



**24th Session of the
UN Human Rights Council
Item 2& 3**

**General Debate:
Report of the High Commissioner and the
Report of the Secretary General on reprisals
13 September**

Delivered by Nada Dhaif

Thank you, Mr President.

I am Dr. Nada Dhaif, chairperson of BRAVO. I am speaking as a member of CIVICUS and wish first of all to thank the High Commissioner for her update, in particular for the concerns raised on the deteriorating situation in Bahrain.

Secondly, having been harassed and tortured myself and been mentioned in the report of the Secretary General on reprisals, I strongly welcome his report and recommendations with the roadmap to follow by all governments, including the government of Bahrain. We also warmly welcome the joint statement delivered by Switzerland.

Thirdly, I wish to raise the situation of women in Bahrain – so far not often mentioned at this Council - which is seriously deteriorating. Based on discrimination and violations it has now reached unprecedented levels. Since the protests in 2011, approximately 5000 women have been dismissed from their jobs, faced suspension and in some cases a reduction in their salaries which can be attributed to sectarian reasons.

There are 235 women political prisoners including doctors, nurses, teachers and journalists which have been subjected to torture and sexual harassment. This phenomenon has become a tactic, lately increasingly used by the security forces. It is deeply concerning that such tactics are being used against women in an arab, muslim, tribal community.

The targeting of women is related to freedom of speech and assembly, in retaliation against their husbands or fathers who may have been involved in political activities. Currently there are five women in prison including Zainab al Khawaja who is facing 17 criminal charges. Other cases include Reyhana Al Mouswai and Nafeesa Al Asfoo. They were jailed for six months under the new terrorism law which has been used to hold activists for up to 45 days, thereafter allowing for a renewal. Some activists' terms have been renewed more than 6 times – including those of Reyhana Al Mouswai and Nafeesa Al Asfoor.

Others cases include: Haleema al Sabag – a nurse- who helped injured activists. She was arrested directly from hospital and Nadia Ali – pregnant at third trimester who was also arrested. We urge the Council to call on the Bahrain government to finally implement its commitments to the BICI and UPR recommendations.

I thank you