



Mr. President,

ADHRB and BIRD would like to call the Council's attention to the Bahraini government's reprisals and restrictions on the participation of civil society in the UPR process.

An effective UPR process requires the participation of civil society activists. However, Bahrain has restricted their participation during the UPR pre-session, the UPR itself, and during the UPR civil society and national consultative stage. For example, during Bahrain's 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle UPR, widespread travel bans restricted all but 3 activists from traveling to participate from Bahrain. In addition, external NGOs, including ADHRB were not allowed access to Bahrain to take part in the National consultative phase.

Bahrain has also targeted activists who engaged with the UPR mechanism, as well as with this Council. For example, late last month, following the UPR review, Ebtisam was summoned by the National Security Agency. There NSA officers interrogated her regarding her engagement with the Human Rights Council, the UPR mechanism, and her broader human rights work. During her 7-hour interrogation, she suffered physical and psychological torture, including beatings and sexual assault.

ADHRB calls upon the international community and this Council to take immediate action in order to protect activists in their engagement with the UPR mechanism, and other human rights bodies of the United Nations.

Thank you.