



Madam Vice President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), with the support of AlSalam Foundation, would like highlight several areas of technical inadequacy of human rights mechanisms in Bahrain which merit the Council's attention. As has been detailed in previous statements during this session, the effective status of human rights in Bahrain is dire. Due to the persistent human rights challenges facing Bahrain, we believe further technical assistance is required.

The National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) in Bahrain has yet to establish its independence as defined under the Paris Principles and continues to lack OHCHR accreditation. The NIHR has thus far failed to live up to its mandate to independently report on and critique national human rights practices and policies. This was recently demonstrated when the NIHR vocally defended new national legislation which drastically curtailed citizens' rights to free assembly and expression. More troubling still are reports of reprisals against individuals who have brought complaints to the NIHR. These ongoing deficiencies illustrate the inability of the NIHR to effectively and independently report on and defend human rights in Bahrain.

Similarly, the recently established Office of the Police Ombudsman lacks the necessary independence from the Ministry of Interior and the Bahrain government to effectively carry out its mandate. Indeed, the Office has failed to proactively and effectively address the ongoing use of torture in Bahrain – a core element of its mission. These technical inadequacies have served to undermine the Office’s credibility as a legitimate mechanism for victims seeking redress.

We hope that with further external monitoring and technical assistance, Bahrain may finally be able to achieve compliance with the many international treaties, mechanisms and standards of human rights to which the country has committed. We therefore urge Bahrain to call for the establishment of a permanent OHCHR mission in the country, complete with a full technical as well as reporting mandate. We also call on Bahrain to allow the various representatives of the UN Special Procedures immediate and unfettered access to the country to follow up on the growing number of reports their offices continue to receive.

Thank you.