



Mr. High Commissioner,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, along with the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights would like to congratulate you on your election and thank you for continuing OHCHR's work in promoting and protecting human rights in the GCC region and around the world.

We were encouraged to hear your persistent concerns about the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia, including the situation of human rights defenders [like Waleed abu al-Khair], the application of the death penalty and the use of corporal punishment. We join your calls for Saudi Arabia to bring its criminal justice system into compliance with international standards.

Yet despite your recognition of the deep human rights challenges of a Member State in the Council, as well as eleven other country-specific mentions in the Middle East & North Africa region, we were disappointed by the lack of recognition of another major human rights abuser: Bahrain.

Your Excellency was “disturbed” by many “harsh restrictions on public freedoms” that continue to plague Bahrain. You referred specifically to “crackdowns on demonstrations; harsh sentencing of human rights defenders, journalists and dissidents in politically motivated trials; brutal punishments for simple tweets [as in the case of Nabeel Rajab].” Your Excellency also warned against measures used to build a “national security state” including: “arbitrary or prolonged detention; torture and ill-treatment; unfair trails; discriminatory policing; and the abusive use of legislation to curb legitimate rights to peaceful protest and to freedom of expression.” All of these human rights violations and restrictions on public freedoms continue to be systematic in Bahrain.

Therefore, we ask Your Excellency why Bahrain did not make the list as a country of concern, despite your office’s extensive engagement on these widespread and systemic abuses?

Furthermore, given that earlier this week Bahrain’s Deputy Foreign Minister announced the kingdom’s “intention to resume cooperation” with your office, yet continues to refuse a single Special Procedures mandate holder entry to Bahrain since 2006 despite repeated request, how does your office intend to facilitate country visits by the Procedures as a means of renewed cooperation with Bahrain?

Thank you.