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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels, 6 November 2018

Dear Federica,

I would like to bring to your attention the worrying political landscape in Bahrain in anticipation of the upcoming elections for Bahrain's lower house of parliament, the Council of Representatives, on the 24 November 2018.

In fact, these elections are extremely important because the Council of Representatives is the only elected governing body in Bahrain. However, because of political prisoners and the government's closing of all civil and political space, the elections cannot be considered as democratic, free and fair.

Major opposition groups such as Al-Wefaq and Wa'ad were forcibly dissolved and their leaders threatened, intimidated and arrested. It has also become forbidden for anyone who ever belonged to one of the dissolved opposition societies or who was in prison for more than 6 months to run for office. Regarding political prisoners, conditions have not improved, namely for Hassan Mushaima, who, as you know, has been denied healthcare and access to medication, as well as visits from family.

Moreover, Al-Wefaq's former Secretary General Sheikh Ali Salman was finishing his four-year sentence in prison when on 4 November, he was sentenced to life in prison on new arbitrary charges of espionage, because of phone calls that took place in 2011 with officials from Qatar.

Finally, there are other several factors to demonstrate the unlawfulness of these elections, namely the disenfranchise of the Shia community, the lack of ties between polling stations and specific constituencies, as well as the lack of an independent and impartial electoral commission.

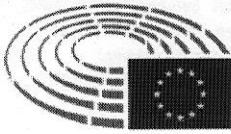
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I therefore urge you and the EEAS to put pressure on Bahraini authorities in order for them to have real democratic elections, recognised by the international community, as per their statements of good will.

Best regards
Ana Gomes

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Member of the European Parliament

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