## THE PERSECUTION OF SHIA CITIZENS IN BAHRAIN



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#### Introduction

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

The study of sectarian persecution and discrimination in Bahrain is a taunting process, given the dark patches woven into its history, staining its memory throughout the ages, eventually taking over everything else.

This report discusses the cultural and religious history of Bahrain, which was distinguished by being an urban habitat for a stable agricultural, marine, and commercial community. Sitting astride the significant shipping lane of the Arabian Gulf, as opposed to the neighboring deserts, Bahrain became a destination for immigrants flocking from different regions of the Gulf, and even beyond.

It further explores the fact that Bahrain was a haven for various religions since the ancient times, where the followers of the three religions of "Islam, Christianity and Judaism" coexisted with the adherents of other religions in harmony and love.

The report also highlights that Bahrain adopted Islam voluntarily and embraced the Shiite doctrine since antiquity, contrary to the politically-motivated attempts to promote that the existence of Shia in the country is new.

The discrimination and persecution against the majority population of the indigenous people, who belong to the Shiite sect and who are known as *Baharna*, is a consequence of the political backwardness of the governing regime and its bigoted practices and conduct, which has taken various forms throughout history. The British who placed Bahrain under their protection in 1820, tried to put an end to the religious discrimination and persecution practiced against Shiite citizens. They enacted laws that limited forced labor, discrimination, and the confiscation of properties and lands. They also replaced the lawless "Al-Fidawiya" or Shaikh's guards with police forces and courts and established relatively modern state institutions.

Bahrain's independence which was attained on August 18, 1971, was a real opportunity to create a new chapter in the relationship between the authorities and the people. The independence was declared as Iran made its claim to Bahrain through the United Nations, and regional and international countries agreed to have a referendum carried out in Bahrain through the UN Mission. The overwhelming majority of the people of Bahrain, who were mostly Shiites, confirmed their desire to have an independent state, where equal citizenship and opportunities are achieved, and where discrimination and all forms of persecution are put to an end, as the senior government officials at the time made the aforementioned guarantees.

In fact, feasible steps had been taken in this regard, such as the establishment of the country's constitution in 1973 and the National Assembly (Parliament) elections, reflecting the people's will and Bahrain's demographics in spite of the fact that the Cabinet Ministers were included in the assembly as part of the legislative authority. This experience; however, did not last for more than 18 months, as it was followed by the dissolution of the National Assembly, the abrogation of the constitution, and enforcement of the State Security Law for a prolonged period that lasted until 2001.

Another opportunity to rectify the situation loomed after the arrival of the new ruler Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa. He opened the door for a historical reconciliation and launched reforms in order to improve the deteriorating situation on all levels through the National Action Charter, for which the majority voted by 98.4% on February 14, 2001. Nonetheless, it wasn't long before a new constitution was promulgated on February 14, 2002, followed by a series of laws, amounting to 56, including an election law that practically consolidates institutionalized sectarian discrimination. Furthermore, the overlapping of authorities exacerbated persecution and discrimination in an unprecedented manner.

In light of all these circumstances, there were two serious concerns, the naturalization plan which was revealed in details in the infamous Bandar-gate report in 2006, followed by the unprecedented targeting of the Shia and opposition in Bahrain's history, after the eruption of the democratic movement in February 14, 2011.

This report provides statistics and facts, aiming at revealing nothing but the truth, since the road to the achievement of a state of equal citizenship begins with recognizing the problem that has placed Bahrain at the bottom, in comparison to other countries. Much more work is also required in order to reject and criminalize discrimination and persecution, and build a country based on both equal citizenship and opportunities.

Through this report, we claim today that Bahrain is in dire need of the help of friends, from the international community, human rights organizations and institutions to pull it out of the dark tunnel of persecution and discrimination and save it from this invasive cancer of sectarianism that have begun to destroy everything and continues to grow even bigger. We insist that help is needed since this disease has reached to advanced and unprecedented stages that directly threaten stability in Bahrain



# **1** The Definition of religious and sectarian persecution:

#### The Definition of religious and sectarian persecution:

According to the United Nations literature, religious discrimination is defined as any mistreatment of an individual or a group of individuals as a response to their religious beliefs, on three levels- physical, legal, and mental. International Human Rights Law clearly prohibits persecution through mistreatment, discrimination, contempt, incitement of hatred, and promotion of antipathy and prejudices, which inflame sectarianism and division and provoke dissension and intolerance among human beings or the people of a single nation. International Human Rights Law also regards the physical element of the crime as the acts committed against one person or a group - by the state, one of its institutions, or someone else - with the intention to disparage, demean, or express hatred against them in a way that may result in violence, discrimination and extreme hostility. In legal terms, it is any illegal behavior. However, the mental element is having a criminal intention, i.e. the will to both accomplish something and its result, as well as having a motive.



Persecution based on religious affiliations or beliefs is a crime. It is considered to be a crime against humanity because it inflicts racism and hatred which is prohibited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, pursuant to Articles (1) and (2). Article (7) of The Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute 1988) declares that persecution is categorized as a crime against humanity, which is punishable internationally. Subparagraph (h) states that: "Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court". The concept of persecution is further identified in subparagraph (g): "(Persecution) means the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity."

# **2** History of Religious Persecution in Bahrain:

#### **O** History of Religious Persecution in Bahrain:

Researchers of the history of Bahrain agree that Shiite Muslims - who make up between 60% and 70% of the total population- were continuously subjected to religious persecution since before foundation of the independent state in 1970. Historical events; however, indicate the presence of religious persecution since the tribal campaigns launched on the island in the 17th century

In spite of the diversity in the types, forms, and manifestations of religious persecution practiced by the Bahraini authorities evidently and systematically in recent years, the most prominent features of these manifestations of persecution were continuously mentioned in historical studies; none of the known methods of persecution were excluded.



Imposing a tax on the organization of Ashura processions (1869-1932)

High taxes on Shiite areas under the pretext that they did not pledge their allegiance

It is discerned through tracing the sequence of historical developments in Bahrain that persecution and discrimination against the Shia-majority population has been practiced by the authorities in Bahrain since 1783. They continued to impose a number of taxes on Shiite citizens, one of which was a tax imposed during the rule of Issa bin Ali (1869-1932) for organizing Ashura religious processions. High taxes were also imposed on Shiite areas, including the villages of A'ali, Sitra, Diraz and Bani Jamra, under the pretext that they did not pledge their allegiance and offer their services to the ruling Sheikh.

These studies determine that the discrimination between the two denominational components (Sunnis and Shiites) in employment and provincial administration continued in various forms before and after the independence. This indicates that religious discrimination has been going on for a very long time.



Bahrain's rulers from the AI Khalifa family described their entrance to Bahrain as a "conquest", calling the first Al Khalifa tribe ruler "Sheikh Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Khalifa" the conqueror (Ahmad Al-Fateh) (1782 - 1795). Historically, T\this title is usually given when Muslims conquer non-Muslim countries either peacefully or by force and convert them to Islam. Bahrain is considered one of the first countries that embraced Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, as it embraced Islam in the era of Prophet Mohammad, and this is known to have taken place in famous historical events recorded in the most prominent sources of Islamic history. Thus, the "conquest" came as a detraction of the principle of citizenship and national identity. This detraction and denial was obviously declared by the authorities in 2014 during the peak of the popular uprising that demanded democratic changes. The authorities repeatedly claimed that the ruling family brought Islam to Bahrain when it conquered it two centuries ago; which means that the country did not know Islam before they entered it and this is considered a distortion of Bahrain's history and its religious heritage.

The pages of history are rich of what proves this persecution. In the 1920s, the British Political Agent, Major Daly, submitted a report, addressing the cruel persecution the Shiite local residents suffered from. It further spoke of the corruption in the tribal administration and mismanagement of public services.

J.G. Lorimer, who relied on official British reports in his book *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, described the situation of the Shiites before 1900 by saying:

"Although Al-Baharna (a name for the Shiites) are the strongest class in terms of numbers, but they were not important politically. In fact, their situation was a little bit better than slavery";

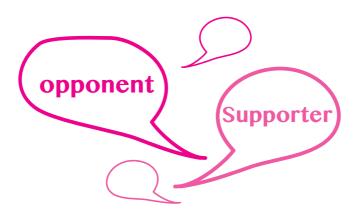
in reference to the system of forced labor which was in effect at that time.

In 1921, Shiites began to submit grievance petitions and write complaints to protest against their bad conditions. 50 prominent Shiite figures signed a petition to the British Political Agent urging him to implement the reforms. The same scene repeated itself in December of the same year, when they demanded British protection. Moreover, in January 1922, the Shiites signed a petition confirming the explicit discrimination practiced against them, since they were deprived of representation in the judiciary authorities, the Customary Council, and other state administrations.

After the British administration ousted the governor of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa bin Ali, in 1923, due to many reasons– including the blatant marginalization and persecution of Shiites– it sent messages to the Shiite Baharna saying that they won't be treated completely equal to the Sunnis. On May 26, 1923, Captain

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Knox sent the Shiites a message saying: "Most of the tension which the country had witnessed recently was unreal [...] You should not expect to be completely equated with the Sunnis." In the same regard, Major Daly commented, saying: "Shiites' hopes on reforms were dashed."



During that exact period the signs of division over supporting or opposing the administrative reforms began to emerge, as the Shiites announced their support and approval of the reforms, while the tribes expressed their opposition. It can be said that Shiites paid a hefty price for these stances, according to historical sources. The sources stated that raids were launched on Shiite areas; thus their men were murdered, their properties looted, their women raped, and homes burnt. Those areas included the villages of Barbar, A'ali and Sitra.

The scene repeated itself with the emergence of any reformist stance by the Shiite citizens throughout different periods. It was evident in the 1990s in a number of forms, including the arrest of preachers, closing down of Ma'tams (religious mourning gatherings) and Hussainiyahs (Shiite congregation hall) and sealing them with red wax, and banning of Ashura rituals and processions, due to the stance taken by the majority of the Shiites regarding the dissolution of the National Council and suspension of the constitution. These violations were also repeated following the democratic popular uprising in 2011. The persecution included the demolition of 38 Shiite mosques, banning of and crackdown on mourning processions by force, arrest of clerics, preachers and religious eulogy reciters, derogatory statements against Shia beliefs via media outlets and newspapers, incitement of hatred against the Shia, shutting down of the most prominent religious and civil bodies, dismissal of hundreds from their jobs, and imprisoning thousands behind bars.



Returning to the period of independence, no significant development in the situation of the Shiite majority and other ethnic and religious minorities had occurred after the independence in 1971. However, the Shiites had played a significant role in the process of inquiry - conducted by the United Nations in Bahrain, in March 1970, to explore the people's opinions about the political future of their country regarding its independence or subordination, which Iran was claiming. They all chose independence rejecting subordination to any foreign country. When establishing the new bodies of state after the independence, in particular the military and security bodies. Shiites were excluded. In fact, Bahrain witnessed systematic discrimination based on exclusion and marginalization especially from sovereign institutions and sensitive government positions. Discrimination became an official policy, widely endorsed by the authorities, as well as a norm, which was well regarded as an unwritten law, practiced by the state authorities. The discrimination included all aspects of public life in Bahrain, whether it be employment, appointment in public posts, education, scholarships, training,

promotions, assignments in judiciary authorities economic opportunities, public services, religious rituals, media, press, or even sports and selection of members of national teams representing Bahrain in sports events. Discrimination is evident in all of these sectors, which are vital sectors of public life in the country.



Discrimination based on detraction from equal citizenship is a daily practice, experienced by the Shiite citizens, along with everything it represents, including detraction of rights, unfairness, inferior treatment, and political and social injustice, from which they suffer in all aspects of their social and private lives. The numerical majority that the Shiites represent did not grant them more power in the governance of the country. On the contrary, the authorities have taken control over all aspects of political and economic life and systematically practiced sectarian discrimination and violated their human rights.

The open and blatant practice of discrimination is so obvious and it hardly requires any efforts to prove its existence, as its manifestations are visible and its evidence is tangible in the people's lives. The authorities went so far with the policies of exclusion and marginalization by exercising all forms of discrimination, thus developing strategies and work plans that aim at practicing further exclusion and marginalization, and attempted to cause a demographic imbalance and a new. The existence of such strategies and systematic plans was revealed via the so called Bandargate, the famous report which was named after "Dr. Salah Al-Bandar", the former strategic planning adviser of the Bahraini government, who leaked it to the public in July 2006. He is a British citizen of Sudanese origins who worked as a strategic planning adviser within the framework of an official plan aimed at marginalizing Shia citizens from the political scene as well as changing the country's demographics through several methods, which included naturalization, marginalization of Shiites from decision-making positions, excluding them from state institutions, depriving them from education and other public services, establishing governmental authorities to sponsor that, establishing GONGOs to replace the civil society institutions in which Shiites constitute the majority, and establishing forums and newspapers loyal to the authorities. A huge budget was dedicated to the implementation of these plans. The report showed photocopies of checks and promissory notes which revealed the enormity of these plans. Based on all these plans, Shia citizens were being cleansed from state's bodies, and completely marginalized.

**3** Overview of the Long History of a Movement Demanding Democracy and Equal Citizenship

#### Overview of the Long History of a Movement Demanding Democracy and Equal Citizenship

The people of Bahrain were always known for refusing what diminishes their human rights, as defined and guaranteed by international laws and religions. This made Bahrainis to be historically renowned for their desire to achieve equal citizenship and to achieve a more just political system.

#### The Twentieth Century:



In 1922, the first popular peaceful movement erupted to demand the abolition of the forced labor and taxes system, which obliges anyone over 15 years of age to pay taxes to Sheikh Isa bin Ali Al-Khalifa, who ruled between 1869 and 1923. In 1923, this system was abolished after the interference of the British, following an agreement with the Shiites in Bahrain, in return for the approval of transferring the power to Sheikh Hamad, the son of Sheikh Isa bin Ali.

