



27<sup>th</sup> session of the  
Human Rights Council  
Item4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**  
**Delivered by Oliver Henman**

Thank you Mr. President,

CIVICUS remains deeply concerned about the unabated restrictions on civil society space in **Bahrain**. The recent arbitrary arrest of human rights defender and co-director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights Maryam al-Khawaja represents the government's most recent attempt to suppress all forms of dissent in the country. Maryam has been an unwavering advocate for democracy and human rights including here at the Council. While the government of Bahrain committed to allowing human rights defenders to conduct their work without undue hindrance during its Universal Periodic Review in 2012, it has patently failed to create an enabling environment for civil society.

CIVICUS reiterates its support for the joint statement endorsed by 47 States during the 26<sup>th</sup> Session expressing serious concern about the human rights situation in Bahrain. However, in light of the Bahraini government's routine and flagrant breach of fundamental rights enshrined in the ICCPR, it is imperative that the Council takes concerted action to address the situation in Bahrain. We further urge the Government of Bahrain to immediately release all detained human rights defenders, including Maryam Al-Khawaja, and her father, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja.

Mr. President,

CIVICUS is equally concerned about the situation in **Egypt**. In addition to the joint letter addressed to all members and observers of the Council, we wish to highlight the government's unprecedented crackdown on dissent. It is of grave concern that the government has recently issued an ultimatum to civil society organisations to register under a regressive, Mubarak-era NGO law, which empowers officials to silence CSOs critical of state policy — or face dissolution.

We urgently ask the Council to finally break its silence and address in a resolution the mass killings and arbitrary detentions in Rabaa Square in August 2013 and call for an international inquiry into grave violations committed since January 2011 in Egypt.

Thank you, Mr. President