

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 call the panel's attention to the practice of juvenile torture and ill-treatment in detention and the use of coerced confessions to justify the arbitrary detention of children in the Middle East.

In cases as recent as this year, we have documented and reported on cases of juvenile torture and ill-treatment of children in police custody. In a number of cases, children under the age of 15 have been forcibly disappeared by government forces in connection with the youths' alleged association with an illegal gathering or protest. After their arrest, some children report that they are interrogated without the presence of a lawyer or family guardian. In many of these cases, children are subjected to intimidation, threats, abuse and ill-treatment as a means of coercing confessions. Coerced confessions are often admitted as evidence to convict individuals, including children, of arbitrary charges related to free assembly or expression.

According to our documentation of cases in the region, youths are often incarcerated alongside adults in overcrowded prisons and subjected to the same levels of neglect or mistreatment during their arbitrary detention.

Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain would therefore like to ask the panel if they are aware of these types of cases in the region, and

what types of protection can a detained child seek against such human rights abuses?

We also ask the panel, what role can civil society, the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner play in combatting the continued practices of youth enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment?

Finally, if governments in the region would like to seriously address these issues, what are some immediate concrete steps that governments can take toward alleviating these abuses against their children?

Thank you.