Bahrain entered the era of what was known as a modern state, following the shift of rule to Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. Governmental departments for finance, police and land registration (property law deeds) were established following the arrival of the British advisor Charles Belgrave in 1926 to Bahrain, where he resided for 30 years.

#### The Beginning of the Trade Union Movement:



In 1938, Sunni and Shiite traders and dignitaries in Bahrain demanded an elected legislative council, municipal council and trade unions. In this year– i.e. six years after discovering oil in Bahrain– the trade union movement began. The demands of the movement were limited to labor rights, including the increase of salaries from six Indian annas to 4 rupees, as well as giving the workers holiday pay and fair treatment by employers. The demands expanded to establishing an elected legislative council and municipal council, formulating a general law to regulate labor affairs, limitation of working hours, and reform of governmental departments. The Bahraini authorities' response to those demands was attacking the movement and punishing its leaders from both sects by imprisoning and exiling them.

#### National Union Committee:



In the 1950s, Abdul Rahman Al-Baker (Sunni) founded a Co-operative Compensation Fund after the government imposed a tax on taxi owners. The aim of the fund was helping out taxi drivers. However, the authorities stripped Al-Baker of his nationality– a method still used to date to punish political activists– under the pretext that he is originally from Qatar.

As a result, a group of men from both the Sunni and the Shiite sects gathered in Sanabis (Shia town) to protest against the decision to strip Al-Baker of his citizenship. During the meeting, they formed the Supreme Executive Committee followed by a general assembly of 120 members with equal shares for both sects. The Committee, which was the first political party in the Gulf, imposed its presence in Bahrain and thus forced the British to recognize it, especially after the Committee had swept all elections.

#### **1973 Parliamentary Elections:**

Following the independence of Bahrain in 1971, the first parliamentary and municipal elections were held in 1973. 30 members were elected from 20 constituencies. The Parliament of 1973 was characterized by intellectual and political diversity, as it included members of religious, liberal and moderate movements.

1975

In 1975, the Parliament disagreed with the government on the State Security Law, as the majority of members rejected it while the government wanted to enforce it. As a result, the Emir of Bahrain dissolved the Parliament, and thus a new chapter of the pro-democracy movement started in Bahrain, demanding the return of the parliamentary life.

After dissolving the Parliament in 1975, the authorities began to commit violations, through the State Security Law, against political activists who are mostly Shiites. It deliberately drew the Sunnis closer to its bodies and deprived the Shiites from many civil and political rights.

Despite the rise of oil prices at that time, poverty spread among Shiites due to the lack of social justice. All the political and religious Shiite institutions were closed and a bitter chapter of detestable religious and sectarian persecution began.

There were many movements demanding human rights, justice and democracy in the 1970s and the 1980s. However,

the state security law and practices suppressed every peaceful movement demanding the return of parliamentary life. It also exiled and issued prolonged prison terms reaching up to life imprisonment against leaders of the movements. Some victims were tortured to death in prison while others were shot by police in demonstrations.



In 1992, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, a religious and political leader, raised a petition calling for the restoration of parliamentary life and the right to establish political institutions and trade unions. Men from both Sunni and Shia sects and other political and social parties signed the petition, including Sheikh Abdul Latif Al-Mahmoud, Sheikh Isa Al-Jowder, Mohammad Jaber Al-Sabah, Abdullah Mutaywe', Ali Rabia, Ibrahim Kamal Eldin, and Hamid Sanqour.

In 1994, Al-Jamri, along with other political and social parties, raised another petition calling for the same demands. However, the authorities responded with escalation and arrests. In December of the same year, they arrested Sheikh Ali Salman (current Al-Wefaq Secretary-General, and a prisoner of conscience), and as a result, the streets of Bahrain erupted in protests, which was known as the pro-democracy movement in the 1990s.

The 1990s movement demanded the return of the constitutional and parliamentary life, the abolition of the State Security Law, and holding the individuals in charge of the State Security Law accountable for human rights violations. The movement continued until 1999 and resulted in the lack of security, the demise of more than 50 people, thousands of arrests, exiles and prison terms, and the execution of a citizen accused of killing a policeman.



After the demise of the Emir of Bahrain Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa in 1999, his son Sheikh Hamad took over power. He made steps for reform, including the release of all prisoners, allowing the return of the exiled citizens, and launching the National Action Charter. In 2001, political and community leaders called for approving the Charter since it represents a transition to adopt the constitution, conduct political reforms, and put an end to human rights violations. The people of Bahrain voted "yes" by 98.4% for the Charter.

On February 14, 2002, a year following the signing of the Charter, the King of Bahrain unilaterally issued a new constitution, which granted him an absolute control of all authorities. This represented another relapse of the national hope in maintaining stability in Bahrain. The political and civil parties strongly opposed the 2002 imposed constitution.

The obvious abandonment of the political reforms was represented by granting the authority of legislation to the appointed Shura Council (a council that constitutes of 40 members appointed by the King) in parallel with the elected Council of Representatives (parliament). However, the National Action Charter, which was voted for by the majority of the people, stated that this council is for counseling only. This is only one of many extensive censures.

This situation urged the political and civil parties and Bahrainis to voice their dissatisfaction through organizing protests, demonstrations and petitions, or by holding conferences and meetings, in which they expressed their opinions. In 2002, the first parliamentary election of the new era was widely boycotted by the Shiite community and the democratic parties.

# The Movement of February 14, 2011:

Following the abrogation of the country's 1973 constitution and the National Action Charter on the onset of the new millennium, citizens continued to witness injustice and oppression, as well as discrimination, exclusion, and absence of equal citizenship, which further accumulated to their previous experiences. Their democratic movement manifested by demonstrations, rallies and public conferences continued. In February 14, 2011 the movement and protests started gathering momentum as thousands of Bahrainis took to the streets to call for a democratic transition of power. However, the authorities responded with a brutal crackdown on the movement, leaving one person killed on the first day and more casualties on the following days.

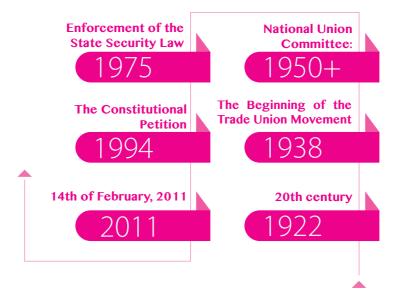
The citizens, who heavily participated in the funeral procession of the first victim of the February 14 movement, headed on that day to the Pearl Roundabout (Gulf Cooperation Council Roundabout) in the Bahraini capital Manama to take it as a center for the protests. They camped there, equipped the place with tents, and set up food stands in order to make it a permanent location. Thousands of Bahrainis from all walks of life used to visit the site frequently to attend the speeches and seminars organized there.

However, the authorities were awaiting the chance to end this huge sit-in, which began to really frustrate them. At the dawn of February 17, 2011, security forces attacked the sleeping protesters, leaving three people killed and hundreds of others injured. Meanwhile, the Bahraini military was deployed around the roundabout for three days.

On February 19, the citizens returned to the roundabout after protests were staged, attempting to reach the roundabout, during

which one demonstrator was shot dead and hundreds of others injured. The protesters camped there until March 16, 2011, when the Peninsula Shield Force (a joint military force between GCC States) entered the country, after the King of Bahrain declared the state of national safety (state of emergency) and ordered the Bahraini army to implement it for a period of three months.

During that period, Bahrainis suffered from the most heinous unprecedented crimes which can be classified as crimes against humanity. Security forces killed large numbers of citizens on the streets and under torture in prisons. Hundreds of people remained missing and unaccounted for, while others were prosecuted in military courts. In addition, 38 Shiite mosques were demolished, the majority of civil and political leaders were arrested, and hundreds of people were dismissed from their jobs. The situation is still snowballing and worsening until this day.



**4** Religious Demography According to the 2014 US State Department Report:

#### Religious Demography According to the 2014 US State Department Report:

In the 2014 annual Report on International Religious Freedom, the US Department of State estimated the population of Bahrain by 1.2 million. The Bahraini citizens constitute less than half of the population, 99% of which are Muslims, while Christians, Hindus, Baha'is and Jews make up the remaining 1%.

The report pointed out that according to the Jewish citizens, there are 36 to 40 Jews that represent 6 families. Muslims constitute 70.2% of the total population of citizens and noncitizens, while Christians make up 9% of the total population.



The report indicated that there are around 350 licensed Sunni mosques, whereas the licensed Shiite premises include 863 mosques and 589 obsequies. The housing projects in both Hamad Town and Issa Town, which often witness a mixed blend of Shiites and Sunnis, tend to have a disproportionate number of Sunni mosques.

The report estimated the foreigners, who mostly come from South Asia and other Arab countries, by 51% of the total population. More than half of them are adherents of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Baha'ism and Sikhism.



The report considered that the Constitution does not actually protect the freedom of religion. Although it prohibits discrimination in rights and duties on basis of religion or belief, there are no other anti-discrimination laws or measures to appeal from discrimination.

The report further explained that the Bahraini Law requires a license issued from the Ministry of Justice for the Muslims to practice their activity. Yet, there are 19 non-Muslim institutions, including Christian churches and Hindus temples, subjected to the Ministry of Social Development Law.

On a related note, the report discussed the unrest the country witnessed, including the protests calling for political reform and the violence between anti-government groups and security forces.

It also highlighted that in the last year, the police had arrested a number of people, the majority of which are Shiites. The report further mentioned the allegations of arbitrary arrests, excessive use of force, and abuse.

The report discussed as well the deportation of Sheikh Hussein Al-Najati, who is among the 31 Bahraini citizens whose citizenships have been revoked. The report stated that he was under pressure to leave the country and that, according to press reports, he was scheduled to leave before he was deported.

The report also noted that a number of prominent Shiite Clerics were arrested in 2011 because they were linked to the opposition movement. It pointed out that the eulogy reciter Mahdi Sahwan, was arrested during a rally and sentenced in Septem-

## **5** Geo-religious background of Bahrainis:

#### **O** Geo-religious background of Bahrainis:

Bahrain is currently defined as a group of islands, consisting of 33 islands, located in the southwest corner of the Arabian Gulf, with a total area of about 765.3 km<sup>2</sup>. The most important and popular islands are: Al-Muharraq, Manama (Bahrain Island), Sitra, Hawar Islands, Umm an Nasan, Umm Al-Sabban, Nabih Saleh, Jidda Island, and other tiny islands.

The indigenous Arab Bahrainis are Shiites from the tribes of Bani Qais, Tamim bin Mudar, and Rabi'a. Historically, there were many migrations, especially in the late decades, from Gulf, Arab, and Asian countries either for the purpose of work or residence. Their number exceeded the number of the indigenous people, but they often coexisted together.



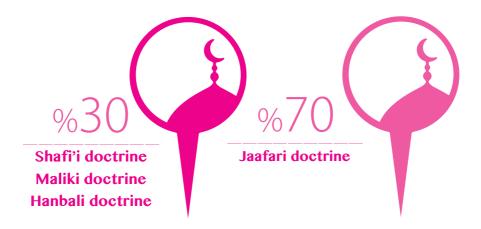
The government does not provide any decisive numbers or statistics regarding the population. It is believed that this is due to many reasons, the most important of which is the political naturalization project that became clearly defined. Another reason is the manipulation of the electoral constituents and the electoral blocs, which can be inferred through a lot of information. Thus, the official statistics are not available. However, according to the "Annual Report on International Religious Freedom" issued by the US State Department in 2006, it is estimated that 70% of Bahrainis are Shiites, a fact that is also supported by the International Crisis Group report. The remaining third, including Al Khalifa and the tribes supporting the ruling family, follows the three different schools of the Sunni doctrine. Religiously, Islam is the dominant religion since the majority of Bahrainis embrace it. Also, an old minority of Jews and minorities of Christians and Hindu exist in Bahrain. Historical sources mention that there was a large community of Christians before Islam, living in the island of Samaheej, known today as the island of Muharraq, where the villages of Samaheej and Al-Dair are located. They embraced the Nestorian doctrine, which believes that the human nature is the single nature of Christ.

According to the historical studies, the Islamic religious presence was represented by three doctrinal groups: urban Sunnis who follow the Shafi'i doctrine, tribal Sunnis who follow the Maliki doctrine, and Arab and Persian Shiites who follow the Jaafari doctrine.

In Bahrain, the religious map geographically varies between these categories. Groups from all doctrines are dispersed across towns and villages, but Arab Shiites are concentrated in the villages.

Ethnically, the Shiites are divided into pure Arabs and Persians. The pure Arabs are the indigenous people of Bahrain, and they are known as *Baharna* – the plural of *Bahrani*, instead of *Bahrainis* – the plural of *Bahraini*, which others are known by. The Persian Shiites, also known by Ajam, are of Iranian origins. On the other hand, the Sunnis are also divided into the same sections. The Arab Sunnis belong to Arab tribes, which have origins and subdivisions in the Arabian Peninsula. However, the Persian Sunnis, also known as *Houla*, are originally from Southern Iran.

Bahrain's ruling family, the tribe of Al Khalifa, arrived to the archipelago in 1783 from the coastal town of Al-Zubarah, which lies on the western shores of the Peninsula of Qatar, south of Bahrain. It has established its ruling system, which is based on the tribal hereditary governance, since then.



Despite this religious diversity in the small island of Bahrain, we emphasize here that the sectarian and religious harmony, coexistence, and tolerance remained the most prominent feature among all the components of society throughout the history of Bahrain. However, the Bahraini authorities have always focused on the contradictions in order to delay, as much as possible, the establishment of social partnership, justice and equal citizenship, which the civil and political parties call for.

# Evidence of Persecution before February 14, 2011:

### **O** Evidence of Persecution before February 14, 2011:

#### 1. The systematic economic persecution against Shiite citizens:

The urban transformation in Bahrain, since the oil boom in the 1970s, was not in tune with the reality of poverty and political and social unrest that continued to exist. The oil revenues from selling 250 thousand barrels per day remained exclusively under the control of distributive institutions, which included members of the authorities and their loyalists. Monopoly of wealth remained one of the most important elements of the economic persecution.

