

Mr. President,

IDO, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the European Center for Democracy and Human Rights would like to thank Mr. Forst for the recent communications reported on by his mandate regarding harassment of human rights defenders in Bahrain.

In your most recent communications report, your mandate reported on the case of the prominent Bahraini advocate for interreligious dialogue, Sheikh Maytham al-Salman, who has faced repeated acts of harassment including arbitrary detention and judicial intimidation in regards to his work.

Additionally, your mandate has issued multiple communications regarding the case of Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. Nabeel continues to face a travel ban and the government maintains charges against him that could amount to ten years in prison. In addition to Nabeel, all of members of the Bahrain Center face harassment and intimidation for their work documenting Bahraini human rights abuses. We join the Special Rapporteur for his repeated calls for the government to drop the charges against Nabeel.

Prominent Defenders like Naji Fateel, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and Abduljalil Singace continue to serve arbitrary life sentences in Bahrain. Likewise, outside the country, Bahraini human rights defenders face reprisals. Last year, the government arbitrarily revoked the citizenship of dozens of human rights defenders and activists, including our colleague Sayed Ahmed al-Wadaei.

Bahrain also uses FinFisher surveillance software to monitor email, social media accounts, personal documents, and control device cameras of human rights defenders both at home and abroad. Bahrain's use of harassment, surveillance, and reprisals further restricts the space for critical voices essential to promoting meaningful human rights reforms.

We therefore ask if the Special Rapporteur has received any substantive response from Bahrain toward alleviating these forms of harassment against human rights defenders, and if your mandate plans to visit Bahrain to follow up on these reports.

Thank you.