



Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, together with the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), are concerned with Bahrain's total lack of cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Over past months, Bahrain has created an extremely hostile environment for OHCHR's technical cooperation and capacity building programs, imprisoning human rights defenders, deporting religious leaders and dissolving the main political opposition group. Moreover, Bahrain has made a conscious effort to undermine the authority of the High Commissioner and his office, calling into question its independence and impartiality.

Therefore, we were surprised to hear the Government express its readiness to cooperate with OHCHR in a public statement earlier this session. It would appear that Bahrain publicly expresses a willingness to cooperate, while their behavior and practices would suggest otherwise. We strongly believe that Bahrain's cooperation with OHCHR is of utmost importance, especially given the recently alarming deterioration in the country's human rights situation. We particularly think that the High Commissioner's office could assist Bahrain in the area of the judiciary and in security sector reform, where most of the gravest violations are occurring.

However, we urge the Council to remain prized of the situation in Bahrain, as it appears that the Government does not seriously intend to cooperate with OHCHR. This 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, we were particularly disappointed by Bahrain's decision to issue blanket travel bans preventing Bahraini civil society from engaging with the Council.

We call on Bahrain to end all reprisals against civil society and to look to its upcoming third cycle UPR in May 2017 as an opportunity to pave a new path for reform and cooperation with OHCHR.

Thank you.