

# BAHRAIN

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

## Young man's body carries all marks of savagery

### Time to End State Terrorism

As the people of Bahrain embraced themselves to commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the notorious Amiri (royal) decree suspending certain articles of the constitution and dissolving the partially-elected parliament. They were horrified to see some of the most brutal images of torture to be inflicted on a human being by any government.

The tortured body of the 22-year old Nooh Al-Nooh on 21 July, carried the message of the feudal ruling establishment. His family were hurried to bury their offspring by club-wielding foreign mercenaries recruited by the Al-Khalifa to counter the rising opposition to their tyrannical regime. No sooner had the body been delivered than did the people rush to the scene with full vigour and dignity. They exhibited signs of sorrow and anger, but managed to contain their emotions. This was not the first time they had to face up to the reality of the horrific situation they had to endure under the most ruthless ruling tribe in the region. The funeral was humble, but courageous, dignified and overwhelming to many. Wailing women, chanting youth and subdued elderly dignitaries formed the core of the mourners who paraded the body on their shoulders for a distance of one and a half kilometres. As the body laid in the grave, people were breathing a sigh of relief. After all, their struggle did not seem to have gone in the drain. Day in, day out, the number of disillusioned citizens was increasing, the dichotomy between the state and the society was becoming gradually un-bridgeable, and the zeal of the young men, women and children seemed to be getting out of control.

The story of the latest martyr illustrates one of the most horrifying episodes in the months old intifada (uprising). As the extent of the Government's crime became more apparent, the people felt they had to defend themselves through the escalation of the civil protests. For several months, the Al-Khalifa officials, including the Amir himself and the prime minister, repeatedly stated that the intifada had been wiped out and that the thousands of prisoners were no more than criminal bandits.

The demonstrations that swept the capital and throughout the country for a full week following the killing of Nooh have confirmed what the opposition has all along been claiming; there is no solution without returning to the constitution.

What added to the anger of the Bahraini

government was the fact that the three exiled clerics had been offered political asylum in the UK, something that the previous governments were not keen enough to pursue. Since the Labour government came to power last year several applications for political asylum were processed after years of delay.

The Al-Khalifa government reacted furiously and accused Britain of "harbouring terrorists and saboteurs". Her mercenaries commented in their daily columns reflecting such an attitude. However, the situation in Bahrain has become unbearable even to those with whom the Al-Khalifa enjoy good friendship. The prime minister has left no stone unturned in his endeavour to enslave the country under his dictatorship. The British government was acting within her own laws as well as the international conventions. British officials were embarrassed to see one of their allies violating the most basic of human rights in such an audacious way. How on earth could a modern government forcibly exile her own citizens? The decision to offer members of the Bahraini opposition political asylum should have come much earlier, but the Conservatives did not want to upset the prime minister of Bahrain choosing instead to delay decisions on the applications.

The position of the Al-Khalifa was further complicated by the mysterious killing of a Bahraini man in Beirut. The Lebanese government rushed to confirm that the murdered person had been working for the regime as a secret agent, and that he had entered into Lebanon eight times in the previous twelve months with different names. The Bahrain regime immediately disowned the dead man and it was assisted by other GCC states in putting pressure on the Lebanese authorities not to pursue the matter any further. A special envoy was despatched from Bahrain to Lebanon to assist in "establishing the facts from the myths". The mercenaries working for the security apparatus became disillusioned and to calm down their fears, the British officer Ian Henderson, resurfaced in newspapers and on TV. His reappearance was meant to be a comfort for the rest of mercenaries employed for the sole purpose of repressing the Bahraini nation.

It is clear from the ongoing events that the situation is worsening. Killing innocent civilians is unforgivable crimes and it can in no way subjugate a nation. In fact, the killing of Nooh has served as a catalyst that infuriated the public leading them to express their anti-government sentiments in the heart of the capital, Manama. The random arrests that followed served no useful purpose for the government. There is now deep feelings against the torturers and their masters especially as they remain at large and are not made to pay for their crimes against humanity.

