Bahrain’s VNR covers nearly all Goals, showing policy coherence. However, Goal 2 is effectively left out. While food sovereignty may be at stake, it’s not among the cited six key issues.

Meanwhile, Bahrain’s development-resource challenges include severe scarcity of water and land, with half the territory given over to foreign military forces and only about 10% left for citizens’ housing. Even reclaimed land is over 90% privatized, despite legal prohibitions, making the coastline royal-family property. Coastland grabs have cost small family fisheries their livelihoods and, to the country, a heritage and a pillar of food security.

Toward Goal 11, government seeks to create new urban communities (p. 35), but corruption still impedes sustainable urbanization. A parliamentary study found 16 corrupt techniques affecting development land, but the VNR reports no remedial efforts. Authorities have now dissolved all major opposition groups ahead of this year’s elections, undermining parliament’s capacity to check corruption, waste and other obstacles to sustainable development.

The VNR does note that Bahrain tries to “balance security and development in a stable environment” (p. 66). However, the UN has documented a longstanding pattern of material discrimination against Bahrain’s Shi’a majority, including denial of housing, land and jobs. Protests over these disparities have been violently suppressed by authorities.

Amid these challenges:
1. How does the Office of Financial and Administrative Control[7] and other bodies operate to rectify these obstacles (p. 67) and “ensure equal access to land” (p. 74)?

2. With many independent organizations, political groups, and independent newspapers, like al-Wasat, dissolved and leading human rights defenders, like Nabeel Rajab, imprisoned, how can Bahrain reach SDG targets 16.3, 16.7 and 16.10?

3. Extrajudicial killings rose again last year. Will the government identify and prosecute the perpetrators and implement reforms to curb police brutality in line with SDG targets 16.1, 16.3, and 16.6?


