



appg

THE COST OF REPRESSION | SECRET GOVERNMENT FUNDS & HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN THE GULF

INQUIRY REPORT INTO THE INTEGRATED ACTIVITY FUND AND THE GULF STRATEGY FUND

APPG ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GULF

JULY 2021

Written and researched by APPG Secretariat Josie Thum, Research and Policy Associate at the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)



JULY 2021

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the group.

© 2021, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf.
All Rights Reserved.

www.gulfappg.co.uk

Published in July 2021.

This report was researched and written by Josie Thum, Secretariat of the APPG,
with contributions from the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD).

This report has been endorsed by Brendan O'Hara; Lord Scriven; Sir Peter Bottomley; Alistair Carmichael; Andrew Gwynne; Andy Slaughter; Chris Law; Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle; Ben Lake; Alan Brown.

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the group.

Design by R Probert.

ABOUT THE APPG

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf is a cross-party parliamentary group of 17 members, of which 12 are office holders, whose purpose is 'to promote and protect democracy and human rights in Gulf countries'. The APPG, which has been in existence since 2016, has been scrutinising UK-funding to Gulf countries through the Integrated Activity Fund since 2017. The APPG is Chaired by Brendan O'Hara MP, Scottish National Party (SNP) Spokesperson for International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) acts as the Secretariat.

Membership of the APPG¹

Chair - Brendan O'Hara MP, Scottish National Party
Vice Chair - Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Conservative
Vice Chair - Alistair Carmichael MP, Liberal Democrat
Vice Chair - Andrew Gwynne MP, Labour
Vice Chair - Chris Law MP, Scottish National Party
Vice Chair - David Linden MP, Scottish National Party
Vice Chair - Andy Slaughter MP, Labour
Vice Chair - Lord Scriven, Liberal Democrat
Vice Chair - Baroness Stern, Crossbench
Officer - Martyn Day MP, Scottish National Party
Officer - Ben Lake MP, Plaid Cymru
Officer - Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP, Labour
Member - Fiona Bruce, Conservative
Member - Layla Moran, Liberal Democrat
Member - Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Green Party
Member - Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party
Member - Alan Brown MP, Scottish National Party

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE APPG	i
Membership of the APPG	i
GLOSSARY	1
FOREWORD	2
KEY FINDINGS	4
RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS	4
Recommendations to the Government	6
Referrals to Select Committees for further inquiry	6
BACKGROUND	7
Background of UK funding streams to the Gulf	8
The Gulf Strategy Integrated Activity Fund	8
The Gulf Strategy Fund	9
ISSUES OF TRANSPARENCY	10
Government admits lack of transparency and accountability	12
Government refusal to disclose spending breakdowns	12
Blanket exemptions to information disclosure	14
Failure to implement Foreign Affairs Committee recommendations	14
HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS	16
Failures of human rights due diligence	16
Case study: The death penalty and political prisoners in Bahrain	18
Case study: Saudi Arabia and war crimes in Yemen	21
FAILURE TO DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVENESS	23
Lack of transparent evaluation mechanisms	23
Problematic references to 'success' in Bahrain	23
Failure to positively impact the human rights situation in the Gulf	27
METHODOLOGY	28
REFERENCES	29

APPF - Arab Partnership Participation Fund
APPG - All-Party Parliamentary Group
BIRD - Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy
CSSF - Conflict, Security and Stability Fund
DFID - Department for International Development
DIT - Department for International Trade
FAC - Foreign Affairs Committee
FCDO - United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FCO - United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FOIA - Freedom of Information Act
FY - Financial Year
GBF - Global Britain Fund
GCC - Gulf Cooperation Council
GSF - Gulf Strategy Fund
IAF - Gulf Strategy Integrated Activity Fund
ICAI - Independent Commission on Aid Impact
ICU - Intensive Care Unit
JCNSS - Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy
MENA - Middle East and North Africa
MoI - Ministry of Interior
NIHR - Bahrain's National Institute for Human Rights
NSC - National Security Council
ODA - Overseas Development Assistance
OPP - Bahrain's Office of Public Prosecution
OSJA - Overseas Security and Justice Assistance
SDSR - Strategic Defence and Security Review
SIU - Bahrain's Special Investigations Unit
SNP - Scottish National Party
UAE - United Arab Emirates
UN - United Nations
WGAD - United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

FOREWORD

In 2011, calls for democracy, justice and the respect for human rights erupted across the Middle East. The historical movement that followed shook nations to their core and ignited the hopes of millions across the world. Yet, a decade on, the struggle for democracy and a fairer society is far from over for the people of the Arab Gulf.

In the wake of the Arab Spring, the United Kingdom (UK) began providing funding to the Gulf monarchies. Despite almost ten years of British taxpayer-funded assistance to these wealthy regimes, their human rights records have largely deteriorated. Gulf populations continue to suffer some of the most brutal oppression in the world, often in flagrant violation of international law.

Arbitrary executions, systemic use of torture, enforced disappearances, mass imprisonment of political dissidents and routine harassment of civil societies have plagued countries such as Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, whilst Yemen continues to suffer the world's worst humanitarian crisis six years after the Saudi-led military coalition invaded the country. Yet despite their manifold abuses, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states continue to receive millions of pounds from the British taxpayer every year.

As parliamentarians, we have seldom encountered so much government resistance as when we began investigating the source of this funding; the secretive Integrated Activity Fund (IAF) and the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF). The Gulf-specific IAF was founded in 2016 and replaced by the GSF in 2020. Showers of requests for information on the IAF, torrents of credible human rights concerns connected to the funds and repeated calls for their suspension from within Westminster and beyond have been steadily ignored by successive governments since at least 2015.

Indeed, IAF-funded programmes have been run with absolute minimal levels of accountability, transparency and due diligence in spite of being repeatedly implicated in human rights violations. When the secrecy of the IAF was challenged, the government simply transferred funds to the GSF. Despite countless warnings and mounting evidence from human rights watchdogs, notably the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and years of repeated cross-party representations, efforts to compel government action have been routinely stonewalled. Attempts to scrutinise these funds are met with hostility and the government has been deliberately secretive to the extreme about the way this money is being spent. Ministers routinely ignore or evade

questions, and pledges of improved transparency have transpired to be tokenistic.

While the UK government prevaricates, we have witnessed the heartbreaking human suffering inflicted by the funds' beneficiary states. Having met personally with victims such as Ahmed Ramadhan, the 11-year-old son of a Bahraini death row inmate, it is appalling to see efforts to put an end to violations obstructed by the UK government time and again. Ahmed's father, Mohammed Ramadhan, was tortured, sexually assaulted and had his death sentence upheld after IAF-funded oversight bodies whitewashed his allegations of abuse. Mohammed could now be executed at any moment with little warning given to his wife and three children, despite the United Nations calling for his immediate release and compensation.

With the government seemingly prepared to go to considerable lengths to avoid revealing its activities in the Gulf, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf commissioned this report in order to compile known information about the IAF and the GSF, highlight extremely serious ongoing concerns, make recommendations to address the funds' implications in human rights abuse and urgently refer the matter to Select Committees for further inquiries. The government's inaction is no longer tenable and it is high time that the UK suspends its provision of harmful assistance to GCC countries through the GSF.



A stylized signature of Brendan O'Hara in black ink.

Brendan O'Hara MP
APPG Chair



A stylized signature of Lord Scriven in black ink.

Lord Scriven
APPG Vice Chair

KEY FINDINGS

1. The IAF and the GSF have failed to prevent a severe deterioration in the human rights situation in the GCC: Human rights in beneficiary countries have worsened since IAF-funded programmes began in 2017. Bahrain ended a moratorium on the death penalty and executions have increased over ten-fold in Bahrain since 2017. Executions have also risen in Saudi Arabia, which executed a record 184 people in 2019. States have violently cracked down on civil societies whilst freedom of expression, opinion and assembly have been increasingly curtailed. Peaceful dissidents, including human rights defenders, continue to face persecution.

2. IAF-backed institutions in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have whitewashed human rights abuses, placing the UK government at risk of complicity in abuses themselves: The IAF has funded training to internationally discredited Bahraini oversight bodies which have repeatedly whitewashed torture allegations. Due to the lack of transparency surrounding the IAF, it is not possible to conclusively confirm whether or not its taxpayer-funded government programmes are directly complicit in abuses.

3. The transparency of the IAF and the GSF is wholly inadequate: What little information has been released on the IAF and GSF was disclosed only as a result of extensive scrutiny and investigation by rights groups and parliamentarians. The government has been highly secretive and adversarial when dealing with scrutiny towards the funds. FOI requests are routinely subject to blanket exemptions whilst responses to written parliamentary questions that are not refused are frequently incomplete

or contain insufficient information. Despite a promise to improve the transparency of the fund, the publication of a GSF programme summary in March 2021 was inadequate and failed to provide information repeatedly requested by elected representatives.

4. The IAF and GSF lack accountability: Negligible levels of transparency, flawed human rights due diligence and a near-absence of Ministerial oversight on projects with human rights implications has meant that the IAF and the GSF have poor levels of political accountability.

5. The UK government has been misleading and deceptive about the IAF and the GSF: Government claims that much information on the IAF cannot be disclosed since most programmes are delivered regionally, are false. Similarly, the government's representation of the IAF as a fund for health, sport and culture, as well as its claim that the IAF does not fund bodies dealing with security matters in Bahrain, are misleading to the point of deception

6. IAF and GSF's OSJA human rights due diligence is flawed, improperly applied and entirely absent in some cases: The OSJA process lacks Ministerial oversight and political accountability and failed to be applied to at least one IAF-funded activity with security and justice implications, leaving this activity without any human rights due diligence. Consequently, IAF programmes do not comply with the UK's domestic and international obligations in every case. Due to the lack of transparency, it is not possible to know on how many occasions the government failed to conduct an OSJA where it was required.

7. The IAF and the GSF fund programmes to bodies in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia that continue to be implicated in serious human rights and international law violations, years after they began benefiting from UK-funded training:

a) Bahraini beneficiaries of both funds, including the aforementioned oversight bodies and the Ministry of Interior, have whitewashed torture allegations reported by death row inmates, whitewashed the torture allegations of children and conducted inadequate investigations into allegations of abuse. b) IAF beneficiaries in Saudi Arabia have been implicated in war crimes in Yemen. Specifically, the Royal Saudi Air Forces have been accused of perpetrating war crimes against civilians in Yemen, while the Joint Incident Assessment Team have been accused of conducting inadequate investigations into war crimes.

8. The UK government has repeatedly ignored evidence that IAF and GSF beneficiaries are implicated in human rights abuses:

The government has so far failed to acknowledge mounting credible concerns, supported by considerable evidence, implicating IAF and GSF beneficiaries in human rights abuse. Instead, the government responds defensively to concerns and continues to heap problematic praise onto GCC states which risks further emboldening perpetrators. The government regularly accepts flawed and inaccurate assurances from GCC authorities above evidence presented from the international community.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS

Recommendations to the Government

The APPG is deeply concerned by the findings of this report which indicate that the IAF - now renamed the GSF - is implicated in human rights violations in the Gulf.² Findings show that programmes under the fund are: ineffective in achieving their objectives; uphold institutions that facilitate and perpetrate violations including torture, arbitrary application of the death penalty and illegal drone strikes; and, that there is unprecedented government secrecy surrounding these public funds, which has at times amounted to deception, and which undermines the principles of a democratic nation.

