

# BAHRAIN

*Issued by the "Bahrain Freedom Movement" to promote human and constitutional rights*

## Failures on all sides will fore tyrants down

The tragic events in Mecca this year are just repetition of previous events that led to loss of life at massive scale. First came the fall of the massive crane on the pilgrims with the loss of more than 100 lives. Then there was the scary fire at a large hotel which caused more than 1000 pilgrims to flee for their lives. Then there was the fan that fell on the worshipper causing serious injuries among them. The final and most devastating tragedy was the death of up to 1000 pilgrims in what the authorities called a "stampede" the cause of which have not yet been fully explained. The common thread among them is the failure of the Saudi state to maintain the minimum level of safety to those travelling hundreds and thousands of miles to perform hajj (pilgrimage) at the House of God.

It is now clear that the whole Arabian Peninsula has lost its tranquillity with death and destruction emanating from the heart of Arabia with the main base of the Al Saud tribal rule forming the epicentre of destruction and death. In the past five years, Bahrainis were the first to receive the brunt of the Saudi violent attack on the Arab Spring. They dispatched their army to the small island to crush the Revolution of its people. Then there were the various campaigns of violence against the people of Iraq, Syria and Libya. Six months ago the Saudis and their allies launched their fiercest and most vicious attacks on Yemen, causing massive destruction on the scale of what happened to Japan in the Second World War. Up to 6000 Yemenis have perished in the relentless campaign with no end in sight. With the tragedies in Mecca, the Saudis have thus become the angels of death to the Arab and Muslim worlds. Since they spearheaded the counter-revolution campaign against the Arab people's revolutions, the political, security and moral landscape in the Middle East has fundamentally changed. However, the Saudis will not have it fully their way. This time they will be scrutinised

Serious cracks have appeared in the formations of the counter-revolution forces. The Al Khalifa of Bahrain have been forced to declare financial and political bankruptcy, while the Saudis are rapidly exhausting their financial reserves. They

have stabbed themselves in the back with their ill-advised policies and tyrannical tendencies. People cannot be defeated; tyrants can. This is a fact of life that dictators cannot easily comprehend, and when they do it is too late. The Bahraini regime has been swimming against the tide in turbulent oceans, depending on help from others who are, themselves, losing steam and becoming politically and militarily redundant. On the other hand, native Bahrainis who see the land of their ancestors being raped beyond belief, have no stomach for defeat or compromise. In the recent past they attempted to accommodate themselves within the Al Khalifa system of government, hoping dictators may transform into democrats. Now they have realised, beyond any doubt, that this transformation is impossible to happen. Thus they decided to carry on the struggle for democracy and justice forward. They are aware of the destructive roles played by allies of the regime especially in Washington and London, but they are also certain that the will of the people is mightier than the swords of the aggressors and dictators. Last month the regime was forced to concede defeat in its resistance to democratic transformation demanded by the people. By acknowledging their financial bankruptcy, they have admitted that their policy of subduing the people has disastrously failed. Economic downturn is often the first step to downfall of nations and regimes. Their main tool to counter their foes has now come back to haunt them. Flooding the market with oil was meant to cause extreme hardships to Russian, Iran and Iraq. These countries have survived despite the hardship of their people. As dictators always lack strategic planning, the Saudis committed what could prove to be fatal mistake; waging war on Yemen. The cost of his war is astronomical; beyond anyone's imagination or calculation. The Saudi monetary reserves were estimated at over \$750 billion. There are varying estimates of the cost of war, but the most conservative say that it is at least one billion dollars a month. This means that the Saudis have now used one third of reserves with no tangible results. The Yemenis have withstood the initial onslaught in the form of daily bombings form the air, and are now fighting back

inside the Saudi borders. They are almost in full control of the three regions which belong to Yemen but leased by the Saudis; Jizan, Najran and Assir. The human casualties of the Saudis and their allies are mounting. This reflects heavily on the economic situation of the aggressors.

