



Mr. President

IDO and ADHRB would like to call the Council's attention to the rising political repression surrounding Bahrain's upcoming elections in November 2018. While elections should be a time when States work to ensure political, civil society and press openness, the Government of Bahrain has only moved to relentlessly crush this space in the two years leading up to this November's election.

Bahrain has undertaken a systematic campaign to erase organized political opposition. The government banned the country's largest political opposition society, Al-Wefaq and jailed its leadership, including Sheikh Ali Salman who is in prison on charges relating to peaceful political speeches. The government also dissolved Wa'ad, a secular leftist party, and earlier this year the government instituted a new law barring any member of a dissolved political group from ever seeking elected office again. The crackdown on organized political opposition has come in tandem with the shutdown of the kingdom's only independent newspaper, *Al-Wasat*.

In addition, Bahrain has systematically jailed political opposition figures, human rights activists, and journalists. Among those prisoners of conscience currently detained in Bahrain's overflowing prisons are Hassan Mushaima, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Nabeel Rajab, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, Naji Fateel, and Abdulwahab Hussain.

It is amidst this high tide of repression that Bahrain will be holding its parliamentary elections. With Bahrain banning all forms of political opposition, limiting party funding, gerrymandering districts, suppressing independent press, and arresting community leaders, the elections cannot be legitimate. We call on the Council and international community to press Bahrain to take serious steps towards ending this repression ahead of any proposed elections.

Thank you