



Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights would like to thank the Special Procedures for their dedicated work on behalf of victims of human rights abuses worldwide. In many countries where no domestic recourse is available, communications with the Special Procedures remains one of the only means of redress.

This session, the mandates have raised serious concerns in six communications with Bahrain. The mandates expressed their continued alarm over the arbitrary arrest, detention, and prosecution of human rights defender Nabeel Rajab for his work documenting abuses. They also raised the case of Al-Wefaq, the largest opposition society in Bahrain, which was arbitrarily dissolved by the government earlier this year. Bahraini authorities mirrored this move just days ago, when they launched new legal proceedings to dissolve the Wa'ad political society, Bahrain's other major opposition group. The Special Procedures additionally expressed deep concern over the "systematic persecution and repression of the Shias," including religious leaders, peaceful dissidents, and human rights defenders. Some communications directly referred to the Bahraini government's interference in access to the HRC, with the Special Procedures noting numerous cases of human rights defenders being banned from traveling to Geneva to take part in recent sessions.

We therefore reiterate the High Commissioner's call for Bahrain to allow the Special Procedures unrestricted access to the country – and particularly the special rapporteurs on torture – so that they might monitor and investigate these increasing reports of abuse.

Thank you.