

BAHRAIN

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What Went Wrong?

The GCC is in Turmoil Following the Change of its Secretary General

After twelve years in his post, Abdulla Yaqoub Beshara, should have learnt the art of not infuriating the Saudis. His career would have continued for a while longer. He would not have been accused of "alienating the people of the Gulf". In the event, however, Mr. Beshara was ousted as the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and replaced by an enigmatic character; his name is Fahem Sultan Al Qasimi. The white coup was staged at the last summit in Abu Dhabi where Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan did his best to cover up the cracks in the GCC, and forced Al Qasimi on the alliance.

What did Mr. Beshara do to enrage the Saudis? Apparently there were three factors that had contributed to the political demise of the first Secretary General of the GCC. One is some remarks in Kuwait after its liberation from the Iraqi forces in which he was reported saying: "the democratic flag is looming in the Gulf". The word "democracy" is banned by the Saudis and is considered "alien to the traditions and culture of the region". Several other statements by Mr. Beshara in the past had infuriated the Saudis who wanted to keep the GCC countries democracy-proof. This is not to say that Beshara was an advocate of democracy. He had always sided with the anti-democratic forces and is not fond of the liberalisation in the political scene. He was himself affixed person and was known for his heavy consumption of Alcohol. He might have been influenced by the accusations levelled against the GCC countries for its lack of political freedom by the West. His remarks were often directed at western audience and not for the locals.

The second is Mr. Beshara's tendency to keep an independent character and would not like to be controlled by his superiors. He often iterated remarks without referring to the political hierarchy of the Gulf countries, a problem that had often led to frictions even at the summits. The Saudi press had often talked of the lack of harmony between the GCC secretariat and the public opinion in issues of culture, politics and international relations. He was accused of advocating ideas alien to the societies of the Gulf. The problem, in their eyes, is not his un-Islamic behaviour, but his talk of democracy and political liberalisation, the two issues which are the most hated by the rulers of the GCC countries. Furthermore, he was considered unpredictable due to his personal views and world wide links, qualities not favoured by rulers who like to be secluded as much as possible.

The third is related to the inter-GCC rela-

tions. These have exhibited visible cracks in recent years and are threatening the very existence of the GCC as a political entity. Of special importance are the relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia which had direct bearing on the position of Mr. Beshara, a long-careered Kuwaiti diplomat. An example of the deteriorating relations was visible during last month's visit to Kuwait of the former United States President, George Bush, who had commanded the operation to liberate Kuwait, code-named "the Desert Storm". The Kuwaitis were over-ecstatic during the visit to the extent that they directed their thanks and gratitude singularly to the US and said little about the Saudi role.

It must be mentioned here that the Saudi monarch, King Fahd, likes nothing more than mentioning his name everywhere and all the time. The extent of the personality cult King Fahd likes to make for himself is visible from the various projects to which his name is attached. Saudi Arabia today is full of these; King Fahd's causeway, King Fahd's University, King Fahd's academy, King Fahd's hospital, King Fahd's airport, .. etc. He wanted his name to be mentioned alongside that of George Bush and not to be put aside. The Kuwaitis have always tried to avoid missing out King Fahd's name, but this time they did not get right. The result was a barrage of criticism from the Saudi press inside and outside the country. The Kuwaitis rushed to apologise and acknowledged the efforts of the Saudis, most notably King Fahd's himself. The political fate of Mr. Beshara was thus directly linked to the relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, a fate which was doomed the day the Kuwaitis decided to hold elections to the national assembly. The Saudis will not forgive the Al Sabah for their decision to bow to the popular pressure to activate the democratic process as demanded by the country's constitution.

