roundabout on the 19 February 2011 ‘was the extension of protests to other important locations in Manama’. According to the BICI report, demonstrations ‘started taking place at other locations such as the premises of the Council of Ministers, the Ministries of Interior, Information and Education, and later the Bahrain

³⁵ ‘Al Manama’ 2012, *Google Maps*, <http://maps.google.com.au/maps> – Accessed 30 January 2012

³⁶ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.67 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

Financial Harbour'.³⁷ The BICI notes that demonstrations occurred in the Diplomatic area on 27 February, 3 March and 15 March 2011.³⁸

3. What is the current situation in Bahrain in relation to opposition protests and the authorities' attitude towards the opposition and participants in demonstrations?

While Bahraini authorities arrested 2,929 people in connection with the protests, most have now been released.³⁹ However, some protest leaders have been sentenced to heavy prison terms. The special military courts established after the protests ended their operation on 7 October 2011, after more than 250 persons were convicted through the courts.

Demonstrations have continued in Bahrain in 2012. Sources report that human rights activists and protesters have been subjected to arrest and ill-treatment in relation to these recent protests.

The Human Rights Watch *World Report 2012* notes that twenty protest leaders were sentenced by the special military court to prison terms ranging from five years to life.⁴⁰ The charges against them ranged from calling for a change of government, leading illegal demonstrations, spreading false news, and harming the reputation of the country. An appeals court upheld their convictions and sentences on 28 September 2011.⁴¹

On 28 April 2011 the special military court sentenced four defendants to death and three others to life in prison for their alleged involvement in the murder of two police officers.⁴² Two of the death sentences were upheld by the Appeals Court of National Safety, while the other two were changed to life imprisonment. According to the Human Rights Watch *World Report 2012*, on 29 September 2011 the special military court sentenced another defendant to death for the alleged murder of a third police officer.⁴³

The special military courts ended their operation on 7 October 2011, more than four months after a 29 June 2011 decree by King Hamad that supposedly transferred all protest-related cases to civilian courts.⁴⁴ According to Human Rights Watch, more than 250 people were convicted and sentenced by special military courts.⁴⁵

³⁷ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.164-5 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

³⁸ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, 27 February protest p.94-5, 3 March protest p.104, 15 March protest p.141 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

³⁹ On the State of National Safety legislation see Chapter III: Section F: Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.47 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.3-4 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.3-4 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴² Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.3-4 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴³ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.4 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.4 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.2 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

The BICI reported that, overall, the total number of persons arrested pursuant to Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011 (declaring a State of National Safety) was 2,929.⁴⁶ Of those, 2,178 were released without charge.⁴⁷

Protests have continued in Bahrain in recent months.⁴⁸ Sources report that prominent human rights activists and demonstrators have been detained and ill-treated in recent protests. On 15 December 2011 police detained Zainab al-Khawaja, human rights activist and daughter of a prominent opposition leader, during a demonstration.⁴⁹ Zainab Al-Khawaja was reportedly arrested with another activist, Masoma Al-Sayyid.⁵⁰ Images of a policewoman dragging Al-Khawaja on the ground by the handcuffs received wide coverage on media and the internet.⁵¹ According to Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, regional deputy director at Amnesty International, 'Khawaja's arrest ... demonstrates the authorities' utter contempt of freedom of expression and peaceful protest'.⁵² According to *Al Jazeera*, along with Zainab Al-Khawaja's father, three other male relatives and her husband were imprisoned after the February 2011 uprising.⁵³ Al-Khawaja and Al-Sayyid were reportedly released after five days in custody and are awaiting trial.⁵⁴

The Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR) has stated that the organisation's members 'are always subject to harassment'.⁵⁵ BYSHR reports that in December 2011 the President of the organisation received death threats and a member of the board of directors

⁴⁶ On the State of National Safety legislation see Chapter III: Section F: Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.47

<http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴⁷ According to BICI, the most prevalent charges made against persons brought before National Safety Courts included: participating in and inciting hatred against the regime; illegal assembly; rioting; possessing anti-government leaflets; possessing material calling for the overthrow of the regime; inciting violence; threatening a public official; use of violence against a public official; premeditated murder; kidnapping; attempted murder; aggravated assault; membership in an illegally established society; and spreading rumours that undermine the public interest. On the State of National Safety legislation see Chapter III: Section F: Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.47

<http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁴⁸ Khalifa, Reem 2012, 'Bahrain protests turn violent after teen protester's funeral', *Huffington post*, source: *Associated Press*, 1 January http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/01/bahrain-protests-violent_n_1178414.html - Accessed 6 February 2012; '4 killed in protests in Bahrain, opposition groups says' 2012, *CNN*, 27 January http://articles.cnn.com/2012-01-27/middleeast/world_meast_bahrain-unrest_1_bahrain-center-bahraini-police-wefaq?_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST - Accessed 6 February 2012; 'Bahraini police fire tear gas in clash with protesters' 2011, *Arabian Business*, source: *Reuters*, 17 December <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahraini-police-fire-tear-gas-in-clash-with-protesters-435540.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012; 'Fired Bahrain Shiites want their jobs back' 2012, *Kuwait Times*, 22 December (CISNET Bahrain CX278984)

