

أما الأخير

الملك في رسالة بمناسبة اليوم العالمي لحرية الصحافة

حرية الصحافة عنواننا لمشروعنا الإصلاحى

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Bahrain 2017...

**As If Nothing Had Happened...**



**Bahrain 2017... As If Nothing Had Happened...**

Eighth annual report  
Freedom of press in Bahrain 2017

**Bahrain Press Association**

Organization concerned with defending  
freedom of expression in Bahrain

Founded in London

9th July 2011

**All Rights Received**

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## Freedom of the Press in Bahrain in 2017: 188 violations and shutting down of “Al-Wasat” restore the freedom of expression in the public sphere to the year 1999

- The closure of “Al-Wasat” newspaper and the arbitrary dismissal of its staff brings the country back to the atmosphere that preceded the reform project.
- 22 final judgments by Bahraini courts against journalists, photographers and Internet activists were recorded.
- At least 11 people were arrested, 88 investigation cases and 25 cases of targeting Internet users were documented, most of which are directed to Twitter users.
- The expulsion of citizen Ibrahim Karimi to Iraq, as one of the most severe penalties against freedom of expression.
- Observing of two cases of torture, death threats and sexual abuse of lawyer Ibrahim Sarhan and Internet activist Yousef Al-Jamri.
- Withdrawing the licenses of foreign correspondents, arresting them and imposing fines on them for "working without a license" and targeting the German News Agency (DPA) photographer Mazen Mehdi, and hitting him in the back.
- The Gulf crisis with Qatar was reflected negatively as the authorities imposed further restrictions, and two arrests have been already taken place—the arrest of the prominent lawyer, Issa Faraj, and captain Hamood Sultan.



The year 2017 marked total crackdown on the press and media freedom in Bahrain. The closure of Al-Wasat newspaper, the only independent newspaper in the country, and the arbitrary dismissal of 150 of its employees and workers bring the country back to the atmosphere that preceded the advent of the reform project. The time when newspapers and government media outlets present only the official discourse of the state, which is politically oriented and far from the reality the political crisis in the country.

journalists, photographers and Internet activists who have been convicted in explicit cases of opinion and expression. The most prominent charges this year included blasphemy and insulting religious symbols, insulting the Council of Representatives, insulting the king, insulting the judiciary, assaulting a member Parliament, inciting hatred of the regime, organizing unauthorized rallies, circulating false statements, and disseminating and circulating fake news and hoaxes in wartime.



With regard to the systematic targeting of media freedoms and freedom of expression, the Bahrain Press Association has documented 22 judgments issued by Bahraini courts this year against

The Association also recorded the arrest of at least 11 persons and 88 cases of investigation and interrogation under the same charges as well as 4 cases of obstruction of work; there were two cases of citizenship-stripping. Among these, there are at least 25 targeted Internet users, most of which are Twitter users, as Twitter has become a platform for the security apparatus to hunt down independent and opposition figures. The expulsion of the

Bahraini citizen, Ibrahim Karimi, to Iraq this year upon convictions of managing "Freej Karimi's" Twitter account is one of the most severe penalties on opinion and expression.



This year, the security complex of Muharraq, a branch of the National Security Agency, emerged as a place for interrogating and threatening activists and journalists as well as torturing them. The Bahraini Press Association observed 2 cases of torture, death threats and sexual assault on the lawyer Ibrahim Sarhan after a statement he gave to "Al-Mayadeen" TV channel following a sit-in dispersal. The other case was the activist Yusuf Al-Jamri, who emerged in recent years by covering the social and political events via his Twitter account.



In addition to the withdrawal of foreign reporters' licenses, they were arrested and fined on charges of "working without a license." Instances include journalist Nazeeha Saeed, a correspondent for Monte Carlo International Radio and France 24, and the arrest of the AFP photographer Mohammad Al-Sheikh for one day. This year, security forces shot tear gas canisters at the German News Agency (DPA) photographer Mazen Mehdi on two different occasions while covering the protests—hitting him in the back once.

The Gulf crisis with Qatar represented one of the milestones that had a negative impact on the freedom of the press in Bahrain as the authorities imposed further restrictions on the press and media outlets this year. In official statements, the authorities banned citizens and the media from expressing any public views that are contrary to the official orientation, including "sympathy with Qatar."

In this context, two cases of arrest and interrogation of citizens were documented as video footages of them expressing independent positions towards the Qatari crisis went viral on social media. The first is the lawyer Issa Faraj Aehma al-Burashid and the second is captain Hamood Sultan, the former goalkeeper of the Bahraini national football team and a football pundit for the Qatari "Al Kass" Sports Channels.

## Courts and Judiciary



The Court of Appeal (4 January 2017) upheld the imprisonment of sports journalist Faisal Hayyat for 3 months for "insulting a religious symbol" in a Tweet that was deemed offensive to Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, the Umayyad ruler who reigned 14 centuries ago. The Court of Appeal (5 January 2017) commuted the sentence of photographer Hossam Soror from 15 years to 5 years over charges of "participating in an unauthorized gathering." A Bahraini court (7 February 2017) fined the Shiite cleric Sheikh Bashar al-'Ali 50 dinars for "insulting the Council of Representatives." The Grand Criminal Court (9 February 2017) sentenced the Tweeter Younis Mohammed Jumaa Shakhouri (36 years) to one year in prison for "insulting the king," "inciting hatred against the regime" and "violating the law by advocating for unauthorized demonstrations" via social media.

On 1st April 2017, the Supreme Court of Appeal amended the sentence against Hussain Khamis, who managed a Twitter account called "Bo Khamis," from 5 to 2 years for "disseminating false statements during wartime" and "insulting the nation's martyrs on social media." The second minor criminal court (4 April 2017) sentenced the satirical actor Mansour "Sanqima" to imprisonment for two and a half years with a fine of 50 dinars for charges of libel and slander of former MP Mohammed Khaled on social media, Facebook and Ingram. He was later released on bail of 1.000 Dinars.

The Criminal Court (25 May 2017) fined Nazeeha Saeed, a correspondent for Monte Carlo International Radio and France 24, one thousand dinars over charges of "working without a license as a correspondent for foreign radio despite

the expiration of her license." The Court of Appeal (1 June 2017) upheld the sentence of the former Secretary-General of the Al-Wahdawi political society, Fadhil Abbas, for 3 years for "disseminating false news and rumors during wartime" and "publishing a statement to the media, alluding to military procedures Bahrain is taking with a number of sister countries to restore legitimacy and stability in Yemen. Such statements would question the integrity and legitimacy of the kingdom's political and military position."

A Bahraini court (10 July 2017) sentenced Nabeel Rajab, political activist and the president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), to 2 years in prison for "committing the crime of broadcasting false and malicious news, statements and rumors about the internal situation of the Kingdom that would undermine its status and prestige."

The Court of Appeal (18 July 2017) upheld the fining journalist Nazeeha Saeed, a correspondent for Monte Carlo and France 24, for working without a license as a correspondent for foreign radio. The Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal (9 October 2017) upheld the sentence of a fifty-year-old Bahraini to 3 years in prison for "insulting the judiciary by publishing audio clips on social media in which he insulted a judge, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary and its committee and authorities."

The Court of Appeal (26 October 2017) supported the dissolution and termination of the National Democratic Action Society (WAAD), the most prominent secular opposition group over charges of "venerating individual sentenced over terrorism charges" and "supporting organizations convicted of inciting and practicing violence," and "propagating the forceful removal of the political regime." The Supreme Criminal Court (30 October 2017) sentenced online activist Ali al-Miraj to life imprisonment and revoked his citizenship. In what became to be known as "al-Busta" WhatsApp group, the court also sentenced the Al-Wasat journalist, Mahmoud Al-Jaziri, to 15 years in prison over charges of "collaboration with a foreign country and a terrorist organization affiliated with it," "receiving funds from this country to carry out hostilities and to harm the national interests of Bahrain" and "violating the law by forming, joining and funding a terrorist group."

The Court of Appeal (30 October 2017) upheld the imprisonment of Hassan Gharib, a photographer, for 5 years for "trespassing a police security point." On 22nd November 2017, the Court of Appeal upheld the sentence of human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, for 2 years for "broadcasting false news" during television interviews with foreign media.