The Al-Khalifa have impressed no one with their savage behaviour. Even within the Gulf they have failed to consolidate their stand. They have become a liability due to their ill-behaviour whilst the people of Bahrain have retained international respect, sympathy and support. The latest crime that has been perpetrated by the torturers employed by the government serves to consolidate the image of savagery and barbarism of the Al-Khalifa. On the long run this could lead to the isolation of the regime in a world that is becoming more open and democratic. Over the past few months media coverage of Bahraini politics in the United States and Britain have stunned the allies of the regime. Collective action by freedom-loving people will surely lead to a better outcome for the oppressed people of Bahrain. After all, the noble values that have enshrined the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be preserved and protected. One way of achieving this is through the curtailment of the excesses of terrorist regimes such as that of the Al-Khalifa.

### Asylum in Britain for three clerics

On 20 July Britain granted asylum to three Bahraini who were deported from Bahrain three years ago, after they'd campaigned for the restoration of the Bahraini parliament which was dissolved in 1975. Before being deported, Sheikh Ali Salman, Sheikh Hamza al-Deiri and Sayed Haider al-Sitri had also called for the release of those detained during anti-government demonstrations to press for political reforms. Reuters said on 21 July: The news that the three had won their battle to stay in Britain indefinitely came in a written parliamentary answer from junior Home Office minister Lord Williams of Mostyn on Tuesday.

Immediately before their deportation in January 1995, they had been campaigning for the restoration of Bahrain's national assembly, dissolved in 1975, and the release of people detained in riots in Shi'ite villages.

In November last year, the three were given five-year jail terms by a Manama court following a trial of eight opposition leaders in exile on charges of violating state security, including setting up an illegal group to overthrow the government by force. The other five defendants were sentenced to 15-year jail terms.

A spokesman for the Home Office, Britain's Interior Ministry, said the government never commented on the reasons for granting or refusing applications for political asylum. Lord Avebury who asked the question to which Williams responded, was not immediately available for comment.

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# July 98: A young man tortured to death, Henderson

1 July: The interior ministry continued its programme for re-arresting those people who had been released in April and May following a visit by the Red Cross. Many of those released were told by security officers that they would be re-arrested after few days.

On the other hand, the interior ministry refused to release many of those who had been found innocent even by the State Security Court. An example of such behaviour is evident in the refusal to release a group of people who were acquitted by the State Security Court on 16 May 1998. The group (ten of them in Bahrain and one is outside Bahrain) was accused of burning a shop more than three years ago (on 25 March 1995). The group was tortured and held in detention since then. They were first brought to a trial on 27 December 1997. And on 16 May 1998, they were found innocent from all charges against them. However the interior ministry refused to release them.

The said group includes Adel Abdulla Yousef Sengais, 29 years old, who is outside Bahrain. Others remaining in detention are: Seyyed Hassan Ali Mosa, 19, Abbas Yaqub Yousef Mohammed Al-Uleiwat, 31, Seyyed Aqeel Yehya Al-Qallaf, 20 (was 17 years old when arrested in 1995), Saeed Isa Ali Hassan Ali-Hammar, 24, Seyyed Adnan Saeed Ali Al-Setri, 17 (child), Mohammed Abdulla Ali Al-Haddad, 17 (child), Seyyed Adnan Majid Hassan Al-Saffar, 29, Mahmood Ibrahim Abdulla Al-Jamal, 19, Abdul Amir Ahmad Mahdi Al-Gas, 25, and Abbas Isa Hassan Al-Hammar, 24.

The following remain in detention without trial or charges for more than three years: Mohammed Jawad Ahmad Jaffer Al-Oreibi, 25, from Kawarah; Ahmad Shaaban, 24, Kawarah, Mirza Khamis Qambar, 19, Sitra, Salman Makki Marhoon, 20, Sitra, Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Tawwash, 25, Sitra, Mohammed Ghannam, Sitra.

2 July: In the past days, several loud explosions were heard around the country while the security forces failed to remove pro-democracy slogans from the wall. A recent development is the increase in writing of slogans in English language. One such slogan in Duraz, said, "All the sectors [of Bahrain society] are demanding the parliament".

4 July: The Kuwaiti Appeal Court held its session on 4 July to look into the sentences passed against a group of Bahraini workers in Kuwait. The session was adjourned until 25 July. The group was accused of possession of leaflets critical of the regime in Bahrain, an accusation that is not punishable by Kulaw. A junior court convicted six Bahrainis to prison terms ranging between 3 months to 3 years last March.

7 July: The residents of Sanabis, Daih, Duraz, Karzakkan, Demestan, Malkeya, Sitra and other places commemorated the third anniversary of the martyrdom of Saeed Al-Eskafi who was tortured to death on 8 July 1995 by the notorious officer Khalid Al-Wazzan. The people called for the punishment of Khalid Al-Wazzan before a fair trial.

July 10 (Reuters) - The International Free Trades Union Confederation on Friday named and shamed close to two dozen countries for

failing to respect trades union rights during the last four years. [Bahrain was amongst the condemned countries]. The Brussels-based CISL, upholding workers' rights to set up trades unions enshrined in a 1993 International Labour Organisation convention, named countries from around the world for murder, torture, police beatings, arrests and total bans on unions struggling to win their mem

Earlier a US state department official responded to an enquiry by the Bahrain opposition saying that the US Administration supported the recent declaration of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) "we strongly encouraged countries to support it" the official said and added that "the US strongly urged Bahrain to support the Pact". Bahrain abstained from signing the pact. The pact aims to protect the right to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively, to eliminate forced labour, end discrimination in employment and to bring about the effective abolition of child labour.

8 July, the security forces raided the house of Abdulla Ahmad Marhoon, about 48 years old, and arrested him. The citizens own a bookshop, which was also raided and many of its equipment were confiscated. His two sons, Elyas and Hussain, had earlier been detained on 23 June.

9 July, the torturer Khalid Al-Wazzan led an attack on several houses in Iskan Jedhafs. The torturer and his group smashed doors and windows of houses in an attempt to terrorise the residents. They also briefly arrested and beaten Mohammed Khalil Ibrahim, 22, Karim Maki Kashkool, 22, Jamil Hassan Ahmad, 17. On 14 July, the security forces attacked Daih arrested Bashar Al-Shajjar, 22, and Hani Matoq Fakhar, 22.

While Asaad Mostafa Ali, 24, was walking in Mostalla, a group of foreign security men stopped him and started beating him severely. This is one of the methods adopted by the foreign forces for intimidating the nation.

10 July: The following were known to have been re-arrested in Daih on 10 July: Abdul Zahra Ali Mushaima'a, 18, and his brother Hussain, 16, Jawad Nemat-Allah, 18, Ahmad Al-Sarsawi, 23. These were detained for 18 months without charges or trial. They had been released a month ago, and have now been re-arrested as part of the on-going programme for re-arresting those released recently.

15 July: Ian Henderson, the top British Security Chief, has been shown standing behind the interior minister on 15 July. His recurrent appearance on TV and in newspapers indicates how entrenched Mr. Henderson is. He continues to direct operations against the peaceful people of Bahrain to fulfil his duties as a protector of dictatorship.

17 July: A fire that might have been started by arsonists working for the security forces gutted Bu-Kannan furniture show room. The fire was extinguished on 17 July, at 11.00 am. The furniture show room is located on Sheikh Salman Road, near Isa Town.

It is widely believed that the security forces have blacklisted several business people. There are many drivers for this type of arsonist action. The intelligence department targets any

businessperson that is suspected to be helping the poorer sections of the society. The family of Bu-Kannan is amongst a number of business families who are targeted by the intelligence department.

21 July: The people of Bahrain mourned a new martyr today, 21 July. Nooh Khalil Abdulla Al-Nooh, 22 years old, was arrested in a raid on his parent's house in Nuaim district (Manama) on Saturday 18 July. Few days later, the interior ministry telephoned the family of the martyr and ordered them to collect the dead body of their son from the mortuary.

As the family went to receive the body of their dear son, the foreign security forces had already encircled the district of Nuaim. Nevertheless, the citizens penetrated the siege and about 1500 people attended the burial and funeral of the young man.

The people photographed his body. It was full of torture, the kind of which is applied to all citizens taken into custody for interrogation.

The tortured body carried signs of electric shocks, severe beating and drilling-penetrations. The people chanted for the freedom of the nation and called for the punishment of torturers.

24 July: Hundreds of citizens marched through the streets of Manama, the Bahraini capital, on 24 July (7.00pm) protesting against the killing of Nooh Al-Nooh on 21 July. Nooh was arrested by the intelligence department on 18 March and tortured with electric shock, burns, drillings and painful lashing until death. He died within 48 hours of his arrest.

Early on the day, the security forces encircled the house of the martyr's parent and ordered them to cancel the gathering that usually takes place on the third day of a person's death. However, these threats never frightened the honourable citizens from converging into the district of Nuaim.

The people gathered and listened to speeches condemning the torturers and demanded that those responsible for the death of Nooh Al-Nooh be brought to justice. The photos of Nooh's body in the mortuary were distributed. All the photos showed the extent of torture that caused the death of Nooh.

The government of Bahrain ratified the UN Convention against Torture last February. However, torture never ceased and indeed it had been increasing in scale and type. The photos of Nooh's body are further evidence of the criminality of the regime that employs mercenaries from all over the world for the sole purpose of torturing Bahrainis.

Security forces encircling the district of Nuaim fired at the protestors, but the youths charged towards the mercenaries and clashed with them in defence of honour and dignity. The clashes spread to the heart of Manama Town Centre and as a result dozens of shops were damaged.

Youths in other parts of the country also clashed with the mercenaries. Columns of and clashes were reported in Daih, Sanabis, Durza, Karzakkan, Sanad, Sitra and many other places. Witnesses spoke of the return of the "intifada" defying the atrocities of the regime.

The interior minister, Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, was pictured standing near the notorious British security officer, Ian



## .. is back

Henderson, in government's paper on 23 July. He thanked the staff of the interior ministry and encouraged them to continue their operations as usual. This statement is indicative of the nature of the murderous regime, which declares its pride after the killing of citizens. The murdering of the Nooh Al-Nooh is part of a policy adopted by the unconstitutional and feudal regime, which refuses to stop torturing the citizens, and refuses to respect the country's constitution. The struggling nation of Bahrain will never succumb to the mercenaries and those who commissioned them for torture and murder.

25 July: The torturing-to-death of yet another innocent citizen by the security forces rallied the nation to denounce the irresponsibility and criminality of the regime. Protestors vowed to continue struggling against the feudal dictatorship and to continue demanding their basic rights of dignity, respect and freedom of expression. Security forces were put on high alert and were ordered to camp in public areas. Patrolling have been intensified in a desperate attempt to silence the nation.

On 25 July, protesting citizens from various parts of Bahrain took to the streets protesting against the torturing-to-death of the 22-year old, Nooh Al-Nooh on 21 July. Amongst the areas that witnessed intensified activities were: Bani Jamra, Duraz, Shakhura, Daih, Sitra, Karbabad, Abu Sayb'a, Quraya, Dair (where protestors block the highway leading to the International Airport) and Nuaim (where its entrances have been besieged by the security forces to prevent the citizens from paying their last tribute to the martyr Nooh).

Later on the same day, the security forces waged an offensive raid on an assembly hall in Nuaim where people had been gathering for commemorating the martyr. Many of participants were arrested and contents of the assembly hall were completely ruined.

Arrests and raids on citizens' houses have resumed in an even more cruel and brutal way. Citizens have been rounded up from across the country in the most intimidating and terrorising manner. The following are known to have been arrested in the past few days. On 25 July, Mahmood Abdulla Khalaf and his four brothers, from Karbabad, were rounded up in the early hours of the morning. On 24 July, Mohammed Abdulla Khadim, 41, and his four brothers (Khalifa, 36, Taha, 31, Ali, 25, Mahmood, 23) were arrested during a midnight raid on their family house in Karbabad. On 19 July, Hussain Abdulla Hassan, 22, from Jirdab, was arrested from his house in the early hours of the morning. In the second week of July, Abdul Amir Abdulla Al Janahi, 24, from Ras Romman, was arrested and brutally tortured. He was released after three days of exhaustion.

26 July: Kuwait Times said on 26 July that "appeal verdict on Bahrainis postponed until September 14". Kuwait's criminal court earlier this year sentenced six Bahrainis to three years imprisonment after accusing them of distributing leaflets against the government in Bahrain.

27 July: The notorious mercenary Ian Henderson has again appeared on Bahrain TV escorting the Prime Minister upon the latter's departure for a 10-day "private" visit abroad.

## Killed in Lebanon: Was he an agent?

The Lebanese news agency stated that a Bahraini person "working for Bahraini intelligence" was found killed near Beirut. Tawfiq AbdulNabi Ibrahim Al-Bahranah, 46, was killed on Sunday 19 July in mysterious circumstances. A Bahraini governmental official denied the allegations made by the Lebanese official source that the person worked for the intelligence.

Reuters said on 22 July "Lebanese Foreign Minister Paris Bouez insisted on Wednesday a Bahraini killed with a bullet to the head was an intelligence officer working undercover, despite official denials from Bahrain. The man identified as Tawfik Abddenabi Ibrahim, 46, was found on Monday with a pistol in his hand and a bullet in his head in a tourist area northeast of Beirut.

"The man (Ibrahim) was identified as an intelligence officer. We do not have additional information," Bouez told reporters.

According to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) Ibrahim was in charge of observing Bahraini opposition circles based in Lebanon. Bahrain swiftly denied on Tuesday that the man belonged to the Gulf Arab state's security agency or any other state body.

An-Nahar and other newspapers reported that the body was found Monday in the mountain town of Beit Mery with a gunshot wound to his head and a pistol in his left hand to imply that he committed suicide.

Bahrain's official Gulf News Agency, however, said al-Bahama "had no connection with state security or any other official body in Bahrain." It did not say what al-Bahwas doing in Lebanon.

Bouez has asked Bahrain to provide more information about Ibrahim, and he didn't rule out the possibility of conducting a joint investigation with Bahraini officials. Bahrain does not have an embassy in Lebanon despite the existence of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Lebanese officials said they were investigating the death of the Bahraini citizen on 23 July, Lebanon's foreign minister on Thursday

retracted a statement that a man found shot dead in a mountain town this week was a Bahraini intelligence agent. "Preliminary information had indicated that the slain Bahraini (was an intelligence agent)," a statement issued by Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz's office said. But the Bahraini foreign minister "did not confirm this, pending more accurate information on this subject," the terse statement added. It did not elaborate. On Wednesday, Bweiz said that "it became apparent" from conversations with Bahrain officials that the victim dead found Monday was an intelligence agent. In remarks carried by Lebanon's official National News Agency, he also said "information in our possession" showed the man was an agent.

Al-Bahama's body was found in Beit Mery town with a gunshot wound to his head and a pistol in his left hand to imply that he committed suicide. Local media reports said police investigators were acting on two theories: the victim was either spying on exiled Bahraini dissidents, or he ran into heavy losses at a casino and that somehow was a motive behind his death, be it suicide or murder. Al-Bahama was staying at a Beit Mery hotel.

The As-Safir reported Thursday that according to investigators al-Bahama was a regular customer at the casino.

On 25 July, Reuters reported that "Lebanon said on Saturday a Bahraini killed by a bullet to the head this week was not an undercover intelligence officer, as it had earlier alleged. General Prosecutor Adnan Addoum told a news conference the man, identified as Tawfik Abddenabi Ibrahim, 46, was not a Bahraini agent. Addoum said the man had committed suicide.

"The news about Ibrahim and his belonging to one of the intelligence systems in his country are baseless," Addoum told the news conference, which was attended by Bahrain's ambassador to Syria, Abdel-Aziz Abu Ali. Ibrahim was found on Monday with a pistol in his hand and a bullet in his head in a tourist area northeast of Beirut.

## Prostitution and AIDS in Bahrain

The Al-Khalifa government has transformed Bahrain to a centre for prostitution. Fun-girls are imported from all over the world, primarily Russia, to sell sex in the Exhibition Road in Manama and in the hotels, most of which are owned by the Al-Khalifa.

A recent addition in the government-sponsored prostitution industry has been African girls. As a result of this policy, AIDS is now widespread in Bahrain. In a rare look at a subject scarcely acknowledged, Bahrain television screened frank interviews with AIDS sufferers. "My husband had the disease and he did not tell me about it. I lived with him for a long time without knowing that," the widow of a Bahraini AIDS victim said.

