

Mr. President,

Before addressing our topic, Al-Salam Foundation along with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy would like to point at the Bahraini authorities' arbitrary and unjustified closure of the city of Diraz and threatening protestors around the home of Sheikh Isa Qassim, whose nationality has been revoked six days ago.

As a rejection of these actions that carry a retaliatory character and as a protection of the right to peaceful assembly, we call on the Bahraini government not to use violence against those gathered around the house of Sheikh Isa Qassim and to reverse their decision to arbitrarily strip the citizenship of Sheikh Qassim.

We would also like to draw the attention of the Council to the third cycle of Bahrain's UPR review. While a number of countries have committed themselves to taking the final steps towards implementing the recommendations of previous cycles, we see Bahrain taking steps towards ignoring the recommendations of this Council and distance itself from international human rights standards.

During Bahrain's second UPR cycle, the kingdom has sought to institutionalize the restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religious and cultural freedoms. All forms of opposition and protest are now illegal.

During this month, the government targeted human rights activists by imposing a travel ban on them or arbitrarily detaining them, as in Nabeel Rajab's case. The government closed Al-Wefaq Society, and doubled the prison sentence against its Secretary General, Sheikh Ali Salman. The most worrying aspect, however, is the revocation of the nationality of the senior cleric of the majority Shiite population in Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Qassim. This caused thousands of peaceful demonstrators to take to the streets of Bahrain in numbers not seen since 2011.

These measures directly contradict the vast majority of the 158 recommendations that were accepted by Bahrain during the second cycle of its UPR review.

We call on states to note that Bahrain ignored the second cycle recommendations of its UPR review, and to focus during the upcoming third cycle on implementation and accountability.

Thank you.