

Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, would like to call the Council's attention to issues of reprisals against civil society who engage with technical capacity building and human rights training programs. We are particularly concerned with cases of reprisals carried out by the Government of Bahrain.

Last month, OHCHR carried out a program in Bahrain to train local civil society on different types of UN engagement, including engagement with this Council and its mechanisms. OHCHR and the Bahraini government had mutually agreed to protections for all participants in the training.

Unfortunately, only a few short weeks later at the beginning of this session of the Council, two of these civil society activists attempted to follow through on this training by traveling to Geneva to take part in this Council session. However, when they arrived at the Manama airport, Bahrain border security informed these training participants that the government has imposed travel bans against them and they are unable to leave the country.

These participants were among a total of ten human rights activists who were subjected to travel bans when attempting to travel to Geneva this month to participate in the Council. This marks an unprecedented step by the Bahraini government to carry out acts of reprisals and restrictions on human rights defenders for engaging with the Council and OHCHR.

In light of these acts of reprisal, and the worsening human rights situation in the country, we call on OHCHR to completely suspend all technical cooperation with the government of Bahrain until activists' full protection can be guaranteed.

Thank you.