

Country/entity	Bahrain
Region	Middle East and North Africa
Agreement name	Bahrain National Dialogue Proposals, Executive Summary
Date	28 Jul 2011
Agreement status	Status unclear
Interim arrangement	Yes
Agreement/conflict level	Intrastate/intrastate conflict

Bahraini Uprising (2011 -)

Following uprisings across the MENA region in early 2011, protests ensued on February 14, 2011, aimed at generating social reforms and greater social equality for Bahrain's Shi'a majority. Following the deaths of two protesters in the first two days, a sit-in was held at the Pearl Roundabout in Manama on February. The next morning, security forces stormed the camp, killing 4 protesters, marking a turning point in the conflict. Protests picked up momentum and by April 2012, over 80 protesters and security forces had been killed in violence from both sides. In December 2013, there were impromptu 183 protests alone. Sectarian tensions are further heightened by the recruitment of Sunni Muslims into the National Army from abroad, and the deployment of soldiers from the predominantly Sunni GCC Joint Shield Force. There is also an indication of state-sponsored systematic destruction of Shi'a mosques across Bahrain following the protests.

On July 2, 2011, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa instigated the Bahrain National Dialogue as a means to promote reconciliation between the government and Bahrainis. 300 participants were involved with 37% representation dedicated for political organisations, 36% for CSOs, 21% for opinion leaders and 6% for media representation. Opposition parties were only granted 5 seats, and there was much criticism of the un-balanced nature of the National Dialogue. The National Dialogues were suspended by January 2014. Parliamentary Elections later that year boycotted and dismissed by the Shia opposition as a farce, followed by the arrest of the opposition (Al-Wefaq) leader Sheikh Ali Salman, ensuing into protests and clashes between his supporters and security forces. Systemic harassment and prosecution of Shias continue.

Close

Bahraini Uprising (2011 -)

Stage	Framework/substantive - comprehensive
Conflict nature	Government
Peace process	Bahrain: Reform-based peace process

Parties	<p>300 participants; 37% from political societies, 36% from civil and non-governmental organisations, 21% from opinion leaders and prominent figures within the Kingdom of Bahrain and 6% from the media.</p> <p>Civil and non-governmental organisations had a representation percentage of 12% for professional societies, 9% for social societies, 5% for women societies, 5% for youth societies, 3% for the various labour unions and 2% representation from the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.</p>
Third parties	-
Description	<p>The National Dialogue was launched by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to tackle growing animosity between sections of Bahraini society and the regime. It was poorly received by the opposition, who only gained 5 seats of 300. The executive outcomes document contains a summary of potential policy outcomes in the four policy areas of social, economic, political and rights.</p>
Agreement document	<p>BH_110728_Bahrain National Dialogue Executive Summary.pdf (opens in new tab) Download PDF</p>

Women, girls and gender

Participation

Participation→Gender quotas

Page 2, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

A. Political

1. . . .

Delegates did not reach consensus on a number of further suggestions, such as limiting the term for ministers and head of government or a fixed quota for women in parliament. They did not agree on whether the Shura Council should be granted the same powers as the Parliament, and whether the responsibility for law making and oversight should be restricted to the elected chamber.

Participation→Effective participation

Page 2, 2. The debate centred on equal representation of the population. Critics of the current system argued that the geographical distribution of constituencies did not reflect the demographics of Bahrain. They maintained that the proposals for a system with one or five constituencies would reduce existing inconsistencies and provide greater opportunity for women and minority groups to be represented. Others defended the current arrangement, noting that smaller constituencies allow MPs better familiarity with their community. They feared that reducing the number of constituencies would create sectarian quotas in parliament, leading to political crisis.

Participation→Citizenship

Page 6, 5. Naturalised citizens

Consensus was reached on the proposal that the children of Bahraini women married to foreign nationals would be granted Bahraini citizenship according to a clear set of rules. Delegates agreed to develop rules to prohibit discrimination against naturalised citizens. Naturalised citizens will be entitled to stand for elections 5 years after having obtained their Bahraini passport on the condition that they are not dual nationals.

Equality

Equality→Social equality

Page 5, C. Social

3. Women, children and persons with special needs

... A decision to bolster women's rights will ensure their greater protection from violence, equal rights in the workplace and greater political and economic empowerment, including reviewing women's salary levels in the private sector. ...

Particular groups of women No specific mention.

International law	<p>International law→General IHRL, IHL and IL Page 5, C. Social 3. Women, children and persons with special needs The National Dialogue recognised the importance of protecting the rights of women, children and persons with special needs. A decision to bolster women’s rights will ensure their greater protection from violence, equal rights in the workplace and greater political and economic empowerment, including reviewing women’s salary levels in the private sector. In particular, Bahrain will ensure the comprehensive implementation of the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women while respecting the country’s religious tradition. International law→International human rights standards Page 5, C. Social 3. Women, children and persons with special needs ... In particular, Bahrain will ensure the comprehensive implementation of the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women while respecting the country’s religious tradition. ...</p>
New institutions	No specific mention.
Violence against women	<p>Violence against women→Protection (general) Page 5, C. Social 3. Women, children and persons with special needs ... A decision to bolster women’s rights will ensure their greater protection from violence, equal rights in the workplace and greater political and economic empowerment, including reviewing women’s salary levels in the private sector.</p>
Transitional justice	No specific mention.
Institutional reform	No specific mention.
Development	<p>Development→General Page 5, C. Social 3. Women, children and persons with special needs The National Dialogue recognised the importance of protecting the rights of women, children and persons with special needs. A decision to bolster women’s rights will ensure their greater protection from violence, equal rights in the workplace and greater political and economic empowerment, including reviewing women’s salary levels in the private sector...</p>
Implementation	No specific mention.
Other	No specific mention.