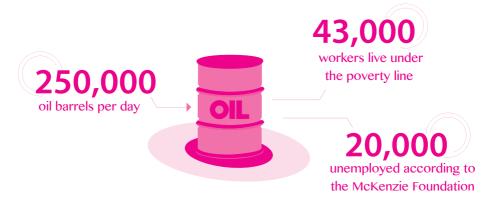
The economic persecution was one of factors of discontent among Shiite citizens. The official figures, issued recently by Bahrain's Public Authority for Social Insurance, indicate that more than 45,000 workers live below the poverty line. The data points out that the salaries of 41,159 Bahrainis range between 200 and 400 Bahraini dinars (BD). This is not the only reality. According to a study conducted more than 10 years ago by McKinsey & Company, there were "around 20,000 unemployed Bahrainis". The report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates the real unemployment rate among Bahrainis between 15% and 20%. Yet, the official numbers continued to show much lower percentages, given that the majority of them are Shiites.

Most of the job vacancies – especially those created by the private sector with salaries and added values that exceed 1000 dinars – are usually filled up by non Bahrainis. Such jobs are usually given to those who are close to authorities and are regarded to represent the economic elite. According to Labor Market Indicators, jobs that pay more than 800 BD per month go to 14 Bahrainis and 85 foreigners, jobs that pay more than

900 BD per month go to 5 Bahrainis and 54 foreigners, jobs that pay more than 1000 BD per month go to 9 Bahrainis and 207 foreigners, and jobs that pay more than 1500 BD per month go to 4 Bahrainis and 296 foreigners.

The naturalization process carried out by the authorities has been used to create a demographic imbalance for political purposes. Moreover, its aims now to change the demographic composition and has become a factor of impoverishment. Naturalization has targeted Shiites in order to deprive them of jobs in a number of ministries and governmental bodies and of many governmental services, such as housing, since the naturalized are given the priority in public services. In addition, Shiites are subject to discrimination in health and education services, which are generally deteriorating. The newly naturalized citizens, most of whom were given the Bahraini citizenship illegally, compete with the citizens over the services. This situation was intentionally created by the authorities.

Two types of poverty prevail in Bahrain as a result of the atrocious caste system. The majority of the Bahraini people are poor, but their poverty is of two kinds: obvious poverty and masked poverty. You can hardly find a citizen devoid of one of these kinds. The obviously poor citizen lives in a rickety or overcrowded house, or both, and if he worked, his salary would not provide a decent life for him and his family.



The person of masked poverty is the one who earns a relatively good salary, but spends his salary on bank loans or debts, which he can't build a good life without.

The data indicates that the middle class in Bahrain is shrinking as a result of monopoly, unfair wealth distribution, inflation, high prices, wage rigidity, low wages, and the inability of the local economy to create suitable employment opportunities for the majority of Bahrainis. These issues form a major challenge to the economic development plans and policies.

Powerful individuals and economic elite close to them control the overall economy of the country. The majority of them create their own wealth while the legal or legislative accountability is disabled against claims of corruption

## 2. Depriving and Restricting the Civil and Social Rights of Shiites:

For a long time ago, Shiite citizens in Bahrain have not been officially recognized as equal citizens; therefore, their civil rights have always been derogated. The authorities have always imposed restrictions on freedom of expression; and a ban on establishing TV channels or newspapers, or launching radio stations. In addition, the government media marginalizes the Shiite citizens in its various programs and does not cover their religious rituals as Friday Prayers and mourning processions. In fact, there is no tangible presence of the Shiite culture or local dialect on the radio and television. The Shiite associations and institutions, whether cultural, educational or others, are subjected to restrictions on all levels. Many of these institutions were closed down.

#### 3. Depriving Shiites of Managing their Religious Endowments:

An Islamic endowment (waqf) is defined as the property granted by a person to be held in trust and used for religious purposes (like building mosques) or to be used in serving all the people (hospital, educational centre, etc...). There are special legislative provisions for endowments in Islam. In Bahrain, endowments are managed by a special directorate called the Endowments Directorate. There is a Shiite (Jaffari) Endowments Directorate and a Sunni Endowments Directorate.

The Jaffari Endowments Directorate is appointed by the authorities, and the endowments are managed without the consent of the donors, Shiite clerics and the Shia community.

The board of directors of the Jaffari Endowments Directorate is appointed solely by the government. The chairman and 10 members of the board of directors are appointed by a Royal Decree, and the appointed board follows the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Thus, the appointment takes place away from the supervision and guidance of Shiite jurisprudence laws. It also takes place base on an individual will that goes beyond the will of hundreds of endowment bodies. And yet, the Jaffari Endowments Directorate is responsible for supervising and developing the assets of those endowment bodies as well as protecting them from damage and losses.

The Jaffari Endowments Directorate did not obtain administrative, organizational and financial independence since it was founded in 1928. The authorities seized it under the pretexts of organization, development, institutionalization and demarcation. This put the endowments under the authorities' control. It also led to confiscating the endowment properties and weakening their role and impact in Bahrain, as well as stripping the endowment work of its independence, position, value, effect, and the interaction of the community and charitable people with it.

One who follows the history of the Jaffari Endowments Directorate will see the total domination of the authorities over it for long decades. The former President of the Jaffari Endowments Sadeg Al-Baharna revealed in an interview with Al-Wasat local newspaper on February 20, 2002 that Charles Belgrave, the advisor of the Bahraini Government, used to insist on attending the meetings of the Jaffari Endowments Directorate's board of directors since its foundation. Also, he used to follow all the details related to the endowments work and constantly write letters and correspondences to the Council of Jaffari Endowments concerning all the matters within its areas of work. For instance in one of his letters, he wrote: "Since I am leaving Bahrain for a period of time, I ask the directorate to stop taking decision in this matter (for example, following up the shrimp fishery area which is one of the Directorate's tasks). In another letter he stated: "I do not agree at all on any decision to spend unless you obtain the value of the new harvest." The interference of the advisor of the Bahraini Government in the Jaffari Endowments affairs reached the extent of deciding for the preachers regarding religious activities and rituals. He noted in one of his correspondences to the Jaffari Endowments Directorate: "I hope that you stop dealing with the affair of the preacher until I return from London."

The Endowments Directorate is still fully controlled by the government, as the government assigns its loyalists to manage the endowments and it controls the decisions of the directorate. Also, it excludes the majority of the Shiite citizens and independent clerics from participating in the decision making process.

The control of the authorities over the endowments does not include the administrational aspect only, but also the flow of the endowment funds and how they should be managed and disbursed. This leads to the abolition of the administrative, organizational and coordinative independence of the directorate. Although the Shiite jurisprudence (Fiqh) allows disbursing these funds in public utility projects such as building charitable institutions and hospitals. Nonetheless, the Endowments Directorate does not do so because of the authorities' control over it and their unwillingness to direct the endowment funds in that way.

It is noteworthy that the international laws grant religious groups the right to direct their own endowments according to their own social beliefs, religious regulations and community interests. However the authorities have confiscated the right to manage Islamic endowments for centuries. The donor of an endowment property, such as a mosque, Hussainiyah (Shia congregation hall), or an Islamic seminary (Hawza) seeks to abide by the Islamic law, and thus, seeks the appointment of a manager that the Islamic law approves of. No other party has the right to impose a trusteeship on the endowments without the agreement of the donor. That's why many people demand the complete independence of the Endowments Directorate, with the possibility of supervision of the cash flow of the Directorate by the government as it supervises the cash flow of charity organizations. The interference of the authorities in any further matter eliminates the Directorate's independence

The endowments are exposed to repeated theft by influential figures, some officials, and even some appointees in the Endowments Directorate. A former director of the Endowments Directorate called on the Shiite clerics to save the endowments. "Can you believe that a 170-meter land has a monthly rent of 375 fils (1 USD) and an annual rent of 1 BD and 670 fils (less than 5 USD)," he said. This is the case of many more endowment properties.

#### 4. The Attempt to Eliminate and Distort National Heritage, Antiquities and History:

Bahrain is well known to be rich in its national heritage and history. This fact has unfortunately concerned the authorities because it proves the origins and the ancient existence of the Shiite citizens in the country. The heritage of the Bahrainis is divided into tangible and sentimental heritages:

#### a. The Sentimental Heritage:

There was a prominent scientific renaissance in the region that lasted for approximately five to seven centuries, and ended in the eleventh Hijri century after the entrance of "Utub" (the Bani Utbah, a federation of Arabs who originated from Najd) to Bahrain. Hundreds of scholars emerged from the renaissance. Their heritage is represented by thousands of manuscripts that are still found in the libraries of the Islamic World. The authorities have highly marginalized this renaissance, and as a result, the Manuscripts Hall of the Bahrain National Museum does not contain any of these Islamic and national manuscripts, as they were replaced by Moroccan and Tunisian ones.

Some researchers and historians interested in this domain stated that they offered to provide Bahrain's National Museum with thousand-year-old manuscripts and eight-hundred-yearold manuscripts, but their offer were ignored and not paid any heed.

Furthermore, this renaissance is never mentioned in the Bahraini curricula, since it was replaced by an alternative heritage on all levels.

#### b. The Tangible Heritage:

The tangible heritage of Bahrain includes many national traditions and clothing, popular dishes, and means of transportation that have been marginalized. The people of Bahrain used to ride donkeys as a mean of transportation, but the Bahrain National Museum replaced them with horses and camels.

On the other hand, there is obvious discrimination in dealing with the folklore. The authorities had great interest in restructuring some historic houses, such as the house of Sheikh Ibrahim bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the house of Sheikh Issa bin Ali Al Khalifa, and many other houses of figures from the ruling family in the Island of Muharraq and the village of Al-Jasra. However, many other houses of Shiite figures were demolished, such as that of the pearl dealer Sayed Saeed Khalaf's house, which was a symbol of the ancient architecture, in the capital Manama. The Ministry of Municipalities demolished it along with other houses.

People concerned about this issue believe that the project of renovating the dilapidated houses, which was halted in recent years, was used to eliminate many historical and architectural structures. Many argue that these structures were built in a modern way in order to be hidden from tourists and the new generation.

The authorities also damaged and erased many historic inscriptions that reflected the ancient cultural and religious Bahraini identity under the pretext of maintenance and renovation. Some inscriptions were also destroyed as a direct act of retaliation. The case of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Barbaghy Mosque is a clear example, which contained a 400-year-old ancient inscription and was demolished in 2011 during the campaign launched to demolish 38 Shiite mosques.

#### 5. Distorting National History in the Curricula by Deleting Contributions of Shiite Citizens and the Shiite Milestones from National History:

In addition to what was aforementioned, the process of distorting and falsifying national history included the era in which the Bahraini people embraced Islam.

The Bahraini pseudo history indicated that Bahrain was uninhabited and the A'ali Burial Mounds were a graveyard in which the rulers and foreigners were buried; and later on, people began settling there. Also, the origins of the Baharna and their belonging to the tribe of Abdul Qays (Banu Abdul Qays) and the tribe of Bakr ibn Wa'il (Banu Bakr) were concealed. Many incidents showed the role of the tribe of Abdul Qays in the history of Bahrain, but this is not mentioned in the curricula.

The scientific renaissance, which Bahrain experienced in its golden period in the eleventh Hijri century, is completely absent from the curricula since the Shiites had great contributions during that time. Bahrain was known for its scholars and prominent thinkers at that time.

#### The most prominent domains that the cultural renaissance and the national heritage related to the Shiite sect are hidden from









National and archaeological museums

Cities

Tourism

Curricula

Evidence of Persecution after February 14, 2011:

#### **O** Evidence of Persecution after February 14, 2011:

#### 1. Demolition of 38 Mosques Registered in the Jaffari Endowments:

As discussed earlier, on February 14, 2011, the majority of Bahrainis took to the streets in pro-democratic marches that coincided with the Arab Spring revolutions. A month after the people of Bahrain rallied in the Pearl Roundabout, the security forces attacked the protesters after imposing, what the authorities called, a state of "National Safety" from March 15, 2011 until the end of June 2011. That period witnessed several major and serious violations, including the demolition of more than 38 mosques and vandalism and targeting of dozens of other mosques and religious centers. Demolishing mosques is unprecedented in the history of Bahrain since Bahrainis embraced Islam in the first century of the Islamic era.

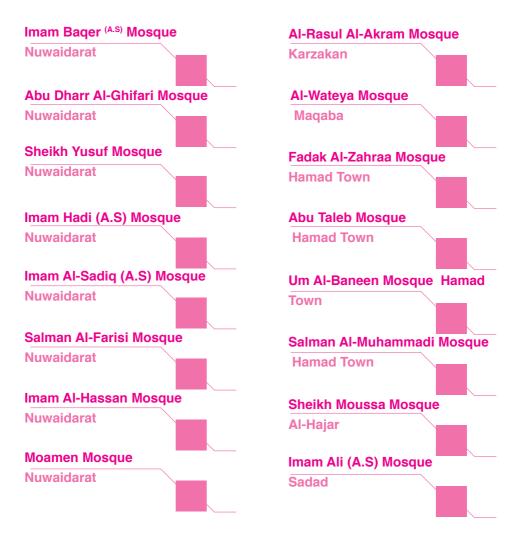
That campaign included the complete demolition of mosques, graveyards and tombs. The operations used to take place either in daylight or late at night, and the sites were cordoned off for the purpose of carrying out the violations. The Bahrain Indepen-

dent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) has proved the demolitions and confirmed that they were undertaken illegally, in violation of the law and cannot be given any justification.

