

## **Shadow report (spotlight)**

### **About the Voluntary National Report of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 – Bahrain**

**July 2023**

#### **Report preparation:**

**The report was prepared by the Arab Network of NGOs for Development.**

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#### **Background on the National Voluntary Shadow Report.**

The Kingdom of Bahrain is located on an archipelago of islands in the Arabian Gulf off the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia) and the population is estimated in 2022 at 1,504,365 inhabitants with a land area of 786.5 square kilometers.(1)

Bahrain will submit its voluntary report to the High-Level Political Forum to be held at the United Nations - New York in July 2023. Bahrain submitted its first Voluntary National Report VNR in 2015, followed by follow-up reports on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. Civil society has not had the privilege of participating actively in the preparation of this report as recommended by the United Nations or as aspired to by an active civil society. The efforts made by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, which was introduced by His Majesty the King in the new Cabinet line-up, suggests that this Ministry coordinates efforts between ministries and government agencies to prepare the VNR as well as follow-up Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Study Centre, which was commissioned by the Ministry to prepare the VNR, held an introductory meeting with some relevant civil society institutions in relation to the Sustainable Development Report.

## **OVERVIEW**

In order to promote renewable energy (mainly the uses of solar and wind to produce electricity), as well as to begin reducing carbon levels to reach carbon neutrality until 2060 the Cabinet has announced a statement to adopt a programme for this purpose. But the government has not taken real practical steps to implement such programs, which require huge investments, nor has it encouraged citizens to take advantage of solar energy. The government did not provide support programs to citizens for this purpose.

With regard to digital technology, especially its uses in daily life to facilitate government services for citizens, transactions and remittances, and promote the use of social media to promote freedom of opinion and expression, the government has re-established strategic partnerships with leading global cloud companies. The Information and eGovernment Authority has also signed a memorandum of understanding with financial companies specialized in developing innovative solutions for electronic financial payment processes and the management of payments and remittances through multiple channels. However, some international organizations have accused Bahrain of being one of the countries that used Israeli spyware (Pegasus) to spy on political opponents and perhaps some residents, and Bahrain has been exposed to some legal problems in this regard in some countries.

Bahrain held its parliamentary elections in November 2022 for the next four-year cycle, which is an indication of relative stability in the political situation in the country.

In the last three years after the Coronavirus pandemic hit the world, the effects of this epidemic on the economic and social situation have been reflected, which is difficult or in order to move forward in the commitment to implement the SDGs. Despite the great efforts made by the Government of Bahrain to reduce the effects of the pandemic, Bahrain, like the rest of the world, has been a victim of this pandemic, with the number of deaths (1,564) at 0.22%. Infections were (721,961) (2), or 41% of the population (1,504,365). Bahrain is one of the countries where the vaccination rate of the population exceeds 90%, however, the pandemic has caused damage to the national economy and the bankruptcy of some companies, especially small and medium-sized companies. The government has launched financial packages worth more than BD 4.5 billion to support the local economy with its various components as a response to the challenges of the Corona pandemic.

This, added to other global economic developments linked to the pandemic, most notably inflation, high prices of food and medicine, the disruption of supply chains, as well as the impact of political and economic conditions, high public debt, human rights observations and Bahrain's backwardness in many global indicators such as the Corruption Perceptions Index Issued by Transparency International or the Press Freedom Index and recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council, are all factors that have slowed economic growth and thus affected the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Bahrain introduced as a government priority in 2018 after the rapid rise of public debt as a result of a worsening annual budget deficit. As a result, three Gulf Arab states intervened with a USD 10 billion bailout in exchange for the government gradually reducing the deficit until reaching the fiscal balance in 2022. Due to the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic, the initial date for reaching fiscal balance of 2024 has been delayed. Bahrain has been unable to reach the fiscal balance in its budget since 2020 despite the rise in oil prices in 2022, but the deficit has continued due to several reasons, including the high costs of security and military budgets. The high cost of public debt of BD 737 million (equivalent to USD 2 billion) for a public debt volume of BD 17 billion as of 2021 (3) (equivalent to USD 45 billion or USD 130% of GDP of USD 34.72 billion (4)). In order for the government to fulfill its commitments, it imposed a 10% VAT, raised a range of fees, reduced some support budgets, and halted the annual increase for retirees. Government policies have been widely criticized, affecting low- and middle-income people without affecting large landlords and capitalists, who continue to make their profits without paying any taxes on them or their wealth.

