

Committee against Torture

Concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain*

ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION

1. The Committee against Torture considered the second and third periodic reports of Bahrain (CAT/C/BHR/2 and CAT/C/BHR/3) at its 1511th and 1514th meetings, held on 21 and 24 April 2017 (CAT/C/SR.1511 and CAT/C/SR.1514), and adopted the following concluding observations at its 1533th and 1534th meetings (CAT/C/SR.1533 and CAT/C/SR.1534) held on 8 and 9 May 2017.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee regrets the late submission of the second and third periodic reports, submitted in 2015 and 2016, 12 years after the consideration of the initial report. It welcomes the dialogue with the State party's delegation and the information provided orally in response to the concerns raised by the Committee.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the State party's accession to and ratification of the following international instruments:

- (a) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on 20 September 2006;
- (b) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on 27 September 2007; and
- (c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on 22 September 2011.

4. The Committee welcomes the State party's initiatives to revise its legislation in areas of relevance to the Convention, including the adoption of:

- (a) Royal Order No. 28 establishing the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry "to investigate and report on the events occurring in Bahrain in February/March 2011, and any subsequent consequences arising out of the aforementioned events, and to make such recommendations as it may deem appropriate", in July 2011;
- (b) Royal Order No. 45 establishing the National Commission to follow-up on recommendation 1715 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, on 26 November 2011;
- (c) Amendments to articles 208 and 232 of the Criminal Code changing the definition of torture and bringing it in line with the relevant provisions of the Convention and removing the statute of limitations for torture, by Act No. 52 of 3 October 2012; and
- (d) Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility Act No. 18 that allows lawyers representing inmates or persons in pre-trial detention in criminal or civil cases to meet with their clients, in 2014.

5. The Committee also welcomes the initiatives of the State party to amend its policies, programmes and administrative measures to give effect to the Convention, including the:

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixtieth session (18 April to 12 May 2017).

- (a) Act No. 1 establishing the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in 2008;
- (b) Royal Decree Law No. 30 establishing the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims, on 20 September 2011; and
- (c) Adoption of Ministerial Decision No. 14 on the Code of Conduct for Police Officers, in January 2012.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Discrepancy between the legislative and institutional framework and its implementation in practice

6. While commending the establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and taking note of the amendments to national legislation defining torture and the establishment of the institutional framework pursuant to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Committee is concerned at the substantial gap between the amended legislative and institutional frameworks and their effective implementation in practice with regard to the obligations of the Convention (arts. 2, 4, 10, 12 and 13).

7. **The State party should unambiguously proclaim at the highest level that torture will not be tolerated and take the necessary measures to narrow the gap by, inter alia, announcing and ensuring that investigations and prosecutions will be carried out promptly against perpetrators of torture and those with command responsibility in all cases and issue a warning that anyone committing acts of torture or otherwise complicit or acquiescent in torture will be held personally responsible before the law and will be subject to criminal prosecution and appropriate penalties.**

Allegations of torture and ill-treatment and related impunity

8. While taking note that the State set up the National Commission to follow up and implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Committee is concerned at continued numerous and consistent allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in all places of detention as well as outside, in particular at the Criminal Investigations Directorate, at the moment of arrest, during pre-trial detention and in prisons, in order to extract confessions or as punishment. It is also concerned at the climate of impunity which seems to prevail as a result of the low number of convictions for torture and the sentences given to persons responsible for torture resulting, inter alia, in death, which are not commensurate to the gravity of the crime (arts. 2, 4, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16).

