

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: BHR32705
Country: Bahrain
Date: 3 December 2007

Keywords: Bahrain – Demonstrations – Al Qal’a prison – Opposition political groups

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Questions

- 1. Please provide any information on demonstrations in June 1996 or on 15 April 2007 where people were arrested.**
- 2. Please provide any information on the Al Kalaa (Al Qal’a) prison and on its staffing.**
- 3. What is known about a group or organisation called “the United Quaternity” and its constituent organisations?**
- 4. Was there a large demonstration at Al Saif in Al Manama in 2002?**

RESPONSE

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- 4. Was there a large demonstration at Al Saif in Al Manama in 2002?**

The above four questions were emailed to Mr Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), on 30 November 2007 (RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja: ‘RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia’, 30 November – Attachment 1).

On 2 December 2007 Mr Al-Khawaja provided the following response:

I response to your message dated 30 November 2007, I would like to state the following:

1. In regard to demonstrations in June 1996, we do not keep a detailed record, however, I could confirm that 1996 witnessed escalation of demonstrations, arrests and arbitrary detention. That year was the peak of the wide unrest in Bahrain during 1994-1997.
2. In regard to the demonstrations in Bahrain in April 2007, I can confirm that there was demonstrations and unrest in deferent parts of Bahrain including April 15th, including in Demistan and Karzakkan, villages which are close to the Formula 1 Track. You may find more details in Alwasat daily Newspaper published on April 16th. At the following link:
http://www.alwasatnews.com/newspaper_pages/ViewDetails.aspx?news_id=40487&news_type=LOC&newspaper_date=04-16-2007
3. Al Kalaa (Al Qal'a) is the location of the Ministry of interior in the middle of the capital Manama, which consist of several blocks. It is also a place for detention and interrogation. It has various facilities including prison cells and the central medical center for detainees and prisoners. Many cases of torture and ill-treatment specially in the eighties and nineties took place in Al Qal'a.
4. The "United Quaternity" is a coalition of four opposition political societies, including Al-Wefaq National Islamic society which has 17 out of 40 seats in the current House of Representatives. The other three societies are a leftist group: the National Action Society, a pan-Arab: the National Democratic Gathering and the Islamic Action Society. The four societies formed the coalition as a reaction to the controversial 2002 constitution declared by the then new ruler.
5. Yes there was a large demonstration at Al Saif in Al Manama in late 2002 (Al-Khawaja, A. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 2 December – Attachment 2).

Researcher note: The webpage referred to by Mr Al-Khawaja is in Arabic. This has been accessed and is included in this response as Attachment 3 (Untranslated news article from *Al-Wasat*, dated 16 April 2007, accessed for *Research Response BHR32705* http://www.alwasatnews.com/newspaper_pages/ViewDetails.aspx?news_id=40487&news_type=LOC&newspaper_date=04-16-2007 – Accessed 3 December 2007 – Attachment 3).

List of Sources Consulted

Mr Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, President, Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR)

List of Attachments

1. RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja: 'RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 30 November.
2. Al-Khawaja, A. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 2 December.
3. Untranslated news article from *Al-Wasat*, dated 16 April 2007, accessed for *Research Response BHR32705*

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