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Bahrain**

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International experience. Local knowledge.

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1.0 Executive Summary

Overall Threat Level: **LOW to MEDIUM**

Bahrain is a small island nation physically linked only to Saudi Arabia via the King Fahd Causeway. The overall threat level is between low and medium, but can easily be managed with security planning and precautions.

The country's main threats stem from the unofficial Shiite opposition, as opposed to those involved in the political process. This broadly is linked to the country's Sunni ruling family governing over a Shiite majority population. Although protests and other opposition activity have substantially diminished since those of the 2011 "Arab Spring", they still occur on a daily (often nightly) basis, causing localised disruptions largely but not exclusively in towns outside of Manama with populations sympathetic to the opposition. Shiite militancy is also a persistent threat, although the number of homemade IED attacks have notably declined and the vast majority of incidents lately involve Molotov cocktails targeting security personnel or installations. Despite this, civilians and their property can be caught in the crossfire, while perceptions that non-violent methods are ineffective can push more opposition sympathisers, particularly among the youth, toward militancy.

Both opposition activity and low-level militancy tend to increase surrounding holidays, anniversaries, and events symbolic to the opposition. In order to better prepare, Le Beck provides a list of such dates in [Appendix Two](#) of this report.

There are also inherent threats linked to the country's economic situation, including low oil prices and the necessity of cutting government spending. Bahrain has already implemented subsidy cuts and has concrete plans to increase non-oil revenue, but it must tread carefully when altering the long-standing social contract. More importantly, unemployment, and particularly youth unemployment, which is higher, can lead to dissatisfaction and an increase in crime, especially petty crime.

It is important to note, however, whenever addressing political and economic-related risk in Bahrain that Saudi Arabia remains an essential ally and any major security or economic is likely to be countered by measures from Riyadh and/or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This is evidenced by Saudi intervention alongside the UAE under the auspices of the GCC Peninsula Shield Force in March 2011 shortly after the protests began, as well as financial aid pledged by the GCC to both Bahrain and Oman that same month.

When it comes to crime, levels are low, particularly for violent crime, although there are recurring issues connected to forced labor, debt-bondage, and human trafficking. For the banking sector, skimming scams continue to occur, although chipped cards, SMS messaging regarding transactions, and awareness efforts are proving to combat this phenomenon.

Finally, legal and cultural differences can pose problems for foreign employees who do not familiarise themselves with differing laws and norms. Le Beck lays down some of the key differences in this report's sections on crime and religion/culture.

2.0 Political Risk and Stability

2.1 Overview and Main Threats

Overall Threat Level: **MEDIUM**

Bahrain continues to face risk related to Sunni minority rule over a Shiite majority population. This includes civil unrest that has persisted since the 2011 protests, low-level militancy, legal crackdowns targeting official Shiite opposition groups, and socio-economic concerns linked to an oil dependent economy that faces low oil prices. For the latter, please see [Fiscal Risk and Stability](#) section below.

2.2 Political Opposition

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

2.2.1. Intra-government opposition

Following the outbreak of the 2011 protests, there emerged two distinct factions within the ruling family. On one side was the king's eldest son and successor, Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, who supported reconciliation talks with the opposition and political reform. On the other side was the king's uncle and the prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, who opposed offering concessions and supported a more heavy-handed approach. This dynamic helps explain the various responses seen post-2011 from reconciliation talks and the establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to the forcible dispersal of protesters, harsh sentences, and recent legal action taken toward prominent opposition figures and organizations. These disagreements, however, should not be exaggerated and do not likely represent any major break within the royal family, including regarding succession.

