



مملكة البحرين
Kingdom of Bahrain



مفوضية
حقوق السجناء والمحتجزين
Prisoners & Detainees Rights Commission

Report No (24)

PDRC Report on the Unannounced Exceptional Visit to Reformation and Rehabilitation Center in Jaw (JRRC)

On 25th August 2023

Table of Content

Introduction	2
Section 1:	
Visit Background.....	3
Section 2:	
Vist Methods & Observations	4
Section 3:	
Review the Procedures of other Authorities and Institutions.....	7
Section 6:	
Recommendations.....	12
Section 7 Appendices:	
References	14

Introduction:

The Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC) oversees the rehabilitation and reformation centers, prisons, juvenile and detention centers, and other places where persons may be detained, such as hospitals and mental health centers, with the aim of assessing prisoner detention conditions and treatment and ensuring that they are not subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. PDRC's reports also help improve conditions at detention centers, prevent any possible transgressions and make recommendations to change certain conditions at those places.

In this context, PDRC conducted an unannounced exceptional visit to the Reformation and Rehabilitation Center in Jaw (JRRC) on Friday evening 25th August 2023, and the visit extended to the early morning hours of Saturday 26th August 2023, in order to determine directly the reality of the situation in JRRC against the background of some inmates' announcement of their 'hunger strike'.

Section 1: Visit Background

A team from PDRC made a surprise visit (unannounced) to Reformation and Rehabilitation Center in Jaw (JRRC) on Friday evening 25th August 2023 and the visit extended to the early morning hours of Saturday 26th August 2023, and this exceptional visit came to verify the conditions of JRRC against the background of the announcement of some inmates a 'hunger strike' due to a number of announced demands regarding the conditions of their presence in the place and the mechanism of services provided to them.

PDRC team made a qualitative adjustment to the principles, criteria and indicators mechanism were verified during the inspection, because it was a dedicated visit to a specific purpose, not a general inspection visit. For its part, JRRC management showed all cooperation with PDRC team and provided them with the necessary facilities to perform their tasks easily and professionally.

This brief report reviews the most important observations that PDRC team drew from its visit to JRRC and the assessment of the conditions associated with the hunger strike of some inmates with the accompanying measures taken by the concerned authorities in Ministry of Interior (MOI) and independent institutions such as the Ombudsman and the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR).

Section 2: Visit Methods & Observations

Within the framework of PDRC exercising the powers assigned to it under Decree No. 61 of 2013, which includes monitoring reformation and detention centers and detention places in order to verify the conditions of inmates and the treatment they receive, and provide recommendations that help to improve the conditions in these places, taking into account Ombudsman principles and standards for visiting prisons and places of detention, approved by the Supreme Judicial Council in 2014.

On the evening of 25th August 2023, a team from PDRC made an unannounced visit to the JRRC to review the conditions and the treatment of inmates there and to listen to their testimonies regarding what is being circulated regarding the subject on hunger strike. PDRC team investigated information through the following:

– **Inmates Interview:**

PDRC team interviewed a random sample of inmates independently to ensure their privacy and recorded what they have proposed regarding the mechanism of dealing with them, and the health care received by the hunger-striking inmates, where none of these inmates mentioned any kind of mistreatment, and they confirmed the availability of intensive health care, but some of them refused to get treatment or medical supervision where they have signed a written declarations to that effect, they also have reported that they continue to obtain all other rights related to the usual daily schedule, visits and phone calls according to the regulations in JRRC, despite their participation announcement of the strike.

– Questions to JRRC Management:

PDRC team met with JRRC management, where they were identified about the measures taken by the management to deal with inmates who announced their strike and the health care provided to them.

It was also shown from the records and from the CCTV recordings that three meals are provided daily (breakfast, lunch and dinner) to all inmates without exception, even to those who announced a hunger strike they are provided on the usual timing with a sufficient, nutritional value meals, all inmates receive a full meal by the building representatives (which he is an inmate selected to coordinate administrative matters and living arrangements in each building), where the percentage of the unreturned meals until the time of the visit reached 90%.

JRRC management also added the provision of more diverse goods been allowed in the store (the canteen), and the management recently has noticed an increase in inmates purchases from the store, especially juices and snacks.

–Direct Observation:

PDRC collected information in the field by touring JRRC and inspecting the building which is allocated in cooperation with public hospitals, as an additional field clinic for inmates registered as abstainers from food and equipped to receive cases that require their treatment or put them under medical supervision until they stabilize.