9. **The State party should:**

(a) **Take additional measures to effectively implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, in particular recommendation 1719 to investigate cases of alleged torture and ill-treatment;**

(b) **Strengthen measures to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment in all places where persons are deprived of their liberty;**

(c) **Take vigorous measures to eliminate impunity for acts of torture by holding alleged perpetrators accountable for such acts; and**

(d) **Establish a plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.**

Military courts and the National Security Agency

10. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The amendment to article 105(b) of the Constitution of March 2017 and amendments to the Military Justice Code in April 2017 allowing for civilians to be tried in

military courts for cases concerning the threat to national security, which appears to be contrary to recommendation 1720 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry;

(b) Allegations that in the past, trials that took place in military courts during the state of national safety were unfair and that judgements were often said to be based on coerced confessions; and

(c) The restoration of law enforcement and arrest functions to the National Security Agency (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16).

11. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Consider repealing the legislative provisions concerning the trial of civilians by military courts and repeal the recent amendments to the Military Justice Code;**

(b) **Implement recommendation 1720 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and make subject to review in ordinary courts all convictions and sentences rendered by the National Security Courts where fundamental principles of a fair trial, including prompt and full access to legal counsel and inadmissibility of coerced testimony, were not respected be subject to full review in the ordinary courts; and**

(c) **Implement recommendation 1718 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and ensure that the National Security Agency is an intelligence gathering agency without law enforcement and arrest authorities.**

Resumption of the application of the death penalty

12. The Committee is gravely concerned about:

(a) The interruption by the State party of the de facto moratorium since 2010 on the application of the death penalty which led to the execution by firing squad on 15 January 2017 of Abbas Al-Samea, Sami Mushaima and Ali Al-Singace;

(b) Reports that the trials of the three men convicted for killing three police officers in 2014 were based on confessions obtained under torture, which had not been properly investigated by the competent authorities; and

(c) The situation of Mr. Mohammed Ramadhan and Mr. Hussain Ali Moosa who face the death penalty and are said to have also been convicted on the basis of confessions extracted by torture (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16).

13. The State party should:

(a) **Consider the prompt re-establishment of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty;**

(b) **Consider, in this context, pardon, reprieve and commutation of sentences for death row inmates;**

(c) **Ensure that allegations by defendants that their confessions have been obtained under torture are properly investigated by competent bodies. No court rulings should be based on confessions obtained as a result of torture which contravene article 15 of the Convention against Torture and the Constitution and Penal Code of the State party;**

(d) **Introduce a mandatory system of review of cases of capital punishment, with suspensive effect following a death penalty sentence in the first instance; and**

(e) **Bring to the attention of the judges that investigations and a new trial of Mr. Mohammed Ramadhan and Mr. Hussain Ali Moosa could be envisaged if coerced confessions have been taken into account as evidence during their previous trial, guarantee them effective assistance by legal counsel at all stages of the new judicial proceedings and ensure strict confidentiality of all meetings with their lawyers.**

Fundamental legal safeguards

14. The Committee is concerned:

(a) At allegations that persons deprived of their liberty most often do not enjoy all fundamental legal safeguards from the moment of their apprehension; and

(b) That while audio-visual equipment for recording interrogations of suspects and detainees has been installed in all police stations, in the General Department of Criminal Investigations and in interrogation rooms used by prosecutors, that interrogations accompanied by ill-treatment and torture are often carried out in other parts of the cited facilities in order to avoid them being recorded by the audio-visual equipment (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

15. The State party should take effective measures to guarantee that all detained persons are afforded in practice all the fundamental legal safeguards from the outset of their deprivation of liberty, in accordance with international standards, including to:

(a) Be informed about the charges against them, both orally and in writing, in a language that they understand, and to sign a paper confirming that they have understood the information provided to them;

(b) The right to request and receive a medical examination by a qualified medical doctor within 24 hours of their arrival in a place of detention, and to have access to an independent doctor upon their request;

(c) Have access to a lawyer or legal aid from the time of their apprehension and to be able to consult with him/her in private, throughout the proceedings against them, in accordance with article 20 of the Constitution;

(d) Notify a family member or any other person of their choice of their detention immediately after apprehension;

(e) Have their detention recorded in a central register immediately after arrest and that this register is accessible to their lawyers, family members or other persons concerned by the case;

(f) Be brought before a judge within 48 hours of their apprehension; and

(g) Ensure that all interrogations of suspects and detainees in all places of deprivation of liberty take place exclusively in interrogation rooms equipped for that purpose so that videotapes can be made and reviewed to identify and investigate any torture and other breaches of national legislation; that tapes are made available to defendants and their lawyers; and that they may be used as evidence in court.