Although the royal family holds the majority of power, the country is a constitutional monarchy and has two legislative bodies. The Upper House, known as the Majlis al-Shura, is appointed by the king, while the Lower House, the Majlis al-Nuwab, is elected (hereafter "Parliament"). The most recent elections were held in November 2014 and resulted in the underrepresentation of the Shiite population. This was due to several reasons, including a boycott by the Shiite opposition and redistricting. As a result, the majority of victors were independents. Although the powers of the elected body is limited and doesn't pose a direct threat per se, they can hinder government activity. In December 2013, for example, MPs boycotted parliamentary sessions due to plans to cut fuel subsidies, causing the government to postpone its implementation in order to "reassess" the proposed policy. (Fuel subsidies were, indeed, cut but not until December 2015.)

2.2.2 Shiite opposition

Bahrain's Shiite opposition can be broadly categorized into two distinct groups. The first is the official societies that have previously fielded candidates in elections and have held government-sanctioned protests. The most prominent and largest, al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, would frequently hold large-scale peaceful demonstrations, including along the Budaiya Highway. However, the government's attitude and approach to al-Wefaq shifted following the 2014 elections boycott. At the end of November 2014, the home of al-Wefaq's spiritual leader Isa Qassim was raided, while the following December the group's Secretary General Ali Salman was arrested. In June of 2016, a court

ordered al-Wefaq’s suspension and revoked Qassim’s citizenship. These actions have essentially removed al-Wefaq’s ability to act as a legitimate and meaningful opposition.

Protests condemning these actions, however, continue to occur by elements of what can be considered the unofficial opposition. These groups, which include the more well-known February 14 Youth Coalition and al-Wafa Islamic Party, are outlawed by the government and considered to be “terrorist organizations” or affiliates of such groups. Members and supporters of these groups engage in small-scale demonstrations, low-level militancy, and extensive online anti-government rhetoric. Although they certainly pose a threat, their actions are largely localised to areas outside of Manama and the Seef District. There are also indications that their numbers are limited, including due to diminishing support among the broader population caused by, among others, economic disruptions due to frequent roadblocks and other civil unrest. For more, please see the sections on Civil Unrest and Militancy below.

2.3 Civil Unrest

Overall Threat Level: **MEDIUM**

2.3.1 Protests

Bahrain sees daily protests by the Shiite opposition with the after dark hours and Fridays some of the more popular times. With few exceptions, these are small-scale and see turnout ranging from one to the high dozens but often on the lower end of the spectrum. Risks associated with demonstrations are localized disruptions: Although many protests conclude without incident, all bear the risk to see forcible dispersal, often with tear gas and particularly if participants attempt to move in the direction of sensitive locations or installations such as police stations or highways. Locations at primary risk for such disruptions include certain neighbourhoods of Manama, including Juffair and the Manama Souq area (see Figure 1), as well as towns outside of the capital that have populations sympathetic to the opposition.

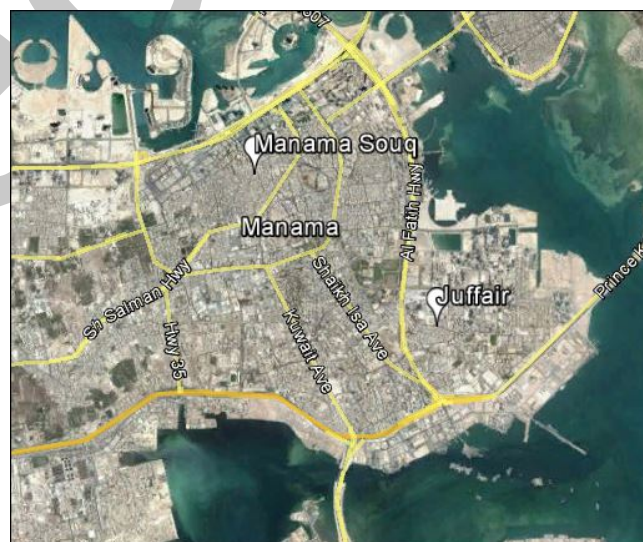


Figure 1: Popular locations in Manama for opposition activity

It is important to note that there is anti-Western sentiment among the opposition. Following the 2011 protests, two general schools of thought emerged regarding US and British support and presence in Bahrain. The first argued that it offered some level of restraint on Bahrain’s government that would be even more harsh in their absence. The other claimed that it justified government crackdowns. The unofficial opposition has largely adopted the latter and have engaged in protests that condemn their presence, including the burning of images of the British and American flags. Roadblocks are often also set in Juffair “on the road leading to the US naval base” (see more on these below) although in practice they are often further from the base than claimed. Despite this, Westerners rarely, if ever directly come under direct physical threat from either demonstrations or roadblocks aside from corresponding travel disruptions.

