

Conclusion



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The very establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, and the immediate follow up to implement the recommendations, has been unprecedented. The Government and the National Commission acted swiftly to study the findings of the report and called in international experts to advise on the optimal implementation of the recommendations.

Over that period, necessary action was taken to implement 15 recommendations out of the 26 recommendations contained in the BICI report, namely recommendations 1715, 1716, 1717, 1718, 1719, 1720, 1722(A), 1722(B), 1722(C), 1722(D), 1722(G), 1722(H), 1723(A) and 1723(B). Required action for the implementation of Recommendation 1723(C) is nearing completion.

In addition, some action was taken on the following recommendations. Remaining action is being taken to implement them. They are: 1722(E), 1722(J), 1722(K) and 1723(D).

Action is also being taken to implement recommendations 1724(A), 1724(B), 1724(C), 1725(A) and 1725(B).

One recommendation, that of the death sentences, namely recommendation 1722(I), is not applicable as no final death sentences have been passed.

The scale of the reforms put in place span the entire activities of Government. Police and security sector reforms have been developed to ensure that security for all Bahrainis is managed in a responsible, professional manner that upholds the rule of law and respects the human rights of the citizen. Widespread training programmes; new oversight mechanisms in the form of the NSA Inspector General and the police ombudsman; and the transformation of the National Security Agency into an intelligence only organization, all attest to this desire.

Ensuring that the justice system is properly equipped to provide justice and fairness for all is an essential part of any modern state. In this context, charges for speech related activity were dropped, jurisdiction for investigations into torture was made the exclusive remit of the Attorney General, and civil courts are undertaking reviews of convictions handed down in the National Safety Courts. New training programmes designed in collaboration with world renowned institutions will ensure that judges and prosecutors are equipped to handle all cases of torture and ill-treatment.

The Commission also recognises the steps taken to ensure full and fair accountability for all the actions and events of February and March 2011. With support from international legal experts, the decision to establish an independent unit within the Public Prosecution to investigate these issues is a positive step forward. Equally the three new compensation schemes offer the opportunity for comprehensive redress to be provided to the victims of the events of 2011.

The Government's implementation of BICI recommendations has also addressed issues of education and media policy. Through education programmes in schools and the plans made by the Information Affairs Authority to increase freedom of expression and access for all to media channels, it is hoped that these implementation mechanisms will increase tolerance and acceptance of the other, in a way that will contribute to the lasting stability of Bahrain.

Perhaps most importantly, the Commission has carefully examined the Government's efforts towards furthering the cause of national reconciliation. Reconstruction of places of worship and efforts to reinstate both public and private sector workers who were dismissed, have both helped to further this goal. The newly established National Social and Economic Reconciliation Commission will also work closely with NGOs to further social reconciliation.

The Commission acknowledges the speed and force of effort that has been made by the Government in achieving this progress. Implementation of these recommendations is designed to achieve a long term lasting impact on the Kingdom, which is why it is right that time has been taken to study the various mechanisms and consult with international bodies and experts. The Government has now put in place the mechanisms and structures, proposed the legislation, and begun the training of officials and security forces, all of which will provide the building blocks to transform of the human rights landscape in Bahrain.

But the path of reform must not end here. The elected representatives of the people in the Council of Representatives are requested to prioritise the passage of legislation pertaining to the BICI report. We note here that the legislative amendments proposed last year on freedom of expression and torture, both of which were complimented in the BICI report, have recently been approved by the Council of Representative in Parliament. Meanwhile the Government must ensure that continued priority is given to the ongoing implementation of the recommendations.

Above all, segments of the Bahraini society must come together in the spirit of national reconciliation to ensure Bahrain proceeds down a positive path to safeguard the future of the Kingdom.

In response to the Kingdom's call, and out of love and loyalty to this country through which we have been honored to uphold this national duty, we thank King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, and appreciate his utter trust in us and for giving us the opportunity to serve our country on this National Commission.

We will not forget the quick response from the dignified Government, foremost of which is His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, may Allah protect him, and the Government team who have greatly cooperated with us. They have provided the Commission with all of its requirements and had much impact on the success of its work.

Thanks also goes to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander for his constant follow up of, and continued support to, the Commission's activities.

May peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you.

Chairman and Members
of the National Commission
Assigned to Follow Up the Recommendations
of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry

