

BAHRAIN

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

The European Parliament condemns the Al Khalifas

From Iran to Britain in sixty weeks

Today it is Britain that is sheltering and supporting "terrorists and saboteurs". Few months ago the State of Qatar was the culprit. Last year Iran headed the list of the countries conspiring against the Al Khalifa who are ruling Bahrain with terror and intimidation. When the myth of Iranian involvement evaporated as the facts and events unfolded, the Al Khalifa became so nervous that they arrested two Qatari citizens, tried them for spying and sentenced them to three years imprisonment. However, they had to back down once again as the episode turned into a political fiasco for a regime that was losing its credibility amongst its own allies.

The British dimension was introduced into the troubled political equation when the Al Khalifa became more exposed to international criticism. Over the past few weeks the political situation changed dramatically against the Al Khalifa. Last month the European Parliament passed an historic resolution condemning the Al Khalifa for their bad record on human rights and calling on the EU countries to stop supplying Bahrain with arms or security assistance until democracy has been retained. This resolution was the latest in a series of international condemnation of the Al Khalifa's terror.

In June the British Minister responsible for the Middle East, Derek Fatchett, described the Bahraini opposition as moderate and asked the government of Bahrain to open up the country for inspection by Amnesty International and other similar organizations. That was a clear departure from the British policy of keeping a tight lip on the events in that country. In July, Human Rights Watch issued a long report on the human rights crisis in the country entitled: "Routine abuse, routine denial".

The United Nations Human Rights Sub-Commission passed a resolution condemning Bahrain's record on 21 August and asked for the release of political prisoners. The resolution was passed after an embarrassing saga in which financial corruption by the Al Khalifa was exposed. They had worked relentlessly to obstruct the resolution but to no avail. The resolution was first introduced by Claire Palley, the British expert who was one of the 26 members of the Sub Commission.

The Al Khalifa think that any initiative by a British personality against their dictatorship is motivated and encouraged by the

British Government. They always view other people's actions in the light of their treatment of the people of Bahrain.

When the resolution of the European Parliament was passed they became uncontrollably angry. They knew that the resolution was co-sponsored by Stanley Newens, a British member of the European Parliament. They tried to block it but failed. A media campaign against Mr. Newens and the British government was waged ferociously in Bahrain. Bahrain's dailies published columns and editorials lashing at the British Government and considered the British support for human rights issues a clear indication of her desire to colonise the world once again.

The opposition reacted to the resolution of the European Parliament by calling on the Al Khalifa to engage in dialogue in order to salvage the situation. But the government has once again failed to reply in favourable terms to this request.

The situation has however, continued to be tense especially with the all-out media campaign being waged by the Bahraini press against the United Kingdom, whose only shortcoming is to giving refuge to Bahraini exiles after they had been forcibly expelled from their land.

The events of the past three years have once more exposed the real nature of the regime. The Al Khalifa's adamant refusal to engage in constructive dialogue with the opposition to discuss the constitutional and democratic demands of the people indicates a mentality that is both destructive and dangerous. Their intransigence and arrogance has proved beyond any reasonable doubt that they belong to an old era and are alien to the modern world.

The opposition will continue its civil resistance until the country is returned to civil and constitutional rule. It has exercised a high degree of self-restraint in the face of often-unbearable provocation by the repressive regime. Torture is rampant in Bahraini jails, more than 1500 prisoners have remained in detention without either charge or trial. Collective punishment has remained the order of the day, and the events of Duraz on 16 September are yet another unprovoked attack on civil liberties. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) confirmed that they had verified the names of 1429 detainees in 27 detention centres.

There is now an international consensus on condemning human rights violations and

demanding constitutional and democratic rights. The recent international reports and resolutions reflected this. The countries, which are friendly with the Al Khalifa, are duty-bound to bring pressure to bear on them to make them aware of the implications of their unwise policies. The Gulf states are already aware of this and are disgusted with what they consider "inappropriate response" by the Al Khalifa to the challenges facing their government. They are well aware that a rotten apple is likely to spoil the rest of the apples, and are privately discussing with the Al Khalifa practical face-saving alternatives.

The United States is well placed to apply pressure on them especially with the new US Ambassador to Bahrain, Jonney Young, who will take up his post shortly. In his testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relation Select Committee, he hinted at his desire to see the Government of Bahrain adhering to the international norms on human rights in dealing with the unrest in the country. This is a welcome gesture and more is needed if the message is to be delivered clearly and decisively to the Al Khalifa.

The opposition is keen on the stability and security of Bahrain and has refrained from any step that could compromise that aim. Their demands are humble and moderate, and the Al Khalifa will retain their power under the country's constitution, and their legitimacy will become constitutional.

The people of Bahrain marked the 25th of September with memories of sadness. It was two years ago when Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues were released for few months before being re-arrested in January 1996. That release followed the establishment of an understanding for the initiation of a dialogue process in return for calming down the situation.

The prime minister, who is believed to be the main obstacle to political reforms in the country, must be alerted in an unambiguous way to the dangers of his actions not only to the people of Bahrain but to his own clan. The constitutional uprising started with a declared aim and will not compromise on it. The civil resistance programme has been successful and more successes are being awaited. The final victory will materialise when the rule of constitutional law eventually reigns over the country. It is in everybody's interest to accommodate this noble and moderate demand.

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The tribal dictatorship turns the blame to the UK

September 1997: Politics of despair

From August: Attack on freedom of expression continues in Bahrain. The lawyer and poet, Ali Salem Al-Orrayed (younger brother of the minister Jawad Salim Al-Orrayed) was stopped and forced into a car belonging to the ministry of interior on 27 August. Then he was taken for interrogation regarding the poems he wrote several years ago. He had since been released and threatened with re-arrest. Earlier in the year, the poet Ali Hassan Yousif was detained and ill-treated following the publication of the second volume of his work "Isharat". The lawyer and poet Ahmad Al-Shamlan suffered a severer ill-treatment.

1 September: Ms. Ismat Al-Mosawi, the local correspondent (stringer) of the BBC Arabic Service, has not been heard on the BBC for sometime. It is widely believed that Ismat had been banned for reporting for the BBC as part of the government's drive to reinforce a total control of political reporting. Attacking freedom of expression is a consistent feature of the regime in Bahrain. Ms. Ute Meinal of the German News Agency, DPA was expelled from the country last July. Mohammed Al-Gharah of UPI was detained and forced to resign from the news agency that is based in Abu Dhabi. Last year, in September 1996, the local Reuters correspondent, Mr. Abbas Salman was jailed for one day as a punishment for reporting on the events in Bahrain.

2 September: The GCC Secretary-General Jameel Al-Hujilan said on 31 August that the Gulf leaders had agreed to appoint a committee to start preparations for setting up a consultative council. "The committee will hold its first meeting in Doha on 2 September", Reuters quoted Al-Hujilan. Kuwait proposed creating a 30-member consultative council at the GCC summit held in Qatar in 1996. The democratic forces in the Gulf hope that the Gulf leaders would adopt a more accountable and transparent institution than an appointed and powerless consultative council.

3 September:

Amnesty International issued a report on 3 September (AJ INDEX: MDE/01/05/97 3) stating that "hundreds of Bahraini nationals have been forcibly exiled from Bahrain, losing the protection of their own state". Bahrain is the only country in the world that forcibly exile its citizens after arrival at the airport, or after completing their prison terms or simple taking them from their homes and forcing them to board a plane destined for another country, usually Syria or the UAE.

3 September: The Amiri Court summoned the owners of all bricks factories and stone-crushers who have sites located in the south of the country. The undersecretary of the Amiri Court, Sheikh Duajj Al-Khalifa, instructed the businessmen to kill all stray dogs and cats because they disturb the Amir who spends sometime in the time during the months. The businessmen were surprised because they thought the meeting was called for something of importance for the Amir who might have thought of talking to them about the political crisis.

