

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain



Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain together with the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (ADHRB and BIRD) welcome the High Commissioner's report to the Council and wish to echo his concern regarding government reprisals against human rights defenders.

For example, in Bahrain, on 12 May, government-backed media defamed human rights defender Ebtisam al-Saegh, referring to her as a criminal and accusing her of fabricating documented rights abuses. Three days later, al-Saegh's car was mysteriously incinerated. On 26 May, al-Saegh was detained, sexually assaulted, and physically and psychologically tortured for 7 hours by the National Security Agency, where she was questioned about her participation in the 34th Human Rights Council session and told to end all human rights activities.

Family members of exiled human rights defenders have also been targeted. This past March, the brother- and mother-in-law of Sayed Ahmed al-Wadaei were detained and tortured expressly in response to al-Wadaei's human rights work. Also, after I voiced my support for a protest against King Hamad's prominent visit to the United Kingdom in May, Bahraini authorities summoned my father and sister to Muharraaq police station. They refused to release my family unless I agreed to apologize to the king.

Recent victims in Bahrain have identified the re-empowered NSA as leading this most recent attack on civil society. And that these measures, backed up by broad counterterrorism laws and military courts legally empowered to try civilians, have led many to see Bahrain now as a full-fledged Police State.

In light of this situation in Bahrain, we call on all states to end all reprisals, including travel bans, violence, intimidation and torture, and we call on this Council to renew its efforts to create a Special Rapporteur on Reprisals to address this critical issue.

Thank you.