

February 13, 2024

Mohammed Ben Sulayem, President
Natalie Robyn, Chief Executive Officer
Federation Internationale de l'Automobile
8 Place de la Concorde
75008 Paris, France

Dear Mr. Ben Sulayem and Ms. Robyn:

I am writing on behalf of Human Rights First, a non-governmental human rights organization based in the United States, to express our concern about the possible participation of Bahrain's Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa in events during the [upcoming Bahrain Grand Prix](#), scheduled for March 1-2, 2024.

We strongly urge that Shaikh Nasser, who has been the subject of long-standing torture allegations, not be chosen to award the winners of the event, or otherwise participate in the Bahrain Grand Prix.

As you may know, the United States Department of State is currently considering Human Rights First's [recent recommendation](#) that it impose visa sanctions against Shaikh Nasser for his alleged direct involvement in gross violations of human rights.

In 2011, during the Bahrain government's violent crackdown on pro-democracy protests, Shaikh Nasser publicly [called for](#) "accountability" for anyone who opposed the regime and took the [lead](#) in identifying athletes who participated in demonstrations. He is alleged to have personally subjected political prisoners to severe beatings. In public statements and testimony during judicial proceedings, multiple survivors have offered evidence of Shaikh Nasser's direct acts of torture.

The FIA's [Statement of Commitment to Respect for Human Rights](#) affirms its commitment to respecting internationally recognized human rights in its operations. This commendable commitment should extend in practice to all aspects of its operations, including award ceremonies.

As per the Formula 1 [Sporting Regulations](#), we note that the winning driver's award is often presented by the head of state or prime minister of the host country, or the FIA President, or by an appropriate proxy. At the 2022 Bahrain Grand Prix, Shaikh Nasser was given the honor of [presenting the awards](#) to podium finishers.

We urgently call upon you to confirm publicly, within seven days of receipt of this letter, that Shaikh Nasser will not be invited to present awards to the winners of the upcoming Bahrain Grand Prix. Providing him with such a prestigious platform would compromise the integrity of the event and the principles the FIA seeks to uphold.

Sincerely,



Michael Breen
President & CEO
Human Rights First