



Mr. President,

Alsalam and ADHRB would like to call attention to violations of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association in Duraz, Bahrain and Awamiyah, Saudi Arabia.

Awamiyah is a Shia-majority town in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province that has long been a center for anti-government protests. On May 10th, Saudi security forces accompanied by demolition vehicles entered the city and began razing the 400-year-old Mosawara neighborhood. This initiated an ongoing military operation that has resulted in hundreds of forced evictions and the death of at least five civilians. The government operation appears to target dissidents, activists, and the local Shia community.

Across the causeway in Bahrain, since June 2016, hundreds of peaceful protesters have gathered in the village of Duraz to protest the government's arbitrary denaturalization of Sheikh Isa Qassim, Bahrain's most prominent Shia religious leader, who has also been convicted of unsubstantiated money-laundering charges. On 23 May, Bahraini authorities violently raided the peaceful assembly in Duraz using live ammunition and indiscriminate fire that killed five civilians, including environmental activist Mohamed Khadim Muhsin Zain Aldeen, while 287 were arrested.

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's raids are an effort to deny citizens their rights to free expression and peaceful assembly and association. We call on the Council to condemn Saudi Arabia and Bahrain's suppression of these basic human rights.

Thank you.