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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Bahrain Jurists Society, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Girls

The Bahrain Jurists Society (BJS) "an organization with a consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations," commends the progressive work of Bahrain on a national level in reforming its legislation and its commitment to vitalizing the democratic approach envisaged in the role of the parliament, national institutions, and civil society.

The Bahrain Jurists Society congratulates Bahrain on the repeal of Article 353 of the 1976 Penal Code, which exempts rapists from prosecution if they married their victim. This momentous amendment to legislation will strengthen Bahrain's protection of women's and girls' fundamental rights. It is another key step toward Bahrain's worldwide commitments to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely SDG5 on gender equality, and consistent with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of women's rights. The reform is also a highly positive achievement in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Bahrain Jurists Society praises the other legal reforms to combatting discrimination against women, such as the legal reforms stipulating equal pay remuneration for work of equal value between men and women, prohibition of discrimination in employment based on sex, and ensuring equality between women and men in retirement with full pension benefits.

On the other hand, the Bahrain Jurists Society emphasizes the acceleration of human rights development in Bahrain through the support granted by The Head of The State to consolidate, preserve, and protect human rights and freedoms in the Kingdom. The Bahrain Jurists Society further commends the issuance of the National Plan for Human Rights for the years 2022-2026, and the evaluation and extension of the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women 2023-2026 to keep up with the many new developments post COVID-19 circumstances. It is remarkable that Bahrain's comprehensive efforts helped maintain its top tier ranking, for the fifth consecutive year, according to the US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons (TIP), to become the sole Arab country to achieve this rating.

The Bahrain Jurists Society has followed the positive records of Bahrain in eliminating discrimination against women according to international assessments and reports. According to the World Bank, Bahrain has been classified as being among the fastest reformers, with annualized growth rates in the index in the top fifth percentile. Bahrain was also ranked first globally in closing the gender gap in enrolment in secondary and tertiary education according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022.

In view of the recent advancements witnessed as a result of the progressive coordination between the executive and legislative authorities, and the Supreme Council for Women, the Bahrain Jurists Society calls on the government of Bahrain to continue to review and reform its laws to safeguard women's component in the context of human rights and enhance the institutional systems that protect these rights.

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Mabadea Human Rights Society Arab Union For Human Rights Marsd For Human Rights Society, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.