The successor at the top of the GCC secretariat is a diplomat from the United Arab Emirates, whose relations with Saudi Arabia is not as bad as those of Kuwait and Qatar. Fahem Al Qasimi is now trying to familiarise himself with the job which was started by Mr. Beshara. There were attempts to change the deputy Secretary General, Saif bin Hashel Al Miskiri, an Omani diplomat with an outstanding experience. The Bahrainis presented their candidate, Abdul Aziz Bu Ali, their ambassador to Paris, saying it was unfair to keep high posts in the hands of individuals from one or two countries. The Qataris countered by nominating their candidate, Hussain Ali Mefthah, the head of the Arab department at the Foreign Ministry and

ex-ambassador to Tunisia. It was clear the contest was going to be divisive and the animosities between these two states would surface afresh. In last month's meeting of the GCC foreign ministers in Riyadh, the issue was brushed aside for fear of creating further discontent in the crumbling alliance. Al Miskiri will thus remain in his position for a longer period for the time being.

The changing of the secretary general of the GCC is significant since it indicates the extent of discord among the six states. Mr. Al Qasimi will soon find out the mess he has inherited and the unenviable position he is in. Apart from the internal disputes on border issues and other matters, he will realise how difficult it is to go along with the Saudis who have disputes with almost everyone else. He will have to put the priorities of the GCC alliance in order and especially in issues such as Gulf security and relations with both Iraq and Iran. The faltering "Damascus Declaration" is yet another challenge that has, so far, failed to materialise in practical steps. The issue of militarisation of the Gulf region is a further challenge whilst the dwindling oil revenues are causing alarms in the region.

Perhaps the most difficult problem is that relating to the increasing popular demands for democracy and political liberalisation. The Kuwaitis are well ahead of the rest in this respect but they are finding themselves in a hostile environment and are facing a barrage of criticism from their neighbours, the Saudis. Al Qasimi will have to decide how much influence he has over these problems and how credible the calls for political openness and respect of human rights are. There is still an interest worldwide in the Gulf region which supplies the world with 40 percent of its oil needs and has two thirds of the proven oil reserves. The continuation of the internal political stagnation is not beneficial to the governments and Mr. Al Qasimi will have to face a situation with increasing appetite for respect of political and human rights. He will soon find out it will be almost impossible to keep the alliance intact while it is facing internal dissension and regional hostilities in addition to the inter-Gulf disputes. Mr Beshara had benefited personally more than he had expected. He disappeared from the scene with a cheque for US\$ 3 million as redundancy payment which was half the sum he had requested. The change of the Secretary General is not the solution to the ever-rising inter-internal feuding and fragmentation. Political reforms may be the only practical solution to these illnesses.

Football Fans Discover The Usefulness of Eggs

Players Kick Football, Fans Throw Eggs It was a fine and clear Friday afternoon. The skies were spotless and the Spring breeze was cool enough for Sheikh Mohammed, the Amir's son, to venture out of his air-conditioned limousine to enlist his "royal" presence at the semi-final between the two football clubs of Al Muharraq and Al Rafaa'a. After all, he is the chairman of the board of directors of the Bahrain's Football League (BFL). The game was being monitored by the dignitaries from a special balcony which had been designed to entertain only the VIPs. Nothing seemed unusual at the start of the match which was being attended by 18,000 spectators, a decent figure for a semi-final.

Without a prior warning, the non-suspecting Sheikh Mohammed, suddenly became the target of a barrage of spoilt eggs and tomatoes. At the same time, anti-government chanting was becoming louder and louder. The situation went out of control and no one seemed to be able to control it. With a lot of struggle, the young sheikh was smuggled out of the stadium, whilst the football fans of both teams were involved in their political crusade against the government, an event that shook the whole establishment. That was exactly the thing the Al Khalifa had been trying to suppress for years. Of course they had a bitter memory of a similar event that had taken place thirty seven years ago. The circumstances were different then.

In March 1956, the British Foreign Minister, Selwyn Lloyd had arranged a stop-over in Bahrain en-route to the Far East. It was at the height of the strongest anti-government uprising organised by the High Executive Committee, an alliance of the Shia and Sunni population. Britain was being viewed as an accomplice in the dictatorial policies of the Al Khalifa, with the presence of the British Advisor, Charles Belgrave, the Political Agent and the Political Resident in Bahrain. As Selwyn Lloyd's motorcade was converging near the Al Muharraq stadium more than 10,000 football fans came out in protest against the British policies of propping up the regime, chanting slogans against the Foreign Secretary and using all kinds of missiles against the motorcade. It was a bad shock for the government and their guest. The total disruption of the trip had a deep effect on the British policy in Bahrain, and several developments took place shortly afterwards.

