



Mr. President,

ADHRB expresses its concern regarding religious intolerance, as such is wholly inconsistent with the DDPA.

Yet we continue to see worsening religious discrimination in Bahrain, where the Shia community is systematically discriminated against in society. For example, Bahrain's majority Shia are gravely underrepresented in Bahrain's police and security forces, as well as in political spaces and the judiciary. Discriminatory political districting consistently undermines the influence of Shia voters.

Restrictions are also imposed on Shias seeking to exercise their freedom of religion, and rights to expression, assembly, and association. Eleven months have passed since the forced dissolution of Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, Bahrain's largest Shia opposition party. Since then, more than 75 Shia religious leaders have experienced judicial harassment.

On 20 June, 2016, Bahrain's Interior Ministry ordered the denaturalization of the country's most prominent Shia religious leader Sheikh Isa Qassim. Three weeks ago, on 21 May, Sheikh Qassim was sentenced to one year in prison for unsubstantiated money-laundering charges—in relation to the centuries-old Shia religious practice of *khums*.

Two days after the court decision, police raided Sheikh Qassim's village of Duraz, where his followers had sustained a peaceful sit-in since the announcement of his denaturalization. Five civilians were killed.

These abuses violate the right to manifest one's religion in "worship, observance, practice and teaching." We therefore urge all states, particularly Bahrain, to end all forms of religious intolerance.

Thank you.