

13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Group of the UPR

UPR of Bahrain

**Statement by A u s t r i a**

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of Bahrain to the UPR and thanks for the submission of its national report.

Austria commends Bahrain for the appointment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to investigate all human rights violations during the 2011 unrest. Austria takes note of a number of steps taken to implement its recommendations and encourages Bahrain to redouble its efforts in this respect.

We encourage the Government of Bahrain to present the findings of the BICI as well as the report of the BICI implementation commission during an upcoming regular session of the Human Rights Council.

Austria remains concerned about the human rights situation in Bahrain in particular regarding allegations of torture, arbitrary detention as well as undue restrictions of the freedoms of assembly and expression, in particular the harassment of journalists. Therefore we would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Effectively prosecute all security agents that have allegedly tortured or otherwise abused protestors during and after the 2011 unrest;
2. Allow the Special Rapporteur on torture to visit Bahrain before the end of 2012;
3. Make subject to review in civilian courts all convictions and sentences rendered by the National Security Courts where fundamental principles of a fair trial, including prompt and full access to legal counsel and inadmissibility of coerced testimony, were not respected;
4. Repeal or amend the 2002 Press Law eliminating all restrictions upon the freedom of the press not in line with relevant provisions of the ICCPR and enact a progressive, substantive Freedom of Information Law in its place;
5. Implement the commitment to rebuild the Shi'a places of worship destroyed between March and May 2011;
6. Abolish the death penalty, introducing in the meantime a formal moratorium and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

I thank you.