⁴⁹ 'Bahraini police fire tear gas in clash with protesters' 2011, *Arabian Business*, source: *Reuters*, 17 December <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/bahraini-police-fire-tear-gas-in-clash-with-protesters-435540.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁵⁰ 'Bahraini blogger released on bail' 2011, *Al Jazeera*, 21 December <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122155515288556.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁵¹ 'Bahraini blogger released on bail' 2011, *Al Jazeera*, 21 December <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122155515288556.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁵² 'Bahraini blogger released on bail' 2011, *Al Jazeera*, 21 December <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122155515288556.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁵³ 'Bahraini blogger released on bail' 2011, *Al Jazeera*, 21 December <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122155515288556.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁵⁴ 'Bahraini blogger released on bail' 2011, *Al Jazeera*, 21 December <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/12/2011122155515288556.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012; 'Bahrain blogger Zainab al-Khawaja freed on bail' 2011, *BBC News*, 21 December <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16283557> - Accessed 8 February 2012

⁵⁵ Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights 2012, *Members of the BYSHR are subjected to harassment and the President received death threats*, 30 January <http://byshr.org/?p=922> - Accessed 8 February 2012

was subjected to harassment and interrogation by security forces at the Bahrain International Airport.⁵⁶ Additionally, BYSHR reports that on 1 January 2012 Mr Ahmed Abbas, human rights activist and member of BYSHR, was arrested and subjected to ill-treatment.⁵⁷ According to the organisation, the authorities had previously tried to arrest Mr Abbas in November and December 2011 in relation to the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations in the village of Nuwaidrat.⁵⁸

On 6 January 2012 Nabeel Rajab, prominent human rights activist and head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), was beaten by security forces after a protest march.⁵⁹ According to BCHR, Nabeel Rajab suffered serious facial injuries and was taken to hospital, where he was interrogated by security forces.⁶⁰ In addition, former opposition MP Matar Matar reportedly told *Agence France Presse* that another activist, Yosuf al-Mahafdh, was also targeted in the incident.⁶¹ In an interview with Amnesty International, Rajab stated that the beating came to an end when a senior officer recognised him and intervened.⁶² The United States called on Bahrain to investigate Rajab's assault noting that they were 'deeply concerned by continuing incidents of violence in Bahrain between police and demonstrators'.⁶³

On 25 January 2012 *Associated Press* reported the death in custody of a protester who had been detained during recent clashes. The Interior Ministry reportedly issued a statement noting that public prosecutors would investigate the death. According to *Associated Press*, the statement from the Interior Ministry said that the detainee had been accused of 'vandalism' during a protest.⁶⁴

On 26 January 2012 Amnesty International criticised the Bahraini authorities for inappropriately using tear gas against protesters.⁶⁵ The report noted that more than a dozen protesters had died since February 2011 as a result of tear gas, 'with a rise in such deaths in

⁵⁶ Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights 2012, *Members of the BYSHR are subjected to harassment and the President received death threats*, 30 January <http://byshr.org/?p=922> - Accessed 8 February 2012

⁵⁷ Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights 2012, *Urgent Appeal: Member of Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights at risk*, 29 January <http://byshr.org/?p=918> - Accessed 8 February 2012

⁵⁸ Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights 2012, *Urgent Appeal: Member of Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights at risk*, 29 January <http://byshr.org/?p=918> - Accessed 8 February 2012

⁵⁹ 'Bahrain activist Nabeel Rajab 'beaten by police' 2012, *BBC News*, 6 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16452260> - Accessed 6 February 2012; 'Leading Bahrain activist beaten during protest rally' 2012, *Arabian Business*, source: *Reuters*, 8 January <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/leading-bahrain-activist-beaten-during-protest-rally-439122.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶⁰ 'Bahrain activist Nabeel Rajab 'beaten by police' 2012, *BBC News*, 6 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16452260> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶¹ 'Bahrain activist Nabeel Rajab 'beaten by police' 2012, *BBC News*, 6 January <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16452260> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶² Amnesty International 2012, *Bahrain: Leading human rights activist describes riot police attack*, 9 January <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/bahrain-leading-human-rights-activist-describes-riot-police-attack-2012-01-09> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶³ 'Leading Bahrain activist beaten during protest rally' 2012, *Arabian Business*, source: *Reuters*, 8 January <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/leading-bahrain-activist-beaten-during-protest-rally-439122.html> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶⁴ 'Protester in Bahrain Dies After Arrest' 2012, *ABC News*, source: *Associated Press*, 25 January <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bahrain-police-fire-tear-gas-rally-capital-15438138> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶⁵ Amnesty International 2012, *Bahrain's use of tear gas against protesters increasingly deadly*, 26 January <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/bahrain-s-use-tear-gas-against-protesters-increasingly-deadly-2012-01-26> - Accessed 6 February 2012

recent months'.⁶⁶ Security forces reportedly threw tear gas canisters into people's homes, including the home of Bahraini lawyer Fatima Khudair, although the report does not indicate whether the victims of such attacks were known to the authorities.⁶⁷ On 27 January 2012 CNN reported that four people had been killed in anti-government protests.⁶⁸

On 30 January 2012 BYSHR reported that more than 70 demonstrators had been arrested 'in recent weeks'.⁶⁹ It is BYSHR's view that the arrests are part of a 'proactive security crackdown' in the lead up to the one year anniversary of the Bahraini uprising on 14 February 2012.⁷⁰

4. What is the typical profile of those targeted by the authorities for arrest, detention and mistreatment? Have family members of opposition figures and participants in demonstrations been targeted by the authorities?

