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Date: 4 November 2015

Ms Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch

By email to mcgeehn@hrw.org and fax to +1-646-468-9348

Dear Ms Whitson

Thank you for your letter dated 22 October 2015, addressed to His Excellency the Minister.

The content of your letter addresses the offices of the Public Prosecutor, the Special Investigations Unit, the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission and the Ombudsman for this Ministry. You indicate that you have forwarded your letter to most of these institutions, and I expect that they will respond to the various allegations you have made.

Insofar as this Ministry is concerned, I have the following general but important remarks:

1. We have implemented all of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) recommendations that concern this Ministry. Reports that describe in detail our BICI implementation efforts and some other reforms are, as you are aware, published annually on the Ministry's website at www.policemc.gov.bh. It is our hope and expectation that Human Rights Watch will record in its public reporting the extensive reforms that the Ministry has already undertaken and implemented;
2. As has regrettably been the case with Human Rights Watch's reporting on Bahrain for a number of years, you appear to raise previously unreported and unverified allegations of abuse, said to be from a small number of people. The very brief description of those allegations provides scant or no detail. As in the past, I expect that the allegations will continue to remain untested in the report that you publish.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has set up new and independent mechanisms to investigate all allegations of abuse. I can only urge you to act responsibly and lodge all complaints with these institutions. You have engaged them



by way of your current letter. Why not provide them with sufficient information to enable them to conduct effective investigations? No human rights purpose is served by criticising the institutions publicly before they have had the opportunity to receive and investigate the allegations. To the contrary, by doing so, you undermine their purpose and effort to protect peoples' rights;

3. You have also made allegations in relation to the riot that broke out at Jaw Prison some months ago, where prisoners took over a large area of the prison and physically attacked prison guards and police. During that attack, 141 policemen were injured, with 2 very severely requiring hospitalization. No prisoner was severely injured; 104 prisoners sustained overwhelmingly minor injuries. Nevertheless, there followed independent investigations into the police's conduct both by the Special Investigations Unit and the Ombudsman. Pending the results of those, I do not believe that the police contravened the law;
4. You are wrong to insinuate that the Ombudsman for the Ministry of Interior is not wholly independent from this Ministry. It is, and always has been. It was established based on the advice of eminent international experts, and I believe that it continues to conform to the creation and working of similar offices around the world.

In view of these facts, and the responses that those in copy may provide, your conclusion that "the authorities have failed to tackle a culture of impunity among the security forces" is incorrect and unfounded.

I request that you publish this and all letters received from those in copy, by your very short deadline, as an addendum to your report.

Yours sincerely,

**Major-General Ibrahim Al Ghaith,
Inspector-General.**

Copies

Dr Ali Bin Fadhul Al Buainain, Attorney-General
Nawaf Abdullah Hamza, Head, Special Investigations Unit
Nawaf Al-Ma'awda, Ombudsman for the Ministry of Interior