

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>

Groups

Children/youth

Groups→Children/youth→Substantive

Page 4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

C. Social

1. Youth

Young people represent the future of a country, and investment in youth is investment in the future. In order to foster the better integration of young Bahraini citizens in the Kingdom's economic, social and political life, the National Dialogue has agreed on the need to reinforce Bahrain's current youth strategy and ensure its comprehensive implementation. By mainstreaming youth issues throughout the policy process, delegates acknowledged the importance of this precious human capital. In practice, 10 concrete proposals were adopted, including: increasing funding for youth projects; establishing of youth centres across the country; setting up training and development programmes; and redoubling efforts to increase the participation of young people in the decision-making process.

Page 5-6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

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. On children's rights, delegates called for all relevant legislation to be fully implemented, and to restrict the participation of children in rallies and demonstrations. People with special needs will be granted better access to education and specialised bodies through the adoption of a National Strategy on the rights of people with special needs in September 2011. Delegates called for improved coordination between the government and civil society organisations protecting the rights of people with special needs.

Disabled persons	<p>Groups→Disabled persons→Substantive</p> <p>Page 5-6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>D. Rights</p> <p>3. Women, children and persons with special needs</p> <p>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. On children’s rights, delegates called for all relevant legislation to be fully implemented, and to restrict the participation of children in rallies and demonstrations. People with special needs will be granted better access to education and specialised bodies through the adoption of a National Strategy on the rights of people with special needs in September 2011. Delegates called for improved coordination between the government and civil society organisations protecting the rights of people with special needs.</p>
Elderly/age	No specific mention.
Migrant workers	<p>Groups→Migrant workers→Substantive</p> <p>Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>E. Foreign Residents</p> <p>The National Dialogue’s final session was dedicated to foreign residents. Over sixty foreign residents representing expatriate communities, business associations, religious groups, and cultural organisations offered their views on reform in Bahrain. Recommendations from this session will be submitted to the King for his consideration along with the Dialogue outcomes.</p> <p>Participants proposed a number of initiatives to improve foreign workers’ rights, including establishing a minimum wage. They requested a review of citizenship rules to enable the children of long-term residents born in Bahrain to be given citizenship. Delegates underlined the importance of non discrimination between Bahraini-born and naturalised citizens. Representatives welcomed the fact that they can exercise their freedom of worship but noted that this should go hand-in-hand with the freedom to build and register a place of worship. Members of the Indian, Pakistan and Philippine community sought greater assurances of their personal safety and security in the wake of recent events, calling for compensation for those affected by the unrest. Participants called for the establishment of a government one-stop-shop to deal specifically with the expatriate community and its concerns, in particular with regard to administrative issues. They called for all official communications to be available in the English language. Delegates put forward a number of detailed suggestions to improve the economic competitiveness of Bahrain and help attract more foreign direct investment.</p>
Racial/ethnic/ national group	No specific mention.

Religious groups

Groups→Religious groups→Substantive

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

A. Political

2. Electoral system

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.

Page 2-3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

A. Political

3. Combating sectarianism

Sectarianism has been on the rise in the wake of recent events, dividing opinions on the role of religion in political life. In calling for the comprehensive implementation of legislation ensuring non-sectarianism in all civil and political organisations, the National Dialogue has taken important steps to address this sensitive issue. It has also agreed to take measures that will make undermining religions and sects illegal.

Page 4-5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

3. Civil security and peace

In the aftermath of recent unrest and heightened sectarian tension, the National Dialogue focused on ways to improve civil peace and security. Delegates reached consensus on ensuring that no legislation is discriminatory and called for the criminalisation of discriminatory practices. They agreed to develop a national programme to promote a culture of “citizenship and civility” in the country’s education and media strategies in partnership with civil society.

Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

4. Freedom of expression and assembly

The National Dialogue acknowledged the need to regulate religious gatherings and processions as well as identify locations and timing for rallies. Delegates called for a revision of the law on assembly in line with international standards.

Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

E. Foreign Residents

The National Dialogue’s final session was dedicated to foreign residents. Over sixty foreign residents representing expatriate communities, business associations, religious groups, and cultural organisations offered their views on reform in Bahrain. Recommendations from this session will be submitted to the King for his consideration along with the Dialogue outcomes.

Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

E. Foreign Residents

Participants proposed a number of initiatives to improve foreign workers’ rights

Indigenous people No specific mention.

Other groups No specific mention.

