



**UN Human Rights Council
21st session
Item 4**

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention
Statement delivered by Renate Bloem, CIVICUS UN Representative, Geneva**

Thank you Madam President

CIVICUS has repeatedly urged the **Ethiopian** Government to realign its policy in line with international human rights law. Following the passing of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi we believe that now is the time for the new leadership to commit the State to the full respect of its people's human rights. The Council and Ethiopia's international partners should both take the opportunity to call for a number of pressing reforms to re-establish respect for the freedoms of association, assembly and expression as a matter of priority during this time of transition.

In particular, we ask UNHRC member and observer states to call upon Ethiopian authorities to amend the 2009 Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation to remove restrictions on human rights organisations and bring the Proclamation in line with the Ethiopian Constitution and international human rights obligations, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

In relation to our critical comments on Friday, CIVICUS wants to commend the Government of the **Russian Federation** for its non-interference in the large peaceful protest demonstration during this weekend.

The **Bahrain** Government engaged in May 2012 with the 2nd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review process.

It did not specify during the preliminary adoption which of the recommendations to improve its human rights record it would adopt or reject. However, since this date, the crackdown on human rights defenders and political activists has increased in Bahrain, including through arbitrary detention, harassment and torture. We urge Council members and observer states to call on the Bahrain Government during the upcoming UPR adoption to:

- unconditionally release all human rights defenders, including Nabeel Rajab, Zainab and Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Abdul-Jalil Al-Singace, all peaceful opposition activists, and all those jailed for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, including journalists, doctors, teachers, lawyers;
- immediately implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and to establish an adequate timeframe for this;

- adopt all relevant UPR recommendations;
- ensure that those who participate in the UPR process do not face reprisals.
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I thank you for your attention.