



Sir Peter Bottomley MP
Member of Parliament for Worthing West
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 5060 bottomleyp@parliament.uk
www.SirPeterBottomley.com

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

11th November 2022

Dear Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary,

We are writing to raise serious concerns ahead of the parliamentary elections set to take place in Bahrain on the 12th of November, 2022.

We are greatly concerned that these elections will take place in a context of sustained state repression against Bahrain's civil society, which is one of the most repressed in the world. The Bahraini state scored a meagre 2/40 on Freedom House's 2022 "Freedom in the World Report" for political rights, ranked just 167/180 on Reporters Sans Frontières' 2022 "World Press Freedom Index" and 144/167 on the Economist's 2021 Democracy Index. Opposition parties continue to be banned whilst human rights watchdogs are denied access to the country.

We contest that the elections in Bahrain will be entirely lacking credibility so long as leading political opposition figures including Hassan Mushaima, Abdulwahab Husain and Sheikh Mohammed Habib AlMuqdad remain wrongfully behind bars serving life sentences for their roles in Bahrain's 2011 pro-democracy uprising, along with the leader of AlWefaq, Sheikh Ali Salman. In addition, human rights defenders such as Abdulhadi AlKhawaja, Dr Abduljalil AlSingace, Naji Fateel and Ali AlHajee remain unjustly deprived of their liberty, with AlSingace on 490 days of strike from eating solid foods simply to demand authorities return his confiscated research to his family.

Furthermore, we are concerned that Bahrain's 2018 political isolation law prohibits members of dissolved political societies and sentenced individuals from running for office or voting, even if they were pardoned. As a result of this legislation, which Human Rights Watch recently found "pose[s] an existential threat to the health and viability of Bahrain's civil society", it is disturbing that according to research conducted by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, tens of thousands of people will not be able to stand as candidates in the election. Moreover, it is unacceptable that Bahrain's Office of the Public Prosecution has made public threats that anyone who calls for the elections to be boycotted will face imprisonment and a fine.

Earlier this year, you commented that "freedom, democracy and the rule of law are foundation stone principles that we will defend", and you will doubtless agree that such repression surrounding Bahrain's elections, alongside the ongoing imprisonment of opposition figures, are direct and flagrant affronts on freedom and democracy. With this in mind, we hope that the UK government will take appropriate action to defend these principles.

In light of the above concerns, we kindly request that you take the following action:

1. Call upon Bahrain publicly and privately to immediately and unconditionally release all opposition leaders, political prisoners and the death row inmates who have alleged torture, ahead of the elections' conclusion;
2. Call upon Bahrain to repeal its repressive political isolation laws;
3. Publicly affirm that the UK government will not recognise the outcome of Bahrain's elections in light of repressive restrictions to fundamental freedoms and the democratic process.

Thank you for your consideration of this serious matter. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Peter Bottomley MP
Alan Brown MP
Richard Burgon MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP

Sarah Green MP
Kenny MacAskill MP
Layla Moran MP
Brendan O'Hara MP

Sarah Olney MP
Lord Scriven
Baroness Stern
Zarah Sultana MP

Constituency Office:
Address details, telephone number and email address
Website: www.name-of-MP.org.uk