

Mr. Vice President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain would like to draw the Council's attention to the status of persons with disabilities among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Aside from Saudi Arabia, no other GCC State has ratified the Optional Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

While recognizing Saudi Arabia's ratification of the OP as a positive step, we are concerned about the continued incarceration and sentencing of persons with disabilities throughout the Gulf region, including in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia continues to issue the death penalty against persons with mental and physical disabilities. For example, the mentally disabled prisoner Abdulaziz al-Toaili'e was among the 47 prisoners executed by Saudi Arabia on 2 January of this year.

In Bahrain, the government continues to torture and arbitrarily detain physically and mentally disabled individuals. Furthermore, the government has reportedly tortured detainees in ways that specifically target their disability. Bahraini prison officials tortured Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, who is partially paralyzed in both legs, by forcing him to stand without crutches for prolonged periods of time. He continues to suffer from the injuries inflicted during his torture. No Bahraini officials have

been held accountable for torturing Dr. al-Singace. Further still, Bahraini prisoners have become disabled due to injuries suffered during their torture, such as Shia cleric Sayed Hussein al-Guraifi.

We express our hope that all GCC states will ratify both the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol. Noting that ratification without implementation is meaningless, we further call on GCC countries to implement legal reforms in line with their international commitments. Mr. Rapporteur, we ask whether additional GCC governments have expressed interest in ratifying the Convention and its Optional Protocol? If so, could the Rapporteur comment on what steps would be necessary for GCC states to take in order to fully implement the Convention?

Thank you.