

Mr. President,

I want to start by condemning the arrest of the prominent Bahraini human rights defender Nabeel Rajab at dawn this morning. He has not been heard of since his arrest without charge, and must be immediately released by the government.

Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, the Bahrain Institute for Rights & Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, would like thank the High Commissioner for his continued concern at the high number of arbitrary citizenship revocations in Bahrain. In total, over 300 Bahraini citizens had their citizenship revoked, myself included, with three more individuals having their citizenship revoked over this past weekend. Many of these individuals are rendered stateless and subsequently deported to Lebanon.

In February 2015, the government released a list of 72 persons whose citizenship it had revoked. My name was among approximately 50 on that list who were human rights defenders, political activists, journalists, academics and religious scholars; however, 20 others were known to be Daesh extremists. By revoking the citizenships of peaceful figures and human rights activists alongside those of violent extremists, the Bahraini government is equating human rights defenders with violent terrorists.

We join the High Commissioner's call that Bahrain end this practice of arbitrary citizenship revocation and reinstate all citizenships revoked for politically-motivated purposes.

We further support the High Commissioner's condemnation of the blanket ban on protest in Bahrain's capital, Manama, since 2013. Protestors are often met with overwhelming violence by security forces.

We strongly agree that, "Repression will not eliminate people's grievances; it will increase them."

Thank you.