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Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Bahrain

Addendum

Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



1. The Kingdom of Bahrain takes continuous action to promote human rights and to protect human dignity by cooperating with all stakeholders and partners at the national and international levels.
2. The Kingdom of Bahrain also continues to engage in constructive cooperation with the United Nations, the Human Rights Council and all its mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, and with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other competent international mechanisms and organizations.
3. In line with its aspiration to cooperate with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism with a view to achieving its goals and objectives based on the principles of dialogue, objectivity and non-selectivity, the Kingdom of Bahrain carefully reviewed the 245 recommendations made during the examination of its fourth national report on 7 November 2022.
4. The recommendations that have been accepted are recommendations that are already in force, or recommendations that are currently being planned or implemented.
5. The recommendations that have been noted require further study and research. Some of them can be partially accepted provided that their content is not incompatible with national legislation and the provisions of the Islamic sharia, and provided that they do not undermine State sovereignty.
6. Accordingly, 172 recommendations have been accepted and 73 have been noted.

Questions concerning continuous action to improve the conditions of migrant workers and to afford them protection

7. The following recommendations are accepted:
124.23, 124.152, 124.220, 124.221, 124.222, 124.223, 124.224, 124.225, 124.226, 124.227, 124.228, 124.229.
8. The Kingdom of Bahrain accords priority to protection of the rights of migrant workers, in line with the Kingdom's principles, ethics and culture, which are based on coexistence and respect. It also promotes cooperation in raising migrant workers' awareness of their rights and duties and in informing them of developments in the labour market. The Migrant Worker Protection and Support Centre, the first of its kind in the Middle East, is a comprehensive and specialized Centre responsible for the protection and admission of migrant labour. It provides diverse preventive, advisory and legal services, creates shelters for victims and potential victims of the crime of trafficking in persons and all other forms of exploitation, and protects their employment rights, in accordance with international norms and best practices in that area. The Kingdom's full commitment to guaranteeing protection for persons belonging to this group is thus clearly demonstrated.
9. The following recommendation has been noted:
124.230.

Questions concerning the ratification of international treaties and conventions to which the Kingdom of Bahrain has not yet acceded or concerning the withdrawal of reservations

10. The following recommendations are accepted:
124.1, 124.2, 124.3, 124.11, 124.13, 124.16, 124.17, 124.18, 124.19, 124.22, 124.24, 124.27.
11. The Kingdom of Bahrain continuously studies all international instruments and their compatibility with its national legislation and policies in order to ensure the protection, respect and promotion of human rights within its territory. It constantly seeks to enhance its cooperation with various United Nations mechanisms and to fulfil its obligations under the instruments to which it is a party.

12. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.4, 124.10, 124.12, 124.14, 124.15, 124.20, 124.21, 124.25, 124.26.

Questions concerning the amendment and development of national legislation aimed at the protection and promotion of human rights

13. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.38, 124.40, 124.46, 124.64, 124.65, 124.116, 124.133, 124.135, 124.144.

14. The Kingdom of Bahrain takes steps to protect, respect and promote human rights in all its national laws and practices, prioritizing their continuous development in a manner that guarantees the welfare and well-being of all citizens and residents within its territory.

15. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.66, 124.69, 124.99, 124.143, 124.151.

Questions concerning cooperation with the United Nations, special procedures and mandate-holders, and concerning invitations to special rapporteurs

16. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.30, 124.34.

17. The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to cooperating and engaging in dialogues with United Nations bodies in a spirit of transparency and openness with a view to promoting, protecting and guaranteeing respect for human rights. The Kingdom of Bahrain takes continuous steps to cooperate with OHCHR and to respond to all urgent appeals and enquiries from the special procedures. It also submits its periodic reports to the treaty bodies in a timely manner.

18. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.28, 124.29, 124.31, 124.32, 124.33, 124.35.

Questions concerning the effective implementation of the National Human Rights Plan

19. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.36, 124.47, 124.48, 124.49, 124.50, 124.51, 124.52, 124.53, 124.54, 124.55.

20. The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores its commitment to ensuring the effective implementation of the National Human Rights Plan (2022–2026) and to the execution of all its programmes. The Kingdom devised an implementation programme aimed at achieving all the goals and projects of the Plan. The programme clarifies the projects, identifies the authorities responsible for their implementation as well as supporting agencies, indicates time periods for the comprehensive implementation of the Plan, and specifies indicators to be used in assessing the successful implementation of the projects, the outcome of which is included in the annual reports.