The Al Khalifa regime has little consolation. Native Bahrainis have continued their protests despite the enormous human cost in life, property and liberty. Around 4000 prisoners remain behind bars. But there has not been lack of people pouring in the streets daily to call for the downfall of the antiquated hereditary dictatorship. Most prominent figures; from the revolutionary and political trends, are languishing behind bars. Human Rights abuses have continued unabated despite the attempts by the Al Khalifa friends in London to conceal them. The 30th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva has exposed a regime that is abusive, criminal, tyrannical and deceptive. While Bahraini activists have scored great successes in their human rights campaign, culminating in the statement signed by 33 states, the Al Khalifa spin machine has scored disastrous failure despite the presence in Geneva of several of its high-ranking members. It is clear that the Al Khalifa regime is losing the moral as well as the political campaign despite the enormous resources at its disposal. The recent mass arrests, trials and media campaign against the native Bahrainis have not been able to deter the people from pursuing their goals; liberty, freedom, democracy and self-determination. While the opposition has achieved significant moral high grounds, the Al Khalifa and their regional and international backers are losing the war. Several prominent figures from the regime's ranks are now sought for justice by international bodies. Both Saudi Arabia and UK have protected the regime from falling, but with their own domestic and regional problems they have become unable to influence events surrounding them. The conclusion is that the Al Khalifa regime has forfeited the purpose of its existence, and the only viable route available to its leaders is to pack and go. If they do that they may save their skin, lest the people's fury sinks them in the bottom of the ocean.

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## Saudis must abandon AlNimr crucifixion, fatigue plagues Alkhalifa regime

UN human rights experts and many international NGOs have called on the Saudi regime to halt the proposed crucifixion of Ali AlNimr. The teenager was condemned to death for joining anti-regime protests; his sentence was ratified last week. Saudis have been beheading opponents under false pretexts; a practice that has been embraced by ISIS and other Saudi-backed terrorist groups. Mr AlNimr's mother has appealed for intervention to spare the boy's life. On another front, the Saudi-led aggression on Yemen is gradually becoming a quagmire for the invaders as they sustain more losses and less successes. Alongside the mounting human and territorial losses, their economies are rapidly declining and the world's public opinion is fast turning against them. The announcement by the Alkhalifa rulers of a severe austerity programme is the beginning of comprehensive defeat of the aggressors and hereditary despots. Last week Bahrain's dictator was forced into conceding defeat by announcing what he called "smaller government" led by his uncle and son with the task of imposing serious cuts in various sectors. Bahrain's people have accused him and his clique of financial and political corruption. The Saudis are now plagued by reduced oil revenues and formidable foes both inside and outside the country. It is the beginning of the end of one of bleakest eras of Arab history

dominated by the most corrupt and despotic regimes in the world.

Yesterday Alkhalifa regime's forces snatched under-aged Hassan Mohammad Hassan while conducting cruel home raids. He faces the prospects of torture and possible liquidation as he had been on the run for long period. Under-aged Sayed Shubbar Alawi was also detained by foreign-staffed security forces. On 17<sup>th</sup> September Ibrahim Jaffar, from Sitra AlKharjiya, was arrested. From Bilad Al Qadeem, Khalil Al Saffar was taken away by masked members of regime's Death Squads. For the past week the prisoners of Wing 10 of the notorious Jaw Prison have been on hunger strike to protest the ill-treatment and cruel torture. Four months ago they were subjected to horrific treatment when they went on strike. Several names of torturers have been exposed and legal processes have begun to bring them to justice.

In another worrying development to the Alkhalifa regime, British-Bahraini citizen Jaafar Al-Hasabi has filed a criminal complaint against the Alkhalifa regime's attorney general in Switzerland over torture allegations. Al-Hasabi was tortured by government forces in Bahrain in 2010. Attorney General Ali Bin Fadhul Al-Buainain attended a conference in Switzerland and activists have urged the country's authorities to take the complaint seriously. "The Swiss authorities have the oppor-

tunity to show they take the UN Convention against Torture seriously and to apply their national law accordingly," Wolfgang Kaleck, general-secretary of the Berlin-based European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights told Reuters. "Opening an investigation into the role of the Bahraini attorney general and calling him for questioning would send a clear message against torture and in support of the principle of universal jurisdiction," he added. Four activist groups urged Swiss prosecutors to take up the politically sensitive case.

