

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain



Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and Bahrain Institute for Rights & Democracy, call the Human Rights Council's attention to the escalating human rights crisis in Bahrain.

Since June 2016, the Government of Bahrain has increased its repression of civil society, political opposition, and the majority Shia religious community to unprecedented levels.

Bahraini authorities arbitrarily arrested Nabeel Rajab, the president of BCHR. He may serve up to 16 years for statements he published in relation to his work as a human rights defender, including tweets and an open letter in the New York Times. For the second consecutive session of this Council, Bahrain has completely restricted all independent civil society actors from traveling to Geneva. Such reprisals and restrictions are wholly unacceptable.

Bahrain has also dissolved Al-Wefaq, the largest opposition political society in the country, and extended the arbitrary detention of its Secretary General, Sheikh Ali Salman, to 9 years in prison.

The Bahraini government has revoked the citizenship of the community's leading spiritual leader Sheikh Isa Qassim. This has resulted in hundreds of protesters taking to the streets – in numbers unprecedented since 2011. As a result, they have arbitrarily arrested and charged dozens of protesters. The list included the interfaith leader Sheikh Maytham Al-Salman, Bahraini medic Dr. Taha Al-Derazi, and almost 60 Shia clerics.

While we appreciate that many states and OHCHR have raised a wide range of concerns, we further call on the Human Rights Council to fulfil its preventive mandate by elevating its deep concerns over the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain, and insisting that the government fully live up to its international human rights commitments. We further call on the Council to pass a resolution on Bahrain to establish a Special Rapporteur on Bahrain that will document further human rights developments in the kingdom and report these findings to the Council.

Thank you.