

Research Report
Model United Nations
Development Programme
XXV. Annual Session



**UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL AND PEACEBUILDING AFFAIRS
(UNDPPA)**

**ADDRESSING THE SECTARIAN TENSION
IN BAHRAIN**

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Basic Overview of the Issue

Sectarian division in Bahrain is an issue that has long been present, but a persisting agenda for centuries. This division is between the Sunni and Shia Muslim communities, both of which claim to be the rightful owner group of Bahrain, and sectarianism in the country mostly occurs due to the imbalances between both groups in terms of social, economic, and political matters. The inequality between Shia and Sunni groups is due to many factors such as the unbalanced populations and powers of these two religious groups and is taken into consideration generally as a political division instead of a religious division. Although the country's leadership is predominantly Sunni, the population of Shia Muslims in Bahrain is about 50-60% whereas Sunni Muslims only stay at 40-50% (Justin Gengler, 2011) which leads the country to be in a constant state of political unrest.

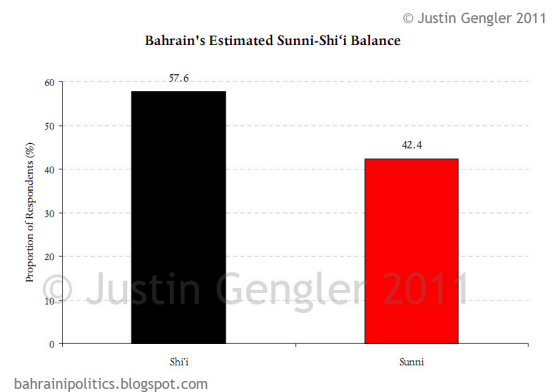


Image 1: Shia-Sunni population distribution in Bahrain (Justin Gengler)

Furthermore, this political imbalance is not the only aspect that is proof of systemic discrimination against Shia Muslims as Shias often face discrimination in matters of housing, employment, and many daily life matters due to the alleged discrimination of the Bahraini government. Additionally, the government of Bahrain is also alleged to have promoted rule and divide strategies in the country, deepening the sectarian division between Shia and Sunni groups to escape the hate that could come from the enraged Shia Muslim groups. Regional influence has become a great factor on this agenda with the influences of Iran and Saudi Arabia favoring Shia and Sunni groups respectively, and this has only deepened the mentioned divisions between religious groups.

With the recurring acts of injustice and discrimination acts towards the Shia population, the occurrence of a massive riot/protest chain was inescapable. With the rise of Arab Spring in the region in 2011, the Shia Muslim groups were influenced by it and the Bahraini Uprising against the monarchy began, advocating for pro-Shian political/electoral reforms, equal rights for everyone, and an end to systemic discrimination in the country. At first, these protests were peaceful but evolved into aggressive riots as protestors occupied



Pearl Roundabout. The Bahrain government had to intervene with military forces/help from the neighboring countries and its allies to suppress the movement. This led to many arrests, injuries, and even deaths of protestors, and the leaders of the opposition party in Bahrain were caught after the protests. After these riots ended, the protests continued as small bursts through the country and the government's narrative tried to justify their actions towards protestors. From then on, the sectarian divisions did not get resolved but deepened throughout the years with the presence of many other events just like the aforementioned protest chain.

Today, the inequality issues Shia Muslims face persist and though solution attempts have been tried over and over again, no conclusion has been reached and ways to soften class differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims living in Bahrain should be found.

Explanation of Important Terms

Sunni Islam

Sunni Islam is one of the two major branches of Islam, that consists of the majority of Islam's adherents. Muslims regard their denomination as the mainstream and traditionalist branch of Islam—as distinguished from the minority denomination, the Shi'ah. There are fewer Sunnis in Bahrain than there are Shia Muslims. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025)

Shi'i Islam

Shi'i Islam is one of the two major branches of Islam, consisting of a minority of Islam's adherents. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025) Shia Muslims are distinguished from the Sunni majority though there are more Shia Muslims in Bahrain than there are Sunnis in this agenda item's context.