Bahraini human rights activist Maryam Al-Khawaja, the director of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights, has condemned the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) for entering into contracts with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain despite their record on human rights. She also criticised the UK government saying "Britain is the largest obstacle to human rights being upheld in Bahrain." In 2010, the SQA signed a deal with Bahrain to help to develop the education sector, shortly before a pro-democracy uprising. In 2013, it emerged that another contract had been signed. Last month, the SQA was advertising for people to work on a project in Saudi Arabia, a regime that has also been condemned for human rights violations.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015

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## Pilgrims killed due to Saudi negligence, Alkhalifa must not be armed by US

The Saudi authorities have confirmed the execution verdict passed on a young boy from AlAwwamiyah in the Eastern Province. Ali AlNimr, a relative of Sheikh Nimr AlNimr, had been sentenced to death for allegedly targeting policemen and participating in anti-regime protests. The Saudis have been carrying executing people at an alarming rate without due process of law. In the first six months of this year the number of those executed reached 200. International human rights bodies have expressed outrage at the increasing rate of executions which amount to "extra-judicial killing". People were also angered by the lack of care by the Saudi authorities after a crane crashed at the Holy Sanctuary housing the Ka'ba on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September. More than 110 pilgrims were killed in this incident. The annual pilgrimage has been plagued by deadly accidents causing hundreds of deaths.

Meanwhile Saudi and Alkhalifa dictators have been angered by the victory of Jeremy Corbyn in the leadership elections of the Labour Party. The results has been welcomed by millions of people with free thinking and humane approach to politics, both in UK and outside. It has shaken the British establishment to its core and is likely to force some elements to plot against Labour Party winning the next general elections. Native Bahrainis had prayed deep from their hearts for Mr Cor-

byn's victory as he had always stood with them against Alkhalifa. In an article published on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, the day after his victory, Jeremy Corbyn wrote in The Guardian: "Isis is utterly abhorrent and President Assad's regime has committed appalling crimes. But we must also oppose Saudi bombs falling on Yemen and the Bahraini dictatorship murdering its democracy movement, armed by us.

The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights has documented at least 20 arrests in the week 6-13<sup>th</sup> September. Among them were one woman and one child. On 14<sup>th</sup> September a native Bahraini musician was arrested. Yasser Khalifa was snatched from his home in Sitra by masked members of the regime's death squads. He had previously been to various kinds of harassment while working with Bahrain Aluminium (ALBA). From Tubli a young man was detained while trying to cross the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. Mahmood Hammad was detained on his way to perform pilgrimage (Hajj). His home was also raided and his nephew, Ahmad was also arrested. From Duraz, masked members of Death Squads in civilian clothes kidnapped Raja'ei Bad-dao and took him to the notorious torture houses.

On 8<sup>th</sup> September The Washington Post published an article titled "Five human rights abusers backed by the U.S. whom you never heard of". It said: "Here are five of the most egregious U.S.-backed viola-

tors operating today that Americans have never heard of". It mentioned Islam Karimov; president of Uzbekistan, Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa; ruler of Bahrain, Emomali Rahmon; president of Tajikistan, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov; president of Turkmenistan and Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo; president of Equatorial Guinea. On Bahrain's dictator the article said: "He had cracked down heavily on largely Shiite protesters during 2011 Arab Spring revolutions with the help of soldiers from neighboring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. More than 30 were killed, mostly at the hands of Bahraini security forces, and hundreds more were wounded, according to human rights groups. Hundreds more were arrested and scores faced trials before a military court." In Washington, calls have been made to halt arms sales to Alkhalifa dictators. Two senators: Ron Wyden representing Oregon and Jim McGovern representing Massachusetts' 2nd Congressional District have tabled new bill calling for a stop on arms exports to Bahrain. In an article they said: "We are deeply disappointed by the U.S. State Department's recent decision to resume arms sales to Bahrain. U.S. arms sales should never aid and abet the repression of peaceful protesters, and we are introducing legislation to roll back this misguided decision."