3 September: Ahmad Mohammed Al-Khalifa, a member of the ruling family, pub-

lished on his poems in Al-Ayyam on 3 September insulting the nation and threatening the use of more violence against the peaceful people of Bahrain. The same person exchanged bad-language poems with the head of the crown prince office in 1995 insulting the people of Bahrain. These poems are indicative of the nature of some of Al-Khalifa tribe who are living in a time and a place that reject such backwardness. While the ruling family encourages one of its members to publish insults, it had banned and imprisoned Bahraini poets such as Ali Hassan Yousif and Ali Salim Al-Orrayedh.

5 September: Riot police besieged the Sadiq Mosque in Qafool, Manama, on 5 September, mid-day. As people gathered for entering the mosque to perform Friday prayer, the foreign forces raided the mosque and prevented the Friday prayers. The raiding of the mosque and prevention of people from praying inside it is one of the hate-based policies that are being practised by the government, and provides another proof for intolerance and racism directed against the citizens, in violation of the UN conventions.

5 September: On 5 September, the security forces arrested Aqil Al-Madani, 30, and subjected to him to sever torture. His health conditions deteriorated markedly and the interior ministry released him on 8 September so that he does not die inside the torture chamber.

5 September: The crown prince, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, visited France on 5 September and met with the French Defence Minister. The crown prince had earlier visited the UK and it is believed that he looking for military equipment and training for his new "National Guard" that was created earlier in the year for increasing the capability of repression against the Bahraini people who are demand their basic rights.

AFP said on 12 September that France and Bahrain reached last week an agreement on defense cooperation. No details were given about the agreement which was reached by French Defense Minister Alain Richard and the crown prince Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, in Paris. The Bahrain Defence Force signed with France an agreement of co-operation in July 1995, under which French armament firms sold 95 million francs (15 million U.S. dollars) of weapons. The crown prince was in London before going to Paris. It is believed that he was looking for military equipment and training for the newly imported foreign troops that were used for the formation of the National Guard. The latter is intended for internal repression.

9 September: The interior ministry published, on 9 September, the names of three citizens it accused of carrying put the fire in Dairy Queen outlet in Adahi village, about five km (three miles) south-west of the capital Manama. The fire on 29 August was carried out by around 10 security personnel as a form of revenge against a successful Bahraini businessman. The opposition denounces violence and has called on the interior ministry to stop its people from setting places on fire. The three victims selected by the interior ministry are

Abbas Khamis Ahmed, Hassan Ali al-Saeed and Ali Abdullah Salman.

The opposition's view that the security forces have been involved in arson and sabotage are becoming clearer to many people. The security forces burnt Dairy Queen restaurant on 29 August. In the same period a farm belonging to the younger brother of the Amir, Sheikh Mohammed bin Salman Al-Khalifa (an arch-rival of his brothers the Amir and the Prime Minister) was targeted by a group of arsonists. The farm's guards managed to capture some of the attackers and these had been identified as members of the intelligence department.

12 September: For the fourth week running, the Al-Khalifa ruling family prevented people from performing Friday prayers in Al-Sadiq mosque in Qafool, Manama. The riot police encircled Al-Sadiq mosque on 12 September and prevented people from approaching the area. In a similar show of force, the Al-Khalifa deployed their foreign forces around Mo'men mosque (Manama) and intercepted those people who wanted to enter the mosque. In Ras-Romman (Manama), members of the intelligence department stopped people and turned them away. This is a newly enforced policy of religious intolerance and follows the appointment of a torturer by the name Abdul Aziz Atteyat-Allah Al-Khalifa as a governor of Manama.

In Karranah, the security forces raided several houses, destroying their contents and arresting youths that happen to be in the houses. The collective punishment raid followed a night of clashes last week.

