

**Oral Intervention – UPR- Bahrain**

9 June 2008

8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council – Geneva

Presented by:

**Front Line:** The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders  
The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Thank you Mr. President.

Front Line, which is a leading international foundation for the protection of human rights defenders, would like to draw your attention to the following:

First: the Bahrain government is still imposing siege and legal ban on several human rights groups including:

- the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights,
- the Bahrain Women Petition Committee,
- the Bahrain Youth Human Rights Organization,
- the National Committee for Martyrs and Victims of Torture, and
- the Unemployed Committee.

In this regard, the government has not reacted positively to a recommendation on 2005, by the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination, to maintain dialogue with all civil society organizations, including those critical of its policies.

Secondly: During the last four years, human rights groups and defenders were harassed, defamed, denied access to the media and legally persecuted. Many of them were victims of the use of excessive force, as in the cases of senior members of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights and the Committee of the unemployed during two peaceful demonstrations in June and July 2005.

As for the current situation, since December 2007, an activist has lost his life as a result of using excessive force by the security Special Force against a demonstration calling for an end of impunity and redress for victims of torture. The authorities reportedly have staged a crack down against activists and human rights groups including more than 20 human rights defenders. In most cases, these persons were arrested violently at their houses, they were reportedly subjected to severe torture including the use of electric chocks, hanging and sexual abuse, and they are currently facing unfair trial.

Finally: Front line would like to recommend:

1. That Bahrain invites the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders to visit Bahrain as soon as possible
2. That Bahrain should insure in laws and practices the implementation of the International Declaration on human rights defenders
3. To release human rights activists and to investigate reports of abuse and harassments against human rights defenders, and
4. That the International community, specially governments with good relations to Bahrain including the European Union and the united states, to take more effective role in the protection human rights activists in Bahrain

Thank you Mr. President.

