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Good Afternoon,

BGR Group represents the Kingdom of Bahrain's Embassy to the United States. It may come to your attention that there is a letter circulating in the Senate to Secretary of State Blinken concerning Bahrain's human rights record. This is an ill-advised and ill-timed letter, damaging to a critical defense partner and the host of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. Since 1999, Bahrain has embarked on a constitutional process of wide-ranging reforms that led to the establishment of an elected Parliament, the promotion of human rights, and the advancement of women's rights.

The letter circulating fails to acknowledge both the reforms enacted by the Kingdom since 2011 that not addressed calls for change, and the reforms conducted following the [BICI](#) report that have been internationally praised. The establishment of different independent oversight bodies such as the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC), Ombudsman (the first and only office of its kind in the region), and the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) ensure accountability. The SIU as of 2020 for example, referred 175 police personnel for criminal and disciplinary deliberations.

Furthermore, Bahrain has been an essential partner throughout the U.S. mission in Afghanistan, most recently by providing safe passage for thousands of evacuees from the Kabul Airport to alleviate humanitarian suffering. Both Secretary Blinken and Secretary of Defense Austin have repeatedly expressed gratitude for Bahrain's support of the Afghanistan mission. Secretary Austin [recently stated](#) that "[Bahrain's] assistance was invaluable in helping us conduct the largest air evacuation in history. We treasure your partnership. You have always been a strong partner. We look to continue to strengthen that relationship... I cannot say thank you enough for all that you've done for the United States of America."

Additionally, Bahrain has led the region in strengthening multilateral cooperation through the historic participation in the Abraham Accords and dispatchment of its first Ambassador to Israel. Just this morning during the ["One Year Anniversary of the Abraham Accords: Normalization Agreements in Action"](#) event, Secretary Blinken described Bahrain's role in the Abraham Accords as fundamental to the concrete results the world is already seeing and also key to the long-term vision of the Accords moving forward. Blinken stated that the "deepening diplomatic relationships provide a foundation to tackle challenges that demand cooperation among nations, like reducing regional tensions, combatting terrorism, and mitigating the impact of the climate crisis."

The letter is also tone-deaf to the progress Bahrain has been achieving in the past years, especially the unprecedented judicial reforms that included the Alternative Punishment Law, which was recently amended to expand eligibility. Just two days ago, the [US Embassy in Manama](#) welcomed "Bahrain's expanded application of its alternative sentencing law and this week's release of prisoners," expressing the United States' support for "the Kingdom's continuing efforts to strengthen its judicial processes". Additionally, Bahrain has been engaging with the [United States](#), the [United Nations](#), and other international partners in the ongoing process of drafting its first National Action Plan for Human Rights.

Moreover, Bahrain has consistently been a Tier 1 country in the State Department's annual Trafficking In Persons report since 2018, with a stellar record of annual improvement.

Given the critical role Bahrain plays as a stabilizing actor in the region, the strong humanitarian actions Bahrain has taken to support the close partnership between our two countries, and the reforms it has been implementing to protect human rights, **we ask that your boss not join this letter.**

Please let me know if you would like to talk more about this letter or the critical role Bahrain plays in the region to advance U.S. interests.

Thanks,
Mark

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