13 September: Local newspapers said on 13 September that the interior ministry detained five citizens last week and accused them of burning a car. The citizens are Jaffar Mohammed Al-Aali, 17, Ali Ahmed, 17, Sayed Hassan Abdulla Ahmed, 16, Abbas Hani Ahmed, 16, and Mohammed Ali, 16, from Bori village, 16-km (ten miles) southwest the capital Manama. The opposition believes in peaceful civil resistance. However, the security forces have vested interests in attempting to de-rail the opposition by engaging and encouraging arson and sabotage. Through this, the Al-Khalifa vent their hate-based policies against the peaceful nation, while at the same time blaming the people for violence.

14 September: An-Nahda Women Association was holding a meeting to discuss details of the commemoration for the late national figure Ms Aziza Al-Bassam. Security officers stormed the Association and brought the meeting to a halt. He also summoned the participant for interrogation the next day. On 15 September, executive members were threatened that if any activity takes place, the interior ministry will hold them responsible. Nothing to be published in press or in booklets. The threats were made by the notorious officer, Abdul Salam Al-Ansari, chief of Manama Police.

When the distinguished members said that they had permission from the Labour Ministry, the interior ministry official replied "we do not care about any permission. You are banned from gathering or publishing anything about Aziza Al-Bassam". The opposition has called for one-

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minute stoppage on 1 October, 11.00 am in respect of Aziza. Aziza was dismissed from Radio Bahrain in 1995 following the submission of the pro-democracy "Women Petition" in March 1995.

16 September: The afternoon of Tuesday, 16 September will not be forgotten. A peaceful traditional procession that is guaranteed by the constitution of the country was passing through the streets of Duraz. The foreign-staffed security forces started their attack when the procession reached the National Bank of Bahrain. Rubber bullets, sharp glass particle bullets and tear gas were all deployed against men, women and children. The security forces stopped short of nothing. An eyewitness said "I saw more than 50 riot police personnel surrounding five youth, beating them until blood covered all their bodies". "I saw the four-year old son of Yousif Ahmad Abdulla bleeding as a result of a bullet". The child is now in hospital. "Redha Abdulla Al-Shehabi had one of his arms broken as a result of the beating". Hundreds were taken prisoners. "Falah Mohammed Habib Al-Asfoor was hit by sharp particle bullets".

Another eye witness reported how "the riot police poured petrol on a new car belonging to Seyyed Jaffer Seyyed Mohammed. Then they stepped back and fired live ammunition that caused a huge explosion and total destruction of the car. The riot police then turned to a car belonging to Mohammed Abdul Hussain Saleh and set on fire in a similar way".

"Two village elders who head local congregation halls were detained. These are heads of Matam al-Shehab and Matam al-Noor: Ali Ahmad Shehab and Abdul Razzaq Zain-al-Din. Both matams were shut down".

"The aftermath of the atrocities speaks of horrific crimes. The riot police intentionally damaged more than fifty cars, and private properties were ruined. For example, the house of Haji Isa Al-Ajami was ransacked and had its contents damaged or turned upside down". "Sheikh Jaffer Al-Khal, a blind cleric, was attacked when he started praying in the mosque later on. The riot police smashed the microphone of the mosque and roughly-handled the old man". "Salch Mahdi Al-Marzooq and his daughter were both arrested from one of the streets".

Fadhil Abdul Nabi Kadhim Al-Owd, 17 years old, who had been seriously injured by bullets fired by the security forces in Duraz on 16 September, is critically ill. He is now being treated in Bahrain International Hospital. Ahmad Yousif Ahmad Abdulla, nine-year old, was hit in the back and doctors decided not to operate on him as this might permanently endanger his back.

Others injured include a 3-year old Ali Mohammed Saleh, and elderly women (the mother of Ali Seyed Ahmad, another lady; Ghaneya Mohammed Kadhem, Fardan Mohammed Kadhem, Ali Mahdi, Mohammed Kadhem Ahmad, Hassan Isa Ahmad Ali, and several others.

