



Mr. President,

Alsalam and ADHRB would like to raise deep concerns over Bahrain's bid for membership in the Human Rights Council, as it comes amidst a sharp deterioration in the kingdom's human rights situation, severe repression of fundamental freedoms, and steady refusal to work with the international community and the mechanisms of the United Nations.

Article 9 of General Assembly Resolution 60/251 calls on Member States of the Council to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights." However, since mid-2016, Bahrain has taken increasingly repressive measures to silence dissent and imprison political activists. The government has dissolved all opposition political parties, silenced independent media, jailed human rights defenders and political leaders, and criminalized forms of expression and association.

In addition to suppressing fundamental freedoms, Bahrain refuses to engage with the Human Rights Council, and continues to be one of the worst offenders in terms of reprisals against civil society for cooperating with the HRC and its mechanisms. No Special Procedures have been allowed into the country since 2006 and the government has refused cooperate constructively with OHCHR.

Most troublingly, it appears that Bahrain has publicly committed itself to continuing its crackdown on dissent in its membership voluntary pledge when it committed to "[eliminating] any incitement to... anti-nationalism."

Member States of the Council are expected to uphold the highest standards of human rights and to set an example to all states. Bahrain has clearly and repeatedly demonstrated a complete disrespect for international human rights standards, and has rejected constructive participation with UN human rights bodies and mechanisms. Bahrain is therefore unfit to be a Member of the Human Rights Council.

Thank you.