With that incident in mind, the government of Al Khalifa reacted swiftly to deal with the new incident. On Sunday 4th April the BFL's Board of Directors suspended the membership of the First Team of Al Muharraq Club in the league whose fans championed the anti-government agitation. Eyewitnesses reported that almost everyone in the stadium at the time took part in the event including the fans of the other team. The First Team of Al Muharraq Club was at the top in the number of points and was confident of winning the League's cup. The President of the BFL, Sheikh Mohammed, took the following actions:

1. Freezing of all activities of the First team of Al Muharraq Club until further notice. It is also considered as having lost its two remaining matches.

2. The results of the last match between the

First team of Al Muharraq and Al Rafaa' Al Gharbi are considered null and void.

3. Both teams are deprived of the financial benefits of the match.

The result was 1/0 in favour of the First Team of Al Muharraq club.

In an attempt to contain the situation, the President of Al Muharraq Club issue a statement to the effect that his Club's Executive Committee and fans did not approve what had happened at the main balcony and what had happened to the President of the BFL, Sheikh Mohammed bin Essa Al Khalifa. He also added his dismay at the decision to suspend the activities of his club. That statement did not alter the BFL's decision. As a result of the BFL's decision, Executive Committee of the Al Muharraq Club handed its resignation to the President of General Corporation of Youth and Sports, Sheikh Essa bin Rashid Al Khalifa, who was more than willing to accept it. Shortly afterwards a new Executive Committee for the Al Muharraq Club was appointed, contrary to the normal procedure of electing the members of the Committee.

At mid April, the newly appointed Committee visited Sheikh Mohammed bin Essa to renew the Club's apology. After congratulating them on the confidence given to them by the General Corporation of Youth and Sports, he promised them to offer the BFL's support and facilities (provided they remained loyal and prevented political activities in their environment). They requested him to lift the ban imposed on their club by the BFL, and he promised to review the matter.

The incident and its consequences indicate the extent of the wedge between the people and the government. The people of Al Muharraq who staged the latest political show have

witnessed the extent of the devolution intolerance towards the political freedom. Supporters of Al Muharraq Club come in large numbers from the town of Al Hidd, where Sheikh Abdul Latif Al Mahmood started his anti-governmental activities. Many of the signatories of last November's petition calling for the restoration of constitutional rule were from both Muharraq and Al Hidd, and the suppression of the freedom of speech and curtailing of the activities of the sponsors of the petition had led to public agitation against the regime.

It is the first time in many years that a football stadium has become the staging post for political demonstration. In recent years, such activities were largely confined to mosques and religious places. However, the situation has so deteriorated after the formation of the Shura (Consultative) Council that people felt obliged to widen their scope of activities. Another point of interest is the appointment of the new Executive Committee of the Al Muharraq Club, a development unprecedented in the sports history. The norm has been the election of the Committee members by members of the club. It now appears that any form of elections, even if they are for a football club is to be banned. Until the uprising of the fifties, members of Municipality councils were chosen by an electoral process. That has since gone, and local councillors are now appointed.

The idea of people participation is flatly rejected by the devolution, and this is causing great disturbances among the people. From the opposition's point of view, the incident at the football stadium is an encouraging sign that things will not be the same again unless the Al Khalifa have changed their attitude towards the people and agreed on the rule of law.

The Campaign of Repression Goes On and Claims More Victims

The Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) staged a new campaign of detentions and torture in Bahrain. The past few months have witnessed an upsurge in arbitrary arrests, detentions, interrogations, torture and threats.

On 11 April 1993, five people were snatched by SIS officers while walking in a Manama street. The five youth, all in their twenties, were Mr. Husain Al-Tattan, Mr. Husain Mansoor, Mr. Husain Ali Al-Muhanna, Mr. Mohammed Abdul-Jalil and Mr. Jabir Al-She'ala. The next day, SIS officers stormed the residence of Mr. Husain Al-Tattan and thoroughly searched all rooms and belongings.