2.3.2 Roadblocks

Roadblocks, which largely consist of tire or rubbish fires, are also a near daily occurrence. Although they are more common within opposition sympathetic towns and neighbourhoods, main roads can also be affected, including the Budaiya and Sheikh Salman Highways. These disruptions almost exclusively involve traffic congestion and are usually resolved swiftly. As noted above, there has been rising criticism among the general population regarding this type of opposition activity, which are increasingly seen as damaging to the economy, such as to shop owners in the Manama Souq.

2.3.3 Holidays and Anniversaries

In the days surrounding holidays, anniversaries, or other notable events associated with the 2011 protests, such as February 14, March 14, and the Formula 1 race, the disruptions caused by civil unrest and low-level militancy often rise due to an increase in their numbers and frequency. See [Appendix Two](#) for a list of such dates. Coordinated roadblocks and/or rounds of protests, for example, may be planned. These often trigger increased security deployments and checkpoints, which can also cause limited travel disruptions.

The opposition occasionally will also plan for boycotts or strikes surrounding major anniversaries, including of gas stations, shopping centers, and educational facilities and sometimes involving calls to shut all exterior lights. These are almost exclusively localized to towns with opposition sympathetic populations and rarely, if ever have affected the business or tourist areas.

2.4 Militancy

Overall Threat Level: LOW to MEDIUM

2.4.1 Sunni Militancy – Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

Sunni militancy is rare in Bahrain although its majority Shiite population, Westerner expatriate population, and more lax laws (regarding alcohol, for example) certainly makes it a desirable target for Islamic State (IS). In fact, there is an IS “province” called the Bahrain Province, but which has been responsible for only one attack thus far in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province, that is, an October 2015 shooting targeting Shiites in Saihat. This is despite IS’s “Najd Province” claiming prior attacks in that area. Rather than demonstrating IS operations in Bahrain, the name was likely intended to send a message of expansion (even if it wasn’t actually expanding) and stoke fear among the Bahrain’s population.

There are various reasons why IS has faced difficulties in operating in Bahrain and/or focuses its attention primarily in Saudi Arabia. Firstly, there are significant challenges to recruitment given the Shiite majority population and good relations between the Sunni minority and the ruling family. In addition, although there certainly are high numbers of expatriate workers in the country who could be susceptible to online radicalisation, their numbers are substantially smaller than that of larger countries. Secondly, Bahrain is more difficult to reach, with only two main points of entry into the island through the King Fahd Causeway with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain International Airport, both of which require travellers to pass through customs and other security. Regarding the King Fahd Causeway, hundreds of thousands of people cross this bridge on a weekly basis; however, any would-be attacker would also have to avoid the attention of Saudi security and intelligence forces. Saudi Arabia is also likely a more preferred target for IS, given the increased ability to recruit among the population and the presence of Islam’s two holiest sites in Mecca and Medina. Regarding the

former, Saudi nationals comprise one of the highest numbers of foreign fighters abroad, indicating that at least some elements of the population are more susceptible to radicalisation, possibly due to the strict interpretation of Islam practiced there as opposed to in Bahrain.

This indicates that, while IS will certainly remain interested in attacking the island, its capabilities are much more limited. In this context, the main threat likely stems from a lone-wolf style attack from a foreign national (i.e. not home grown). The perpetrator would radicalise relatively quickly online so as not to garner the attention of local intelligence forces and involve more unsophisticated means, such as small arms, which are less easily traced and less likely to trigger red flags.

