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UN Human Rights Council - 27th 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 their national report.

Austria commends Bahrain for its dedication to the UPR process and its efforts to improve the human rights situation in the country, including the creation of numerous entities dedicated to safeguarding human rights such as the Special Investigations Unit and the Ombudsman institutions at the Interior Ministry and the National Security Agency. We also acknowledge the additional measures Bahrain has taken since its last review to investigate human rights violations during the 2011 events and provide redress to the victims.

Nevertheless, we feel that lately the human rights situation in the country shows a tendency to deteriorate in some important respects. We would like to express our specific concern at the maintenance of the death penalty and the renewed recourse to executions, the prosecution of many human rights defenders including the practice of withdrawing their citizenship especially in cases where this leads to statelessness and the extension of the competence of military tribunals to cover also civilians.

Furthermore, we believe that the independence and impartiality of many of the new entities created to safeguard basic human rights needs to be enhanced significantly, especially when it comes to counter the still numerous cases of alleged torture and arbitrary detention.

We would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Immediately declare an official moratorium on executions with a view to the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and the abolishment of the death penalty.
2. Allow the Special Rapporteur on torture to visit Bahrain, following up on the acceptance of recommendations to that effect in the 2nd UPR cycle.
3. Finalize and enact the new media law under the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders and providing for a truly independent regulatory body.

I thank you.