

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

UPR Submission

Bahrain

June 2012

About ODVV

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. The ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a participatory of the NGOs Coalition for an International Court (based in New York), and national coordinator of the Global March Against Child Labour (based in New Delhi) which cooperated in a variety of issues with international organizations and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. The ODVV is also a member of the International Organization against Small and Light Weapons, and the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), and the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centres in the Middle East and North Africa, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

4. During the last 2 decades, we have done so many activities, mainly informative in regards with human rights and supportive in regards with the victims of violence. Various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, conferences have been held or co-held by the ODVV for various sectors of society: civil society institutions and governmental organizations.

5. Other Activities:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights annual sessions, and the new Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva. Written and oral statements on various items of the agenda are issued by the ODVV.
- Internship for foreign students
- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia. Publication of Defenders Newsletter (English), human rights news and developments bulletin (Farsi), Rights of the Child bulletin (Farsi)
- Daily electronic human rights newsletter in English and Farsi.

Promotion and protection of human rights

6. Extensive violation of fundamental rights: member of the World Conference for the Protection of Human Rights of the People of Bahrain, Ghasem Al-Hashemi saying that the rule of the Al-Khalifa has violated all human rights principles added: “to-date over 20,000 cases of human rights violations has been recorded in Bahrain”. This human rights activist revealed reports of rapes committed against women protestors by Bahraini security forces and added, “The number of examples of human rights violations in Bahrain’s recent developments is far more than the abovementioned statistics. But in view of the brutal crackdown of Al-Khalifa’s military and the unit known as the Island’s Shield, we only managed to record and register 20,000 cases of human rights violations in the form of images, video clips and documents. This is because most human rights violations take place in detention centres and away from public eye, reporters and journalists.” This activist who’s been forced into exile in London by the Manama government added, “We have approximately over one thousand documents on human rights violations, which leave no doubts or the objections of Bahraini officials, some of these include the killing of innocent people with no reason, mental and physical torture, seizing of citizens, indiscriminate shooting into the people, sexual rape, forcing people to migrate, and arrests and detentions of people without proof of crime.

7. Violation of the rights of doctors: One of the most extensive forms of human rights violations in Bahrain are the grave violation of the rights of doctors in the country, which causes Organization for Defending Victims of Violence and human rights defenders in various countries serious concern. Richard Sollom deputy director of the Physicians for Human Rights says in this regard: “in two decades of study on human rights violations in more than 20 countries, I have never witnessed such extensive and systematic violations that take place in Bahrain.” Ambulances, hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses and medical staff are all targeted, and this is very extensive and continues to take place. These attacks seriously violate the neutrality of physicians principle and international law.

8. While observing their code of ethics in fair and unprejudiced treatment of injured protestors and civilians, the rights of doctors and nurses in Bahrain themselves are violated, and not only we’ve witnessed their dismissal from medical treatment centres, but in instances these humanitarian acts of theirs has resulted in their arrest and detention. At least 22 medical experts were grabbed by security forces and sent to solitary confinement.

9. Unfortunately even in some instances doctors have been assaulted and battered in their place of work. According to reports published by Sollom, 6 severe cases of assault and battery of doctors in Salmanieh Hospital committed in the hospital staff room by security forces have been registered. In another cases, Bahieh Al-Aradi died as a result of being shot in the head for participating in the treatment of the injured on Low-Low square. This is while not only doctors but even their families are at risk of being arrested and mistreated, and in instances security forces have entered their homes and arrested them and transferred them to unknown locations, which is blatant violation of Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

10. These types of blatant attacks, has caused fear among many medical experts in Bahrain. Many are so scared that they cannot go to work. Going to a hospital most times means passing through many road blocks and checkpoints where identity papers must be produced, and might get attacked. Reaching a hospital or clinic does not necessarily mean reaching safety, because the police and security forces enter these places all the time.

11. Military intervention by other countries: The independent decision making of a nation with regards to internal issues is a value. Thus in Article 2, the UN Charter mentions the objectives and principles of the United Nations with regards to the self determination of nations. Article 2.4 also stresses: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations". This is while the military intervention of Saudi Arabia is a blatant violation of the aforementioned paragraphs. The philosophy behind the clear military support of Bahrain by Saudi Arabia is for the crackdown of the Bahraini Shia and preventing them from getting political power. This is a clear violation of Article 1.2 of the Charter.

Gender, racial and religious discrimination

12. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence is deeply concerned over the attacks on mosques and destruction of holy Islamic property and also banning the Shia to hold religious ceremonies and also attacks on mourners over the recent months in the country which are all grave violations of international laws with regards to the protection of places of worship, and also Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regards to freedom of religion and belief and holding of religious ceremonies in public or private. Furthermore, over 1300 Shia citizens have been sacked from work.

13. Women have not been immune or exempt from arrests, abuse and torture. More than 25 Bahraini women have been arrested during various protests in the country, and some have even been raped. Children and youths have also been other victims of the recent crisis in Bahrain. The arrest of a nine year old girl and the killing of a 15 year old youth in one of the residential districts of Manama which was in the path of military special units, are instances that can be highlighted.

Recommendations

14. While respecting democracy, the Bahrain government must respect the maximum participation of the people of the country for self determination and facilitate the necessary conditions for this. International organizations such as the United Nations can be observers in this process.

15. People's political, civil, religious, cultural, social and economic freedoms must be guaranteed.

16. The destruction of places of worship, prevention of religious ceremonies from taking place and also the abuse of the free will of the people to choose their own system of governance are all contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN

Charter, and they must immediately stop this process and compensations must be made for the rights that have been violated, and all the centres and properties that have been destroyed must be reconstructed.

17. All the people of the country must enjoy equal protection of the law.

18. The rights of various groups that include human rights defenders and doctors that have been violated in the recent unrests must be compensated in accordance with international laws, and these individuals have a right to complain against the abuse of their rights in national courts as stated in Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

19. According to Article 1.2 of the UN Charter one of the purposes of the United Nations is: "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace." Also Article 2.4 of the Charter states: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."; therefore it is expected for other countries, such as Saudi Arabia to while respecting human rights laws to refrain from military intervention in Bahrain.

20. We call upon the Bahrain government to provide clear answers to world public opinion regarding its cases of human rights violations, as quickly as possible.

21. We call upon big power nations to avoid using double standards approaches in the regions revolutions and to take steps to give them legal support.

Conclusion and perspective

22. As the highest international institution the United Nations, international organizations and NGOs can by monitoring the situation in Bahrain prevent the expansion of human rights violations in the country. It is also expected from these institutions to work towards the rights of individuals whose rights have been violated for the sake of their wishes to have fundamental and civil rights as stated in human rights laws and the UN Charter; and for their rights be fulfilled through referral to national courts as stated in Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We hope that with the cooperation of all relevant international organizations a just peace is established in Bahrain thorough consideration of the fundamental rights of all its citizens.

ODVV Contact

23. Director: Siavash Rahpeik Havakhor

Email: info@odvv.org

Website: www.odvv.org

Address: 2nd Floor - 1 Mirsarabi Alley – Palestine St. – Keshavarz Blvd. – Tehran – Iran

PO Box: 16765-911

Telefax: (+9821) 88963091, 88964943, 88954928