



# Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain

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Madame High Commissioner,

We thank you for your oral update and we agree about the importance of technical cooperation as a way to improve human rights records. However, to be effective, these programs must engage independent civil society actors and include protections for activists and independent organizations as well as mechanisms for accountability.

We are concerned that if these programs exclude these conditions, states may use technical cooperation programs as a way to whitewash their abuses or obscure the failure, inability, and unwillingness of state actors to take responsibility for their violations.

It is critical that OHCHR only work with states if cooperation comes with the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the elimination of restrictions on independent civil society, and immediate investigations into allegations of human rights abuses.

For example, OHCHR undertook a technical visit to Bahrain several years ago, however, that visit failed to bring about the release of political prisoners or other meaningful change. We would hope to see a new visit, but only on the condition that Bahrain seriously investigate security force impunity, widespread and systematic torture, and the role of Ministry of Interior in these abuses, including the Minister himself Rashid bin Abdullah AlKhalifa.

Madame High Commissioner, we urge your office to only initiate technical cooperation programs that ensure accountability, and work to address systemic abuses. Without these conditions, such programs will not be effective.

Thank You.