## Arrest and Detention Profile



On 2nd April 2017, security forces arrested the 41-year-old online activist Mahmoud Abdel-Hamid. They raided his house in the village of Bani Jamra at dawn as he "called for a march in Riffa against the new traffic law." Security authorities also arrested a photographer of the Western Riffa Sports Club Hassan Gharib while covering a match at al-Ahli club southern the capital Manama on 7th May. Moreover, they arrested the online activist Yasser al-Mawali after raiding his house in Muharraq on 30th May 2017. On 13th June 2017, security authorities arrested lawyer Issa al-Faraj Arehma al-Burashid after a Tweet that denounced the boycott of Qatar.

On 16th August 2017, security authorities arrested Shiite cleric Mohieldin Al-Mashaal while returning from Kuwait and charged him with "inciting hatred of the regime and insulting a religious sect." Blogger Rawan Sanqour was arrested from her office (18

September 2017) after launching an appeal calling on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help ensure the treatment of her brother, detainee Ali Sanqour, who suffers pelvic and leg fractures.

Security authorities (22 October 2017) detained the football pundit for the Qatari "Al Kass" Sports Channels and former goalkeeper of the Bahraini national football team, captain Hamood Sultan, after a video of him praising the Qatari people was broadcast. On 14th November 2017, Tweeter Abdullah Al Hammadi was arrested after publishing on social media news about imposing fees by the General Directorate of Traffic. Security authorities also arrested (14 November 2017) Mohammed Qambar, a singer in a club at Amwaj resort over charges of "harming social peace" by referring to the honor of Bahraini women in one of his songs.



## Investigation and interrogation



The Cybercrime Unit (20 February 2017) summoned businessman Mohammed Hassan al-Arabi to interrogate him about a complaint filed by the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry regarding a Tweet in which he criticized the Chamber for its performance.

The former secretary-general of WAAD and the current member of its central committee, Ibrahim Sharif (20 March 2017), appeared before the Prosecution of Terrorist Crimes on charges of "inciting hatred of the regime via Twitter." On 19th April 2017, the Public Prosecution summoned the Internet activist Saleh al-Khanna on charges of "assaulting MP

Hamad al-Dossary." On 23rd April 2017, the Public Prosecutor's Office summoned Jafar al-Jamri, a journalist in Al-Wasat newspaper, where he was interrogated about his Tweets, and issued a travel ban on him.

On 25th April 2017, the Public Prosecution summoned the sports journalist Faisal Hayyat under allegations of "participating in an unauthorized march in al-Daraz." On 26th April 2017, Ahmad Radhi, a journalist, was also summoned for "protesting in al-Daraz area" and "participating in an unauthorized march." On 24th May 2017, the National Security Agency summoned lawyer Ibrahim Sarhan, the former legal



adviser of the Al-Wefaq Society, where he was interrogated about a statement he made to Al-Mayadeen. He was also tortured and threatened with rape, forced sitting on a glass bottle and kicking his genitalia.

The Bahraini Public Prosecutor summoned human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) on September 12th, 2017 from his prison for additional charges over online posts on his personal accounts on Twitter and Instagram. Journalist Ahmad Radhi was also interrogated (13th September 2017) on charges of "protesting and participating in an unauthorized march and shouting hostile slogans in Bilad al-Qadeem," a suburb of Manama.

On 1st and 2nd August 2017, the Bahraini National Security Service summoned the Internet activist Yousef al-Jamri for interrogation about his cyber activities as he covers social and political events in social media. Under interrogation, he was threatened with death and sexual assault and was also forced to insult his deceased father. On 23rd October 2017, the WAAD's opposition leader, Ibrahim Sharif, was charged with "insulting the Ministry of Information" on social media. The Northern Governorate Prosecution (25 October 2017) interrogated journalist Mohammed Al-Aali of the GDN newspaper and former journalist Zeinab Al-Tajer following the publication of news concerning their coverage of the Northern City Council in 2016.

## Impeding the Press Work



وزارة شؤون الإعلام  
Ministry of Information Affairs

The Ministry of Information Affairs (16 January 2017) issued a decision to ban Al-Wasat newspaper from using electronic media and to stop the circulation of its electronic version immediately and until further notice. The decision was made upon allegations of "the newspaper's repeated publication of content that creates division among the society."

Security authorities stopped photographer Mazen Mehdi briefly on 18th January 2017 during his coverage of the protests following the execution of three Bahraini activists accused of killing an Emirati policeman. Mehdi was later (14 February 2017) hit by a tear gas canister fired directly

at him by the police as he was covering protests in Sitra district, southern Manama, on the sixth anniversary of the 14th February uprisings.

The authorities at Bahrain Airport (22 March 2017) detained the photographer of the AFP news agency, Mohammed Sheikh, for a day upon his return from a holiday in India.

Journalist Mazen Mehdi, a photographer for the German news agency (25 March 2017), was shot by a tear gas canister directly in his head while covering the funeral of Mustafa Hamdan, who died two months after being shot in the back by masked gunmen.

The Ministry of Information Affairs (7 June 2017) decided to suspend the publication and circulation of Al-Wasat newspaper until further notice over allegations of "violating the law and the repeated publication and broadcast of what divides the society and affects the relations of the Kingdom of Bahrain with other countries, as the newspaper published an article that is offensive to an Arab country." On 8th June 2017, the Ministry of Information issued a warning to all media outlets not to "publish or circulate any objection to the decisions of the Kingdom or its allied countries with regard to the crisis with Qatar." It also vowed to take legal actions against any agency that violates the decision. In turn, the Interior Ministry warned (8 June 2017) that "sympathy or bias towards the government of the State of Qatar or opposition to the actions of the Kingdom of Bahrain is a punishable crime."

The Bahraini Ministry of Interior banned (18 October 2017) the opposition National Democratic Action Association (WAAD) from organizing a symposium at its headquarters under the title "Balfour Declaration and the strategy of the Zionist enemy in the region."

Security authorities (31 October 2017) deported cyber activist Ibrahim Karimi to Iraq after serving a two-year prison sentence and stripped him of citizenship on charges of "insulting the king" via managing a Twitter account called "Freej Karimi." The Supreme Military Court (2 November 2017) issued a decree banning all print, video, audio or electronic media from publishing any content regarding a cell accused by the authorities of "attempting to assassinate the Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defense Force."

On 8th December 2017, security authorities denied the entry of Greg Carrollton, an American journalist for the Economist and Al Jazeera, to cover the Regional Security Summit "Manama Dialogue." On 14th December 2017, sports commentator for "Al Kass' Sports Channels and former goalkeeper of the Bahraini national football team, captain Hamood Sultan was banned from traveling for the second time through Bahrain International Airport to attend the 23rd Arabian Gulf Cup in Kuwait. However, he was granted travel permission two days later.

**The Bahrain Press Association condemns targeting journalists, bloggers, and photographers, which, it believes, has become a systematic and regular behaviour. It is also one of the main reasons that led to the decline of Bahrain's reputation at the international level in terms of freedom of the**

**press. The Association calls on the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Nations and all international organizations and bodies concerned with the defense of freedom of opinion and expression, press and media freedoms to exert urgent pressure on the Bahraini government to:**

- Immediately and unconditionally release all photographers, media professionals, and activists detained for practicing their work in covering protests or exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- Stop arbitrary prosecutions and arrests and judicial trials on charges of "insulting the king," "spreading false statements" made against Internet activists and media professionals. Charges such as "protesting" for photographers, "inciting hatred of the regime" for politicians, and all charges pertaining to freedom of expression must be revoked.
- Securing the freedom of media and the press and shutting down the Office of Internet Surveillance in the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication, and the abolition of Law No. (47) that regulates the press, publishing, and printing in the country.
- Ending the authority's monopoly of the television, radio and print media and enabling the voice of opposition in the media, including reauthorizing the publication of Al-Wasat.
- Call on the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression to schedule an urgent visit to Bahrain.



