



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Briefing

Panelist Biographies

Bahrain: 2022 Elections

Panel I



Maryam al-Khawaja is a leading voice for human rights and political reform in Bahrain and the Gulf region. She played an instrumental role in the pro-democracy protests in Bahrain’s Pearl Roundabout in February 2011. The protests triggered a government response of widespread extrajudicial killings, arrests, and torture, which she documented extensively on social media. Due to her human rights work, al-Khawaja was subjected to assault, threats, defamation campaigns, imprisonment, and an unfair trial. She was arrested for “assaulting police officers” in 2014 and sentenced in absentia to one year in prison. She currently has an outstanding arrest warrant and four pending cases against her, one of which could carry a life sentence. She serves on the boards of the International Service for Human Rights, Urgent Action Fund, CIVICUS, and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy. She previously served as co-director at the Gulf Center for Human Rights and acting president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights.



Sayed Ahmed al-Wadaei is the advocacy director of the UK-based Bahrain Institute for Democracy and Human Rights. Sayed was involved in the 2011 anti-government protests at Pearl Roundabout in Manama and was severely beaten when security forces stormed the roundabout on February 17. In July 2012, he left Bahrain for the UK where the courts granted him political asylum. He has been a prominent critic of the Bahraini government's human rights abuses. In January 2015, he was among a group of 72 Bahrainis whose citizenship the authorities revoked. Sayed remains one of the most outspoken voices calling for democracy and freedom in Bahrain.



Joey Shea is a researcher in the Middle East and North Africa Division of Human Rights Watch investigating human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Prior to joining Human Rights Watch, Shea was a non-resident scholar at the Middle East Institute. Her work focused on digital information controls and operations, security, political violence, and the human rights impact of technology across the Middle East and North Africa. She was also a Non-Resident Research Fellow at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) and has consulted for SMEX, the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, and the World Bank. She was an Information

Controls Research Fellow with the Open Technology Fund and eQualit.e, where she conducted research on censorship and surveillance. Shea has an M.A. from the University of Toronto in Political Science and a B.A. from McGill University in Political Science and speaks Arabic.



Brian Dooley is Senior Advisor at Human Rights First and has been documenting human rights issues in Bahrain and the Gulf region for over a decade. He is a regular commentator in U.S. and international media on Bahrain and has spoken about human rights in the Gulf at the UN, in parliaments and at academic fora. He is the author of several academic books on U.S. politics and human rights, and is a Visiting Scholar at UCL in London. He is a prominent voice on social media on human rights using the handle @dooley_dooley.

Moderator



Elizabeth Hagedorn is Al-Monitor's State Department correspondent. She previously reported on the region as a freelance journalist in Turkey and Iraq for publications including Middle East Eye, The National and The Guardian.