

Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, BCHR and BIRD are concerned with growing reports of human rights violations in Bahrain documented by the Special Procedures of this Council. We are also concerned with the continued disregard for these communications and this state's lack of cooperation with UN mechanisms.

In the latest joint communications report, Bahrain's practice of reprisals against human rights defenders is highlighted in the cases of prominent women human rights defenders Maryam Al Khawaja, Zeinab Al Khawaja and Ghada Jamsheer, raised by the mandates on Arbitrary Detention; Freedom of expression; Freedom of peaceful assembly and association; and Human rights defenders. Threats of reprisals made and also carried out by the government of Bahrain during past sessions of the Human Rights Council, including reprisals against Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, are further a sign of disregard for this Council and its engagement with civil society.

In the March joint communications report, 11 different mandates including Torture, Freedom of Religion and Summary Executions issued reports on behalf of 16 victims of human rights violations in Bahrain. We continue to be concerned that despite evidence of wide ranging abuses in the country, all standing invitations by Special Procedures have been denied. We further note, with alarm, that next year marks 10 years since Bahrain last granted access to a mandate-holder of the Special Procedures.

Mr. President, in light of this country's continued contempt for human rights, and the mechanisms established by this Council to protect these rights, we urge the Council to request that Bahrain immediately facilitate country visits to the mandates which currently maintain requests to visit.

Thank you.