In response to the 2011 protests the Bahraini authorities targeted persons suspected of participating in or supporting the demonstrations. Sources report that this included specific groups or professions, such as doctors, teachers, students, leaders of recognised opposition groups, journalists, athletes and human rights defenders. Some reports suggest that Shias in general may have been targeted purely due to membership of their religious sect. Many of those arrested have been held incommunicado and there have been reports of torture and ill-treatment while in detention. Additionally, government agencies, other official bodies and private companies in which the state held a substantial interest dismissed more than 2,500 employees, reportedly for their suspected involvement in the protests. Sources report that some family members of detainees have been assaulted or threatened.

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) *World Report 2012* states that, since mid-March 2011 security forces have arrested over 1,600 people who participated in, or were suspected of supporting, the anti-government demonstrations. The organisation reports that those held 'include doctors, teachers, students, athletes, a prominent defence lawyer, and leaders of legally recognized opposition political societies'.⁷¹ According to HRW, authorities held most detainees in incommunicado detention for weeks, in some cases months.⁷²

⁶⁶ Amnesty International 2012, *Bahrain's use of tear gas against protesters increasingly deadly*, 26 January <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/bahrain-s-use-tear-gas-against-protesters-increasingly-deadly-2012-01-26> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶⁷ Amnesty International 2012, *Bahrain's use of tear gas against protesters increasingly deadly*, 26 January <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/bahrain-s-use-tear-gas-against-protesters-increasingly-deadly-2012-01-26> - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶⁸ '4 killed in protests in Bahrain, opposition groups says' 2012, CNN, 27 January http://articles.cnn.com/2012-01-27/middleeast/world_meast_bahrain-unrest_1_bahrain-center-bahraini-police-wefaq?_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST - Accessed 6 February 2012

⁶⁹ Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights 2012, *Bahrain: a crackdown on demonstrators in the first anniversary of the Feb. 14 protests*, 30 January <http://byshr.org/?p=922> - Accessed 8 February 2012

⁷⁰ Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights 2012, *Bahrain: a crackdown on demonstrators in the first anniversary of the Feb. 14 protests*, 30 January <http://byshr.org/?p=922> - Accessed 8 February 2012

⁷¹ Matar Ibrahim Matar and Jawad Fairouz, who represented Al Wefaq, the largest opposition bloc in parliament before its members resigned in protest in February, were seized on 2 May 2011. Authorities released Matar and Fairouz in August but they still face charges related to their political activities. Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.2 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf - Accessed 27 January 2012

⁷² Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.2 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf - Accessed 27 January 2012

An October 2011 article from *AlJazeera* reported that ‘teachers, professors, politicians, doctors, athletes, students and others have all appeared in Bahrain’s military courts’. The article notes that, in just two weeks, 208 people were sentenced or lost appeals, leading to a cumulative total of just less than 2,500 years in prison.⁷³

Shias

On 21 April 2011 Amnesty International (AI) reported that more than 500 people had been arrested over the last month, the ‘overwhelming majority’ being Shi’a Muslims who were active during the protests.⁷⁴ According to AI, as the military and security forces took control of the Pearl Roundabout, the Financial Harbour and the SMC ‘they launched a clearly planned and orchestrated crackdown on the Shi’a political and community leaders and activists who had been prominent in leading the protests and who had spoken out publicly criticizing members of the royal family and calling for a change of government...’. In addition, AI reported that military or police checkpoints had been set up at the entry and exit points of predominantly Shi’a villages and towns.⁷⁵

Some reports suggest that Bahraini authorities have targeted Shias in general, not just those suspected of involvement in the protests. An article published by the *Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)* on 23 March 2011 reported that authorities were stopping people at checkpoints and asking them if they were Muslim or Rafithi – a derogatory term for Shia. According to the report, ‘people feel like they have to lie about their background and maybe even their name to be safe and to be allowed to pass’.⁷⁶ Saudi soldiers reportedly ‘treated them like they were not human because they are Shia, and that they were cursed for being Shia while being beaten up’.⁷⁷

On 6 April 2011 the *New York Times* reported the funeral march of Sayed Hameed Sayed Mahfood, a 60-year-old plumber who was found dead in a garbage bag. The article states that members of Mahfood’s family insisted that he had never been involved in politics. ‘Maybe they killed him because he is Shiite, no other reason’, the man’s cousin reportedly posited.⁷⁸

A *Reuters* article published 9 May 2011 states that Bahrain ‘has pursued a punitive campaign that appears to target Shi’ites in general, not just the advocates of more political freedoms, a constitutional monarchy and an end to sectarian discrimination’.⁷⁹ Similarly, an *AlJazeera* report published 19 October 2011 states that while many of those imprisoned took part in

⁷³ ‘Two weeks in Bahrain’s military courts’ 2011, *AlJazeera*, 19 October (CISNET Bahrain CX274733)

⁷⁴ Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p4
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁷⁵ Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p3
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁷⁶ Al-Khawaja, Zainab 2011, ‘Protesters reject Sunni-Shia split claims’, *Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)*, 23 March (CISNET Bahrain CX265640)

⁷⁷ Al-Khawaja, Zainab 2011, ‘Protesters reject Sunni-Shia split claims’, *Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR)*, 23 March (CISNET Bahrain CX265640)

⁷⁸ Krauss, Clifford 2011, ‘Bahrain’s rulers tighten their grip on battered opposition’, *The New York Times*, 6 April (CISNET Bahrain CX271479)

⁷⁹ Lyon, Alistair 2011, ‘Analysis: West turns blind eye to Bahrain crackdown’, *Reuters*, 9 May
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/09/us-bahrain-repression-idUSTRE7481VM20110509> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX265547)

massive pro-democracy protests earlier this year, ‘others, families say, were in the wrong place at the wrong time and were targeted by virtue of their religious sect’.⁸⁰