The APPG therefore makes the following recommendations to the government:

- Government funding to GCC states through the GSF should be immediately suspended pending an independent inquiry into its implication in human rights and international law violations. This is with particular regards to human rights violations in Bahrain and war crimes perpetrated by Saudi Arabia in Yemen.
- The government's OSJA process is the only apparent form of due diligence to which IAF and GSF programmes are subject and has proven an inadequate means of assessing human rights risks. Fundamentally, the government should accept that Ministers cannot legally authorise any assistance carrying a real risk of contributing to torture or the death penalty.
- The government should commit to an independent review of the OSJA policy, and take steps to replace it with a regime of binding statutory safeguards in order to prevent UK complicity in torture and the death penalty.
- The government should commit to publishing all assistance to countries on the FCDO's human rights watch list, as well as all GCC countries, along with all OSJAs assessments for such programmes, with appropriate redactions where necessary to avoid serious harm to national security.
- The government should implement the Foreign Affairs Committee's (FAC) recommendations made in its 2018 report *Global Britain: Human Rights and the Rule of Law*, namely that the UK Foreign Office should:
 - Be clearer about how funding is allocated and what it achieves;
 - Outline clear mechanisms for measuring progress in its rule of law and democracy programmes;
 - Review the current situation in Bahrain and report its findings to the FAC to further consider whether funding should continue to this country; and
 - Respond firmly to countries that fail to make sufficient progress in the areas of rule of law and democracy in order to underline the importance of international standards and rules on human rights. States that fail to make progress, or that regress, should be subject to repercussions, including the suspension of support.

- Given the failure of the OSJA process to adequately assess the human rights implications of taxpayer-funded projects in the GCC, the government should publish IAF and GSF programme details to allow these implications to be independently assessed. Publication would help to address serious ongoing human rights concerns and would demonstrate the level of effectiveness of IAF and the GSF programmes. Publication would also improve the transparency of the funding and increase public confidence in government policy. The following information on the IAF and GSF should be made public immediately:
 - Actual spending broken down by (a) country (b) financial year and (c) individual programme;
 - All programme titles;
 - The names of programme beneficiaries and the value of the assistance they received, broken down by (a) financial year and (b) programme title;
 - The names of programme implementers and the value of the assistance they received, broken down by (a) financial year and (b) programme title;
 - A programme-based breakdown of dates and locations of activities; and
 - All evaluations and assessments of programme activities.

Referrals to Select Committees for further inquiry

In light of the findings of this report, the APPG makes referrals to the following governmental committees for their inquiry into the implications of the IAF and GSF in human rights violations in the Gulf:

1. The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee;
2. The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee;
3. The House of Commons Defence Select Committee; and
4. The House of Lords International Relations and Defence Select Committee.



BACKGROUND

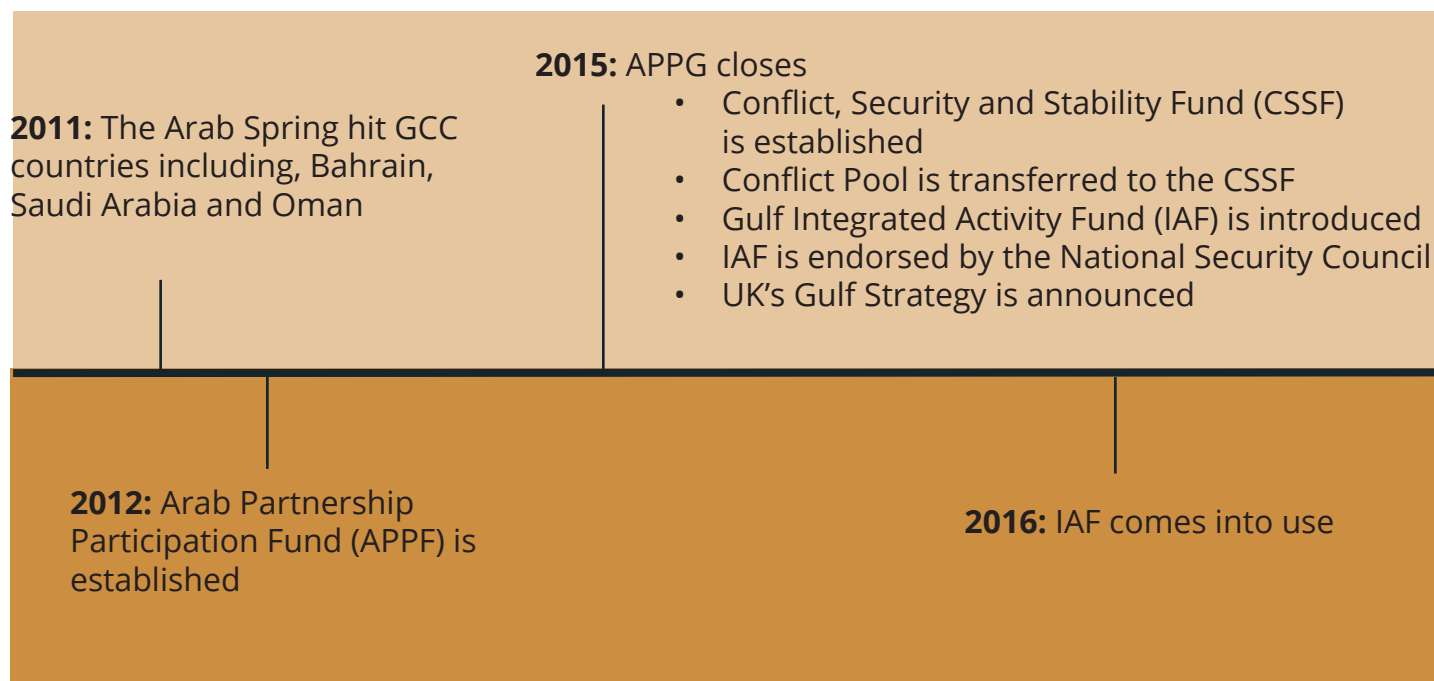
Background of UK funding streams to the Gulf

Since 2012, government funding to GCC countries has moved between at least four different funds. From the 2011/12 to the 2014/15 financial year (FY), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provided funding to Gulf countries through the Arab Partnership Participation Fund (APPF); a £42.8m fund which was set up in the wake of the Arab Spring as part of the 'Arab Partnership Initiative' and ran under the Department for International Development (DFID) and the FCO.⁴ Through this fund, over £2.8m was spent on delivering projects "that support political participation; freedom of expression and public voice; and good governance" in Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.⁵ The Conflict Pool, a fund that was transferred to the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) in the 2015/16 FY, has also been used to fund security and justice projects delivered to Bahrain.⁶ Indeed, the 2014 training of the Bahraini Chief of Police, Tariq Al Hassan, was paid for by the UK taxpayer through the Conflict Pool.⁷

The controversial conflict, security and stability fund, the CSSF [...] drew criticism from UK aid watchdogs for serious shortcomings in the way it operated. It was found to have been insufficiently rigorous in applying safeguards to prevent collaboration with foreign entities with suspect human rights records [...] once the programme began to face scrutiny, it was simply transferred over to the Integrated Activity Fund.

David Linden MP³

Timeline of UK funding streams to the Gulf



The UK's Gulf Strategy

The UK's Gulf Strategy was announced in November 2015 in the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review. It was endorsed by the National Security Council (NSC) in July that same year.⁸ The objectives of the Gulf Strategy are to strengthen, deepen and broaden the UK's engagement with the six GCC states in order to increase regional stability, mutual security and prosperity, and to protect and promote UK interests.⁹ The review stated that "in particular, we will build a permanent and more substantial UK military presence to reflect our historic relationships" and went on to discuss HMS Jufair at the Mina Salman port in Bahrain as well as the intention to establish a British Defence Staff in the region.¹⁰

The strategy promises sustained and regular Ministerial engagement and claims to be underpinned by "cooperation in areas ranging from rule of law to education, healthcare and infrastructure".¹¹ In the same year as this strategy was announced, both the CSSF and

the Gulf Strategy Integrated Activity Fund (IAF) were introduced.¹²

Conflict, Security and Stability Fund

Launched in 2015, the CSSF is a £1.26bn annual fund operating in 84 countries.¹³ Through the CSSF, around £5m has been spent on the UK's technical assistance programme in Bahrain alone.¹⁴ Indeed, £1.52m was spent on this programme through the CSSF in the 2016/17 FY, in order to "encourage progress on human rights in areas which included focusing on building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law and justice reform".¹⁵

In 2017, parliament's Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy (JCNSS) warned that the CSSF risked becoming a "slush fund" and that its operations and achievements were opaque, whilst it "lacks political leadership and accountability".¹⁶ The JCNSS also criticised the NSC for "marking its own homework", due to its dual-role in both operating and reviewing the CSSF, and the JCNSS con-

2017: Existence of the IAF is revealed

2020: IAF closes and is replaced by the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF) in April

2018: IAF is transferred from the Cabinet Office to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

2022: GSF is funded until April this year, with future allocations to be determined in the forthcoming Spending Review.

cluded that it could not provide parliamentary accountability for taxpayer money spent through the CSSF.¹⁷ The fund went on to be widely criticised for its secrecy and risks of complicity in human rights abuses in its countries of operation, including in Bahrain.¹⁸ Indeed, the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) published a critical 2018 report on the CSSF, stating that “the Fund does not know if it might cause unintended harm” due to its “inadequate” results management and theories of change, and “insufficient” risk analyses.¹⁹

Examples of CSSF-funded activities in the GCC include the training of a delegation of Bahraini police officers in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 2015. This community policing and protest management training cost the taxpayer £16 000 and included sessions on the use of water cannons, dogs and intelligence gathering methods.²⁰ It was denounced by rights groups, who stated that “elements of Bahrain’s security apparatus trained by the UK committed appalling human rights violations against [...] five death row inmates, and did so while or after receiving British training”.²¹

Furthermore, in 2017, it emerged that £25,000 of public money was spent under the CSSF to send the Royal Marines band to Manama, Bahrain, to play at the Queen’s 91st birthday celebrations.²² In the face of mounting scrutiny and criticism, the CSSF responded to many of the ICAI recommendations in May 2018. However, by that point money earmarked for Gulf countries had already been reassigned to the newly created - and even less transparent - IAF.²³

The Gulf Strategy Integrated Activity Fund

The IAF was a public fund reserved for the six GCC states. Introduced in the 2015 spending round as part of the UK’s Gulf Strategy, the IAF

did not come into use until the 2016/17 FY.²⁴ The IAF was non-ODA and had an allocated annual budget of over £20 million to invest in the GCC until the end of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, amounting to a £80m budget until 2020. The actual spend for the IAF between the 2016/17 and 2019/20 FY was £53.4 million. The IAF was originally based in the Cabinet Office, but was later transferred to the FCO (now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office - FCDO) at the start of the 2018/19 FY.²⁵ The IAF was designed as a means for the government to fund activities exclusively in the six GCC states. An unknown amount of funding for the IAF came through the CSSF and the Prosperity Fund.²⁶

The government has strongly resisted providing any information about the fund or its beneficiaries. Although the IAF was introduced in the 2015/16 FY, its very existence was not revealed until December 2017, following a written parliamentary question to the then-Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Alistair Burt.²⁷ The Global Britain Fund (GBF) is the FCO’s departmental policy programme budget and has funded some of the same security and justice projects as the IAF.²⁸



The crux of the issue [...] is to do with secrecy. There have been few statements about the fund. Initially, there was no admission of the fund at all. It was like the security services used to be - it did not exist.

Andy Slaughter MP²⁹

Governance of the IAF

In 2020, limited details about the governance of the IAF were revealed in response to an FOI request. The Gulf Strategy Group (IAF) was responsible for the governance, oversight and operation of the IAF and for ensuring that IAF funded programmes contributed to the delivery of the Gulf Strategy. It was accountable to the Gulf Strategy Group (GSG) which is chaired by the FCDO Director MENAD.³⁰ The GSG (IAF) met bi-monthly and prepared quarterly reports covering programme performance, finances and risk.

The GSG (IAF) was chaired by the Head of the FCO's Arabian Peninsula Joint Unit. Voting members of the group included a representative from each GCC post, and government departments delivering the Gulf strategy including DFID and NSS. Representatives from the Stabilisation Unit, the IAF team and FCDO MSPT also attended meetings.