# 01

**JANUARY**  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2 0 1 7



## The press law is referred to ministerial committee

(2 January 2017) The Bahraini Council of Ministers referred the Press and Media Law, which will replace Law 47/2002 that deals with the organization of the press, printing and publishing, as well as electronic media, to the Ministerial Committee for Social Services, Communication and Media.

The Committee is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Ali Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. The Minister of Information highlighted in a presentation during the session that the bill deals with the organization of the press, printing, publishing and the issuance of print and electronic.

## Dr. Said Al-Samahiji is released



(3 January 2017) Security authorities released the eye doctor, Said Al-Samahiji, after completing a one-year sentence for a conviction of insulting a sister country and publicly inciting law disobedience on social

media. The Second Supreme Criminal Court had issued a decision on 7th September 2016 in support of the verdict for a one-year prison sentence for Dr. Al-Samahiji, with immediate effect.

## Journalist Faisal Hayyat's imprisonment is upheld

4 January 2017) The Court of Appeal upheld the imprisonment of journalist Faisal Hayyat for 3 months. Initially, a Bahraini court convicted him of "insulting a religious symbol" following a tweet that was deemed as offending Yazid ibn Muawiyah, one of the rulers of the Umayyad state 14 centuries ago. This came after Hayyat sent an open letter to the Minister of Interior in which he reported that he had been tortured by the Ministry personnel during his detention in 2011.



Ministry of Interior

@moi\_bahrain



القبض على شخص نشر تغريدة على (تويتر)  
تمثل إهانة لإحدى الملل  
policemc.gov.bh/  
news/ministry/

## Nabeel Rajab's detention extended

(5 January 2017) The Public Prosecution in Bahrain decided to extend the detention of the President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Nabeel Rajab, for an additional 15 days, for further investigation on charges of "spreading false news." On 28th December 2016, the Public Prosecutor's Office stated that Nabeel Rajab was facing continued imprisonment in a case involving "spreading false news and rumors about the internal situation in Bahrain." A court decided, on the same day, to release Rajab and ban him from traveling. It also decided to postpone his case to 23 January 2017 in order to be presented with the prosecution's evidence.





## Houssam Sourour's sentence reduced, from 15 to 5 years

(5 January 2017) The Court of Appeal reduced the sentence of photographer Houssam Sourour from 15 to 5 years. On 21st April 2016, a local court had sentenced him to 15 years imprisonment for "participating in an unauthorized march" and "attacking the police," before the sentence was later reduced after being reviewed by the Court of Appeal.



## Journalist Nazeera Saeed's first trial session

(16 January 2017) The Minor Civil Court decided to postpone the hearing for the case filed by the Ministry of Information against journalist Nazeera Saeed, the reporter for French Radio Monte Carlo International and French channel France 24, to 28th February. The case was adjourned

upon the request of defense attorney Hameed Al-Mulla at a hearing on Monday 16th January, which was the first hearing allowing the defense to review all the documents relating to Nazeera Saeed's case and charge of "practicing work in the press without a license."

## Court of Appeal overturns sentence of photographer Sayed Ahmed Al-Musawi

(16 January 2017) The Court of Appeal overturned the 10-year imprisonment sentence of photographer Sayed Ahmed Al-Musawi and the revocation of his nationality.

On 23rd November 2015, a local court sentenced Al-Musawi to imprisonment

over charges of "establishing a terrorist cell through telephone" as well as "illegal marching" and "rioting." The photographer's family confirmed that he had been subjected to "stripping from all his clothes, torturing by suspension, electric shocks and being forced to stand for long hours over the course of 4 days."



## Ministry of Information suspends electronic version of "Al-Wasat" newspaper

(16 January 2017) The Ministry of Information issued a decision to suspend the circulation and use of "Al-Wasat" media (electronic version) immediately and until further notice. The ministry explained that its decision was taken "because the

newspaper repeatedly published and broadcast content that creates a divide in the society and promotes a spirit of dissension and damage to national unity and endangering the public peace" in a statement distributed to the press.



## Photographer Mazen Mahdi arrested

(18 January 2017) Security authorities arrested photographer Mazen Mehdi, a photographer for the German News Agency while covering protests following the execution of 3 citizens accused of killing an Emirati policeman. Mehdi was released later on the same day after a brief detention.

## Nabeel Rajab's trial started: "spreading false news"

(19 January 2017) The Minor Criminal Court decided to look into the case against human rights activist Nabeel Rajab on charges of "publishing and broadcasting false and malicious news, statements and rumors about the internal situation in the Kingdom" and "torture in the Jaw prison" through

his participation in external television interviews and making statements that subvert the truth. The first session was held on 23rd January 2017, during which a technical report concerning the case was presented, but the Court decided to postpone the session until February 21st.





# 02

**FEBRUARY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7



## Man fined 50 dinars for "insulting the Council of Representatives"

(7 February 2017) A Bahraini court fined Shiite cleric Bashar al-A'li 50 dinars for "insulting the Council of Representatives." In October 2016, competent authorities referred al-A'li and other religious clerics to the court for speeches they gave during the occasion of Ashura.

## Tweeter Yunus Shakhouri imprisoned for "insulting the king"

(9 February 2017) The Higher Criminal Court sentenced tweeter Yunus Mohammed Jumaa Shakhouri (36 years) to one year in prison for "insulting the King," "inciting hatred of the regime" and "calling for unauthorized demonstrations against the law" through social media. According to the lawsuit, the defendant had "created an account on Twitter," and that the Cybercrime

Directorate received a report that the account was publishing political tweets, inciting hatred of the regime and calling on people to come out to demonstrate. Therefore, investigations were conducted and led to arresting Shakhouri. The prosecution charged him with insulting His Majesty the King and inciting hatred of the regime.

## Journalist Mazen Mahdi shot with tear gas canister

(14 February 2017) Journalist Mazen Mehdi was shot with a tear gas canister by the police. Mehdi was covering the 6th anniversary of the February 14 protests in the Sitra district, south of Manama, when security forces targeted him with a tear gas canister.

## Businessman Mohammed Hassan Al-Aaradi summoned for "criticizing the Chamber of Commerce"

(20 February 2017) The Cybercrime Directorate summoned businessman Mohammed Hassan al-Aaradi for interrogation following a complaint filed against him by the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry for a Tweet he published criticizing the Chamber's performance. Al-Aaradi said that "the Chamber's complaint accuses me of supporting the statements of the Bahraini Commercial and Industrial Coalition, which criticize the Chamber's performance and expose its inadequacies. I have denied any representation of this coalition despite the fact that I agree with many of the points raised in its statements. Nonetheless, I have admitted publishing some of these statements on Twitter as an exercise of freedom of expression and also since they were already published by other on social media.'



# 03

**MARCH**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7





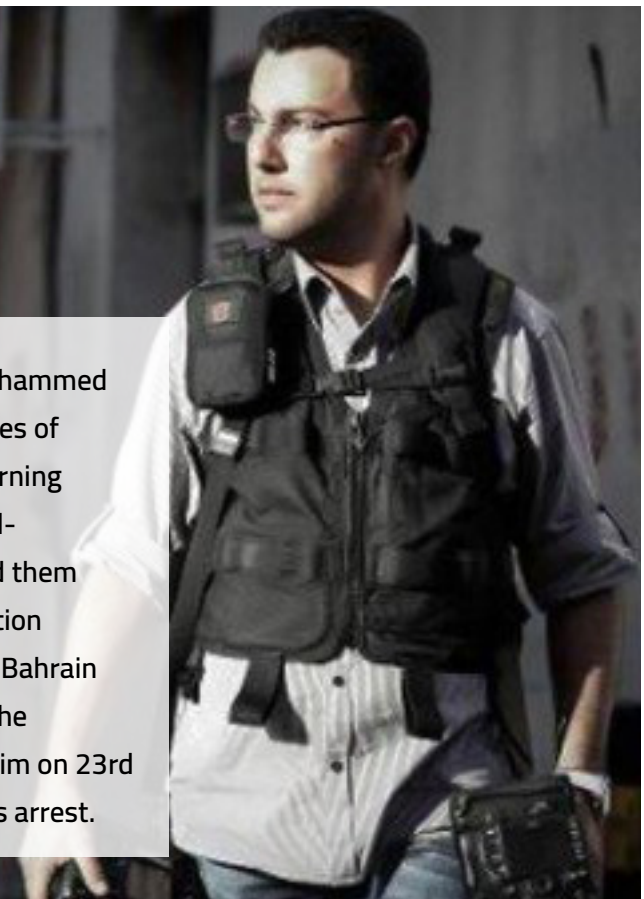
## Terrorism Crimes Prosecution summoned Ibrahim Sharif

(20 March 2017) Former Secretary-General of the WAAD Association and member of its current Central Committee, Ibrahim Sharif, appeared before the Terrorism Crimes Prosecution. The Cybercrime Directorate at the Ministry of Interior had summoned him on 18th March

2017 to appear before the prosecution. The writ he received did not mention any charges; it only read that "his presence was requested by the police." However, it turned out that his interrogation focused around the charge of "inciting hatred of the regime through tweets."

