



22 January 2021

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles

European Commission

Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200

1049 Brussels, Belgium

Esteemed High Representative Josep Borrell,

We are writing ahead of the meeting between Bahraini Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani and the EU scheduled for 26 January, in which a Cooperation Agreement is expected to be signed.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing deterioration of human rights in Bahrain, following a year where Human Rights Watch [accused](#) the government of having “escalated repression” against critics. We therefore kindly urge you to take this opportunity to hold your Bahraini counterparts accountable for their human rights commitments by raising the cases of European-Bahraini dual citizens **Abdulahdi Al-Khawaja** and **Sheikh Mohammed Habib Al-Muqdad** and urging Bahrain to restore their moratorium on the death penalty.

European-Bahraini Prisoners of Conscience

Among the most renowned political prisoners currently incarcerated in Bahrain are high-profile political opposition leaders, activists and human rights defenders [convicted](#) for their roles in the 2011 pro-democracy protest movement in the so called “Case of Leading Activists.” Among those imprisoned is **Danish-Bahraini Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja** and **Sweidsh-Bahraini Sheikh Mohammed Habib AlMuqdad**, both of whom are considered prisoners of conscience as well as **Hassan Mushaima**, a prominent Bahraini opposition leader. All have been prosecuted and sentenced to life for their political and human rights activism, and subjected to torture, mistreatment and [systemic denial of medical care](#).

Increased use of the death penalty

As you are aware, Bahrain abandoned its *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty in 2017 and has since conducted six executions, five of which were condemned as arbitrary by UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Agnes Callamard, in [2017](#) and [2019](#) respectively. Today, 26 death row inmates currently face imminent execution, nearly half of whom were convicted on the basis of confessions allegedly extracted under torture in cases related to political unrest.

Following the upholding of **Mohamed Ramadhan** and **Husain Moosa**’s death sentences by Bahrain’s Court of Cassation in July 2020, 56 MEPs [wrote](#) to the King of Bahrain urging for all political prisoner’s death row sentences to be pardoned or commuted, reiterating our opposition to the death penalty and encouraging work towards establishing a moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty.

In light of these worrying developments, I kindly ask that you use your meeting to urge your Bahraini counterparts to:

- Ensure the immediate provision of adequate medical care;
- Secure the immediate release of **Hassan Mushaima**, dual Swedish citizen **Sheikh Abduljalil Al-Muqdad** and dual Danish citizen **Abdulahdi Al-Khawaja**; and



- Urge the Bahraini authorities to impose a moratorium on the death penalty.

We hope that you treat this request with the urgency it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Karen MELCHIOR MEP
Mr Dietmar KÖSTER MEP
Mr Mikuláš PEKSA MEP
Mr Ernest URTASUN MEP
Mr Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR MEP
Ms Markéta GREGOROVÁ MEP
Mr Nikolaj VILLUMSEN MEP
Mr Łukasz KOHUT MEP
Mr Francisco GUERREIRO MEP
Mr Martin BUSCHMANN MEP
Mr Helmut SCHOLZ MEP
Ms Özlem DEMIREL MEP
Mr Milan BRGLEZ MEP
Mr Fabio Massimo CASTALDO MEP
Mr Chris MACMANUS MEP
Mr Cyrus ENGERER MEP