The GSG (IAF) had the authority to approve projects of up to £1m and to vire up to £250 000 between projects. Projects over £1m had to be referred to the GSG with a recommendation on whether or not to approve those projects. Each IAF activity required a lead department and a Senior Responsible Officer.³¹

The Gulf Strategy Fund

The GSF replaced the IAF on 1 April 2020. It is a non-ODA fund which is managed as part of the FCDO's International Programme.³² The GSF initially had a budget of £20 million in 2020/21, which was reduced to £8.4 million following a spending review in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.³³ Programme teams in each of the GCC countries were assigned to oversee nine GSF programmes in Bahrain, four in Kuwait, nine in Oman, two in Qatar, six in Saudi Arabia and seven in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the 2020/21 FY.³⁴

At the end of an October 2020 House of Commons Backbench Business Debate on the 'Transparency of the IAF' and following significant scrutiny on the fund's transparency, MENA Minister James Cleverly, promised that a programme summary of the GSF would be published.³⁵ On 31 March 2021, the government published this programme summary which provided very limited detail of GSF activities and made no mention of human rights or due diligence.³⁶

The summary did confirm that GSF projects including "security and justice" are funded in Saudi Arabia whilst "police reform" and "capacity building of Bahrain's oversight

IAF Spending		
Financial Year	Allocated Budget (£)	Actual Spending (£)
2016/17	20 M ⁴⁰	10.5 M ⁴¹
2017/18	20 M ⁴²	13.9 M ⁴³
2018/19	20 M ⁴⁴	17.08 M ⁴⁵
2019/20	20 M ⁴⁶	12.4 M ⁴⁷
2020/21 (GSF)	8.4 M (formerly 20 M) ⁴⁸	-
2021/22 (GSF)	10 M ⁴⁹	-

Table 1: IAF and GSF Spending showing allocated budget and actual spending for FYs 2016/17 to 2021/22

bodies" are funded by the GSF in Bahrain. In the UAE, the GSF funds work addressing "mutual threats of concern" including cybercrime and terrorism whilst in Oman projects include a "Public and Order Public Safety Training" project, which was delivered in Oman from December 2020 to March 2021.³⁷ In June 2020, the summary was updated to show that some GSF funds have been earmarked to establish a regional "cyber ambassador" to provide "opportunities for UK companies to export cyber security products and services",

which raises some concern in light of past UK sales of spyware which might have been used for internal repression in countries including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE.³⁸

Bahrain projects aim to support Bahraini oversight bodies to develop a complaints management system, contribute towards the promotion of evidence-based police investigations and to help develop Bahrain's thinking and capability around extremist violence.³⁹

Table 2: Government Departments that Applied to the IAF and the GSF in FYs 2018/19 to 2020/21

Government Departments that Applied to the IAF and GSF	FY 2018/19 (IAF)⁵⁰	FY 2018/19 (IAF)⁵¹	FY 2020/21 (GSF)⁵²
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Yes	--	--
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Defence	Yes	--	--
Cabinet Office	Yes	Yes ⁵³	Yes ⁵⁴
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Crown Prosecution Service	--	Yes	--
Department of International Trade	Yes	Yes	Yes
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Home Office	Yes	Yes	--
Department of Health	--	Yes	--
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	Yes	Yes	Yes

ISSUES OF TRANSPARENCY

How can MPs and the public judge the effectiveness of the programme if they do not know what the money is spent on? [...] We need to have greater transparency and greater effectiveness from the money.

Sir Peter Bottomley MP⁶³



Information on the IAF obtained both by parliamentarians and through FOI requests has been piecemeal, with the government frequently relying on blanket exemptions to justify withholding information.⁵⁵ The transparency of the IAF notably regressed in comparison with the CSSF, details of which were disclosed through FOI requests without the application of blanket exemptions.

The government has consistently professed the benign nature of the IAF, stating that the activities it funds “include, but are not limited to, activities focusing on aquaculture, sport and culture, healthcare and institutional capacity building”.⁵⁶ These activities alone would not merit the degree of secrecy with which the IAF is treated by the government. The replacement of the IAF by the GSF reflects a pattern whereby the government moves money between funding streams to the Gulf to avoid unwanted scrutiny; with the IAF now no longer in use it remains to be seen whether the government will ever disclose how and where this public money was spent over the course of its four-year existence.

The government’s response to years of parliamentary demands for greater transparency surrounding these funding streams was to quietly publish a short bullet

point structure programme summary of the GSF which provided very limited details of the fund’s activities.⁵⁷ Although the government made this publication as a response to calls for improved transparency, new information provided on GSF programmes was minimal. Indeed, if anything the publication highlighted the government’s ongoing failure to effectively improve the transparency of its funding.

Government admits lack of transparency and accountability

This report can reveal that in August 2019, the Governance Board of the IAF identified the need to “rebrand” the fund and reported that a “root and branch overhaul” of the IAF was needed. A key area for improvement was to strengthen the “transparency, accountability and governance of the fund”.⁵⁸ They also stated that the government needed to “own the narrative on the fund in [the] future”. Following this identification of a need for rebranding the IAF, it was replaced by the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF) on 1 April 2020.⁵⁹

This shows that although the government’s own internal evaluations found the fund to be lacking transparency and accountability, no discernible improvements were made in

these areas. Indeed the IAF proceeded to be transferred to the GSF, seemingly as part of the aforementioned “overhaul”. However since the GSF’s establishment, there has not been any information to suggest that it has greater levels of transparency, accountability or indeed effectiveness than its predecessor. The government’s own admittance that the IAF was flawed demonstrates the urgent need for both funds to be halted until their levels of transparency and accountability can be significantly improved and their implication in rights abuses can be independently assessed.

Government refusal to disclose spending breakdowns

The government has repeatedly refused to disclose country-specific breakdowns of how the IAF was spent in each of the six GCC countries covered by the fund. By way of explanation, the government claims that “many of the [IAF] projects and programme activities were delivered regionally, so it is not possible to provide a breakdown by beneficiary state”.⁶⁰

In direct contradiction to this claim, however, this report can reveal that at least two thirds of IAF programmes are country-specific and only a minority of programmes are delivered regionally. In the 2018/19 FY, 66% of IAF programmes were country-specific and in the 2019/20 FY this rose to 70%.⁶¹ In both years, IAF programmes were delivered to Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE respectively, with the addition of Qatar in the 2019/20 FY. This finding is complemented by two responses to FOI requests which detail two programmes delivered exclusively in Bahrain, and a third FOI response revealed that each GCC state undergoes country-specific monitoring and evaluation under the IAF.⁶²

It thus appears that the **FCDO has issued**

I again urge the Government to provide a clear breakdown of the individual projects and programmes they fund in each of the countries that the IAF supports. With a history of controversial projects and their insistence on being vague about the Integrated Activity Fund, the Government are not painting a particularly clear image of their support for the GCC region.

David Linden MP⁶⁴



deliberately misleading responses to many requests, both for information and for improved transparency, regarding the IAF.

Blanket exemptions to information disclosure

The government has consistently refused to release information about activities funded by the IAF, despite repeated requests by MPs, peers and rights groups. The government has used a number of different excuses to justify withholding even basic information on the IAF, among the most prominent of which are blanket exemptions on grounds of national security and/or international relations.

It is simply outrageous that the Government continue to use national security or other measures to disguise the use of money that they say is for entirely benign purposes.

Andy Slaughter MP⁶⁵



National security exemptions

The government has justified withholding information based on the blanket exemption of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regarding matters pertaining to national

security (Section 23). However, with regards to Bahrain the government has explicitly stated that the IAF “is not being used to fund or sponsor Bahraini bodies dealing with security matters,” raising questions about the applicability of the exemption.⁶⁶

Whilst this claim may be technically true, it is an incomplete and misleading response, since the IAF has funded bodies which in turn provide direct assistance or training to Bahraini security bodies. When detailing the activities funded by the IAF, the government has referred to “activities focusing on aquaculture, sport and culture, healthcare and institutional capacity building,” projects which lack any ostensible security dimension.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, information continues to be withheld on national security grounds.

Claims that the government does not fund bodies dealing with security matters in Bahrain, alongside the presentation of the IAF as a fund for health, sport and culture, are deceptive. Written parliamentary questions tabled by APPG members reveal that about one third of IAF projects were related to security and justice (30% of projects in the 2018/19 FY and 34% in the 2019/20 FY) whilst the GSF continues to fund “police reform” in the country.⁶⁸

Equally, whilst funding has not been directly provided to Bahrain’s MoI to support security programmes, funding has been provided under the IAF to the UK’s College of Policing for them to, in turn, provide training to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), a quasi-governmental Bahraini human rights oversight body which operates under the auspices of the Office of Public Prosecution (OPP) on matters relating to security.

Both the SIU and the OPP have been widely criticised for whitewashing human rights violations, with the UN Committee Against

Torture stating that: “[...] the Committee is concerned that those bodies are not independent, that their mandates are unclear and overlap, and that they are not effective given that complaints ultimately pass through the Ministry of the Interior. It is also concerned that their activities have had little or no effect”.⁶⁹

International relations exemptions

The government has repeatedly justified withholding information based on the (Section 27) blanket exemption of the FOIA regarding matters pertaining to relations with foreign states. It is unclear, however, how releasing information about projects related to “aquaculture, sport and culture, healthcare and institutional capacity building” would threaten international relations with any of the GCC states who received funding under the IAF.⁷⁰

As well as making blanket refusals of FOI requests made by members of the public, the government has regularly refused to disclose information on the IAF to parliament. Written parliamentary questions are often not answered in order “to maintain the confidence and confidentiality” of, and “protect [the] security” and commercial interests of, their Gulf partners, or since “disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and another state”.⁷¹ The Home Affairs Select Committee has stated that “the Foreign Office should not hide behind any relationship with foreign governments under the guise of ‘commercial sensitivity’”.⁷²

In November 2020, the Department for International Trade (DIT) stated that it is government policy to not disclose specific information related to individual IAF projects for the above reasons. Indeed, the answer

"[w]e do not disclose information related to individual Integrated Activity Fund projects to maintain the confidence and confidentiality of our Gulf partners" was given at least 16 times to written parliamentary questions on the IAF in 2020 alone, including in response to questions with requests as benign as asking for the number of IAF projects applied for by government departments, the titles of IAF projects, the number of projects subject to an assessment through OSJA and the number of projects delivered in a particular country.

Failure to implement Foreign Affairs Committee recommendations

In its 2018 report entitled *Global Britain: Human Rights and the Law of Rule*, the FAC made clear recommendations to the government on how it should improve transparency of its funding to the Gulf, particularly to Bahrain.⁷³ In spite of clear recommendations made by the FAC, transparency of UK funding to Bahrain has not improved and technical support continues. Indeed, the report concluded that "the FCO should be clearer about how all such funding is allocated and used and what it achieves, and should inform us in its response to this report how it plans to increase transparency in this respect".⁷⁴

The FAC also called for increased and clearer guidance, stating: "the FCO should create a measured and graduated set of responses to human rights catastrophes. The FCO should review the current situation in Bahrain and Myanmar/Burma and report its findings to us to further consider whether funding should continue to either country".⁷⁵ The report went on to recommend that:

"the FCO should outline clear mechanisms for measuring progress in its rule of law and democracy programmes [...] the FCO should respond firmly to countries that fail to make sufficient progress

in these areas in order to underline the importance of international standards and rules on human rights. States that fail to make progress, or that regress, should be subject to repercussions, including the suspension of support".⁷⁶

These recommendations were never implemented.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

Failures of Human Rights Due Diligence

Lack of Ministerial consultation

This report can reveal that as little as 2% of IAF programmes were subject to Ministerial approval.⁷⁷ Only one IAF project underwent Ministerial consultation in the 2018/19 FY and only one in the 2019/20 FY, with the Home Secretary and the Foreign Secretary consulted on both occasions.⁷⁸ This very low rate of Ministerial consultation compounds concerns about the inadequacy of the IAF's due diligence, particularly given the high rate of security and justice programmes supported by the fund, which amount to around one third.⁷⁹ Indeed, in 2019 the Governance Board of the IAF noted "a lack of awareness amongst Ministers of the IAF".⁸⁰

Despite a large proportion of IAF activities carrying potential human rights risks, Ministerial oversight is negligible, further reducing the political accountability of the fund's spending.



The secrecy and lack of transparency that surround this fund make a mockery of the Government's claim to be pursuing an ethical foreign policy. An ethical foreign policy does not fund states that are complicit in human rights abuses, and then seek to deny elected representatives the right to scrutinise that. How can it be remotely ethical to give money to regimes that are accused by many highly-respected international human rights organisations of routinely using torture and executing political dissidents? How can it be remotely ethical for a Government to do everything they can to prevent democratic scrutiny and avoid public accountability for what has been done in our name?