2.4.2 Shiite Militancy – Overall Threat Level: **MEDIUM**

Shiite militancy rose following the outbreak of the 2011 protests and the perceived failure of demonstrations to effect concrete change. Despite accusations by the government that some dismantled cells had links to and/or received training from Shiite elements in Lebanon, Iran, or Iraq, their methods remain largely unsophisticated. This includes homemade explosive devices, such as pipe bombs, as well as small arms and Molotov cocktails, the latter being the most common. In addition, while a number of attacks have caused casualties, this often appears to result from more strategic placement rather than larger-scale or more sophisticated devices or materials. There are also Shiite militant groups that claim to operate in the country and conduct attacks, but which are never claimed and seem to operate exclusively on social media.

Notably, the number of incidents of militancy dropped substantially in 2016, with the most recent IED occurring in al-Eker in July when a bomb likely meant for security personnel detonated as a civilian drove by, killing one woman and injuring three children. The assessment that it was intended for security personnel is based on the overwhelming majority of attacks that target security personnel and installations. The is true also for Molotov cocktails, which are still reported on a near nightly basis. Please see [Appendix One](#) for a list of incidents from 2015 to 2016.

Although Shiite opposition and militant groups have expressed anti-Western sentiment (opposing, for example, the American and British military presence in Bahrain), Western expatriates have rarely, if ever come under direct attack. On occasion, however, foreigners from non-Western countries have been killed or injured due to militancy, such as in December 2014 in Karzakkan in western Bahrain. Moreover, as demonstrated by the incident in al-Eker, civilians can be harmed or their property damaged even if not directly targeted. A resurgence of low-level militancy aside from Molotov cocktails also cannot be ruled out, given the relative ease in which homemade IEDs can be built and despite the capabilities of the country's security and intelligence forces. In this context, the unofficial opposition, whose ranks include youth, are susceptible to radicalisation, particularly if they begin or continue to perceive non-violent methods as ineffective.

2.5 Media

Overall Threat Level: MEDIUM

Bahrain has significant restrictions on freedom of expression that include strict laws related to criticism of the royal family and allies, state security, as well as the ability to censor and ban material and regulate the Internet. Journalists, for example, are subject to the 2002 Press Law, which can see a sentence of up to five years in prison for, among others, criticising the king or royal family and undermining or inciting actions that undermine state security. The same holds true for the average citizen or resident: In 2014, a law was passed that imposed a prison sentence of up to seven years

and as much as a 10,000 Bahrain Dinar fine for publicly insulting the king, its flag, or its “national emblem”. There is also a law that stipulates prison time and/or a fine for equivalent criticism of an ally, namely, “publicly offending a country of international organization that has headquarters in the Kingdom of Bahrain, or its president or representative in the Kingdom, and whoever publicly offends its flag or emblem”.

Those operating in Bahrain should err on the side of caution when communicating in public, including on social media, and refrain from criticising the Bahraini government or those of its allies. Westerners are not exempt from these laws, as evidenced by the detention of four American journalists covering the anniversary of the 2011 protests in February 2015. Although later released, one was accused of, among others, participating in an attack against police.

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3.0 Fiscal Risk and Stability

3.1 Overview and Main Threats

Overall Threat Level: **LOW** to **MEDIUM**

Like other countries that rely heavily on oil revenue, Bahrain's economy has been hit by low oil prices causing it, alongside the other GCC states, to begin gradually cutting back on subsidies as a means of reducing public sector spending. Despite these and other austerity measures based on an International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance plan, the World Bank described the country in a [July 2016 report](#) as "vulnerable [...] due to its limited savings, low reserves and high debt levels". It is also projected to continue running "significant fiscal deficits", which as of 2016 is estimated as 16.8 percent of GDP. More worrisome is the World Bank's forecast that the debt will raise to 83.7 percent in 2016 from 44 percent two years earlier.