17 September: The atrocious attack on Duraz happened on the same day when the Prime Minister started an official visit to Egypt. The ruling Al-Khalifa family had recently estab-

lished security arrangements with the Egyptian authorities. Last month, the Egyptian government handed over a Bahraini university student by the name Ibrahim Abdul Latif Ibrahim Hussain Dhraboh, 20 years old. Many of the judges in the security courts and in the prosecutor general office are Egyptians imported for processing injustice in Bahrain. The recent warming in relations is also related to the recent condemnation resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission on 21 August.

22 September: The residents of Sitra-Wadyan buried one of their dear children: Yaser Ibrahim Ali Sdaif, 22 years old. Yaser was detained in early 1995 and had suffered extreme forms of torture. One type of torture caused bleeding and resulted in the deterioration of his health. It was the insertion of a bottle in his back passage. He later developed cancer. His conditions became very serious two months ago. His death brings to mind the horrific treatment of prisoners under the hands of the merciless torture-officers headed by Ian Henderson. We call upon human rights organisations to initiate an investigation into the death of Mr. Sdaif and to urge the Bahraini authorities to stop torturing the people of Bahrain.

18 September: The European Parliament issued an historic resolution condemning human rights violations and absence of political freedoms (see special report).

The opposition welcomed the remarks made on 18 September by Mr. Johnny Young, President Clinton's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Bahrain, in which he said "we will continue to encourage constructive and decisive action, by the Government of Bahrain to address the underlying political, social and economic causes of the unrest". However, the opposition rejects any claim that might imply a foreign connection to the internally inspired and led community-based movement.

24, 25, 26 September: The people of Bahrain commemorated the days of 24, 25 and 26 September. These were the days two years ago when Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues calmed down the situation in return for the initiation of political dialogue. The security forces realized then that such a clam down would disadvantage their favorable position within the structure of the state. They attacked the peaceful nation and re-ignited the event that continued until today.

Saddened and angered by such an irresponsible behaviour, the people switched-off lighting on the evening of 24 September. The security forces blocked entrances of the home village of Sheikh Al-Jamri, Bani Jamra, aiming to prevent the people from congregating in the village. The grand mosques of Al-Sadiq in Qafool (Manama) and Khawajah in Makharga (Manama) were besieged. Entranced to the capital were manned with security forces for stopping people and turning them away.

The scholar who leads the prayer in Khawajah mosque, Seyyed Saeed Seyed Alawi was arrested on 26 September, 10.00 am local time, together with the two persons in-charge of the mosque. The officer who led the house-raiding of the scholar and the two men was the Yemeni officer Mogbil. The mosques of Al-Sadiq and Khawajah continued to be under siege

until Friday night (26 September).

On 25 September, at 6.25 pm local time, the security forces fired tear gas inside al-Khawajah mosque, raided the mosque compound and arrested at least 35 people. These included Ali Al-Moot and Yaser Mohammed Abdul Rasool from Sanabis, Hani Ali Ahmed Radhi and Jaffar Al Shia'lah from Zinj.

The main Budaya Highway (near Jedhafs and Daih) was blocked on Friday 26 September, 8.30 pm local time. The security forces launched an attack against the citizens in that area. Similar skirmishes were reported near Duraz on the preceding nights.

Update on Bahrain-Qatar Dispute

2 September 1997: The Bahraini government unveiled plans to build 54 new houses and flats on the Hawar islands. Ebrahim Rashid Al-Jowder, Assistant Undersecretary for Housing, said the new buildings were part of a two-year housing plan which involves the construction of more than 1,000 housing units to keep up with demand.

The move is bound to antagonise the Qataris who had taken the dispute on the island to the Hague. The move to build 1,000 housing units is also meant to counter the plan to build Zayed Town. The prime minister was angered by the fact that the crown prince considered Zayed Town as a personal victory for his faction.