## AFP photographer arrested

(22 March 2017) AFP photographer Mohammed Al-Sheikh was arrested by the Authorities of Bahrain International Airport while returning to the country from a holiday in India. Al-Sheikh contacted his family and notified them of his transfer to the Criminal Investigation Building immediately after his arrest at Bahrain International Airport without knowing the reasons. Security authorities released him on 23rd March 2017, after around one day of his arrest.







## Photographer Mazen Mehdi hit by a tear gas canister

(25 March 2017) German Press Agency photographer Mazen Mehdi was shot by a tear gas canister directly to his head while covering the funeral of Mustafa Hamdan, 18 years-old, who died two months after being shot in the back by

masked gunmen who opened fire on demonstrators in the village of Diraz in January. Mehdi was reportedly wearing a vest that clearly identified him as a member of the press, according to reports by the Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

## Photographer Sayed Ahmed Al-Musawi, first appeal session held



The Court of Appeal held its first hearing in the case of photographer Sayed Ahmed Al-Musawi after the Court of Appeal had annulled, on 16th January, his sentence of 10 years imprisonment and the revocation of his nationality. The court decided to adjourn the case until 23 April 2017. On 23rd November 2015, a local court sentenced Al-Musawi to prison on charges of "establishing a terrorist cell through telephone" as well as "illegal marching" and "rioting." The photographer's family confirmed that he had been subjected to "stripping from all his clothes, torturing by suspension, electric shocks and being forced to stand for long hours over the course of 4 days."



# 04

**APRIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7



## Bou Khamis' sentence reduced from 5 to 2 years

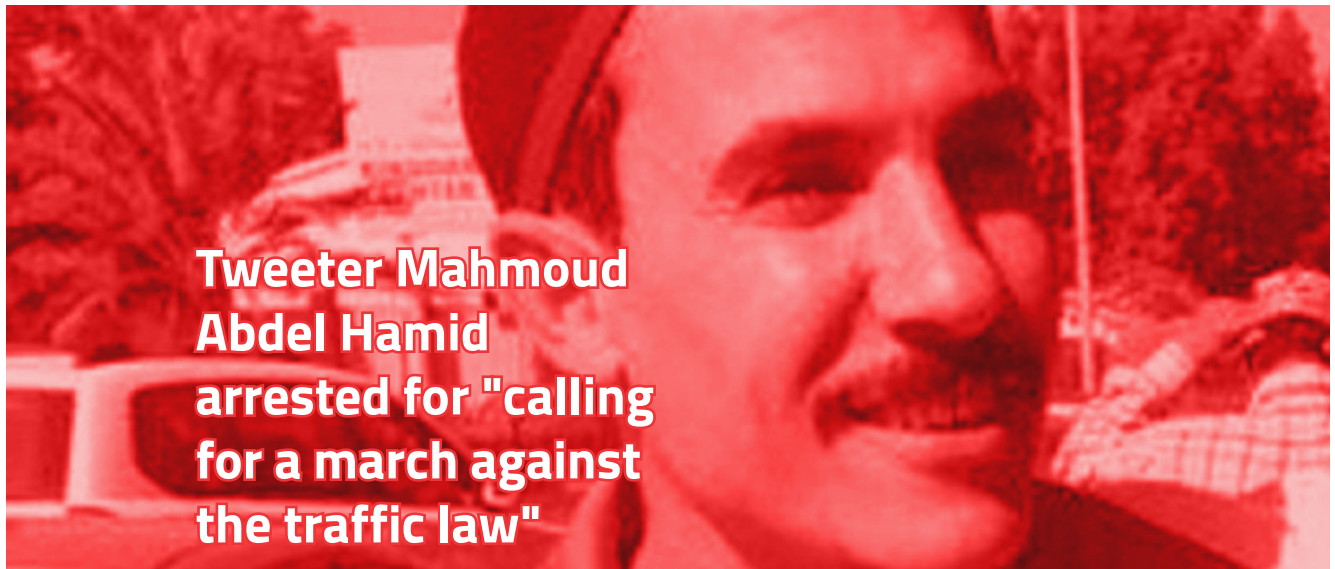
The Court of Appeal has reduced the sentence of Tweeter Hussain Khamis, who owned the Twitter account "Bou Khamis" from 5 to 2 years. A local court had convicted him with "offending the nation's martyrs on social media" in reference to the five Bahraini soldiers killed in Yemen on 5th September while participating in the Saudi-led war coalition in Yemen.



## Tweeter Mahmoud Abdel Hamid arrested for "calling for a march against the traffic law"

(2 April 2017) Security forces arrested social media activist Mahmoud Abdel Hamid (aged 41 years) from the village of Bani Jamra after raiding his house at dawn. The authorities accused him of "calling for a march in Riffa against the new traffic law." Abdul Hamid admitted the next day that he had published the invitation to the Riffa march but was not the one who

initiated it. When he appeared before the Public Prosecutor, he denied the charges and said that he was "beaten and received threats of assaulting his wife and sister if he does not admit the charges." Abdel Hamid was released on 3rd April 2017, after being investigated, but it is not yet known whether his case will be sent to the court or otherwise will be archived.





## Satirical actor "Sanqima" sentenced to two and a half years in prison

(4 April 2017) The Second Minor Criminal Court sentenced satirical actor Mansour "Sanqima" to two and a half years in prison and a fine of 50 dinars for charges of defaming former MP Mohammed Khaled on the social networking sites Facebook and Instagram, with a bail bond of 1,000 dinars.

Regarding the charges, the Public Prosecution stipulated that, in 2014, Sanqima; First: he publicized facts that would cause punishment and disrespect to the plaintiff; Second: he publicly defamed the plaintiff by using specific words and

expressions (that were mentioned in the appeal's record but no specific incident was referenced); Third: he deliberately annoyed the victim through the misuse of the telephone; Fourth: he published news and comments concerning the private life of the plaintiff and his family, even if true, with the aim of harming him. The court sentenced him in absentia to one year in prison for the first charge, three months for the second charge, one year for the third charge, and three months in prison and a fine of 50 dinars for the fourth. A bail bond of around 1,000 dinars was set.

## Public Prosecution summons cyber activist Saleh Al-Khanna

(19 April 2017) The Public Prosecution summoned social media activist Saleh Al-Khanna over charges of "attacking MP Hamad Al-Dosari."



## Jaafar Al-Jamri summoned for interrogation

(23 April 2017) The Public Prosecution summoned "Al-Wasat" Newspaper's journalist Jaafar Al-Jamri. Al-Jamri mentioned on his "Twitter" account that he had been summoned for investigation by the Cybercrime Directorate, adding that "the call came without a formal writ." Al-Jamri was interrogated about his posts on Twitter and, eventually, the Prosecution issued a ban on his travel.



## Journalist Faisal Hayyat summoned for interrogation

(25 April 2017) The Public Prosecution summoned sports journalist Faisal Hayyat for interrogation. Hayyat stated on his "Twitter" account that the Prosecution accused him of "participating in an unauthorized march in the Diraz village," and that he confirmed that he had not even entered the village.



## Journalist Ahmed Radhi summoned for interrogation

(26 April 2017) The Public Prosecution summoned journalist Ahmed Radhi for interrogation. He was charged with "marching in the Diraz area" and "participating in an unauthorized march" on 6th October 2016.

