



GULF INSTITUTE  
for Democracy and Human Rights

UPDATES ON THE CRACKDOWN ON  
**HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GULF**

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# **SAUDI ARABIA: A YEAR AFTER JAMAL KHASHOGGI'S MURDER**



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## 271 BAHRAINIS WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON OVER POLITICAL CHARGES IN 17 MONTHS

The Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR) monitored the life sentences in the Bahraini courts between January 2018 and May 2019. GIDHR documented 271 life sentences in political motivated cases. 247 of the sentences were accompanied by stripping of citizenship.

The statistics showed 130 Bahrainis were sentenced to life in prison in 2018 (January – December), at a rate of 10.8 sentences a month:

- 15 life sentences in January
- 15 life sentences in February
- 8 life sentences in March
- 17 life sentences in April
- 43 life sentences in May
- 8 life sentences in October
- 5 life sentences in November
- 16 life sentences in December

While in the first 5 months of 2019 (January – May) 141 Bahrainis were handed life sentences, at an increased rate of 28.2 sentences per month:

- 51 life sentences in January
- 4 life sentences in February
- 68 life sentences in April
- 15 life sentences in May

All those sentenced to life in 2019 were stripped of their citizenship.

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All those sentenced to life in 2019 were stripped of their citizenship.



## **BAHRAIN** USES ITS LEGAL POWERS & TOOLS TO CRACKDOWN ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS

In an attempt to further crackdown on the religious freedoms in the country, Bahraini Security forces forcibly removed all the displays, black flags and slogans of Ashura commemorations from several Bahraini villages.

The Bahraini authorities summoned Shiite clerics, who were taking part in commemorating Ashura rituals, and obsequies organisers for investigation under pretext of inciting hatred against the government.

According to the Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), 54 violations of freedom of religion and belief were recorded during the first eight days (1st – 8th September) of the Ashura season. These violations included: 11 cases of vandalising and confiscating Ashura banners and flags, 4 cases of arrests of preachers and Ma'tam (Shiite mourning halls) officials, and 39 cases of summons of preachers, religious vocalists and Ma'tam officials to police stations and interrogating them over the content of their speeches or religious poems or the content of some religious banners used in congregation halls.

On 25th September, the security authorities arrested 6 citizens over charge of participating in the central prayers held on the eve of the 10th of Muharrum in downtown Manama.

In the same context, Jaw Prison authorities had forbidden detainees from observing the annual Ashura commemorations in groups. The detainees were informed they were only permitted to commemorate the religious occasion inside their cells, taking into consideration that gatherings are an essential part of holding such rituals.

Bahrain's security authorities adopt a methodology to undermine religious freedoms as a policy of collective punishment in an attempt to impose official customs that criminalise certain religious practices and rights. The Bahraini authorities have violated Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantee the freedom of belief and the freedom of expression by using its legal powers of interrogation and judicial pursuit as tools of intimidation against the Shi'a citizens.

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> Bahrain



# DOZENS OF CIVILIAN WERE KILLED DURING SAUDI-LED COALITION'S AIRSTRIKES ON RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

On the 1st of September, an airstrike on Yemen's south western province of Dhamar killed at least 100 people. The United Nations special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffith's, issued a statement which reported that over 170 prisoners were being held at a detention facility within the compound.



"Today's event is a tragedy. The human cost of this war is unbearable. We need it to stop. Yemenis deserve a peaceful future. Today's tragedy reminds us that Yemen cannot wait. I hope the Coalition will launch an inquiry into this incident. Accountability needs to prevail," Griffith said.

On 23 September, a whole family of seven including children were killed during airstrikes waged by the Saudi-led coalition in Amran province in Yemen. The airstrikes targeted the family when they tried to seek refuge in a mosque after they escaped their tent in Al-Sawad area.



> Yemen



SEP 24, 2019



TARGETED A HOUSE IN QA'ATABAH  
IN SOUTHERN YEMEN'S DALEH PROVINCE

AT LEAST **16** PEOPLE, INCLUDING **7** CHILDREN AND **4** WOMEN WERE KILLED

On 24 September, air strikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition targeted a house in Qa'atabah in southern Yemen's Daleh province and killed at least 16 people, including seven children and four women.

The United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, expressed his grief at the death of dozens of civilians including children in the recent airstrikes. "I urge all to take tangible and quick steps to reduce the violence, respect international humanitarian law and allow for a conducive environment for Yemen to return to a political process without delay," he said.

From its side, the European Union reiterated the need to fully respect International Humanitarian Law and human rights laws, in particular protecting the civilians. EU called upon all parties of the conflict to engage constructively with the UN Special Envoy to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement.

