



The global network
DEFENDING AND PROMOTING
FREE EXPRESSION

TO:

HM Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
Office of HM the King
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace
Kingdom of Bahrain

CC:

H. E. Mr Muhammad Abdul Ghaffar
Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain to UNESCO

Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifah
Foreign Affairs Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al-Khalifa
Interior Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain

27 June 2016

Your Excellency,

IFEX, the global network of 104 organisations working to promote and defend freedom of expression worldwide, writes to you regarding your response to the UNESCO Director-General's 2016 request to provide information on the status of judicial inquiries into the killing of Ahmed Ismael Hassan Al Samadi that occurred on 31 March 2012.

While we welcome the information that you provided on this case in 2013 and 2015, we encourage you to continue this trend of accountability and submit the relevant updated information to be included in the upcoming 2016 report on *The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity*, and to grant permission to make this information publicly available. In addition to having your efforts recognized in the Director-General's report, this act of transparency and cooperation will be reflected positively in Bahrain's upcoming Universal Periodic Review taking place in May 2017.

The biennial Director-General's report was commissioned by the International Programme for the Development of Communications (IPDC) as a means for States to demonstrate their commitment to addressing crimes against journalists and media workers by providing detailed information on the steps

being taken to achieve justice and end impunity.

Since 2006, more than 700 killings of journalists and media workers have occurred worldwide. In over 90% of these cases, the perpetrators have gone unpunished. This type of extreme unchecked violence is the ultimate form of censorship and severely curtails the flow of information necessary for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society to flourish. The culture of impunity that has developed around this issue only makes it more likely that such crimes will continue to occur. For this reason, the issue of impunity for killings of journalists is one of the greatest threats to freedom of expression and information worldwide.

To ensure that your efforts are documented in the 2016 report, we call on your government to demonstrate your leadership and accountability by submitting the relevant information to UNESCO before **15 July 2016**. In so doing, you will be helping to improve political will to address violence, building a global repertoire of best legal practices, and showing that attacks on freedom of expression in Bahrain will not be tolerated.

We look forward to your response to this letter and to seeing updated information on the case of Ahmed Ismael Hassan Al Samadi made public in the 2016 Report and on the UNESCO website. For more information visit:

<http://www.ifex.org/noimpunity>

<http://www.unesco.org/en/safetyofjournalists>

Sincerely,

Annie Game,



Executive Director of IFEX