Mr. Al-Tattan had been arrested several times in the past and had spent several years in detention. He was acquitted by the State Security Court in 1991, but the SIS continued to harass him and his friends. The five were released few days later.

Other people arrested and intimidated include: Sadik Ali Al-Mosawi, Mahdi Hasan Sahwan, Mohammed Hasan Sahwan, Mahdi Makki-Traif, Radhi Al-Qafas, Ali Hasan, Wahid Al-Minawi and Mohammed Jawad Kadhem. Other people were arrested upon their return and deported to various countries.

Three people returned home after years of exile but were not granted entry. Mr. Abdulla Al-Rashid, Mr. Abdul Jalil Al-Nuaimi and Hamid Awachi were all arrested, interrogated for a week and then deported to Yemen.

It is most likely that the government is looking for scapegoat to justify a massive repressive campaign reminiscent of the ones carried out in the Eighties. The arrest of these five people comes in the midst of a tense political environment after the failure of the government to satisfy the aspiration of the general public on much-needed reforms. The event is also one of many that have been taking place since last February's decision taken by the UN Human Rights Commission to lower its concern on violations of human rights in Bahrain.

As April progressed, more interrogations took place. Fuad Hassan Al Sayegh, Abbas Ahmad Darwish, (both from the village of Abu Saibe), Aqeel Rashed and Salman Yousef (from Duraz), Mulla Mohammed Al Madhi (from Al Shakhoura), Mahdi Al Saeed, Hussain bin Sha'ar and Hussain Ahmad were arrested, interrogated and subsequently released in the continuing campaign of repression.

Henderson: The British Quasi-Colonial Ruler of Bahrain

Many intellectual people would argue that we are currently living in the age of democracy and human rights. Furthermore, colonial rule as was practised before the second world war is over. However, ordinary people see things differently. Colonial rule does exist with different protocols. There is no doubt that Bahrain is an independent state. It is also a member of the United Nation. It has a national flag, a national anthem, a national currency and many other national features. However, common people see at the core of every thing, there is a controlling factor. Any decision is valid as long as it is cleared by "Al Dakhiliyah", i.e. Interior Ministry. At the heart of the Interior Ministry, there is a central command which has been chaired by British officers ever since its creation.

When its Director General (Mr. Jim Bill) retired in December 1992, a more notorious person was put in-charge, yes, as you may have guessed, it was: Ian Henderson. The conclusion arrived at by a common person can be corroborated by "intellectual" assessment as follows.

Henderson is a British officer. He has been in charge of intelligence service since 1966. Britain officially controlled Bahrain until 1971. In 1956, the British army was deployed to suppress the national uprising which started in 1954. The British then established the Special Branch (see Dr. M. Al-Rumeihi in his PhD Thesis on Bahrain). A state of emergency was declared and the then three leaders of the uprising were jailed in the British island of St.

Helena. The three were then released in 1961 and compensated after a labour MP had campaigned for them.

In 1965 another uprising was quelled by the British army stationed in Bahrain. This time the British decided to strengthen the intelligence service. And in 1966, the security service was re-structured by installing Ian Henderson at the top of the organisation to suppress any opposition to the feudal regime of Al-Khalifa. Before then Ian Henderson had been in Kenya.

The Keesing's Contemporary Archives No. 20333 (October 3-10, 1964) provides a detailed account of an encounter between the then Kenyan Minister for Home affairs and a group of British security officers, amongst them Mr. Ian Henderson. Extracts from the referenced archives are as follows:

"Mr. Oginga Odinga, the Minister for Home Affairs, declared Assistant Commissioner of Police Leslie Pridgeon a prohibited immigrant on July 1 and ordered him to leave the country within 24 hours, no explanation of the reason for this action being given other than that it was "in the interests of internal security." Mr. Pridgeon had been in command of the police force which suppressed the Somali election riot at Isiolo in May 1963 [see 19487 A]. The British High Commissioner, Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, sent a strongly-worded protest against Mr. Pridgeon's expulsion to Mr. Kenyatta on July 2.