Refugees/displaced persons No specific mention.

Social class No specific mention.

Gender

Women, girls and gender	<p>Page 2, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>A. Political</p> <p>1. . . .</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Page 5, C. Social</p> <p>3. Women, children and persons with special needs</p> <p>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. On children’s rights, delegates called for all relevant legislation to be fully implemented, and to restrict the participation of children in rallies and demonstrations. People with special needs will be granted better access to education and specialised bodies through the adoption of a National Strategy on the rights of people with special needs in September 2011. Delegates called for improved coordination between the government and civil society organisations protecting the rights of people with special needs.</p> <p>Page 6, 5. Naturalised citizens</p> <p>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.</p>
Men and boys	No specific mention.
LGBTI	No specific mention.
Family	No specific mention.

State definition

Nature of state (general) No specific mention.

State configuration No specific mention.

Self determination No specific mention.

Referendum No specific mention.

State symbols No specific mention.

Independence/ secession No specific mention.

Accession/ unification No specific mention.

Border delimitation No specific mention.

Cross-border provision No specific mention.

Political institutions (new or reformed)

Governance→Political institutions (new or reformed)→New political institutions (indefinite)

Page 1, In this context, the recommendations put forward by the National Dialogue for His Majesty the King's consideration range from calls for existing laws to be better applied to decisions to strengthen the role of the Parliament and consolidate Bahrain's human rights record, and should be viewed in the light of recent events. There were repeated calls for existing legislation to be reinforced and properly implemented.

Page 1, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

A. Political

1. Powers of the executive and Legislative

The National Dialogue reached groundbreaking consensus to increase the powers of the Parliament, in particular by granting it enhanced democratic scrutiny over the government. This decision represents a radical shift in the balance of power between the democratically elected parliament and the executive branch, and between the elected parliament and the appointed Shura Council.

Under the new proposals the Prime Minister will assume responsibility for selecting the members of his government. The King will continue to appoint the head of government. The new government will need to secure the approval of the elected Parliament. If MPs disapprove they can vote to reject the entire government.

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

A. Political

1. Powers of the executive and Legislative

Parliament will also have the power to reject the government's four-year work plan. These reforms guarantee that the government's composition and work plan will reflect the will of the people. The Chairman of the Parliament will assume responsibility for presiding over the National Assembly, taking over from the Chair of the Shura Council and adding more weight to the elected chamber's voice.

The elected Parliament will also be granted greater legislative and monitoring powers.

In particular, the presence of ministers will be required when MPs debate issues related to their respective ministries. MPs will be able to question ministers during the parliamentary sessions rather than in specific committees. The Parliament will be entitled to initiate discussions on any theme in addition to the agenda. Overall, these decisions reinforce the parliament's powers of scrutiny over the activities of the government, strengthening the accountability of ministers to the elected representatives of the people.

Among other reform proposals, delegates agreed to introduce measures to create more efficient law-making procedures, which will help address the delays in ratification and gaps in implementation.

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.

Elections

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

A. Political

2. Electoral system

The National Dialogue achieved consensus on the need for fairer electoral constituencies, but did not agree on which form this should take. Delegates' positions on the three proposals have been included in the list of recommendations.

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.

**Electoral
commission**

No specific mention.

**Political parties
reform**

No specific mention.

Civil society

Page 3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

A. Political

4. Political societies

In an effort to bolster transparency among political societies, the National Dialogue has agreed to establish a set of rules related to their funding, covering financial disclosure as well as the structure and oversight of funding. The age limit for participation in political societies will be aligned with the legal voting age. No agreement was reached on transforming political societies into political parties.

Page 4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

2. Civil society organisations

Recognising the importance of civil society organisations in the life of the country, the National Dialogue agreed on the adoption of a National Strategy for NGOs. Under this new initiative, NGOs be able to establish their headquarters with assistance from the Ministry for human rights and social development and will be entitled to greater financial support. The distribution of public funds for NGOs will be regulated. Corporate social responsibility mechanisms will be consolidated to improve coordination and cooperation between the private sector and civil society. Delegates noted that civil society organisations should not combine political and human rights activities.

Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

2. National and international human rights commitments

The National Dialogue has taken several steps to reaffirm Bahrain's commitment to human rights. Delegates confirmed the country's human rights obligations outlined in the National Charter and the Constitution. In the wake of recent events, they agreed to establish a national body for reconciliation and fairness and called for a national programme to promote human rights awareness among official and civil society organisations, and in particular among law enforcement personnel.