## **1.First objective: poverty eradication**

As the definition of poverty begins, according to the United Nations, poverty is measured by "the number of people living below the international poverty line (1.25 dollars). Officially, by this definition, none of Bahrain's

residents live below this line, the UN has raised this line successively to (2 dollars) - although it is said not to apply to Bahrain. But what was officially calculated for the relative poverty line is consistent with this, which was attributed to people living below 70 dinars per month (at or above 1.8 dinars per day). The officials in Bahrain explained that this situation has been restored with a social security program that is granted to large categories of citizens, which according to the statistics of the Ministry of Social Development reached 128,200 thousand Bahraini families. This support has ensured that the beneficiaries go above the relative poverty line.

In a statement issued by the Secretary General of ESCWA, Ms. Rola Dashti, pointed to a report issued by the ESCWA on the presence of 3.3 million poor in the Gulf countries, the statement said that Bahrain ranks third among the Gulf countries with a percentage of poor 7.5 Per cent. She also noted that the level and distribution of income or expenditure among the population were the main factors contributing to poverty rates. The richest 10% of citizens spend more than 16 times as much as the poorest 10% in some Gulf countries. Poverty has affected one in seven citizens in Saudi Arabia, one in ten in Oman and one in 13 in Bahrain, according to the ESCWA data. (5)

In 2018, Bahrain participated in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York, to review the Kingdom's voluntary report on the SDGs. Mr. Mohammed Al Mutawa, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Chairman of the National Information Committee, said that the Kingdom of Bahrain has been able to achieve many achievements in the field of sustainable development. After the government has included the Sustainable Development Goals in the government program as a plan of action for the government, and that these goals are implemented through partnership with the private sector, civil society and academic bodies, where 78% Goals are included in the government program.

Regarding a statement from the Minister of Social Development on the standard of living of a family of 6 for 336 dinars per month, Mr. Al Mutawa responded widely, with some members of Bahrain's parliament and many citizens and activists saying the statement was a provocation to the suffering of the Bahraini family. The minister relied on a study prepared in 2010 and announced by the former minister in 2011 and many activists believe that the cost of living since that date until 2023 should not be less than 700 dinars per month for the same size of family, taking into account the levels of inflation during the past ten years and the imposition of a value-added tax of 10% and its direct impact on the cost of living. In its session on 6 March 2023, the parliament went to question the Minister of Development and a committee was constituted to investigate what the Minister said in order to ascertain the acceptable standard cost of living for a family of 6.

Social assistance benefits nearly 15,000 families with a minimum of 70 dinars per person per month, the ministry said 120 Dinars for husband and wife, up 25 dinars per family member «sons» at a cost of more than 19 million dinars in 2015. She pointed to the amendment of the minimum limits under Law No. 32 of 2021 to spend 77 dinars per capita, 132 dinars for the family consisting of a couple and 28 dinars for each member of the family, which is more than that.

Since 1972, the Ministry of Social Development has provided financial assistance to poor families, and the Ministry grants assistance to groups that demonstrate through social research that there is no sufficient source of income on which to rely for their livelihood. This includes the categories of family, widow, divorced, abandoned, elderly, family of the incarcerated, the unemployed, the disabled, unmarried girl, boy, and the orphan. The number of families receiving social security assistance reached 15 thousand families, according to the ministry's statement to the House of Representatives in June 2023, and the number of beneficiaries of financial support for low-income people reached 128.2 thousand families. The number of beneficiaries of the disability allowance 12.943 thousand people, and the number of beneficiaries of meat support compensation 174.937 thousand families.(6)

There are a number of projects and programmes in support of the cause of combating poverty, drawing on the expertise of the World Bank in the development and structuring of the social safety net and the development of social assistance systems. Based on the development of standards that clarify the minimum requirements for living

life in the Kingdom of Bahrain, based on the results of the statistical survey carried out by the Information and eGovernment Authority. The ministry has taken a number of steps to develop needy families into productive families such as the National Project to Develop and Support Productive Families by recruiting and developing their talents to increase their sources of income. It also provided, through the Family Bank, micro-loans to low-income groups without bank guarantees to establish income-generating projects. The government has said in more than one website that support for families will be legalised. Eradicating or reducing poverty requires raising the standard of living of those below the poverty line in the current situation, families and individuals. This requires a fight against unemployment that has reached unprecedented levels as it will later respond and requires that it siphon off jobs and create new jobs in the public and private sectors. This requires amendments to the legislation and policies adopted by the Government of Bahrain that encourage the uncontrolled flow of foreign workers.

Due to the persistent deficits in the general budget of the state, If the government implements its 2023 – 2024 austerity budget, it will increase the number of families whose monthly income will decline, exposing them to need and stability in poverty levels that the government has worked to eliminate.

## **2.Fifth Goal: Gender Equality.**

There are 354,442 women in Bahrain, or 49% of Bahrainis, and the Bahraini constitution equates men and women with many rights, including elections, whether by nomination or voting. However, many aspects of the legislation have not yet been purified from discrimination and harmonized with the CEDAW Convention - 21 Years after the State ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2002.

