

Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) would like to thank the High Commissioner for his update to the Council, and for raising his call for vital leadership from States in addressing the plight of migrant workers. In this regard, we are deeply concerned at the continuation of the *kafala* system in the GCC. As you know, the *kafala* system is an oppressive employment system that forces migrant workers to continue working for abusive employers. Despite some States' nominal efforts to dismantle it, the *kafala* system remains in effect across the GCC.

For example, as thousands of migrant workers labor in the harshest conditions to build stadiums for the Qatar 2022 World Cup, it is altogether illegal for one of these workers to seek alternate employment without the permission of his current employer. This raises significant concerns, as it is therefore criminal in Qatar for a migrant construction worker to find alternative work when his employer forces him to work 12 hours per day in up to fifty-degree weather. This is to say nothing of the litany of other abuses endemic for migrant workers in Qatar and the rest of the GCC. Migrants who were promised a decent wage before leaving their home country, often find themselves given wages at a fraction of these contracts, or can

even have their wages completely withheld for up to years at a time. Many migrant workers are forced into overcrowded and unsanitary labor camps lacking clean water or decent food. Governments legally restricting workers from escaping such conditions is tantamount to supporting a form of modern-day slavery.

We therefore support the High Commissioner's call for vital leadership in effectively protecting the rights of migrants, particularly in Qatar and the GCC.

Thank you.