Page 5-6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

3. Women, children and persons with special needs

... Delegates called for improved coordination between the government and civil society organisations protecting the rights of people with special needs.

Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

4. Freedom of expression and assembly

The National Dialogue took steps to review legislation on media and liberalise the legal environment for journalists. In particular, they called for the development of a code of ethics for journalists and for measures to ensure their access to information from official authorities. Delegates agreed that the dismissal of journalists on the grounds of their opinions should be made illegal, as should shutting down a newspaper without a court order. They urged the parliament to fast track the ratification of legislation governing print media and identified a need for new laws to over broadcast and online media. The National Dialogue decided to establish a supreme council for journalism bringing together journalists, media professionals and civil society organisations.

Traditional/ religious leaders	No specific mention.
Public administration	No specific mention.
Constitution	No specific mention.

Power sharing

Political power sharing	No specific mention.
Territorial power sharing	No specific mention.
Economic power sharing	No specific mention.
Military power sharing	No specific mention.

**Human rights/RoL
general**

Page 1, In this context, the recommendations put forward by the National Dialogue for His Majesty the King's consideration range from calls for existing laws to be better applied to decisions to strengthen the role of the Parliament and consolidate Bahrain's human rights record, and should be viewed in the light of recent events. There were repeated calls for existing legislation to be reinforced and properly implemented.

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Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

1. Independence of the judiciary

The National Dialogue discussed ways of strengthening the independence of the judiciary. They also approved the suggestion that the Supreme Judiciary Council should be formed by appointment rather than election to avoid politicising the system. Participants agreed that judges should be suitably trained on human rights issues, and in particular on international treaties and conventions that Bahrain has acceded to. In the same spirit, they decided to increase the number of specialised judges.

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Bill of rights/similar No specific mention.

**Treaty
incorporation**

Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

2. National and international human rights commitments

Bahrain is a party to 7 of the 9 international covenants under the umbrella of the UN. Delegates urged Bahrain to sign and ratify further international human rights treaties and protocols, while respecting its religious and cultural traditions. At the same time, they stressed that international human rights commitments should be fully transposed into national legislation. Participants called on the government to regularly review its reservations towards certain international human rights agreements, and asked that the oversight for human rights organisations be transferred from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Rights to the Parliament.

Page 5-6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

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Civil and political rights

Human rights and equality→Civil and political rights→Equality

Page 4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

B. Economic

4. Redistribution of wealth: taxation, subsidies, welfare

Delegates underlined the importance of improving social justice in Bahrain. They agreed that this could be done by increasing subsidies for the less privileged while reducing overall benefits, without affecting basic wages and needs. In this context, they called for an in-depth study to identify low-income target groups and improve the redistribution of government support.

Page 4-5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

C. Social

3. Civil security and peace

In the aftermath of recent unrest and heightened sectarian tension, the National Dialogue focused on ways to improve civil peace and security. Delegates reached consensus on ensuring that no legislation is discriminatory and called for the criminalisation of discriminatory practices. They agreed to develop a national programme to promote a culture of “citizenship and civility” in the country’s education and media strategies in partnership with civil society.

Human rights and equality→Civil and political rights→Freedom of association

Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

4. Freedom of expression and assembly

The National Dialogue took steps to review legislation on media and liberalise the legal environment for journalists. In particular, they called for the development of a code of ethics for journalists and for measures to ensure their access to information from official authorities. Delegates agreed that the dismissal of journalists on the grounds of their opinions should be made illegal, as should shutting down a newspaper without a court order. They urged the parliament to fast track the ratification of legislation governing print media and identified a need for new laws to cover broadcast and online media. The National Dialogue decided to establish a supreme council for journalism bringing together journalists, media professionals and civil society organisations.

The National Dialogue acknowledged the need to regulate religious gatherings and processions as well as identify locations and timing for rallies. Delegates called for a revision of the law on assembly in line with international standards.

Human rights and equality→Civil and political rights→Thought, opinion, conscience and religion

Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

D. Rights

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Socio-economic rights No specific mention.