Radhi denied all the charges and noted to the prosecutor that he was "a victim of torture, unjustly imprisoned more than once and prevented from traveling repeatedly and that these new charges are arbitrary and unfounded."



# 05

**MAY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7



## Riffa Club photographer Hassan Gharib arrested

(7 May 2017) Security authorities arrested the Western Riffa Sports Club's photographer Hassan Gharib while covering a match at "Al Ahli Club" in the

south of the capital Manama. His arrest was reportedly an execution of a five-year sentence he received in absentia in a case that involved political implications.



## Lawyer Ibrahim Sarhan tortured after his statement to "Al-Mayadeen"

(24 May 2017) The National Security Agency summoned Ibrahim Sarhan, the former legal advisor of the "Wifaq National Islamic Society" to their center in the Muharraq area.

He was interrogated about a statement he made on 23rd May 2017 to "Al-Mayadeen" channel regarding the events that took place in the Diraz village.

His statement was made following a security operation carried out in Diraz to disperse a sit-in outside the home of the religious leader Sheikh Issa Qassem. Sarhan announced in a lengthy statement that he was brutally tortured, threatened with rape, being forced to sit on a glass bottle and kicked in his genitalia, which later forced him to leave the country.



## Journalist Nazeeha Saeed fined 1,000 dinars

(25 May 2017) The Minor Criminal Court convicted journalist Nazeeha Saeed, correspondent of Radio Montecarlo International and France 24, and fined her with 1,000 dinars. The Public Prosecutor's Office charged her of

"working as a correspondent for foreign radio with an expired license" after the authorities refrained from renewing the aforementioned license in June 2016, under which she had been operating for 12 years.



## Social media activist Yasser Al-Mawali arrested

(30 May 2017) Security authorities arrested social media activist Yasser Al-Mawali after raiding his home in Muharraq at 3:30 pm. Security personnel arrived at his home disguised as Aramex courier boys, but he was not in. They claimed there was an envelope that needs be handed over to him in person. His family informed them that he would be back in an hour. He was arrested

without a warrant outside his house later on when he received a call and had to step out. A police officer returned to his home 10 minutes later to fetch his cell phone and informed his family that he would be transferred to the Criminal Investigation Directorate. Yasser is the brother of Yusuf Al-Mawali, one of the victims of torture during the protests.





# 06

**JUNE**

ANNUAL REPORT

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## 3-year sentence of former secretary of "Wahdawi" society upheld

(1 June 2017) The Court of Appeal upheld the 3-year prison sentence of former Secretary-General of the "Wahdawi" society, Fadil Abbas, after he made a statement concerning the war in Yemen. Fadil Abbas was accused of "broadcasting false news and rumors during wartime"

and "publishing a statement in the media that included a report on military actions taken by Bahrain with a number of sister countries in order to restore and stabilize the situation in Yemen, which incites distrust in the safety and legitimacy of the Kingdom's political and military position.'



## Ministry of Information suspends "Al-Wasat" newspaper

(7 June 2017) The Ministry of Information decided to suspend the circulation and use of "Al-Wasat" newspaper until further notice.

The ministry explained that its decision was taken "because of the newspaper's violation

of the law and repeated publishing and broadcasting of content that creates divide in the society and affects the relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and other countries, after it published an article on page 19 in the Sunday issue (4 June 2017) that offended a sister Arab state.'



## Ministry of Information is to take legal action against those supporting Qatar

(8 June 2017) The Ministry of Information issued a warning to all media agencies calling on them to "abide by the Kingdom's stated position, in line with the political decision to sever relations with Qatar, and in line with the international Gulf and Arabian position and measures taken against Qatar," warning the media off "spreading content that attacks the Kingdom's supreme interests and aforementioned measures." The Bahraini official news agency (BNA) broadcast the Ministry's warning off "publishing or circulating content objecting

the decisions of the Kingdom or the countries unified with the Kingdom in this position, including content that is detrimental to the stature and sovereignty of the Kingdom, or favoring the State of Qatar's policies or justifications, in any form of media".

The ministry confirmed that it "will take legal action against anyone who gets involved in publishing or contributing in the circulation of such content in any form, and they will be subjected to criminal and/or administrative accountability."

## Ministry of Interior is to take action against those who favor Qatar

(8 June 2017) The Ministry of Interior warned that "sympathy and favoritism towards the State of Qatar or any objection against the measures taken by the Kingdom of Bahrain is a punishable crime." It noted in a statement that "as a result of the declaration to sever the diplomatic relations with the State of Qatar, and in line with the Gulf and Arab states' measures taken towards Qatar due to its hostile actions against the Kingdom of Bahrain and its deviation

from the Gulf and Arab constants and the principles of international law, the Ministry of Interior confirms that, based on the sovereign rights of the Kingdom of Bahrain, sympathizing with and favoring the State of Qatar or objecting to the measures taken by the Kingdom of Bahrain on social media, whether through Tweets, contributions or any other written or spoken means, is a punishable crime with sentences up to five years imprisonment including fines.'



## Attorney Issa Al-Bourshid arrested

(13 June 2017) Security authorities arrested attorney Issa Al-Faraj Al-Rahmah Al-Bourshid, following his tweets that rejected the decision to boycott Qatar. The Ministry of Interior declared in a statement that Al-Bourshid had published "content that is harmful to the social fabric and national unity" on social networks. While the Ministry's statement did not specify the nature of the "content" in question, it hinted that his Tweets "were sympathizing with Qatar," which is banned by the country. The Ministry declared in the statement that "the necessary legal procedures are being completed in preparation for referring the case to the Public Prosecutor's Office." His arrest came after he filed a lawsuit against the authorities because of Manama's participation in the Qatari blockade. He was released on 21st June 2017, after spending nearly a week in prison.

## Al-Wasat Newspaper decides to lay off its employees

(24 June 2017) Al-Wasat Newspaper decided to lay off its employees three weeks after it had been suspended by the authorities under the accusations of "spreading and broadcasting content that creates divide" in society and damages the Bahraini foreign relations.

The newspaper administration informed its employees of the decision through an

e-mail sent on the eve of Eid Al-Fitr. In the e-mail, Adel Al-Maskati, Chairman of Dar Al-Wasat Publishing and Distribution Company, wrote: "We regret to inform you that the Board of Directors has decided to terminate the employees' contracts due to the suspension of Al-Wasat Newspaper following the Ministry of Information's decision on 4th June 2017 and the resulting losses for the company."



## Tweeter Tayba Ismail released

(26 June 2017) Security authorities released Tayba Ismail after serving a year in prison following a comment she wrote on Twitter that was deemed offensive to the King of Bahrain. Security forces had raided the social media activist's house on Sunday 26th June 2016. She was arrested on charges of "offending the King of Bahrain through comments on Twitter" after she unveiled her account identity. The Bahraini Judiciary had sentenced her to one year in prison with a fine of 1,000 dinars.



# 07

**JULY**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7



## **Nabeel Rajab sentenced two years for “spreading false news”**

(10 July 2017) A Bahraini court sentenced Nabeel Rajab, a human rights activist and the president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, to two years in prison for “spreading false news.” The Twitter account of the Bahraini Public Prosecution reported from the Northern District Attorney that a lower criminal court sentenced an accused (anonymously referring to Rajab) to two years in prison. He added that Rajab was found guilty of “committing the crime of spreading and disseminating false and malicious news and statements and unfounded rumors about the internal situation in the Kingdom, which would undermine its esteem and prestige.” Accusations included in the court’s decision dates to television interviews conducted with Rajab back in 2015.



## **Court of Appeal upheld fining “Monte Carlo” and “France 24” correspondent**

(18 July 2017) The Court of Appeal upheld fining journalist Nazeeha Saeed, a correspondent for Monte Carlo and France 24, one thousand dinars for working without a license as a correspondent for foreign radio. The upheld comes after the second lower criminal court found Saeed guilty in the aforementioned case and fined her one thousand dinars on 25th May 2017. The Bahraini Committee on Media Affairs refused to renew Saeed’s accreditation in June 2016 as a correspondent for the “French Media Group” albeit working for the Group for 12 years.