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
16<sup>th</sup> September 2015

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## GCC aggression on Yemen condemned, Bahrain's violations escalate

Anger is mounting at the intensification of aggression by four GCC countries against Yemen. Saudis, Alkhalifa, Qataris and the UAE are preparing land invasion to capture Sanaa and inflict more suffering on the Yemeni people. This is in retaliation for the mounting losses of the GCC invaders. Last week at least 80 troops were killed when Yemenis fired a missile on a military facility in the town of Ma'rib causing large explosions in ammunition depots. At least 48 UAE troops, 5 foreign troops sent by Alkhalifa of Bahrain and more than 20 Saudis perished. There were also feelings of disappointment and frustration at the failure of President Obama to ask the visiting Saudi dictator, Salman bin Abdul Aziz to stop the aggression on Yemen. The war has symbolised naked unprovoked aggression by the strong against the weak. The Yemenis have committed no crime against their neighbours to deserve this horrific punishment without condemnation from the West, the UN, or even a call to stop it. Meanwhile the Saudis have detained a Yemeni citizen who uttered words of support to his countrymen. He was flogged publicly and sentenced to five years in jail.

Emboldened by the world's indifference to the suffering of the Bahrainis, the Alkhalifa dictatorship has continued its repression. In the week 1st – 7th September at least 22 native Bahrainis including two children were detained for taking part in peaceful anti-regime protests. More were subsequently arrested. On 7th September Hajji Majid, one of the eldest revolutionaries in the country was detained and taken to Budayya torture centre. Despite his old age and peaceful nature of his protest he has been repeatedly targeted by regime's forces which are becoming less tolerant by the day for any dissent. On 6th September Talib AlKhabbaz was snatched from the airport and taken to torture chambers. He was travelling abroad for treatment to his wounds suffered earlier during torture sessions. Under-aged Hassan Fakhar sustained horrific injuries on his face as he was being detained by masked members of Alkhalifa Death Squads.

A senior figure from AlWefaq Society, Sheikh Hassan Essa, has had his illegal detention extended for two more weeks. This is seen as continuation of the policy of revenge against those who refused to bow to the dictator. Regime's forces raided the house of Sheikh Hussain AlDaihi at the town of Daih and wreaked havoc on its contents. He is the Deputy Secretary General of AlWefaq Society which is now being pursued by dictator Hamad Alkhalifa for boycotting his doomed elections. Sheikh AlDaihi is outside the country. This is one of the reasons why Bahrain ranked below countries like Russia, Rwanda and Venezuela, as well as regional neighbours, Oman, Iraq, Qa-

tar, Kuwait and UAE. Last year it was also ranked at 163 by The World Press Freedom Index, and in 2013 it was ranked 165.

Prisoner of conscience Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb has been denied his medication for hypertension and diabetes since March. He has also been denied supportive shoes which his doctor says are needed to help alleviate his back pain, which he has suffered from since his torture in 2011. The University and College Union has urged its members to write to the Alkhalifa dictators; Urging the Bahrain authorities to immediately allow Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb to receive his medication, vitamins and supportive shoes and Urging them to release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peaceful expression of his opinion.

