

# BAHRAIN

Issued by the "Bahrain Freedom Movement" for promoting Human and Constitutional Rights

The valuable recommendations of Human Rights Watch

## Routine Abuse; Routine Denial

The Al Khalifa of Bahrain have consistently refused to adapt their political system to the modern world insisting on the continuation of the status quo that had prevailed in the region ever since these sheikhdoms came to existence.

The Crown Prince of Bahrain was scheduled to visit London last month, and during Mr. Fatchett's visit to the Gulf in June a hasty arrangement was made for him to meet Bahrain's Amir in London at the same time as the visit of the Crown Prince. Neither of them eventually made the visit and Mr. Fatchett's office had to explain the reasons for the cancellations. It soon became clear that the Al Khalifa became infuriated by the possibility of an upsurge of protests in the event of the official visit by either the Amir or his son. They had earlier lost their gamble when two of the younger ministers of the Al Khalifa made it to London in a futile attempt to woo the Labour government to their side.

Mr. Fatchett's assertions during the Adjournment debate at the House of Commons on 3 June about the human rights violations had infuriated the Al Khalifa and Mr. Ian Henderson beyond any limit. They felt defeated to the core as they read the British official statements sympathizing with the moderate opposition. They eventually decided against the visit of both the Amir and the Crown Prince until such a time when the political situation became less hostile to the Al Khalifa. The cancellation of

the visits marked further embarrassment to both the British and Bahraini officials.

Later on Mr. Fatchett sent a reply to Lord Avebury suggesting not to write-off the Shura Council. Lord Avebury had earlier challenged Baroness Symmonds at the House of Lords on the issue of the Shura council who had argued that such a political forum was acceptable in the Arab world. He argued that the Shura Council with all-appointed members and without any real power was confined to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and perhaps the United Arab Emirates; and that it was not a pan-Arab practice. The reply of Mr. Fatchett to Lord Avebury was later highlighted by Kathy Evans of the Guardian (25 July) who was covering the report of Human Rights Watch about the violations of human rights in Bahrain.

The 109-page report, entitled: "Routine Abuse, Routine Denial", caused an international furor as major international news agencies took up the news. It was, probably, the most important international document against the Al Khalifa inhumane dictatorship. Besides highlighting the countless abuses of human rights at the hands of the terror machine of Ian Henderson, the report contained important recommendations to both the US and UK governments to take certain steps to curtail the excesses of the Al Khalifa. The latter's reaction was to deny that any abuse was being committed by the foreign-staffed riot and security forces. It is expected

that the report will form a major step forward in the efforts to enlist the US support to the democratic movement in Bahrain.

The constitutional crisis in Bahrain is thus taking unprecedented international dimensions. Day after day, the extent of the human rights violations is exposed to the outside world. The British Government is pressing the Al Khalifa to invite international human rights organizations to visit Bahrain. At the same time the Al Khalifa are engaged in relentless efforts to silence the opposition. However, its policies have failed to woo the liberal elements in the country and have relied heavily on the use of sheer terror including mass arrests and collective punishments.

The death last month of a religious figure in jail, Sheikh Ali Al Nachas, has fuelled more protest and led to more polarization of the political situation. It is now expected that a wider range of political figures will take active part in the struggle for democracy. The wise step by the governments friendly to the Al Khalifa is to take seriously the recommendations contained in the report of Human Rights Watch. This is a practical step forward to break the stalemate. The alternative is for a violent reaction to the excesses of the Al Khalifa taking place. This is both unpleasant and unwanted. Could London and Washington therefore listen to what Human Rights Watch had to say? Could Al-Khalifa adapt before it becomes too late?

## Some of HRW Recommendations to the government of Bahrain

"To the government of Bahrain concerning law enforcement and administration of justice:

- Amend the State Security Measures Law of 1974, the Penal Code of 1976, and all other laws and decrees to eliminate those provisions that violate rights protected by Bahrain's Constitution, including those provisions that allow for unlimited or arbitrary detention...

- End the practice of detaining persons for unlimited or extended periods without charge or trial for vaguely-defined "acts" or "statements." Release immediately all persons being so detained or bring formal charges and try those persons in a court of law in which they have full access to defense counsel, the right to call defense witnesses and to question prosecution witnesses, and the right to appeal the verdict to a higher judicial tribunal in accordance with international fair trial standards.