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## **Cyber activist Hamid Khatam released after one year**

(25 July 2017) Security authorities released cyber activist Hamid Khatim upon completing a one-year imprisonment term over charges of “publishing statements that incite hatred of the regime and insults the king” on his personal account on Twitter.

A local court had sentenced him to 2 years on 31st August 2016 over these charges before the Court of Appeal decreased it to one year in a hearing session that took place on February 16, 2016.




# 08

**AUGUST**  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2 0 1 7







## Tweeter Yousef al-Jamri threatened murder and sexual assault

(1 August 2017) The Bahrain National Security Agency summoned cyber activist and Tweeter Yousef al-Jamri to the Agency's building in Muharraq city for interrogation. In the following day, 2nd August, he was summoned to the same place where he was interrogated for 13 hours.

On 3rd August, he broadcast a video of him addressing a message to the King saying that he "was threatened with murder

and sexual assault during the interrogation and was also forced to curse his deceased father.' He further added that interrogators "insulted Shiism—to which he belongs—and cursed the supreme religious authority, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani." "My life is in danger, and I'm so hopeful that you will issue your orders for opening an urgent investigation to ensure my safety and the safety of my family members and my mother," he added addressing the King.

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## Warrant to arrest journalist Nazeeha Saeed issued

(14 August 2017) The journalist and correspondent for Monte Carlo International Radio and France 24 Nazeeha Saeed received a phone call from the Southern District Police Security Directorate informing her that an arrest warrant was issued against her for failing to pay a fine of one thousand dinars—over

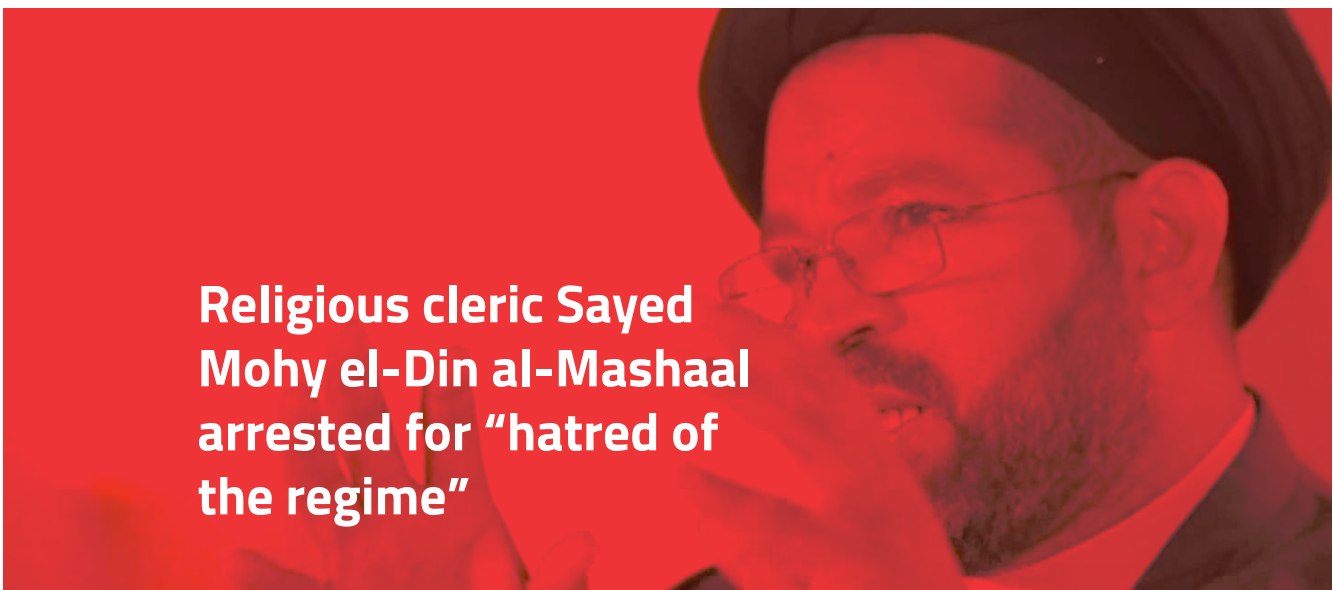
charges of working without a license as a correspondent for a foreign radio.

Saeed mentioned via her account on Twitter that the execution judge denied a request by her lawyer, Hamid al-Mulla, to postpone the fine payment and suspend the imposition of the sentence.



## Actor Sadiq al-Shabani transferred to solitary confinement

(16 August 2017) Jaw Central Prison's administration transferred detained actor Sadiq al-Shabani to solitary confinement after he had submitted a complaint to the concerned authorities that he was denied access to medication for stomach and colon diseases he is suffering from.



## Religious cleric Sayed Mohy el-Din al-Mashaal arrested for "hatred of the regime"

(16 August 2017) The public prosecutor decreed the detention of Shiite cleric Sayed Mohy el-Din al-Mashaal for one week on remand over charges of "inciting hatred of the regime and offending a religious belief."

Lawyer Abdullah al-Shamlawi tweeted that "the interrogation with Mashaal started at

1:00 pm and continued until 4,' noting that the Public Prosecution prevented him from meeting with his client, Sayed Mashaal, before the interrogation. The authorities arrested the Shiite cleric Sayed Mohy el-Din al-Mashaal at King Fahd Causeway on his way back from Kuwait and transferred him, in custody, to the prosecution.



# 09

**SEPTEMBER**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7





(10 September 2017) The Bahraini Public Prosecution summoned sports journalist Faisal Hayyat and charged him with participating in an unauthorized march in al-Ma`amir area earlier in July of the same year. Upon his release, Hayyat stated that "it has not happened, and I denied [the charge]."

## Nabeel Rajab facing new charges - Tweets posted while in prison

(12 September 2017) Human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), was indicted by the Bahraini Public Prosecution for new charges concerning Tweets and posts on Twitter and Instagram. "[S] preading false news' and "inciting hatred

of the regime' and "violating the law' were the new charges he faced. The Tweets were posted on his personal accounts in January 2017 while he was in custody since June 2016, where he had no Internet access. He denied the charges on the grounds that he was in prison at that time.

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## Journalist Ahmed Radhi summoned for "assembly"

(12 September 2017) Journalist Ahmed Radhi received a writ of summons from the General Administration of Investigation and Criminal Evidence to appear the following morning (13 September) before the General Prosecution.

Radhi stated after the interrogation that he was "charged with assembly, participating in an unauthorized march, and chanting

hostile slogans in the al-Bilad al-Qadeem area. I have denied the charges.' He also added that "interrogating me is an attempt to justify the travel ban imposed on me through imputing false criminal accusations to me without any evidence or real incidents ... After checking with the Immigration and Passport Directorate, I was assured that a new travel ban was imposed on me upon orders from the Ministry of Interior.'

## Rawan Sanqour arrested upon sending appeal to Red Cross

(18 September 2017) Blogger Rawan Sanqour was arrested at her workplace after launching an appeal calling on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help ensure the treatment of her brother, detainee Ali Sanqour, who suffers from pelvic and leg fractures. She has been interrogated about her appeal without the presence

of a lawyer and was threatened. She was cast to Isa Town Women's Detention Centre in a cell isolated from other inmates. The Public Prosecution decreed her detention for 30 days on remand after facing charges of 'communicating with foreign organizations.' She was released on 22nd October 2017 without dropping these charges.



## 67 balladeers and orators summoned during Ashura

According to a BCHR reports, security authorities summoned 67 of the Shiite balladeers (rawadeed, sing. radud) and orators (khatib) during the season of Asuraa that took place from 21st September to 1st October 2017).

Among those who were summoned, the following were interrogated about opinions they expressed and stands they took: Balladeer Abdel-Amir al-Belady, who

was detained (30th September 2017) for two days for requesting the release of his colleague. Balladeer Ali al-Hammady was also summoned (29th September 2017) to Southern Hamad City Police Station, circle 17. Among the orators, Sheikh Hasan al-Aaly and Sheikh Hany al-Banaa (30th September 2017) following sermons they gave on the first day of Muharram. Shiite cleric Sayed Ali al-Musawi was also detained (2 October 2017) for nine days.