Brendan O'Hara MP⁸⁷

Overseas Justice and Security Assistance

The government has consistently claimed that the IAF is “provided in line with international standards and fully complies with our human rights obligations and the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance process” and “fully complies with [...] the OSJA process”.⁸¹ The OSJA is a mandatory tool for all UK agencies to assess human rights risks when considering delivering assistance to security and justice institutions abroad. An OSJA assessment should assess the overall human rights situation in the country concerned, whether UK support in any way increases the risk of a human rights violation and whether mitigating actions are available.⁸² It has been widely criticised, including by the Home Affairs Select Committee who stated that “we question whether the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance guidance is fit for purpose”.⁸³

An FOI request revealed that no OSJA was conducted on the visits of delegations of Bahraini officials to the UK under the IAF in 2018.⁸⁴ This included both officials from Bahrain's Mol and judges from Bahrain's Court of First Instance. Given that judges from this court have contributed to a 600% rise in death sentences in the country since 2011, the failure to conduct an OSJA for these visits raises concerns that judges responsible for issuing death sentences may have benefited from IAF-funded training.⁸⁵

When asked about the lack of OSJA, MENA Minister James Cleverly replied: “The visits to the UK in 2018 and 2019 were arranged for Bahraini officials to meet, observe and ask questions of UK judges and officials about the approach to alternative sentencing by the UK's courts and National Probation Service. I am satisfied that both visits were consistent with our domestic and international rights and obligations and that OSJA assessments were not required”.⁸⁶

This answer is of serious concern in light of the security and justice focus of the visits and the repeated implications of Bahraini judges and Bahraini Mol officials in human rights violations, including issuing death sentences based solely upon confessions coerced through torture. This raises the concern not only that OSJA is being improperly applied to IAF and GSF activities, but also that an unknown number of IAF and GSF security and justice programmes may not have been subject to an OSJA or any other form of human rights due diligence at all.

Considering the accusations from human rights groups over the legitimacy of this fund, the Government should be obliged to publish the results of the risk assessment that they should obviously have undertaken.



David Linden MP⁸⁸

Case Study: The death penalty and political prisoners in Bahrain

Since 2012, the UK has been providing Bahrain with 'technical assistance', aimed at supporting "progress on building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and justice reform".⁸⁹ The Bahrain-specific programme was established after the violent suppression of Bahrain's pro-democracy uprising by Bahraini, Saudi and Emirati troops during the 2011 Arab Spring.⁹⁰ Since technical assistance was transferred to the IAF, the FCDO no longer discloses beneficiaries of technical assistance in Bahrain. However, beneficiaries of IAF and GSF funding include Bahraini institutions implicated in serious human rights abuses, such as the torture and sentencing to death of political prisoners.

Until 2017, the primary beneficiaries of UK taxpayer-funded technical assistance to Bahrain included internationally discredited Bahraini human rights oversight bodies including the SIU, the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) and the National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR).

Why have the Government been unable to come out to condemn the death sentences against torture victims in Bahrain? Why is the receipt of funding from the IAF not contingent on the states seeking it not executing people, including their own dissidents? What is the Minister's explanation for why two states in particular, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, which receive millions of pounds of taxpayers' money, are now executing more people, at a faster rate, than they were before receiving money from the IAF?

Brendan O'Hara MP¹⁰³

Death Penalty

Since British assistance to Bahrain began through the IAF, executions in the country have increased over ten-fold.⁹¹ In addition, there has been a 600% rise in death sentences in the last decade, with torture allegations marring five out of the six executions that have taken place since 2017, five of which were labelled as "extrajudicial" or arbitrary by the UN,⁹² showing the IAF and GSF have failed to reduce the arbitrary application of the death penalty in the country. There are currently 26 people on death row in Bahrain, 11 of whom allege to have been sentenced based upon confessions extracted under torture.

In 2018 and 2019, visits were made under the IAF from the UK College of Policing, Independent Office for Police Conduct and Merseyside Police Professional Standards Department to meet counterparts at Bahrain's SIU.⁹³ Bahraini SIU representatives made similar visits to the UK. Costs incurred included an SIU Investigators Workshop in Bahrain to build investigatory capacity and skills in 2019.

Following this IAF-funded assistance to the SIU, its investigation into the torture allegations of Bahraini death row inmates Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa was criticised by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims as "critically flawed" and failing to meet "the minimum professional standards and minimum international legal standards".⁹⁴ In May 2021, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) "reiterate[d] concerns previously raised about the [Special Investigations] unit's independence and effectiveness" in its decision that rules Mohammed and Husain to be arbitrarily detained in contravention of international law.⁹⁵ In spite of such evidence that the SIU investigation served to cover up

both on the floor of the House and in its reports.⁹⁶

Indeed, in its 2019 Human Rights and Democracy Report published in 2020, the FCDO praised Bahrain's oversight bodies, stating "there was progress in other areas, notably active investigations by the human rights oversight bodies into allegations of violations".⁹⁷ The government cites the SIU and Ombudsman investigations' into the torture of Mohammed and Husain as a key success, even though the government had already been made aware that this investigation, which directly led to the court's reimposition of these men's death sentences,⁹⁸ "was inconsistent, contradictory and contravene[d] international standards" and that "the SIU [is] implicated now in human rights abuses".⁹⁹ The WGAD have called for Mohammed and Husain to be immediately released from prison and afforded a right to compensation and other reparations, with release being particularly urgent due to the increased threat posed by Covid-19 to inmates.¹⁰⁰

IAF-funded programmes provided through the College of Policing are thus implicated in the imposition of death sentences upon torture victims in Bahrain. When commenting upon the College of Policing's international assistance programmes in 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee stated that:

"[...] the provision of training on the basis of opaque agreements, sometimes with foreign governments which have been the subject of sustained criticism, threatens the integrity of the very brand of British policing the College is trying to promote. It simply smacks of hypocrisy".¹⁰¹

Nonetheless, the FCDO refuses to make its technical assistance contingent upon a demonstrable improvement in the human

rights situation in Bahrain, and it is of serious concern that Ministers continue to praise these bodies whilst refusing to increase transparency so as to substantiate the basis of their support.¹⁰²

[The] investigation into the torture allegations of the death row inmates Mohamed Ramadan and Hussain Moosa was inconsistent, contradictory and contravenes international standards [...] the SIU, which the noble Lord maintains is transparent, is quite the opposite and is implicated now in human rights abuses.

Lord Scriven¹⁰⁴

Disposition

113. In the light of the foregoing, the Working Group renders the following opinion:

The deprivation of liberty of Mohamed Ramadhan Isa Ali Husain and Husain Ali Moosa Hassan Mohamed, being in contravention of articles 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (1), 19, 20 and 21 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and articles 2 (1), 2 (3), 9, 14, 19, 21, 22, 25 (a) and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is arbitrary and falls within categories I, II, III and V.

114. The Working Group requests the Government of Bahrain to take the steps necessary to remedy the situation of Mr. Ramadhan and Mr. Moosa without delay and bring it into conformity with the relevant international norms, including those set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

115. The Working Group considers that, taking into account all the circumstances of the case, particularly the risk of harm to the physical and psychological well-being of Mr. Ramadhan and Mr. Moosa, the appropriate remedy would be to release both men immediately and accord them an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law.³⁵ In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the threat that it poses in places of detention, the Working Group calls upon the Government to take urgent action to ensure their immediate release.

116. The Working Group urges the Government to ensure a full and independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Mr. Ramadhan and Mr. Moosa, and to take appropriate measures against those responsible for the violation of their rights.

Political Prisoners

Thousands of people are held as political prisoners in Bahrain's prisons on charges related solely to their peaceful protest activities. Prison conditions are notoriously poor, with torture, poor sanitation, religious discrimination and widespread medical negligence regularly reported by political prisoners.

In 2018, two IAF-funded visits to the UK from Bahraini judges and Ministry of the Interior representatives took place. The visits focused on Bahrain's law on alternative sentencing (Law No.18 of 2017).¹⁰⁵ According to the Bahraini Embassy in London, these visits were conducted to discuss "both the scope and implementation of alternative sentences in the UK".¹⁰⁶ Despite a mass prisoner release to ease severe overcrowding in Bahrain's prisons following the outbreak of Covid-19, evidence suggests that alternative sentencing legislation has discriminated against political prisoners, including Ali Al Hajee and Hajer Mansoor.¹⁰⁷

In July 2018, members of Durham Police Constabulary visited Bahrain under the IAF and signed an agreement with the Bahraini Mol to support "wider British aims in the region".¹⁰⁸ Under this agreement, Durham Police committed to providing training "so that Bahraini officers can better make use of forensics in their investigations". Equally, GSF projects in Bahrain aim to "contribute towards the Bahraini-led reform programme which includes promoting evidence-based police investigations in line with best international standards".¹⁰⁹ Despite this assistance, the Bahraini justice system has failed to use forensic evidence appropriately. Political prisoner Hajer Mansoor, along with her son and nephew, was convicted and sentenced to three years' imprisonment in October 2017 in

spite of the fact that forensic investigations produced no evidence connecting them to the alleged crime.¹¹⁰

In 2021 Bahraini authorities used forensics to detain four juveniles, three of whom were detained on the basis of one child's coerced confession and forensic evidence allegedly linking that child to a crime. The children were reported to have been subjected to physical, verbal and psychological abuse whilst in detention, including threats of rape and crucifixion, beatings and pepper spray in a confined area.¹¹¹ Despite British training and rather than improving the quality of investigations, forensics have thus been improperly used by Bahrain, including to facilitate human rights abuse and detention of children.

With regards to the mistreatment of Bahraini prisoners in violation of international law, the UK government has been warned since at least 2017 of Bahrain's use of medical negligence against some of the country's most high profile political prisoners such as Hassan Mushaima. Mushaima, a 72-year old opposition leader who suffers from multiple chronic health problems, who has had over 25 written parliamentary questions tabled on his case alone.¹¹²

Despite repeated engagement with IAF-funded oversight bodies, inmates continue to report being denied appointments with specialist doctors and access to requisite medication. In April 2020, 19 rights groups appealed to Bahrain to release imprisoned rights defenders and opposition activists, citing the threat posed by medical negligence and Covid-19.¹¹³ In spite of the repeated international condemnation of these oversight bodies for their complicity in rights violations, including against political prisoners, the FCDO continues to refer individuals to these same bodies.

Indeed, inmates have accused oversight bodies of not only failing to investigate abuses committed by prison guards, but of actively concealing abuse. When political prisoner Hajer Mansoor was assaulted by the Director of Isa Town Female Detention Centre Mariam Al Bardoli in 2018, the NIHR dismissed the allegations.¹¹⁴ When challenged, the Ombudsman then disclosed confidential information to Bahrain's Embassy in London who posted it on social media in violation of GDPR.¹¹⁵

Furthermore, imprisoned human rights defender Ali Al Hajee alleges that the NIHR failed to investigate an assault against him by prison guards in 2015, even after he provided the organisation with the names of the officers responsible.¹¹⁶ Since 2018, Al Hajee has been forced to conduct two 75-day hunger strikes in order to secure specialist medical care.¹¹⁷ Equally, in April 2020, the day after disputing claims made by NIHR president Maria Khoury regarding preventative Covid-19 measures in Bahrain's Jau Prison, journalist Mahmood Al Jaziri, an inmate at the prison, was put into solitary confinement.¹¹⁸ Despite their manifold failures, the FCDO continues to direct victims of abuses toward discredited oversight bodies, to accept assurances from Bahrain's government of human rights compliance and heap praise on these discredited institutions.¹¹⁹

The practices and conditions in prisons, which are squalid, lead to epidemic-level outbreaks of illness. Prisoners do not get treatment for serious health conditions. Many of these individuals are long-standing human rights campaigners going back decades. They are now quite elderly, but they are locked up. Despite having serious health conditions, they do not receive any health treatment.