Destruction of Shiite places of worship

Sources report that, in the wake of the 2011 protests, the government demolished dozens of Shi’ite places of worship.⁸¹ The authorities reportedly deemed the structures illegal.⁸² An article in the *Terrorism Monitor* notes that representatives of Bahrain’s ruler, King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, issued ‘thinly justified decrees’ that the sites are being destroyed ‘regardless of any doctrine’.⁸³ The BICI investigated the destruction of the sites that took place between 1 March 2011 and 11 May 2011. The BICI received reports that 53 religious structures were demolished during or in consequence of the events that occurred in Bahrain in February and March 2011.⁸⁴ The BICI inspected 30 places of worship and found that only five of them had both the requisite royal deed and building permit; the other sites were in violation of Royal Decree Law No. 19 of 2002.⁸⁵ The BICI report states that the Government of Bahrain’s (GoB) decision to demolish the structures was based on information received by the Ministry of Interior that ‘these places were used as a staging point for attacks against police forces and for the manufacture and storage of weapons such as Molotov cocktails’.⁸⁶ However the BICI noted ‘with concern’ the timing of the demolitions and their connection with the events of February and March 2011. According to the BICI:

... the GoB must have been aware of the construction of these structures and that they lacked proper legal permits and did not conform to building regulations. Nonetheless, the GoB had not stopped the construction of these structures nor taken action to remove them for a number of years. The Government should have realised that under the circumstances, in particular the timing, the manner in which demolitions were conducted and the fact that these were primarily Shia religious structures, the demolitions would be perceived as a collective punishment and would therefore inflame the tension between the GoB and the Shia population.⁸⁷

Whilst Shias appear to have been targeted following the 2011 protests, Sunnis perceived to be supporting the protest movement have also been arrested. HRW reports that Ibrahim Sharif, a

⁸⁰ ‘Two weeks in Bahrain’s military courts’ 2011, *AlJazeera*, 19 October (CISNET Bahrain CX274733)

⁸¹ Hammond, Andrew 2011, ‘Feature: Bahrain Shi’ites talk of abuse under martial law’, *Reuters*, 1 June <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/01/bahrain-abuse-idUSLDE74Q14020110601> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX266076)

⁸² Lyon, Alistair 2011, ‘Analysis: West turns blind eye to Bahrain crackdown’, *Reuters*, 9 May <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/09/us-bahrain-repression-idUSTRE7481VM20110509> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX265547)

⁸³ The article posits that the bulldozing of the Shi’a centers, some of them ancient, may be due to the growth of intolerant Wahhabi values in the Sunni-run security forces. These security forces have become stocked with recruits from Sunni communities in Pakistan and from poorer regions of the Sunni Arab world. The article also states that another possible driver may be an opportunistic attempt by descendants of Sunni settlers to erase the history of the island’s indigenous Shi’a communities, which long predate the al-Khalifa dynasty established in 1783. See: Flood, Derek Henry 2011, ‘The island at the center of the world: the silencing of Bahrain’s crisis’, *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 9, Issue. 19

http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37921&tx_ttnews%20%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=b82d113e6d6cd8d4b2cec2048fa4a042 – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX264726)

⁸⁴ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.329 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁸⁵ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.329 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁸⁶ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.329 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁸⁷ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.329 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

Sunni who heads the secularist National Democratic Action Society, was one of the first arrested in a pre-dawn raid on 17 March 2011.⁸⁸ A January 2012 report from *MERIP* states that, at the height of demonstrations, ‘the late Pearl Roundabout played host to a number of Sunni personalities who appealed to their co-religionists to join the protest movement’. However, the article notes that these attempts to bridge the sectarian-cum-political divide never gained traction’. Moreover, *MERIP* reports that even the outside chance of cross-sectarian coordination ‘was enough to elicit a furious government effort to brand the uprising an Iranian conspiracy – and to ostracize and punish any Sunni who dared to join it’.⁸⁹

Doctors and other health care staff

Since the outbreak of anti-government protests in February 2011, HRW documented ‘restrictions on the provision of emergency care at temporary health posts, sieges at hospitals and clinics by security forces, arrests and beatings of people with protest-related injuries, and arrests of doctors and other health care staff who had criticized these actions’.⁹⁰ The HRW *World Report 2012* states:

Hospital staff and protesters being treated for injuries inside the [Salmaniya] hospital were subjected to harassment, beatings that sometimes rose to the level of torture, and arrest. Security forces also raided health care facilities elsewhere, where they interrogated and arrested medical staff.⁹¹

Similarly, AI reported that the government detained several medical doctors and nurses, mainly from the SMC. According to AI ‘the exact reasons for their arrest are not known but they appear to have been targeted for allegedly supporting the protests and the protestors who had camped in the car park of the medical complex’.⁹²

A *Reuters* report published 9 April 2011 quotes a representative from Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), a U.S.-based group that campaigns for medical staff working in crisis zones, who claimed that, during the crackdown on the protests, ‘police and soldiers entered operating theatres and a number of doctors at the hospital had disappeared’. According to PHR, police forces still tightly controlled the SMC and continued to harass patients and staff.⁹³ Government officials reportedly claimed that ‘the Salmaniya hospital had been overrun with political activities directed against the government’.⁹⁴ Another *Reuters* article published on 1 June 2011 reported that state media accused doctors of ‘storing weapons in a

⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.2

http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁸⁹ Gengler, Justin 2012, Bahrain’s Sunni awakening, *Middle East Report Online (MERIP)*, 17 January (CISNET Bahrain CX280200)

