Lawyer Abdullah Shamlawi described the Bahraini penal code's laws on discrimination as “loose,” indicating that they do not include a description of behavior that could be called criminal.

Shamlawi pointed out yesterday (Monday, May 5) at the Bahrain Observatory for Human Rights’ event “Bahrain: Between Tolerance and Sectarianism,” that the penal code’s description of incitement to hatred in Article No. (172) stipulates that “he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years and a fine not exceeding two hundred dinars for either he who instigate publicly to spread hate among people or to scorn them against another sector of people, if such a behavior affected the civil peace.”

He commented, "There is no doubt that this text is... very loose and incompatible with the philosophy of criminal justice... especially with the lack of any standard or a clarification what the law means by ‘civil peace,’ or how and when it is disturbed by criticizing authorities. [There also is no clarification on the] concept of and the limits of disturbance”,

Shamlawi added “In recent years, hate speech, negative stereotyping in the media, and accusations of religious or national hatred have resulted in the killing of innocent people, attacks on places of worship, invitations for revenge and a spiral of violence.” He believes that those events "lead us to search for the right balance between freedom of expression and the need to protect individuals and communities from discrimination or violence according to the Human Rights Commission.”