"Mr. Odinga stated at a press conference on July 10 that Mr. Pridgeon's expulsion was "the

first step" in a "cleaning-out process designed to rid the country of ill-intentioned imperialist remnants," by whom "a cloud of suspicion and rumours" had been "deliberately created to sow the seeds of discord within the Government by discrediting my standing in the political leadership".

"Four other Britons, including Mr. Ian Henderson, G.M., a retired Assistant Commissioner of Police, who had captured the Mau Mau "Field-Marshal" Dedan Kimathi in 1956 [see 15638 A], were declared prohibited immigrants on Aug. 5 and ordered to leave within 24 hours. After the British High Commissioner had failed to obtain an extension of the time limit for the deportees, both he and the Governor-General, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, made representations on their behalf to Mr. Kenyatta, while Sir Alec Douglas-Home Telegraphed the Prime Minister of Kenya in the matter without apparent avail".

Another source of information continues the story. Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald in their book "British Intelligence and Covert Action" page 154 state: "Shortly after independence Kenyatta let it be known that the British had refused to let him appoint Odinga as Finance Minister. Instead, he became Minister of Home Affairs, where he had to oversee the tricky process of pulling the rug out from under the regionally-biased independence constitution. He was also given the task of deporting a white police intelligence officer, Ian Henderson, a task which made him unpopular with the white settlers. Henderson subsequently turned up in Bahrain where he devised and implemented the Gulf's most elaborate and pervasive internal security system". The Economist of 22 August 1987 described Henderson's security service as: "Bahrain's efficient British-officered security force, which contrives to impose the strictest security in the nicest possible way"... "Bahrain's jails contain plenty of political prisoners"... "A polite police state".

The British Government has a formal response to any enquiry regarding Ian Henderson: Henderson and other Britons have not been seconded by HM Government. This might be technically true but not so from an historical point of view. Henderson was put in-charge of the intelligence service in 1966 when Britain controlled Bahrain. It might be said that: OK, that was in the sixties, but later on Henderson was responsible to the Al-Khalifa ruling family. The Bahraini public does not see the issue in this way. It is also immoral to say the least, when Britain raises the flag of freedom and democracy, while paying no attention to individuals who after all are British and were senior British officials some years ago. Moreover, these are still British citizens and would be protected by HM Government if anything happens to them. The people of Bahrain see Henderson and his likes as instruments used by Al-Khalifa and Britain to subvert the country to the rule of a feudal regime for the gratification of ill individuals. The British Government has a moral obligation to prove that it is not implementing a double-standard policy regarding human rights and democracy.

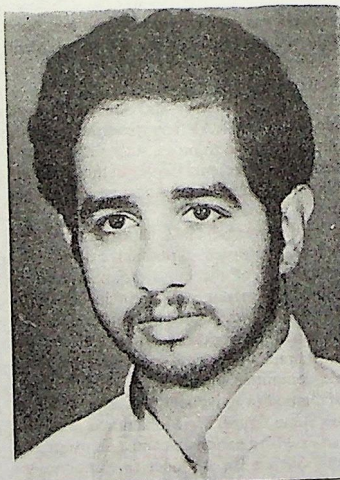
Amnesty International: Call to end ill-treatment

Amnesty International of April 1993 wrote the following:

Mohammad Jamil 'Abd al-Jamri, a 33 year-old civil engineer with the Ministry of Health, was arrested in 1988 and was reportedly tortured in custody to force him to confess. In 1990 the State Security Court sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment after an unfair trial.

Mohammad al-Jamri, son of a leading religious figure in Bahrain's majority Shi'a community, was accused of spying for Iran, a charge he has vigorously denied. He was convicted by the state Security Court, which tries all cases concerning internal or external security. Procedures in this court fail to comply with international standards for fair trial. Proceedings are usually held in camera, and there is no provision for appeal against either the verdict or the sentence. Mohammad al-Jamri, like many other defendants tried by this court, was denied access to his lawyer until immediately before his trial.

Those tried before the security court can be convicted on the basis of uncorroborated confessions, which need only be recorded by the public prosecutor or the police, a practice which has encouraged the security forces to resort to torture to obtain confessions. Following his arrest, Mohammad al-Jamri was reportedly severely tortured in al-Qal'a Prison. Before he made his "confession", which he repudiated in court, he was severely beaten and made to stand still on one spot, blindfolded and with his hands



bound behind his back, for four days. He is now reportedly held in al-'Adliya Prison.