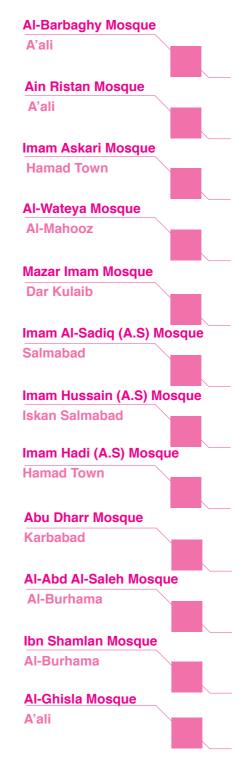
Demolitions of the mosques were distributed among provinces and regions in the east, west, north and south of Bahrain. Soldiers affiliated to the Bahraini Ministry of Defense, as well as the Ministries of Interior, Justice and Islamic Affairs, and Municipalities, and other bodies participated in the demolitions.



The demolition of 38 mosques in Bahrain came as a shock both locally and internationally. Many human rights, political and civil organizations as well as the presidents of a number of countries condemned this crime and this serious act that encroaches upon customs and humanitarian and moral logic.

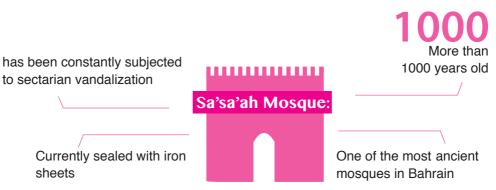






#### 2. The Targeting of Mosques Registered in the Jaffari Endowments:

The Shiite mosques became a frequent target of vandalism, shootings and robberies after the state of emergency was imposed in the country. On May 13, 2011, Imam Al-Sadiq (A.S) Mosque in Diraz was raided by security forces, soldiers, and security forces dressed as civilians. They assaulted the janitor who resides inside the mosque, broke the doors, scattered dozens of Quran copies, books of supplications (Duaa), and Turbahs (clay tablets used to prostrate on during prayers), stole some television sets, vandalized the contents of the audio control room, and left some sound bombs - used to crack down on demonstrations - beside the Mihrab (a semicircular niche in the wall of the mosque that indicates the direction of the Kaaba; Qibla), which Sheikh Issa Ahmad Qassem, one of the prominent Shiite leaders, prays in.



Some acts of vandalism and theft against many mosques in various areas were documented, while others were not. Al-Khodr (A.S) Mosque in Bani Jamra, one of the old and well-known mosques, was targeted on April 25, 2011. Security forces backed with the army demolished the front side of the mosque and then raided it, broke some of the doors, vandalized some of its contents, and scattered Quran copies, books of supplications, and Turbahs. On March 15, 2011, the security forces vandalized the mosque and the shrine of Sa'sa'ah ibn Suhan in the village of Askar. It is considered to be one of the most ancient mosques in Bahrain. The mosque is a thousand years old and contains the tomb of Sa'sa'ah ibn Suhan Al-Abdi. The security forces vandalized parts of the shrine (the fence placed over the grave), broke the doors and windows of the mosque, removed its front awning, scattered its contents, removed the air conditioners and the charity box of the mosque, sealed it with iron sheets to prevent anyone from entering, and then hung up pictures of government figures at the entrance of the mosque. This mosque was targeted and vandalized more than once.



On May 24, 2011, Sheikh Ibrahim bin Al-Ashtar Mosque, which is located on a small island beside the village of Askar, was attacked and vandalized. Until now, no one knows the extent of destruction of the mosque because people are banned from reaching it. However, eyewitnesses saw the vandalism at the time it occurred.

The year 2011 witnessed many violations. The vandalism practices have targeted dozens of mosques, including Imam Ali (A.S) Mosque, Al-Musharaf Mosque in the village of Jidhafs, Sheikh Yaacoub Mosque in the district of Noaim, Al-Anwar Mosque in the village of Al-Daih, Sheikh Ali ibn Lotfollah Mosque in the village of Jid Al-Haj, and Sheikh Mohsin Mosque in the village of Diraz.

The Shiite mosques remained a target of attacks until 2015. The grand A'ali Mosque was attacked, vandalized and its contents were scattered. Sheikh Darweesh Mosque in the village of Diraz was raided once, Al-Abd Al-Saleh Mosque in the village of Al-Hamla was shot at twice within two months by "unknown individuals", as the official security authorities call them. The authorities lack seriousness in conducting investigations to arrest these "unknown suspects".

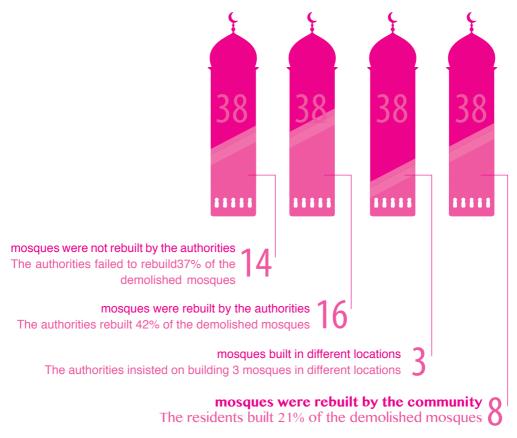
Both obsequies (Ma'tams) and mosques remained a target of the security forces whenever protests and demonstrations occurred in the Shiite regions. Some video clips, captured by citizens from their houses, show the security forces intentionally targeting the windows of the mosques by tear gas, sound bombs, and rubber grenades.

The Bahraini authorities are still delaying the reconstruction of some of the 38 Shiite mosques that they demolished in 2011 during the state of emergency. Despite the fact that the authorities stated that they are accelerating the construction of the mosques to be completed by 2014, they only finished 12 out of 38 mosques by 2015. It is considered a small number compared to the authorities capability to expedite this process.

On the other hand, the authorities did build 4 mosques, however, on locations different from their original ones without any substantial justifications. The Shiite citizens believe the authorities only intended to provoke them.

Besides building the mosques on different locations, the Bahraini authorities told the delegation of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which visited Bahrain in 2014, that 10 out of 30 mosques were rebuilt. However, the USCIRF concluded that the Shia expended their own funds to rebuild six out of ten mosques and religious structures that were demolished in 2011, which the government claimed that it rebuilt and reconstructed. Records prove that the Shia community funded the reconstruction of eight of the demolished mosques.

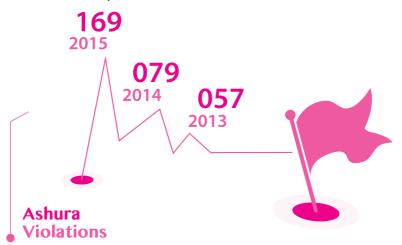
On the whole, 20 mosques were rebuilt; the authorities rebuilt 12 of them, while the Shia community rebuilt 8. In addition, there are 4 mosques that the authorities rebuilt in locations other than their original ones. 14 mosques are still under construction until the time of writing this report.



#### 3. Tightening the Grip on Shiite Religious Activity & Violation of the Freedom to Practice Religious Rites:

The acts linked to the restriction of the Shiites' freedom to exercise religious rituals related to the annual Ashura occasion (the commemoration of Imam Hussain martyrdom, grandson of Prophet Mohammed) reached 57 cases in 2013 and 79 cases in 2014. In 2015, the documented cases reached 169 cases, including the summoning and interrogations of preachers, (mourning) eulogy reciters, directors of obsequies and religious events, and individuals participating in the events. The cases also included excessive use of force by security forces during their crackdown on the attendees of the ceremonies for the purpose of vandalizing and confiscating the Ashura manifestations.

The data indicates that two Shiite preachers were banned from delivering Friday sermons in 2014. One of the preachers was banned from travel for speaking of political affairs during his Friday sermons. This is considered to be a clear violation of freedom of expression.



Bahrain's Ministry of Interior officially announced the government "justifications" after the deportation of the prominent religious cleric Sheikh Hussein Al-Najati in 2014, claiming that the Sheikh used to collect the Khums (amount of money paid to religious clerics to be spent on charity) without an official license. However, Khums is an obligation on the Shiites, it is devotional, and therefore it doesn't require a license to perform it. In addition, Shiism does not allow asking for such a license regarding this pure religious matter.

The authorities always seek to tighten their grip on religious activity. They impose restrictions on any popular and scholarly project, that teaches the Shiite devotional provisions, and ordered it to attain an official license or otherwise it will be considered illegal. This indicates the extent of practiced cultural and religious rights violations. While the authorities ban teaching the Jaafari doctrine in the curricula of public and private schools, they also tighten the grip on religious education outside schools, which is manifested by the dissolution of Bahrain's Ulama Islamic Council (Islamic Scholars Council), which was the largest educational body for the Shiite citizens.

The security forces banned congregational prayers in the sites of some demolished mosques several times and surrounded the worshippers and arrested them in order to prevent them from praying. This happened frequently in the historic mosque of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Barbaghy, which was demolished by the authorities during the state of emergency in 2011, in the village of A'ali. The mosque of Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari in Nuwaidrat was turned into a public garden by authorities

The authorities surrounded the worshippers frequently in order to prevent them from reaching the village of Diraz and conduct the Friday prayers in the biggest religious assembly in the country. A worshiper was killed while the security forces were chasing him to prevent him from arriving to the prayers. In several occasions, the security forces made checkpoints, which frustrated worshippers and caused traffic jams.

The report of the former government adviser Dr. Salah Al-Bandar (Bandargate) expressed clearly the restrictions imposed on religious activity by several means. Al-Bandar mentioned a longterm plan with a budget of millions of dollars aiming at restricting and controlling the Shiite religious activity on the security, political, and organizational levels. And, if that was not achieved, then the religious activity would be eliminated by force.

On the whole, since the eruption of the popular pro-democracy movement in 2011 until 2015, the total violations of freedom of religion exceeded 560 violations. There were 130 violations in 2011, 60 violations in 2012, 118 violations in 2013, 101 violations in 2014, and 169 violations in 2015.





The most notable violations, excluding 2014, were demolishing 38 Shiite mosques, imposing tighter restrictions on Ashura ceremonies, and banning the people from performing Friday prayers twice during 2011 and 2012.

## 4. Degradation of Shiites in (State and Semi-State) Media and on National Television:

Degrading the Shia community remained a main sign reflecting the complete absence of equal citizenship since March 2011. Many concerned international organizations believed that the various types of media (print, audio and visual) broadcasted hate speech in an obvious attempt to alienate and incite hatred on Shiites.

In April 2014, the Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Beirut, Ahmad Abdul Salam, stated that they have noticed the increase of hate speech in Bahrain in recent years based on the monitoring done by the OHCHR technical team that has been staying in Bahrain for almost two months.



The national television and radio channels exclude the Shiites in all their programs and do not cover any Shiite rituals. In fact, neither the culture of the Shiites nor their local dialect exist on both the radio and television.

After 2011, the sectarian persecution was obviously seen on the programs of the state-run Bahrain TV that targeted the Shiite citizens and their culture. They attacked the Shiites by defaming, insulting and inciting hatred against them, as well as ridiculing their beliefs and rituals, describing them with racist and derogatory statements, and accusing them of treason.

In some cases, they even allowed audience and guests to insult the Shiites on air, and incite the practice of oppression, killings, persecution, and torture practiced against the Shiites in addition to the demolition of their mosques, and also demand inflicting more than that upon them.

According to lingual and historical studies, the Bahraini local dialect is considered to be the first Arabic dialect on the island of Bahrain. This dialect was extremely ridiculed as a result of the sectarian persecution policy, which dominates the Bahraini television.

The national Bahrain TV broadcasts many social and entertainment shows especially on various occasions, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. However, who watches those programs will obviously detect the intentional absence of the main Bahraini dialect. Perhaps the reason behind the exclusion of this dialect is hiring media executives that are from a certain sect, which obviously shows the discrimination in these programs.

The disrespect of the indigenous local dialect has increased significantly in the Bahraini media after the February 2011 events. It is publicly disrespected in the official television in particular, and in the official and entertainment media in general. There are examples of the mocking of the indigenous Bahraini dialect on state television, such as the "Hiwar Maftouh" (open debate) program that is presented by a Bahraini television host, and the articles of Bahraini journalists of official newspapers like Al-Watan and Al-Bilad newspapers.

The contempt is also practiced in the entertainment media as well within the plays broadcasted by Bahrain TV. Those comic plays constantly present Bahraini villagers as simple and often as foolish people.

## 5. Insulting and Inciting Hatred against the Shiite Sect in Friday Sermons and Some Events:

Insulting the Shiite sect and declaring its adherents as apostates (Takfir) was practiced in a reserved manner before the pro-democracy movement erupted on February 14, 2011. Thereafter, the insults and hate speech from government loyalists continued to increase in public—and apparently— with the government's approval and encouragement as it seems, since the authorities have not taken any action against those who make such hateful statements. In fact, governmental figures praised and met with hardliners who made such insults in public assemblies, one of which was the meeting of an official with Jassim Al-Saeedi (one of the Takfiri figures, who publicly declares Shiites as infidels). The official declared referring to Al-Saeedi: "Who loves him, loves me." It was published in the local press in a clear insult to 65% of the religious demography in Bahrain.

In Friday sermons, many clerics declared that the Shiites are apostates. These clerics include Jassim Al-Saeedi –the preacher of Sabika Al-Nosf Mosque in Isa Town, Jassim Motlaq Al-Thawadi –the preacher of Issa bin Salman Mosque in the village of Safra, Jalal Al-Sharqi – the preacher of Kanoo Mosque in Hamad Town, Abdul Rahman Al Fadhel –the preacher of Nouf Al-Nassar Mosque in Isa Town, and Adel Hassan Al-Hamad – the preacher of Al-Nosf Mosque in Riffa.

> They declared Shiites as infidels, wished harm to be inflicted upon them, directly incited hatred against them, described them – in some cases – as "animal" in speeches drenched with hatred and sectarianism, and incited the authorities in Bahrain and the Gulf to deny them their universal human rights.



