



Mr. President,

We agree with the decision by the High Commissioner to suspend OHCHR technical cooperation with Bahrain. The human rights situation in Bahrain has reached a crisis point. In suspending cooperation, the High Commissioner sends a strong message that Bahrain must end its relentless repression of basic human rights and commit to honoring its human rights obligations.

In recent months, we have witnessed a steep rise in human rights abuses in Bahrain. These widespread abuses do not create conducive conditions for the success of any OHCHR mission to accomplish substantive progress.

At present, we believe that the situation is such that any cooperation without strict demands for delivering progress, only serve to whitewash abuses. In recent years, the United Kingdom has provided technical assistance and training to Bahraini human rights mechanisms. Yet Bahraini security forces continue to use excessive force against peaceful protesters and torture prisoners.

We hope that the situation in Bahrain improves in order to enable a successful OHCHR mission with the full cooperation of the government. Yet this can only happen if the Bahraini government commits to concrete steps and confidence-building measures, as the High Commissioner stated in his report. Bahrain must release all human rights defenders and establish effective protections for civil society.

Thank you.