

Bahrain

Question

In 2008, Bahrain committed to increase training related to human rights for police officers, law enforcement officials, and staff of other government ministries. Three years later, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry recommended that Bahrain promulgate and enforce professional standards of the police force, and carry out legal and sensitivity training for police officers. Could the delegation of Bahrain provide Canada with information on the processes established, methods used, and results achieved, with regard to human rights sensitivity training for police officers and security forces as well as with a timetable for completion if this process is still in course?

Recommendations

Canada recommends that Bahrain:

1. Take steps to develop new legislation and policies for law enforcement officials to guarantee accountability of security forces and respect for human rights, and prevent incidents of violence against members of ethnic and religious communities.
2. Amend the Penal Code to remove all criminal penalties for alleged libel offences, and the press law to bring its provisions into compliance with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
3. Reinstate all employees and students dismissed following the events of February and March, 2011, whose political activities were consistent with the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and amend Law 21/1989 and Law 32/2006 on public gathering to bring their provisions into compliance with article 21 and 22 of the ICCPR, and develop an enabling legal environment for civil society to flourish.

Observations (if time allows):

We welcome the steps taken by Bahraini authorities to ensure implementation of the recommendations contained in the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry report. We encourage Bahrain to thoroughly implement all recommendations and we look forward to seeing the effects of their implementation on the ground.

We are concerned by reports of violence and human rights violations by police and security forces, including reports of torture of a Canadian citizen. We hope that those within the security apparatus responsible for such violations will be brought to justice. We stress the importance for the government to take measure to protect freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and develop laws conducive to the protection and development of civil society.

RECEIVED BY: ANNE-TANAZA LORRE
HR Counsellor