To date, the state has not adopted mechanisms to monitor discrimination in laws and practices in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It has not revoked its reservations to articles 2 (c), 5 (a), 9-(2), 15 and 16 of the Convention, which constitute an obstacle to the implementation of the Convention as a whole. Despite the successful experiences of countries with similar cultural backgrounds and legal systems, where national legislation has been successfully brought into line with the Convention.

National legislation also does not contain explicit measures to stop discrimination against women, whether direct or indirect, in the public and private spheres, in the political, economic or social sphere, and intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance to articles 1 and 2 of the CEDAW (7). Official versions have also come to replace the term "equality" with the term "balance" in their reports.

Another legislative discrimination occurred in 2018, according to which a large number of women were deprived of the exercise of their civil rights stipulated in the Constitution and international conventions and treaties ratified by the state. Most notably, the International Covenant on Civil Rights, through the application of Article (43)(8) of the Law of Associations, as amended by Law No. (36) of 2018, the amendment provides for " A member of the Board of Directors is required to enjoy all his civil and political rights, and by virtue of this amendment", however all members of civil society associations have been deprived. Those who were previously members of political associations that were dissolved by judicial rulings, weren't allowed to run for public elections, and their contribution to voting and participating in public activities has been limited, and this constitutes a violation of the rights of active membership and the deprivation of an inherent right. An estimated 3,838 members, including 667 women candidates and candidates for elections to the Civil Society Organizations Board of Directors are currently subject to a security audit, which has led to a reluctance to run.

On the other hand, there has been a positive legislative development with regard to the punishment of rape in the Bahraini Penal Code, following the vigorous efforts of the women's movement and civil society. On 9 May 2023, the

House of Representatives voted to repeal section 353 of the Bahraini Penal Code of 1976, under which rapists were exempt from prosecution if they married their victims. It remains to complete the rest of the legislative and enforcement steps, as well as to consider the rest of the articles of this law, such as Article 344 on the punishment of a female without her consent and Article 345. To encourage violence against young girls and other material that needs to be seriously revised.

In its third periodic report to the State, the CEDAW Committee recommended in its concluding observations that "the Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain should be functioning. To strengthen its cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular by supporting women civil society groups and non-governmental organizations. However, the concrete reality is far from the substance of these recommendations and the paragraphs of the official report. The new methodology is completely distinct from the beginnings of the establishment of the Council and limits cooperation in participating in some training activities and events of Bahraini Women's Day, and urged civil society to perform its awareness tasks.

### **Protection from Domestic Violence Act No. 17 of 2015**

Despite the promulgation of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in 2015, after a vigorous follow-up from the CEDAW Committee since 2008, the law needs a lot of amendments, the most important of which is the definition of violence in the first article, as it is free from the threat of violence, which violates the contents of international conventions. Most notably the Universal Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1933, and the 1995 report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the law also does not cover violence in the public space, nor does it cover non-Bahraini women. There are also gaps in protection orders, effective punishment for perpetrators of violent crimes, and disregard for marital rape and its punishment. It calls on the concerned voluntary bodies working in the field of combating domestic violence to activate the contents of the national strategy to protect women from violence, and to enable them to access the database (TCTAF) launched by the Supreme Council for Women. With the element of confidentiality.

### **Bahraini nationality law 1963**

The law requires the father to be Bahraini in order for the child to acquire Bahraini nationality (9), and therefore Bahrain has infringed article (9) (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Despite all the efforts made by civil society since 2005, the citizenship law is still in place, despite the many attempts that have been presented to the legislative authority, and its view "it is contrary to the sovereignty of the state. Equality is already achieved by "equalizing the children of Bahraini women married to non-Bahrainis with Bahraini children to the rest of the population regarding all services provided to citizens in terms of health and education".

The Bahraini Women's Union has monitored 444 cases affected by the law and issued a documentary study on the right of the Bahraini mother to grant her nationality to her children, which showed the violation of the family's unity. An adult is bound by a contract of employment, in addition to being deprived of the exercise of his political, social and economic rights. Many Bahraini mothers suffer from many problems as a result of the deprivation of their children from acquiring Bahraini nationality, especially in cases where the foreign husband dies, or when he releases and abandons it while she is still residing in Bahrain. They are strangers in a country where they were born, they feel a sense of belonging, but they cannot exercise their economic and political rights. There is also concern that children of Bahraini mothers married to foreigners may become stateless if the foreign spouse's legislation does not enshrine the right to blood for the father, or the father is stateless.