The Early Day Motion 241 tabled by several MPs two months ago about the situation in Bahrain has been signed by 42 of them. It expresses "severe concerns" about the ongoing restrictions against free

speech, That this House expresses severe concerns about the ongoing restrictions against free speech reprisals against individuals exercising their right to free speech in Bahrain, including the continued ban on protests and rallies and the systematic use of torture and other cruel and degrading treatment. It condemns the harassment, intimidation, detention and sentencing of human rights defender Nabeel Rajab to six months' imprisonment for a tweet critical of the Ministries of Interior and Defence. It calls on the government of Bahrain to release all political prisoners and those imprisoned for their right to freedom of expression; and urges the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to re-evaluate its assistance to Bahrain in light of these ongoing violations and to implement the recommendations of the Foreign Affairs Committee in its First Report of Session 2013-14, HC88, by listing Bahrain as a country of concern in its upcoming human rights report.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**

9 September 2013

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## Bahrain: Prosecuting the prosecutor

21 September 2015

Mr Ali Bin Fadhul Al-Buainain is what people might call an "honorable man". Last week he was meeting other honorable men and women in Berne and Zurich in Switzerland – places where honorable people often mingle. Zurich has been hosting the annual meeting of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP), a group of high-ranking prosecutors from all over the world.

Meanwhile, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva was busy last Monday examining the situation in Mr Al-Buainain's home state of Bahrain. 32 countries, led by Switzerland, issued a statement condemning human rights violations in the Gulf state, where men and women are imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of opinion and free association and face abuse and torture in detention.

The representatives of these states would have needed only to get the train a few hours north to hand their statement to one of those most responsible for these crimes. Mr Al-Buainain is Bahrain's Chief Prosecutor. To date he has not faced any backlash from his prosecutor colleagues. Two years ago an Irish human rights group called on the IAP to expel Al-Buainain from its ranks. Yet nothing was done. On the contrary: last week Al-Buainain stood to be elected Vice President of the IAP's Executive Committee.

Like all countries in Europe, Switzerland has signed the UN anti-torture convention. This means it is obliged under the principle of universal jurisdiction to take criminal proceedings in cases of torture – including those that occur abroad – whenever

a suspect is present on Swiss territory. We recently filed a criminal complaint with the Swiss authorities alerting them to the allegations against Al-Buainain. It was a collaborative effort by my organization ECCHR together with Swiss, Bahraini and British human rights organizations. At the center of the complaint is the story of torture survivor Mr Jaafar Al-Hasabi, a Bahraini-born British citizen. In 2010 Al-Hasabi was held in incommunicado detention in Bahrain where he was subjected to various torture methods, including electric shocks.

Torture: it's one of the gravest crimes in our statute books. Yet the Swiss prosecutors, like so many, have trouble dealing with suspects like Al-Buainain. If the suspect had been say a drug boss instead, the authorities would have arrested him as soon as he set foot in Switzerland, even if his activities were more on a behind-the-scenes level, as with the Bahraini prosecutor. The key consideration would be his dominating role within his criminal organization. And yet it seems to be too big a jump for some to apply the same criteria to state structures, even when there have for years been credible accounts of systematic torture there. This is particularly the case when it's an allied and economically powerful state like Bahrain.

The Swiss prosecutors had time to take the necessary action. By allowing Ali Bin Fadhul Al-Buainain to leave the country they missed a crucial opportunity to implement the calls by Switzerland and 31 other states: to bring to justice those who torture or oversee torture in Bahrain.

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## Trade Unions take firm stance on UK's relationship with Bahrain

UK trade unions, with the support of Education International and the Trade Union Congress, today launched a campaign highlighting “widespread and systematic” human rights abuses in Bahrain and calling for an independent audit of UK government aid to the Gulf Monarchy.

The University and College Union (UCU), initiated an open letter condemning British failure to act over repression in Bahrain, which has now been signed by the largest trade unions in the UK including UNITE, USDAW, UNISON, GMB, CWU, NASUWT, RMT, NUT, NUJ, RCN, PCS and BFAWU.

It has also gained the backing of Trade Union Congress (TUC), which represents 52 unions across the UK with a combined membership of 5.5 million, and Education International, the world’s largest trade union federation, which represents over 30 million education employees across 400 organisations worldwide. Union officials will launch a drive for further signatures at the Labour Party conference, which opened in Brighton on Sunday 27th September.

