



Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs & Security Policy
Vice President of the European Commission

Our Ref: B1157

Brussels, 14 February 2012

Dear Baroness Ashton,

BAHRAIN: ONE YEAR ON

It has been one year since the first peaceful demonstrator was killed as a result of the use of excessive force by security forces in Bahrain. Since then, on 23 November 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) has presented a report concluding that excessive force and torture had been used against protesters and that many of them were on trial or had been sentenced for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

While the BICI report made several recommendations which the Bahraini authorities promised to implement, reported government investigations have failed to demonstrate any progress in assessing allegations of torture. It is unclear how many people involved in human rights abuses in Bahrain have been brought to justice. Hundreds of people there still face criminal charges for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The government clampdown shows no sign of abating with an opposition activist, Zainab al-Khawaja, arrested on 12 February for participating in a peaceful protest.

We urge you to press the Bahraini authorities to:

- Immediately and fully implement the recommendations of the BICI report
- Investigate all allegations of detainee torture, publicise the outcomes of enquires and bring the perpetrators to justice
- Free anyone held for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly, including Zainab al-Khawaja, a group of 14 opposition activists comprising Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and Ebrahim Sharif and the 20 doctors and nurses sentenced to imprisonment for their involvement in protests

We should naturally be happy to provide any further information you might require.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nicolas J Beger
Director