Andy Slaughter MP¹³⁰

Case Study: Saudi Arabia's War Crimes in Yemen

In 2021, written parliamentary questions lodged by APPG members revealed that the IAF and GSF were both used to fund activities in Saudi Arabia related to security and justice, including training and assistance provided to a number of Saudi military bodies. In light of the Saudi-led coalition's ongoing military campaign in Yemen, which is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and one of the worst food crises in the world, the lack of transparency and demonstrable effectiveness of the IAF and the GSF raises concerns of complicity in human rights and humanitarian violations committed in Yemen.

Over £1.7m was spent on delivering programmes through the IAF to Saudi Arabia from the 2016/17 FY to the 2018/19 FY, with £0.5m spent through the GSF in the 2019/20 FY (£2.4m spent in total).¹²⁰ Beneficiaries of this "training, advice and assistance" were the Royal Saudi Air Force, Royal Saudi Land Forces, Royal Saudi Naval Forces, Border Guard, Saudi Arabia National Guard, Joint Incident Assessment, Security Forces and Joint Forces Command.¹²¹ The government stated that an objective of these programmes is "to aid Saudi Arabia's efforts to protect its national security and support the Saudi military's compliance with international humanitarian law".¹²²

IAF and GSF beneficiary, the Saudi Arabian National Guard, is mandated with the protection of the Saudi royal family amongst other internal security responsibilities.¹²³ Taxpayer-funded support to a defence force tasked with internal security, then, is irreconcilable with the government's stated objective of helping the Gulf state comply with humanitarian law beyond its borders.

The Joint Incident Assessment Team, another Saudi beneficiary, has been repeatedly criticised by Human Rights Watch over the

course of its reception of UK assistance for “failing [...] to provide credible, impartial, and transparent investigations into alleged coalition laws-of-war violations”, and for conducting investigations into international humanitarian law violations in Yemen which are not in line with international standards.¹²⁴

UK funding to Saudi Arabia thus supports bodies accused of breaching international law and whitewashing alleged war crimes in Yemen.¹²⁵

In addition, the Royal Saudi Air Forces have been consistently implicated in the perpetration of war crimes in Yemen, including the killing of civilians through drone strikes as

part of the Saudi-led military coalition.¹²⁶ Civilian casualties caused by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen almost doubled between 2017 and 2018, whilst Saudi military forces received IAF-funded assistance, suggesting this funding failed in its aim of helping Saudi Arabia better comply with international humanitarian law.¹²⁷ Indeed, the United Nations has highlighted that the coalition’s killing of thousands of civilians in airstrikes, the torture of detainees, the rape of civilians and the use of child soldiers may amount to war crimes.¹²⁸ When asked for further information on IAF and GSF funding to Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Defence refused to disclose details on specific programmes, stating that the information was likely to “prejudice” the UK’s international relations, making it impossible to ascertain the extent to which these programmes may be implicated in violations of international law in Yemen.¹²⁹

UK spent £2.4m to help Saudi Arabia comply with international law

Over the last four years, the Gulf state has been accused of bombing and killing Yemeni civilians



▲ A model of a Saudi air force Eurofighter Typhoon jet, manufactured by BAE System, at a Riyadh exhibition. Photograph: Bloomberg/Getty

Britain spent £2.4m over the last four years to help Saudi Arabia’s military comply with international humanitarian law - during which time the Gulf state has been accused of indiscriminately bombing and killing Yemeni civilians.

The figures - obtained via parliamentary questions - are the first time the UK has detailed the amount spent via secretive funds to the kingdom, prompting a campaign group to say British taxpayers were backing the country’s military.

War Crimes Report on Yemen Accuses Saudi Arabia and U.A.E.



The old quarter of Sana, Yemen, in August. The house in the foreground was destroyed by an airstrike. Khaled Abdullah/Reuters

FAILURE TO DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVENESS

Lack of transparent evaluation mechanisms

When asked about the effectiveness of the IAF, the government has failed to provide any measurable indicators to demonstrate that the IAF or the GSF meet their objectives. Although the government stated in January 2020 that it was “confident of [technical assistance’s] positive impact across a variety of areas including building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and police and justice reform”, it has failed to provide credible evidence to substantiate claims of the positive impact of IAF programmes.¹³¹ Indeed, available information which is outlined in this report shows that the IAF and the GSF are far from effective.

IAF-funded activities are subject to “evaluation to ensure it continues to deliver in line with objectives”, and FOI requests have revealed that this evaluation consists of country-specific ‘Quarterly Results Reports’.¹³² Although these reports were disclosed in one case for Bahrain programmes in the 2019/20 FY under FOIA, much of their content was redacted (see Image). The IAF’s opaque nature amidst increasing concerns of its complicity in human rights violations makes it impossible to ascertain upon what basis the fund is deemed effective or even safe.

In order to demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of the funds, the government should publicise all IAF and GSF evaluations. This is particularly important in light of mounting demands from parliamentarians and civil society alike for improved transparency and accountability.

Problematic references to ‘success’ in Bahrain

Where the FCDO is able to point towards any ostensible successes of its IAF or GSF programmes, there are almost always concerns surrounding these references. In Bahrain in particular, the FCDO has repeatedly welcomed what it deems to be indicators of progress in the country, despite such supposed signs of progress being marred by denunciations from human rights organisations. Indeed, the government regularly praised Bahrain or welcomed

IAF Quarterly Results Report

The report should be no more than 3-4 pages, protectively marked as necessary, and used to demonstrate programme performance and achievements.

Programme Title: Bahrain IAF Programme		Quarter 1 FY 19/20	Green
Country Focus: Bahrain			
Overview – [REDACTED]			
1. Briefly summarise overall performance and highlight top results over last quarter in two/three lines			
1) Contract signed with [REDACTED] implementing partner leading on the project to support the Bahrain Parliament; 2) First public meeting between Bahrain MPs and 38 young Bahrainis to discuss job opportunities and unemployment; 3) Tender process completed for Careers Guidance project [REDACTED]			
2. Outcome level - outline progress towards a consistent set of outcomes [max 5]:			
Outcome	Indicator	Milestones for Quarter 1	Progress against milestone towards your outcome.
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
3. What output level results were achieved this quarter that contributed towards the outcome level results above?			
Output	Indicator	Milestones for Quarter 1	Progress against milestone towards your output.
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

FOI 10925

perceived areas of progress, without acknowledging or addressing human rights concerns surrounding these same issues.

These problematic references to ‘success’ in Bahrain can be observed in many answers to written parliamentary questions as well as in the FCDO’s annual Human Rights and Democracy Reports. The omission of key human rights concerns linked to IAF and GSF-funded activities provides incomplete and misleading information. Concerns are not only omitted in government reports, but in direct response to questions which raise those same concerns.¹³³

“

Will the Government publish their internal evaluations and let Members of this House and the public see how they assess the recipients of IAF money and how they are making progress towards building those effective and accountable institutions?

Brendan O’Hara MP¹³⁴

Oversight bodies

Bahrain’s human rights oversight bodies, ostensibly independent bodies mandated to investigate human rights abuse, are beneficiaries of the IAF and the GSF although they have been repeatedly denounced by international organisations including the UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for being “not independent”, “not effective” and for having “little to no effect”.¹³⁵ Indeed, in 2021 Amnesty International stated that these oversight bodies “remained ineffective in safeguarding human rights and punishing

violations”.¹³⁶ They are, however, repeatedly praised by the government without due regard for the criticism and concerns surrounding their role in human rights violations in the Gulf state.

Following a ninety minute debate where APPG members unanimously outlined such concerns, MENA Minister James Cleverly stated: “I know that the ombudsman’s office has, again, been criticised, but it must be recognised that it has investigated more than 5,000 complaints”,¹³⁷ whilst the FCDO’s 2019 Human Rights and Democracy Report welcomed the fact that “oversight bodies investigated all allegations put to them, and made their findings public where possible, including through the annual Ombudsman report”.¹³⁸

As outlined above, in 2020 the government welcomed the SIU’s investigation into the death penalty cases of Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, despite this investigation having led to the reimposition of both men’s death sentences¹³⁹ and being criticised by the Bar Human Rights Committee and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims as “insufficient”, “ineffective under law” and “fail[ing] to meet the minimum professional standards and minimum international legal standards”, including of the Istanbul Protocol.¹⁴⁰

The government’s insistence on praising Bahrain’s IAF and GSF-funded oversight bodies and continued referral of victims towards them shows a demonstrable resistance to addressing serious and legitimate criticism of the harm that these programmes cause.

Bahraini officials’ implication in abuse

In their 2019 Human Rights and Democracy Report, the government celebrates Bahrain’s prosecution of 90 officials for abuse over the course of the year. However, in 2021 Amnesty International stated that “[i]n Bahrain there is

no known record of a successful prosecution for torture to force a confession in the past four years” whilst Human Rights Watch have observed that “prosecutions have almost exclusively involved low-ranking officers, and even those have resulted in acquittals or disproportionately light sentences”.¹⁴¹

In 2021 it was reported that the SIU, IAF and GSF beneficiary, referred an average of 7.7% of total complaints received over the past five years to criminal courts, with most referrals resulting in acquittals or light sentences.¹⁴² Indeed, high-ranking officials implicated in human rights abuses, including torture and sexual assault, remain in their posts, and have continued to benefit from UK taxpayer-funded training under the IAF.¹⁴³

Among them is Brigadier Fawaz Hasan Al Hasan, who received UK-funded training in Northern Ireland in 2015. Subsequently, while Al Hassan was acting Director-General of the Muharraq Security Complex in Bahrain, female Bahraini rights defenders Najah Yusuf and Ebtisam AlSaegh were tortured and sexually assaulted by officers from Bahrain’s National Security Agency.¹⁴⁴ He has since become Director of Bahrain’s Royal Academy of Policing, described by prisoners as a notorious ‘torture hub’.¹⁴⁵ His brother, Tariq Al Hassan, is Bahrain’s Chief of Public Security and has also benefited from IAF-funded training.¹⁴⁶ When asked about the “role of Tariq Al-Hassan in human rights violations in Bahrain”, the government failed to directly answer the question or effectively address this concern in its response.¹⁴⁷


Alternative sentencing

Although the FCDO’s repeated welcoming of the use of Bahrain’s alternative sentencing legislation is warranted, the government does so without acknowledging proper context or addressing key concerns. Concerns that the application of the legislation is discriminato-

ry and is repeatedly denied to eligible political prisoners, such as Ali Al Hajee and Hajer Mansoor, have not been acknowledged by the government. Even when asked directly about the risk of alternative sentencing’s discriminatory application, the government not only does not outline any intended representations in response to this concern, but fails to acknowledge its premise.¹⁴⁸

Detained children and Ministry of Interior Ombudsman investigation

In February 2021, thirteen children were detained in Bahrain during the tenth anniversary of the nation’s Arab Spring pro-democracy uprising in 2011. Those detained included a boy of just 11-years-old and Sayed Hasan Ameen, a 16-year old with sickle cell anemia who suffered a kidney infection, a lung infection and reduced heart function at the time of his detention.¹⁴⁹ He had been hospitalized twice for a total of 26 days in October and November 2020, including 7 days in an Intensive Care Unit, just months prior to his arrest. With other children, he was detained in Dry Dock Detention Centre where



The problem is not just that these organisations are ineffective, despite the money they receive from the UK, but that they collaborate with the prosecuting authorities. They provide a shield against proper investigation and often turn down investigations on little or no evidence, which puts the individual whose case they are reviewing in a worse position than when they started.

Andy Slaughter MP¹⁵⁷

there were confirmed cases of Covid-19, putting his life in danger due to his severe medical condition.¹⁵⁰

Reports from BIRD and Human Rights Watch revealed that children's confessions were coerced under verbal, physical and psychological abuse and under threats of electric shocks, crucifixion, gang rape and the rape of their parents.¹⁵¹



If we consider the way in which alternative sentencing policy is pursued in Bahrain, we find very quickly that in fact there is no benefit for the political prisoners there.

