



Mr. President,

ADHRB wishes to express concern over continued violations of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by certain States.

For example, Bahrain continues to discriminate against its Shia majority community, arresting prominent political and religious figures on spurious religion-motivated charges.

In December 2014, Bahraini security forces arrested Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of Bahrain's largest opposition political party, Al-Wefaq. A court sentenced him to four years in prison on charges related solely to his political speeches. The government later brought additional dubious espionage charges against him, while seeking the death penalty. Although initially acquitted, the government continues to appeal his acquittal. In addition, the government ordered the closure and dissolution of Al-Wefaq. Like the charges against Sheikh Ali Salman, those against al-Wefaq are highly dubious.

Authorities also target Sheikh Isa Qassim, the pre-eminent leader of Bahrain's Shia community. In June 2016, Bahrain revoked his citizenship without any legal proceedings. The government then leveled spurious fraud charges against him. After his conviction, the government has held him on house arrest and under constant threat of deportation. Because of this, Sheikh Qassim cannot leave his home, although he suffers from extremely poor health and needs urgent surgery to address his condition.

The DDPA directs states to counter discrimination and intolerance in all its forms. We call upon all states, including Bahrain, to uphold their responsibility to the Declaration by working to end discrimination against religious and socio-ethnic groups.

Thank you.