Although subsidy cuts and other austerity measures can limit Bahrain's financial risk, these efforts also pose a threat to security and stability, as can unemployment and particularly youth unemployment. The GCC countries all have long-standing social contracts with their citizens that, to different extents, see limits on political participation in exchange for social benefits. As demonstrated by the aforementioned 2013 Parliament boycott in response to planned fuel subsidy cuts, changes to the social contract are unpopular and must be implemented gradually in order to limit the day-to-day impact and opposition. Unemployment, meanwhile, is costly for the government in terms of both finances (i.e. costs of benefits) and security, as high numbers of citizens out of work can increase dissatisfaction with the government and cause spikes in crime.

3.2 Economic policies

Bahrain is aiming to rationalise spending and diversify revenue, which was triggered in part by low oil prices but has also been a long-term goal for the country to reduce reliance on natural resources and limit shockwaves brought on by changes in oil pricing. These efforts are not unique to Bahrain, although its oil reserves are more limited, but are occurring in all other GCC countries. Some of the key policies being pursued include:

- *Subsidy cuts:* In 2015, Bahrain cut subsidies on meat and in December of that year, it approved a gradual increase over the next four years in prices for diesel, kerosene, and jet fuel. Implementation began in January but with exemptions for bakers and fishermen. Fuel prices similarly began to be gradually increased to reflect those in other GCC states. Electricity and water prices also rose beginning in March 2016 for expatriates, the industrial and commercial sectors, and Bahrainis with more than one account. Gradual implementation and exemptions are efforts to limit the day-to-day impact on the average citizen and reduce opposition. Although the unofficial opposition sometimes protests against subsidy cuts, there were no widespread demonstrations or boycotts within Parliament, suggesting that this strategy is effective.
- *Diversifying revenue:* In 2018, Bahrain plans to introduce VAT (potentially at around five percent) alongside the other GCC states as a means of diversifying revenue. There will likely be exemptions for certain food items, as well as possibly health, education, and other social services. Like exemptions for subsidy cuts, these are aimed at reducing opposition to these reforms, as are plans to keep wealth and income tax at zero. Other

methods of diversifying revenue include a “sin tax”, which refers to increased tax rates on tobacco and alcohol, as well as efforts to boost tourism, light manufacturing, and services industries.

- *Other methods:* These include bond sales and other policies aimed at reducing government spending, including by restructuring government departments and pushing for increased employment in the private sector. One of the ways that the latter can be and is being pursued is through “Bahrainisation” policies that require, at the risk of penalty, certain percentages of employees be Bahraini nationals.

3.2.2 Unemployment

The World Bank puts unemployment in Bahrain as of 2014 at a low 3.8 percent. Others, however, place the number higher, with the World Economic Forum stating in an [October 2014 report](#) that overall unemployment stood at 7.4 percent and youth unemployment at 27.5 percent, the second highest among the GCC states that year after Saudi Arabia. Security concerns related to high unemployment, particularly among youth, relate to potential increases in social unrest and criminal activity. It cannot be forgotten that one of the main factors behind the so-called Arab Spring protests of 2011 was dissatisfaction regarding economic conditions.

Addressing unemployment in Bahrain, as well as the remaining GCC states, likely requires educational changes to provide citizens with in-demand skills, as well as a shift in cultural attitudes regarding work in the private sector. The public sector is, by far, more preferable due to salaries and benefits. According to the World Economic Forum’s report, from 2000 to 2010, almost 80 percent of jobs created by the private sector across the GCC were filled by foreigners.

4.0 Crime

4.1 Overview and Main Threats

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

Crime in Bahrain is low—both organized and general—, including violent crime. Among that which does occur, the direct threats to businesses and persons are low, particularly if common sense precautions are taken. The 2014 Corruption perceptions index also ranks Bahrain as 59th (out of 175 countries), which is in line with other countries in the region.

