



Mr. President,

IDO, together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain thank SR Knox for his report. We highlight his point that food security depends on the biodiversity of the surrounding environment. We also agree with his assessment that the loss of biodiversity can disproportionately affect some groups more than others.

As an archipelago, Bahraini society is inextricably bound to the sea. Historically, it was known for its pearls, while the local diet was enriched by local fish and shrimp. However, beginning in the 1950's the Bahraini government launched ongoing land reclamation projects. In addition, pollution from industrial plants has increasingly destroyed Bahrain's coastline and marine environment negatively impacting the livelihoods of many Bahrainis. Oil spills and chemical waste kill marine life, destroying sources of income and sustenance. The cumulative effects have resulted in the destruction of at least 90 percent of Bahrain's fisheries and destroyed the surrounding landscape, allowing for erosion and an increase in water temperature and sediment.

Many people in the village of Ma'ameer rely on the fishing industry. However, due to land reclamation projects, Ma'ameer now has one of the highest levels of poverty and unemployment in Bahrain. Despite this, authorities have not taken steps to help the community. The populations most affected by land reclamation projects and industrial pollution are impoverished Shia families. In Sitra, land reclamation has destroyed formerly pearl-rich and sea-food rich areas, putting local fishermen out of business. However, the government has not provided any support to fishermen.

Healthy communities rely on a biodiverse environment. However, land reclamation and pollution is destroying Bahrain's biodiversity and harming its communities and people. Therefore we ask Mr. Knox, what efforts has he taken to urge governments to halt land reclamation?

Thank you