



PALAIS DES NATIONS - 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

17 July 2023

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Bahrain by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 41st session in November 2022. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Bahrain was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 52nd session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/bh-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "[UPR practical guidance](#)" and the "[UN good practices](#)" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'V. Türk'.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The adoption of the national human rights action plan, 2022–2026 is a welcome achievement. The implementation of its 102 projects aimed at promoting respect for human rights at all levels would benefit from the integration of the recommendations of the fourth UPR cycle into the action plan. The efforts and renewed commitment to increase cooperation with various United Nations bodies through their regional and international offices, and to implement related projects and initiatives, are acknowledged. Bahrain is encouraged also to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, including special procedures mandate-holders, along with the Office, benefitting from available best practices, training, and technical assistance.

Numerous measures have been taken to protect migrant workers, such as the recognition of their right to change employers without the consent of the original employer, and the implementation of a flexible work permit system, which allows migrant workers employed under unfair conditions to apply independently for a personal work permit without being associated with an employer. Bahrain is encouraged to pursue these efforts further.

Amendments made to the Bahraini Citizenship Act concerning the regulations governing the granting, withdrawal or revocation of citizenship are noted, together with the fact that the courts have not revoked citizenship in any judgments since the amendments entered into force. Bahrain is encouraged to refrain from further revocations of citizenship, including those made to protect national security, by further repealing and amending relevant legislation, including the Citizenship Act, which provides for the revocation of citizenship when a person is convicted of certain terrorist offences. Bahrain is also encouraged to revise the Act on the Protection of Society from Terrorist Acts so as to bring its counter-terrorism and counter-extremism legislation and practices into full compliance with international human rights standards, and ensure that the rights to a fair trial and access to justice are respected in all criminal proceedings for terrorism.

Bahrain is further encouraged to continue the practice of updating its implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the parliament, the judiciary, the national human rights institution, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms, and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is also encouraged to further strengthen the national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, the High Coordinating Committee for Human Rights, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Bahrain may wish to continue with the practice of submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
17 July 2023