



**24<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Human Rights Council  
Item 4**

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention: Bahrain  
17 September 2013**

**Delivered by Mariam Al-Khawaja**

Thank you Mr. President,

My name is Maryam Alkhawaja, acting president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, speaking on behalf of our partners CIVICUS and CIHRS.

The human rights situation in Bahrain unfortunately continues to deteriorate. In July law amendments were made that further infringe on people's basic rights to free assembly and free expression. The Ministry of Justice announced a new decision that any meetings between political societies and foreign embassies must be announced to the ministry and they have the right to sit in on these meetings.

Since mid-February until now we have documented at least 1200 arbitrary arrests, including women and children, some being tried under the terrorism law. In August alone, we documented at least 400 house raids. The visit of the special rapporteur has been effectively cancelled and torture is rampant and systematic. Most of those arrested are subjected to enforced disappearance that last from several hours and sometimes up to a week, during which people are ill-treated at times amounting to torture.

In this context CIVICUS and CIHRS stand in solidarity with imprisoned human rights defenders in Bahrain: Nabeel Rajab, Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja, Zainab Al-Khawaja and Naji Fateel who was severely tortured following his arrest in May this year.

Reprisals are still ongoing, just yesterday activists here at the council were photographed repeatedly despite requests to the person to stop. We thank the 47 countries that signed the joint statement on Bahrain, but it is time to take it a step further, we urge that there be a resolution on Bahrain next session.

Thank you Mr. President