Sectarianism/Sectarian Division

Sectarianism or sectarian division is the strong support for a religious or political group that you are a member of causing divisions and problems between groups, in this case, between Sunnis and Shias. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a series of pro-democracy movements in Arabic countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Bahrain. The events in these nations



generally began in the spring of 2011, which led to the name. The movements in Bahrain were usually led by Shia Muslims, advocating for equal rights and more. (Al Jazeera, 2020)

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The Gulf Cooperation Council is a political and economic alliance created between 6 countries in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. This council was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 1981. The GCC took place in suppressing protests led by Shia Muslim groups called the Bahraini uprising. (gcc-sg.org)

Constitutional Monarchy

A constitutional monarchy refers to a country with a king or queen whose power is controlled by a set of laws and basic principles outlined in a constitution. In this form of government, the monarch is not an absolute ruler as their power is limited by the constitution, which also places the law-making power in the legislature.

(ScienceDirect, 2018)

Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society

Al-Wefaq has been the without a doubt leading Shiah party as an opposition to the Sunni governance in Bahrain. As Al-Wefaq was alleged to support protests and comply with riots in Bahrain by the government, the party was banned from participating in any future elections and was dissolved which was seen as a huge damage to the democratic systems of Bahrain.

Martial Law

Martial law is the temporary rule of military authorities in a designated area in case of any emergency, outbreak, or riot just like in Bahrain. The Bahraini government declared martial law when riots by Shia Muslims took place. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025)

Political Islam

Islamism is a broad set of political ideologies that utilize and draw inspiration from Islamic symbols and traditions to pursue a sociopolitical objective. The aims and objectives of these movements vary widely. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025)



Economic Marginalization

The exclusion of minorities from the labor force which becomes politically and economically unsustainable for many states that are struggling to retain their legitimacy and strengthen their competitive potential in an increasingly global marketplace. (World Bank Blogs, 2017)

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council that calls for each UN Member State to undergo a peer review of its human rights records every 4.5 years. (OHCHR)

Detailed Background of the Issue

The sectarian divisions in Bahrain take place between two main religious groups: The Sunni Muslim population and the Shia Muslim population. This sectarian division of these two groups specifically is not anything new, especially in the Arabian Peninsula but the tension in Bahrain has some different aspects to it in terms of political, social, and economic inequalities between groups.

Although there is a clear Shia majority in the country, the rights of Shia Muslims are usually undermined. Shias often face systemic discrimination under topics like housing, employment, and political representation and usually are not given the same treatment as Sunnis in the country.

Furthermore, the system of governance in the country is led by a Sunni family, Al Khalifa, and is a monarchy. This creates problems in terms of democracy as well, making Shia communities feel underrepresented. In the past, unjustifiable acts of Sunnis towards Shias and the sectarian division have caused protests against the government to occur and violent conflicts to take place between the Shias and the Sunni monarchy.

Historical and Social Context of Sectarianism in Bahrain

The sectarian tensions in Bahrain are deeply rooted in the country's historical, social, and political landscape influenced by both internal forces and external pressure from regional states such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. The sectarian divide between the Shia majority and the Sunni minority, which has governed the country for over 200 years, comes from a combination of historical anger, colonial past, and recent political events in Bahrain.



Origins of Sectarian Divisions

The sectarian divide in Bahrain originates from the broader Sunni-Shia split in Islam, which dates back to the 7th century and is caused by the conflicts over leadership after Prophet Muhammad's death. Following the death of Prophet Muhammad, Bahrain experienced centuries of shifting rule, with many local powers born. From the 16th century, Bahrain was dominated by the Persian Safavids and later by the Ottoman Empire (LSE, 2020). Over the centuries, these divisions in Bahrain deepened as the ruling of the Al Khalifa family, of Sunni origin, established true monarchy and dominance over the Shia majority. This imbalance caused political and social tensions, as the Shia community expressed themselves as marginalized.

Colonial Legacy and Sectarianism

Under the colonial rule of Great Britain, Bahrain's political and social structures were heavily influenced by various policies that deepened sectarian tensions. Great Britain supported the Sunni ruling section to maintain stability and secure its strategic interests in the area. This approach and actions taken by Great Britain not only deepened Sunni dominance over the Shia population but also heightened the anger of Shia Muslims as the colonial power of Great Britain disregarded the Shia majority's calls for equal rights and representation. For example, the British allowed the ruling Sunni family to maintain control while ignoring Shia calls for better political representation.

