

**27th session of the Universal Periodic Review (1 – 12 May 2017)**

**Review of Bahrain**

**Statement by Ireland**

**1 May 2017**

Mr. President

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Bahrain and thanks it for its national report and presentation.

Ireland welcomes progress taken to implement the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry. Ireland appreciates Bahrain's openness to dialogue on human rights issues of concern. We welcome the open offer by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Bahrain and urge the authorities to accept this offer and all outstanding Special Rapporteur and Working Group visits as soon as possible.

Ireland urges Bahrain to respect the legitimate rights of all its citizens to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. We note the 17 previous UPR recommendations in this regard. We urge the Bahraini government to amend any of its laws that can be used to prosecute individuals for the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly or association, and bring its Penal Code in line with international standards established by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In that regard, we recall the legitimate and fundamental role of civil society in promoting and protecting all human rights. Ireland is extremely concerned about reports that human rights defenders were prevented from travelling to Geneva in connection with this review. We urge Bahrain to immediately cease the harassment and reprisals against human rights defenders engaging in national and international advocacy. Ireland **recommends** that Bahrain take urgent steps to facilitate the work of civil society and human rights defenders, including guaranteeing the protection of all persons from intimidation, threats, attacks or reprisals for seeking to cooperate with the UN

Finally, Ireland shares the Committee against Torture's concerns regarding reports of use of torture and ill-treatment, particularly inside detention facilities, and the ongoing role of military courts and their jurisdiction over civilians in national security cases. Ireland condemns the reintroduction of the death penalty in January of this year, after a moratorium of six years. We **recommend** that Bahrain ratifies the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty.

Thank you