In relation to the dispute over Hawar, the crown prince called for UNITY with Qatar. The official Gulf News Agency on 3 June "Yesterday, his highness the heir apparent renewed his call for unity with the brothers in Qatar. When his highness did this, he was sure that this call stemmed from the hearts of the Bahraini and Qatari peoples in particular, and our Gulf peoples in general. The Gulf peoples want to see our countries cohere and coalesce and even combine into one entity". On 17 June 1997, the Amir of Qatar in a press conference with Qatari papers (see Al-Hayat of 17 June) responded to the call made by Bahrain's crown prince for unity with Bahrain saying: "The call for unity comes from a clean heart. However, the issue in Qatar, is that we must submit this call for the people to vote on it, because such a matter must come from the hearts of the people, instead of leaderships. The two leaderships might be on good or bad terms from one day to another".

On 9 July 1997, 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. The new frigate was named "Sabha". This name is meant to anger the Qataris. The Al-Khalifa claim that name refers to the name of a fort built by one of their forefathers in Zubarah, Qatar. In the Eighties, the name "Hawar" was given to a gunboat acquired by the Bahrain Defence Force naval unit. On 21 August 1997, Qatar received two gunboats purchased from the British company "Vosper Thornycroft". The two are part of an order for the delivery of four gunboats. The advanced gunboats are equipped 76 mm diameter gun that can target naval as well as ground targets. They are also equipped with platform for launching ground-air rockets. Qatar name one of the boats as "Hawar".

An Historic Resolution by the European Parliament:

Restore Parliament and Respect Human Rights

Euro Resolution:

Resolution passed on 18 September 1997, by the European Parliament, Strasbourg.

Urgency Resolution Under Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

The resolution was tabled on 17 September 1997 by the following members of parliament:

Stanley Newsens, on behalf of the PSE Group; Bertens, on behalf of the ELDR Group; Gonzalez Alvarez, Manisco, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group; Gahrtou and Mrs Van Dijk, on behalf of the V Group; Hory, on behalf of the ARE Group

On Human Rights Abuses in Bahrain

* The European Parliament:

A. Noting with profound alarm the Report published in June 1997 by Human Rights Watch/Middle East entitled 'Routine Abuse, Routine Denial: Civil Rights and the Political Crisis in Bahrain, which documents the continuing political crisis in Bahrain, with associated widespread political repression, torture and abuse of detainees, denial of legal representation and reliance for convictions on uncorroborated confessions; and the Amnesty International report of 16 July 1996, which expresses grave concern at continuing human rights abuses in Bahrain and the absence of the protection of due process, and the report by the UK Parliamentary Rights Group;

B. Recalling that the Bahraini parliament was disbanded in 1975 and that the ruling Al-Khalifa family has since resisted all calls for the restoration of democratic and constitutional rule;

C. Recalling that the current political crisis started in the second half of 1994 with widespread demonstrations and petitions calling for the return of constitutional rule, the release of political prisoners and permission to return for hundreds of Bahrainis forcibly exiled or prevented from returning because of their political activities;

D. Observing with deep regret that these moderate demands have been met with arrests, the torture of detainees and wider use of the State Security Court, the procedures of which fall far short of accepted international standards for a fair trial and from which there is no right of appeal, despite the imposition of death sentences;

E. Noting that helicopters and gas supplied from abroad have reportedly been used against civilians;

1. Calls upon the government of Bahrain to release political prisoners, to facilitate the return of exiles and institute due process of law, according to accepted international standards, and to open negotiations with opposition forces immediately, with a view to holding democratic elections, open to all sexes, at the earliest opportunity;

2. Calls upon European Union Member States to refrain from supplying arms or security support to the Government of Bahrain and requests the Council to take initiatives in order to obtain similar restraint at international level until democratic conditions have been restored;

3. Unequivocally condemns all use of un-

lawful violence, torture and terrorism, whether committed by the security forces or any other agents.

4. Calls upon the Bahraini authorities to admit internationally respected human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to the country and allow organisations with similar peaceful democratic concerns to operate in Bahrain.

5. Instructs its President to forward copies of this resolution to the Council and the Commission, to the governments of Member States, to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to the Bahraini Government.

