

Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), would like to thank the Working Group for its engagement on behalf of victims of arbitrary detention in Bahrain. Today, we would like to call your attention to some particular cases of arbitrary detention, which we find to be representative of a broader pattern of arbitrary arrest and detention that is prevalent in the country.

Of the roughly 4,000 current prisoners detained in Bahrain in relations to their human rights, the case of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja is particularly concerning. Abdulhadi is in the third year of his life sentence—declared arbitrary by the Working Group—and has suffered torture and ill-treatment in that time. Presently, Abdulhadi is on the 18th day of a hunger strike in protest over the continued use of arbitrary arrest and detention in Bahrain and his life is at grave risk.

Abdulhadi's daughter, Maryam al-Khawaja, is also a prominent human rights defender. Due to the serious deterioration of her father's health, Maryam traveled to Bahrain on 29 August and was arrested upon her arrival at the Manama airport. While she now faces charges of assaulting a policewoman, we are concerned that Maryam's detention is in relation to her work as a human rights defender, and that her detention is therefore arbitrary.

In addition to the al-Khawajas, many other prominent human rights defenders, political activists, journalists, doctors and teachers remain imprisoned under politically motivated charges, including: Abduljalil Singace, Hassan Mushaima, Sheikh Mohammed Habib al-Miqdad, Abdulwahab Hussein, Ibrahim Sherif, Sheikh Mohammed al-Mahfoodh, Husain Hubail, Ahmed Humaidan, Dr. Ali alEkri and Mahdi Abu Dheeb.

In addition to these ongoing cases of arbitrary detention, the Working Group included three new cases of arbitrary detention in its latest joint communications report. These cases illustrate the ongoing use of arbitrary detention in Bahrain to restrict free assembly and expression.

We therefore reiterate the call of 47 Member States to Bahrain in a recent joint statement, to immediately “release all persons imprisoned solely for exercising human rights, including human rights defenders, some of whom have been identified as arbitrarily detained according to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.”

Thank you.