### **Bahraini family law 2017**

Law No. 19 of 2017, which contains many shortcomings and provisions that contradict the Convention, including the age of marriage, and the ability of a man to prevent his wife from working. There are many biases in the issue of divorce, custody and the ability of women to make decisions concerning them, and the requirement to review the law and include best practices is a key requirement for the women's movement and many interested people. Reviewing and reforming the judicial system in the Sharia courts, especially with regard to the execution of sentences.

### **Political and public participation of women:**

The participation of Bahraini women in political and public life remains below ambition, and amendments to the Law on the Exercise of Political Rights in 2006 and 2018 have contributed to the imposition of further restrictions on the right of nomination to the House of Representatives where the category "The de facto leaders and members of political societies dissolved by final judgment are all pernicious in damaging or disrupting the course of constitutional or parliamentary life to the categories prohibited from running for the House of Representatives. Women who are included under this classification and without specific charges are denied the right to stand for election, estimated at more than 667 women, to exercise their constitutional right, which is a fundamental pillar of democratic action. During the last elections held in 2022, the names of large numbers of citizens who did not vote in the 2018 elections were written off, which significantly reduced the electoral bloc, including women.

The Global Gender Gap Report for 2022 continues to indicate a low ranking for the Kingdom globally with an index of 0.63 (131 out of 156 countries). Although the Bahrain Global Gender Gap Index has fluctuated significantly in recent years. However, it tends to increase over the 2007-2022 period ending at 0.63 in 2022 (10). Weakness in the political empowerment index (0.066) and in the order 143. It is necessary to review and correct negative legislation towards increasing the political empowerment of women, the most important of which is to remove restrictions on the law of the exercise of political rights and to adopt the principle of quota, which is not approved by the official side and is contrary to the Constitution from his point of view. While we emphasize the need to enact a law to fortify the quota system in the three executive, legislative, judicial and other authorities until the culture of equality in society is established.

In front of all these observations, we see that there is a delay in reviewing and purifying discriminatory legislation against women that does not comply with the UN conventions adopted and ratified by Bahrain, such as the CEDAW Convention. These include the Bahraini Nationality Law, the Family Law, and the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence.

### **3.Sixth Goal: Clean Water and Hygiene.**

The Constitution of Bahrain (2002 in section 11) states that "all natural resources and all their resources are the property of the state, based on conservation and proper investment, taking into account the requirements of state security and national economy." Bahrain has a number of decrees, laws and regulations enacted to regulate and control water use in various consuming sectors as well as to preserve groundwater resources from salinity and depletion. However, these laws are not standardized under a comprehensive water law. There are ten laws, decrees or procedures.

Water security in Bahrain is an important and critical issue and the country is at risk as a result of excessive consumption of individuals, institutions and companies, which affected the loss of most artesian wells. Thus, artesian wells cannot be relied upon as these are scarce, and do not cover even 30% of daily use. Rainfall rates are poor in Bahrain (80 mm/year), and evaporation is high due to the hot climate and arid lands. All of this resulted in a scarcity in surface waters. Bahrain needs high-level technical management if we consider population growth above global natural rates (4.7%), Bahrain's annual groundwater consumption is 100 million cubic metres. Bahrain relies mainly on desalination equivalent to 60% to 70% of daily consumption.

The total desalination capacity is around 846,000 cubic metres/day or just under 309 million cubic metres per year as in 2017(11).

Given the importance of water in Bahrain due to its scarcity, Bahrain has made significant progress in water sector management. Royal Decree No. 36/2009 on the amendments of some of the provisions of Decree No. 7/1982 on the establishment of the Water Resources Council and its responsibilities: the formulation of public policies and strategies for the country's water resources, Including the development of appropriate institutional and legislative frameworks, coordination of government water policies, ensuring the integration of these policies, following up the implementation of water policies and plans and setting priorities for the implementation of developed strategies and programmes. The Water Resources Council is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and is a member of a group of ministers and is tasked to the application of integrated water resources management.

Bahrain has worked to regulate the water sector, which could expose it in the future to investor exploitation conditions, making it difficult for citizens and residents to use water according to actual needs.

With regard to the efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain towards the issue of water sustainability, Dr. Waleed Zubari (12) "Given the water challenges facing the Kingdom of Bahrain in terms of water resources and financial resources on the one hand, and the high population density, changing consumption patterns and water requirements of the growing sectors on the other hand - it can be said that the Kingdom has achieved many achievements in the face of these challenges. If we use the overall framework of the sixth SDG as a reference in assessing these efforts, we will find that the objective of this goal is to ensure access to drinking water and sanitation for all by 2030 (targets 1 And 2), both of which were achieved by the Kingdom decades ago, the Kingdom is classified as a developed country in this field at the global level". Confirmed dr. Zubari stressed the importance of the role of civil society institutions in spreading water awareness to achieve water sustainability and meet the challenges facing the water sector in Bahrain, reviewing the current water situation and the nature of water sources and uses. One of the most important challenges facing Bahrain in the field of water is the high desalination costs and the loss of desalinated water, both at the level of supply and represented by leaks, or at the level of use, whether individual or industrial and agricultural.

