

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain

BIRD
BAHRAIN INSTITUTE FOR
RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



Mr. Vice-President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), would like bring to the Council's attention the repeated concerns raised by the Office of the High Commissioner and UN Special Procedures since 2011 regarding human rights in Bahrain. The Bahraini government has failed to adequately respond to these serious concerns over the intervening years.

These concerns include the continued convictions and imprisonment of opposition and human rights activists for expressing their right to free speech; the torture of detainees and failure to hold officials accountable; the ongoing "campaign of persecution against human rights defenders"; and "the disproportionate use of force by Bahraini security forces" resulting in serious injury and death.

While we welcome the committed work of the recently returned temporary OHCHR technical mission to Bahrain, the ongoing human

rights crisis in the country requires a permanent OHCHR mission, with a full technical and reporting mandate.

We also welcome today's joint statement regarding human rights in Bahrain, presented by Switzerland, on behalf of a cross-regional coalition of XX countries. This statement cites a list of grave concerns which builds upon the serious issues raised by OHCHR since 2011. These include the continued ill-treatment and torture of detainees in police custody; "the repression of demonstrations"; the failure to guarantee fair trials; the "harassment and imprisonment" of human rights defenders and journalists; increased restrictions of the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association; the stripping of citizenship from activists; and the lack of "accountability for human rights violations".

We join Switzerland and its supporting States in urging the government of Bahrain to release all prisoners detained for exercising their human rights -- prisoners such as Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Abduljalil Singace, Mahdi Abu Dheeb and Ibrahim Sherif, among others.

We look forward to the further follow up by OHCHR on the human rights situation in Bahrain, and urge Bahrain to heed the calls of the various Member States to take committed, transparent, expeditious, and tangible steps towards addressing its human rights deficiencies.

Thank you.