# 10

**OCTOBER**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7



## Fifty-year-old man sentenced 3 years for "insulting the judiciary"

(9 October 2017) The Second Grand Court of Criminal Appeal upheld the sentence of a fifty-year-old Bahraini man to three years in prison for insulting the judiciary by publishing audio clips on social media in which he insulted one of the judges, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary and its committee and authorities. The Public Prosecution accused him of "publicly insulting the judiciary during the years 2016

and 2017 by publishing audio and video recordings containing [abusive] language on social media.'

The accused has lodged an appeal to the Court of Appeal and, during the hearing, claimed that he had not had food or water for 26 days. The court accepted the appeal in the form but rejected it on the merits, and thus, upheld the sentence.

## Ministry of Interior banned "WAAD" holding forums

(18 October 2017) The Ministry of Interior banned the opposition National Democratic Action Association (WAAD) from organizing a symposium at its headquarters under the title "Balfour Declaration and the strategy of the Zionist enemy in the region." The Association stated that "the ban decision that we have been informed of after we had been summoned to the Hooraa Police Station included all the forums we are planning to hold in our premises in the future. We have been informed that it is compulsory to obtain an official letter from the Ministry of Justice allowing our association to organize these forums among our political activities.'

## Permits imposed on houses to host Shiite religious events

(19 October 2017) The Jaffaria Waqf Directorate imposed obtaining special permits for those who wish to host Shiite religious events at their homes. It stipulated the following five conditions to obtain the permit: 1. "There is no official obsequies center in the area for holding mourning gatherings (Azaa), and appropriate times must be chosen.' 2. "The use of loudspeakers outside is forbidden.' 3. "No mixing between the sexes, so that men's gatherings are strictly for men only and women's gatherings are strictly for women only.' 4. "Commitment to Sharia regulations and refraining from what would disrupt public security and provoke sedition among members of society and offend any other component of the society.' 5. "Commitment of Azaa reciters to moderate discourse.'

## "Al Kass" sports pundit Hamood Sultan arrested

(22 October 2017) Security authorities detained the football pundit for the Qatari "Al Kass Sports Channels" and former goalkeeper of the Bahraini national football team, captain Hamood Sultan, after a video of him praising the Qatari people was broadcast. It was reported that his arrest was due to a statement he made for "Al-Majlis"

program broadcast on the channel. He expressed his appreciation and respect for Qataris which he witnessed since the first moment he arrived in there, and that it is a shame to say a bad word against them. "I have not seen from them except all good, and Allah is my witness," Hamood added. The authorities released him in few hours after he was interrogated.

## Ibrahim Sharif charged with "insulting the Ministry of Information"

(23 October 2017) The Public Prosecution summoned WAAD's opposition leader Ibrahim Sharif and charged him with "insulting the Ministry of Information" after he had posted a Tweet criticizing Gulf media for their lack of maturity and strategic understanding. The Prosecution decided to release him with a proof of residence.

## Nabeel Rajab mistreated; forcibly cut hair

Human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, (25 October 2017) was subjected to degrading treatment and forcible head shaving after being transferred to Jaw Central Prison. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights confirmed that Rajab "was subjected to ill-treatment, humiliating searches and forcibly shaved his head by the police. He was placed in an isolated

cell, the same cell where he had served his previous sentence term and caused psychological harm." The BCHR added that "soldiers stormed the cell in the middle of the night when Rajab was asleep. They shouted at him, insulted him and searched him thoroughly and unjustifiably. They also confiscated all the books and clothes in his possession and refused to receive other clothes from his family."



## Journalists published news about city council interrogated

The Northern District Prosecution (25 October 2017) interrogated journalists Mohammed Al-Aali of the GDN newspaper and former journalist Zeinab Al-Tajer following the publication of news concerning the Northern City Council, which they covered in 2016. The published report brought up a Council's member who accused the Electricity and Water Authority of manipulating the Authority's database by means of its employees. The Electricity and Water Authority submitted a complaint to the Public Prosecution

against the City Council member because of the word "manipulation."

The member was summoned and interrogated, but he denied saying the word "manipulation," pointing out that the journalists tried to provoke public opinion. During the interrogation, both Al-Aali and Al-Tajer denied insulting the Authority, confirming that the Member mentioned the word during the Council's session and many newspapers reported it. Thus, they were released with proof of residence.

## Court of Appeal upheld dissolution of "WAAD"

The Court of Appeal (26 October 2017) upheld the dissolution and termination of the most prominent, secular, opposition society operating under the umbrella of the law, the National Democratic Action Association (WAAD).

WAAD was convicted with "committing serious violations of the principle of the rule of law," "supporting terrorism,"

"providing an umbrella to violence," "venerating individuals sentenced over terrorism charges," "supporting organizations convicted of inciting and practicing violence," and "propagating the forceful removal of the regime." The Grand Administrative Court ordered the dissolution of the secular opposition association on 31st May 2017.



## Jaw Prison's administration prevented hospitalising photographer Ahmed Humaidan

(28 October 2017) The administration of Jaw Central Prison prevented the detainee Ahmed Humaidan from being transferred to the hospital for treatment of severe eye inflammation. A report confirmed that Humaidan

suffered swollen eyes and extremely red eyes, which impaired his vision. He has been transferred to the prison's clinic and was supposed to be taken to the hospital, but the prison's administration refused.



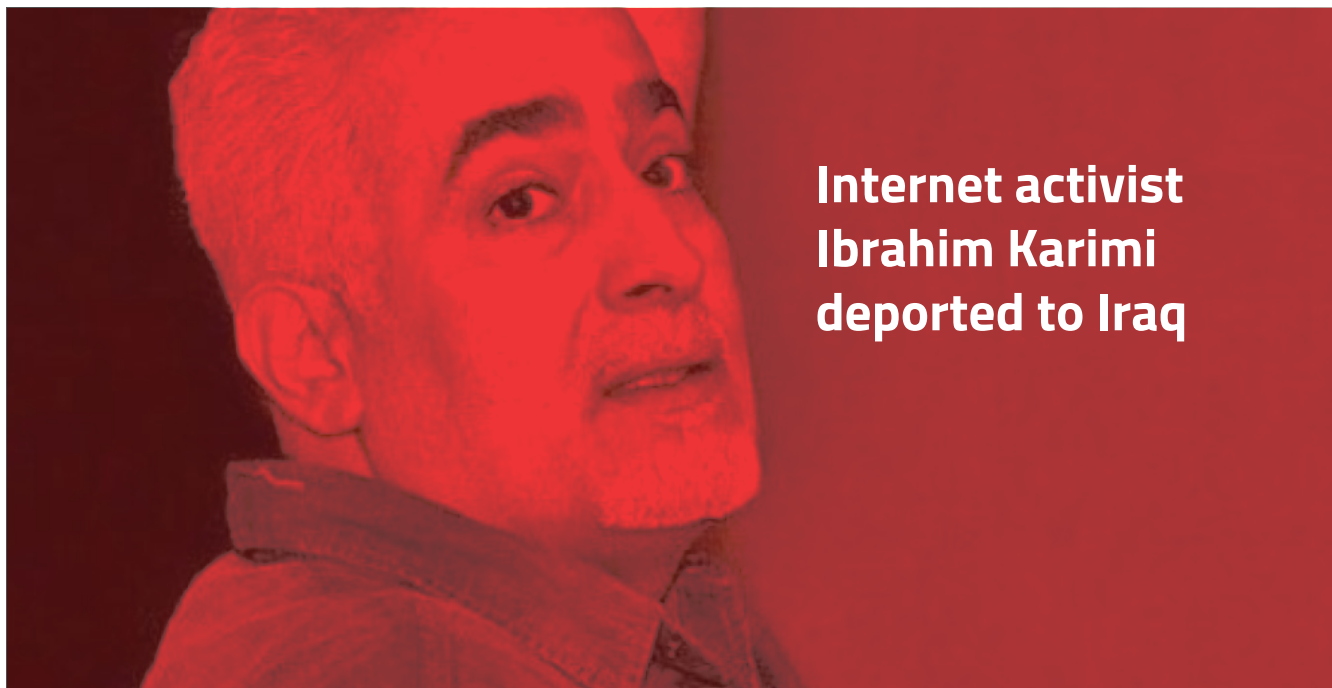
## Activist Ali Miraj - Life imprisonment and revocation of nationality

(30 October 2017) The Grand Criminal Court sentenced cyber activist Ali al-Miraj to life imprisonment and revoked his citizenship in the case known as "al-Busta' WhatsApp group. He, along with other 18 defendants, were convicted with "collaboration with a foreign country and a terrorist organization affiliated with it," "receiving funds from this country to carry out hostilities intended to harm the national interests of Bahrain" and "violating the law by forming, joining and funding a terrorist group."