Shifts in Power Post-Independence/British Rule

After gaining independence in 1971, Bahrain's political structure was formalized under Sunni control, with the ruling of the Al Khalifa family. The establishment of the National Action Charter in 2001 promised reforms and greater inclusivity, but many Shia citizens felt the changes were insufficient as political parties like Al-Wefaq faced repression, which contradicted the entirety of the charter. These unresolved issues have caused continued political unrest and deepened sectarian divides, especially after the Bahraini Uprising in 2011.

The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring had a significant impact on the Bahraini Uprising, inspiring widespread protests in 2011. Like many nations in the area, the Bahraini government



saw its citizens demanding political reforms, greater freedoms, and equality. The Shia majority, already frustrated by the ongoing political and economic marginalization, took the problem to protests, calling for democratic change. The government's violent responses to these protests, along with support from the GCC and Saudi Arabia escalated tensions.

Economic Disparities and Social Inequality

Economic inequality of Shia communities in Bahrain is another dimension of the sectarian divide as economic resources and wealth are not equally distributed amongst the Sunni and Shia populations. While the Sunni section dominates the most profitable sectors, Shia communities and people often struggle with poverty, unemployment, and inadequate access to resources. These reasons for the economic marginalization of Shia often become the main reasons for many protests and demonstrations.

Economic Marginalization of Shia

Economic marginalization remains one of the key factors for the anger of Bahrain's Shia community, who often find themselves excluded from profitable sectors such as oil extraction and finance. While the Sunni elite group controls most of the upper branches of business and government, Shia citizens face systemic discrimination by Sunnis in such opportunities. Additionally, public sector jobs, which are one of the most significant portions of Bahrain's overall workforce, are overwhelmingly dominated by Sunni citizens, creating a sense of systemic bias for the Shia majority.

Impact of Economic Inequality on Social Stability

The economic inequality mentioned in the previous section has crucial effects on social instability in the country. Such inequality has fueled resentment and unrest, with economic inequalities often making up the leading reasons for protests and riots in Bahrain. Many Shia communities view their exclusion from economic and social opportunities as an



Image 2: Clear division between rural and urban areas in Bahrain (upda.gov)

attempt by the government to weaken their political representation in the country.

Efforts to Address Economic Disparities



Although the Bahraini government has launched various initiatives to promote economic development and diversification, such as the National Action Charter, which has transformed the country from an emirate to a constitutional monarchy, leading to a slightly more modern and democratic system, these efforts have done little to address the economic differences between Sunni and Shia citizens. Programs/initiatives like the National Action Charter often either fail to reach Shia-majority areas in Bahrain or just stay on paper due to a lack of implementation nationwide. The lack of these efforts undermines any attempt which targets reducing sectarian tensions or promoting social harmony.

Political Repression

Human rights violations in Bahrain have become a recurring problem for the past decades, especially under the topic of the government's efforts to suppress the Shia majority/opposition and maintain Sunni dominance. These human rights violations are generally targeted toward Shia activists, opposition leaders, and protestors, creating widespread international condemnation from many human rights organizations like the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Crackdown on Protests

In general, Bahrain adopted violent crackdown policies against Shia protests in the country, such as responding to citizens with brute force, military attacks, and imposing martial law, especially in the 2011 Bahraini Uprising. This behavior along with the use of security forces, live ammunition, and tear gases was directly seen as a



Image 3: Bahrain 2011 protests, Arab Spring (npr.org)

human rights violation by International Amnesty and The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Inconsistent arrests, torture, and unlawful detentions against protestors became a common thing in Bahrain and these were disproportionately targeted at Shia activists and opposition leaders. Human rights organizations have condemned these actions by Bahrain and have brought severe



international criticism to the country.

Human Rights Violations

Even over a decade after the 2011 uprising in Bahrain, the country still represses the political representation of Shia Muslim groups. Political opposition to the Sunni monarchy has met consequences such as the imprisonment of leaders of such opposition groups, abolishment of citizenships, and even banning/dissolving of the political parties as a whole. Media censorship and surveillance over daily life activities have mostly limited the freedom of expression, with activists mainly getting targeted. The government's continued repression has made it nearly impossible for Shia representation to function properly. In addition, in response to the reaction coming from international parties over how Bahrain handled the 2011 protests, Bahrain established the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to investigate the alleged human rights violations. The BICI report has shown the government's excessive use of force during the suppression and recommended various reforms to address the underlying issue of brute force usage and sectarian divisions between the Sunni and Shia populations. However, the government has not been effective in implementing these recommendations, and many violations of human rights continue to be undebated.