⁹⁰ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.4

http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁹¹ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.4

http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁹² Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p5

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

⁹³ Richter, Frederik 2011, ‘Bahrain human rights activist “arrested, beaten up”’, *Reuters*, 9 April

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/09/us-bahrain-idUSTRE7382WW20110409> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX265566)

⁹⁴ Richter, Frederik 2011, ‘Bahrain human rights activist “arrested, beaten up”’, *Reuters*, 9 April

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/09/us-bahrain-idUSTRE7382WW20110409> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX265566)

nearby hospital during the protests, using ambulances to transfer weapons and stealing government medicines to run a makeshift health centre at Pearl Roundabout'.⁹⁵

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders reports that on 4 April 2011 the President of the Bahrain Nursing Society (BNS), who treated victims injured during the demonstrations, was summoned to the Adliya Criminal Investigation Department. According to the report, she was then arrested by security forces and held incommunicado.⁹⁶

On 29 September 2011, the Bahrain National Safety Court sentenced 20 doctors and medical workers who provided medical assistance to demonstrators to heavy prison sentences ranging from five to 15 years.⁹⁷ According to the International Federation for Human Rights, the medical staff had been charged with possession of unlicensed weapons, occupying Salmaniya Medical Complex, calling for the overthrow of the regime, seizing medical equipment and spreading false information.⁹⁸

Journalists and Human Rights Defenders

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OPHRD) *Annual Report 2011* states that, since the start of the protest movement 'more than 68 journalists have been the target of acts of intimidation and harassment due to their coverage of the peaceful demonstrations'.⁹⁹ According to the OPHRD, demonstrators and defenders who documented, denounced or bore witness to the repression of the demonstrations of February and March 2011, 'were subjected to arbitrary arrests, threats and intimidation, and even acts of torture that caused the death of one of them'.¹⁰⁰ On 9 April 2011, Mr. Zakariya Rashid Hassan, a blogger and moderator of the al-Dair village forum, who denounced human rights violations against the inhabitants of the village, died in detention following his arrest. According to OPHRD, Hassan was arrested for 'incitement to hatred', 'spreading false information' and 'attempting to overthrow the Government'. His body reportedly bore traces of torture and ill-treatment.¹⁰¹

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) reports that on 28 September 2011, 14 opposition leaders and human rights defenders were sentenced in appeal to heavy prison terms, including life imprisonment.¹⁰²

Teachers

⁹⁵ Hammond, Andrew 2011, 'Feature: Bahrain Shi'ites talk of abuse under martial law', *Reuters*, 1 June <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/01/bahrain-abuse-idUSLDE74Q14020110601> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX266076)

⁹⁶ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October, p.526

⁹⁷ International Federation for Human Rights 2011, Series of harsh, disproportionate and unfair sentences against professionals for standing by human rights victims, 30 September (CISNET Bahrain CX275362)

⁹⁸ International Federation for Human Rights 2011, Series of harsh, disproportionate and unfair sentences against professionals for standing by human rights victims, 30 September (CISNET Bahrain CX275362)

⁹⁹ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October

¹⁰⁰ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October

¹⁰¹ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October, p.525

¹⁰² International Federation for Human Rights 2011, *Series of harsh, disproportionate and unfair sentences against professionals for standing by human rights victims*, 30 September (CISNET Bahrain CX275362)

On 1 June 2011 *Reuters* reported that a teacher in Hamad Town and 25 colleagues had been taken out of their school the previous week by female police who had arrived in two buses. According to one teacher, the police asked them if they went to the roundabout [Pearl/GCC], and whether they wanted to bring down the government. The police reportedly threatened the teachers with sexual abuse, made them sing the national anthem and state their allegiance to Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman.¹⁰³

On 25 September 2011 the President and Vice-President of the Teachers' Association of Bahrain were sentenced to ten and three years in prison respectively on charges of 'disrupting schooling', 'broadcasting false news' and 'threatening national security'. According to FIDH, the pair had expressed solidarity with the popular protest movement in Bahrain and denounced human rights violations committed during its repression.¹⁰⁴

The dismissal of employees, students and union members

The HRW *World Report 2012* states that, according to the General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions, government ministries, other official bodies, and private companies in which the state held a substantial interest dismissed more than 2,500 employees in the first half of 2011.¹⁰⁵ In most cases the stated reason for dismissal was absence from work during and immediately after street protests, however HRW reports that 'the dismissals appear to have been arbitrary and carried out in violation of Bahraini law'.¹⁰⁶

AI reported in April 2011 that 'hundreds of people who joined the protests have been dismissed from their employment in government service, state institutions and private companies, including university lecturers, school teachers and medical doctors and nurses'. Additionally, many workers were not paid in March. According to AI:

... the justification put forward for these dismissals is generally that employees had breached their terms of employment by joining the protests but, in practice, it appears that the government is seeking to send a clear signal that there will be adverse consequences for those who continue to take to the streets to demand change, including for their and their families' livelihoods.¹⁰⁷

On 19 April 2011 the Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reported that the University of Bahrain had dismissed 200 students, academics, and other employees in connection with protests and clashes on the campus in March.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, scores of university students reportedly lost government-sponsored scholarships.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Hammond, Andrew 2011, 'Feature: Bahrain Shi'ites talk of abuse under martial law', *Reuters*, 1 June <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/01/bahrain-abuse-idUSLDE74Q14020110601> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX266076)