Questions concerning the continuous protection and promotion of human rights, social security and well-being

21. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.37, 124.109, 124.136, 124.146, 124.147, 124.148, 124.149, 124.153, 124.161.

22. The Economic Vision 2030 was launched after four years of intensive deliberations among a wide range of decision makers and officials in the public and private sectors, with the participation of governmental institutions, civil society organizations and groups of international experts, who sought to design the frameworks on which the Vision is based.

Questions concerning awareness-raising and capacity-building activities aimed at the protection and promotion of human rights

23. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.43, 124.44, 124.45, 124.160, 124.213.

24. The Kingdom of Bahrain attaches great importance to human rights training and awareness-raising. With that end in view, all legislative, executive and judicial authorities develop special human rights training programmes for their personnel. In addition, information and awareness-raising campaigns are continuously conducted by a wide range of media in order to draw attention to human rights and their importance.

Questions concerning measures taken to enhance available remedies and to guarantee their independence

25. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.56, 124.57, 124.58, 124.59, 124.60, 124.61, 124.62, 124.63, 124.91, 124.92, 124.104, 124.105, 124.106, 124.107.

26. In accordance with the national approach aimed at promoting the establishment of independent mechanisms responsible for guaranteeing the protection, respect and promotion of human rights, a number of agencies have been established, including the National Human Rights Institution, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Special Investigation Unit. These bodies have succeeded, by means of their independent and effective action, in achieving the objectives for which they were established, and they take continuous steps to enhance their performance on the ground. In addition, the Kingdom of Bahrain has built a solid structure aimed at preventing and addressing acts that constitute forms of torture by establishing a number of independent national bodies responsible for protecting persons against torture and ill-treatment and ensuring that the perpetrators are prosecuted.

Questions concerning continuous capacity-building and action taken to enforce the law and to improve conditions in detention and incarceration facilities

27. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.93, 124.96, 124.97, 124.98.

28. The Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility Act No. 18 of 2014 contains provisions aimed at guaranteeing the rights of detainees sentenced to a penalty of deprivation of liberty and persons held in pretrial detention, namely the right to health care, social protection, visits and contacts, procedural rights, the right to education, the right to practise one's religion, and the right to work.

Continuous action to combat terrorism

29. The following recommendation is accepted:

124.102.

30. The Kingdom attaches great importance to action aimed at eliminating international terrorism and extremism in order to create a better world in which the principle of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is protected, in which just, comprehensive and lasting international peace prevails, and in which efforts to achieve sustainable development are intensified.

Questions concerning continuous action to disseminate a culture of interreligious dialogue and to promote a culture of peaceful coexistence and religious freedom

31. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.68, 124.103, 124.110, 124.111, 124.112, 124.113, 124.121, 124.122.

32. The Kingdom of Bahrain is a model of peaceful coexistence and harmony between persons of different religions, creeds and cultures, as demonstrated by the establishment of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence in 2018, the inauguration of the

King Hamad Chair for Interfaith Dialogue at Sapienza University in Italy, and the launching of numerous related initiatives, such as the publication in 2017 of the “Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration”, which calls for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence throughout the world, as well as the promotion of religious freedom and interreligious dialogue.

Questions concerning continuous action taken to combat trafficking in persons

33. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.138, 124.139, 124.140, 124.141, 124.142, 124.145.

34. The Kingdom of Bahrain attaches particular importance to action to combat trafficking in persons. As a result, it was the only country in the Arab world to be ranked for the fifth year running in the Tier 1 category by the American Department of State in its 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report. The Kingdom continues to promote the rights of vulnerable groups, including contract workers in general and women in particular, in order to enhance their protection from all forms of exploitation and ill-treatment.

Questions concerning continuous action to promote women’s rights and gender equality

35. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.150, 124.162, 124.163, 124.164, 124.165, 124.166, 124.167, 124.168, 124.169, 124.171, 124.172, 124.173, 124.174, 124.175, 124.176, 124.177, 124.178, 124.179, 124.180, 124.181, 124.182, 124.183, 124.185, 124.187, 124.188, 124.189, 124.190, 124.197, 124.198, 124.199.

36. The National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women (2013–2022) continues to be implemented. Its aims are: to ensure family stability for women within the framework of family cohesion; to give women the necessary capacity to contribute competitively to the development process on the basis of the principle of equality of opportunity; and to integrate the needs of women into development by enabling them to distinguish themselves in their performance and to progress in their aspirations in order to improve their quality of life and to promote lifelong learning through interaction and institutional collaboration with partners. A plan for the next period (2023–2030) is currently being prepared, bearing in mind the progress achieved by Bahraini women.

37. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.184, 124.186, 124.191, 124.192, 124.193, 124.194, 124.195, 124.196, 124.201.

38. The penalties prescribed for rape crimes are applicable if the victim refuses to marry the perpetrator, since the Family Code stipulates that the consent of both parties, without coercion or constraint, is a precondition for the validity of a marriage contract.

Questions concerning continuous action to ensure unrestricted access to education and to promote the right to education

39. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.154, 124.155, 124.156, 124.157.

40. Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain is compulsory and free of charge, and children of school age are enrolled in public or private schools. The Ministry of Education guarantees access to education for all Bahraini and non-Bahraini pupils who attend public schools, and provides them with the necessary textbooks free of charge at the beginning of each school year. The Government promotes the incorporation of universal human rights principles and values into courses concerning civics and human rights, which constitute a basic subject at the three levels of education in the public and private schools of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

41. The following recommendation has been noted:

124.245.

Questions concerning the protection and promotion of children's rights and building of their capacities

42. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.159, 124.200, 124.202, 124.203, 124.204, 124.205, 124.206, 124.231.

43. The Kingdom of Bahrain takes continuous action, through the National Committee for Childhood, to promote the educational, cultural and psychological development of children of all ages.

Questions concerning continuous action to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable groups and to guarantee their full integration into society

44. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.158, 124.207, 124.208, 124.209, 124.210, 124.211, 124.212, 124.214, 124.215, 124.216, 124.217, 124.218, 124.219.

45. The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is designed to create a Bahraini society based on the principle of inclusion, so that citizens with disabilities can exercise all their rights in a fair and equitable manner. The Strategy is designed to serve persons with disabilities, members of their families, and all persons wishing to provide services to this component of the local community.

Questions concerning the protection of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists

46. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.39, 124.41, 124.42, 124.100, 124.101, 124.132, 124.137.

47. There are currently 666 civil society organizations operating in different fields in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Social and Cultural Associations and Clubs, Private Institutions and Sports Organizations Act promulgated by Legislative Decree No. 21 of 1989 regulates the establishment and functioning of social associations and clubs in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

48. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.108, 124.129.

Questions concerning continuous action to promote freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly

49. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.114, 124.115, 124.118, 124.127, 124.128, 124.130, 124.134.

50. Articles 22, 23, 27 and 28 (b) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain guarantee the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The Bahraini Constitution also guarantees the freedom to establish associations and trade unions at the national level, for lawful purposes and by peaceful means, in accordance with the terms and conditions laid down by law, provided that they do not breach religious principles or undermine law and order.

51. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.117, 124.119, 124.120, 124.123, 124.131.

Questions concerning nationality

52. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.170, 124.233, 124.234, 124.235, 124.236, 124.237, 124.238, 124.240, 124.244.

53. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.67, 124.232, 124.239, 124.241, 124.242, 124.243.

54. The question of the transmission by Bahraini women married to foreigners of their nationality to their children is being examined with great interest in cooperation with the legislative authority and in the context of discussions that take into account the multiple dimensions of the issue. The Kingdom has sought to guarantee the rights of children of Bahraini women married to foreigners by adopting a number of measures that take into account the children's right to benefit from educational, health-care and other public services so that they are treated in the same manner as Bahraini children. The measures have greatly improved the lives of children of Bahraini women and have helped to address problems arising from their lack of Bahraini nationality. The Kingdom of Bahrain also underscores that there are no "stateless persons" in the country.

Questions concerning criminal justice

55. The following recommendations are accepted:

124.88, 124.89.

56. The following recommendations have been noted:

124.5, 124.6, 124.7, 124.8, 124.9, 124.70, 124.71, 124.72, 124.73, 124.74, 124.75, 124.76, 124.77, 124.78, 124.79, 124.80, 124.81, 124.82, 124.83, 124.84, 124.85, 124.86, 124.87, 124.90, 124.94, 124.95, 124.124, 124.125, 124.126.

57. The progress made in the Bahraini criminal justice system has achieved important legal results in terms of enhancing the protection of human rights and guaranteeing the principle of accountability with a view to preserving the rule of law. The results include the establishment of independent procedures and remedies, and the implementation of guarantees of the independence of the judiciary and fair trials. The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores that the death penalty is imposed in very limited circumstances and only for particularly serious crimes, following the completion of legal proceedings at all levels and in accordance with the guarantees enshrined in the country's legislation. The Kingdom also insists that there are no so-called political prisoners in the Kingdom of Bahrain, since all convicted persons have been tried by an independent judiciary in fair trials for committing acts that violate domestic legislation.