Please send courteous letters appealing for a retrial in accordance with international standards for fair trial, and for an investigation into the torture allegations, to:

His Highness al-Sheikh 'Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa/ Office of His Highness the Amir/ The Amir Court/ Rifa'a Palace/ Rifa'a/ Bahrain

Sheikh Al-Jamri's Sin was Talking to his Co-Religionists

The recent attempts by the Bahraini security service to silence opposition figures through arrest and threat of deportation have highlighted the dictatorial nature of the regime. This is not the first time that Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri had been targeted. Since 1988, the authorities have stepped up its confrontation and tested all forms of intimidation in an attempt to silence him. In what follows a brief account of the life and the major events relevant influencing the recent developments.

Between 1962 and 1973, Shaikh Al-Jamri studied Islamic theology and law at Al-Najaf Religious Institute. Authored several books which included: Islamic Duties, Islamic Teachings, Women in Islam, Poetry among others.

In the period 1973-1975 he was elected by the 14th regional constituency for the National Assembly. As an active opposition member, he lobbied vigorously against the imposition of the State Security Law which was issued by the Amir (ruler) in October 1974. For example, Shaikh Al-Jamri together with six other MPs representing the various trends within the parliament issued a declaration which was published in the *Al-Adhwa'* a newspaper of 26 June 1975. In this declaration, the signatories announced the following:

"On 14 June 1975 a meeting was held between the undersigned (Shaikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, Rasool Abd Ali Al-Jishi, Ali Saleh Al-Saleh, Abdulla Al-Madani, Mohammed Salman Ahmed Hammad, Mohsin Hamid Marhoon and Khalid Ibrahim Al-Thawadi) to discuss the crisis resulting from the decree for a law concerning measures for state security, and the following was agreed: (1) The government to announce in a public session (of the National Assembly) that: in accordance with the report submitted by the Foreign, Interior and Defense Affairs Committee to the Assembly regarding the decree for a law concerning measures for state security, and after the notification of the government with views of all members of the Assembly, the government shall endeavor to review the decree in a period not later than July 1975. (2) The undersigned also agreed (a) that the session when the government announces the above to be public. (b) That the word (review) assumes the meaning of renouncing the decree, and that this shall be minuted officially for the Foreign, Interior and Defense Affairs Committee, where both the prime minister and the speaker of the Assembly must be present. (c) That July 1975 is the ultimate deadline for the government to renounce the decree".

The constitution specifies sharing the legislative power between the Amir and the National Assembly. Both branches of the legislature must mutually agree on any bill before it can become a statutory law. The Amir disregarded this, dissolved the elected parliament and suspended the important articles of the constitution in August 1975. The State Security Law empowers the Interior Minister to order the administrative detention of opponents for up to three years renewable. This law has been fully utilized to suppress the opposition since 1975.

Between 1975 and 1977, Shaikh Al-Jamri

assumed his role as a religious scholar and active member of the Islamic Enlightenment Society. He was involved in many cultural, social, charitable and educational activities for the promotion of religious teachings and social justice.

In 1977, he accepted an offer to join the Religious Court as a judge. The religious courts are part of the Ministry of Justice which were established in the twenties to cater for resolving cases pertaining to personal affairs, such as marriages, divorces, inheritance and other community's religious affairs. The courts are divided into two departments, one for the Shia community and one for the Sunni community, being the two major Muslim sects of Bahrain. Sheikh Al-Jamri was a member of the Shia court.

As a prominent figure in the society, his domain of activities extended beyond the courts to include all cultural activities, including peaceful opposition to the social injustices caused by the banning of the parliament and the rough implementation of the State Security Law.

