



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



Department  
for International  
Development

Lord Faulkner  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0AA

24 July 2020

*Dear Richard,*

Thank you for posing the below question during the recent House of Lords Private Notice Question on Bahrain which took place on 8 July:

*Why has the 2018 Foreign Affairs Committee report on the effectiveness of UK assistance to Bahrain not yet been properly debated, and why has the review that was promised not yet taken place? The report referred to the gravity of human rights violations there. The FCO was urged to review the current situation in Bahrain and report its findings to us to further consider whether funding for the Special Investigations Unit should continue. Why has that not taken place? Can the Minister look at that again?*

The FCO's response of 23 November 2018 to the Foreign Affairs Committee's report *Global Britain: Human rights and the Rule of Law*, makes clear that Bahrain remains an FCO human rights priority country, particularly because of the use of the death penalty, allegations of torture and mistreatment in detention and concerns over freedom of expression and assembly.

The response explained that the FCO's assessment of the current situation in Bahrain is published in the Annual FCO Human Rights and Democracy Report, the latest version of which was published on 16 July 2020. We monitor developments on all matters that relate to human rights within the country closely. We continue to believe that Bahrain is taking steps in the right direction to improve its human rights record on justice and security issues, in line with the Government's plan, which built on the reform recommendations set out in the 2012 BICI Report.

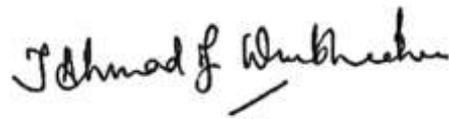
We and the Government of Bahrain acknowledge this is a work in progress. Our support for this Bahrain-led reform – through both political engagement and technical assistance – is helping to build effective and accountable institutions, strengthen and

modernise the rule of law and deliver justice reform, including the use of alternatives to imprisonment. We are clear that stopping public and private dialogue, and technical assistance makes achieving the positive reform that Bahrain and the international community seek less likely.

All technical assistance programmes funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are monitored and evaluated by officials on a quarterly basis. I am satisfied that the Bahrain programme continues to meet programme and contract requirements and to comply with our domestic and international human rights obligations.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**  
Minister of State for the South Asia and the Commonwealth  
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict