

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain

BIRD
BAHRAIN INSTITUTE FOR
RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation, together with ADHRB and BIRD welcome the statements made in recent weeks by the High Commissioner and the Office of the Secretary-General regarding the attack on peaceful protestors in Diraz, Bahrain. We further echo the High Commissioner's call for an independent international investigation into the deaths of five protestors during the raid.

After the Bahraini government arbitrarily revoked the citizenship of Ayatollah Isa Qassim in June 2016, demonstrators launched a peaceful sit-in around his home in protest. Eleven months later, on 23 May, authorities raided the gathering, killing five protestors. 286 individuals were also arrested. Those killed were buried without the consent or participation of their families and those arrested have reported abuses during detention such as beatings.

Among those killed were Mohamed Khadim Muhsin Zain Aldeen, a respected environmental activist, and Mohamed Hamdan, the older brother of Mustafa Hamdan, another protestor killed by security forces in Diraz this year. Mustafa was shot in the head with live ammunition during a raid in January, and finally succumbed to his wounds in March.

The deadly raids on Diraz demonstrate that the Bahraini government has only intensified its suppression of the right to free assembly. Security forces continue to use deadly force against peaceful protests with impunity, while the authorities subject activists as well as religious leaders, like Sheikh Isa Qassim, to arbitrary judicial harassment. Following the raid on Diraz, Sheikh Isa remains under effective house arrest, with security forces continuing to surround his home.

Yet one of the still more troubling elements to the escalating crisis in Diraz has been the growing role of the National Security Agency in these increasingly deadly police actions. The NSA and Police's excessive force, disappearances and torture against dissenters, coupled next to Bahrain's deeply flawed judiciary and the expanded role of military courts to try civilians, force a number of observers to see Bahrain today as a rising Police State.

We therefore urge states, including Bahrain's allies like the United States and United Kingdom, to likewise condemn the excessive force and extrajudicial killings in Bahrain carried out in response to free expression, assembly, and belief. We further call on this Council to support the High Commissioner's call for an independent international investigation into the deadly Diraz raid to ensure redress and accountability.

Thank you.