Regional and International Influences

Bahrain's sectarian tensions are not only an inner problem of the country but also affect the regional and international dimensions as well. Its neighboring countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia have great roles in influencing both Shia and Sunni sides, respectively, in protests and other fields as well. These powers take key roles in shaping this agenda.

Saudi and GCC Support for the Sunni Monarchy

The involvement of Saudi Arabia and other GCC nations in Bahrain's 2011 uprising highlighted the broader regional aspects of the conflict. With Saudi Arabia's fear of a possible Shia-led government in Bahrain aligned with Iran, Saudi Arabia deployed troops under the GCC to support the Sunni monarchy system in the region. This important intervention in the



Image 3: A map showing Member States of the GCC (Britannica.com)



inner conflict Bahrain has experienced highlights the geopolitical matters of Bahrain's sectarian tensions and demonstrates Bahrain's dependence on external Sunni support for maintaining its power.

Iran's Influence on Shia Movements

The Bahraini government often accuses Iran of backing Shia opposition groups as a part of its broader strategy to hold more importance in the region and expand Shia influence in the region. Although there is no conclusive evidence to prove direct Iranian involvement, the narrative of Iranian influence has deemed the government's accusations "correct" according to the Sunni monarchy, and quote-on-quote justified the government's heavy-handed measures against Shia activists. These accusations have overall internationalized the sectarian conflicts in Bahrain and turned the country into a proxy war ground for Sunni-Shia rivalries.

Western Countries' Stance

Western nations, especially the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom have various important military and strategic interests on Bahraini land, such as the USA's 5th Fleet Naval base which is vital for maintaining security in the Persian Gulf and overseeing maritime routes, due to its geopolitical location near the Persian Gulf. Due to these interests, the USA and the UK along with some other Western states have remained rather silent on human rights violations of Bahrain and political repressions of Shia opposition parties, only expressing their concern for such issues. This muted response collected criticism internationally and although these nations have called upon some reforms, they remained rather insufficient.

Major Parties Involved

The Kingdom of Bahrain

Bahrain's political landscape is heavily influenced by the sectarian tensions between Sunni and Shia groups as of now. Bahrain has been Sunni-governed by the Al Khalifa family for more than 240 years now and it is one of the biggest actors of sectarian divisions in the country because of its massive Shia majority of 60-70% and Sunni minority. Due to this difference in population, Shia Muslims also think they deserve a place in representing



Bahrain and should be in power instead of Sunnis, so the division is more political than it is religious. This ongoing disagreement since the 1970s has led to many key events such as the 2011 Bahraini Uprising influenced by the Arab Spring, and other protests calling for greater political representation and reform. The Bahraini government has usually suppressed these protests in collaboration with the GCC and other external forces. Furthermore, the Bahraini government also dissolved and banned opposition parties in the country which also escalated tensions further. Despite many attempts to transform the country, and implement reforms, Bahrain currently stays in status quo.

Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society

Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society is the largest and most prominent opposition group in Bahrain. From 2006 to 2011, the party was by far the single largest party in the Bahraini parliament, with 18 representatives in the 40-member assembly. Al-Wefaq advocates for democratic reforms, reinstatement of opposition parties in the parliament, political inclusion, and overall greater representation for Shia communities. The group has repeatedly called for constitutional changes to reduce the monarchy's control over the country and implement a more democratic political system for the good of Shia populations. Al-Wefaq was the party the government would talk with in the past in cases of a national dialogue or to bring solutions to the table to solve the sectarian division problem in the country. However, after its undeniable role in the 2011 Uprising and other protests, the party's connections with the government worsened and eventually, the party was ordered by the government to dissolve due to the accusations that the organization was inciting violence, promoting sectarianism, and creating an environment conducive to terrorism.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is one of the key actors taking a role in sectarian divisions in the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia itself has a government led by Sunnis and promotes Sunni activity in the region as a whole. This act is mainly correlated with two main reasons: trying to prevent any Shia uprising influenced by the neighboring countries in Saudi Arabia and promoting Sunni governance in the Arabian Peninsula. Additionally, Saudi Arabia along with other countries in the GCC has sent military forces to Bahrain to assist the government in quelling the Shia-led protests. Saudi Arabia has continued to provide political and military support to the Bahraini government due to Sunnis trying to prevent any Shia uprising and



Sunnis' aim of promoting Sunni governance in the Arabian Peninsula. Finally, Saudi Arabia sees the regional influence of Bahrain as crucial in preventing the spread of Iranian influence in the Gulf, particularly among the Shia population. Finally, Iran's influence in the region, particularly in promoting Shia interests and opposing Sunni-led monarchies, has made Bahrain's conflict a part of the larger Sunni-Shia rivalry in the Gulf.

The Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran, just like Saudi Arabia, is also a key party taking a role in sectarian divisions in the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula. Iran has a 90-95% Shia majority in the country (US Department of State, 2022) and naturally, the government is Shia as well, promoting Shia-governed systems for all Member States in the Arabian Peninsula. The promotion of such governance structures is closely linked to reasons similar to those held by Saudi Arabia: stopping the sectarian divisions mainly to favor Shia Muslims and influence other Shia populations in other countries to stand up for their rights to start an uprising. In addition, the Iranian government is also alleged to be directly promoting and supporting Shia protests in Bahrain. While the support from the Iranian government to Shia protests in Bahrain is without a doubt present, the government is denying accountability for physically interfering with the inner politics of Bahrain such as providing military support to riots. Finally, Iran's influence in the region, particularly in promoting Shia interests and opposing Sunni-led monarchies, has made Bahrain's conflict a part of the larger Sunni-Shia rivalry in the Gulf.

The United States of America (USA)

The USA has long-standing military and strategic interests in Bahrain due to its location in the Persian Gulf, including its 5th Fleet Naval base which is vital for maintaining security in the Persian Gulf and overseeing maritime routes. Due to this strategic interest, the USA has often sided with the Sunni monarchy in exchange for regional security and favor for the country. Although the USA has criticized the Bahraini government for its human rights violations, and recommended political reforms and human rights improvements, it mainly followed a balanced path to keep good relations with the Sunni monarchy to keep their military interests protected. As an answer for this, the USA has faced strong criticism from many human rights organizations for not keeping an unbiased view towards Bahrain and failing to take stronger actions against suppressing opposing political groups and other human rights violations.



The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)

The UK maintains strong historical and political ties with Bahrain as it played a significant role in the country's history as a colonial power. Due to this historical tie between the two nations and Bahrain's significant geopolitical location, the UK has a great presence of British military forces in the country and it has helped moderate Bahrain's regional influence. Even though the UK has expressed its concerns over human rights violations in Bahrain, the country tries to maintain good relations with the Sunni monarchy just like the USA to keep its military interests protected. Because of this, the UK also received backlash from various human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, for not keeping an unbiased view of Bahrain and failing to take stronger actions against suppressing opposing political groups and other human rights violations.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The GCC is a regional, intergovernmental, political, and economic union created between 6 member nations: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar. These 6 countries help each other on various matters such as economy, military, and politics. The GCC, especially Saudi Arabia, plays an important role in supporting Bahrain's current stance on sectarian issues such as suppressing protests and disabling opposition parties. The GCC's regional economic and military cooperation has helped ensure Bahrain's stability, though it also adds to the sectarian tension by positioning itself against Iranian influence and supporting Sunni-led governments. Additionally, all six countries of the GCC are Sunni monarchies, which further unites them for one big cause.

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The UNHRC is directly relevant to the issue of sectarian tensions in Bahrain in many ways. The UNHRC is tasked with regularly monitoring human rights violations around the world with various bodies, the main one being the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) system. The UNHRC has addressed the crackdown on protests, arbitrary arrests, torture, and suppression of political rights in Bahrain, with this, the UNHRC has given the Bahraini government recommendations aimed at improving political freedoms, freedom of expression, and ensuring better treatment of minority groups, such as the Shia population. Furthermore, various bodies such as the UPR have provided Bahrain with reviews and expressed their concerns about human rights violations. Even though all recommendations and periodic



reviews remained insufficient, they hold a significant role in addressing the issue in Bahrain.

Chronology of Important Events

Date	Description of Event
1781	The Al Khalifa family, a Sunni Dynasty, established control over Bahrain.
August 15, 1971	Bahrain gained independence from the UK.
1994	Shia populations began to lead protests under reasons like equal rights.
1999	King Hamad bin Isa ascended to the throne and allowed political freedoms for Shia, which were not enough.
February 14, 2011	The Shia population was inspired by the Arab Spring and started the Bahraini Uprising.
February 17, 2011	Protestors occupied Pearl Roundabout, demanding the fall of the monarchy.
March 14, 2011	The GCC sent troops to Bahrain to help suppress the protests.
March 16, 2011	The Bahraini government declared martial law.



