

Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, would like to call the Council's attention to the concerning number of cases of human rights abuses in the GCC region reported on by the Special Procedures. We also raise our concern at the lack of engagement from these States in cooperating with these Procedures. For example, the number of reports from the smallest member of the GCC—the Kingdom of Bahrain—is particularly stunning. Yet Bahrain still has not allowed *any* Special Procedures access to the country since 2006.

In the latest Joint Communications Report, the Special Procedures raised cases on behalf of a total of 16 individual Bahraini victims of human rights abuses. Additional complaints concerned thematic issues, such as the destruction of the Pearl Roundabout and related imagery, and a woman's right to pass on her nationality to her children. Despite 11 Procedures issuing complaints on Bahrain, the kingdom continues to deny visits to any of the 6 Mandates with current requests to visit the country.

These Mandates continue to be restricted from following up on cases including arbitrary arrests of prominent human rights defenders like Nabeel Rajab, Maryam al-Khawaja and Najj Fateel in relation to free expression and assembly charges. The Mandates are also unable to follow up on the troubling cases of nine Bahraini victims, including children, who all allegedly “suffered torture, such as beatings, electrocution, food and water deprivation, forced stress poses, psychological torment, and sexual abuse, including for the purpose of extracting confessions.”

Our organizations are further concerned with threats and acts of reprisals against Bahraini civil society & human rights defenders both during the current session of the HRC, and following 27th sessions of the Council last September. Such threats and acts are wholly unacceptable.

Therefore, we call on Bahrain and its fellow GCC States facing similar concerns, to issue standing invitations to all interested Special Procedures, and expeditiously facilitate country visits by these mandate holders. Finally, we call on all States to cease all acts of intimidation or reprisals against civil society who engage with the Council.

Thank you