Alistair Carmichael MP¹⁵⁸

Bahraini judges and prosecutors were found to have enabled this abuse and to have barred parents and lawyers from attending children's interrogations and court hearings.¹⁵² Complaints of abuse related to some of these cases were brought to the Bahraini Ombudsman, an IAF beneficiary, whose investigation dismissed all the allegations and was, according to findings by BIRD and Human Rights Watch, a "blatant effort to whitewash serious human rights violations".¹⁵³ The UK government then approvingly cited this misleading report by the ombudsman.¹⁵⁴

When serious concerns surrounding the detention and abuse of children were raised with the UK government, they failed to acknowledge any of the concerns and instead chose to paint the children as criminals. In a letter to FCDO ministers, Human Rights Watch raised serious concerns that the government

had publicly named the children in connection with their alleged crimes and had directed children towards their abusers, putting them at even greater risk of harm. The FCDO also repeated assurances from Bahrain that "access to medical care for those in detention is provided in line with the constitution of Bahrain", despite credible evidence to the contrary provided by Human Rights Watch and BIRD, which noted that Sayed Hasan Ameen was unable to access vital medication for 8 days whilst in detention.¹⁵⁵ The letter further highlighted that the FCDO falsely stated that three of the children were "all aged 17" and failed to correct this error; the organisation called upon the government to correct the parliamentary record pertaining to these cases.¹⁵⁶

Letter re: UK Response to Abuses against Children by Bahrain Authorities

June 7, 2021

James Cleverly, MP
Minister for the Middle East and North Africa

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon
Minister of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Human Rights Minister

Re: UK Response to Abuses against Children by Bahrain Authorities

Dear Minister Cleverly and Lord Wimbledon,

We are writing to share information we have documented about children who were detained and abused in Bahrain from November 2020 to March 2021 for alleged crimes related to protests. We also wish to express our concerns about your statements on behalf of the UK government about these cases in response to parliamentary questions.

UK government [statements](#) about these children's cases instructed "those with concerns about treatment in detention [to] contact the relevant authorities as well as the appropriate Bahraini human rights oversight body." We believe that if the Bahraini children in this case were to follow your instructions, they could be at even greater risk of abuse. The UN Committee against Torture has [raised concerns](#) that the ombudsman's office is neither independent nor effective. It and other official bodies have [repeatedly failed](#) to investigate credible allegations of prison abuse or to hold Bahraini officials accountable.

Failure to positively impact the human rights situation in the Gulf

Millions of pounds of UK taxpayer money continue to be opaquely funnelled to GCC countries to train bodies implicated in torture, arbitrary executions and other grave human rights violations in some of the world's most oppressive nations, whilst the FCDO refuses to disclose why, how and where this public money is being spent.

Since the IAF's establishment, the human rights situation in the Gulf, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE, has severely deteriorated.¹⁵⁹ Since 2017, both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have seen renewed government crackdowns, with political opposition figures and dissidents jailed and a startling tenfold rise in the use of the death penalty in Bahrain.¹⁶⁰ In 2019, Saudi Arabia executed a record 184 people, including over 100 executions that were crucifixions or beheadings.¹⁶¹ In 2017, Bahrain abandoned a moratorium on the death penalty and has since executed 6 people, with a further 26 on death row currently at risk of imminent execution.

All Bahraini political opposition parties have been dissolved and their leaders handed lengthy sentences on sedition charges.¹⁶² Unlicensed gatherings of over five people are illegal and Bahraini police invariably suppress public protests with violence.¹⁶³ The free press was abolished with the forcible shut down of Bahrain's only independent newspaper, Al-Wasat, in 2017, while authorities have targeted critical civil society figures for expressing their views online.¹⁶⁴ Despite the FCDO's public commitment to promoting press freedom, Bahrain is at 168/178 on the World Press Freedom Index 2020, with Saudi Arabia at 170/178, making them some of the

most censored and repressed civil societies in the world.¹⁶⁵

Indeed, in its 2021 World Report, Human Rights Watch stated that throughout 2020, in Saudi Arabia, "authorities continued to repress dissidents [and] human rights activists" and that "capital trials continued against detainees on charges that related to nothing more than peaceful activism and dissent".¹⁶⁶ The report also declared that "Bahrain escalated repression" in 2020, and underlined that no independent media have been able to operate since 2017.¹⁶⁷

The UAE continued to unjustly imprison leading human rights activists and peaceful dissents without clear legal basis and Kuwaiti authorities "restrict[ed] free speech and prosecute[d] dissents", whilst Oman also cracked down on freedom of expression.¹⁶⁸ The report highlighted that all GCC countries apart from Qatar continued to participate in the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen, carrying out "unlawful airstrikes that have killed and wounded thousands of civilians", contributing significantly to the disastrous war there and the worst humanitarian crisis on the planet. The APPG Chair wrote to the MENA Minister highlighting the reports' findings and raising human rights concerns, whilst repeating the call for the

The record on human rights across the board is getting worse year on year in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain [...] I ask the Minister, how are our attempts, funded by the British taxpayer, to improve human rights in these countries going? It all seems to be going in the opposite direction.



Andy Slaughter MP¹⁷⁰

suspension of funding pending demonstrable improvements in the regions' human rights situation, but did not receive a response.

Across the Gulf, prominent activists have faced torture and arbitrary imprisonment. Loujain Al-Hathloul, the now-released Saudi women's rights campaigner was tortured and sexually abused in Saudi custody, and Emirati blogger and dissident Ahmed Mansoor, who remains behind bars at the time of writing, are among thousands of human rights defenders, activists, journalists and dissidents who have been arbitrarily detained across the Gulf.¹⁶⁹

Given the failure of UK assistance through the IAF and the GSF to prevent a steep decline in human rights in the GCC, there are serious questions to be asked about the way public money is being spent by the government in the region. With the government consistently refusing to disclose information about IAF and GSF-funded programmes and ongoing human rights concerns surrounding the funds, it is imperative the GSF be suspended pending an independent investigation to ensure that public money is not contributing to human rights violations in the region.

METHODOLOGY

This report is largely based upon both answers given to written parliamentary questions and responses to FOI requests. Written parliamentary questions were lodged by past and present APPG members as part of the group's investigatory work into the IAF and GSF, as well as other members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, whilst FOI requests were submitted by members of the public and representatives from human rights organisations such as BIRD. Government answers to over 100 written parliamentary questions and FOI requests are relied upon in this report.

REFERENCES

NEWS ARTICLES ON THE IAF & GSF

The Times

- Catherine Philip, [Foreign Secretary urged to intervene to stop execution of Bahraini activists](#), 11 July 2020
- Catherine Philip, [‘Tortured’ activists must be executed, Bahrain court rules](#), 9 January 2020
- Catherine Philip, [Britain invokes spy clause to cover up payments to Bahrain](#), 22 September 2018

The Guardian

- Diane Taylor, [UK trained military of 15 countries with poor human rights record](#), 17 January 2021
- Dan Sabbagh, [UK spent £2.4m to help Saudi Arabia comply with international law](#), 13 January 2021
- Patrick Wintour, [Bahrain to execute two activists despite concerns over torture](#), 13 July 2020
- Patrick Wintour, [UK accused of ‘empty talk’ as Bahrain activists face death penalty](#), 9 July 2020
- Patrick Wintour, [UK Foreign Office urged to secure safety of three rights activists in Gulf](#), 26 June 2020
- Karen McVeigh, [British government accused of funding human rights abuses in Bahrain](#), 17 May 2018

The Independent

- Rob Merrick, [Revealed: Priti Patel’s links to Bahrain minister blamed for ‘torture’ of political prisoners](#), 29 May 2021
- Bel Trew, [Trying to save two pro-democracy activists from execution will prove the UK is serious about human rights](#), 12 July 2020
- Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, [Bahrain is holding my family hostage - and the UK is abetting them](#), 29 December 2019

Vice News

- Phil Miller, [Revealed: Britain Spent Thousands Training a Bahraini ‘Monster’ Cop](#), 23 August 2018
- Phil Miller, [Police in Dictatorships Are Still Getting British Training](#), 27 July 2018
- Phil Miller, [UK Spooks Involved in Controversial Police Training Scheme for Dictatorship](#), 4 July 2018
- Phil Miller, [Britain Trained a Bahraini Police Chief Who Presided Over Abuse of Political Dissidents](#), 6 April 2018

Buzzfeed News

- Aisha Gani, [Boris Johnson Has Been Warned An Embassy In London Has Been "Colluding" In Reprisals Against Human Rights Protesters](#), 16 November 2017
- Alan White, [Foreign Office Accused Of “Covering Up” Bahrain Torture Allegations](#), 3 August 2016
- Alan White, [Concerns Raised Over Authoritarian Regimes’ Links To Queen’s 90th Birthday Celebration](#), 19 May 2016

The Metro

- Sam Courtney-Guy, [‘Five days to save their lives’: UK urged to stop Bahrain executing activists](#), 9 July 2020
- Adam Smith, [Bahrain death row inmates get last minute reprieve ‘because of prison torture linked to UK’](#), 25 October 2018

Other

- Anthony Harwood in The Mirror, [Fury as UK government spends millions on protecting Saudi royal family despite cuts](#), 23 January 2021
- Middle East Eye, [Bahrain king urged to commute death sentences of pro-democracy activists](#), 23 July 2020
- Andy Slaughter MP in Politics Home, [The UK’s reputation as a defender of human rights is under scrutiny. Parliament deserves answers](#), 10 September 2018

ENDNOTES

- 1 The facts presented and views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of members of the APPG on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf or their political parties.
- 2 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 111557, 9 November 2020. Available at : <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-04/111557>
- 3 David Linden, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>
- 4 Baroness Anelay of St Johns, Arab Partnership Participation Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL1048, 16 July 2015. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2015-07-02/HL1048>
- 5 Philip Hammond, Arab Partnership Participation Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 23104, 22 January 2016. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2016-01-19/23104>;
Foreign Affairs Committee (2013). 'Broader Context: UK ties with the Gulf' in The UK's relations with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmfaff/88/8806.htm>;
FCO and UK aid (n.d.). Leading the UK Government's strategic response to the Arab Spring. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/88486/Arab-Partnership-booklet.pdf
- 6 Baroness Northover, International Development: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL674, 8 July 2014. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2014-06-27/hl674>;
Baroness Anelay of St Johns, Bahrain: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL5265, 20 February 2017. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2017-02-06/HL5265>
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 157709, 3 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-06-26/157709>;
HM Government. (2015). National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 (pp. 55, paragraphs 5.56 - 5.59.). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_9161_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf
- 9 HM Government. (2015). National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 (pp. 55, paragraphs 5.56 - 5.59.). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_9161_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 157709, 3 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-06-26/157709>.
- 13 HMG (2020) Conflict, Stability and Security Fund. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/conflict-stability-and-security-fund/about>
- 14 Reprieve and BIRD. (2018). Training Torturers. Available at: <https://reprieve.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/05/TRAINING-TORTURERS-THE-UK%E2%80%99S-ROLE-IN-BAHRAIN%E2%80%99S-BRUTAL-CRACKDOWN-ON-DISSENT.pdf>
- 15 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Technical Assistance, Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL 1626, 26 September 2017. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2017-09-14/hl1626>
- 16 Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. (2017). Conflict, Stability and Security Fund: Second Report of Session 2016-17, p. 13. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201617/jtselect/jtnatsec/208/208.pdf>
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 McVeigh, K (2017). 'Secrecy around £1bn aid and security fund raises 'significant concern', say MPs' in The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/07/secrecy-around-1bn-aid-and-security-fund-raises-significant-concern-say-mps>
- 19 ICAI (2018). Report: The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's Aid Spending. Available at: <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/html-report/cssf/>

20 Miller, P. (2018). 'Britain Trained a Bahraini Police Chief Who Presided Over Abuse of Political Dissidents' in Vice News. Available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/43b4k9/britain-trained-a-bahraini-police-chief-who-presided-over-abuse-of-political-dissidents>

21 Ibid;

Reprieve and BIRD (2018). Training Torturers. Available at: <https://reprieve.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/05/TRAINING-TORTURERS-THE-UK%E2%80%99S-ROLE-IN-BAHRAIN%E2%80%99S-BRUTAL-CRACKDOWN-ON-DISSENT.pdf>

22 Merrill, J. (2017). 'UK aid paid for military band to play at Queen's birthday event in 'toxic' Bahrain' in The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/09/uk-aid-paid-for-military-band-to-play-at-queens-birthday-event-in-toxic-bahrain>

23 HMG (2018). HM Government Response. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705880/180510_HMG_response_to_ICAI_CSSF_report.pdf;

ICAI. (2019). ICAI follow-up of: The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's aid spending. Available at: <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019-ICAI-Follow-up-CSSF.pdf>

24 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 159490, 10 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-07-02/159490>

25 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 157709, 3 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-06-26/157709>.

