



Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, in coordination with the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, would like bring to the Council's attention certain cases of religious intolerance and discrimination in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Bahrain's exclusionary labor practices against Shi'a—particularly regarding the security forces; the dissolution of the Shi'a Islamic Scholars Council; and the harassment of leading Shi'a religious figures in the country, stand in opposition to Section II, paragraphs 46, 47, and 49 of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Bahraini Shi'a suffer from discrimination in public sector employment in Bahrain. Such discrimination is most concerning in the Ministry of Interior and security forces. Shi'a are not represented in the upper levels of leadership in the Bahraini security forces. Subsequently, these forces are often implicated in human rights abuses targeting Shi'a protestors, political and human rights activists, religious figures and places of worship.

Bahrain continues to target many leading Shi'a spiritual leaders with harassment and detention, including: Sheikh Mohammed Habib Miqdad, Sheikh Abduljalil Miqdad, and Sheikh Mohammed Ali al-Mahfood.



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Particularly concerning was the case of Sheikh Hussain Najati, whose Bahraini citizenship was arbitrarily revoked in 2012. Continued abuses against him were highlighted earlier this year by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Mr. Heiner Bielefeldt, who expressed his concern that: “on 23 April [2014] [Sheikh] Hussain Mirza Abdelbaqi Najati was forced to leave his own country for Lebanon after being exposed to enormous pressure and harassment by the authorities.”

The Bahrain government has repeatedly demonstrated a pattern of religious intolerance and discrimination towards the Shi’a majority population in Bahrain. We therefore call on the Government of Bahrain to facilitate a country visit by the Special Rapporteur on religious freedom to conduct a neutral and independent assessment in the country at the earliest possible date. We further call on the Bahrain government to fulfill its commitments to the recommendations of the BICI and UPR reports regarding safeguards against discrimination for followers of all faiths.

Thank you.