The overexploitation of groundwater and seaborne operations have led to the reclamation of water bodies and their conversion into land areas. As a direct result saltwater bodies (sea water and brackish water lurking in the sediment-or sedentary) migrated into the aquifer. This has resulted in continued salinization and deterioration of groundwater quality, and this has negatively reflected on opportunities for groundwater-based surface agriculture, also turning into scarcity in the local vegetable-based food basket.

## **6.Goal Eight: Decent Work and Economic Growth.**

On the sidelines of the 2010 Arab Labour Organization conference held in Bahrain, the decent work programme was signed and sponsored by the International Labour Organization by the three production parties, the Government, and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions. However, the events that took place in Bahrain in 2011 and the subsequent impact on the entire institutions of civil society associations. The implementation of this pilot programme, which was drafted by the International Labour Organization, was postponed and it was hoped that a time plan would be drawn up to begin it, through which many of the laws and practices demanded by workers through their unions can be amended, such as establishing a minimum wage, providing social protection for all workers including migrant workers, and a healthy working environment. Fair wages, fair employment contracts, elimination of discrimination, etc. (13)

The General Union considers that the delay in the implementation of this program for more than ten years has left Bahrain behind regarding human rights and labor rights. The General Federation of Bahrain

Trade Unions believes that the difficulties facing Bahrain today in the labor market and the high unemployment rates are due to the lack of adoption of standards as stated in the decent work program. The General Union continues to call for the implementation of this programme on every occasion when it has the opportunity to meet with the relevant bodies, including the International Labour Organization.

Since the promulgation of the Trade Unions Decree in 2002, workers in the public sector have suffered from their inability to establish their own trade unions and from their inability even to join existing ones, as stated in the text The law in Article Ten (workers who are engaged in civil service regulations shall have the right to join it). (14) A civil service circular prohibiting public sector workers from establishing their own union has been issued and a union established or in the process of being formed is considered a violation of the law (No. (1) of 2003 in the following - that The right of workers to join trade unions under the Civil Service Regulations ) - although the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain has given workers a general right to establish their oal trade union organizations.

The Federation filed a complaint in the International Labour Organization against the backdrop of the dismissal of more than five thousand workers from the private and public sectors. The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry has documented 4,500 citizens who were dismissed due to the political and security events that Bahrain experienced in 2011.

The Labor Market Regulatory Authority, as a licensed entity, adopted a system of wage protection to determine the extent to which private sector enterprises are committed to pay their labor wages on time and at the agreed wage through financial transfers through banks and financial institutions provided that the service is accredited by the Central Bank of Bahrain and contributes to the protection of the rights of employers and workers by documenting the payment of wages. This supports the judiciary in settling disputes related to workers' wages and reduces the phenomenon of informal employment in the labor market. The Labour Market Regulatory Authority has initiated the development of an electronic system linked to financial and banking institutions licensed and accredited by the Central Bank of Bahrain to enable them to follow up on the payment of workers' wages on time electronically. (15)

The Ministry of Labor has adopted the unemployment rate in the Kingdom of Bahrain (4%) thanks to the continued ability of the labor market in Bahrain to generate suitable employment opportunities for citizens. However, the General Union of Bahrain Workers, after registering the unemployed in 2020, found that the unemployment rate among young people reached 10% Having documented data for more than 14,699 unemployed people and submitted this study to the Cabinet. The majority of the unemployed according to the Labor Union study have never worked, by 53%, which means that there are no real opportunities for the unemployed, neither in terms of quantity nor gender. Besides, there is a mismatch between the numbers of unemployed, those receiving dependency allowance, and more than 69% of registered unemployed do not receive dependency allowance. Why has the number of beneficiaries of the unemployment allowance for graduates decreased in the last five years? (16)

The number of foreign workers registered with the General Authority for Social Insurance by the end of 2022 reached 464,304 workers (17)

The Union's plan aims to reach the unemployment rate among Bahrainis during 2024 to zero%, including the implementation of an integrated plan over the four years to raising jobs in the government sector by 100% Raising the percentage of Bahrainis in the private sector. (2020-2024). This requires adopting an effective development strategy and diversifying the economy towards a productive economy.