- Ensure that members of the Ministry of Interior directorates of Public Security, Criminal Investigations, and State Security comply with the requirements of the criminal procedure code and with international law enforcement

standards in conducting arrests and searches of premises.

- Establish by legislation, in accordance with the constitution of the state of Bahrain, a Supreme Council of the Judiciary to supervise the functions of the courts (Article 102[d]) and a judicial body competent to rule on the constitutionality of laws and regulations (Article 103).

- End the practice of interrogating detainees without allowing them to exercise their right to legal counsel. Release or conduct an independent judicial review of the cases of all persons convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated confessions secured without the presence of defense counsel. This review should take the form of a public hearing involving the accused and legal counsel of his or her choice.

- Abolish the State Security Court and end the practice of trying detainees before any tribunal that is closed to the public and in which basic fair trial standards are not guaranteed. Release all persons convicted by the State Security Court, or conduct an independent judicial review of their cases and reverse or amend convictions

and sentences accordingly. This review should take the form of a public hearing involving the accused and legal counsel of his or her choice.

- Transfer the office of public prosecutor from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, and take other steps as necessary to separate institutionally the state's public security and the administration of justice functions.

- Appoint a special independent public prosecutor to investigate deaths at the hands of the security forces, including those occurring in detention, and alleged acts of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment committed by officers with the Special Investigation Service, the Criminal Investigation Directorate, and the Public Security Force. This prosecutor should be empowered to report publicly on the findings of such an investigation and to bring charges against any officials implicated as responsible for ordering, for carrying out, or for tolerating such acts of torture or acts resulting in wrongful death. The special prosecutor should receive the firm public backing...

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# July 1997: The mercenary forces intensify their

29 June: Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas, 50, blind cleric, died in custody. Thousands of people converged on Bilad al-Qadim to offer their sympathy and condolences for the family of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas. Leading national figures, such as Ali Rabea and Mohammed Jaber Sabah, were amongst the first to visit the family of the martyr. Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal condemning the killing of Sheikh Al-Nachas and calling for bringing those responsible to justice. In the first day of martyrdom (29 June), the foreign forces attacked Bilad al-Qadim and arrested scores of people. Sheikh Al-Nachas was forcibly buried in Hooraa Cemetery. The son of Sheikh Ali-Nachas, Abdulla, 19, was in jail when his father martyred. Because of the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) he was released for 3 days. In an interview with the BBC Arabic Service he shocked the nation by describing how his father was ill-treated and denied medical care when he needed it. Abdulla also said that his father campaigned peacefully for the restoration of the parliament. It is feared that the intelligence department might torture him when he returns to prison and after the departure of the ICRC.

In an interview with the Mideast Mirror of 30 June, the ex-MP, Dr. Abdul Hadi Khalaf said the death of Al-Nachas is an indication of how bad the prisons' conditions are. He also said the root problem is that the Al-Khalifa consider themselves "conquerors" and treat the nation as "conquered people".

1 July: Reuters reported that "an explosion rocked a hotel in central Manama early on Tuesday, smashing a hotel window but not causing any injuries, an executive of the hotel said. "It was a simple, small explosion outside the hotel," the executive at the four-star Delmon Hotel told Reuters by telephone from Manama. "One window was broken. I think it was a bomb. No one was hurt, everyone is safe," he said, adding the blast occurred at around 4.15 a.m. (0115 GMT) this morning. Witnesses said part of the roof of the hotel's nightclub had collapsed due to the explosion. They said workers were clearing up the area and police were setting up checkpoints nearby". AP reported "several gas cylinders exploded today in the kitchen of a luxury Bahrain hotel, severely damaging the building but causing no casualties. The cause of the morning explosion at the Delmon International Hotel was under investigation, security officials said. The blast destroyed a kitchen and some furniture and brought down a ceiling of the 120-room hotel. Windows of neighboring shops also cracked and glass pieces littered the street".

