



## Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain

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Madam Vice President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, with the support of the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, would like to call to the Council's attention the refusal of leading members of the Council to engage UN Special Procedures and mechanisms as a means of technical assistance and capacity building. For example, we specifically cite Saudi Arabia's failure to constructively engage with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, many of which have maintained pending country visit requests for over ten years.

Six Special Procedures currently maintain outstanding country visit requests to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, pending since 2005, the Special Rapporteur on Torture, also pending since 2005, and, most recently, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Association, pending since 2013. Saudi Arabia has not allowed a Special Procedure to visit the country since 2008, when the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women traveled to the Kingdom and reported widespread and systemic abuse of women in the



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Kingdom, making numerous and broad recommendations to alleviate their plight. Since the Rapporteur issued her report, however, international human rights organizations and human rights defenders on the ground have found little to no progress in elevating Saudi women towards equality.

At the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council, we call on all governments to positively and expeditiously respond to pending Special Procedure country visit requests in order to facilitate necessary technical assistance and capacity building. We further ask the Government of Saudi Arabia to implement all of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in 2008. We also ask that Saudi Arabia, as a leading Member of the Human Rights Council, to not only invite the Special Procedures with pending visit requests, but to extend a standing invitation to all Special Procedures to conduct country visits to the Kingdom.

Thank you, Madam Vice President