



Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain is concerned about some states' failure to abide by the Vienna Declaration's promoting the equal rights of women.

For example, in February 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed numerous concerns about Bahrain's incomplete implementation of provisions of CEDAW. We are particularly concerned by Bahrain's preferential treatment to the Al Khalifa tribe by refusing to hold the tribe accountable for violations of women's rights.

The Al Khalifa tribe often forces its women into tribal and political marriages. Additionally, serious allegations of violence against Al Khalifa women have gone unreported and unsolved. Furthermore, some children born of Al Khalifa men to non-Al Khalifa mothers have not received the rights and privileges associated with tribal affiliation. Yet, the women of the Al Khalifa tribe do not have access to justice. Because they belong to the Al Khalifa tribe, Bahraini courts will not accept their reports of abuse. They must instead file their cases in a tribal setting with elder sheikhs who have judicial authority over private facets of their lives.

The Vienna Declaration is global in scope and the Kingdom of Bahrain must respect its obligations under the Declaration. We call on Bahrain to take immediate action to end discrimination against all women in Bahrain, and to immediately withdraw all reservations to CEDAW.

Thank you,