Forced confessions

16. Despite the existing national legislation, the Committee remains concerned at numerous reports of continued widespread use of forced confessions as evidence in courts and on the absence of information of any cases in which officials may have been prosecuted and punished for extracting confessions in violation of article 15 of the Convention. It is further concerned at the widespread acceptance by judges of forced confessions, that some persons are reported to have been sentenced to 25 years of incarceration on the basis of confessions made under torture, and the refusal of judges to take into account in court visible signs of torture shown by the defendants. It is particularly concerned that the sentences of the three persons who were executed on 15 January 2017 are reported to have been based on confessions extracted under torture (arts. 2, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16).

17. The State party should implement relevant provisions of its Code of Criminal Procedure, including article 253, and ensure that evidence obtained through any form of coercion or torture is inadmissible in all judicial proceedings, in line with article 15 of the Convention. It should enact legislation providing for inquiries on well-founded allegations of torture when they are brought to the attention of the judge by the defendant or their counsel. Judges should review cases of convictions based solely on confessions, since many may have been based on evidence obtained through torture

and ill-treatment and inform the Committee of the results of the review. The State party should conduct prompt and impartial investigations into such cases, take appropriate remedial measures and provide information on whether any officials have been prosecuted and punished for extracting such confessions.

Duration of pre-trial detention

18. While noting that the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that the law enforcement official should hand a suspect over to the Public Prosecution within 24 hours of apprehension and that the detention warrant issued by the Public Prosecution shall be valid only for a seven-day period following the handover of the suspect, the Committee is concerned that the Public Prosecution can submit an application to a lower court judge to issue a warrant for a further period of up to 15 days, or for successive periods amounting in total to not more than 30 days and that article 147 of the Code of Criminal Procedure allows for detention on remand that can be imposed by a lower court for a period of up to 45 days to a period or consecutive periods of up to 30 days on condition that no period exceeds 15 days. It is particularly concerned that Chapter I of the special section of the Criminal Code regarding State security offences allows the Public Prosecution to detain a suspect for an initial period of 28 days or periods of up to six months under the Act on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts (arts. 2, 4, 11 and 16).

19. The State party should:

(a) Ensure that persons who are arrested on criminal charges, including under the Act on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts, are brought before a judge within 48 hours;

(b) Amend legislation and take all necessary measures to shorten the duration of pre-trial detention, which should be used as an exception, as a measure of last resort and applied for limited periods of time;

(c) Ensure that pre-trial detention is regulated clearly and subject to judicial supervision at all times in order to guarantee fundamental legal safeguards;

(d) Consider replacing pre-trial detention for minor crimes with non-custodial measures, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules); and

(e) Ensure that redress, including compensation, is provided to victims of unjustified prolonged pre-trial detention.

Solitary confinement

20. While national law prescribes in the Reform and Rehabilitation Institution Act since 2014 that solitary confinement should not last more than 7 days, the Committee is concerned about the actual use of solitary confinement in different detention centres as punishment for prolonged periods of time. It is particularly concerned about the solitary confinement of Mr. Nabeel Rajab which is reported to have exceeded nine months and during which he has been denied adequate medical care. The Committee draws the State party's attention to the fact that excessive use of solitary confinement constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or, depending on the circumstances, even torture (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13, 16).