It was verified that there is a medical staff affiliated with public hospitals whose task is to examine all inmates who abstain from food on daily basis, JRRC doctors reported that most of inmates who announced their hunger strike, refuse to carry out this examination

and that there are no critical or emergency cases among them, requiring their transfer for treatment outside JRRC.

PDRC also visited JRRC medical clinic, which is administratively affiliated with public hospitals to determine the extent of its continuity in providing integrated health services to inmates around the clock to ensure the preservation of their health and public safety where the medical staff working in JRRC clinic were discussed to verify the medical protocols followed regarding the state of the strike.

– Review Records & Surveillance Cameras:

PDRC team reviewed the relevant documents, including the declarations signed by the striking inmates. It was found that the number of abstaining inmates who signed the abstention form and completed their legal procedures with the Public Prosecution on 25th August 2023 was (119) inmates.

The team also requested to see CCTV recordings inside some cells, but it was found that they were broken by a number of inmates who declared a hunger strike, where PDRC team has not verified inmate's behavior on how they are dealing with the food provided to them.

Section 3: Review the Procedures of other Authorities and Institutions

Before preparing this report, PDRC reviewed the positions of the concerned authorities following the strike of some inmates in JRRC, whether from the MOI or from independent national institutions, in order to coordinate efforts and positions, and to take full and comprehensive note of the dimensions of dealing with this situation, the plans and recommendations submitted in this regard, to complement the efforts PDRC and ensure that they do not conflict with the efforts of all other parties.

1. :Review Ombudsman Statement

PDRC reviewed Ombudsman statement published on Sunday the 13th August 2023, where it monitored published social media news about some inmates hunger strike since Monday the 7th August 2023, in some buildings at JRRC and since that date, there was correspondent from JRRC management on the same subject.

Moreover, Ombudsman has received a number of assistance requests from some inmate's families to inquire and check on their conditions in light of the news circulating about their hunger strike.

Ombudsman has also confirmed that on Thursday the 10th August, 2023 a team from Directorate of Monitoring, Detention and Correctional Facilities has conducted its investigations in this matter according to the work mechanism followed by Ombudsman, these investigation has concluded that most of the inmate's demands who announced their hunger strike are not consistent with the articles of the Reformation and Rehabilitation Institution Law No. 18 of 2014 and its implementing regulations No. 131 of 2015.

2. Review National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) Statement:

PDRC reviewed the statement published by the National Institution for Human Rights on Sunday the 27th August 2023, which included an unannounced visit by a delegation from the NIHR to JRRC on the same day August the 27th, to follow up on the situation of inmates. NIHR confirmed that there is no critical health condition among the inmates on hunger strike, and the extent of health care provided in each building, that is in order to preserve the health and safety of all inmates according to the procedures followed in such cases.

It was confirmed that the services were provided to everyone normally, and also stressed its keenness to consider all requests submitted by inmates and the extent to which these requests comply with international human rights standards, in order to ensure that they receive all their rights stipulated in national legislation and relevant international standards.

Section 4: PDRC's Conclusion

- That is on 7th August 2023 some inmates of JRRC announced their engagement of a hunger strike, in order to achieve several demands, which are: amends to the system of visits, allowing visits from non-second-degree relatives, removal of the glass barrier during the visit, amending the charges on telephone calls, increasing the time of going out to the outdoor courtyards, opening the doors of rooms inside the wings throughout the day – transferring a number of inmates from certain buildings to other buildings under the pretext of objecting to what was called by the inmates as isolation measure, and complaints about late medical appointments.
- The PDRC has monitored on social media and some websites a number of demands and allegations by the hunger strike inmates and talks about demands for their release under the pretext that they are 'political inmates', the files of these inmates proved that they were convicted according to the Bahraini judicial system of multiple crimes such as terrorism, murder, attempted murder, destroying public property, and other crimes that affect the public safety. Such demands do not fall within the scope of the tasks and responsibilities of the PDRC and could not be dealt directly through discussion with JRRC management.
- It was found that the number of inmates on hunger strike varied from the numbers published on social media and in some websites, the PDRC was unable to validate those numbers at the time of visit, rather it was proven that the number of inmates on hunger strike who signed the abstention form and completed their legal procedures with the Public Prosecution until 25th August 2023 amounted to (119) inmates.