Rights related issues

Citizenship	<p>Rights related issues→Citizenship→Citizen, general</p> <p>Page 3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>B. Economic</p> <p>2. Improving government services: health, education, housing, CSR, environment</p> <p>One of the key responsibilities of a government towards its citizens is to ensure high quality public services, from health and education to housing and the environment. In this regard, the National Dialogue showed broad support for an independent authority that will assess the quality of government services based on citizens' interests. Financial aid from the GCC should be used to support economic and social development.</p> <p>Page 4-5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>3. Civil security and peace</p> <p>In the aftermath of recent unrest and heightened sectarian tension, the National Dialogue focused on ways to improve civil peace and security. Delegates reached consensus on ensuring that no legislation is discriminatory and called for the criminalisation of discriminatory practices. They agreed to develop a national programme to promote a culture of "citizenship and civility" in the country's education and media strategies in partnership with civil society.</p> <p>Rights related issues→Citizenship→Citizen delimitation</p> <p>Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>D. Rights</p> <p>5. Naturalised citizens</p> <p>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.</p>
Democracy	<p>Page 1, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>A. Political</p> <p>1. Powers of the executive and Legislative</p> <p>The National Dialogue reached groundbreaking consensus to increase the powers of the Parliament, in particular by granting it enhanced democratic scrutiny over the government. This decision represents a radical shift in the balance of power between the democratically elected parliament and the executive branch, and between the elected parliament and the appointed Shura Council.</p>
Detention procedures	No specific mention.

Media and communication	<p>Rights related issues→Media and communication→Media roles</p> <p>Page 4-5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>3. Civil security and peace</p> <p>In the aftermath of recent unrest and heightened sectarian tension, the National Dialogue focused on ways to improve civil peace and security. Delegates reached consensus on ensuring that no legislation is discriminatory and called for the criminalisation of discriminatory practices. They agreed to develop a national programme to promote a culture of “citizenship and civility” in the country’s education and media strategies in partnership with civil society.</p> <p>Page 6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>D. Rights</p> <p>4. Freedom of expression and assembly</p> <p>The National Dialogue took steps to review legislation on media and liberalise the legal environment for journalists. In particular, they called for the development of a code of ethics for journalists and for measures to ensure their access to information from official authorities. Delegates agreed that the dismissal of journalists on the grounds of their opinions should be made illegal, as should shutting down a newspaper without a court order. They urged the parliament to fast track the ratification of legislation governing print media and identified a need for new laws to over broadcast and online media. The National Dialogue decided to establish a supreme council for journalism bringing together journalists, media professionals and civil society organisations.</p>
Mobility/access	No specific mention.
Protection measures	<p>Rights related issues→Protection measures→Protection of groups</p> <p>Page 5, 2. National and international human rights commitments</p> <p>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> <p>Rights related issues→Protection measures→Other</p> <p>Page 3,</p> <p>B. Economic</p> <p>1. ...Delegates also asked to fast track the publication of consumer protection laws.</p>
Other	No specific mention.

Rights institutions

NHRI No specific mention.

Regional or international human rights institutions No specific mention.

Justice sector reform

Criminal justice and emergency law No specific mention.

State of emergency provisions No specific mention.

Judiciary and courts Page 3-4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights
B. Economic
3. Fighting corruption, improving transparency
[Summary] Provision mentions the 'National Audit Court'. See Corruption.

Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights
D. Rights
1. Independence of the judiciary
The National Dialogue discussed ways of strengthening the independence of the judiciary. They also approved the suggestion that the Supreme Judiciary Council should be formed by appointment rather than election to avoid politicising the system. Participants agreed that judges should be suitably trained on human rights issues, and in particular on international treaties and conventions that Bahrain has acceded to. In the same spirit, they decided to increase the number of specialised judges.

Prisons and detention No specific mention.

Traditional Laws Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights
D. Rights
2. National and international human rights commitments
Bahrain is a party to 7 of the 9 international covenants under the umbrella of the UN. Delegates urged Bahrain to sign and ratify further international human rights treaties and protocols, while respecting its religious and cultural traditions. At the same time, they stressed that international human rights commitments should be fully transposed into national legislation. Participants called on the government to regularly review its reservations towards certain international human rights agreements, and asked that the oversight for human rights organisations be transferred from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Rights to the Parliament.

Development or socio-economic reconstruction

Socio-economic reconstruction→Development or socio-economic reconstruction→Socio-economic development

Page 3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

B. Economic

2. Improving government services: health, education, housing, CSR, environment

One of the key responsibilities of a government towards its citizens is to ensure high quality public services, from health and education to housing and the environment. In this regard, the National Dialogue showed broad support for an independent authority that will assess the quality of government services based on citizens' interests. Financial aid from the GCC should be used to support economic and social development.

