

Mr. President,

IDO and ADHRB would like to thank the High Commissioner for his remarks concerning the shrinking of civil space in Bahrain and would like to draw the attention of the Council to Bahrain's ban on peaceful protests and gatherings, specifically the crackdown on the peaceful sit-in at Duraz in May 2017.

After leading Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim was denaturalized, hundreds of Bahraini citizens gathered for a peaceful sit-in outside of his home at Duraz, in fears that he would soon be deported despite his advanced age and ailing health. The government disrupted the peaceful protest, killing 5 men: Ahmed Jamil Ahmed Mohammed al-Asfoor, Mohamed Ali Ebrahim Ahmed Kadhem Ahmed, Mohamed Ahmed Hassan Mohammed Hamdan, Mohammed Kadhem Mohsen Ali Nasser, and Mohamed Abdulnabi al-Ekri. As many as 287 individuals were arbitrarily arrested, and the government cut off access to the village, restricting the free movement of anyone in Duraz. More than a year later, the village remains inaccessible.

There has been no investigation into the violence in Duraz, and the Bahraini government continues to use violence in suppressing the freedom of assembly in Bahrain.

Bahrain's actions have resulted in a complete denial of citizens' right to free expression and peaceful assembly and association. With this in mind, ADHRB calls on the Council and the High Commissioner to press Bahrain to reverse the crackdown on free expression and assembly, and to investigate and prosecute government agents who used excessive force in Duraz.

Thank you.