



Dear Editor,

We would like to correct false allegations stated in Ghassan Dhaif's column, "I was convicted for treating protesters. Now I face arrest any time." – July 16th, 2012.

Firstly, it is crucial to clarify that no medic has been charged with treating protestors as the column claims. The charges brought against the medics were primarily for their involvement in politicizing their profession, breaching medical ethics and, most seriously, their call and involvement in the overthrow of the monarchy.

The BICI report states "[the medics] moved in and out of their roles as political activists and medical personnel" (para 834) and that "most of the ground floor including the Emergency Section, the ICU and the administrative section, were taken over and controlled by medical personnel, resulting in difficulties in the Emergency Section" (paras, 834 & 847). There were also incidents of mistreatment of expatriates (para 838), and even cases of unlawful detention of patients (BICI, para, 769). In addition, the BICI report also found cases of medical personnel actively spreading false information (BICI, para, 835). Not only were these claims a breach Bahraini law, but also a breach of their profession's ethical code.

Contrary to Dhaif's claim that the "Ministry of Health and security forces [were ordered] not send ambulances" which he claims was confirmed by the BICI report, where in fact the report states "whether such restrictions were designed to limit access to the crime scene or secure the wellbeing of the ambulance staff, or whether there were other reasons, is the subject of different accounts which cannot be reconciled" (para 844)

We reject Dhaif's allegation that the Government has not had "any form of redress, compensation or accountability of the officials responsible for [the] violations" mentioned in the BICI report, as many of the recommendations from the report have been implemented to ensure just that. Those who suffered any abuse or mistreatment have the right to seek compensation from the Victim's Compensation Fund, a fund that has already paid out more than \$2.6 million. In terms of accountability, those who have committed violations, the Public Prosecution Special Investigation Unit (SIU) investigated 72 accused security personnel, including officers of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and referred 12

cases involving 19 accused to the courts. Recently, one member of the security forces was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for injuring a protestor; and 3 policemen's charges were raised from manslaughter to murder where they could face life imprisonment or the death penalty.

The medics have had the previous verdict reviewed (as per the report recommendation) and many gave testimony detailing their experiences before a judge. Any improperly acquired evidence was dismissed. But it is important to stress that the court guarantees a fair trial process, and although the collation of evidence may take time, it ensures the rights of citizens and abidance by rule of law. This process has acquitted 9 of the medics on trial, and the remaining still have the right to appeal, including Dhaif.

Regards,
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