

Mr. President,

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action condemns arbitrary detention and mandates that States take all measures to prevent acts of enforced disappearance and torture. Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain would like to express serious concern about violations of Section II of the VDPA regarding the use of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and torture.

For example, on August 18 2015, UAE security forces arrested prominent human rights defender Dr. Nasser bin Ghaith, who had previously been arrested for his peaceful activism in 2011. 7 months later, the government has yet to disclose information about bin Ghaith's whereabouts. He remains at risk of torture and ill treatment.

Between March 2012 and July 2013, the UAE arrested 94 activists after they petitioned the government for political reforms. The state security apparatus subsequently held up to 70 of the activists in secret detention. At least 44 activists spent between 6 and 11 months in prison without being taken before a judge. The government did not investigate detainees' credible allegations of torture. In July 2013, a state security court found 69 of the activists guilty of founding an organization with intent to overthrow the government. The vast majority of those convicted remain imprisoned.

Since the trial, UAE officials have targeted supporters of the activists, including by holding 3 sisters of one defendant in secret detention for 3 months. The state maintains a travel ban on Ahmed Mansoor, another activist who petitioned the government.

Mr. President, we call on all States to effectively uphold the tenets of the VDPA. We further feel that Human Rights Council Member States, such as the UAE, have a particular obligation to uphold the VDPA's provisions in national legislation and in practice.

Thank you.