



Mr. President,

ADHRB wishes to bring to the Council's attention multiple violations of freedom of expression in Bahrain, particularly online and in the press. Bahraini authorities continuously silence critical opinions in the country.

In February 2018, Bahrain's unelected Prime Minister for over 40 years, Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, announced harsher penalties for charges of "misusing social media" under the umbrella of cyberterrorism. Soon after, the King announced that the kingdom's security forces would take new measures to track down activists for criticizing the government on social media, and five new arrests were conducted. Earlier this month, Nabeel Rajab's five-year sentence for tweets criticizing the war in Yemen and condemning torture in Bahraini prisons was upheld. He is now facing a total of seven years in prison.

Bahrain has further imposed restrictions on free press. In June 2017 the government closed *Al-Wasat*, the last independent newspaper in Bahrain. On the 12th of June 2018, for the second time in seven years, Bahraini forces arrested Hassan Mohammed Qamber, a photojournalist documenting human rights in the country. His house was raided sixty times in six years because of his activities and he was sentenced *in absentia* over 100 times.

We call on Bahrain to halt violations of freedom of expression in the country, to reinstate independent press outlets, and to release all prisoners convicted for exercising their rights to freedom of expression. We also urge the Council to hold Bahrain accountable for violating international norms relating to the freedom of opinion and expression.

Thank you