It is important, however, for expatriates to understand local laws in order to prevent accidental breakage. This includes the aforementioned media laws, as well as strict penalties for drug offences, including possession, and alcohol use. These are discussed further in the [Culture and Religion](#) section below.

4.2 General Crime

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

Although the direct targeting of Westerners and other expatriates is rare, break-ins and theft do occur. While some involve armed perpetrators, this largely means weapons other than firearms due to strict gun laws. This risk can largely be mitigated by common sense precautions, including through alarm systems and other basic security measures. In addition, OSAC reports that “much of the crime occurs within the large South Asian population of guest workers”.

4.3 Organized Crime

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

The organized crime faced by Bahrain primarily involves issues related to forced labor, debt-bondage, and human trafficking. The US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons considers [Bahrain to be Tier 2](#) and described it as “a destination country for men and women subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking”. According to the report, migrant workers can experience “withholding of passports, restriction on movement, contract substitution, non-payment of wages, threats, and physical or sexual abuse”. Bahrain is, however, exerting efforts to combat these issues, including through a recently-established shelter, prosecution and conviction of trackers, a hot-line, and awareness education. At the same time, this does not pose a direct threat to countries operating in Bahrain, assuming they do not engage in such practices, although exploitation of workers and non-payment of wages can lead to an increase in crime.

5.0 Other Threats

5.1 Health

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

There are no reports of major disease or virus outbreaks in Bahrain. Although Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) is still a concern in neighbouring Saudi Arabia, it has been on the decline and the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed Bahrain's [first case](#) only in April 2016 in a Saudi male.

5.2 Environment

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

There are currently no active environmental hazards in Bahrain. However, heavy rains and wind during the winter months can cause flooding and material damage. The country also sees sandstorms, particularly in the hot summer months, which can significantly reduce visibility and make driving conditions more dangerous. It also has the potential to cause minor respiratory issues.

There are also several structural and incidental risks. These relate to potential oil spills, desertification, and fresh-water shortages. The rapidly growing population will require ever more fresh water, necessitating the government to stimulate water conservation measures and expand the current desalination system. Additional measures to counter water pollution and waste could result in stricter requirements for (industrial) businesses and households. In addition, there is a low albeit existing threat of contamination from a radiological hazardous event in Iran or other countries with nuclear programmes. This includes a meltdown of Iran's Bushehr reactor or those currently being developed by the UAE. The threat of a potential strike by Israel targeting Iran has been substantially reduced by the nuclear deal; however, opposition by US President Elect Donald Trump to the agreement has the potential to cause its breakdown, which could shift Israel's risk-benefit calculation and increase support for precision strikes against Iran's nuclear programme.

5.3 Travel

Overall Threat Level: **MEDIUM**

4.3.1 Road Safety – Overall Threat Level: **MEDIUM**

Although relatively good compared to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, road accidents and risky driving is commonplace. A fifth of all vehicles are reportedly involved in some sort of accident each year and involve a large percentage of foreign drivers. WHO's 2010-11 global road safety statistics estimate an annual death rate of 11 Bahraini drivers per 100,000 residents versus 12.7 in the UAE and 24.8 in Saudi Arabia. That there is a downward trend in the number of fatal road incidents is due to stricter laws, better enforcement, and awareness campaigns. The law also prohibits the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving. Nonetheless, road accident risks are high for pedestrians and they make up 39% of all traffic related fatalities.

4.3.2 Infrastructure – Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

There are no known significant risks related to infrastructure.

4.3.3 Other – Overall Threat Level: **MEDIUM**

As discussed above (see section on [Civil Unrest](#)), Shiite opposition protests and roadblocks can cause travel disruptions in areas across Bahrain. This includes along main routes like the Budaiya and Sheikh Salman Highways, but is more common within towns that have opposition sympathetic populations. These occur relative frequently and the risk is largely limited to traffic congestion. Police checkpoints, including permanent and temporary ones, can also cause travel disruptions.