21. The State party should:

(a) Effectively implement current national legislation in order to ensure that solitary confinement remains an exceptional measure, imposed for as short a time as possible and is a measure of last resort, in line with international standards;

(b) Ensure that solitary confinement is under strict supervision and judicial review and in no case longer than the law provides and that the detainees are guaranteed due process rights, such as the right to appeal;

(c) Establish clear and specific criteria for decisions on isolation and ensure that the practice of renewing and prolonging disciplinary sanctions of solitary confinement should be strictly prohibited;

(d) Ensure that the detainee's physical and mental condition is monitored daily by qualified medical personnel throughout the period of solitary confinement, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules); and

(e) Put an end to the solitary confinement of Mr. Nabeel Rajab and ensure that he is provided with adequate medical assistance and redress.

Conditions of detention

22. While taking note of information about the construction of new buildings to accommodate inmates, the Committee is concerned that overcrowding remains a problem in detention facilities. It is also concerned at reports of poor material and hygienic conditions in places of detention, including inadequate bathing and toilet facilities, lack of access to adequate quantity and quality of food, health care, lack of outdoor activities and unnecessary restrictions on family visits (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

23. The State party should:

(a) Intensify further its efforts to bring the conditions of detention in places of deprivation of liberty into line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules);

(b) Reduce further prison overcrowding in all places of detention, including by building additional facilities and renovating existing ones and reduce the rate of incarceration;

(c) Ensure that detainees are provided with adequate material and hygienic conditions, including bathing and toilet facilities, adequate quantity and quality of food, space per prisoner, health care, outdoor activities and family visits; and

(d) Allow regular visits by independent monitoring bodies as well as international ones to carry out regular unannounced visits to all places of detention and meet in private with detained persons.

Riots in prisons

24. The Committee is concerned at reports of outbreaks of violence by inmates in prisons resulting in riots and escapes by inmates, as was the case in Jaw Prison in March 2015 and January 2017 and in Dry Dock Prison in 2016. Those reports make reference to excessive use of force by security forces in Jaw Prison that included the use of rubber bullets, tear gas and shotguns by security forces as well as the harsh treatment of the detainees by the prison administration which included forcing inmates to spend 10 days in the open courtyard and the transfer of 100 detainees to another section of the prison where they were reportedly subjected to collective punishment amounting to ill-treatment and torture. It has been reported that a number of prisoners were given increased sentences as a result of these events (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

25. The State party should:

(a) Ensure that the use of force by security forces in places of detention during security operations is not excessive and that tear gas is not fired in closed spaces to quell riots, which endangers the lives of the inmates;

(b) Ensure that the basic rights of detainees are maintained in all circumstances and that they are not subjected to collective punishment by the prison administration;

(c) Ensure effective investigations of all cases of violence and ensure that conditions of detention do not provoke riots by the inmates; and

(d) Ensure thorough investigations of all allegations of torture and ill-treatment committed in detention facilities; punish the perpetrators if found guilty and provide redress, including medical and psychological rehabilitation, to the victims.

Treatment of minors

26. The Committee is concerned that the age of criminal responsibility for juveniles is at the age of 7 years and that minors over 16 years of age are in fact regarded as adult offenders, as this increases the minors' exposure to risk of torture and ill-treatment. The Committee is also concerned at reports that 76 minors were detained during security operations in 2010 and that among the cases of torture submitted to a non-governmental organization between 1 January and 26 June 2016, 10 involved minors at the time of arrest. It is also concerned that minors were among the inmates against whom tear gas was used during the riot in Jaw Prison in 2015. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that of some 200 minors who were incarcerated in 2015, about half of them were detained in facilities for adults, sometimes because of overcrowding (arts. 2, 11, 12, 13 and 16).

27. **The State party should:**

(a) Amend its legislation with a view to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 12 years, as recommended by General Comment No 10 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

(b) Ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards as well as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty; and

(c) Ensure that minors are detained only as a last resort and for the shortest possible period, are separated from adults and are afforded full legal safeguards, and should envisage the use non-custodial measures for minors who are in conflict with the law.

