



Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and the Bahrain Institute for Rights & Democracy (BIRD) welcomes the statement of the High Commissioner and thanks him for calling this Council's attention to the situation in Bahrain.

Indeed, we share all of his concerns and regret that in the last few months, we have observed an intensification of all violations in Bahrain. In June, we were deeply concerned by the re-arrest of leading Human Rights Defender Nabeel Rajab, coming only weeks after a Bahraini court had extended the arbitrary sentence of main political opposition leader Sheikh Ali Salman.

We have also been extremely concerned with the Government of Bahrain's clear campaign against its Shia population. In June, we were alarmed by the decision to revoke the citizenship of Bahrain's Shia spiritual leader Sheikh Isa Qassim. Unfortunately the practice of citizenship revocation has become all too customary in Bahrain. However, the denaturalization of Sheikh Qassim provoked an unprecedented number of protests in Bahrain with people gathering in numbers unseen since 2011. Bahrain has since arrested a number of these peaceful protesters and has imposed a blockade on the town of Sheikh Qassim's residence, Diraz, where several protesters have been unable to exit, and others unable to enter.

We welcome the High Commissioner and his office's engagement on these and many other issues and ask that he continue to call on Bahrain to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. We share his view that the last 10 years have shown with "punishing clarity" what happens when peaceful voices are smashed and warning bells ignored by the international community.

Thank you.