His Highness the Crown Prince has issued the Prime Minister with a "order" On October 5, 2022, the Labor Market Regulatory Authority revoked the flexible work permit and the flexible work permit has undoubtedly undermined most of the government's efforts to reform the labor market for the benefit of citizens in order to



obtain a means of decent living. The details of the application of this "order" and how it will address the serious consequences of its application are not yet known. There currently is a visit visa system that the labor market regulatory body began to let its bearers work. As well as the Golden Residence Visa, all of them have led to more confusion and pressure on national employment in the labor market and have compounded the suffering of citizens from foreign labor competition and the complexity and weakness of the current economic situation. It has enabled foreign workers to drop out of the country and stay "practically" in it without productive work causing social, security and economic problems.

Bahrain's economic growth. (18) According to the Information and eGovernment Authority's report on national accounts estimates for the second quarter of 2022, the Kingdom of Bahrain's GDP grew real by 6.95% and 22.87% Current prices compared to the second quarter of 2021. This economic growth is due to the rise of the non-oil sector, which reached 9.05% in real prices and 17.83% in current prices. While the oil sector fell by 2.20% in real prices as a result of the decline in oil production, while it rose by 51.66% at current prices, reflecting the rise in oil prices compared to the same quarter of 2021.

The government has launched financial packages worth more than BD4.5 billion (USD 12 billion) to support the local economy with its various components as a response to the challenges of the Corona pandemic during 2020 and 2021, which contributed to the easing of the severity of the economic crisis experienced by the national economy in that critical period. The support of the Arab Gulf states also came to support the efforts of the Bahraini government in overcoming this crisis. The government paid 6 months of salaries to citizens in the private sector in 2020 during the intensification of the Coronavirus crisis.

The state's general budget for fiscal year 2021 ran a deficit. It led to a rise in public debt of BD 16.9 billion at the end of 2021 compared to 15 billion at the end of 2020 with public debt standing at around 130% From GDP (19) as announced by Bahrain in 2021 Final Account, the total is at current prices estimated for fiscal year 2021 and 114.5% in fiscal year 2020, up 12.8% Compared to fiscal year 2020. The budget deficit for 2021 amounted to about 953 million dinars, while the previous year amounted to 1258 million dinars. The high volume of public debt will lead to a rise in public debt service, as the interest paid by Bahrain on public debt is more than 750 million dinars for 2023 and continues to rise. This situation will hinder economic development and growth, strain the public budget and negatively affect the quality of services provided to citizens.

## **Sixteenth Goal: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions – Anti-Corruption and Governance.**

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (( 20)

Target 4: By 2030, significantly reduce illicit flows of funds and weapons, promote the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime

Target 5: Significantly reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

Target 6: To establish effective, transparent and accountable institutions at all levels

The report of Bahrain in 2019 regarding the sixteenth goal (that Bahrain has promoted the achievement of justice and the strengthening of the democratic system and enjoy good relations with other countries) and here it must be noted that Bahrain has been cut off its relationship with its neighbor, the State of Qatar, which is a short distance away from the Bahraini border, and stopped flying and social visits between the Bahraini and Qatari peoples, and continued to sever the relationship for more than 3 years. The Bahraini-Qatari relations still lack credibility between the two countries and are marred by many contradictions, in addition to severing relations with its other neighbor, which is separated from it by the waters of the Arabian Gulf, Iran. Relations and aviation between the

two countries remain suspended, hindering travel between the two countries. Bahrain also continues to suspend direct flights between Bahrain, the Iraqi Republic, the Lebanese Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic, members of the League of Arab States, and there are no convincing grounds for stopping flights between Bahrain and these countries. Civil peace requires moving out of the political crisis that the country has been experiencing since 2011 to an environment of peace and trust between the people and the government and between the various components of society, which is advocated by all loyalists, including society Civil. It is considered one of the most important elements of stability and justice in the distribution of power and wealth.

**UN experts in their report to UN-HRC on the UPR cycle 4, A/HRC/WG6/41 /BHR /I Presented at the 41 st meeting of the Human Rights Council, November 2022 experts expressed concerns about various aspects of human rights including:- (21)**

1. Concern about discrimination on the basis of religious doctrine and groups such as children, women, stateless persons and migrants.
2. Attention to the right to life under the death penalty for criminal offences and political charges, where the group of citizens was executed and there are final sentences pending execution of 21 death sentences.
3. Fears over allegations of torture and ill-treatment of detainees allegedly political.
4. The UN Committee against Torture has expressed concern that official government agencies tasked with addressing human rights violations, especially for detained persons, are not independent and ineffective.
5. The Human Rights Committee is concerned about the restrictions imposed on human rights personnel and opposition groups and their resolution in some cases.
6. The government has dissolved some opposition parties, (Islamic Action, Al Wefaq and Waad), Bahrain has adopted Law No. 25 (2018) which prevents all members of dissolved political associations from participating in parliamentary and municipal elections.
7. Concern over shortcomings in health services, especially after 2011 protests.
8. Attention to gender equality where patriarchal stereotypes about the role of men and women in the family and society dominate.
9. Concern about violence against women and impunity.
10. Worried about Bahrainis whose nationality was revoked (estimated at 434) in 2022 and who are in exile or in prison. The revocation of citizenship has a negative impact on dependent children, depriving them of civil services such as identity, education and medicines. A stateless person can raise children born to a Bahraini mother and a non-Bahraini father who has not secured his nationality for his children.

