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Postponing UN High Commissioner's visit to Bahrain raises concerns over conditions of detainees

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) stated that postponing the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Bahrain -which came at the request of the Bahraini authorities- raises concerns about the conditions of detainees who went on a hunger strike for a month to demand improvement of their detention conditions.

The visit aimed to inspect prison conditions and its compliance with the international standards of places of detention, however the Bahraini authorities postponed the visit indefinitely.

The political prisoners in Bahrain had entered a hunger strike to improve their detention conditions, however, following promises to improve detention conditions, the detainees suspended their strike until the evaluation at the end of the month.

The political prisoners in Bahrain have the right to freedom, especially those who were arrested more than a decade ago while participating in peaceful protests calling for consolidating democracy in the country.

AOHR UK called on the administration of President Joe Biden, who is scheduled to meet with the Bahraini Crown Prince on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting, to pressure Bahrain to release political prisoners and uphold the freedom of opinion and expression.

These developments coincide with the visit of activist Maryam Al-Khawaja to Bahrain to see her detained father, Abdul Hadi Al-Khawaja, accompanied by a delegation of international human rights defenders. Concerns over her possible arrest or



harassment due to her international human rights activities, or subjecting her father to punitive measures, continue.

The organisation held the Bahraini authorities fully responsible for Al-Khawaja's health, as he suffers from heart diseases. Al-Khawaja also is the only detainee who is still on a hunger strike due to the lack of medical care.

AOHR UK called on all international human rights bodies, political parties and the media to use all means to guarantee the freedom and safety of prisoners of conscience in Bahrain and to work to consolidate the foundations of democracy in Bahraini society.

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