Independent complaints mechanisms in places of detention

28. While noting that persons deprived of their liberty can file complaints about torture or ill-treatment with a number of bodies created pursuant to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry such as the Office of the Ombudsman (General Secretariat of Complaints) of the Ministry of the Interior, the Directorate of Internal Investigations of the Ministry of the Interior, the General Directorate of Reform and Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Interior, the Ombudsman's Office of the National Security Agency, the Special Investigation Unit in the Public Prosecutor's Office, the National Institution for Human Rights and the Prisoners' and the Detainees' Rights Commission, the Committee is concerned that these bodies are not independent, that their mandates are unclear and overlapping and that they are not effective given that complaints ultimately pass through the Ministry of the Interior. It is also concerned that little or no outcome regarding their activities has been provided by the governmental authorities. The Committee is also concerned about the loopholes in the existing complaints mechanisms whereby prison inmates have to submit complaints regarding torture or ill-treatment through prison wardens, the prison Director or Deputy Director, which do not guarantee the outcome of the transmittal of such complaints to the competent authorities (arts. 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

29. **The State should:**

(a) Ensure that all mechanisms empowered to consider complaints by pre-trial detainees and convicted prisoners in all places of detention are independent;

(b) Ensure that all reports of torture or ill-treatment are investigated promptly, effectively and impartially by an independent mechanism with no institutional or hierarchical connection between the investigators and the alleged perpetrators;

(c) **Ensure that all persons under investigation for having committed acts of torture or ill-treatment are immediately suspended from their duties and remain so throughout the investigation, while ensuring that the principle of presumption of innocence is observed;**

(d) **Facilitate the submission of complaints by victims of torture and ill-treatment, including by obtaining medical evidence in support of their allegations from competent and independent doctors, in keeping with the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol); and**

(e) **Ensure in practice that complainants in all places of detention are protected against any reprisal as a consequence of their complaint.**

Monitoring of places of detention

30. While noting that visits to places of detention can be undertaken by the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, the President of the High Criminal Court, the sentencing judge, the President of the Juvenile Court, the Public Prosecution as well as the accountability mechanisms created pursuant to the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry cited, the Committee is concerned that conduct contrary to the Convention by law enforcement and prison officials continues (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

31. The State party should:

(a) **Ensure an effective and independent monitoring system that regularly inspects all places of detention, without prior notice, is able to meet in private with detainees, receive complaints and conduct investigations into alleged conduct contrary to the Convention by law enforcement and prison officials;**

(b) **Strengthen cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms by permitting visits as soon as possible by special procedures mandate holders who have requested them, in conformity with the terms of reference for fact-finding missions by special rapporteurs and special representatives (E/CN.4/1998/45); and**

(c) **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture providing for international and national mechanisms for the prevention of torture in places where persons are deprived of their liberty.**

Reprisals and alleged torture and ill-treatment of human rights defenders and journalists

32. The Committee remains concerned at numerous and consistent allegations of serious acts of intimidation, reprisals, threats, revocation of citizenship as reprisal as well as arrests and arbitrary imprisonment of human rights defenders, journalists and their relatives in retaliation for their work. It is also concerned that they have reportedly faced arrest on criminal charges and have been placed on trials without due process of law and without benefitting from fundamental legal safeguards. The Committee is deeply concerned by reports that numerous persons who were deprived of their liberty have been subjected to torture or ill-treatment. It is particularly concerned about the situation of Messrs. Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Naji Fateel, Nabeel Rajab, Abduljalil Al-Singace, Hussain Jawad, Abdulwahab Hussain, in particular with regard to their access to medical care (arts. 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

33. The State party should:

(a) **Implement recommendation 1722 of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry with regard to the use of force, arrest, treatment of persons in custody, detention and prosecution in connection with the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association;**

(b) Release from detention human rights defenders and journalists who are imprisoned and in detention allegedly in retaliation for their work, including the persons listed in the paragraph above;

(c) Investigate promptly, thoroughly and impartially all allegations of harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture or ill-treatment of human rights defenders and journalists, prosecute and punish appropriately those found guilty while ensuring that they have access to justice and are guaranteed fundamental legal safeguards and provide redress to the victims; and

(d) Refrain from using revocation of citizenship as a form of reprisal against human rights defenders, journalists and any other critic who is a political activist and not in favour of the authorities.

Violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence

34. The Committee is concerned that violence against women, including marital rape and domestic violence, is not a separate crime in the Criminal Code and at the delay in the adoption of legislation in this regard. It is particularly concerned that article 353 of the Criminal Code exempts perpetrators of rape from prosecution and punishment if they marry their victims and that article 334 of the Penal Code reduces the penalties for perpetrators of crimes committed in the name of so-called honour (arts. 2, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

35. **The State party should:**

(a) Define and introduce domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape, as specific criminal offences in its Criminal Code, with appropriate sanctions;

(b) Amend the Criminal Code in order to repeal articles 334 and 353;

(c) Expedite the adoption of the bill on domestic violence whose drafting began in 2007;

(d) Ensure that all allegations of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence, are registered by the police and that all allegations of violence are promptly, impartially and effectively investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted and punished;

(e) Ensure that victims of domestic violence benefit from protection, including restraining orders, and have access to medical and legal services, including counselling, redress and rehabilitation as well as to safe and adequate Government-funded shelters throughout the country; and

(f) Provide mandatory training for police and other law enforcement officials, social workers, prosecutors and judges on the vulnerabilities of victims of gender-based and domestic violence.

Corporal punishment against children

36. The Committee is concerned at reports that corporal punishment of children remains permitted in the home, alternative care and day care settings as well as in penal institutions (arts. 2, 4 and 16).

37. **The State party should enact legislation to explicitly and clearly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings.**

Compensation to victims of torture and ill-treatment

38. While welcoming the creation of the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims and the establishment of special courts devoted to hearing compensation claims announced on 27 February 2012 by the Supreme Judicial Council, the Committee is concerned that compensation has been paid to some of the victims and families of victims identified by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry only (art. 14).

39. **The State party should ensure that the National Fund for the Compensation of Victims provides compensation to all victims of torture and ill-treatment entitled to receive it, including all those identified by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.**

Visits by United Nations human rights mechanisms

40. The Committee is concerned that despite repeated requests by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture to visit the country the State party has postponed the visit claiming that it has “come at an inopportune time”, on account of the State party’s efforts to implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and a far-reaching process of reform and development. The Committee is also concerned that the representatives of the State party were not able to indicate when the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would be permitted to visit the country in response to the Parliament of Bahrain invitation through the media, to visit Bahrain’s places of detention and Shia villages. The invitation had been accepted by the High Commissioner, but the Government of Bahrain had taken no action in this regard at the time of their dialogue with the Committee.

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party promptly accept the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit the country. The State party is encouraged to enable the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit the country and, in particular, its places of detention, which is a matter of relevance to the compliance by Bahrain with the provisions of the Convention.**

Follow-up procedure

42. The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 12 May 2018, information on follow-up to the Committee’s recommendations on the moratorium of death penalty, regular visits by independent monitoring bodies, including international ones, to places of detention, and visits by the United Nations human rights mechanisms (see paras. 13(a), 23(d), and 41 above). In the same context, the State party is invited to inform the Committee about its plans for implementing within the coming reporting period, some or all of the remaining recommendations in the concluding observations.

Other issues

43. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CAT/C/CR/34/BHR, para. 9) that the State party consider making the declarations envisaged under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention.**

44. **The Committee invites the State party to ratify the core United Nations human rights treaties to which it is not yet party.**

45. **The State party is requested to disseminate widely the report submitted to the Committee and the present concluding observations, through official websites, the media and non-governmental organizations.**

46. **The State party is invited to submit its fourth periodic report by 12 May 2021. To that end, the Committee will transmit to the State party a list of issues prior to the submission of its periodic report. The State party’s replies to that list of issues will constitute its periodic report under article 19 of the Convention.**