Insulting the Shiite sect in Bahrain was not limited to that only. Some pro-government groups brought some regional Takfiri clerics to participate in events for the purpose of fundraising and supporting Jihad. These clerics included Othman Al-Khamees, Hajjaj Al-Ajmi, Mohamad Al-'Arifi, Adnan Mohammed Al-Aroor, and Saleh Al-Fayez. They were known for declaring that Shiites are infidels, disrespecting them, as well as provoking hatred against them publicly and on television. It is noteworthy that some of those were arrested in Gulf States over extremism charges, or had their bank accounts frozen after their involvement in supporting terrorism. Others were welcomed as guests in other events and disrespected the Shiites publicly and provoked hatred against them.

The Bahraini authorities were aware of these events, but they didn't take any action whatsoever. This drives Shiite citizens to believe that the authorities' are partnering with the Takfiri clerics against them. Bahraini authorities used to take actions against some Shiite tweeters and preachers because of their opposition to the authorities' violations, yet they turned a blind eye to extremists, allowed them to enter the country, and gave them the right to organize public events, in which Shiites were subjected to the incitement of hatred

## 6. Deliberate Neglect and Official Vandalism of Ancient and Historical Sites Related to the Shiite Heritage:

The authorities have proven to lack moral tact in dealing with the national heritage. With the launching of the so-called state of National Safety, they demolished some of the most ancient and historical mosques, which formed part of the history of Bahrain, including the ancient mosque of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Barbaghy - which was established in 1549.

The authorities' demolition of such ancient mosques revealed their way of dealing with holy Shia religious sites as well as the civilizational and cultural heritage of Bahrain and their carelessness towards preserving it.

Several years ago, the authorities cleared a large number

of A'ali Burial Mounds, which contained tombs which were 5000-year-old. They also tried to change the name of some of the mounds and link them to areas other than A'ali, which the hills are named after.

The official neglect of the ancient and historical sites and the religious shrines of the Shiite areas is considered a prominent feature of the government's attitude. The concerned authorities do not include these places in the national tour guide and do not pay them any heed, although these places could be invested for tourism and become a destination for visitors and foreign tourists.

The authorities constantly attempt to hide the identity of Shia towns and villages by giving the regions new names and removing parts of some areas and linking them to other regions for political purposes.

The members of some municipal councils in Bahrain continued to raise complaints about the state's continuous intentional neglect of the national heritage in some provinces.



Al-Barbaghy Mosque - 400 yrs +, illegal demolition, continuous ban of prayers

# 7. Degradation of Shiite Citizens at the Hands of Security forces:

After giving the security forces unrestricted authority following the Bahraini pro-democracy movement in 2011, they continuously disrespected the Shiite citizens while none of the officials lifted a finger to stop them.

# In one of the books... considered the Shiites apostates because of their religious beliefs

Disrespecting the Shiite sect and citizens has taken various forms. They have been constantly insulted at checkpoints to a degree that the citizens were asked whether they are Sunnis or dogs! During the night raids of the security forces, there were many cases of tearing up and spitting on the photos of Shiite religious figures and clerics. In addition, Shiites received derogatory treatment in torture chambers where the Shia sect is offended, and cursed. Some video clips showed the security officers insulting Shiites and calling them "sons of mut'ah" -a derogatory term meaning that Shiites are illegitimate children. Racist vocabulary is constantly used by security forces while cracking down on demonstrations in Shiite areas.

The various incidents of degrading and insulting Shiite citizens reflected the sectarian mentality of the security forces. Documented photographs showed that the Advising Unit of the Army's Defense Force printed booklets, which declared Shiites as infidels and disrespected their beliefs, and distributed them among the members of the army.

In one of the books, *The Light of Sunnah and the Darkness* of *Bid'ah (heresy) in Quran and Sunnah*, the writer, Saeed Al-Qahtani, considered the Shiites apostates because of their religious beliefs concerning their visits to the graves and tombs of the Prophet Mohammad and the Shia Imams in the city of Medina in Saudi Arabia, as well as Iraq and Iran. The book stated that "*Tawaf* (to circumambulate) the graves seeking to be closer to who is buried in them" is an act of heresy. The book also calls the Shia *Rafidis* (rejectors), describes them as creators of *Bid'ah* (heresies), and considers them one of the "misguided groups – which include Ismailia, Nusayriyah, Druze and others" – in terms of their beliefs. Moreover, the book also stated that the celebrations held by *Rafidis* (Shiites) and other religious sects on Prophet Mohammad's birthday and "considering it as a holiday resembles the celebrations of the Jews and Christians on their holidays"; "We are forbidden to imitate them," the book says. It also points out, in the same context, to the celebrations of the *Isra* and *Mi'raj* and the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sha'ban.

# Shiites received derogatory treatment in torture chambers where the Shia sect is offended, and cursed

The Advisory Directorate of the Ministry of Defense also printed, on its own expense, another book, entitled *The Light of Tawheed (oneness of God) and the Darkness of Shirk (polytheism) in the Light of Quran and Sunnah*, written by the same author. The book contains the same views declaring others as infidels. It is one of the books distributed among the members of Bahrain's Defense Force.

The BICI report confirmed, more than once, that Shiites are scorned. It indicated that the security forces insult the Shiite citizens because of their religious beliefs and insult the religious beliefs and figures of the Shiite citizens.

# 8. Targeting and Besieging Predominantly Shiite Villages and Areas:

After the eruption of the pro-democracy movement on February 14, 2011, the areas comprising of a Shiite majority became targets of the abuses of security forces. That period of time was characterized by besieging and excessively spraying villages and residential areas (both open and closed areas) with tear gas as well as torture practiced against the people.

According to statistics, there were 79 cases of deaths by suffocation as a result of tear gas fired at citizens. In addition, 24 fetal deaths were recorded due to the deteriorating health conditions of pregnant mothers after inhaling large amounts of tear gas, mostly during the targeting of predominantly Shiite villages and areas.



Since Monday, March 14, 2011, groups of civilians in civilian vehicles started to carry out attacks in some predominantly Shiite villages and suburbs, using shotguns. The residents of those and other areas mobilized themselves to protect themselves and their villages. They divided themselves in groups and headed to the entrances of the villages to prevent the attackers from entering the villages. The residents had a solid background regarding similar events, during the revolutions that erupted in Egypt and Yemen, during which people were terrorized.

Since the entrances of the villages of the Sitra Island were among the regions which were targeted at the evening of that day, the people came out of their homes to protect the residents, the area, and properties, especially after news was spread stating that shops and the cars were being targeted and destroyed.

# The Shiite Bahrainis recall harsh scenes from the security forces' attacks on their areas

On the following day, large numbers of security forces gathered to besiege the island of Sitra. They closed all its entrances and attacked the area, leaving three people killed and hundreds of others injured. Later that day, security forces attacked and surrounded the Sitra Health Center.

That attack left three people dead and more than 250 injured, 65 of whom were in critical conditions. The injuries varied between the head, chest and other serious parts of the body and most of them were caused by shotgun pellets (birdshot). A number of citizens disappeared, but following the events, it was revealed that they were detained, tortured, and abused. They were subjected to forced disappearance and arbitrary detention.

This is how the situation in Bahrain worsened when the authorities retaliated against the citizens because they were demanding their political and civil rights.

The Shiite Bahrainis recall harsh scenes from the security forces' attacks on their areas. Those incidents led to a number of victims, who were inside their homes, due to the excessive use of tear gas canisters, which were fired directly into the houses, rooftops and yards, filling the atmosphere of the neighborhoods with toxic smog. The Shiite residents also remember the insults and house raids, which were mentioned in the BICI report. The report stated that women were forced to stand in front of the policemen in their sleepwear, which is considered to be a blatant violation of the local and religious values and customs. Also, the report mentioned how children were separated from their mothers by force, causing psychological traumas to many of them.

The authorities in Bahrain attacked the Shiite villages and districts in an inhumane way. By granting the security forces the

permission to do whatever they want, the authorities committed serious human rights violations. The districts are still exposed to raids, sieges, and tear gas campaigns.

## 9. The Arrest and Torture of Thousands of Shiite Citizens:

It is noteworthy that torture in Bahrain was not a result of the 2011 events. It is a systematic policy, as the country's history has recorded its existence since the establishment of the state and its victims in each stage.

The data indicates that there were 3054 torture cases between 2011 and 2014, 20 victims of which passed away. In 2011, there were 1866 cases, in 2012, 601 cases, in 2013, 197 cases, and in 2014, 390 cases. These are the cases that were documented by human rights groups alone. According to the statistics of the human rights and political groups, torture continued during 2015 and the authorities have still not allowed the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit Bahrain in order to evaluate the situation in the country.



# Martyr Ali Jassim Makki torture



The typical acts of torture and abuse include slapping, kicking, beating with hands and hoses, electric shocks, rape by inserting solid objects into the anus, sexual harassment by touching the genitalia, pouring water on the victim while placing him in a very cold chamber, forced standing for prolonged hours, deprivation of sleep, food, water, and toilet and shower access, prolonged suspension of victim in extremely painful position, tying up victim in harmful way, threatening to beat and rape victim or his parents, making the victim hear the sounds of other people being tortured, imitating "rape of victim's parents" in front of victim, solitary confinement, publishing victim's photo in media before conviction, not allowing the victim to attend the funeral of the deceased members of his family, injuring the victim with firearm for torture, deprivation of medical care, deprivation of communication, and short-term forced disappearance.

# Martyr Abdulkarim Fakhrawi torture



The first victim who died under torture after the eruption of the pro-democracy movement in 2011 is Hassan Jassim Mohammad Makki. He died on April 3, 2011 during the state of National Safety. The report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry documented the case of Hassan Jassim Makki. In paragraph 991, it confirmed, "The death of Mr. Makki is attributed to torture at the Dry Dock Detention Centre."



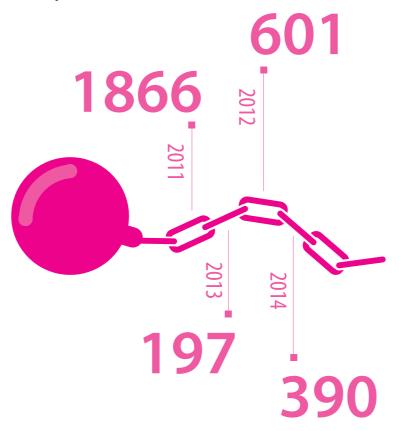


In paragraph 988, the report stated, "The deceased was detained at the Dry Dock Detention Centre and collapsed twice within one and a half. A doctor was called on the first occasion and provided medical assistance. The doctor was then called a second time, and upon his arrival, he discovered that the victim had died. The forensic medical report noted that the deceased had cylindrical bruises and a head wound, which had become infected."

Martyr Issa Saker torture



Paragraph 989 explained, "The Commission received information that the deceased was arrested at his home on 28 March 2011. He was taken to the CID after one day and then to Jaw Prison. On 3 April 2011, relatives saw that his name was posted online as deceased. They went to the morgue and were only allowed to see his face. Salmaniya Medical Complex did not provide a medical report. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Amnesty International examined the body and confirmed to the family that the deceased had been attacked with sharp objects. A witness who had been detained with the deceased in the same cell overheard him being told by prison personnel that since he had sickle cell anaemia, they would shower him and turn on the air conditioning in his cell and that he would not be allowed any medical treatment."



# 10. The Dismissal of Thousands of Shiite Employees after February 14, 2011:

Following the authorities' suppression of the Pearl Roundabout main rally and the increased human rights violations, the BICI report recorded the dismissal or suspension of 2075 employees in the public sector and 2464 employees in the private sector. These numbers are probably official since they were reported by the Civil Service Bureau and the Ministry of Work, while other sources recorded higher figures. Five members of municipal councils were dismissed during the campaign of dismissals; they were influential figures in their constituencies, and they were all from the Municipal Bloc of Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society.

The BICI revealed: "The three main grounds used to dismiss employees" – most of which, if not all, were Shiites – "in the public sector were: absence from work; involvement in demonstrations (...), and public display of opinions incompatible with the internal regulations of the ministries. In the private sector, the two main grounds used to dismiss employees were: absence from work and involvement in union activity related to the demonstrations."

In another paragraph, the BICI added: "Many of the dismissals ostensibly based on absence from work were in fact motivated by retaliation against employees suspected of being involved in the demonstrations."

"Various government officials, having publicly condemned the demonstrations, created an environment whereby individuals participating in demonstrations and strikes could face retaliation for their involvement by employers. In addition, the Commission has received anecdotal evidence suggesting that government representatives directly encouraged companies to dismiss employees suspected to be involved in the events of February/March 2011," the BICI concluded.

Official statements published in the local newspapers revealed that the authorities were behind the campaign of dismissing the Shiite employees from their jobs. These statements confessed that all the ministries and governmental authorities were ordered to implement disciplinary measures according to what was called "rules and regulations".



In a statement reported by Bahrain's News Agency (BNA) on April 17, 2011 the statements of the officials stressed that "offenders will not escape" and "all the offenders and collaborators will be held accountable", in reference to the protesters who participated in the demonstrations.

The dismissals started in March 2011 and lasted until May 2011. They continued thereafter in a lighter pace and under other pretexts, which were intended to be disconnected from the political atmosphere yet remained as recognizable political reasons.

Following the local and international condemnations and mounting complaints, the Bahraini authorities returned many of the dismissed employees to their jobs. However, they kept procrastinating the return of a large number of them until the end of 2014.

On June 2011, during the 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, 12 International Industrial Unions submitted a complaint to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Governing Body. The ILO sent delegations to countries, formed The Trilateral Commission which contains the three terminals of work in the country: workers, employers and the government, and then made two agreements under the supervision of the ILO to return the dismissed employees to their jobs. Due to the aforementioned, many of the employees were returned to their jobs, but most of them were excluded from their previous positions or were marginalized. Not to mention, there was a delay in paying them their dues, like the stalled wages during the period of dismissal, social insurance, and other entitlements such as annual raises.

