



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 welcome the joint statement made during this debate by Switzerland, on behalf of ## States, highlighting the ongoing human rights abuses in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In today's Joint Statement, 33 States expressed their serious concern for persistent human rights issues in Bahrain, including imprisoning Bahrainis for exercising their rights to free opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly. We also join their concern for the harassment of human rights defenders, arbitrary detention of individuals (including minors), unfair trials, and the systematic use of torture and ill-treatment by Bahraini security forces. We second these States' call for the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners of conscience in Bahrain, including the Bahrain 13.

While we too welcome the establishment of various human rights institutions in the country, we maintain serious reservations about the independence, accountability, transparency and credibility of these institutions in effectively combating human rights abuses in Bahrain. Indeed, we are deeply troubled by multiple accounts of reprisals carried out against individuals for reporting human rights violations to the Bahrain Ministry of Interior's Ombudsman. Such institutions must proactively protect victims of human rights abuses and guard against further abuse.

We finally recognize that this is the fifth joint statement on Bahrain since 2011 under the steadfast leadership of Switzerland. However, Bahrain must recognize that such ongoing concerns need to be urgently addressed. Without serious steps to address these issues, we call on States to raise future concerns in an HRC resolution and create a Special Rapporteur on Bahrain.

Thank you.