26 FCO. (2018). Supplementary Estimate Memorandum (pp. 3-4). London: FCO. p.3

27 Alistair Burt, Bahrain: Overseas Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 116302, 11 December 2017. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2017-11-29/116302>

28 Sir Alan Duncan, Global Britain Fund: Overseas Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 159489, 10 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-07-02/159489>;

Sir Alan Duncan, Global Britain Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 159547, 10 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-07-02/159547>

29 Andy Slaughter, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

30 FOI 10925 digest;

31 FOI 03080

32 James Cleverly, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 114082, 17 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-11/114082>

33 James Cleverly, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 103608, 19 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-14/103608>

34 James Cleverly, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 126782, 14 December 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-08/126782>

35 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

36 HMG (2021) Gulf Strategy Fund Programme Summary. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fcdo-international-programme-spend-objectives-2020-to-2021/gulf-strategy-fund-programme-summary#gulf-strategy-fund-programme-allocation-for-financial-year-2020-to-2021>

37 Ibid;

James Cleverly, Oman: Public Order: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 7945, 8 June 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-26/7945>

38 Stone, J. (2020) 'UK selling spyware and wiretaps to 17 repressive regimes including Saudi Arabia and China' in The Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-spyware-wiretaps-saudi-arabia-china-bahrain-uae-human-rights-a9613206.html>

39 Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL15129, 29 April 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15129>

40 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 103608, 19 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-14/103608>.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 167845, 7 September 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-07-24/167845>

44 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 103608, 19 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-14/103608>

45 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL16048, 19 June 2019. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2019-06-04/HL16048>

46 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 103608, 19 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-14/103608>

Dr Andrew Murrison, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 5455, 23 January 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-20/5455>

47 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 103608, 19 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-14/103608>

48 This was reduced from £20m to £8.4m due to the Coronavirus pandemic, see: HMG (2021) Gulf Strategy Fund Programme Summary. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fcdo-international-programme-spend-objectives-2020-to-2021/gulf-strategy-fund-programme-summary#gulf-strategy-fund-programme-allocation-for-financial-year-2020-to-2021>;

Dr Andrew Murrison, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 5457, 23 January 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-20/5457>

49 Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL15129, 29 April 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15129>

50 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106364, 27 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106364>

51 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 111557, 9 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-04/111557>

52 James Cleverly, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 114083, 17 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-11/114083>

53 FOI 9433

54 Ibid.

55 Phillip, C. (2018). 'Britain invokes spy clause to cover up payments to Bahrain' in The Times. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britain-invokes-spy-clause-to-cover-up-payments-to-bahrain-dlv00c66f>

56 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 159490, 10 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-07-02/159490>;

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 102830, 16 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102830>

57 HMG (2021) Gulf Strategy Fund Programme Summary. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fcdo-international-programme-spend-objectives-2020-to-2021/gulf-strategy-fund-programme-summary#gulf-strategy-fund-programme-allocation-for-financial-year-2020-to-2021>

58 FOI 10925

59 James Cleverly, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 114082, 17 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-11/114082>

60 Ibid;

Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 157712, 4 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-06-26/157712>;

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 57298, 16 June 2020. Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-09/57298/>

61 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 102832, 16 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102832>

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106366, 27 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106366> ;

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106362, 27 October 2020. Available at:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106362>;
 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 24318, 7 December 2020. Available at:
<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-02/124318>

62 FOI 1053-19;
 FOI 2020/10925;
 FOI 0545-19

63 Sir Peter Bottomley, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

64 David Linden, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

65 Andy Slaughter, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

66 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL6838, 16 April 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-29/HL6838>

67 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 68406, 7 July 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-07-02/68406>

68 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 102832, 16 October 2020. Available at: , <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102832>;
 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106362, 20 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106362>;
 HMG (2021) Gulf Strategy Fund Programme Summary. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fcdo-international-programme-spend-objectives-2020-to-2021/gulf-strategy-fund-programme-summary#gulf-strategy-fund-programme-allocation-for-financial-year-2020-to-2021>;
 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL6838, 16 April 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-29/HL6838>;

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106362, 23 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106362>

69 United Nations Committee Against Torture (2017) Concluding observations on second and third periodic reports of Bahrain, CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3&Lang=en

70 Alistair Burt, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 159490, 10 July 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-07-02/159490>

71 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 146905, 4 February 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-01/146905>;

James Heappey, Saudi Arabia: Military Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 143011, 28 January 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-25/143011>

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106359, 23 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106359>

Ranil Jayawardena, DIT Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 111560, 9 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-04/111560>

72 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2016). College of Policing: three years on, p. 25. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/23/23.pdf>

73 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (2018). Global Britain: Human rights and the rule of law. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmfa/874/874.pdf>

74 Ibid, para. 26.

75 Ibid;

76 Ibid, para. 36.

77 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106361, 23 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106361>;
 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 117262, 23 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-18/117262>

78 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Overseas Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL9874, 16 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-02/hl9874>;

James Cleverly, Overseas Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 124319, 7 December 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-02/124319>

79 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 102832, 16 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102832>;

James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 106362, 23 October 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-20/106362>

80 FOI 10925

81 Dr Andrew Murrison, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 5456, 23 January 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-20/5456>;

James Cleverly, Bahrain: Prisoners Under Sentence of Death Volume 678, 9 July 2020, Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-07-09/debates/D560BD01-121A-46D7-BC92-E619171CEFF2/BahrainPrisonersUnderSentenceOfDeath>;

James Cleverly, Bahrain: Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 73749, 20 July 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-07-14/73749>

82 HMG (2017). Overseas Security and Justice Assistance Human Rights Guidance. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583304/OSJA_Guidance_2017.pdf

83 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2016). College of Policing: three years on, p. 25. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/23/23.pdf>

84 FOI #0545-19

85 BIRD (2020). [@BirdBahrain_]. Bahrain Execution Data on Twitter. Available at: https://twitter.com/birdbahrain_/status/1315950714896740357?s=24

Reprieve and BIRD (2018). Training Torturers. Available at: <https://reprieve.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/05/TRAINING-TORTURERS-THE-UK%E2%80%99S-ROLE-IN-BAHRAIN%E2%80%99S-BRUTAL-CRACKDOWN-ON-DISSENT.pdf>

86 James Cleverly, Bahrain: Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 113516, 17 November 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-10/113516>

87 Brendan O'Hara, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

88 David Linden, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

89 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Technical Assistance: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL7949, 1 June 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-05-16/HL7949>;

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL1130, 19 November 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-11-06/HL1130>

90 Bronner, E., and Slackman, M. (2011). 'Saudi Troops Enter Bahrain to Help Put Down Unrest' in The New York Times. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/world/middleeast/15bahrain.html>

91 BIRD (2020). [@BirdBahrain_]. Bahrain Execution Data on Twitter. Available at: https://twitter.com/birdbahrain_/status/1315950714896740357?s=24

92 Trew, B. (2021) 'Bahrain sees six-fold rise in death sentences and 'drastically escalating' torture despite UK millions' in The Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/bahrain-death-sentences-torture-report-b1882988.html>

Agnes Callamard (@AgnesCallamard), TWITTER (27 Jul. 2019, 2:27 AM), <https://twitter.com/agnescallamard/status/820532830744772608?lang=en>.

Agnes Callamard (@AgnesCallamard), TWITTER (15 Jan. 2019) <https://twitter.com/agnescallamard/status/1155116296851382272> ; Press Release, Office of the U.N. High Commissioner on Human Rights, UN experts call on Bahrain to halt executions of two individuals amid torture allegations, U.N. Press Release, 21 May 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24635&LangID=E>;

Press Briefing, Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Press briefing note on Bahrain, U.N. Press Release, 30 July 2019, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24863&LangID=E>

93 FOI 1053-19

94 IRECT (2020). Independent expert review of the Special Investigation Unit's investigation into torture allegations of Hussain Moosa and Mohammed Ramadhan. Available at: https://irect.org/uploads/media/2020_07_01_PUB_IRCT_Statement_MRamadhan_HMoosa_FINAL.pdf

95 UN WGAD (2021). Opinion No. 4/2021 concerning Mohamed Ramadhan Isa Ali Husain and Husain Ali Moosa Hassan Mohamed (Bahrain). Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session90/A_HRC_WGAD_2021_4.docx

96 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, 12 February 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-02-12/debates/508444BF-B2A9-495F-B0DE-379C2ED430CC/BahrainMohamedRamadanAndHussainMoosa?highlight=bahrain#contribution-94E8E584-51C3-4448-99D4-4190BAE6DFF3>

97 FCDO (2020). Human Rights and Democracy: the 2019 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2019/human-rights-and-democracy-the-2019-foreign-and-commonwealth-office-report>

98 OHCHR (2020). Mr. Mohamed Ramadhan Issa Ali Hassan and Mr. Hussain Ali Moosa Hassan Mohamed. Available at: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=25475>

99 Lord Scriven, Bahrain: Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, 12 February 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-02-12/debates/508444BF-B2A9-495F-B0DE-379C2ED430CC/BahrainMohamedRamadanAndHussainMoosa?highlight=bahrain#contribution-94E8E584-51C3-4448-99D4-4190BAE6DFF3>

100 UN WGAD (2021). Opinion No. 4/2021 concerning Mohamed Ramadhan Isa Ali Husain and Husain Ali Moosa Hassan Mohamed (Bahrain). Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session90/A_HRC_WGAD_2021_4.docx

101 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2016). College of Policing: three years on, p. 32. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/23/23.pdf>

102 James Cleverly, Bahrain: Capital Punishment: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 77846, 1 September 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-07-21/77846>

103 Brendan O'Hara, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

104 Lord Scriven, Bahrain: Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, 12 February 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-02-12/debates/508444BF-B2A9-495F-B0DE-379C2ED430CC/BahrainMohamedRamadanAndHussainMoosa?highlight=bahrain#contribution-94E8E584-51C3-4448-99D4-4190BAE6DFF3>

105 FOI 0545-19

106 Embassy of Bahrain in the UK (2019). New Alternative Sentencing Law Comes into Force in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/3497de2ddb9a/new-alternative-sentencing-lawcomes-into-force-in-the-kingdom-of-bahrain>

107 Amnesty International (2020). Bahrain: Release of Hajer Mansoor 'long overdue', others must now follow. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/03/bahrain-release-of-hajer-mansoor-long-overdue-others-must-now-follow/>

108 Durham Constabulary (2018) 'Training agreement with Bahrain'. Available at: <https://www.durham.police.uk/news-and-events/Pages/News%20Articles/Training-agreement-with-Bahrain.aspx>

109 Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, Gulf Strategy Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL15129, 29 April 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15129>

110 Human Rights Watch (2017) 'Bahrain: Activist' Kin Convicted in Flawed Trial'. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/30/bahrain-activists-kin-convicted-flawed-trial>

111 Human Rights Watch and BIRD (2021) 'Bahrain - Stop Denying Abuse of Detained Children. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/07/bahrain-stop-denying-abuse-detained-children>

112 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Detainees: Written Question HL4425, 8 January 2018. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2017-12-21/HL4425>;

Mushaima, A. (2018). 'Bahraini authorities are killing my father, I'm on hunger strike to save him' in The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/03/torture-bahrain-killing-my-father-hassan-mushaima-arms-sales-repression>

113 20 NGOs (2020). Bahrain: Free Imprisoned Rights Defenders and Activists. Available at: <http://birdbh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Free-Imprisoned-Rights-Defenders-and-Activists.pdf>

114 Harwood, A. (2021). 'Calls for 'Beast of Bahrain' female jail guard to be sacked' in The Daily Mail. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6816339/Calls-Beast-Bahrain-female-jail-guard-sacked-beat-handcuffed-mother.html>

