



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Dear members,

A brief update of the BHRC activities during May.

STATEMENTS

International Crimes Tribunal - **BANGLADESH**

On the 17th May, the BHRC expressed deep concern over the news that Shukhoranjan Bali, the prosecution-turned defence witness in the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Bangladesh, has been located in an Indian jail in Calcutta. Bali has been missing since 5th November 2012 following his alleged abduction from the door of the Court where he was due to give evidence in the case of Delwar Hossein Sayedee. Sayedee now has been convicted and sentenced to hang and his appeal is listed shortly. [Click here](#) to see the BHRC May 17th Statement.

Prior to this, the BHRC has expressed deep reservations about the fairness of proceedings in the Sayedee trial. See previous BHRC Statements [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#)

MAY PUBLIC EVENT

Access to Justice in Iran - The trial of the seven Baha'i leaders - **IRAN**

On 9th May, The Law Society and the BHRC co-hosted a seminar on trial and sentencing of seven former Baha'i leaders in Iran. The panel discussed issues of access to justice in Iran, with a focus on the case of the seven former leaders of the Baha'i community. The event marked five years since the seven former leaders of the Bahá'í community in Iran were tried and sentenced to 20 years in prison for their religious beliefs. Their trial and sentencing is a concerning case of religious persecution and oppression against religious and ethnic minorities in Iran.



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The event was chaired by Kirsty Brimelow QC, Chairwoman of the BHRC, and the panel included Dr Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran; Dr Nazila Ghanea, Member of the OSCE Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief; and Ms Mahnaz Parakand, Iranian human rights lawyer. The event was organised by the Baha'i community of the UK. Following the event, the Foreign Office released a statement on the persecution urging Iran to free Baha'i leaders [\[see statement\]](#).

FORTHCOMING JUNE EVENT - **GAMBIA**

Fear Rules: Life Imprisonment for Wearing a T-Shirt. The Deteriorating Human Rights Situation in Gambia. 12 June 2013 at 6.00 pm

Event co-hosted by Amnesty International UK and the Bar Human Rights Committee (BHRC). Venue: Amnesty International UK, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA

Event's outline: The human rights situation in Gambia, already poor, has deteriorated markedly in recent years. In August 2012, for the first time in nearly 30 years, the death penalty was carried out, as nine death row inmates were executed without prior notification. Government opponents and human rights defenders face arbitrary arrest, torture and detention. The judiciary lack independence and government opponents are continuously prosecuted in a system devoid of free and fair trial. The President has repeatedly issued vitriolic homophobic statements and threatened to "cut off the head" of any LGBT person found in the country. As a result of the human rights situation, significant numbers of Gambians seek asylum in the UK every year.

The aim of the seminar is to raise awareness as to the human rights situation in Gambia and the experiences of Gambian nationals seeking international protection in the UK.

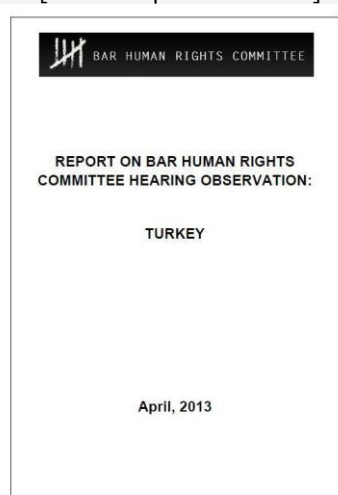
Please [click here](#) to see further event's details

LATEST BHRC REPORTS

Third hearing observation Report - **TURKEY**

On the 30th April, the BHRC launched an observation report on a pre-trial hearing in the case of 46 Turkish lawyers accused of terrorist activities. This report should be read in conjunction with the previous report from the 3rd January 2013 [\[see report\]](#), which concluded that the trial was of a highly political nature and that the procedural irregularities may lead to breaches of internationally recognised fair trial standards and principles on the role of lawyers.

[Click on report to access it]



NEW BHRC PARTNERSHIPS - NEPAL

BHRC began collaboration with the Witchcraft & Human Rights Information Network (WHRIN) to produce a country report on violence against women accused of witchcraft in Nepal. The report will look to explore in-depth the issue and make a number of recommendations aimed at key stake holders in Nepal. The BHRC recruited a *pro-bono* Consultant from its membership to work on this groundbreaking publication.
