

EN

E-006252/2020

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.1.2021)

The EU has systematically raised its concerns related to freedom of expression and association, right to fair trial, prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and mass trials with Bahraini authorities during regular political contacts. The most recent informal EU-Bahraini Human Rights dialogue held on 7 November 2019 in Brussels offered another opportunity to discuss these topics as well as prison conditions and the access to adequate healthcare by prisoners in Bahrain.

The EU regularly raises individual cases. In the context of the global COVID-19 outbreak, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights raised the cases of Hassan Mushaima, Abduljalil al-Singace and Abdulhadi al-Khawaja with high-level Bahraini interlocutors. The EU intends to revert to these issues during the next human rights dialogue, tentatively scheduled for early 2021.

The EU has also issued public statements on individual human rights cases in Bahrain calling for upholding freedom of expression and raising concern over the shrinking political space, including for non-violent opposition¹. On 10 June 2020, the EU publicly welcomed the release of Nabeel Rajab, while calling on the Bahraini authorities to release all other persons detained for expressing their opinion and exercising their human rights or defending the rights of others².

The EU has also repeatedly expressed its principled position against the death penalty³. Furthermore, the European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights supports civil society organisations working on the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, including in Bahrain.

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/38310/statement-spokesperson-sentencing-nabeel-rajab-bahrain_en; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/40218/statement-spokesperson-sentencing-bahraini-human-right-defender-mr-nabeel-rajab_en; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/45995/statement-sentencing-bahraini-human-right-defender-mr-nabeel-rajab_en; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/56106/statement-spokesperson-final-verdict-against-bahraini-human-rights-defender-nabeel-rajab_en; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/53247/statement-spokesperson-sentencing-sheikh-ali-salman-bahrain_en; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/57287/statement-spokesperson-life-sentencing-opposition-leaders-bahrain_en

² https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/80701/bahrain-statement-spokesperson-release-human-rights-defender-nabeel-rajab_en

³ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/72804/bahrain-statement-spokesperson-confirmation-death-sentence-two-citizens_en; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/82794/Bahrain.%20Statement%20by%20the%20Spokesperson%20on%20upholding%20death%20sentences; https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/65918/statement-spokeperson-executions-bahrain_en