

**Statement / Intervention**  
**H.E. Shaikh Abdulaziz Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa**

**Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking**

**13-15 February 2008-02-28**

Mr. Chairman,  
Your Excellencies,

I welcome this opportunity to briefly outline the developments in the Kingdom of Bahrain's efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

From the outset, Bahrain has taken a responsible and realistic view of the problem. We fully recognise that trafficking is a truly global phenomenon, and that no country is immune from its threat. We recognise, too, that it preys on the weakest, the most vulnerable, and those who are often unable or too afraid to report it. Accordingly, we have not sought to deny or cover up the issue, but have instead worked to adopt measures that will detect, deter and combat trafficking, prosecute the perpetrators, and provide assistance to the victims.

One of Bahrain's many efforts to combat trafficking in persons is reflected in the participation of H.H. Shaikha Sabeeka, Wife of H.M. the King and Chairwoman for the Supreme Council for Women, in the International Conference on Trafficking in Persons, organized by the Susan Mubarak Women's International Movement for Peace, and convened in Athens in January 2006.

In 2004, Bahrain acceded to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Protocol against Trafficking in Persons. In 2002, my Government set up an inter-ministerial task force, which I chair, to review and tackle the problem of trafficking. The group brings together all concerned Ministries and government agencies for regular consultations, has been the source of many of the other initiatives that have been taken, and coordinates closely with concerned non-governmental organizations.

We have, for example, opened a shelter to provide protection for women of all nationalities who face abuse or became victims of human trafficking, offering them welfare, health and mental care, as well as providing them with assistance and legal counselling.

The Government has also established a specialist unit within the Ministry of Interior to investigate trafficking cases, and in particular forced prostitution and sex trafficking.

Bahrain has also been admitted as an Observer to the International Organization for Migration, and has worked closely with the IOM and other local and international partners in holding workshops, training and capacity-building programmes, most notably the nine-month programme currently being undertaken in partnership with the IOM.

Mr. Chairman,

The most significant development in Bahrain in recent years, I believe, is last month's passing of legislation to specifically outlaw human trafficking, including prosecution of offenders and resources for investigation of suspected cases. The new law also includes a comprehensive definition of trafficking, and has been hailed by international organizations as one of the best such legislation in the Arab world, and a model for the region. The legislation was initiated by the Government of Bahrain, debated and approved by both houses of the Parliament, and finally ratified by His Majesty the King.

With the law now enacted, we move to the process of implementation and enforcement, and I am confident that in doing so, Bahrain will continue to demonstrate the same commitment that we have shown so far in tackling this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

May I close by underlining the Kingdom of Bahrain's firm commitment to addressing and tackling trafficking in persons, and our recognition that this international problem requires action at every level – in society, by governments, and through international partnership. We look forward to continuing close cooperation both domestically and internationally, and to greater success around the world in tackling the scourge of human trafficking.

Thank you.