1 July: The information ministry expelled the German agency reporter T he correspondent of DPA (Deutsche Presse Agentur) Ute Meinel had been expelled early Tuesday for a report she wrote quoting the BFM. "The expulsion was criticised by DPA's top editors in Hamburg who called it completely incomprehensible and a violation of the principles of press freedom," DPA said. "The German Foreign Office in Bonn summoned Bahrain's ambassador so it could express Germany's disagreement with what it called Bahrain's 'harsh reaction'," DPA said. At the same time the gulf

News Agency spread its version by saying that DPA and the German Foreign Ministry "apologised". This is what the official GNA story said; "the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Information received a written apology from the DPA head office in Hamburg". The world witnessed how a bankrupt government lies without shame.

2 July: Hundreds of people gathered in Hooraa Cemetery of Manama to commemorate the 3rd day of martyrdom of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas, who was killed by the interior ministry while in detention. At the end of the commemoration ceremony, hundreds marched through the capital Manama going through the old city centre, stretching from the American Missionary Hospital, into Sheikh Abdulla Road and ending in Nuaim district. Shops closed down as the demonstrators forced their way while the security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets. This demonstration proved that the will of the people is mightier than the mercenary forces imported from all over the world for the purpose of repressing the nation. Several other places witnessed clashes simultaneously, including Bani Jamra, Daih, Sanabis, Qerrayah, and Duraz.

3 July: The Al-Khalif were angered when the Kuwaiti government refused to hand over Bahrain citizens being held in Kuwait for no legitimate reason. The Kuwaiti interior minister visited Bahrain to explain the complexities.

Clashes in Manama surfaced when riot police besieged the districts of Ras-Romman, Nuaim and Makharga districts of the capital, Manama. In Nuaim, the security forces fired tear gas at mid-night (12.00 am, and early hours of Friday, 4 July). Many residents were arrested and several had been injured. The tense situation continued with further attacks reported around Nuaim and towards Makharga.

4 July: The mercenary forces attacked Bilad Al-Qadim deploying tear gas and rubber bullets. They also deployed the sharp-particles bullets that spread large number of painful particles in the body and started beating citizens indiscriminately. The wife of Seyed Baqir Ali had her chin broken by several direct beating on the face. The mercenary forces arrested many people who gathered for a traditional program at "Matam Al Jishi" of Bilad al-Qadim and attached three local mosques and arbitrarily arrested several people.

4 July: The London-based Al-Arab newspaper published a lengthy interview with the representative of the Popular Front in Bahrain, Mr. Abdul Nabi Al-Ekri. Al-Ekri said that the "Al-Khalifa are still considering themselves as Conquerors owning a conquered nation.

5 July: Reuters reported that a "power generator blew up at a luxury hotel in the Bahraini capital Manama". "The fire at the Diplomat Hotel was caused by an electricity generator explosion," the official said. "The blaze occurred on the 14th floor, but there were no casualties or damage." One firefighter at the 14-storey hotel said: "The fire was small but the smoke was thick." Residents and local newspapers said a fire had damaged Moonlight Restaurant near Ramada Hotel in Manama on Friday night, but there was no immediate report of casualties. Another blaze on Friday gutted a sweet factory and damaged a nearby building

and several residential rooms occupied by Asian workers in Muharrag, linked to Manama by a three km (two mile) causeway. A third fire destroyed a building also in Muharrag".

Citizens in Duraz and Bani Jamra clashed with the foreign forces on Saturday 5 July. At 03:30 pm, riot police attacked Duraz and smashed 22 cars as part of the collective punishment programme. When the cars' owners complained to the police, they were told that these attacks were not "notifiable offences".

6 July: It was announced that the UN overall coordinator in Bahrain, Faisal Abdul Qadir, will be the main guest of party to be organized by the information ministry on 6 July. The Bahraini government has promised Abdul Qadir a Bahraini passport in return for his special services. He had earlier conducted a witch-hunt against Bahraini citizens who handed a letter of complaint addressed to the UN Secretary General. The opposition has complained to the UN Human Rights Centre that the letter might not reach the UN Secretary General. He will also be responsible for any harm caused to the submitters.

6 July: Reuters reported "a Bangladeshi was killed and another was in serious condition when a group attacked a cold store in Sitra on Saturday night". The second person died later. The opposition deplored the killing of innocent people and blamed the security forces.

6 July: The siege of Kharjaya and Wadyan started today. Brutal attacks on Sitra resulted in the injuring of a five-year old child, Mohammed Abdul Adhim, together with his mother, both of whom are now in hospital suffering from wounds caused by the firing of sharp-particles bullets.

6 July: Ali bin Ahmed Al-Shehabi and Abdul-Razaq Zain al-Din (leaders of assembly halls - matams) were summoned by al-Khamis police station and threatened that the assembly halls will be shut down. Also, the minister of justice, summoned senior personalities and threatened them that more mosques and assembly halls will be ransacked and shut down if the citizens continue calling for political reforms.

7 July: Chase Manhattan Bank, offshore banking unit (OBU) decided to close down the Bahrain offices at the end of July and move to London. The Japanese Okasan International liquidated the company from 1 July.

8 July: Reuters reported "An apparent arson attack destroyed a restaurant in Bahrain, causing extensive damage but no casualties. The restaurant was closed when the blaze occurred.

9 July: The former 3,500-ton USS Jack Williams frigate arrived in Mina Salman to serve as the island's first warship. The gift's upgrade work cost \$50 million. At the same time the ruling family requested the purchase of 20 F-16 A/B (or 10 F-16 C/D) fighter jets, along with U.S. training and spare parts costing around \$300 million. While the US Congress approval is being processed, the Al-Khalifa are using these equipment as scare-crow.

9 July: Sheikh Isa Qassim, member of both the Constituent and National Assemblies issued a statement stating "The initiation of serious dialogue that conforms with the truthful values of justice is a language welcomed by all rational people for solving problems. The people in Bahrain have non-extravagant legitimate demands. The people's position is solid.... The



# collective punishment against the citizens

popular reform movement has its representatives who are on the ground and on the forefront: Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri together with his imprisoned colleagues as well as those forcibly exiled...".

9 July: The house of Mohammed Dhraboh in Nuweidrat was raided and had its contents destroyed. The ignorant forces demanded that Mr. Dhraboh hands over his son, Jasim, who is five-years old. A teacher from Bilad al-Qadim, Sa'eed Abdulla Al-Basri (who works in a school in Isa Town) was arrested accused of refusing to identify a student thought to have written slogans on exam papers. The forces had arrested 57 person from Bilad al-Qadim (20 of whom have been transferred to the "Dry Dock-Hidd" prison while the rest are still in al-Khamis prison).

11 July: The siege and ransacking lasted until 11 July. Men, women and children were lined up by security forces in rows and pinched with the sharp knives at the end of the machine guns. Ladies were beaten in front of their relatives with shocking news of manually-handling the women as part of the collective punishment scheme. The news from Wadyan and Kharjaya villages of Sitra Island is continuing to shock the nation. The interior ministry claimed it had arrested four people. In fact, the number is more than a hundred. The four persons (referred to in the official report) are Khalil Ibrahim Makki, 17, Hamad Salman Al-Aali, 17, Makki Abdulla Makki, 14, and Zakarya Jasim Ahmad, 17. The latter was not in the house, so the security forces took his sister as a hostage until he gave himself up.

11 July: So horrific was the news from Sitra that the interior ministry rushed to create a distraction. The evil forces stormed an assembly hall (Matam) in Iskan-Jedhafs and set it on fire at 5.30 am on Friday 11 July. Later in the day, the interior ministry surrounded the area with security forces and some agents working in the local press were ordered to photograph the scene. Witnesses believe that the Al-Khalifa rulers have authorized a dirty campaign. The security forces were setting shops, houses, and now, matam on fire, then blaming the fires on the citizens, to be followed by house-to-house raids and ransacking. This vicious episode can only worsen the situation as the people realize that this ruling establishment continues to behave irresponsibly.

15 July: A mother was shot with a rubber bullet when she resisted the arrest of her son in Sanabis on 15 July. Mrs. Najeeba Al-Sayyed Ali, was injured while defending her son Mohammed Hassan Mahdi, 22. Also arrested from Sanabis was Seyyed Jaffer Alawi Abdulla, 21. The security forces raided the house of Haji Abbas Abdulla Fardan in Northern-Schla on 18 July and arrested his four sons: Hamid and Abdulla, 19 (twins), Hassan, 16, and Ammar 18. Also, they raided the house of Haji Ahmad Abdulla and arrested his son, Isa, 21.