"My children and I have tested for HIV. Fortunately my children were safe, but I had contracted the virus," said the veiled woman, using the fictitious name Hawa. "I advise everyone to make sure to get a blood test of future husbands and wives before their marriage to make sure they are not carrying the disease."

## Opposition letter to the UN

The Bahraini constitutional opposition submitted a memorandum on 15 July to the United Nation Sub-Commission on Human Rights, expressing appreciation for the "historic resolution No.E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/50 which you adopted on 21st August 1997" on the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain. "The timing of your decision was very significant because it came in a crucial period in the history of our political struggle for democracy and human rights in Bahrain".

"Though Bahrain enjoyed two years of partial democracy in 1974 and 1975, unfortunately, in spite of its limitation this experiment was not tolerated and the National Assembly was dissolved in August 1975. However, in 1992 and 1994 two petitions were produced by a new democratic movement which emerged embracing the 1973 constitution". "Currently, there are two members of the CPP (Committee of the Popular Petition) among the political detainees namely; Sheikh Al-Jamri (60 years old) and Mr. Abdulwahab Hussain".



"The Atlanta Journal-Constitution" of July 5, 1998:

## "Opposition in Bahrain shuns violence"

By Larry Kaplow, Manama, Bahrain

In the sandy little neighborhood near the mall of J.C. Penney's, a graffiti cries out for any foreigner who might pass.

"We are reformists. Not a terrorist," it says, though it is likely to be covered quickly by police wielding rifles and paint buckets.

Most Americans know little about Bahrain, but many of the Arabs here speak English. They eat at Dairy Queen and Hardree's, work in banks and resorts or live off the sailors at the port center for the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet.

While Americans celebrate their independence this weekend, tidy little Bahrain has everything American except democracy. Facing tough restrictions on free speech, an opposition movement is trying to bring back a parliament that was banned 23 years ago. Human rights monitors regularly criticize Bahrain, a country with 586,000 and only four times the size of Washington, D.C., for jailing dissidents without trial and mistreating prisoners.

The Bahraini government counters that its opponents are "foreign-backed militant extremists" responsible for thousands of arson and bombings. They note that nearby Iran has backed attempts to destabilize the government.

But some observers say Bahrain's leaders exaggerate the outside threat because strikes a nerve with their American ally. A real terrorist army, they say, probably would firearms and cause more bloodshed.

"It's a surprisingly patient movement," said Graham Fuller, a researcher with the Rand Corporation and a former high-ranking official in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Fuller called the Bahraini opposition "a genuine push for democratization."

The movement's most frequent tools appear to be graffiti, the Internet, vandalism, and arsons - which have killed several. Activists enjoy jamming tires around household propane tanks and burning them until the tank top blows with a loud, but harmless, bang.

Perhaps the most prominent opposition group is the Bahrain Freedom Movement, with an Internet site featuring pictures of the movement's martyrs. The group shows no signs of anti-Americanism, despite the U.S. support for Bahrain's rulers. It asks for an elected parliament, the release of political prisoners and implementation of the country's constitution.

But many question if the opposition will keep its relatively restrained approach, given political climate on the steamy islands.

### Political prisoners

According to a 1997 U.S. Department report, up to 1,100 Bahrainis were in jail for opposing the government. Many are there just for speaking out. The report said they are sometimes beaten on their feet and heads, burned with cigarettes or subjected to electrical shock.

A recent report from Amnesty International gave roughly the same assessment, noting that two prisoners died in Bahraini jails, apparently from mistreatment.

But Bahrain is perched in the volatile Persian Gulf, important for the United States' watch over oil shipping. It consistently supports U.S. pressure on Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

"Bahrain is a state that has been long a friend and partner of the United States in the important work of ensuring the security and stability of the Gulf region," U.S. Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering said in Bahrain recently.

Said Nathan Brown, director of the George Washington University Middle East Studies Program: "Security concerns trump human rights concerns ... even though the human rights record on Bahrain is worse than any other place on the Arabian Peninsula."

The country has been run like a family business by the Al-Khalifa monarchy since the 1700s. Power is mostly held by Sunni Muslims who, according to the State Department, hold a "favored status" for jobs over the two-thirds of the population that are Shia Muslims. The Al-Khalifas, who are Sunnis, live in palaces and drive luxury cars with the low-numbered license plates. They get credit for making Bahrain modern before its neighbors. It has the world's largest aluminium plant, good health and literacy rates around 80 percent.