BIRD (2019). Breaking the Silence. Available at: <http://birdbh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BIRD-ADHRB-BreakingTheSilence.pdf>

115 BIRD (2019) 'UK-Trained Bahraini Ombudsman Breaches Confidentiality of Victim of Abuse. Available at: <http://birdbh.org/2019/03/uk-trained-bahraini-ombudsman-breaches-confidentiality-of-victim-of-abuse/>

116 Al Hajee, A. (2020). 'Opinion: As a political prisoner in Bahrain, I have serious questions for the UK' in The Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/bahrain-political-prisoners-torture-uk-foreign-policy-a9670791.html>

- 117 Ibid.
- 118 Committee to Protect Journalists (2020) 'Bahrain puts imprisoned journalist in solitary confinement after reporting on COVID-19 danger'. Available at: <https://cpj.org/2020/04/bahrain-puts-imprisoned-journalist-in-solitary-con/>
- 119 Dr Andrew Murrison, Bahrain: Political Prisoners: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 6138, 27 January 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-21/6138>
- Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Hussan Mushaima: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL945, 11 February 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-29/HL945>;
- Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Hussan Mushaima: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL347, 27 January 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-13/HL347>;
- Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Hajer Mansoor Hassan: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question HL345, 27 January 2020. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-13/HL345>
- 120 James Heappey (2020). Gulf Strategy Fund – Saudi Arabia: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 113158, Deposited Paper D/PQN/19-21/2020/12349/is. Available at: http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2020-0835/Deposit_MartynDay_PQ113158.pdf
- 121 James Heappey, Saudi Arabia: Training: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 13450, 13 January 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-08/134500>
- 122 James Cleverly, Saudi Arabia: Overseas Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 102833, 19 October 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102833>
- 123 Cordesman, A. (2009) Saudi Arabia: National Security in a Troubled Region, p. 124.
- 124 Human Rights Watch (2018). Hiding Behind the Coalition: Failure to Credibly Investigate and Provide Redress for Unlawful Attacks in Yemen. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/08/24/hiding-behind-coalition/failure-credibly-investigate-and-provide-redress-unlawful>;
- Human Rights Watch (2017). Letter to Saudi-Led Coalition Joint Incidents Assessment Team Regarding Yemen Investigations. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/16/letter-saudi-led-coalition-joint-incidents-assessment-team-regarding-yemen>
- 125 Borger, J. and Kamali Dehghan, S. (2018) 'Yemen school bus bombing 'one of 50 strikes on civilian vehicles this year' in The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/16/yemen-school-bus-bombing-one-of-50-strikes-on-civilian-vehicles-this-year>
- 126 Sabbagh, D. (2021). 'UK spent £2.4m to help Saudi Arabia comply with international law' in The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jan/13/uk-spent-24m-to-help-saudi-arabia-comply-with-international-law>
- 127 Lewis, L. (2019). Promoting Civilian Protection during Security Assistance: Learning from Yemen, p. 13. CNA. Available at: https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IRM-2019-U-019749-Final.pdf
- 128 Cumming-Bruce, N. (2018). 'War Crimes Report on Yemen Accuses Saudi Arabia and U.A.E' In The New York Times. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/world/middleeast/un-yemen-war-crimes.html>
- 129 James Heappey, Saudi Arabia: Military Aid: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 143011, 28 January 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-25/143011>
- 130 Andy Slaughter, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>
- 131 Dr Andrew Murrison, Bahrain: Human Rights: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 1712, 16 January 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-09/1712>
- 132 Mark Field, Bahrain: Integrated Activity Fund: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 237139, 3 April 2019. Available at : <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2019-03-26/237139>;
- FOI 10925
- 133 James Cleverly, Sayed Hasan Ameen: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 163723, 10 March 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-05/163723>
- 134 Brendan O'Hara, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>
- 135 United Nations Committee Against Torture (2017). Concluding observations on second and third periodic reports of Bahrain, CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/BHR/CO/2-3&Lang=en;
- Human Rights Watch (2020). World Report 2020: Bahrain Events of 2019. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/bahrain>;
- Amnesty International (2015). Behind the Rhetoric: Human Rights Abuses in Bahrain Continue Unabated. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2015-04_-_behind_the_rhetoric_english_-_final_1.pdf
- 136 Amnesty International (2021). Bahrain 2020 Annual Report. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north>

africa/bahrain/report-bahrain/

137 James Cleverly, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

138 FCDO (2020). Human Rights and Democracy: the 2019 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2019/human-rights-and-democracy-the-2019-foreign-and-commonwealth-office-report>;

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Detainees: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 3727, 12 December 2017. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2017-11-29/HL3727>

139 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Mohamed Ramadan and Hussain Moosa, Vol. 801, 12 February 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-02-12/debates/508444BF-B2A9-495F-B0DE-379C2ED430CC/BahrainMohamedRamadanAndHussainMoosa>;
Philip, C. (2020). 'Tortured' activists must be executed, Bahrain court rules' in The Times. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bahrain-upholds-pro-democracy-activists-death-sentences-despite-medical-evidence-of-torture-596zjnbff>

140 IRICT (2020). Independent expert review of the Special Investigation Unit's investigation into torture allegations of Hussain Moosa and Mohammed Ramadhan. Available at: https://irct.org/uploads/media/2020_07_01_PUB_IRCT_Statement_MRamadhan_HMoosa_FINAL.pdf

141 Amnesty International (2021). Bahrain 2020 Annual Report. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/bahrain/report-bahrain/>;

Human Rights Watch (2015). Criminalizing Dissent, Entrenching Impunity. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/28/criminalizing-dissent-entrenching-impunity/persistent-failures-bahraini-justice>

142 Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (2021). Defective and Deficient: A Review of Bahrain's National Human Rights Bodies, p.6. Available at: https://bahrainrights.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/A-Review-of-Bahrain's-National-Human-Rights-Bodies_210421_RM.pdf

143 Miller, P. (2018). 'Revealed: Britain Spent Thousands Training a Bahraini 'Monster' Cop' in Vice News. Available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/ev8977/revealed-britain-spent-thousands-training-a-bahraini-monster-cop>

144 Oppenheim, M. (2019). 'Formula One pledges to raise rape and torture of jailed activist with Bahraini authorities but refuses to bin race' in The Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/formula-one-bahrain-grand-prix-date-event-najah-yusuf-human-rights-abuses-a9171111.html>;

OHCHR (2017). 'UN experts urge Bahrain to investigate reports of torture and ill-treatment of rights defender Ebtisam Alsaeg'. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21886&LangID=E>

145 Philip, C. (2020). 'Prince Andrew and his visit to Middle East torture hub' in The Times. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/prince-andrew-and-his-visit-to-middle-east-torture-hub-2qgf0z5zc>

146 Ungood-Thomas, J. (2017). 'Britain helps train 'violent' Bahraini police' in The Times. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britain-helps-train-violent-bahraini-police-hwk8flg5c>

147 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Bahrain: Human Rights: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 13132, 22 February 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/hl13132>

148 James Cleverly, Bahrain: Politics and Government: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 158192, 5 March 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-24/158192>

149 Human Rights Watch (2021). World Report 2021: Events of 2020. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021>;

Human Rights Watch and BIRD (2021). Bahrain: Police Beat, Threaten Children. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/10/bahrain-police-beat-threaten-children>

150 Bahrain Ministry of Interior (2021). [@moi_bahrain] Confirmed Covid Case on Twitter. Available at: https://twitter.com/moi_bahrain/status/1363548176209223686?s=21

151 Human Rights Watch and BIRD (2021). Bahrain: Police Beat, Threaten Children. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/10/bahrain-police-beat-threaten-children> ;

Human Rights Watch and BIRD (2021). Bahrain: Stop Denying Abuse of Detained Children. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/07/bahrain-stop-denying-abuse-detained-children>

152 Ibid.

153 Bahrain Ministry of Interior Ombudsman (2021). 'The Independent Ombudsman reveals the facts regarding allegations raised in an Amnesty International report'. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.bh/en/news/latest-news/the-independent-ombudsman-reveals-the-facts-regarding-allegations-raised-in-an-amnesty-international>;

Human Rights Watch and BIRD (2021). Bahrain: Stop Denying Abuse of Detained Children. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/07/bahrain-stop-denying-abuse-detained-children>

- 154 Human Rights Watch (2021). Letter re: UK Responses to Abuses against Children by Bahraini Authorities. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/07/letter-re-uk-response-abuses-against-children-bahrain-authorities>
- 155 James Cleverly, Sayed Hasan Ameen: Answer to Written Parliamentary Question 163723, 10 March 2021. Available at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-05/163723>
- 156 Human Rights Watch (2021). Letter re: UK Responses to Abuses against Children by Bahraini Authorities. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/07/letter-re-uk-response-abuses-against-children-bahrain-authorities>
- 157 Andy Slaughter, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>
- 158 Alistair Carmichael, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>
- 159 Majzoub, A. (2020). 'Nine Years After Bahrain's Uprising, Its Human Rights Crisis Has Only Worsened' in Human Rights Watch. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/25/nine-years-after-bahrains-uprising-its-human-rights-crisis-has-only-worsened>
- 160 BIRD (2020). [@BirdBahrain_]. Bahrain Execution Data on Twitter. Available at: https://twitter.com/birdbahrain_/status/1315950714896740357?s=24
- 161 Amnesty International (2019). 'No one can protect you': Bahrain's Year of Crushing Dissent. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1167902017ENGLISH.PDF>;
- Amnesty International (2020). 'Death penalty 2019: Saudi Arabia executed record number of people last year amid decline in global executions'. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/04/death-penalty-2019-saudi-arabia-executed-record-number-of-people-last-year-amid-decline-in-global-executions/>;
- Awford, J. (2019). 'Saudi Arabia executions spike in 2019 – with 134 crucified and beheaded including six who were kids when arrested' in The Daily Mail. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9935530/saudi-arabia-executions-increase-134-crucified-beheaded/>
- 162 BBC (2017). 'Bahrain court dissolves main secular opposition group'. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-40104731>
- 163 AP News (2019). 'Bahrain activists say 22-year-old man dies after protest'. Available at: <https://apnews.com/2444e19ec6d14ead9f4fc50eea39c88e>
- 164 Human Rights watch (2017). 'Bahrain: Only Independent Newspaper Shut Down'. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/18/bahrain-only-independent-newspaper-shut-down>;
- Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (2020). Prosecution and Judicial Harassment of Lawyers and Human Rights Defenders in Bahrain. Available at: https://www.barhumanrights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020_BHRC_Letter-to-the-King-of-Bahrain-re.-Al-Shamlawi_Final-1.pdf
- 165 Reporters Without Borders (2021). 2021 World Press Freedom Index. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>
- 166 Human Rights Watch (2021). World Report 2021: Saudi Arabia Chapter. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021>
- 167 Human Rights Watch (2021). Bahrain: No Improvement in Rights Record. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/13/bahrain-no-improvement-rights-record>
- 168 Human Rights Watch (2021). World Report 2021: Events of 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021>
- 169 Wintour, P. (2020). 'UK Foreign Office urged to secure safety of three rights activists in Gulf' in The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/26/uk-foreign-office-urged-to-secure-safety-of-three-human-rights-activists>
- 170 Andy Slaughter, Integrated Activity Fund: Transparency, 22 October 2020. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-22/debates/1A17E46F-FA72-4AFD-B682-CE37E56F794B/IntegratedActivityFundTransparency>

The Cost of Repression | Secret Government Funds & Human Rights Abuse in the Gulf Inquiry Report into the Integrated Activity Fund and the Gulf Strategy Fund

This report was researched and written by Josie Thum, Secretariat of the APPG, with contributions from the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD).

This report has been endorsed by Brendan O'Hara; Lord Scriven; Sir Peter Bottomley; Alistair Carmichael; Andrew Gwynne; Andy Slaughter; Chris Law; Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle; Ben Lake; Alan Brown.

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the group.

© 2021, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy and Human Rights in the Gulf.
All Rights Reserved.

www.gulfappg.co.uk

Published in July 2021.

Design by R Probert.