



Mr. President,

Alsalam and ADHRB express concern over States' violations to the VDPA relating to impunity and their failure to prosecute security forces' human rights violations, in particular torture and extrajudicial violence. This distinct lack of accountability ensures that perpetrators of these crimes not only evade punishment, but are emboldened to carry out further abuses.

For example, in Bahrain, torture is rampant in prisons and security forces frequently use extrajudicial violence with impunity against protesters, critics, and journalists.

On 31 March 2012, Ahmed Ismail Hassan, a photojournalist was killed by security forces during a protest. There has been no investigation into his death and key security force officials, including the head of the Public Security Forces Tariq Al Hasan, remain free and unindicted.

Impunity also reaches to the level of the Bahraini royal family. Nasser bin Hamad, the son of the king, personally led a reprisal campaign against activists that included torture. Because of this, Nasser was stripped of his diplomatic immunity by a British High Court.

But rather than face prosecution at home, Nasser was promoted Commander of the Royal Guard, where he has fought in Yemen alongside coalition forces accused of war crimes. He is also has been appointed to Bahrain's Supreme Defense Council.

This lack of accountability only empowers security forces to act with greater impunity. We call on all States, including Bahrain, to end impunity for crimes committed by security forces and to ensure accountability for human rights violations, in line with the VDPA.

Thank you.