Page 3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

B. Economic

2. Improving government services: health, education, housing, CSR, environment

Delegates acknowledged the need to improve national health standards through a comprehensive strategy and in closer coordination with the private sector, while ensuring equal access to quality services across the country. They also called for compulsory health insurance for foreign residents. They agreed to consider the establishment of a national company to provide suitable housing for those with limited income. They also backed a proposal for measures to protect the environment and increase the number of 'Green zones' in Bahrain.

National economic plan	<p>Page 3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>B. Economic</p> <p>1. Boosting competitiveness</p> <p>Several proposals were put forward to help increase Bahrain's economic competitiveness in regional and international markets. Consensus was reached to accelerate the implementation of the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. Delegates highlighted the need to diversify the country's sources of income, reducing dependence on oil and boosting sectors such as tourism, industry, and real estate among others. All delegates agreed to strengthen commercial arbitration through specialised courts and judges involved in the resolution of commercial, banking and financial disputes. A decision was taken to upgrade existing legislation governing privatisation rules in support of Bahrain's economic interests. Delegates also asked to fast track the publication of consumer protection laws.</p>
	<p>Page 4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>B. Economic</p> <p>4. Redistribution of wealth: taxation, subsidies, welfare</p> <p>The National Dialogue agreed that social justice should be improved, without discrimination, through a revision of taxes, subsidies and welfare benefits to ensure a more efficient redistribution of wealth. The Dialogue agreed on ways to improve government revenues, for instance by establishing mechanisms to manage the expenditure of government institutions and restructuring national companies and organisations to improve productivity and competitiveness. Delegates backed a comprehensive study that will explore ways of increasing indirect taxes and introducing a corporate income tax in line with GCC rules. Some participants saw these taxes as a necessary and beneficial step to improve the national economy while others feared that it would deter investors.</p>
	<p>Page 4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>B. Economic</p> <p>4. Redistribution of wealth: taxation, subsidies, welfare</p> <p>Delegates underlined the importance of improving social justice in Bahrain. They agreed that this could be done by increasing subsidies for the less privileged while reducing overall benefits, without affecting basic wages and needs. In this context, they called for an in-depth study to identify low-income target groups and improve the redistribution of government support.</p>
Natural resources	No specific mention.
International funds	No specific mention.
Business	No specific mention.

Taxation

Socio-economic reconstruction→Taxation→Reform of taxation

Page 3-4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

B. Economic

4. Redistribution of wealth: taxation, subsidies, welfare

The National Dialogue agreed that social justice should be improved, without discrimination, through a revision of taxes, subsidies and welfare benefits to ensure a more efficient redistribution of wealth. The Dialogue agreed on ways to improve government revenues, for instance by establishing mechanisms to manage the expenditure of government institutions and restructuring national companies and organisations to improve productivity and competitiveness. Delegates backed a comprehensive study that will explore ways of increasing indirect taxes and introducing a corporate income tax in line with GCC rules. Some participants saw these taxes as a necessary and beneficial step to improve the national economy while others feared that it would deter investors.

Banks

Socio-economic reconstruction→Banks→Personal or commercial banking

Page 3, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights

B. Economic

1. Boosting competitiveness

Several proposals were put forward to help increase Bahrain's economic competitiveness in regional and international markets. Consensus was reached to accelerate the implementation of the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030. Delegates highlighted the need to diversify the country's sources of income, reducing dependence on oil and boosting sectors such as tourism, industry, and real estate among others. All delegates agreed to strengthen commercial arbitration through specialised courts and judges involved in the resolution of commercial, banking and financial disputes. A decision was taken to upgrade existing legislation governing privatisation rules in support of Bahrain's economic interests. Delegates also asked to fast track the publication of consumer protection laws.

Land, property and environment

Land reform/rights No specific mention.

**Pastoralist/
nomadism rights** No specific mention.

Cultural heritage	<p>Land, property and environment→Cultural heritage→Promotion</p> <p>Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>D. Rights</p> <p>2. National and international human rights commitments</p> <p>Bahrain is a party to 7 of the 9 international covenants under the umbrella of the UN. Delegates urged Bahrain to sign and ratify further international human rights treaties and protocols, while respecting its religious and cultural traditions. At the same time, they stressed that international human rights commitments should be fully transposed into national legislation. Participants called on the government to regularly review its reservations towards certain international human rights agreements, and asked that the oversight for human rights organisations be transferred from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Rights to the Parliament.</p>
Environment	No specific mention.
Water or riparian rights or access	No specific mention.