In 1988, the Bahraini authorities decided to punish him for his open opposition. On 14 May 1988, the security forces surrounded and searched around the Mosque where Sheikh Al-Jamri leads the daily prayers. This was considered as a muscle show by the security forces. Although Bahrain's Law does not allow the sacking of any judge, in July 1988 Sheikh Al-Jamri was suspended from duty. Then, in September both his son (Mohammed Jamil) and son-in-law (Abdul Jalil Khalil Ibrahim) were arrested, severely tortured, charged with anti-government activities and sentenced to ten and seven years imprisonment. Sheikh Al-Jamri himself was arrested on 6 September, but was released after few hours when people demonstrated instantly against the government action.

From his house and the neighborhood mosque, Sheikh Al-Jamri resorted to his usual activities in addition to authoring books and forming educational circles in the mosque. He continued campaigning against government's unjust policies.

In November 1992, he, together with five others, sponsored a petition calling for the restoration of the constitution and the dissolved parliament as stated in the constitution. The petition was signed by hundreds of leading personalities from all sections and tendencies in Bahrain's society. The sponsoring six-people committee included Dr. Abdul Latif Al-Mahmood (a university professor and a leading Sunni figure) Mr. Mohammed Jaber Sabah (an ex-MP, a nationalist and a Sunni personality), Sheikh Isa Al-Joder (a Sunni religious scholar), Mr. Abdul Wahab Husain (a Shia personality) and Mr. Hamid Sangoor (a lawyer, a nationalist and Shia personality).

The petition was submitted to the Amir in mid-November, but the latter disregarded it and went ahead on 16 December and appointed a 30-member Consultative Council.

A meeting between the committee and the Amir ended with failure as the ruler insisted that the best option he saw for Bahrain was the appointed council. Furthermore, the ruler at-

tempted to personalise the issue by asking the delegates if they distrusted the people he had appointed.

On 6th March, both Dr. Al-Mahmood and Sheikh Al-Jamri were invited to speak at Al-Khawajah Mosque in Manama, and present their views to the public in a peaceful way. The Bahraini authorities took the matter seriously and intervened to cancel the meeting. Both speakers were contacted and ordered not to attend the meeting, otherwise they would be arrested. Then, the security forces encircled the mosque, closed its gates and hung the walls with a prohibition notice.

Sheikh Al-Jamri was invited for another meeting on 18th March at Mo'min Mosque in Manama. This time the security forces spared no time and rushed to arrest Sheikh Al-Jamri just before starting his journey towards Manama. Crowds of people gathered instantaneously and after heated exchanges, the security forces left the scene.

On 20th March, Sheikh Al-Jamri was summoned to Al-Khamis Police Station, where he was questioned about the two seminars, who organised them and why would he cooperate with a "Sunni" senior figure on political issues. Al-Jamri stood by his views and insisted he had not done anything against the laws of the country. He was then informed that the State Security Investigations Directorate, which incorporates the Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) would summon him for further investigation on 30th March.

On 27th March, the Government passed a message to Al-Jamri, through three people: one clergy: Sheikh Mansoor Al-Setri, and two businessmen: Mr. Ahmed Mansoor Al-Aali and Sayyed Alawi Al-Sharakhat, that a decision had been taken at the highest level to deport him to Syria. The reasons behind this decision were his relationship with Dr. Abdul Latif Al-Mahmood and his speeches in public. So by the 30th he should pack-up for deportation.

This has created a tense atmosphere and people started to gather in the main mosques and speak publicly about it. Speeches were delivered warning the Government of grave consequences if they deported Al-Jamri from his homeland. The two businessmen, who are also members of the appointed Shura Council met with Sheikh Al-Jamri on 28th March to urge him to sign a declaration - to be passed to the Government - stating that Sheikh Al-Jamri will end his relationship with Dr. Al-Mahmood and will stop delivering lectures on necessity for restoration of the suspended constitution.

Sheikh Al-Jamri refused to do so and on 30th March, he was interrogated at the SIS headquarters. Again he was questioned about his campaign and collaboration with Dr. Al-Mahmood, and was ordered to end this relationship together with speaking in public. As he refused to comply he was ordered to attend another interrogation session on Saturday, 3rd April. In both sessions the Interior Ministry pressed hard for Shaikh Al-Jamri to succumb or face the continued threat of arrest and deportation. His refusal to do so means further unknown actions are being planned by the Interior Ministry.