¹⁰⁴ International Federation for Human Rights 2011, *Series of harsh, disproportionate and unfair sentences against professionals for standing by human rights victims*, 30 September (CISNET Bahrain CX275362)

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.5 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.5 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p7 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.5 http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁰⁹ Krauss, Clifford 2011, 'Bahrain's rulers tighten their grip on battered opposition', *The New York Times*, 6 April (CISNET Bahrain CX271479)

The OPHRD noted that union members were the target of arrests, threats and acts of intimidation because of their denunciation of the repression of the protest movement.¹¹⁰ On 29 and 30 March 2011, five board members of the Bahrain Teachers' Society (BTS) were arrested without a warrant by members of the security forces, 'for having called an indefinite strike on March 13, 2011 to protest against the brutal expulsion of demonstrators who had gathered on the same day near the commercial port of Bahrain'.¹¹¹ According to OPHRD, the board members were held incommunicado and given no information concerning the charges brought against them.¹¹²

Similarly, Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Abdullah Hussein, one of the founders of the Bahrain Union Movement and President of the Bahrain Petroleum Company Union, was dismissed from his job on 31 March 2011 for having 'called for workers to take part in the general strike'.¹¹³ Additionally, on 6 April 2011, the Ministry of Development and Social Affairs published a decree ordering the dissolution of the BTS and the board of the Bahrain Medical Society (BMS). The Ministry of Health also suspended 30 doctors and nurses, whose files were transmitted to an "investigating committee" set up by the Ministry, whose mandate is to 'investigate medical personnel who treated victims injured during the demonstrations'.¹¹⁴

On 22 December 2011 the *Kuwait Times* reported that dozens of Bahraini Shiite employees fired over pro-democracy protests had rallied the previous day demanding a return to work, a day after authorities said 181 would be reinstated.¹¹⁵

Targeting of family members

Some sources report that security forces have assaulted or threatened the family members of those they suspect of involvement in the protests. This has reportedly occurred both at the time of arrest and also during other encounters. According to AI, when people were arrested they were often taken at night, 'by groups of police and security forces who wore masks, failed to produce arrest warrants and sometimes assaulted those they wished to detain and members of their families'.¹¹⁶

On 9 April 2011 *Reuters* reported that Bahraini authorities had arrested and beaten a prominent human rights activist and members of his family.¹¹⁷

On 14 April 2011 the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* reported on a Shia funeral for 'one of the several detainees to die in police custody'. Accused of trying to run over a

¹¹⁰ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October

¹¹¹ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October

¹¹² Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October

¹¹³ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October

¹¹⁴ Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2011, *Steadfast in protest: Annual Report 2011*, October, p.526

¹¹⁵ 'Fired Bahrain Shiites want their jobs back' 2012, *Kuwait Times*, 22 December (CISNET Bahrain CX278984)

¹¹⁶ Amnesty International 2011, *Briefing paper – Bahrain: A human rights crisis*, 21 April, p1

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE11/019/2011/en/40555429-a803-42da-a68d-0f016b908580/mde110192011en.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹¹⁷ Richter, Frederik 2011, 'Bahrain human rights activist "arrested, beaten up"', *Reuters*, 9 April <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/09/us-bahrain-idUSTRE7382WW20110409> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX265566)

policeman during a protest, Ali Isa al-Saqer reportedly handed himself over to police after his family said they were threatened.¹¹⁸

On 22 June 2011 human rights activist and protest leader Dr Abdul Jalil Singace was sentenced to life imprisonment (25 years).¹¹⁹ After his arrest, Abdul Jalil's 28-year-old son, Hussein, and his wife reportedly moved into the family home. According to *AlJazeera*, one week after his father's arrest, police again raided the house in the middle of the night and arrested Hussein. On 6 October 2011, the final day of military courts, Hussein was sentenced to seven years in prison.¹²⁰

5. What is the current situation of and the attitude of the authorities towards Shi'as in Bahrain? Is the Shi'a population in general at risk of harm because the authorities have imputed all Shi'as with anti-government opinion?

Question three provides information concerning the current situation in Bahrain in relation to opposition protests. Sources note that some opposition leaders remain in prison in connection with the February and March 2011 protests. The vast majority of those arrested in relation to those protests were Shia (see question four). Protests have continued in 2012. Sources report that human rights activists and demonstrators have been arrested and ill-treated in these later demonstrations. Sources report that Shias face formal discrimination including in regards to political representation and employment.

Question four provides information concerning the treatment of Shias following the February and March 2011 protests. As discussed, there were reports that Bahraini authorities targeted Shias in general, not just the advocates of more political freedoms and an end to sectarian discrimination. This suggests that in the period following the protests, the Shia population was at heightened risk with the authorities potentially imputing Shias with anti-government opinion. Reports also suggest that the authorities may have imputed some Shias with pro-Iranian opinion. No other reports were located concerning the current attitude of the authorities towards Shias in Bahrain.

Imputed political opinion

Sources suggest that, following the February and March 2011 protests, security forces targeted the Shia community in general, not just the advocates of more political freedoms.¹²¹ In addition, the GoB demolished Shiite places of worship claiming they were used as staging points for attacks against police forces and for the manufacture and storage of weapons. The BICI noted that the destruction of the sites would inevitably be perceived by Shias as 'a collective punishment'.¹²² Such conduct on the part of the authorities may indicate that Shias in Bahrain were at heightened risk following the revolution and were potentially imputed with anti-government opinion.