Bahrain has adopted two important laws to deal with cases of sentences against those against whom they are issued, the first relating to the implementation of alternative sentences and the second to open prisons. Many prisoners have been released pursuant to these two laws although some of those released have completed their sentences.

Bahrainis are facing increasing pressure on basic state services such as education, health, municipalities, traffic services, etc. and are returning to the intensity of naturalization and the recruitment of more foreign labor that negatively affects basic services. Unemployment among Bahrainis is alarmingly rising, especially among young people and women, creating pressure on society and the family. Although per capita GNP is high, it is offset by an increase in the cost of living.

Civil society organizations (associations, sports and cultural clubs, charities) are further restricted and their work space is severely curtailed. The legal amendments to Decree Law No. 21 of 1989, in the light of which many members of these associations were deprived of some of their civil rights to run for the boards of these associations and clubs. It also prevented civil society organizations from joining any international non-governmental network or organization and prevented them from obtaining funding from either inside or outside Bahrain. The Department for Social Development also took more narrow steps when it referred the heads of some associations to investigate before prosecutors for delays in submitting meeting reports or for assistance to cover the expenses of these associations from their official members Without prior permission from the Ministry of Social Development. These actions and policies have undermined civil society and non-governmental organizations beyond borders and have effectively paralysed them. The measures taken by the Ministry of Social Development aimed at silencing civil society institutions reflect a greater tendency to reduce the space available to these by the intervention of the security services in systematically preventing some activists from running for council elections.

Bahrain is ranked 69 th on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2022 (22) out of 180 countries where corruption is measured. Bahrain has not made clear efforts to comply with the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which it ratified in 2010, for example, it has not committed to passing the law establishing the Independent Authority against Corruption (this is Law in the drawers of Parliament since 2010) or a law to protect witnesses and whistleblowers or the issuance of a national strategy to combat corruption or the law on the right of access to information. The report of the Office of Financial and Administrative Control is also not properly utilized and the concerned civil society institutions are not involved when preparing the State report for the implementation of this Convention.

## **The Road to the Future 2030.**

### **In the area of poverty eradication**

1. Develop a new study to set Bahrain's poverty line in proportion to a decent standard of living, in order to tackle poverty and reduce the number of households, whenever possible.
2. Increasing support for productive families with the aim of increasing family production opportunities.
3. Work to maintain a decent standard of living for Bahraini families.

### **In the area of equality.**

- 1) Recognize the existence of an unregulated economy, provide statistics on women workers and undertake necessary economic reforms.
- 2) Review and enact social legislation to provide social protection and insurance coverage with models suitable for women workers, whether at home, online, as employers or on their own account.
- 3) The integration of women workers into the organized economy and into the labour law, with full guarantees of labour rights and the right to organize, to form trade unions, training and development opportunities.
- 4) Addressing the issue of female unemployment.

### **In the field of clean water.**

Bahrain is a developing country and needs capacity building in water access and conservation technology. In order to achieve that, the country needed sophisticated water resources management in cooperation with the United Nations. We believe that the following recommendations in the area of water will contribute to this:

1. Work on building underground water basins for emergencies and expand their construction.

- 2 - Develop a plan to benefit from rainwater in the irrigation of crops to cover the water deficit and work to exploit this water in a scientific manner.
- 3- Increase community education programs to reduce water consumption and not to overuse it.
- 4 - Introduction of some scientific lessons in the curricula on the importance of water for life and its benefits and how to rationalize consumption.
5. Protect and restore water-related ecosystems and repair leaks on a regular basis.
- 6- Working to change the water estuaries in homes, companies and institutions, i.e. changing the faucets that work automatically and turn them into automatic when needed and that work in the way of remote sensing.
- 7 - Work on the reuse and recycling of water in homes using distillation technology in homes.
8. Stop dumping hazardous waste and chemicals near water sources.
- 9- Investment and expansion of wastewater recycling to reduce pressure on desalinated water resources.