The Unions highlight the continued detention and torture of opposition leaders,

unionists, teachers, medics and students, despite rising levels of UK financial assistance aimed at supporting the Bahraini government. Signatories condemned the lack of transparency surrounding the spending, noting their shock *“that there has been no independent assessment made of this expenditure of public money despite a clear deterioration in Bahrain’s human rights record”*.

They further demand an independent assessment of the FCO’s assistance spending to Bahrain, urging that *“any military, diplomatic and security ties are handled with a view to ending human rights abuses”*. These calls come in the wake of criticism from the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which stated in 2014 that the FCO should have “bitten the bullet and listed Bahrain as a country of concern” as there was “little or no evidence that Bahrain has made enough progress in implementing political reform and safeguarding human rights”.

Elizabeth Lawrence, President of the University and College Union (UCU) said: “UCU welcomes the fact that the TUC, Education International and so many trade unions have signed the letter concerning human rights in Bahrain. We salute the

work of all those seeking an end to human rights abuses in Bahrain and send our best wishes to trade unions and human rights defenders in Bahrain. We also call upon the British government to take a much tougher stance with this oppressive regime. UCU members are actively engaged in Bahrain solidarity work and our annual Congress passed its latest resolution on Bahrain in May 2015.”

In 2015, the UCU congress passed a motion condemning the construction of a new British naval base in Bahrain, and ongoing UK government support for the monarchy in the midst of human rights violations such as the imprisonment of Bahraini teachers’ union leader Mahdi Abu Dheeb.

Ahmed Ali, - Legal Officer of the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy said:

“This is a landmark stance by trade unions in the UK who are standing in unity against human rights abuses in Bahrain. We thank all of the signatories for their work in sending a clear message to the government that their support for the government of Bahrain will not go unnoticed by the British public.”

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## NGOs invite states to sign UN joint-statement on Bahrain

The Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, alongside 16 NGOs including Index on Censorship, voiced support for the UN joint-statement on human rights in Bahrain. The statement, delivered by Switzerland at the 30th session of the UN Human Rights Council, was co-signed by 33 countries, including 19 EU states and the United States of America.

The statement remains open for additional signatories until the end of the Human Rights Council session on 2 October 2015. The NGOs invite states who have not signed to do so and call on those who have to continue exerting collective pressure for human rights progress in Bahrain.

Letter

To the Governments of: Albania, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovak Republic, and Spain

24 September 2015

### Excellencies,

We, the undersigned non-governmental organisations, write to voice our support for the joint statement on the human rights situation in Bahrain delivered by Switzerland at the 30th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC). Since the last joint statement on Bahrain in June 2014, the government has continued to curtail the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Human rights defenders, political opposition leaders,

members of the media, and youth have faced intimidation, arrest, arbitrary detention, unfair trials and acts of reprisal by the authorities. Furthermore, negotiations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (OHCHR) for a programme of technical capacity building in Bahrain have stalled in the period since the June 2014 joint statement.

We urge your government, therefore, to sign the joint statement on Bahrain delivered by Switzerland at the HRC’s 30th session in order to refocus international attention on human rights in Bahrain and encourage the government of Bahrain to constructively address its ongoing violations.

International pressure on Bahrain continues to assist in addressing human rights violations in Bahrain, as reflected by the decision of the King of Bahrain to release prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab under a royal pardon after he spent over four months in prison for a tweet criticising the government.

It is critical, therefore, to take action now to reaffirm the high level of international concern over human rights conditions in Bahrain. To abandon collective pressure on Bahrain at a time when the situation is continu-

ing to deteriorate would send an entirely wrong message to the Bahraini government, and undermine both internal and external efforts to foster genuine reform.

Switzerland has indicated that this joint statement will be open for additional signatories throughout the session. We therefore call on your government to recommit to supporting human rights in Bahrain, and to add your endorsement to this joint statement.

Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

Amnesty International

ARTICLE 19

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR)

Bahrain Institute of Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

English Pen

European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)

European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR)

Human Rights Watch

Index on Censorship

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

Pen International

Rafto Foundation

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)