Security sector

Security Guarantees	<p>Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>3. Civil security and peace</p> <p>Participants called for better implementation of legislation on security and peace in the wake of the February and March events. Participants agreed to strengthen to role of governorates (administrative districts) in promoting social cohesion, and increase the role of security forces in humanitarian efforts. Participants recognised the importance of resolving the issues surrounding redundancies during the recent unrest. They recommended looking at international best practices in finding solutions to overcome sectarian divides and support the healing process after the recent crisis.</p> <p>Page 5-6, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>E. Foreign Residents</p> <p>... Members of the Indian, Pakistan and Philippine community sought greater assurances of their personal safety and security in the wake of recent events, calling for compensation for those affected by the unrest.</p>
Ceasefire	No specific mention.

Police	<p>Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>D. Rights</p> <p>2. National and international human rights commitments</p> <p>The National Dialogue has taken several steps to reaffirm Bahrain's commitment to human rights. Delegates confirmed the country's human rights obligations outlined in the National Charter and the Constitution. In the wake of recent events, they agreed to establish a national body for reconciliation and fairness and called for a national programme to promote human rights awareness among official and civil society organisations, and in particular among law enforcement personnel.</p>
Armed forces	<p>Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>3. Civil security and peace</p> <p>Participants called for better implementation of legislation on security and peace in the wake of the February and March events. Participants agreed to strengthen to role of governorates (administrative districts) in promoting social cohesion, and increase the role of security forces in humanitarian efforts. Participants recognised the importance of resolving the issues surrounding redundancies during the recent unrest. They recommended looking at international best practices in finding solutions to overcome sectarian divides and support the healing process after the recent crisis</p>
DDR	No specific mention.
Intelligence services	No specific mention.
Parastatal/rebel and opposition group forces	No specific mention.
Withdrawal of foreign forces	No specific mention.
Corruption	<p>Page 3-4, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights</p> <p>B. Economic</p> <p>3. Fighting corruption, improving transparency</p> <p>The National Dialogue has taken action to fight corruption and increase transparency in public life. Participants called on the National Audit Court to take legal action against those who misuse public funds. Delegates have agreed to establish an independent authority to oversee and implement comprehensive management policies and financial transparency (governance) in ministries and institutions, in line with international standards. Companies with a government share of 30% and more should be committed to the same management policy and transparency procedures. Board members of government related organisations and companies should be limited to 2 terms and 1 board membership at any one time. Participants called for all recommendations published by the parliament's investigation committee relating to state property and reclaimed land (landfill) to be fully implemented.</p>

Crime/organised crime No specific mention.

Drugs No specific mention.

Terrorism No specific mention.

Transitional justice

Transitional justice general	Page 4-5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights 3. Civil security and peace In the aftermath of recent unrest and heightened sectarian tension, the National Dialogue focused on ways to improve civil peace and security. Delegates reached consensus on ensuring that no legislation is discriminatory and called for the criminalisation of discriminatory practices. They agreed to develop a national programme to promote a culture of “citizenship and civility” in the country’s education and media strategies in partnership with civil society.
Amnesty/pardon	No specific mention.
Courts	No specific mention.
Mechanism	No specific mention.
Prisoner release	No specific mention.
Vetting	No specific mention.
Victims	No specific mention.
Missing persons	No specific mention.
Reparations	No specific mention.
Reconciliation	Page 5, III. Main outcomes under the four main policy areas: Political, Economic, Social and Rights D. Rights 2. National and international human rights commitments The National Dialogue has taken several steps to reaffirm Bahrain’s commitment to human rights. Delegates confirmed the country’s human rights obligations outlined in the National Charter and the Constitution. In the wake of recent events, they agreed to establish a national body for reconciliation and fairness and called for a national programme to promote human rights awareness among official and civil society organisations, and in particular among law enforcement personnel.

Implementation

UN signatory	No specific mention.
Other international signatory	No specific mention.

Referendum for agreement	No specific mention.
International mission/force/similar	No specific mention.
Enforcement mechanism	No specific mention.
Related cases	No specific mention.
Source	Hammonda. Mid East Politics, Language, Media, Pop Culture http://hammonda.net/?p=368