## **In the field of work**

- 1.The Decent Work Program signed between the three parties to production (Government, Chamber of Commerce, and the Workers Union), which was signed in 2010.
- 2.Re-establishing the tripartite social dialogue between the three parties of production.
- 3.Allow government workers to establish their own unions.
- 4.Working with civil society institutions to reduce unemployment among citizens, and developing programs to do so.

## **In the field of the sixteenth goal.**

- 1.Deregulate and empower civil society institutions to fulfil their role as per the UN vision of implementation, oversight, monitoring and follow-up on the implementation of UN organizations recommendations..
- 2.Allow all members of these institutions to run for public office and abolish the security audit currently in place.
- 3.The need to draft a new law as an alternative to the current law, with the participation of civil society institutions in the drafting of the law.
- 4.Involve civil society institutions in official teams tasked with preparing voluntary reports on the implementation of all types of United Nations conventions, as well as for these organizations to prepare shadow reports for the pledges that Bahrain has ratified.
- 5.No objection to civil society organizations joining international organizations working in the same field, joining regional and international networks and that the approval of the Ministry is not a condition for this.
- 6.Comply with the United Nations Convention against Corruption with regard to the establishment of an independent body, the adoption of a national anti-corruption strategy and the promulgation of the Witnesses and Whistleblowers Protection Act and the Access to Information Act.
- 7.Granted more regulatory and legislative powers to the House of Representatives and amending the internal regulations of the Council in accordance with the requirements of oversight and legislation and the abolition of restrictions contained in the internal regulations of the House of Representatives.

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(1) المصدر موقع (صحتي) المهتم بوضع الكورونا في العالم: [/https://sehhty.com/bh-covid](https://sehhty.com/bh-covid)

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(3) اقتصاديات التجارة - البحرين <https://ar.tradingeconomics.com/bahrain/gdp>

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تقرير أصدرته منظمة الأسكوا

(5) ورقة قدمتها د. هدى المحمود ورقة مقدمة في ندوة يوم الفقر العالمي 2022 تحت شعار "الكرامة للجميع"

(6) اتفاقية السيداو <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/0360793A.pdf>

(7) قانون رقم (36) لسنة 2018 بتعديل المادة (43) من قانون الجمعيات والأندية الاجتماعية والثقافية والهيئات الخاصة العاملة في ميدان الشباب والرياضة والمؤسسات الخاصة الصادر بالمرسوم بقانون رقم (21) لسنة 1989 <https://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/AdvancedSearchDetails.aspx?id=14363>

(8) مادة -4- من قانون الجنسية البحريني لعام 1963 ( البحرينيون بالسلالة ) يعتبر الشخص بحرينيا:

أ- إذا ولد في البحرين أو خارجها وكان أبوه بحرينيا عند تلك الولادة.

ب- إذا ولد في البحرين أو خارجها وكانت أمه بحرينية عند ولادته، على أن يكون مجهول الأب أو لم تثبت نسبته لأبيه قانونا.

(9) تقرير عن الفجوة الجندرية - <https://knoema.com/atlas/Bahrain/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-gender-gap>

gender-gap-

[index#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20global%20gender%20gap,at%200.63%20index%20in%202022](https://www.knoema.com/atlas/Bahrain/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-gender-gap-index#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20global%20gender%20gap,at%200.63%20index%20in%202022)

(10) د. أحمد العنيسي – خبير بيئي بحريني - متخصص في المياه.

(11) د. وليد زباري أستاذ إدارة الموارد المائية بجامعة الخليج العربي

(12) تقرير الاتحاد العام لنقابات عمال البحرين مايو 2023م.

(13) مرسوم بقانون رقم (33) لسنة 2002 بإصدار قانون النقابات العمالية. نص المادة (10)

للعامل في أية منشأة أو قطاع معين أو نشاط محدد أو صناعات أو حرف متماثلة أو مرتبط بعضها ببعض تأسيس نقابة خاصة بهم وفق أحكام هذا القانون ، ويكون للعاملين المخاطبين بأنظمة الخدمة المدنية حق الانضمام إليها . ولا يجوز تكوين أكثر من نقابة واحدة لعمال المنشأة الواحدة.

(14) الموقع الإلكتروني لهيئة تنظيم العمل

<https://www.lmra.gov.bh/ar/page/show/413#:~:text=%D9%87%D9%88%20%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%20%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%83%D9%86%20%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9%20%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85,%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%82%20%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9%20%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%B9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AC%D9%88%D8%B1%20%D9%85%D9%85%D8%A7>

(15) مصدر سابق د. هدى المحمود.

(16) التقرير السنوي للهيئة العامة للتأمين الاجتماعي

[https://www.sio.gov.bh/reports/pdf/Statistical\\_Report\\_Q4\\_2022.pdf](https://www.sio.gov.bh/reports/pdf/Statistical_Report_Q4_2022.pdf)

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