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**"Human Rights in Bahrain: Assessing Progress on the One-Year Anniversary of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report"**  
**Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain**  
**Wednesday, November 14, 2012 2:00 – 3:30 pm**  
**Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2237**

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain held a panel discussion entitled, "Human Rights in Bahrain: Assessing Progress on the One-Year Anniversary of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report," to discuss the current status of implementation of the BICI recommendations. The panel featured **Mohammad al-Tajer**, co-founder and President of Bahrain Rehabilitation & Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO), Dr. **Fatima Haji**, co-founder and Director of Training and Development at BRAVO, **Brian Dooley**, Director of Human Rights First, **Richard Sollom**, Deputy Director at Physicians for Human Rights, and was moderated by **Husain Abdulla**, Director of Americans for Human Rights & Democracy in Bahrain.

**Husain Abdulla** introduced the panel and discussed the background of the BICI report. He noted that many of the recommendations in the report have been met with continued violence instead of the reforms many had hoped for.

**Mohammad al-Tajer** spoke of his experience as a lawyer for detainees, saying lawyers are often unable to speak privately with their clients or to present a proper defense. He also addressed the failure of the BICI report, citing cases of torture, indefinite detention, and the demolition of mosques as examples. Al-Tajer expressed frustration that "there is nobody held responsible for the killings" in Bahrain.

**Brian Dooley** pointed out that the situation in Bahrain is worsening. He said, "If we look at this time last year ... there wasn't a blanket ban on demonstrations," and the violence was not as severe. "Things are sliding in a horribly frightening direction," Dooley stressed. He mentioned the U.S. has sent observers to trials, which do not comply with international standards, and urged the Obama Administration to make a statement on the issue, referencing Obama's comment last year that "you can't have a real dialogue with parts of the opposition in jail."

**Richard Sollom** discussed his experience documenting the situation for public health officials, stating that of the 95 medics detained, 20 had been convicted on felony charges, 28 on misdemeanor charges, and nine had been acquitted. However, those acquitted were not reinstated to their previous positions, and many who had not gone through the legal system still had their licenses revoked or had been removed from their position. Sollom called this the "biggest violation of medical neutrality" he had ever witnessed.

U.S. Representative **Keith Ellison** (D-MN) made an appearance to thank the panel for their "courageous defense of human rights," and encouraged everyone to "continue to tell the story." He said the "government of Bahrain has not lived up to the (BICI) recommendation," and that the U.S. hasn't "been active enough." "The violations of human rights occurring (in Bahrain) are not small, they are quite serious and demand our attention," Ellison added. He concluded by saying he would encourage the U.S. government to look into a different location for the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet as a possible means of putting pressure on the Bahraini government.

**Dr. Fatima Haji** discussed her detention for providing medical assistance to injured protesters in Bahrain, mentioning that she has not been reinstated to her position, and has been threatened with having her medical license revoked. She said the main hospital in Bahrain's capitol, Manama, has been militarized with checkpoints and a security detail. Haji added that many people who arrive at the hospital for care are first questioned about the nature of their injury. If security forces conclude that the patient was injured during a protest, they are immediately detained without medical attention.

During the Q&A, al-Tajer answered a question about the revocation of citizenship for 31 Bahrainis, a group includes panelist Husain Abdulla, saying they no longer have access to schools, the healthcare system, or jobs, He said that their land and homes will be confiscated, because only Bahraini citizens may own land in the country. When asked about moving the Fifth Fleet's naval base, Haji said the opposition movement would gladly accept a U.S. discussion on the Fleet's relocation if it would change the current situation. Abdulla recommended the U.S. start using the leverage it appears to have over Bahrain, including the Fifth Fleet, to address the human rights crisis. In closing, Sollom said President Obama and the U.S. Secretary of State should "talk about the reality of what is taking place in Bahrain," while al-Tajer added that "Bahrain is looking to the outside world to help end this crisis." Haji urged the "U.S. government to revise their policy," on Bahrain, while Dooley again emphasized the importance for the U.S. to condemn unsubstantiated trials against opposition figures.