An article published by the *Jamestown Foundation* reports that Bahrain's Shia population has suffered under widespread institutional discrimination by the pro-monarchy Sunni rulers 'who

¹¹⁸ 'Bahrain's security clampdown divides kingdom' 2011, *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, 14 April (CISNET Bahrain CX263961)

¹¹⁹ 'Two weeks in Bahrain's military courts' 2011, *AlJazeera*, 19 October (CISNET Bahrain CX274733)

¹²⁰ 'Two weeks in Bahrain's military courts' 2011, *AlJazeera*, 19 October (CISNET Bahrain CX274733)

¹²¹ See question four.

¹²² Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.329 <http://files.bici.org/bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

perceive them as Iranian loyalists'.¹²³ According to the article, the GoB aimed to describe the 2011 protests as 'an Iranian-instigated rebellion'.¹²⁴ The BICI report noted that the GoB and many Sunnis 'have continuously expressed concern at calls by some politically active Shia religious figures, community leaders and groups to replace the existing political order with an Islamic State based on the Wilayat al Faqih system analogous to the Islamic Republic of Iran'.¹²⁵ On 1 June 2011 *Reuters* reported that police had harassed teachers in Hamad town, accusing them of partaking in the protests. The police reportedly accused them of being Iranian loyalists saying "your loyalty is to Iran, let Iran take care of you".¹²⁶

Discrimination

Sources report that Shias' social standing and access to political power is limited on the basis of confessional affiliation.¹²⁷ According to the ICG, 'the reality of formal and informal discrimination [of Shias] is hard to contest'.¹²⁸ Examples of discrimination include: the gerrymandering of parliamentary electoral districts to ensure Sunni representation; granting citizenship to Sunnis from around the region to mitigate Shiite dominance; the recruitment of Jordanians, Syrians and Yemenis by the security services (provoking anger from locals who consider them mercenaries); and the exclusion of Shias from the state-controlled public sector, particularly at the heights of power and in the most sensitive sectors, like the BDF and the Interior Ministry. According to the ICG, 'almost all Bahrainis concede the existence of discrimination in the various security services, from which Shiites have been systematically excluded at least since the Iranian Revolution'.¹²⁹ Additionally, the ICG notes that levels of unemployment and underemployment are disproportionately high among Shiites.¹³⁰

Additionally, while Islamic studies are mandatory in all public schools, the current curriculum is based solely on the Maliki school of Sunni Islam.¹³¹ According to the BICI report, proposals to include units on Ja'afari jurisprudence have yet to materialise.¹³² However, the

¹²³ Rahimi, Babak 2011, 'Special commentary: Iran and the Bahraini uprising', *Jamestown Foundation*, 8 March <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d7756a32.html>, – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX261009)

¹²⁴ Rahimi, Babak 2011, 'Special commentary: Iran and the Bahraini uprising', *Jamestown Foundation*, 8 March <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d7756a32.html>, – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX261009)

¹²⁵ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.23-4 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹²⁶ Hammond, Andrew 2011, 'Feature: Bahrain Shi'ites talk of abuse under martial law', *Reuters*, 1 June <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/01/bahrain-abuse-idUSLDE74Q14020110601> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CX266076)

¹²⁷ Gengler, Justin 2012, Bahrain's Sunni awakening, *Middle East Report Online (MERIP)*, 17 January (CISNET Bahrain CX280200)

¹²⁸ International Crisis Group 2011, *Popular protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain revolt*, 6 April, p.4-5 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/bahrain/105-popular-protests-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-iii-the-bahrain-revolt.aspx> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CIS 20466)

¹²⁹ International Crisis Group 2011, *Popular protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain revolt*, 6 April, p.4-5 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/bahrain/105-popular-protests-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-iii-the-bahrain-revolt.aspx> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CIS 20466)

¹³⁰ International Crisis Group 2011, *Popular protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain revolt*, 6 April, p.4-5 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/bahrain/105-popular-protests-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-iii-the-bahrain-revolt.aspx> – Accessed 27 January 2012 (CISNET Bahrain CIS 20466)

¹³¹ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.24-5 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹³² Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.24-5 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

observance of Shia holidays and public celebrations is allowed in Bahrain. Some Shia complain that approvals to construct new mosques are not granted as readily as Sunni mosques, while the GoB contends that the number of existing Shia mosques and shrines surpasses that of Sunni places of worship in the country.¹³³

6. Please provide information on protests in support of the 2011 Bahraini uprising in Australia, particularly in Sydney and Brisbane.

Protests have been held in Australia in solidarity with the Bahraini protesters, according to a number of news article as well as blogs and other websites. Reports of protests include the following:

On Sunday 27 February 2011 *Press TV* reported that a demonstration was held in Sydney in solidarity with the Bahrain uprising. According to the *Press TV* report, which includes a video of the demonstration, hundreds of people attended the rally.¹³⁴

A rally was held in Brisbane on Friday 18 March 2011 from 5-7pm, according to *Independent Media Centre Australia*. The rally, which was held in Brisbane Square, top of Queen Street mall, was organised by Brisbane's Bahraini community.¹³⁵ A *Youtube* video uploaded by AwamiaTV purports to show the Brisbane protest of 18 March 2011.¹³⁶

A rally was held in support of the Bahraini uprising on Tuesday 22 March 2011 in Hyde Park, Sydney from 11.30am – 2pm. According to the Islamic Human Rights Commission, the rally was part of a worldwide series of marches held in late March in support of the Bahrain uprising.¹³⁷ A video uploaded on *Youtube* on 22 March 2011 depicts a reasonably large and well-organised protest in Hyde Park, Sydney in support of the Bahrain uprising.¹³⁸

On 8 September 2011 *Global Voices Online*, an international network of bloggers, reported that Australian doctors and Bahraini medical doctors in Australia had been staging a hunger strike in front of the American Embassy in Sydney to demand the release of doctors in Bahrain.¹³⁹ On 9 September 2011 *Islam Times* also reported the hunger strike at the American Embassy in Sydney noting it had entered its third day. The article also reports that a similar protest was being held at the 'UN headquarters' in Canberra.¹⁴⁰

No other (verifiable) reports were located.

¹³³ Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.24-5 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICIreportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹³⁴ Charida, Rihab 2011, 'Demo in Sydney in solidarity with Bahrain uprising', *Press TV*, 27 February <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/167338.html> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹³⁵ Independent Media Centre Australia 2011, 'Brisbane solidarity rally with Bahrain', 16 March <http://indymedia.org.au/brisbane-solidarity-rally-with-bahrain> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹³⁶ 'Bahrain protest in Australia – Brisbane 18_03_2011' 2011, 31 March *Youtube*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWeOpYcIN68> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹³⁷ Islamic Human Rights Commission 2011, 'Forwarded Alert: Worldwide: Marches around the world in support of the Bahraini people', 22 March <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/alerts/9622-forwarded-alert-worldwide-marches-around-the-world-in-support-of-the-bahraini-people> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹³⁸ 'Sydney protest on Bahrain (pt.1)' 2011, *Youtube*, 22 March <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v68xPRMoXE> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹³⁹ Kareem, Mona 2011, 'Bahrain: Medical staff released after hunger strike', *Global Voices Online*, 8 September <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/09/08/bahrain-medical-staff-released-after-hunger-strike/> – Accessed 30 January 2012

¹⁴⁰ 'Bahraini activists protesting in Sydney and Canberra' 2011, *Islam Times*, 9 September <http://www.islamtimes.org/vdci5wa3.t1ayr2lict.html> – Accessed 30 January 2012

7. Is there any information to suggest that Bahrainis who have participated in protests in Australia are at risk of facing harm if they were to return to Bahrain? Is there any information to suggest their family members in Bahrain have been targeted?

No reports were located of Bahrainis who have participated in protests abroad facing harm upon their return to Bahrain. A number of Bahraini students studying abroad had their scholarships revoked for participating in protests. These scholarships have reportedly been reinstated. A news source reported that Bahrainis studying in the United Kingdom were required to sign loyalty pledges and vow that they would not compromise Bahrain's image by participating in protests abroad. They were also reportedly ordered to inform on fellow Bahrainis who were not 'fulfilling their loyalty'. According to the article, some Bahrainis alleged that family members of expats who had been pictured at a pro-democracy protest in England had been harassed.

The BICI reported that, beginning in February 2011, 97 Bahraini students studying at universities abroad had their scholarships revoked. According to the Human Rights Watch *World Report 2012* on 25 May 2011, the Education Minister Majid al-Nuaimi reportedly confirmed that some students in Bahrain and abroad who participated in anti-government protests lost their government scholarships.¹⁴¹ The BICI report states that on 27 May 2011 the Ministry of Education reinstated all of the revoked scholarships.¹⁴²

On 1 July 2011 *MSNBC* reported that Bahrainis studying in the United Kingdom had been 'ordered to spy on their countrymen in the wake of the deadly crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators'.¹⁴³ Documents containing "loyalty pledges" were reportedly sent to Bahraini students who receive funding to study abroad. The students were required to vow that they would not compromise Bahrain's reputation 'through the use of social media, public demonstrations or any other manner'.¹⁴⁴ The document, a copy of which was reportedly obtained by *MSNBC*, also states that recipients had a duty to report other students who were not 'fulfilling their loyalty'.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, according to *MSNBC*, the Bahrainis alleged that the families of some expats who were pictured at a pro-democracy protest in England had been harassed.¹⁴⁶

Article 134 of the Penal Code restricts freedom of expression abroad. The Article states:

A punishment of imprisonment for a period of no less than 3 months and a fine of no less than BD100, or either penalty, shall be imposed upon any citizen who has attended abroad in whatever capacity and without authorisation from the Government, any conference, public meeting or

¹⁴¹ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report: Bahrain*, 22 January, p.5

http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/bahrain_2012.pdf – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁴² Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry 2011, *Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry*, 23 November, p.357 <http://files.bici.org.bh/BICReportEN.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2012

¹⁴³ Bruton, Brinley. F 2011, 'Bahrain to citizens living abroad: Spy on countrymen, no protests permitted', *MSNBC*, 1 July http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43590958/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/bahrain-citizens-living-abroad-spy-countrymen-no-protests-permitted/ - Accessed 8 February 2012

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¹⁴⁶ Bruton, Brinley. F 2011, 'Bahrain to citizens living abroad: Spy on countrymen, no protests permitted', *MSNBC*, 1 July http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43590958/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/bahrain-citizens-living-abroad-spy-countrymen-no-protests-permitted/ - Accessed 8 February 2012

seminar or has participated in any manner whatsoever in the deliberations thereof with the intent of discussing political, social or economic conditions in Bahrain or in any other state so as to weaken financial confidence in Bahrain or undermine its prestige or standing or to worsen political relations between Bahrain and these countries...¹⁴⁷

According to the BICI, the Government of Bahrain has proposed amendments to the Penal Code to enhance freedom of expression, including removing Article 134.¹⁴⁸

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