

Mr. President,

ADHRB would like to raise concerns about Bahrain's rejection of OHCHR cooperation to help address the ongoing crisis in the kingdom ahead of the upcoming elections in the fall.

Political opposition groups Amal, Wa'ad, and al-Wefaq have all been dissolved, and leaders like Sheikh Ali Salman, Hassan Mushaima, and Abdulwahab Husain subsequently arbitrarily detained on charges related to their political activities.

The recent amendment to Law No. 14 of 2002 has effectively eliminated the possibility of opposition leaders and members ever running for office. Free and independent press have been silenced, with the last independent newspaper *Al-Wasat* closed last year. As the High Commissioner has previously pointed out, there have been no genuine efforts to reform or to engage with OHCHR.

Ahead of the elections, there is effectively no space for civil society or political engagement. We call on the Council and its members to press the government of Bahrain to genuinely engage with OHCHR, and particularly to allow for transparent, independent international election monitoring.

We further urge Bahrain to engage with OHCHR and other experts who have offered their technical assistance in the past, particularly as concerns civil and political rights. We also call for the release of all political prisoners who are currently arbitrarily detained, and for the lifelong ban on seeking election imposed on opposition members to be lifted. Without these safeguards in place, the upcoming elections in Bahrain have no chance of being free, fair, or legitimate.

Thank you