

## **Deputies prepare plan for constitutional reforms in Bahrain**

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The draft action plan on constitutional reforms is expected to be put in shape by the end of the month said Al Wafaq Vice Chairman Khalil Ibrahim Salman Marzooq. Al Mustaqbal deputy, Abdulaziz Abol, a key figure in the constitutional reform study, reiterated the statement during an interview with Bahrain Tribune.

Abol told the Tribune that the issue of constitutional reform when carried out would be a double-layered activity. The first being the amendment to the constitution and the second the ratification of the amended constitution by the Bahrainis. Only a constitution ratified by the people of the land has political legitimacy. For now there is only an 18-member support. For the reform to be put in place it needs the support of both the Al Asala and the Al Membar. Once this is achieved, the Al Mustaqbal can also be counted on for support.

Detailing further on the constitutional reform, Abol said: "We have to have a constitution that will guarantee legislative powers for the elected representatives. This will, in many ways, be a return to the 1973 Constitution – a bi-cameral constitution, with the King as the head and the two houses being the Shura Council having supervisory and consultative powers, and the Chamber of Deputies having the legislative powers and thus also the powers to veto the laws." In effect this will empower the legislative – the elected representatives.

"Nothing drastic will happen if this is allowed. The power will pass to the hands of the elected representatives and the people will hold their representatives accountable. Now, they cannot, because we do not have the powers to legislate. When we look at the situation, in 2002 there were 400 wishes made and 75 were agreed to and only 23 were implemented," Abol said.

Marzooq seemed in agreement on this and told the Tribune that the election promises would thus be taken up in various stages.

Reacting to a Tribune query on the support to the reforms from other groups, Al Asala Islamic Society deputy Isa Ahmed Abul Fateh said: "We are of the view that the drafting of the Constitution needs to be carried out now. However pushing the reform will have to be made in stages. We are still in infancy and need a little more time to get used to the nitty-gritties of the Constitution."