

Mr. President,

The Alsalam Foundation together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy would like to thank the Rapporteur for his report and for his work in advancing the universal human right to education.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action considers education as an essential tool for achieving sustainability in all nations. Meanwhile, Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child mandates that States make primary education compulsory for all children and secondary education “available and accessible to every child.” Unfortunately, States often ignore these international standards, and continue to deprive their youth prisoners of their fundamental right to education.

For example, authorities in Bahrain’s Jau Prison regularly deny child and youth inmates serving arbitrary political sentences access to education. In 2013 and 2014, Jau Prison authorities prohibited arbitrary detainee Sayed Qassim, a grade 9 student, from studying. As a result, Sayed Qassim failed his courses, and can no longer register for school. Additionally, Sayed Adnan Sayed Majeed al-Khabbaz had to forfeit his education altogether due to alleged miscommunications between Jau Prison and the Ministry of Education. Sayed Qassim and Sayed Adnan’s treatment are emblematic of how Jau Prison authorities deprive incarcerated youth of their fundamental right to an education.

International human rights law binds all States and their agents, including prison authorities. As States like Bahrain fail to fully implement the VDPA and CRC’s requirements for child education, we invite the Rapporteur to comment on the need for education programs in prisons, and ask him to provide recommendations that States may immediately implement towards the education of incarcerated youth.

Thank you.