> the statements of the officials stressed that "offenders will not escape" and "all the offenders and collaborators will be held accountable"

In light of those circumstances and flagrant violations, the authorities transformed the work environments in both the public and private sectors into locations where the inquiry commissions confront employees with pictures that prove their participation in the demonstrations. Many of the employees were referred to courts based on these commissions' investigations. In addition, security forces have assaulted the employees at their work places. The BICI documented these violations, as it pointed out some of these cases. One of violations was when the security forces attacked the building of the Ministry of Health on April 18, 2011, held an employee in a room, and insulted him without even informing him about the reason, and then transferred him to the police station and obliged him to sign papers he didn't read while he was questioned about his participation in demonstrations. Such incidents also occurred with employees in other ministries and companies.

The arbitrary dismissals campaign was accompanied by accelerated employment campaigns launched by employers, i.e. the government and large corporations to replace the dismissed employees with non-Bahrainis even if they were less qualified, since the aim was to make the termination final and permanent.

On the list of dismissed employees, there are still some workers, employees and medical staff who have not been reinstated in their jobs, while the employers, including companies, ministries, and governmental departments and bodies, still show clear procrastination in returning them to their former positions.

### 11. Persecution of Shiite Athletes:

The latest statistics conducted by the Committee for the Defense of Athletes in 2014 indicate that more than 70 athletes were arrested over political reasons related to the 2011 political crisis. The majority of them face harsh sentences that could reach up to life in prison.

The list of targeted athletes – whom are all Shiites – includes international athletes of various sports, who represented Bahrain in international tours and matches. They include the Asian Bodybuilding Championship medalist Tareq Al-Farsani, the Olympic Football Team player Ahmad Al-Asfour and his brother Bahrain Youth Football Team player Jaafar Al-Asfour, the Olympic Team player Younis Abdul Karim, and the Handball Team player Ahmad Abbass. The authorities also targeted the athletes who participated in the 2011 demonstrations, including Bahrain Football National Team players Alaa Hubail, Sayed Adnan, and others. They were subjected to defamation by the national TV channel and some of them were also arrested.



On the other hand, the Bahraini authorities turn to naturalizing foreign athletes, not because of a lack of talents among national athletes, but for the purpose of excluding and disregarding many of those talents. The sports and civil groups made many objections to this policy due to the presence of national talents who are not given the opportunity.

As for the budgets of the sports clubs, the authorities tend to discriminate between the clubs of the Shiite regions and that of the Sunni regions. Despite the lack of statistics, many of the concerned people state that discrimination is practiced.



# Sectarian Discrimination in Employment:

# **O**Sectarian Discrimination in Employment:

### 1. Absence of Equal Opportunities in Employment:

The lack of equal opportunities in employment is as old as the state of Bahrain. The discrimination practiced against Shiite citizens in employment in high, middle, and even low-rank job positions was noticeable, even in the so-called "reform" period at the beginning of the new millennium. However, it began to escalate with the acceleration of retaliation campaigns following the crackdown on the 2011 movement.



The Bahraini authorities have always sought to derogate from the equal citizenship since their practices continued to reveal ongoing discrimination and persecution, based on statistics. The official unemployment statistics raised doubts among civil groups. The Ministry of Labour claims that there are 7414 unemployed Bahrainis, 1046 of which are males and 6368 females, whereas a number of local Bahraini and international studies centers state that the number of unemployed Bahrainis exceeds 20,000. In response to MP Jalal Kadhem's question about the employment of non-Bahrainis in government bodies (January 18, 2015), the Civil Service Bureau stated that during the past three years 2013, 2014 and 2015, 2549 non-Bahrainis were employed; 1212 during 2013, 744 during 2014, and 593 during 2015. The bureau's data indicated that the majority of non-Bahraini employees were hired in the Ministry of Education, mostly as teachers, followed by the Ministry of Health, mostly as doctors, nurses and other medical positions, the Ministry of Electricity and Water, and the Ministry of Labour.

> The government publishes job advertisements for the ministries of Bahrain in Jordanian, Egyptian, Indian, and Pakistani newspapers without publishing them in Bahraini local newspapers

It is noteworthy that there are thousands of unemployed Bahraini undergraduates, mostly Shiites, many of whom have majored in domains linked to the field of education.

The professions occupied by foreigners in the government sector, during the three mentioned years, can be categorized as: 2071 educational professions, 215 medical professions, 91 engineering professions, 114 technical professions, and 58 advisory professions.

The list of unemployed undergraduates did not diminish over the years, as it includes 3400 undergraduates, the majority of which are Shiites, according to the most recent statistics published in the local press in 2015. This list represents one of the proofs of the lack of equal opportunities in the island kingdom. And, it is impossible to say that during the years when the undergraduates were unemployed, no new job opportunities were made available in the market!

The details of the official statistics, which record the number

of unemployed Bahrainis until the end of December 2014, show that the majority of the unemployed are university undergraduates, amounting to 3,396 citizens. The number of unemployed diploma holders reached 1,283 citizens, while the number of unemployed high school graduates and non-graduates reached 2,735. These statistics raise questions among the Bahraini society about why these undergraduates remain unemployed for very long periods of time amid an increase of discrimination, which has invaded government institutions.

The government publishes job advertisements for the ministries of Bahrain in Jordanian, Egyptian, Indian, and Pakistani newspapers without publishing them in Bahraini local newspapers. These advertisements have increased after February 14, 2011, when Bahrainis demanded putting an end to discrimination and achieving democratic and civil reforms. The structure of the political system contributed to the increase of impunity, causing further discrimination, which in turn leads to the lack of equal opportunities.

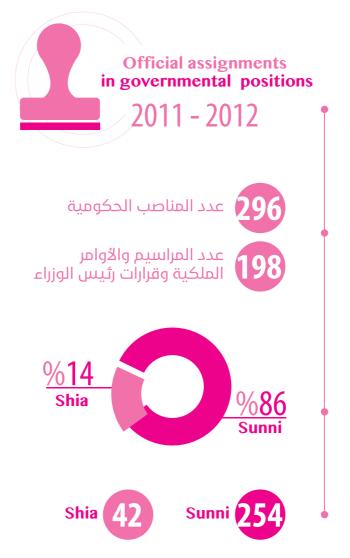
The issue of political naturalization in Bahrain is one of the main reasons behind the lack of equal employment opportunities. This policy provides job opportunities in the public sector and other sectors for naturalized citizens, while excluding Shiites, as a result of the government's uneasiness towards them, as well as its motives for retaliation.

# *a belief that seems to have led a real estate company in Bahrain to apologize for not being able to hire Shia citizens in 2014*

Hatred and contempt campaigns launched against the Shia are led by the media, including national television and pro-regime newspapers, with the government's support and guidance. These campaigns have contributed to the establishment of a belief in the labor market accepting the principle of unequal job opportunities; a belief that seems to have led a real estate company in Bahrain to apologize for not being able to hire Shia citizens in 2014. Hence, the government prohibits, directly and indirectly, these citizens from getting decent jobs in the public and private sectors.

# 2. Exclusion of Shiites from Assignments in Government Posts:

Loyalty to the government has been the only criterion necessary for being hired in high-ranking positions in the government, as well as committees, and large companies, but it has now become rife in all ministries and state agencies.



The number of decisions and royal decrees and orders issued since February 2011 until August 2012 reached 198. These decrees were issued to appoint 8 ministers, 6 agents, 13 assistant agents, 10 ambassadors and ambassadors extraordinary, 1 governor, 91 directors, 62 acting directors, 3 Shura Council members, 16 deputy attorneys general, 3 judges, 4 court heads, 3 court agents, 25 advisers, 41 chairmen, vice chairmen and members of board of directors, and 10 secretaries general, representatives, delegates or inspectors. The percentage of Shiites assigned to these posts is only 14%, and this percentage has only increased by 1% until 2013!

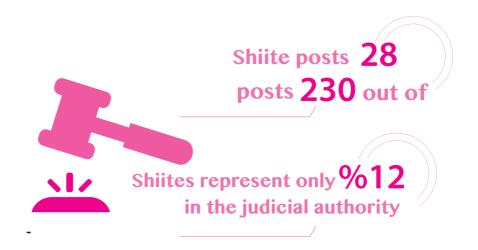


The government's appointment policy, issued either by royal decrees and orders or ministerial decrees, has always reflected the systematic policy of sectarian discrimination and exclusion. Indeed, it is not possible that the citizens of the Shiite sect, who make up the majority of the population in Bahrain, constitute competencies-in the abovementioned appointments- of only 15%, let alone the percentages of Shiites assigned in senior government positions which amount to: 15% in the executive authority, 12% in the judiciary, and 10% in boards and large companies.

### 3. Exclusion of Shiites in the Judiciary:

The percentage of Shiites hired in the judiciary, which comprises of the Constitutional Court, the Department of Legal and Legislative Affairs, the Public Prosecution, and the Supreme Judicial Council, which supervises the Judicial Inspection Department, is only 12%.

Shiites hold 2 out of 9 of the posts in the Supreme Judicial Council, 6 out of 24 in the legislative and legal bodies, zero out of 10 in the Judicial Inspection Department, zero out of 10 in the technical office of the Court of Cassation, zero out of 12 in the Court of Cassation, 1 out of 15 in the supreme courts of appeal, 1 out of 9 in the high courts of appeal, 4 out of 23 in high courts, 2 out of 12 in minor courts, 1 out of 6 in executional courts, zero out of 5 in the case management office, zero out of 12 in high criminal courts, zero out of 7 in minor criminal courts, 10 out of 72 in the public prosecution, and 1 out of 7 in the constitutional court. In summary, 28 out of 230 of those hired in these positions are Shiites, a fact that indicates the practice of extreme discrimination in the judicial authority.



### 4. Clearing Government Departments of Shiite Managers:

Many official ministerial departments, bodies, and major pro-government companies have witnessed an elimination of Shiite directors due to the systematic targeting following the democratic movement in February 2011. Shiites were dismissed from the Bahrain Training Institute - for example - which was founded in 1979. The first to be dismissed was the director general of the institute, who was defamed in the press, transferred to a job that is below his level (of expertise), and had his job description altered. The deputy director of financial and administrative affairs was also defamed in the press, suspended from work, transferred afterwards to a job that is below his level (of expertise), and had his job description altered. These actions, which included removing the job title, changing the job description, final termination, and suspension from work, were taken against the deputy director-general of the trainees affairs, director of trainees affairs, director of the internal audit department, director of planning and development, head of communication and languages department, head of mechanics and automotive department, head of instrumentation technology department, head of business studies department, head of civil engineering department, head of institution training department, head of human resources, chief procurement officer, head of accounting department, and a number of teachers and administrators. Moreover, 37 employees, who have various competencies, were transferred from the institute to public schools and given lower-ranking jobs. Many of their positions were given to foreigners.

The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health have witnessed the same procedures taken against many of its employees, and their promotion systems remain stalled to date.



# The Shiite posts that were violated in the Bahrain Training Institute 2011



**The Director-General and his deputies:** The Director-General Of financial and administrative affairs Of the trainees affairs



### Directors:

of trainees affairs of the internal audit department of planning and development



Heads of departments:

communication and languages department mechanics and automotive department instrumentation technology department business studies department civil engineering department institution training department human resources chief procurement officer accounting department



## Others:

Teachers and administrators 37 employees

# Types of violations against the Shiite sect in the institution 2011:

- 01 Defaming the employee in the press
- 02 Transferring the employee into a lower-level job
- Alternating the job description into a consultant
- Marginalizing and excluding the employee from daily tasks
- 4. Assigning one of the mandatories to do the employee's work
- <sup>66</sup> Transferring the employee to work outside the institution
- 07 Excluding the employee from the main job
- 108 Replacing Shia employees by employees from the other sect
- 09 Ending the contracts
- 10 Terminating the employee
- Giving the post to an Asian employee
- Mandating an employee from the Ministry of Education to replace the Shia employee
- B Excluding the employee from the Institution
- Transferring some of the qualified employees to public schools

# **9** Persecution in Public Services:

# **O Persecution in Public Services:**

### 1. Sectarian Discrimination in Providing Health Care:

In the wake of the 2011 events, health care, as well as all other services, were affected by sectarian discrimination, which is considered a violation of human rights and an explicit breach of medical neutrality and moral and human values.

According to the BICI report, on February 17, 2011, the Ministry of Health banned ambulances from heading to the Pearl Roundabout to treat the injured protestors, on which security forces had cracked down. Such repression was repeated in other situations, on the onset of the state of emergency, when the security forces and the military took control of public hospitals in Bahrain and set up checkpoints inside them. They insulted Shiite patients who were admitted there; as a result, the injured protesters were compelled to be treated at home and out of sight for fear of arrest if they resorted to hospitals. Many of the injured, who were forced to go to public hospitals due to the severity of their injuries, were actually arrested. This still continued to take place in Bahrain, thus the injured do not feel that it is safe to resort to hospitals.

A documented story, among many others, of a patient that suffers from sickle-cell anaemia (a disease from which many of the Shiite population in Bahrain suffer), has shown the extent of sectarian discrimination inflicted on the patients in the period when the security forces took over the Salmaniya Medical Complex.

The incident states that Bahraini citizen Rabab Jassim Al-Aswad (Shiite) was in the hospital during the National Safety period, imposed in 2011. She had went to the information desk to use the phone and call her family when a police officer pointed his pistol at her back and forced her to return to the room. She was deprived of proper nutrition since the food stocks expired, her condition worsened at the time, and the oxygen levels in her blood dropped as a result of moving her out of the intensive care unit.

Even after the state of National Safety, Rabab Al-Aswad still faced serious violations of her rights as a patient. In November 2011, she was taken to the emergency room in the Salmaniya complex, where the head of the nursing department prevented her from receiving treatment.