## 2 MILLION YEMENI CHILDREN ARE OUT OF SCHOOL: UNICEF SAID

Two million children are out of school in war-torn Yemen, a fourth of whom have dropped out since the conflict escalated in March 2015, the UNICEF said on September 25.

"Conflict, underdevelopment and poverty have deprived millions of children in Yemen of their right to

education – and of their hope for a brighter future. Violence, displacement and attacks on schools are preventing many children from accessing school. With teacher salaries going unpaid for over two years, education quality is also at stake," said Sara Beysolow Nyanti, UNICEF Representative in Yemen.

> Yemen



## A YEAR AFTER JAMAL KHASHOGGI'S MURDER

On 30th September, CBS News' 60 Minutes interviewed the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Bin Salman denied personally ordering the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, yet he took the "responsibility as a leader in Saudi Arabia" for what happened.

However, Metin Ersöz, an expert on Saudi Arabia and its special operations missions told BBC that this kind of mission is a special operation and would have needed approval from either the Saudi King or the Crown Prince.

Agnès Callamard, the UN's special rapporteur for extrajudicial killing had listened to the tapes recorded at the Saudi Embassy in Istanbul by Turkish intelligence. Callamard told BBC that as soon as Khashoggi left the Saudi Embassy on 28 September 2018, phone calls were being made back to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

"What was interesting about this phone call is that it referred to Mr Khashoggi as one of the persons that was being sought," Callamard said.

British barrister Baroness Helena

Kennedy, who accompanied Callamard to listen to the tapes said that when Khashoggi and his fiancé were walking towards the consulate, a macabre and shocking phone conversation was taking place inside the Embassy between a Saudi officer and the forensic pathologist.

"He talks about how when he's doing autopsies," Kennedy said. "It's the first time in my life, I will have to cut (up) pieces on the ground," she recalled him saying.

On 2nd October 2018, Jamal Khashoggi walked into his home country's embassy and was never seen walking out. A year following his heinous assassination no real Saudi investigation was held, none of the perpetrators nor the planners were punished, and the burial site of Khashoggi's body was not revealed. The international community must act on seriously. Khashoggi's murder is a new terrifying chapter in the story of Gulf States seeking their opponents. All those who were involved in planning and executing the assassination should be held accountable and punished.

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> Saudi Arabia



# LOUJIAN AL-HATHLOUL WAS ARRESTED FOR CAMPAIGNING TO CHANGE LAWS WHICH HAVE BEEN AMENDED: UN RAPPORTEURS

On 27 September, A group of UN human rights experts urged Saudi Arabia to release Loujain Al-Hathloul whose arrest 500 days ago, marked the beginning of a crackdown against women human rights defenders across the country.

The statement of the Special Rapporteurs and members of the UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice said that it is shockingly hypocritical that Ms. Al-Hathloul remains in prison for campaigning to change laws which have since been amended. Indeed, she should never have been imprisoned in the first place for exercising her funda-

mental rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

On the other hand, Lina al-Hathloul, younger sister of Loujain, said that the trial of Loujain has been suspended without any information about it. She is waiting without any information. Waiting is very tiring when you do not know what the procedures are.

“It is very psychologically exhausting for both her and the family. We have hope even though we do not have any information but it takes a lot of energy to have this hope,” she added.







GULF INSTITUTE  
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**Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR)**, is a civil non-governmental and non-profit organization aiming to promote the respect for democratic principles, as well as establishing the human rights and social justice principles, and stopping the human rights violations in the Gulf Region in general and in Bahrain in particular. Headquartered in Sydney, Australia GIDHR has the right to open branches in other regions, has legal character and independent financial disclosure. GIDHR is seeking to be in the ranks of the major organizations defending democratic and human rights principles and values through contributing to achieve peace and justice for all in the Gulf States.

**معهد الخليج للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان** منظمة غير ربحية وغير حكومية، تم تأسيسه في أستراليا ويهدف إلى تعزيز ونشر ثقافة الديمقراطية، كما يسعى لتحقيق مبادئ حقوق الإنسان والعدالة الاجتماعية وإيقاف الانتهاكات في دول الخليج. وله الحق في فتح فروع أخرى في مناطق أخرى، ويكون له شخصية اعتبارية وذمة مالية مستقلة ولا يستهدف من نشاطه جني الربح التجاري. يسعى معهد الخليج للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان لأن يكون في مصاف كبرى المنظمات المدافعة عن حقوق الإنسان عبر المساهمة في تحقيق السلام والعدالة في دول الخليج.

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