But unemployment rising, even though a third of the population comprises foreign workers who have been brought in to do much of the manual labor and police work. The population has grown quickly and is restless.

### Seeds of unrest

The Al-Khalifa family dissolved the country's parliament in 1975 and allows no political parties. The family appointed a council to serve in place of the parliament, similar to councils throughout a region not known for democracy.

The current unrest began in 1994 with a petition drive and street demonstrations calling for parliament. About 40 people have been killed in the dispute, with the two sides differing on who has lost the most. Some activists have died in prison, while some police and civilians have died in arson fires.

The country now runs under a "security law" under which people can be jailed up to three years without trials. Sometimes, when their terms come up, they are re-arrested immediately. Bahraini officials note they frequently release prisoners and that anyone who wants change can speak directly to the Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Sulman Al-Khalifa.

"But when you talk about some groups which commit crimes, by killing people or burning houses or destroying public utilities, such kind of people you don't deal with through dialogue. You deal with them through the court," Bahrain's Minister of Information Mohamad Al-Mutawa said in a statement.

Bahraini officials count more than 7,300 arsons and 179 explosive or incendiary incidents "by a textbook example of a 20th-century insurgency campaign."

### Speech not so free

Al-Mutawa said the country allows free speech, but the State Department report said the government restricts Internet access and satellite dish ownership. Sensitive to adverse publicity, it deported a reporter for a German company last year. Most Bahrainis will not let their name be used when talking about the government to foreign reports.

The government says it acts with restraint, and observers agree things could be worse. Bahrain has not executed its opponents and frequently release them once they agree to cease their activity. The Red Cross is often allowed to monitor prison conditions. But that is little consolation to the wife of the most prominent opposition leader Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, 59, is a religious leader and was a member of the parliament before it was abolished. He has been in prison since 1996 without being charged or brought to trial.

"Sheikh Abdul Amir insists on using peaceful methods to restore the parliament," said his wife, Zahra Yousif Atiya, known as Um Jameel.

Her son, Jameel, is also in prison and she wants the world to know what is going on in the tiny island state. "America controls everything. It's all in their hands. If they wanted Bahrain to restore parliament, they could do it in the first day, she said.

## Hawar dispute with Qatar

Qatar said on 7 July that Bahrain will violate an agreement signed in 1987 between the two countries if Manama builds a causeway to Hawar island, controlled by Bahrain but also claimed by Qatar. A foreign ministry spokesman in Bahrain responded by saying "any changes in Zubarah (a village in Qatar and the place which Al-Khalifa lived in before coming to Bahrain) is an infringement of Bahrain's sovereignty". On 9 July, the Kuwaiti's Al-Rai Al-Aam said "War of words flares up again between Qatar and Bahrain".

Reuters reported on 14 July saying: The United Arab Emirates is stepping up efforts to end a sovereignty dispute between Qatar and Bahrain over a cluster of Gulf islands, al-Hayat newspaper reported on Tuesday. The London-based daily said UAE President Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan al-Nahayan was considering sending his minister for foreign affairs to Doha and Manama to bridge differences between the two Gulf Arab capitals. The UAE's official WAM news agency reported on Monday that Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani had started a two-day visit to the UAE capital Abu Dhabi. It said the Qatari minister delivered a letter to Sheikh Zaid from Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. The disputed islands are barren but are believed to have oil and gas reserves.

They have been controlled by Bahrain since the 1930s but are also claimed by Qatar, which took the row to the International Court of Justice in the Hague in 1991. Bahrain said in June it was planning to build a 22.5 km (14 miles) causeway to link it with Hawar, largest of the islands at the centre of the dispute. Qatar criticised the plan and said Bahrain had no legal right to build the causeway.

Mr. Abdul Rahman Al-Nuaimi, the leading Bahraini opposition figure, wrote an article in Al-Quds on 21 July analysing the escalation in border dispute between Qatar and Bahrain. He said, "the two countries must strive to solve the dispute. The Bahraini government has persistently sought to divert attention from the on-going struggle for political reforms in Bahrain.