

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 express the necessity for a substantive, robust, and sustained framework and program of action for enhanced technical cooperation between OHCHR and the Kingdom of Bahrain. Such cooperation should be undertaken with a view towards achieving tangible, quantifiable improvements in the status of human rights in the country.

We note again, the positive role that OHCHR was able to play in Bahrain during their temporary technical assessment mission in early 2014. However, even during the time of that mission, Bahrain continued to demonstrate a clear need to address widespread human rights concerns, as security forces still carried out violent prison raids and expelled a leading Shia religious figure.

Beyond the work of OHCHR, some States are already operating technical assistance programs in Bahrain. However, these programs have not yielded any substantive improvement in human rights practices. Indeed, the lack of results from these programs over a span of years underlines the necessity for transparency and accountability, through regular, publically available reporting and concrete timelines and objectives for capacity building programs. Likewise, these programs illustrate the need to remain focused on concrete results instead of quantifying success through the number of participants. Concrete results should rather include indicators like releasing political prisoners, amending or repealing repressive laws, or ending impunity for security sector abuses with a view towards effectively illumination torture and ill-treatment.

Therefore, we reiterate our support for increased cooperation between OHCHR and Bahrain, but stress the need for transparency, accountability, and an emphasis on concrete benchmarks in assessing any technical support program in the country. Finally, we reiterate our call for any technical assistance to Bahrain be administered through a permanent country office with a full reporting mandate.

Thank you.