16 July: The security forces attacked a demonstration in Sanabis. The people of Sanabis commemorated the 40th day of the martyrdom of Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Abdulla, who was killed by the interior ministry on 6 June. Daih, Ghoreifa and Mahooz were amongst the residential areas witnessing clashes in the past

days.

17 July: The public has been outraged at the killing of a 19-year female citizen (Nawal Ahmad Marhoon, from Nuwiedrat) at the hands of a 35-year old Pakistani/Baluchi security officer (Sultan Ahmad Hussain). The government-controlled papers claimed that the security officer murdered the girl because she refused to marry him.

18 July: Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, the leading political figure has gone on hunger strike together with some of his detained colleagues protesting at the killing of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas inside the prison on 29 June. Two security officers were responsible for the killing of the religious scholar Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas. Informal sources revealed that the two torturers are a Yemeni (Abdul Sattar) and a Pakistani/Baluchi (Mohammed Hayat). The two had been responsible for ill-treating, beating and depriving the basic needs of the martyred scholar. The hunger strikers are also demanding an access to news from the outside world.

19 July: The Economist published an article on 19 July entitled "Bahrain's spreading flames" saying that unemployment has reached 40% and that demands for political reforms have not been responded to. The article expressed its concern for the death of guest worker, which the opposition deplored. Commenting on arrest of citizens, the Economist said that the methods for rounding-up suspects and the production of confession within hours ensure that the friction continues. "Houses of suspected troublemakers are broken into, valuables often pocketed by the Baluchi mercenaries who make up the bulk of this lightly armed force. Relatives are detained at police stations until the wanted brother, son or father gives himself up. Women report being threatened with rape by their Bahraini jailers. With no resident western journalist left on the island (a German correspondent was recently expelled) and little public accountability, Bahrain's courts and prisons have a pretty free hand".

20 July: Local papers said "fires gutted a supermarket and a shop in Isa town over the weekend but there were no reports of casualties.

21 July: Scores of children were among those held including a seven-year-old girl from the village of Bani Jamra. The fate of Iman Hassan Ibrahim, seven, was not yet known after she was summoned by police for questioning.

22 July: The residents of Bani Jamra commemorated the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Zahra Ibrahim Kadhim, 53, who was beaten to death by the Al-Khalifa mercenaries.

25 July: Kathy Evans (the Guardian, 25 July) commented on the position of the British Foreign Office by referring to the statement made by both the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and his junior Minister Derek Fatchett. In a speech to aid agencies less than a week ago, Mr. Cook reaffirmed his Government's commitment to supporting democratic procedures. "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country through democratic procedures. These are rights which we have a duty to demand for those who do not enjoy them" In the light of the latter, Kathy Evans questioned the policy towards the all-appointed Shura Council in Bahrain.

25 July: The security forces occupied the girls' school at the entrance of Sanabis. The school is being used as a garrison for armed forces. Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its report condemned such an attack on education. HRW called for the return of the educational establishment to civil administration. Similarly, the foreign forces besieged Hoora Cemetery in Manama and deployed their units near "Matam al-Safafer" in the old town centre. Other units encircled principal mosques around the capital.

25 July: Over the past 30 months, mosques and religious places had been ransacked, damaged and recently an assembly hall was burnt in Iskan-Jedhafs. The Al-Khalifa's forces are waging a dirty war, whereby, public, private and religious properties are being burnt/damaged for enflaming internal conflicts amongst citizens. Three innocent citizens Abdul Redha Taher Mohammed Abdul-Same'a, 17, Ahmad Abdulla Al-Asfoor, 21, and Hamad Isa Al-Mowlani, 21, had their pictures published in the papers accused of burning the matam.

27-29 July: The security forces attacked Sitra again and arrested several people. The house of Radhi Al-Toq was ransacked and the entire family was taken hostage until the son Hussein handed over himself to the foreign torturer. After Hussein handed himself on 29 July, his parents were released together with his sisters. His brother Abbas remained in detention. The policy of taking hostages is being practiced in flagrant violation of Bahrain's constitution and international human rights standards.

Another child was injured. The 3-year old Mustafa Abdulla was hit by a cluster-bullet that exploded in his body spreading sharp particles. The same types of bullets also hit two sisters: Amal Abdul Jabbar and Narjis Abdul Jabbar. When the two girls went to Sitra Medical Centre, they were refused treatment. The 5-year old boy Mohammed Abdul Adhim is still in hospital suffering from a bullet directed at him by Al-Khalifa mercenary forces during the ransacking and siege of Wadyan between 6 and 11 July. Ali Abdul Nabi Abdul Wahab, 17, was also hit by a rubber bullet. He was arrested and publicly beaten by the foreign forces while at pain. The people of Sitra declared the night of 27 July as a night of solidarity with those arrested and injured. All lights were switched off starting from 7:30 p.m. until the next morning.

30 July: Business sources revealed that Digital Corporation, the well-known high-tech company has decided to close and move its Middle East headquarters from Bahrain to Dubai. The closure will include the training centre, which the Labour Minister Abdul Nabi Shu'la often uses as an example for his training scheme. The opposition is not happy to see businesses closing down and believe that the irrationality of the ruling family is costing Bahrain its stability and long term viability. The Al-Khalifa rulers are comforting themselves with the cash received as donations from Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. They was those donations in the importation of mercenary armed units from Yemen and the Syrian desert.



## Human Rights Watch:

## Denial of rights is behind the crisis

The release on 24 July of the major 109-page Human Rights Watch report entitled "Routine Abuse, Routine Denial: Civil Rights and Political Crisis in Bahrain" has received world-wide coverage. The Al-Khalifa rulers adopted a policy of sectarian and racial discrimination hoping that they will be able to avoid listening to the demands for political reforms. They rushed to defend its dictatorship in a characteristically self-exposing manner. A representative of the ruling family who was interviewed by the BBC Arabic Service panicked as he failed to answer the direct questions relating to human rights abuses. Human Rights Watch has urged the governments of the USA and UK to publicly criticize the shameful atrocities of the Bahraini regime. It also called, amongst others, for the amendment of the State Security Law of 1974, the Penal code of 1976, and all other laws and decrees to eliminate those provisions that violate rights protected by Bahrain's Constitution, including those provisions that allow for unlimited or arbitrary detention.

Human Rights Watch Press Release: (New York, July, 24, 1997) - Wide-scale government and security force violations of the civil and political rights of the citizens of Bahrain have been a major factor underlying the unrest now in its third year, Human Rights Watch charges in Routine Abuse, Routine Denial: Civil Rights and the Political Crisis in Bahrain, released today. Human Rights Watch is highly critical of the refusal of the United States government to speak out publicly about abusive practices in Bahrain, a major naval port for US forces in the Persian Gulf.

"Washington's silence in the face of flagrant human rights violations by its Persian Gulf allies is inevitably read as tacit acceptance," said Keith Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch. "The absence of any public reproach to Bahrain for its shameful policies stands in disappointing contrast to the Clinton administration's lofty pronouncements about human rights and democracy in general."

The 109-page report, based on interviews with Bahraini residents, including lawyers and prominent businesspeople, and with persons whom the government has forcibly exiled, also analyzes Bahrain's laws and legal practice. "We found two basic categories of violations," says Joe Stork, advocacy director of Human Rights Watch/Middle East. "The first, relating to law enforcement and administration of justice, includes arbitrary detention, physical abuse of detainees, and special security courts that deny elementary due process rights. The second category covers basic political rights such as the freedom to speak out and to hold meetings, form political parties and criticize government policies. Bahrainis risk arrest and physical abuse, and even exile, for demanding that the government abide by the 1973 constitution."

Bahrain's constitution guarantees many of these rights and freedoms, and provides for a partially-elected National Assembly, but the ruling family, headed by Amir Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa and his brother, Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, unilaterally

dissolved the National Assembly in August 1975. In 1976, the government decreed a new penal code that substantively nullified many of the civil liberties and political rights protected by the constitution and criminalised a wide range of non-violent political activities. Abuses such as torture, which are categorically outlawed by the constitution as well as international law, are common and go unpunished. Uncorroborated confessions, secured in the absence of legal counsel, are sufficient for security court convictions, which cannot be appealed. Arbitrary detention and forced exile are practiced as matters of state policy.

