

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** BHR32705  
**Country:** Bahrain  
**Date:** 3 December 2007

Keywords: Bahrain – Demonstrations – Al Qal’a prison – Opposition political groups

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

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**Questions**

- 1. Please provide any information on demonstrations in June 1996 or on 15 April 2007 where people were arrested.**
- 2. Please provide any information on the Al Kalaa (Al Qal’a) prison and on its staffing.**
- 3. What is known about a group or organisation called “the United Quaternity” and its constituent organisations?**
- 4. Was there a large demonstration at Al Saif in Al Manama in 2002?**

**RESPONSE**

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- 4. Was there a large demonstration at Al Saif in Al Manama in 2002?**

The above four questions were emailed to Mr Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), on 30 November 2007 (RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja: ‘RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia’, 30 November – Attachment 1).

On 2 December 2007 Mr Al-Khawaja provided the following response:

I response to your message dated 30 November 2007, I would like to state the following:

1. In regard to demonstrations in June 1996, we do not keep a detailed record, however, I could confirm that 1996 witnessed escalation of demonstrations, arrests and arbitrary detention. That year was the peak of the wide unrest in Bahrain during 1994-1997.
2. In regard to the demonstrations in Bahrain in April 2007, I can confirm that there was demonstrations and unrest in deferent parts of Bahrain including April 15th, including in Demistan and Karzakkan, villages which are close to the Formula 1 Track. You may find more details in Alwasat daily Newspaper published on April 16th. At the following link:  
[http://www.alwasatnews.com/newspaper\\_pages/ViewDetails.aspx?news\\_id=40487&news\\_type=LOC&newspaper\\_date=04-16-2007](http://www.alwasatnews.com/newspaper_pages/ViewDetails.aspx?news_id=40487&news_type=LOC&newspaper_date=04-16-2007)
3. Al Kalaa (Al Qal'a) is the location of the Ministry of interior in the middle of the capital Manama, which consist of several blocks. It is also a place for detention and interrogation. It has various facilities including prison cells and the central medical center for detainees and prisoners. Many cases of torture and ill-treatment specially in the eighties and nineties took place in Al Qal'a.
4. The "United Quaternity" is a coalition of four opposition political societies, including Al-Wefaq National Islamic society which has 17 out of 40 seats in the current House of Representatives. The other three societies are a leftist group: the National Action Society, a pan-Arab: the National Democratic Gathering and the Islamic Action Society. The four societies formed the coalition as a reaction to the controversial 2002 constitution declared by the then new ruler.
5. Yes there was a large demonstration at Al Saif in Al Manama in late 2002 (Al-Khawaja, A. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 2 December – Attachment 2).

Researcher note: The webpage referred to by Mr Al-Khawaja is in Arabic. This has been accessed and is included in this response as Attachment 3 (Untranslated news article from *Al-Wasat*, dated 16 April 2007, accessed for *Research Response BHR32705* [http://www.alwasatnews.com/newspaper\\_pages/ViewDetails.aspx?news\\_id=40487&news\\_type=LOC&newspaper\\_date=04-16-2007](http://www.alwasatnews.com/newspaper_pages/ViewDetails.aspx?news_id=40487&news_type=LOC&newspaper_date=04-16-2007) – Accessed 3 December 2007 – Attachment 3).

### **List of Sources Consulted**

Mr Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, President, Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR)

### **List of Attachments**

1. RRT Research & Information 2007, Email to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja: 'RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 30 November.
2. Al-Khawaja, A. 2007, Email to RRT Research & Information: 'RE: Request for information from the Refugee Review Tribunal, Sydney, Australia', 2 December.
3. Untranslated news article from *Al-Wasat*, dated 16 April 2007, accessed for *Research Response BHR32705*

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