5.4 Culture & Religion

Overall Threat Level: MEDIUM

Le Beck only considers the risk to be medium if one is unaware of cultural and religious differences and norms. Key points to consider are restrictions on freedom of expression (see the [Media](#) section above); differing laws, including stricter ones related to drugs and alcohol (see the [Crime](#) section above); as well as unique cultural norms.

Drug penalties can result in high fines and imprisonment, including for possession. In addition, while alcohol is not illegal for consumption among non-Muslims, public drinking, intoxication, and drunk driving are cause for arrest. Other potentially problematic laws for foreigners include:

- Financial debt and civil claims that can result in a travel ban.
- The illegality of trying to convert a Muslim to another religion.
- Photographing sensitive locations, particularly security installations, which is forbidden.

Foreigners should also be sensitive to cultural norms. Open displays of religions other than Islam can be offensive, as can immodest dress and public displays of affection, particularly among homosexual couples although homosexuality is not illegal. Locals can also be sensitive about having their pictures taken.

Importantly, during the month of Ramadan when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, eating, drinking, chewing gum, and smoking in public during the hours of fasting should be avoided.

6.0 Sector Specific – Banking

Overall Threat Level: **LOW**

Civil Unrest (protests and roadblocks): Banking customers may experience travel disruptions in and around ATMs and bank branches due to opposition protests and roadblocks incidentally occurring nearby. This is particularly true for those based in towns outside of Manama that are known to see relatively regular opposition activity.

Crime – Armed robbery: As noted above, those that do occur in Bahrain rarely involve firearms due to very strict gun laws, which reduces the risk for a large-scale successful bank robbery. In September 2016, for example, four men armed with a hammer were arrested for attempting to rob a gold shop. The risk for customers to be targeted, particularly those withdrawing money from a branch or ATM, is higher in areas with larger Asian expatriate populations, at night, and in more remote locations. Increasing lighting and installing cameras can reduce this risk.

Crime – Skimming: This is an ongoing risk; however, steps already taken by many banks to reduce this risk have proved effective, including through chipped cards and SMS messaging when purchases are made or funds withdrawn. Like robberies, ATMs in remote locations are at higher risk for skimming incidents. Other methods that can reduce this risk include awareness campaigns: In July 2016, a skimming device was discovered by a customer at an ATM in Manama's southern Juffair neighbourhood who had recently watched a video on skimming and recognized the signs.

Appendix 1: Militancy 2015-2016¹

Not available as part of Le Beck International's free sample.

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¹ This list includes only those incidents that were confirmed by Bahrain's Ministry of Interior (i.e. this does not include claims made by Shiite militant groups that could not be corroborated). With regard to Molotov cocktails, only notable incidents, such as those that caused injury or damage, are included.

Appendix 2: Notable Dates

The following dates have symbolic value for the Shiite opposition and tend to see an increase in protests, roadblocks, low-level militancy, and other opposition-related activity surrounding them, along with correspondingly heightened security measures.

Date	Description
February 14	Anniversary of the outbreak of the 2011 protests.
March 14	Anniversary of the entry of the GCC Peninsula Shield forces into Bahrain
March 15	Anniversary of the declaration of state of emergency in 2011
March 18	Anniversary of the destruction of the Pearl Roundabout, the center point for the 2011 protests
April	Formula 1 race (in 2017, slated for April 14-16)
August 14-15	Anniversary of the three-day protest campaign in 2013 dubbed August 14 Rebellion that corresponds with Independence Day on August 15
December 16	National Day
December 17	Accession Day and “Martyrs’ Day”, the latter of which marks the anniversary of the death of two protesters in 1994
Quds Day	Held on the last Friday of Ramadan (so dependent upon Islamic calendar), it was named by former Iranian Supreme Leader as an international day of solidarity with Palestinians.
Shiite Holidays	These dates change depending on the Islamic calendar, but religious gatherings in Bahrain often have political overtones. The risk for police intervention, however, tends to be lower.