

Bahraini MPs keen to protect interest of exile returnees

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Bahraini MPs have shown interest in having a draft law that protects the interests of those people who have returned from exile.

They were reacting to the presentation of a memorandum presented by the National Committee of Returnees (NCR), saying that there was need for such a move with the allocation of a special budget to deal with the housing, employment and retirement scheme for the returnees.

As expressed to a local daily, Bahrain Tribune, Abdulnabi Al Ekri, the head of the NCR, said there were initiatives by the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Works and Housing but not many benefited from them.

According to him there are 510 returnees who are listed with the Ministry of Social Development but there are few who are registered to benefit from the schemes.

Returnees who are unemployed are entitled to BD150 from the Social Development Ministry while BD180 is given to those who have no house and are living in rented premises.

The 510 returnees were given a royal pardon in 2001-2002, out of which 15 have died and their families have no source of income, he explained.

There were male and female political prisoners who were exiled in the 90s. The returnees have spent more than 20 years outside and faced tough conditions when they came back to Bahrain.

The NCR was set up in 2001 to protect the interest of the returnees and have held three general assemblies.

Most of those who got employment have taken voluntary retirement for being unable to cope with the atmosphere at workplaces. Those working in private sector received no compensation and most of the individuals are still seeking compensation, he pointed out.

NCR had a year ago presented solutions to deal with the situation in the last parliament but no action has been taken by the House yet, he said