

Mr. President,

Upon adoption of Oman's UPR report, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain wish to express our continued concern for the human rights situation in Oman. During a popular uprising in 2011, thousands of Omanis were subjected to severe violations of their civil and political rights. In the past 5 years, the Omani government has increased its use of such restrictive measures. Since 2011, authorities have arrested a documented number of 216 people on charges related to freedom of assembly, or rather 'disturbing the public peace'. These arrests are not an anomaly. The judiciary regularly violates due process, imposing arbitrary sentences on individuals charged for their political opposition.

However, during its 2011 UPR, Oman pledged to "review its relevant legal framework to safeguard the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression." This promise has not been kept.

We are instead concerned with the increasing restrictions on freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and access to information in Oman. Human rights defenders, journalists and bloggers are among the most vulnerable. They continue to face arrest, arbitrary imprisonment and, or, monetary fines: a consequence for expressing their disappointment with the human rights situation, and criticizing the repressive practices of Omani security forces.

We therefore urge Omani authorities to guarantee under all circumstances the freedom of human rights defenders to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals. We also call on Oman to expediently work towards the ratification of the ICCPR and the ICESCR as an important step towards creating a favorable environment for civil society. We further call on this Council to encourage Oman's ratification and implementation of these instruments, in the hope that international standards of human rights can fully be respected in Oman.

Thank you.