Human Rights Watch concludes that the contention of the government of Bahrain, that the unrest of the past two-and-a-half years can be wholly ascribed to Iranian-sponsored "terrorism," lacks credibility. Human Rights Watch urges the government of Bahrain to amend the 1974 State Security Measures Law, the 1976 Penal Code, and all other laws and decrees to eliminate or modify provisions that violate Bahrain's constitution and that unduly restrict the ability of Bahraini citizens to exercise peacefully their rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression. Stressing the need to end the practice of forcibly exiling Bahraini citizens, Human Rights Watch recommends that the government announce that all Bahrainis living in exile are free to return, and that those individuals whom the authorities believe to be responsible for a crime be formally charged and tried before a court of law operating in public prosecutor, without ties to the Ministry of Interior, to investigate and publicly report on deaths and alleged acts of torture at the hands of security forces, and to bring charges against any officials implicated in such acts. Finally, Human Rights Watch urges the government to grant visas to independent human rights monitors to conduct research and to attend trials inside Bahrain.

Human Rights Watch strongly urges the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom to use their close and longstanding military and political ties with Bahrain to press the ruling Al Khalifa family publicly to end abusive practices that are recurrent, systematic, and matters of state policy, and to take steps that will make clear to the government of Bahrain that persistent human rights violations will affect negatively the depth and quality of overall relations, including military and security relations. The group also urges the International Relations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to put Bahrain's human rights record on the agendas of hearings dealing with U.S. policies in the Middle East.

Copies of the report (Title: "Routine Abuse, Routine Denial: Civil Rights and the Political Crisis in Bahrain" By: Human Rights Watch/Middle East, June 1997, ISBN 1-56342-218-1, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 97-73623) are available from the Human Rights Watch Publications Department, 485 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017 for \$13.50 (For North America Shipping) and \$18 (international Shipping) Visa and MasterCard accepted.

## Further Recommendations by HRW

- Appoint an independent commission to investigate overall law enforcement and administration of justice under the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs, and to recommend changes in the 1976 Penal Code and in the administration of justice that will bring that administration into compliance with Bahrain's constitution and with international standards.

- Establish a public register of all detainees, in accordance with international standards, that will include names and whereabouts of those arrested, time of arrest, by which order and under what charge, to be updated on a frequent and regular basis and made available without restriction to judges, lawyers, families, and human rights organizations.

- Amend the 1976 Penal Code to eliminate or modify those articles and provisions that unduly restrict the ability of Bahraini citizens to exercise peacefully their rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression, in particular Articles 134A, 163, 164, 165, 168, 169, 178, and 222.

- Restore the right of Bahraini citizens to participate in public affairs and governance, directly or by means of freely elected representatives, in accordance with international law and with Chapter Two of Bahrain's constitution.

- In accordance with Article 26 of the constitution, end the practice of monitoring postal, telephone, and electronic communications among persons inside Bahrain and with persons outside the country, except when subjected to the oversight of an independent judicial authority.

- End the practice of forcibly exiling Bahraini citizens and announce that Bahrainis living in exile are free to return to the country. If the authorities have reason to believe that a person returning from exile is guilty of a crime, that person may be formally charged and tried before a court of law in which he or she has full access to defense counsel and the right to call defense witnesses and to question prosecution witnesses, and to appeal the verdict to a higher judicial tribunal in accordance with the law.

- Amend the Law of Social and Cultural Societies and Clubs so as to eliminate all unreasonable obstacles to nonviolent political and trade union activity.

- Amend Amiri Decree No. 14/1979 with Respect to Publications in order to eliminate undue restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and to receive information.

- Restore civilian leadership to the Ministry of Education and Bahrain University, and restore a policy of faculty recruitment and student admissions to the university that does not discriminate against persons based on their religion or their political opinions.

- Take steps to regularize the status of Bahrain's biddun population—long-term residents without nationality—by facilitating their applications for citizenship and passports and by permitting the return to Bahrain of bidden who have been arbitrarily or summarily deported.

- Allow international and Bahraini human rights workers to exercise their rights to seek, receive, and disseminate information in Bahrain concerning the human rights situation there.