It is certain that the vast majority of inmates at JRRC, by comparing the number of inmates who declared the hunger strike with the total number of inmates at JRRC at the time of the visit to the center, the vast majority of inmates who did not participate in this strike, did not announce their intention to engage in it, nor did they join the campaign of demands announced by the other inmates on hunger strike.

- PDRC could not verify the credibility of the implementation of this strike, as the inmates in some cells broke the CCTV security cameras, thus PDRC could not verify the seizure of food by the inmates. Rather, JRRC records and the existing CCTV located in the corridors, show that the building representatives (who are inmates who coordinate administrative matters) receive meals in full without decrease in their usual times, and the rate of non-return of these meals is about 90% at the time of the visit.
- The management of JRRC dealt with the state of hunger strike announced by some of the inmates with a great degree of professionalism and responsibility, in accordance to the Law of Reform and Rehabilitation Institution and its implementing regulations, were the management and officers of the center continued to provide advice and guidance to the inmates on hunger strike, in order to defuse the situation. They announced that the administration understands and responds to their demands as long as they fall within the framework of the law and according to the center administrative abilities. Furthermore, the administration also facilitated the work of independent national entities such as the Ombudsman and the National Institution for Human Rights, and facilitated all that is required for the PDRC team during this visit.

- All sustenance services at JRRC are normally provided to all inmates without exception, including those who have declared hunger strikes, and none of the inmates interviewed by the PDRC team reported any kind of mistreatment, and confirmed the extensive availability of health care, but some refused to undergo treatment or medical supervision and signed written declarations to that effect, they also reported that they continue to receive all other rights related to the regular daily schedule such as visits and telephone calls in accordance with the laws and regulations enforced at the center, despite their announcement to participate in a hunger strike.
- JRRC management, in cooperation with Public Hospitals, has allocated one of the buildings as an additional field clinic for inmates registered as abstainers from food, which is equipped to receive cases that require treatment or place them under medical supervision until they are stabilized. It was verified that there is medical staff affiliated with government hospitals whose task is to examine all inmates who abstain from food on daily basis, according to doctors at the center, most of the inmates who went on hunger strike refuse to do this examination and that there were no critical or emergency cases among them that required their transfer outside the center for medical care.

Section 5: Recommendations

While PDRC appreciates the great efforts made by the concerned authorities at MOI, especially the General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation, as well as the management of JRRC, and the role played by the Ministry of Health (MOH), represented by (Public Hospitals) in professional and responsible dealing with the state of strike announced by some inmates at JRRC in order to achieve several 'declared' demands.

PDRC proposes several recommendations based on field observations and after studying all the circumstances and motives declaring such a state of strike, are as follows:

1. All necessary steps should be taken to amend the system of visits by making them available to their relatives without being restricted to a certain degree of kinship.
2. Increasing the duration of time spent at the outdoor courtyards in a way that does not put the security and safety of JRRC at risk.
3. The necessary measures are to be taken in order to amend the telephone call system available to inmates, by increasing the number of telephone calls, with the framework of the Reformation and Rehabilitation Institution Law No. 18 of 2014, and its Implementing Regulation.
4. While appreciating the role played by 'Public Hospitals' in providing integrated health care around the clock by specialized medical care personal from MOH and in coordination with MOI, to inmates of reformation and rehabilitation centers within the framework of health services provided to all citizens and residents in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the PDRC recommends reviewing the mechanism and procedures for providing healthcare services to inmates at JRRC, in order to develop and improve them

better, especially with regard to reducing the waiting period in obtaining healthcare services and the period of referral for outpatient treatment, as well as studying the possibility of including inmates in the health insurance system, including benefiting from the services provided by private medical institutions, as described in the Health Insurance Law.

Appendix 1: References

- Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- National Action Charter.
- Penal Code, as amended.
- Code of Criminal Procedure, as amended.
- Public Security Forces Law, as amended.
- The Reformation and Rehabilitation Institution Law No.18 of 2014 and its Implementing Regulations No.131 of 2015.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OHCHR).
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, taking into consideration the Optional Protocol to the Convention.
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- Charter of the United Nations.
- The Arab Charter on Human Rights (ACHR).
- The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1955 (Geneva Rules).
- The Ombudsman's Principles and Standards for Visiting Prisons and Places of Detention.
- Standards of HM Inspectorate of Prisons of the United Kingdom.