

MPs, lawyers welcome alternative punishments



Implementation of alternative punishments could replace street cleaners with accused.

Move expected to bring down burden on prisons

Alternative punishments may include house arrests, community work, enrollment in training and rehabilitation programmes as well as electronic surveillance.

TDT|Manama
Muhannad Mansour

Describing the move as a significant progress to the judiciary system, the implementation of new alternative punishments was welcomed by lawyers and lawmakers alike.

The law was first declared by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on July 19, 2017, introducing a number of penalties other than imprisonment and offering judges and the Public Prosecution extra options and jurisdictions.

The alternative punishments include five procedures against defendants, such as house arrests, community work, enrollment in training and rehabilitation programmes, electronic surveillance that includes monitoring of social media accounts and emails, compensating the damages caused as a result of the crime and more.

As reported, the Public Prosecution on Sunday announced that it has implemented the new law on 11 female convicts for the first time.

Public Prosecutor General Attorney

Dr Ali Al Buainain confirmed in a statement that the new punishments would help ease congestion in prisons and help in some cases with relation to family stability and living conditions.

He added that the verdicts issued against the women varied between community service and enrollment in training and rehabilitation programmes. However, Dr Al Buainain didn't disclose any information on the nature of the crimes committed by the female convicts.

To speak more on the new law, Tribune yesterday spoke to the Head of the Legislative and Legal Committee in the Council of Representatives Shaikh Majid Al Majid.

Mr Al Majid welcomed the implementation of the new alternative punishments, saying, "this reflects the concern of the wise leadership on the sustainable development of the judicial authority. It's a significant improvement and a legal milestone for the Kingdom, internationally. These efforts are praised as they contribute to reducing negative effects of the crimes committed on the society and the convicts."

"The enforcement of the alternative punishments law proves that each convict gets penalised in accordance with the gravity of the crimes committed. Be it imprisonment sentences or any of the penalties mentioned in the new law, suiting all criminal, civil, labour and family cases. This move reflects the integrity of the judiciary system and is

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become active members of the Bahraini society again."

Tribune spoke to another Bahraini lawyer, Ibtissam Al Sabbagh, who commented, "All fields witness constant improvements, such as medicine, arbitration and other sectors. The law is considered as an advanced punishment system and will lighten the pressure on correctional facilities. It will depend on judges' evaluation, vision and judgement of the offences committed. The law reflects positively on the society and would contribute to the efforts to reduce public money expenditure.

She opined, "Psychiatrically, the inmates would gain several benefits, such as avoiding mixing with other criminals involved in more serious cases and maybe be influenced by them, regain their positions in the society and make a living."

"The house arrest punishment is most likely to be used in some cases involving businessmen and investors who're indebted or bankrupt. It will allow them to work from home and run their businesses, eventually paying back any debts they owe to individuals or entities. As for electronic crimes, the law introduces electronic monitoring, which may include the platform the convict used to commit the crimes," Al Sabbagh said, adding that "it all depends on the judges' ruling".

civil accomplishment for Bahrain," he added.

Speaking on the economic gains of the execution of the new law, Bahraini Lawyer Fatma BinRajab explained, "The punishments are aimed at reducing pressure on prisons, as the State bears the expenses of operating correctional facilities and is responsible for the care of inmates. Having a big number of inmates in prisons is surely an additional burden on the state budget. This law would limit such unnecessary

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BinRajab also said while elaborating more on the impact of the new law on the existing Penal Code, "The alternative punishments law would add the new penalties to Article 81 of the Penal Code, giving judges more options. This has a positive impact on the society and the convicts, as it serves convicts' rehabilitation and integration with different fields of the society. They would certainly gain more social and work experiences that qualify them to

CRIME

Terror suspects jailed

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The fourth High Criminal Court yesterday issued its verdicts against ten terror suspects, Terror Crime Chief Prosecutor Advocate General Ahmed Al Hamadi said.

The convicts were accused of joining a terrorist group, training on using and making fire weapons to commit terror crimes, making and illegally possessing fire weapons and ammunition and attacking policemen.

The court sentenced one of the suspects to 15 years in jail, two to ten years, six to three years, acquitted one and ruled the revocation of the Bahraini citizenship of the first 9 suspects. It also ordered confiscation of the seized items.

Police investigation showed implication of four suspects in shooting policemen in 2016 with a homemade firearm while they were deployed

on Al Janabiyah public road.

Two suspects were arrested and the firearm, bullets as well as materials used for making homemade fire weapons were found in their possession.

Subsequent investigations also showed that one of the suspects gave the fire weapon to another suspect to shoot policemen. Three suspects were also implicated in another shooting incident which targeted a police patrol deployed on Al Janabiyah road.

The Public Prosecution relied in substantiating the accusations on verbal and technical evidences as well as the suspects' confessions and referred all the suspects, including eight in custody to the fourth High Criminal Court. It also ordered to arrest the two suspects who are still at large.

The court heard the case in the presence of the suspects' lawyers while ensuring all legal guarantees.



Stripping of nationality means, the convicts would lose their passports as well as national identity documents and become a 'stateless person'. They will not be eligible for any social welfare schemes.



Public Security Chief Taraq bin Hassan Al Hassan received today newly-appointed Chinese Ambassador to Bahrain An Wa'er. He lauded strong relations between the two friendly countries and the advanced level of bilateral cooperation mainly in the security field.



Coast Guard Commander Brigadier Alaa Siyadi yesterday received Commander of the US Naval Forces Central Command and the 5th Fleet Vice-Admiral Admiral Scott A Stearney. They reviewed bilateral relations and topics of common interests.