2011-2025	With the uncooperative actions of the Bahraini government and the banning of Al-Wefaq, sectarian tensions kept deepening.
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Relevant International Documents

- Adopted by the General Assembly at its 183rd plenary meeting, 10 December 1948
(A/RES/217(III))
- Adopted by the General Assembly at its 1496th plenary meeting, 19 December 1966,
(A/RES/2200A(XXI))
- Adopted by the General Assembly at its 92nd plenary meeting, 18 December 1992,
(A/RES/47/135)
- Geneva Convention, 22 August 1864.

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Since 2006, the UPR system under the control of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) calls upon each UN Member State to undergo a series of reviews of its human rights records every 4.5 years and Bahrain is no exception. Bahrain has undergone this periodic review system for 4 times and has been repeatedly called on to respect human rights. In 2008, Bahrain was under review for general human rights situation, freedom of expression, and judicial independence. In 2012, the agenda was post-2011 unrest and the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry recommendations. Every time, a problem was found and necessary recommendations were made for the government of Bahrain to implement. Even though some of them were implemented, those recommendations remained insufficient and the sectarian divisions persisted.

In 2001, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who is famously known for his actions to end the sectarian divisions in Bahrain and suppress the uprising and protests with peace, ratified the National Action Charter of Bahrain. The charter transformed the country from an emirate to a constitutional monarchy, leading to a slightly more modern and democratic system. The



charter also repealed the 1974 State Security Law, released many political prisoners who were mainly Shia, emphasized the united identity of Bahrain, tried to unite Shia and Sunni Muslims under one roof, and recreated the council of representatives to politically represent Shias more. Though this was an excellent charter for addressing sectarian divisions between two groups, it lacked implementation so did not fully resolve the problem.

Lastly, in 2013, the Bahraini government tried to initiate national dialogue between the government and the opposition parties to address sectarian tensions, create mechanisms for fairer political representation in Shia-majority areas, amend the electoral system to ensure fair representation for all citizens and investigate human rights abuses that occurred during the government's crackdown on protests. The opposition party, Al-Wefaq, was rather optimistic about any chance of the mentioned reforms happening in Bahrain and therefore participated in the dialogue in February but towards mid-2013, the opposition party claimed the intentions of the government were unclear and they had escalated crackdowns on protests during dialogue, so Al-Wefaq along with other parties withdrew from the dialogue. The government tried to push its efforts for a united Bahrain population, but needless to say, the National Dialogue failed miserably.

Solution Alternatives

One of the core problems of the sectarian divisions in Bahrain is the lack of political representation for the Shia majority in the country. Due to the political bans imposed by the government that opposition parties today face, there is near to no possibility of reaching a consensus between the parties. For this reason, solution alternatives for the Bahraini government to reinstate the activity of political parties such as Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society or National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad) may be presented.

After a possible democratic reform like the one mentioned above, a renewed and more inclusive national dialogue with representatives from relevant parties to rebuild trust between communities and religious groups in Bahrain can be retried. For this kind of dialogue program to not fail like the 2013 National Dialogue, further reassurance from the Bahraini government may be taken to not initiate contradicting actions such as initiating violent crackdowns on protests while maintaining peace talks.

Furthermore, a less common approach may be to lower tensions between neighboring



countries to Bahrain, by setting international dialogue between opposing parties such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, to stop Shia-Sunni rivalries. This would help with Bahrain's inner problems, as both countries influence two major groups in Bahrain to favor themselves, creating a proxy war inside the country. This action not only deepens the sectarian divisions between the Sunni and Shia groups but also raises tensions in the Arabian Peninsula, so this solution approach may help reach an international consensus between Shia and Sunni-governed countries to resolve the problem in Bahrain and the Arabian Peninsula.

Useful Links

Amnesty International - Bahrain

<https://amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/bahrain/>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - Bahrain

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/bahrain>

Universal Periodic Review - Bahrain

<https://upr-info.org/en/review/bahrain>

Human Rights Watch - Bahrain

<https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/north-africa/bahrain>

Britannica - Bahrain

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Bahrain>

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