Al-Aswad personally went to ask why she is not allowed to take the prescribed dose of morphine injections. The nurse in charge answered, "Who told you that you have the right to treatment? You have no rights at all!" When she tried to argue that political views should not affect her right to receive treatment, the nurse shouted at her and accused her of speaking ill of the government and also threatened that she will call the police.

Thereafter, four persons dressed in civilian clothing came to the emergency room, and started interrogating Rabab. They asked her irrelevant questions, and questioned her about the number of protest marches she had participated in and her opinion on some political societies. A police officer then joined them and told her that if she did not like how things are going in Bahrain, she must move to Iran.

They accused Rabab of many things and threatened her that if she did not cooperate with them, they will bring a female police officer to take her to the police station, where she will be tortured brutally. Rabab then was returned to her room, where the same individuals who interrogated her were present. They ordered her not to leave her bed according to the directions given.

After a while, two police officers, a man and a woman, woke her up and began another round of interrogation. They used abusive language and accused her once again of several irrational things, such as hiding weapons and trying to overthrow the government. When she told them that they can check her medical file, which will prove that she was in the hospital during that period and did not participate in any protests outside, they accused her of lying and told her that she deserves to be locked up in jail.

They forced her to sign papers without allowing her to read what was on them and before they left, they took her mobile phone and returned it after a few hours. The police officer who interrogated her earlier then returned with another officer and told her that he would help in the investigation of the case on two conditions: 1) that she does not return to the hospital when the nurse in question is present, and 2) to pass by the police cabin located outside whenever she visits the hospital so they can chat, drink tea, and smoke cigarettes. When she refused, the officer told her that he will release her now, but there is a possibility that she will be arrested.

This is one of the incidents from that period. Sickle cell disease patients underwent hard times to obtain treatment. However, they still face deliberate negligence when they try to access health care. The Chairman of the Bahrain Society for Sickle Cell Anaemia Patient Care, Zakareya Al-Kadhem, confirms that the spate of deaths among sickle-cell anaemia patients in the Ministry of Health is ongoing and has exceeded its normal range, as the situation has turned into intended murder.

Official statistics revealed that there are about 18,000 sickle-cell anaemia patients in Bahrain. Despite this fearsome figure, there is no sufficient special medical care for them. Therefore, the patients suffer twice as much from this disease.

As for the number of health centers in the Shia areas, it does not match the number of individuals provided with care, in comparison with other districts. Long queues and slow service are evident in the health centers in Shiite areas (the northern district, which includes 40 towns). The centers are always crowded because they are few in number and are not distributed properly in the region, compared to other districts. Municipal members confirm that 10 other health centers, at least, are needed in the northern district, but the government neglects these needs due to policies of discrimination.

The Prime Minister ordered that the treatment of foreign workers must take place in health centers, but then he decided that certain areas, which are Sunni, shall be excluded. Al-Hidd, one of these Sunni areas, was replaced by the Shiite area, Al-Noaim, for the treatment of foreigners. Riffa, Zallaq, and Askar areas were also excluded and foreign workers were referred to the center of the Shiite Nuwaidrat area for treatment. This indicates the open and systematic policy of discrimination and the lack of equal citizenship.

# 2. Growing Discrimination in Distribution of Scholarships and Depriving Shiites of Right to Education:

Scholarships represent one of the manifestations of blatant discrimination and sectarian oppression in Bahrain. Shiite students are deprived of their rights amid a sharp increase in discrimination in the distribution of scholarships.

Bahrain's Ministry of Education interferes in determining the majors that students will choose, and has added a new condition regarding the distribution of scholarships, which states that 60% is for educational achievement, and 40% for the personal interview conducted by the ministry with top-grade students, which makes it more difficult for the students. The ministry refrained from publishing the scholarships granted, and the names of their recipients in local newspapers.

A recent study in Bahrain revealed that the year 2015 witnessed the highest levels of sectarian discrimination in the distribution of scholarships, based on a comparative study with the five previous years.

The study was conducted on the students that have cumulative grade point averages (GPA) that range between 95% -99% over the past five academic years, in terms of the distribution of scholarships according to university major preferences. The result showed an alarming level of sectarian discrimination. **First:** In year 2011-2012, the study was conducted on 166 male and female students. The results were as follows:



21% of top-grade students deprived of scholarships (abroad)

- **18%** were allowed to pursue their first (university) major preference
- 4% were allowed to pursue their second (university) major preference
- **7%** were allowed to pursue their third (university) major preference
- **49%** were not allowed to pursue their first three (university) major preferences
  - 1% were deprived of scholarships (abroad) and grants

**Second:** In year 2012-2013, the study was conducted on 101 male and female students. The results were as follows:



25%	of male and female students were deprived of schol- arships
7%	were allowed to pursue their first (university) major preference
3%	were allowed to pursue their second (university) major preference
9%	were allowed to pursue their third (university) major preference
54%	were not allowed to pursue their first three (university) major preferences

**Third:** In year 2013-2014, the study was conducted on 108 male and female students. The results were as follows:



**10%** were deprived of scholarships

- **30%** were allowed to pursue one of their first three (university) major preferences
- **60%** were not allowed to pursue their first three (university) major preferences

**Fourth:** In year 2014-2015, the study was conducted on 109 male and female students. The results were as follows:



8%	were deprived of scholarships
17%	were allowed to pursue their first (university) major preference
6%	were allowed to pursue their second (university) major preference
8%	were allowed to pursue their third (university) major preference
61%	were not allowed to pursue their first three (university) major preferences

**Fifth:** In year 2015, the study was conducted on 146 students, who have cumulative GPAs ranging between 95% -99.2%. The results were as follows:



**33.6%** were deprived of scholarships

17.8%	were allowed to pursue their first (university) major preference
0.7%	were allowed to pursue their second (university) major preference
4.1%	were allowed to pursue their third (university) major preference
77.4%	were not allowed to pursue their first three (university) major preferences

The study indicates that year 2015 is the most distinctive among the past five academic years, in terms of the distribution of scholarships and the preferred fields of study. It shows that sectarian discrimination deprived 127 out of 630 students of scholarships in the past five years. It also deprived 387 students of their first three preferred fields of study.

34% of the top-grade students have been deprived of scholarships in 2015, according to the same study. The study included 146 students that have GPAs above 95%. And, it showed that the percentage of the students that were deprived of the first preferred field of study is 82%.

The people concerned about this issue wonder what happened to the 228 medical-major scholarships as many students have not been allowed to pursue their studies in the medical field; which hints that scholarships are being distributed secretly among pro-government students.

# 3. Banning Teaching of Shiite (Jaafari) Doctrine in Public and Private Schools:

Education is a basic human right guaranteed and safeguarded by all religions and international covenants, conventions and agreements. It is the right of all human beings, without discrimination based on affiliation, race, color, language, religion or other reasons. It is noted that the below-mentioned treaties and agreements stress, in a number of their articles, on the necessity to ensure not have anyone deprived of or denied this basic right: Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 25 and Article 3 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 5 (e) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 4.3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and other international conventions and treaties.

In Bahrain, since the establishment of the state in the early 1970s of the last century, the government has deliberately imposed a certain curricula of religion and belief on public and private schools. However, there are multiple religious denominations in Bahrain. Therefore, there is a need to have multiple curricula teaching the principles of every religious doctrine. Students should learn the teachings of the sect they belong to in schools.

Since Official institutions do not heed the urgent need of male and female students who follow the Shiite doctrine, civil religious institutions are playing the role of providing the educational needs of the students according to their religious affiliation.

The government deprives the Shiite community, which represents 65% to 70% of the country's population, of learning anything related to their religious doctrine. They force them to learn the principles of the Sunni doctrine in the official curriculum. This indicates the government's lack of commitment to

neutrality in this matter, in addition to their practice of discrimination and failure to treat a group that represents the majority of the population on the basis of equal citizenship.

# 4. Discrimination in Housing and Housing Services:

In its 2014 Annual Religious Freedom Report, the US State Department stated in its part on Bahrain that "naturalized citizens received government-provided housing more quickly than non-naturalized citizens, whose names remained on waiting lists for houses."

Theodore Karasik, from the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA) in Dubai, says in a statement, published by Reuters news agency, "I think this is one form of discrimination. In some areas there's no housing and also no infrastructure."



According to official information, there are more than 53,000 housing requests at a rate of 4,000 requests per year. However, the political naturalization policy overshadows this issue. Facts indicate that the naturalized citizens are provided with houses ignoring many older housing applications, some of which date back to the 1990s.

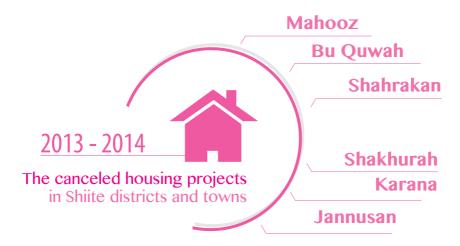
The cost of the housing requests of naturalized citizens exceeds 2.289 billion Bahraini dinars, the equivalent of 6.07 billion US dollars.

Bahrain is suffering from a deliberately caused housing crisis that can be solved in the easiest fashion, yet solutions are being prevented due to the practices of discrimination, oppression, and corruption. Some powerful figures monopolize 90% of land in Bahrain as private properties, while the Ministry of Housing claims that land is scarce in the country.

Bahrain has an area of 718 to 720 kilometers. Citizens live in an area of 70 kilometers only, while the rest of the land is granted to individuals, families, and powerful people and turned into private properties, either through grants or thefts.

Gulf States gave millions to Bahrain through the GCC 'Marshall plan' to provide services, including housing projects. In addition, the Ministry of Housing allocated 120 million dinars of the local budget to housing projects in 2014, and yet the housing crisis has not been resolved.

Even though there are more than 3,000 ramshackle houses, the majority of which belong to Shiite citizens, the Department of Housing canceled, under various flimsy excuses, six housing projects- all located in Shiite areas- in the years 2013-2014. The cancelled Jannusan, Karana, Shakhurah, Shahrakan, Bu Quwah, and Mahooz housing projects were going to provide 1,462 residential units.



In addition, the government take advantage of the citizens' needs for housing services, which are a right guaranteed by the Constitution of Bahrain, to indirectly make them form delegations to visit government officials and humiliatingly ask them to work on providing housing services. Such humiliating requests actually resulted in the completion of some housing projects. However, this method is not required in pro-government regions, where housing projects are implemented without having citizens go through all of that.

An example of the unfair distribution of housing services and blatant discrimination is the Nuwaidrat housing project, which was called "Horat Sanad". The third phase of the housing project was distributed to the citizens of the southern district (Sunnis), despite the existence of requests from citizens of the district itself where the housing project was established. The residents of the project were selected and sorted in a purely sectarian manner.

#### 5- Discrimination in Municipal Services:

Figures show that there is discrimination in municipal services. One-third of the Northern District areas (Shiite areas) still lack sewage systems. Until the onset of the new millennium, Shiite areas remained without paved streets, street lights, sewage systems, gardens, infrastructure, and other services. With the beginning of the so-called reform era, the situation improved, and then discrimination prevailed again after it became a growing trend. The discrimination policy has stopped many projects in the Shiite villages and areas. The plans for developing villages were halted after plans for the development of cities was included, and then it stopped completely after the issue was referred to the Ministry of Municipalities.

The neglect and discrimination extended to the establishment and maintenance of gardens in the villages and neighborhoods; as they remain without maintenance for long periods of time. The projects for improving the shores were also affected. It can be noted that the first phase of the coast project of the Shiite Ma'ameer area was launched in 2006 and is still pending, despite all efforts of the members of the successive municipal councils. Yet, five new coast areas have been established and opened in Muharraq with a budget that exceeds the budget of the Ma'ameer coast by multiple times. The same situation took place in many other areas as well.

Discrimination in services comes in many forms. Some reports indicate that there is discrimination with regards to street paving priorities in the new housing complexes. Due to the lack of clear standards for paving the streets of complexes, it is done by prioritizing certain areas over others.

Many Shiite areas suffer from lack of schools, so parents send their children to elementary, middle, and secondary schools in other areas, despite the fact that there are spaces available for the construction of schools.

A number of municipal council members reveled that sudden decisions are taken to stop many projects in Shiite areas in spite of the fact that there were budget approvals and tender offers.,

Municipal council members in Bahrain protest that their authority was usurped while the Ministry of Municipalities (unilaterally) takes control. The government turned the municipal capital council to a general secretariat through the appointments it made, thus eliminating the will of the citizens residing in the capital, who are mostly Shiites. The government also permanently dissolved the Central District municipal council. The majority of the members in both of these councils were Shiite.

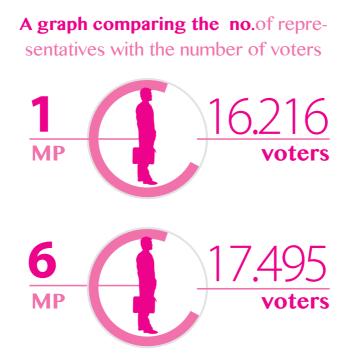
# Persecution in Political Activism:

### **O Persecution in Political Activism:**

#### 1- Sectarian Distribution of Constituencies:

Due to the "unfair" decree issued for the distribution of constituencies, these constituencies took over the share of the Shiites, or the opposition, in the elected council of representatives (parliament). This contradicts with the constitutional articles 31 and 56, which stipulate that the distribution must be made by the passing of a law.

The official figures of the parliamentary-election results in 2010 revealed the blatant unjust distribution of constituencies. The official figures indicated that 35 MPs won seats in the parliament by garnering 130,073 votes.



The figures also indicated that the 17 MPs of the Shiite areas received 82,838 votes, which account for 64%, while the 18 MPs of other areas received 47,235 votes, which account for 36%. This turns the popular majority to a minority as a result of sectarian discrimination and persecution.



Today, constituencies are an obscene manifestation of persecution based on religion and sect. The government is not ashamed of make such a distribution, which reveals the extent of persecution growing within the political system.