UN Resolution:

The European Resolution came a month after the historic resolution by the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission on 21 August.

Bahrain was also discussed by another UN Committee on 5 September.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concluded its annual 3-week session on 5 September after adopting its annual report. The Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Bahrain is one of the 148 States parties to the Convention. These members are required by the terms of the UN treaty to provide the Committee with the periodic summaries on their efforts to combat discrimination in public and private life. Government representatives must also be present to introduce these reports and to answer questions from Committee members. Bahrain had signed this treaty in 1990. It also signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. However, the government refused to submit any report to the responsible committees.

On 21 August, the government was condemned for its racist policies and the gross violation of human rights and discrimination amongst the citizens. The UN Committees find it difficult to deal with those countries that do not submit their reports, and the violating countries, such as Bahrain, abuse this loophole. The Committee will meet again from 2 to 20 March to review situations in countries that are responsible for delays in reporting, and these will include Bahrain.

Government Response

The government realised that its policies had backfired and the international community is not prepared to accept any justifications for the continuation of dictatorship and abuse of human rights. The two condemnations have prompted the Prime Minister to visit Egypt for re-aligning support. The Foreign Minister met with European ministers in New York during the UN General Assembly meeting to counter the European resolution. Similarly, the housing minister and acting foreign minister Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa met with European ambassadors in Bahrain on 29 September regarding the resolution. The despair of the government was vividly displayed when it started attacking the United Kingdom.

The Times reported on 17 September 1997 that "Bahrain rebuffed: Britain has rejected

fresh complaints from Bahrain that it is sheltering opponents of the Emir's rule (Michael Binyon writes). The Bahraini Government, smarting from the presence in Britain of Islamic dissidents, yesterday, called in the British Ambassador to emphasise its condemnation of those giving them refuge. In response, Britain denied that it sheltered terrorists and said it would not forbid entry to anyone with proper documentation and clean record".

Al-Ayyam attacked (see the issue dated 23 September 97) Britain's "crooked method". It said that Britain was "receiving and caring for terrorist elements, facilitating their movements on British territory, and granting them private passports to facilitate their suspect movements throughout the world in order to create bloody tragedies in several Arab areas". The paper also specifically condemned British MEP Stanley Newsens's "defence of the crimes committed by terrorist elements in Bahrain". The commentary said that the days of colonialism were over and Arab countries would not tolerate its return.

A spokesperson for the BFM said "The people of Bahrain hope that one day there would appear a courageous person from the political establishment who could face the challenges of the modern age. There is a short cut to ending the crisis and it is unfortunate that those in charge can not open-up their eyes, minds and hearts".

1995 Resolution:

In 1995 the European Parliament issued its first resolution on Bahrain condemning the State Security Law and the British chief of Bahrain security, Mr. Ian Henderson (Ref: Resolution (rule 47, ref: B4-208/95/RC, B4-276/95/RC1 passed on February 15, 1995).

In that resolution the European Parliament noted that the people of Bahrain have been engaged in peaceful protests expressing demands for the establishment of constitutional democracy, the participation of women in the political process, a solution to unemployment, the release of political and the return of all deportees. It said it was shocked that the Bahrain Government has resorted to the ruthless use of force by the security forces resulting in several deaths, many injuries, the detention of hundreds of persons and the deportation of prominent personalities. Moreover, it was shocked that the security forces in Bahrain are to a large extent directed by a British officer, Ian Henderson. The resolution stressed that the Government of Bahrain resorted to the Decree Law on State Security of 22 October 1974, which entitles the Minister of the Interior to detain political suspects for up to three years without trial; recalling that the National Assembly, dissolved in 1975, refused to pass the State Security Law and that, since required their approval under the constitution, the State Security Law is of doubtful legality. The resolution affirmed the Euro MPs full support for the people of Bahrain who are demonstrating for their political, economic and social rights; and condemned the attitude of the security forces towards the demonstrations and demands that the Government release all political prisoners, etc.