## "Al-Wasat" journalist Mahmoud Al-Jaziri sentenced 15 years in jail

(30 October 2017) The Grand Criminal Court sentenced "Al-Wasat' journalist Mahmoud Al-Jaziri to 15 years in prison in the case known as "al-Busta' WhatsApp group. He, along with other 18 accused, was convicted with "collaboration with a foreign country and a terrorist organization affiliated with it," "receiving funds from this country to carry out hostilities intended to harm the national interests of Bahrain" and "violating the law by forming, joining and funding a terrorist group."



## Internet activist Ibrahim Karimi deported to Iraq

(31 October 2017) Security authorities deported cyber activist Ibrahim Karimi to Iraq after serving a two-year term in prison and stripped him of citizenship over charges of "insulting the king."

Karimi was released from Jaw Prison before he was deported the following day. In 2016, Karimi was sentenced to 25 months over charges of "Public incitement to hatred

and contempt of the regime' and "insulting the King publicly' through managing a Twitter account. He was also convicted with "insulting Saudi Arabia and its King" in a Tweet after the fall of a huge construction crane at the Grand Mosque in Mecca in September 2015—an accident in which more than 100 people were killed. However, Karimi denied possession of the Twitter account.

## 5-year imprisonment of photographer Hassan Gharib upheld

(30 October 2017) The Court of Appeal upheld sentencing photographer Hassan Gharib to 5 years for "assaulting a police checkpoint."

Despite his presence at the Al-Ittihad

Sports Club during the alleged attack on the police, the court upheld his prison sentence. Gharib was arrested in May 2017 when he was covering the football cup final at the al-Ahli stadium.



# 11

**NOVEMBER**

ANNUAL REPORT

2 0 1 7



## Cleric sentenced one year for "insulting the Companions"

(1 November 2017) A Bahraini court sentenced Shiite cleric Mohy el-Din al-Mashaal to one year for "insulting the Prophet's companions." Bahrain makes

these accusations to justify the arrest of Shiite clerics. Mashaal was arrested at King Fahd Causeway on his way back from Kuwait, where he lives and runs a seminary.

## Publication on Field Marshal's incident banned

(2 November 2017) The Grand Military Court issued a decree banning all print, video, audio or electronic media outlets from publishing about a cell accused by the authorities of "attempting to assassinate the Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defense Force." The Chief Military Judge, brigadier Dr. Youssef Rashid Flaifel stated that "The Supreme Military Court issued a decision banning the publication of any information, statements

or news concerning the case (no. 1 terrorism-2017), including the trial of members of the terrorist cell that plotted operations against the Bahrain Defense Force in all print, video, audio or electronic media outlets ... except for those who will be authorized by the court". The decision was "for the sake of public interest, the integrity of the evidence and the right of witnesses to legal protection ... except for those who will be authorized by the court," Flaifel added justifying the decision.

## Imprisonment of "mnarfezhom" Twitter account owner, Mohammed bin Saqr Al Khalifa, vacated

(8 November 2017) The Second Grand Court of Criminal Appeal overturned the decision of imprisoning Mohammed bin Saqr Al Khalifa, a Royal Family member and the owner of "mnarfezhom" Twitter account and fined him 200 dinars instead. Meanwhile, the court upheld two other

decisions fining him 100 dinars in each case. M. Al-Khalifa was sentenced to two months in prison after being convicted of "posting messages on his Twitter account involving statements that were considered offensive to the victims and question their patriotism."

## Satirical actor Mansour "Sanqima's" imprisonment vacated

(9 November 2017) The Second Grand Court of Criminal Appeal vacated the sentence of actor Mansour Sanqima in the case of slandering former MP Mohammed Khaled and ordered fining him 200 dinars. The Public Prosecution convicted Sanqima of "publicly accusing the victim of incidents that would make him liable to punishment and contempt ... and the public slander of the victim by addressing him with the words stated in the [police] report without referring to a particular incident.'

He also "disturbed the victim intentionally by misusing phones ... and publicized news and comments involving private matters of the personal life of the victim and


his family.' The court sentenced him, in absentia, to one-year imprisonment for the first charge, three months for the second, one year for the third, and three months and a fine of 50 dinars for the fourth charge. However, it decided a bail of 1000 dinar to suspend the sentence. Sanqima objected the verdict and, thus, the court sentenced him to one month in prison for each of the four cases, in addition to a fine of 50 dinars for the fourth and bail of 1000 dinars. When he lodged an appeal, the court accepted the appeal on the form and ordered the amendment of the sentence on the merits. Accordingly, the imprisonment sentence was vacated and, instead, he was fined 200 dinars over all the charges.

## Tweeter Abdullah Al Hammadi arrested for publishing about traffic fees increase

(14 November 2017) Security authorities arrested Tweeter Abdullah Al Hammadi after he had published on social media news about imposing fees by the General Directorate of Traffic.

The public prosecution ordered his detention upon charges of misusing telecommunication devices. The Southern

District Attorney, Nawaf al-Awadhi, said that "the Public Prosecution has received a notice from the Cybercrime Directorate that someone has published video clips on social media claiming that the General Directorate of Traffic had imposed [additional] traffic fees, which is not true and totally unfounded.' Hammadi was released two days later.



## Singer Mohammed Qambar arrested for “troubling social peace”

(14 November 2017) Security authorities arrested Mohammed Qambar, a singer in a club at Amwaj resort, over charges of “troubling social peace” by broaching the subject of Bahraini women’s honor in one of his songs. The Ministry of Interior issued a statement saying that “Samaheej police station arrested a person who got

involved in practices that would disturb social peace.’ It added that “Samaheej police station assumed the search and investigation after spotting a video clip that was published and circulated on social media about the incident.’ The Ministry of Interior mentioned that the accused will be transferred to the Public Prosecution.



## Activist Nabeel Rajab’s 2 years sentence upheld - Court of Appeal

(22 November 2017) The Court of Appeal upheld the sentence of human rights activist and the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), Nabeel Rajab, to two years in prison for statements he made during TV interviews with foreign media outlets. Rajab was convicted with “broadcasting false news.’ According to the case file, Rajab said in a television interview that “journalists and NGOs are denied access to Bahrain.’



# 12

**DECEMBER**

ANNUAL REPORT

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## US journalist Greg Carlton barred from entering the country

(8 December 2017) Security authorities denied the entry of Greg Carlton, an American journalist for the Economist and Al Jazeera, in Bahrain to cover the Regional Security Summit "Manama Dialogue."

"Bahrain has detained me at the airport for five hours and then barred me from entering," Carlton said. In turn, the Ministry of Information said that he had

been stopped because "he tried to enter illegally to cover an event without a formal invitation." Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reported from an official at the Ministry of Information that "the Ministry is fully aware of the intentions of this repeated and irresponsible behavior by the Qatari channel [Al Jazeera], which seeks to incite public opinion and propagate what is contrary to reality."

## Qatari "Al-Kass" channel's sports commentator banned from traveling

(14 December 2017) Security authorities banned sports commentator of "Al Kass" Qatari sports channel and former goalkeeper of the Bahraini national football team, captain Hamood Sultan, from traveling for the second time through Bahrain International Airport to attend the 23rd Arabian Gulf Cup in Kuwait. He was also denied travel previously on 6 November

2017. "It is tough on me, my family in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and pardon me for failing to answer your invitation to participate in the Gulf tournament because of the travel ban decision; I cherish you all," Sultan said on his account on Instagram. However, two days later (16 December), the authorities allowed him to travel to attend the Gulf tournament.