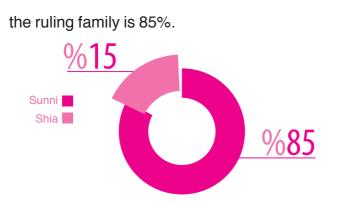
A graph indicating the difference between



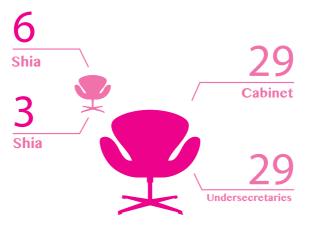


#### 2- Sectarian Marginalization and Segregation in Composition of the Government:

The percentage of the Shiite citizens in the executive authority is only 15%, while the percentage of Sunnis and members of

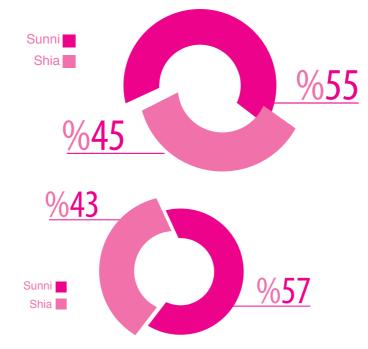


The Shia in the cabinet, which includes the Prime Minister, his deputies and other ministers, amount to 6 out of 29. The number of Shiite undersecretaries is 3 out of 29. The total number of these positions is 58, 9 of which only are Shiites!



#### 3-Marginalization of Shiites in Parliament and Shura Council:

According to the National Action Charter, in favor of which the majority of the people of Bahrain voted in a national referendum, the legislative authority consists of two councils. One council is elected freely and directly by the people and has legislative functions (the lower house), and the other council (the upper house) is appointed and includes what the government describes as individual with expertise and competence to be resorted to for consultation on what requires further knowledge and experience. However, after the 2002 Constitution was issued and amended without reference to the people, the appointed council was given legislative powers that prevent the elected council from passing any legislation that the government doesn't desire; in addition to a distasteful sectarian distribution of constituencies in a manner that hampers the representation of the majority of the people in the parliament.



In the elected council, the percentage of the Shiites is 45%, while that of the Sunnis is 55%. In the appointed council, 43% of the members are Shiites, while 57% represent Sunnis and members of the royal family. The elected council and the council appointed by the king constitute of 40 seats each. Thus, there are 18 Shiite MPs in the House of Representatives (the elected council) and 17 Shiite members in the Shura Council (appointed council).

**11** Link Between Political Naturalization and Plan to Change Religious Demographic Makeup, Turning the Majority into a Minority:

#### Link Between Political Naturalization and Plan to Change Religious Demographic Makeup, Turning the Majority into a Minority:

Political naturalization increased in the 1990s and has grown at a faster pace since 2001. Naturalization is considered to be a strategic plan, according to the testimony of the government adviser who exposed the scheme, Dr. Salah Al-Bandar. It was stated in his report, which was named after him, the Bandar-Gate, that the aim of the plan is to change the demographic composition and turn the Shiites into a minority. This plan continues to be implemented to date.

Al-Bandar leaked his report in July/August 2006, and it included a plan aimed at marginalizing and excluding the Shiites from all decision-making positions, eliminate them from a number of state institutions, and deprive them of education and other services. The report further stated that the plans were to be conducted through programmed and adopted policies and through the establishment of government agencies to sponsor this plan and institutions in the form of civil institutions (GON-GOs) that would replace the civil-society professional institutions, in which Shiites constitute the majority; in addition to the establishment of forums and newspapers that are loyal to the government. Large amounts of money have been dedicated for implementing this scheme. The bills of exchange and checks revealed how massive these sums are.

According to the report, the executive leader of this network is the Minister of State, Ahmed bin Attiyatallah Al Khalifa, and some of its members include Shura Council members, PMs, journalists, clerics, and others, who are mentioned in the report.

According to official figures, the government has naturalized more than 95,000 people between 2004 and 2010. However, in

2004, the former Parliament Speaker, Khalifa Al-Dhahrani, told some political parties in an unofficial statement that 120,000 have been naturalized by 2004. Nonetheless, the number of the naturalized citizens remained obscure, especially since the government restrains from informing citizens about its plans.

This scenario of political naturalization and its repercussions, which affects the Bahraini community comes to mainly target Shiites, aiming at turning them into a minority amid the government's growing concerns about the Shia, and its desire to exclude them.

By studying the official numbers (until 2010), it is clear that the number of the politically naturalized amounted to 95,372 foreigners, which account for 17.3% of the population. This means that the government was able, over the past ten years, to accomplish a demographic change by 17%, according to the figures it released following the National Action Charter and the start of the new parliamentary experience in 2002.

Furthermore, the government has altered the constituencies and dissolved about 32,000 Shiite votes. Hence, the political naturalization process currently has an influence of 30 to 40% on the elections. This means that it contributes to the exclusion of a significant number of Shia voters, and thus, making this plan become a political reality.

The government recruits the naturalized citizens in the military and security sector. Bahrain had an abnormal and exceptional average in the ratio between the number of police officers and the number of citizens, according to the 2013 report of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). It had the world highest average, which reached 6 times the world average. The government provides the naturalized citizens and their children with facilitations— such as housing, right to vote, health, education and other services — at the expense of the citizens. On the other hand, Shiite citizens are prevented from working in military institutions under the pretext of a lack of loyalty to the regime. **12** The Position of the International Community and International Human Rights Organizations:

#### The Position of the International Community and International Human Rights Organizations:

The international community and its various institutions expressed, on different occasions, their rejection of the sectarian discrimination and religious persecution against the Shiite citizens in Bahrain, as well as the lack of equal citizenship. These stances were made amid the Shiite citizens' ongoing subjection to obscene injustice – carried out by the government– and daily struggle for survival; as the principles of coexistence, partnership and sense of security continue to be undermined.

However, the Bahraini government kept on escaping from this reality by denying it. Although Bahrain's human rights record is stained with recurrent international condemnations, it continues to evade this fact and wastes time, committing even more violations.

Bahrain has also received a growing number of international recommendations. During the Human Rights Council session in May 2012, the recommendations addressed to Bahrain reached 170 from more than 60 countries around the world, after the Universal Periodic Review of human rights was presented.

#### 1- The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief deems the deportation of Sheikh Al-Najati a discrimination against an entire group based on their religious beliefs:

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, issued a strongly worded statement demanding to put an end to the persecution of Sheikh Hussein Al-Najati and to give him back his nationality. The Special Rapporteur stated that Al-Najati reportedly left Bahrain, his homeland, after he received threats that he and his son will be arrested in case he refused to leave.

"I have received information from reliable sources that on 23 April Hussain Mirza Abdelbaqi Najati was forced to leave his own country to Lebanon after being exposed to enormous pressure and harassment by the authorities," Bielefeldt said.

The UN expert's statement added that Bahrain's Ministry of Interior issued a statement on its official website on April 23, and it appears that the decision of revoking Al-Najati's Bahraini citizenship and the orders to expel him from Bahrain may have been made due to his religious position among the Shia Sect. "I have expressed to the Government of Bahrain my grave concerns at what appears to be an act of religiously motivated discrimination which would seem to impose unjustified restrictions on Al- Najati's fundamental human rights, including his right to practice and profess peacefully his religious beliefs," Bielefeldt stressed, warning that the case may have far-reaching implications for the community in Bahrain. "Targeting the most senior and influential Shia religious figure in Bahrain may amount to intimidating and thus discriminating against the entire Shia Muslim community in the country because of its religious beliefs," Bielefeldt said.

Mr.Bielefeldt also urged the Bahraini Government to "reverse its decision, which appears to be arbitrary, and to facilitate Al-Najati's return from Lebanon."

"International law, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, prohibits arbitrary deprivation of nationality, including on religious grounds," Bielefeldt said, adding that "discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms."

"I understand that Mr. Najati has consistently refrained from engaging into politics, and has maintained his position and activities strictly in the realm of his religion," the Special Rapporteur further stated. "He is not known to have advocated violence or its use, or to have committed acts that would undermine national security or public order, nor has he been charged or sentenced for committing such acts," he noted.

# 2-British Parliament expressed concern over continued media campaigns that promote sectarian hatred:

In October 2012, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British Parliament, for its part, expressed its concern over the state media's continued adoption of same methods. In its report, it voiced Britain's concern over the ongoing media campaigns aimed at promoting sectarian hatred in Bahrain. The British report stated: "We are still concerned about the sectarian phrases that are used in the media, and we will continue to urge respect for ethical and professional standards to avoid intolerance, incitement of hatred, and violence."

#### 3- US State Department deems discrimination against Shiite population one of the significant problems in Bahrain:

The US State Department considered in its 2013 annual human rights report that some of the significant problems in Bahrain are discrimination against the Shiite population, arbitrary deprivation of life, lack of consistent accountability for security officers accused of committing human rights violations, arrest of individuals on charges relating to freedom of expression, reported violations of privacy, and restrictions on civil liberties, including the freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and some religious practices. The government at times imposed and enforced travel bans on political activists in conjunction with arrest charges. The government maintained the revocation of citizenship for 31 individuals and issued a decree regulating communications between political societies and foreign entities.

#### 4- The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) discusses sectarian language directed against a faction of Bahraini society:

On April 30, 2013, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) issued its annual report on violations of religious freedom around the world. The report included a section about Bahrain. It critically and severely discussed a number of issues and documented media campaigns that use sectarian language directed against a faction of the society.

The report stated that in December 2012 a delegation of the Commission on International Religious Freedom visited Bahrain and assessed the conditions of freedom of religion or belief. It also evaluated the progress made by the Bahraini government in implementing relevant recommendations made by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, including that regarding the reconstruction of Shia mosques and religious structures that the government demolished in 2011.

"The delegation met in Manama with high-level government officials, including the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs and the Minister of Human Rights," the report stated. The delegation also met with associations, religious leaders, representatives of human rights organizations, representatives of non-Muslim religious minority communities, other civil society leaders, and ordinary Bahraini citizens, according to the report.

In its report, the commission stated that if Bahrain does not adequately implement the BICI recommendations over the next year, it may negatively impact its status in the USCIRF's classification of countries based on religious freedom.

"USCIRF remains concerned by the government's ongoing lack of accountability for abuses against the Shi'i community since 2011," the report added. "USCIRF acknowledges some progress by the Bahraini government in implementing various BICI recommendations related to freedom of religion or belief, but much more needs to be done. USCIRF will continue to monitor closely the religious freedom situation in Bahrain over the next year."

"Bahrain is a diverse country and Bahraini citizens have a deep sense of their culture and history going back centuries," the report said. It also added that Bahrainis describe the Bahraini society as "historically tolerant of all religions."

The report further stated that in February 2011, there were demonstrations, in which the demonstrators initially called for political reforms, but over time, and after authorities brutally cracked down on the protestors, the demands changed with some demonstrators, who started calling for bigger demands. The report stressed that the authorities targeted a specific group of the society with mass arrests, torture, and killings.

The report added that the Bahraini government created the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which concluded that "nearly 3,000 people were detained during the crackdown, and as many as half faced abuses such as electric shocks and beatings in detention."

"The BICI report concluded that the government of Bahrain committed systematic and egregious human rights violations by suppressing pro-democracy protests, particularly in February and March 2011," the report noted. It concluded that a lack of accountability by Bahraini authorities led to a "culture of impunity" and violations of international and Bahraini law. The abuses included excessive use of force against protesters leading to more than 35 deaths and hundreds of injuries, arbitrary arrests and detentions, psychological and physical abuse of detainees."

"Security forces systematically raided homes in order to arrest individuals. This practice often was accompanied by sectarian insults and verbal abuse. The report also documented the unfair and summary dismissals of thousands of professionals, workers, and students, the vast majority of whom were Shi'i Muslims," the report stressed.

"The government demolished at least 30-35 Shi'a mosques," the report added. "Government officials claimed that most of the structures were illegal, but they could not answer why so many were destroyed in a short period of time (between March and May 2011). According to Bahraini officials, only five mosques had fully complied with legal and administrative requirements," the report highlighted, adding: "However, according to the BICI report, the Bahraini government did not follow legal provisions requiring notice and an administrative, and possibly judicial, hearing before the demolitions."

#### 5- The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) Report Confirms "Religious Persecution":

The BICI report addressed the issues of incitement of hatred, the abuse of the law, discrimination, use of sectarian language and insults against detainees, and assaults against religious symbols.

The report stated that many of the cases of torture and ill-treatment that took place were a result of sectarian discrimination policies. The report also noted that many of the dismissals, which were allegedly based on absence from work, were in reality motivated by retaliation against the employees.

As for the recommendations, no. 1640 confirmed that the Bahraini media is biased towards the government, not the people. "Six of the seven daily newspapers are pro-government," the report stated that: "The continuing failure to provide opposition groups with an adequate voice in the national media risks further polarizing the political and ethnic divide in Bahrain. The lack of access to mainstream media creates frustration within opposition groups."

Recommendation 1724 urged the authorities to take necessary concrete measures in order to avoid incitement of hatred in the media.

## THE PERSECUTION OF Shia Citizens in Bahrain

The study of sectarian persecution and discrimination in Bahrain is a taunting process, given the dark patches woven into its history, staining its memory throughout the ages, eventually taking over everything else.

This report provides statistics and facts, aiming at revealing nothing but the truth, since the road to the achievement of a state of equal citizenship begins with recognizing the problem that has placed Bahrain at the bottom, in comparison to other countries. Much more work is also required in order to reject and criminalize discrimination and persecution, and build a country based on both equal citizenship and opportunities.

Through this report, we claim today that Bahrain is in dire need of the help of friends, from the international community, human rights organizations and institutions to pull it out of the dark tunnel of persecution and discrimination and save it from this invasive cancer of sectarianism that have begun to destroy everything and continues to grow even bigger. We insist that help is needed since this disease has reached to advanced and unprecedented stages that directly threaten stability in Bahrain

