Madame High Commissioner,

We would like to thank you for your remarks and for calling attention to the importance of the right to life and inherent human dignity.

Even as a growing number of states have abolished the death penalty, others continue to carry out executions, including some Members of this Council, like Bahrain. In July 2019, Bahrain has executed Ali AlArab and Ahmed AlMalali after arresting them without a warrant, torturing them and convicting them in a mass trail alongside 58 others and despite urgent calls to halt the executions including from Members of the European Parliament, the US Congress, and Special Rapporteur Callamard.

We also noted your comments on the importance of civil society and wish to call your attention to the Bahraini government’s ongoing efforts to effectively close civil space in the Kingdom.

Bahrain uses broad definitions of terrorism to detain protests and convict opposition leader. In Bahraini law, the definition of terrorism extends to any non-violent act the government deems “disrupts public order” or “damages national unity”. In May 2019, this was applied broadly to social media, to the extent that liking a Tweet or following an account can be prosecuted as “support of terrorism”.

A country with such a record should not be a member of this Council. We urge Member States to pressure Bahrain to bring its actions in line with international standards of human rights, including establishing a moratorium on the death penalty and releasing all political prisoners.

Thank you