

Bahrain and Egypt's National Human Rights Institutions do not comply with the Paris Principles

To: the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, write ahead of the upcoming reaccreditation of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of Bahrain and Egypt on October 23-27, 2023.

We believe that the two countries' NHRIs have failed to comply with the Paris Principles and to implement recommendations outlined by the SCA's previous reports in [2016](#) and [2018](#), respectively.

The [Paris Principles](#) define the minimal standards that NHRIs must abide by "in order to be considered credible and to operate effectively." The pillars of these principles are **pluralism, independence and effectiveness**. NHRIs must be independent from the government, represent and cooperate with civil society, and effectively promote human rights by monitoring violations and addressing them. Based on civil society reports, the [Bahraini](#) and [Egyptian](#) NHRIs fall short of these standards.

In Bahrain, all the current members of the National Institution for Human Rights ([NIHR](#)) were appointed by King Hamad through a [royal decree](#) issued on 9 May 2021, and there is no democratic or independent [mechanism](#) through which these selections are made. The current Chairman of the NIHR, Ali al-Derazi, was reportedly implicated in [abuses](#) against migrant workers. Furthermore, the Vice-Chairperson of the NIHR, Mr. Khaled Abdulaziz Alshaer had previously [called](#) on those who criticised the Bahraini government to receive the death penalty.

In August 2022, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [concluded](#) that "[the NIHR] has not yet attained the independence required to perform its functions." Previously in 2018, the UN Human Rights Committee had [expressed](#) similar concern and "[regretted] the lack of information on the complaints [the NIHR] has received and the investigations it has carried out in response to those complaints."

In addition, Bahrain's NIHR fails to address and outright [denies](#) the human rights abuses committed by the authorities, including arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and medical negligence in various detention facilities. This contradicts the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's findings regarding [Abduljalil al-Singace](#), [Abdulhadi al-Khawaja](#) and [Naji Fateel](#), three Bahraini human rights defenders who were arbitrarily detained, tortured, medically neglected and subjected to sham trials.

As for the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights ([NCHR](#)), it also lacks independence from the government. In 2021, new members of the NCHR were [appointed](#) for four years. The Chair, Ms. Moushira Khattab, and the Vice-President, Mr. Mahmoud Karem Mahmoud are both former Egyptian officials and diplomats. In both 2014 and 2018, Mahmoud was the [coordinator](#) of

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al-Sisi's presidential campaign, which clearly demonstrates the NCHR's close relationship with the executive.

In March 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee had [echoed](#) these concerns over the "lack of safeguards to ensure [the NCHR's] full independence and effectiveness", as well as over "the lack of information provided on the effective implementation of its recommendations."

The NCHR has left hundreds of complaints unanswered and blatantly denies that certain human rights abuses are being committed. In 2020, the Council [stated](#) that [findings](#) of the UN Committee against Torture, according to which torture was "systematic" in Egypt, were a "politicized categorization" seeking to "undermine the efforts of the government". The NCHR has also remained silent on prominent human rights issues such as the practice of enforced disappearance or the dire conditions of detention. In July 2023, the Council's president [compared](#) a new correctional facility in Wadi al-Natroun to a "5-star hotel". We believe that the Egyptian NCHR is far from acting as a NHRI with "A" status, which it has worryingly been granted since 2006 by the SCA.

In light of the above, it is clear that the NHRIs of Bahrain and Egypt have consistently failed to comply with the Paris Principles and to implement the SCA's recommendations.

We urge you to consider the aforementioned shortcomings of Bahrain and Egypt's NHRIs when reviewing them during your upcoming session, and to not grant them status "A".

Signatories:

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

CIVICUS

Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)

Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms

Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)

El Nadeem against Violence and Torture

Human Rights Foundation (HRF)

HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) – within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF)

MENA Rights Group

Rights Realization Centre (UK)

Salam for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR)

The #FreeAlKhawaja Campaign

The Freedom Initiative (FI)

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) – within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders