

BAHRAIN

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

Torture mentality defeated in Geneva Victory for human rights

The developments of the past few weeks have demonstrated beyond doubt the need for an immediate response from the Government of Bahrain to the legitimate demands of the constitutional movement. For the first time in the history of this small Gulf island, the internal problems have become an international concern forcing the Al Khalifa ruling tribe to send one of the top officials, after a hasty decision, to Geneva to negotiate a face-saving formula to avert international condemnation. The UN human rights experts (forming the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission) had proposed a resolution condemning the Al Khalifa for their violation of human rights and demanding an immediate halt to the arbitrary arrests and summary trials in kangaroo courts. Last year the UN Sub-Commission had passed a similar resolution.

Last February, The Al Khalifa were forced to sign the Convention Against Torture (CAT), a step that spared the ruling family the humiliation of facing an international condemnation last spring for its bad record on human rights. However, it placed a reservation on Article 20 of the convention which enables victims of torture to present their cases to CAT Committee, thereby robbing it of the power to investigate irregularities in the treatment of thousands of Bahraini prisoners. As reports of systematic use of torture persisted the international community felt obliged to take these allegations more seriously, and Françoise Hampson, the British expert at the UN Human Right Sub-Commission, sponsored a carefully-worded resolution condemning Bahrain's human rights record. Eight other experts joined her giving the resolution the necessary number of sponsors.

No sooner had the official Bahraini delegation to Geneva learnt of the proposed resolution than did they dispatch a team headed by the deputy foreign minister to Geneva. This time, however, the business was more serious and a resolution seemed certain. The faces of the international experts were grim as they studied the reports of more serious crimes of torture. Nooh Khalil Al Nooh, the 22-years old young man had just been slaughtered by the Al Khalifa's torturers and images of his tortured body were already circulating in the corridors of the Geneva UN Palace.

Ghazi Al Quosibi, the deputy foreign minister of Bahrain, had to face up to the new charges against the Al Khalifa, but

found himself unable to defend the bad record of his Government. Ultimately he told his bosses that the only way to avert a public humiliation for the Al Khalifa was to make substantial steps to appease the human rights experts. His proposals were immediately sanctioned by the prime minister. The Al Khalifa ambassador (Ahmad Al-Haddad) at Geneva had to read the statement of surrender to the experts, thus saving the skin of his bosses.

The surrender note read by Al-Haddad on 19 August stated: "I am pleased to draw this Sub-Commission's attention to the following recent development: (1) Having recently acceded to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Government is actually studying the withdrawal of Bahrain's reservation regarding Article 20 of that Convention within one year, and, (2) The Government has also agreed to extend an invitation to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention for a preparatory visit to Bahrain - the date of which will be fixed in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Group".

The surrender note went on to say "In the light of these developments, which clearly probe the willingness of the government of Bahrain to engage in and pursue constructive dialogue with the UN's human rights mechanisms, I hope that this Sub-Commission will lend its support to my Government and the draft resolution concerning Bahrain be withdrawn. I would also like to thank the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, and all members, for the useful exchange of views that has resulted and the positive dialogue achieved".

As a result of this surrender, the UN experts agreed to withdraw the draft resolution and to investigate the intentions and seriousness of the government's officials. A day later, the UN experts read what the government's press in Bahrain claimed to be a "victory for the government in the UN". The co-sponsors took note of all these manoeuvres and false claims and will use these propagandist articles against the officials of the government.

The UN experts have clearly demonstrated the ability to bring the Al Khalifa to an international public tribunal, and succeeded in extracting concessions that would otherwise be impossible to get.

Having made substantial gains in the field of human rights with the admittance of the ICRC, the ratification of the Convention Against Torture, withdrawing by the Government of its reservations on Article 20 of the convention and pledging to allow a visit by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the people in Bahrain are now focusing their attention on the next step. This would be to force the Al Khalifa to sign the two important conventions on political and civil rights and economic and social rights. The political forces have

embraced themselves to an uphill struggle but are confident they will reach the summit one day. The international reputation of the Al Khalifa is being eroded with time, and their authority within the country is being conducted through the use of ruthless tactics, a means that has backfired many times. Torturing people to death is certainly not the best way to deal with opponents, and certainly it is not the safest.

The horrifying pictures of the tortured body of Mr. Nooh Al Nooh, were more effective as a tool in the campaign to convince the international concerned bodies of the need to take steps against the mentality of torture and inhuman treatment of people.

This development is certainly a matter of grave concern to the other rulers of the Gulf states. Defending the rulers of Bahrain is not the best method to achieve stability in the region. If the Al Khalifa continued their campaign of terror and intimidation, the international community will gradually find itself embroiled in the situation with terrible consequences to the ruling tribe. This eventuality may have a knock-on effect on other regimes in the region. Questions will be asked about other rulers who support state-terrorism of the Al Khalifa. Files of human rights abuses, lack of democratic practices, totalitarianism, and absence of civil society norms, may all be subjected to international scrutiny. The Bahraini opposition has no design to take up these issues except in the context of the crisis in Bahrain but the longer this crisis continues the more likely that they will be taken up by other players in the field.

The Al Khalifa have proved themselves prone to international pressure despite their attempts to show a "brave" face, by claiming false victories. As the struggle continues, more pressures are likely to be exerted on the Al Khalifa regime, and the longer the crises remains unsolved the more dramatic any solution will become.

The opposition has not challenged the existence of the ruling Al Khalifa tribe but the nature of the ongoing dispute between the people of Bahrain and the ruling tribe may lead to a wider international role in the region. However strong may the ties between the Al Khalifa and their backers, there will come a time when the voice of the society will echo in the various corners of the world. The world will gradually come to understand that one of most important sources of instability in the regional politics is the existence of totalitarian regimes which live outside the sphere and spirit of modern times.

Email: Bahrain@compuserve.com - Homepage: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Bahrain>

Bahrain Freedom Movement, BM BOX 6135, LONDON WC1N 3XX, UK. Tel/Fax: +(44) 171-278 9089

August 98: Independence Day Ignored; Civil Resistance Continues

* 15 August marks the 27th anniversary of Bahrain's independence from Britain after 150 years of British control. In 1970, the UN security council voted in favour of the findings of the personal representative of the then UN Secretary General, Mr. Winspeare Guicciardi. The latter visited Bahrain in early 1970, toured the country and spoke to people in schools, clubs and other public functions. He then reported that the people of Bahrain "were virtually unanimous in wanting a fully independent sovereign state" and that such state would be modern once adopting a modern structure. Independence was proclaimed on 15 August 1971 to be followed by the joining of the UN and the establishment of a Constituent Assembly that ratified Bahrain's constitution and paved the way for the National Assembly. The elected National Assembly lasted for less than 2 years, before its dissolution on 26 August 1975. The ruling family ignores the 15th of August and shows no pride for independence. Rather it is celebrated on 16 December, the day of the current ruler's coronation.

* August 26, marked the 23rd anniversary of the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA) after two years of its formation. On June 20, 1973 the Amir promulgated Law No. 12/1972 forming a Constituent Assembly to draw up the Constitution for the State of Bahrain. After drafting by the Constituent Assembly, the Amir ratified the Constitution on December 6, 1973. The Constitution defined citizens' fundamental rights, and the system of government, stating that it should be based on the separation of powers. Before the end of 1974 NA's session, the government submitted a draft law entitled "The State Security Measures Law."

The draft law would grant the Minister of Interior the power to detain, for three years without trial or judicial review, anyone suspected of committing acts considered harmful to the security of the State. This draft law was unanimously rejected by all elected members of the NA. Despite the NA's rejection of the draft law, the Amir issued the State Security Law on October 22, 1974. A crisis ensued between the NA and Government, leading to the dissolution of the NA and the seizure of the legislative power by the Amir and the Government. According to Article 63 of the constitution, the current Government is unconstitutional.

* The official Bahrain government's press announced a visit by Mr. Derek Fatchett, the British Minister for Middle Eastern Affairs to Bahrain on 14 September. This visit comes amid relentless campaign of slandering by the Bahraini (government-controlled) press against the British government. The fury of the Bahraini regime over Britain comes after three Bahraini exiles had been granted political asylum by the British Government, which in turn sent an indirect message to the Bahraini regime of the UK's concern over the human rights crisis in Bahrain. In retaliation, the Bahrain Government accused Britain of "sponsoring terrorism".

* The BBC World TV transmission to Bahrain has been blocked by the Bahraini regime. The stoppage was announced in the official press and was said to be temporarily.

But speculations that the regime decision to stop the BBC World TV transmission is amongst a series of retaliations against Britain in light of the recent stance adopted by the UK government against human rights violations in Bahrain. The transmission was later re-directed to a lower type of channel.

* On the eve of the 23rd anniversary of the abrogation of the National Assembly, the Bahraini people demonstrated their civil resistance peacefully. Meanwhile, the regime's security forces have continued to violate the basic rights of the peaceful citizens. A savage raid by the security forces against Sanabis resulted in an assault against three girls in their houses is a clear manifestation of the regime's savageness.

* On the other hand, a number of persons are known to have been arrested in the mid August. They are: Hassan Mehsen Abdul Karim, Falah Muhammad Habeeb, Kadhem S. Taher, Muradha S. Abbas S. Taher, Rae'd Hassan Al Asfour, Ali Yousif Ahmed, Abdul Zahra Al Sari. In relation to Abdul Zahra Al-Sari, the security forces raided his house to arrest him but he was not present. So they seized his brother, tortured him and threatened him of more torture if he did not co-operate in the hunt against his brother. They then forced his brother to phone Abdul Zahra on his mobile telephone and misinform him of urgent illness requiring help for emergency hospitalization. Abdul Zahra rushed to his brother only to be met by the mercenaries who arrested him along with another person who happened to accompany him.

* The agents of the foreign security forces intensified their arson and sabotage campaign in the past few days. After the unusual silence on the acts of arson that swept the country during the past two months which targeted peoples' private properties and businesses, the state-controlled media launched a campaign accusing the people of Bahrain of vandalising their own properties.

* On the other hand, the United Kingdom has had its share of the slandering by the regime's sponsored press. So did the neighbouring State of Qatar. The Bahraini regime accuses the British Government of sponsoring terrorism and sheltering terrorists and supporting them financially.

* To show solidarity against the regime's plan to vandalise peoples' properties, the residents of Muqsh'a village have on Budayi Highway rebuilt, equipped and supplied a shop in the village that had been sabotaged by the security forces. The people wanted to deliver a message to the ruthless regime that they are aware of the government's policy of sabotaging citizens' properties in order to use it as an excuse to crackdown on them as well as a shield against international criticism. The people of Muqsh'a are simply saying, we care for one another, and the government is isolated and alienated from its own people.

* Bahrain still bans the visits of international human rights organisations which have requested it repeatedly and the UN thematic rapporteurs have pointed out the lack of cooperation of the State of Bahrain. Human rights organisations urged the UN Sub-Commission to keep Bahrain on its agenda and to call on the

Commission to create a monitoring mechanism on the situation.

* The human rights organisation "Liberation" submitted a statement before the UN Sub-Commission saying "we remain concerned for human rights abuses in Bahrain. The condition has worsened in spite of the resolution adopted by the Sub-Commission last year which condemned the violations of human rights in Bahrain, in spite of the commitment expressed by the government of Bahrain. The concerns have been increasing since 1994 when the Bahrain government waged a harsh crackdown against a popular petition and a campaign calling for democracy and the release of detainee. The Bahrain government reacted harshly against the gathering and street demonstrations which lead to the death and injuring scours of people. Leaders of the campaign were harassed, arrested and forcibly exiled. thousands of people, including children as young as 12 years, were detained for long periods without trial or after unfair trials. Mistreatment and torture has been widely practiced leading in some cases to death in custody, as the new case of the 21 years old, Nooh Khalil Al Nooh who was allegedly arrested on the 19th July of this year, and his body was handed over to his family two days later with clear marks of torture. On the other hand, freedom of speech, peaceful assembly and association remain highly restricted. Mr. chairman, in light of the human rights situation in Bahrain, we urge the Sub-Commission to adopt a new resolution expressing its concern over the continuing abuses of human rights in Bahrain, and requests the Commission on Human Rights at its next session to consider the situation of human rights in Bahrain."

* The fate of Mr. Abdul Jalil Abdula Khadim, 40, from Nuaim district, is still unknown after two months have past since he was arrested. His family has tried to find out his whereabouts or his condition but was not successful. Members of his family are worried about his fate. Mr. Khadim is the owner of the place where Nook Al-Nooh (tortured to death on 21 July) used to work.

* The mysterious death of the citizen Habib Mohammed Ibrahim Al Hamar, 42, from Dar Kulaib village, raises fears of yet another possible martyr in less than a week. His body was found dumped under a car in Nuaim District on Friday 24 July, three days after Nook was tortured to death. The area of Nuaim has witnessed a horrific besiege by the security forces on 24 July where they intimidated the residents of the district. Eye witnesses have mentioned seeing sever wounds on Mr. Al Hamar's shoulders, back and jaws. It is widely rumored in Bahrain that Mr. Al Hamar was tortured to death by the besieging security forces.

* The agents of the foreign security forces intensified their arson and sabotage campaign in the past few days. After the unusual silence on the acts of arson that swept the country during the past two months which targeted peoples' private properties and businesses, the state-controlled media launched a campaign accusing the people of Bahrain of vandalising their own properties.

"Forbes" adverts fail to white wash the regime's atrocities

The US magazine, Forbes, announced two months ago that it will advertise Bahrain in a feature article. The article appeared in the magazine on 10 August. Forbes speaks of Bahrain as if it were an international workshop, not as a country with a nation. The adverts came after a visit by senior magazine editors to Bahrain last May. The visiting editorial staff was received by the highest ranking officials of the state to agree the remit for coverage.

In the promotional article, Forbes said "people living in Bahrain always mention how enjoyable the cosmopolitan lifestyle is". It goes on to say "Bahrain is not an island paradise - that would be too slow". These statements reflect that fact that many of these individuals find the "special" apartheid-style treatment they receive from the ruling family entertaining. Many of them arrive in Bahrain but will never bother to approach the people of the country. That would be a disturbing factor in their excursion. Instead, they go to the private beaches of the Amir and other members of the ruling family; they go to the settlement-quarters that are specially prepared for preferential treatment in line with the "apartheid" type of policies that actually exist in Bahrain.

Forbes magazine is led by Caspar W. Weinberger, as Chairman. As a US defense secretary in the 1980s, he had strong relations with Bahrain emanating from the military presence there. Many US politicians turned themselves into consultants of one form or another. Has Weinberger become a spin doctor for the Bahraini regime?.

In a recent editorial by Forbes, Mr. Weinberger inserted the name of Bahrain after Britain saying "Great Britain and Bahrain have remained, as always, steadfastly loyal" to the US policies in the Gulf.

In another commentary about "PATRIOT antimissile system... and Theater High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to protect our forces", Mr. Weinberger criticized many things here and there but came back and inserted Bahrain in a penultimate and unconnected statement saying "The Administration should be praised for doing something right: inviting one of our oldest and best Arab friends, Sheikh Isa bin Salman al-Khalifa, Amir of Bahrain, for a state visit" on 1 June!!

Contrary to Mr. Weinberger, the Los Angeles Times of 3 June warned the US Administration against too much indulgence in double standard. "The visit of the emir is a good time to address this question (restoration of democratic rights). We can't let every authoritarian ruler in the region simply invoke the word "terrorism" as the catch-all label for any political opposition. Serious violations of democratic and human rights are involved with real consequences for U.S. interests and regional stability. U.S. pressure has brought dramatic and encouraging liberalization in Kuwait over the past six years. Let Bahrain be next or else face an inflammatory Gulf".

The London-based Dialogue newsletter commented in August "in the absence of "good government" in Bahrain it will be almost impossible to imagine the Gulf generally enjoying long-term stability and security".

Buckling under UN pressure; Another victory for the nation

Nine UN Human Right Sub-Commission experts (out of 26) proposed (on 14 August) to condemn the atrocities of the government of Bahrain during the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission session held between 3-28 August. The Bahraini government was made to answer to its broken promises and its continued violations of human rights in Bahrain. Ghazi Al-Quseibi (Foreign Ministry Under-secretary) was flown to Geneva to join the encounter. The Bahraini governmental delegation held several meetings with the UN experts and promised to end violations within a year. However, the UN experts responded by saying that they heard such promises from the Bahraini government for many years, only to find out that the government respects non of its words of honour. The UN experts proceeded with the submission of the condemnation resolution and made it clear to Al-Quseibi that nothing less than a written pledge would be satisfactory.

As a result, the Bahraini government agreed to ratify "Article 20" of the "UN Conventions Against Torture (CAT)". The government ratified CAT last February but excluded Article 20 of CAT. This article allows the UN body to investigate cases of torture that are submitted by Bahraini citizens directly to the UN without interruption by the Bahraini authorities. This concession was not found sufficient on its own to stop the condemnation, hence the Bahrain government made a further concession by promising to allow the "UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention" to visit the jails in Bahrain and to investigate the cases of those in detention.

These two concessions were deemed enough for the UN experts to withdraw the condemnation resolution. The opposition believes that the Bahraini government will try everything to bypass all its obligations. The opposition has pointed out that the torturing-to-death of Nooh Al-Nooh on 21 July came after the ratification of CAT. Torture is systematic and is used daily against the citizens of Bahrain. Despite all the apprehension, the Bahrain people have managed today (19 August) to win the support of the international community. The opposition welcomes the principled position adopted by the 9 UN experts: Mr. Begoa, Mr. Eide, Mr. Fix Zamudio, Mr. Diaz Uribe, Mr. Gooneskere, Ms. Hampson, Mr. Oloka-Onvango, Mr. Pinheiro and Mr. Weissbrodt.

The people of Bahrain will now watch the developments inside the country and it is expected that many cases of torture will be submitted to the UN Committee to start "direct investigation". It is also hoped that the visit of the "Working Group on Arbitrary Detention" will be comprehensive and repetitive to ensure that the army of torturers recruited by the government is checked and reprimanded.

Last August, the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission issued an historic condemnation resolution (ref. 1997/2 dated 21 August 1997). However, the Bahraini government launched media attacks against the UN and intensified its violations. This year it was made to buckle, at least in words. The actions of the government will from now on be under microscopic examination.

Secret operations against opposition uncovered

The Bahrain intelligence service has been increasing its activities in London. Two years ago, two "security" companies were recruited for conducting espionage against the opposition. These were soon countered by the vigilance of the Bahraini community in London.

Last month, the US-based "Arab Times" revealed that the Bahraini intelligence service has recruited an Iraqi person for conducting for "publishing statements against the opposition".

Omar Al-Hassan, is another person used by the feudal dictatorship in London. His lobbying has resulted in a series of failures and disasters for the Bahrain government PR. As a result, other routes are being sought by the Al-Khalifa family in London. Private Eye revealed part of those attempts.

Private Eye : 21/8/1998 No. 957: "WORLD OF HYPE: A SECRET lobbying operation involving Lord "£750-per-hour" Bell is being conducted to persuade the government that its appeasement policy. Towards the brutal regime of Bahrain, known for its appalling human rights record, should remain unchanged.

Documents obtained by the Eye show that Tim Bell and The Policy Partnership, a lobbying company led by Lord Gilford, are advising the Bahrain regime, which is notorious for torturing political opponents (Eyes passim).

Last month Lord Gilford, a former executive with the infamous lobbyist Ian Greer, wrote to the Bahrain ambassador in London, Shaikh Mubarak Al Khalifa. He supplied a detailed "Options of Action" memo soon after three Bahraini dissidents had been granted political asylum by the home office.

The Bahrain embassy was furious that the three were not sent back home for retribution and Lord Gilford sympathised. "Whilst the foreign office are acutely embarrassed both by the actual decision taken by the home office as well as the way in which it was announced," he claimed, "they have little or no jurisdiction over the home office's policy/actions in the asylum arena." The lobbyist suggested tough and exciting initiatives by Bahrain to encourage the UK government to extradite dissidents. This included "a more open approach", a "visit by the Red Cross to Bahrain" and "fact-finding trips to Bahrain by British MPs". The 28-point action plan, copied to Bell's company, also involves directly lobbying Tony Blair, Robin Cook and other senior minister. But there were more intriguing proposals: "Prince Bandar [Saudi ambassador to the US] to express his concern through his own contacts at 10 Downing Street.

"Lord Prior [chairman of GEC and former Tory cabinet minister], in his capacity as chairman of Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, to write to Jack Straw setting out why these measures [granting dissidents refugee status] could jeopardise trade relations with Bahrain, Saudi and the UAE.

"Monitoring the actions of the dissidents." This lobbying strategy, was discussed by the Bahrain ambassador with Bell on 28 July, and a week later with Bertie Way, a Bell executive, over lunch at the ultra-expensive Bibendum restaurant. Hopefully no one spoiled the meal by mentioning the torture chambers on the Bahrain Island of Nabih Salah".

Seminar on the 23rd anniversary of the dissolution of parliament:

"The Crises of Justice and Freedom in Bahrain"

An important seminar was held on 20th August 1998 in the British parliament to mark the 23rd anniversary of the dissolution of the National Assembly in Bahrain. The distinguished panel of speakers was chaired by Lord Avebury and comprised Olivier Da-Lage, Middle East Editor of Radio France International, Grace Malden, member of the Bar Committee for Human Rights and other distinguished persons.

Lord Avebury started by saying that "over the period in which dozens of states have made the transition from dictatorship to democracy, Bahrain is unique in having gone the opposite direction and having remained there ever since". "I have only to remind you that at the end of the seventies Russia and Eastern Europe was still in the grip of communism, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia were governed by racists and there were military regimes in power in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay. And now all these countries have become democratic and respect for human rights in those places have been greatly improved.

Even in the Gulf you can see signs of progress with greater participation by the people in decision making and some extension of freedom of expression in certain countries. In Bahrain alone you still get this undiluted hereditary dictatorship coupled with severe oppression of anybody who dares to speak or act in support of liberal values".

Mr. Olivier Da-Lage said "I used to be a correspondent based in Bahrain in 1981-82. I was freelancing for a number of papers and radios. Of course I knew I was being watched. I was under-surveillance... I did get warning at some stage. I was summoned to the Ministry of Information and I was told to be careful not to report on the fightings within the ruling family. I published a book on the GCC countries, that was in 1985, in which I was describing the security apparatus of Bahrain extensively... and I know clearly they were not pleased with what I wrote which was something by the way everyone knows in Bahrain and outside.

In December 1994, when the unrest started spreading, I applied for a visa... for about two months I called every second day the Ministry of Information... my usual contact was saying that he was not here and others were telling me that my application was being processed by immigration and I should be patient and wait. But in the mean time I was trying to do something about the situation, to report, and I was preparing a story for the "Le Monde Diplomatique" which eventually was published in March. Then there was no point asking anymore for a visa and once more I got indirect reaction from Bahrain and they were quite angry with the article. The common answer in the area and chiefly in Bahrain is to avoid problems with the press, just don't welcome journalists.

The second problem which is similar is the refusal by official to give interviews to reply to questions. They just flatly denied the possibility to interview them. And for two years I was in charge of radio Monte Carlo in Arabic from 1995-97, and we tried to interview the Minister of Interior and Minister of Information of Bah-

rain, we sent faxes, many phone calls and they would just not answer. At the same time we did interview by telephone Mansoor Al Jamri or Shiekh Ali Salman. Afterwards they would say: look they're one sided because when you listen to this radio or read this newspaper, you just hear one point of view".

Dr. Abdul Hadi Khalaf, member of the Bahraini National Assembly said "we met, here, two years ago, we were commemorating the 25th anniversary of Bahrain's independence and that was a commemoration that was interesting. It was the opposition groups inside and outside Bahrain that celebrated the country's independence while the regime totally ignored it. It was fascinating because, about four months later, the regime celebrated another occasion that is 35th anniversary of the enthronement of the Amir. And if you look at it in retrospect you will see that there are two things are being celebrated: one, the opposition trying to celebrate a state formation, the beginning of a statehood, the beginning of the transformation of subjects to citizens, transformation of dependents to free agents. While the regime was celebrating the continuation of a tribal order. It seems to me the regime considers the country as the Al Khalifa while the rest (the people) are the subjects.

Grace Malden, barrister and member of the Bar Human Rights Committee said "the State Security Court is our main concern in Bahrain. We are also concerned about the widespread torture, the problem with exiles and the detention of children. The role of Ian Henderson is another concern for our committee. I just would like to say at the out set that I'd like to endorse the comments made by Lord Avebury about the recent concessions made by the government to the UN Sub-Commission and endorse the comments he made that hopefully the UN Sub-Commission will follow up and particularly the UN group on arbitrary detention will follow up problems particularly related to Sheikh Al Jamri whose a man who we also had some involvement with in corresponding to the Minister of Justice, Prime Minister of Bahrain and the Amir. Some of that concerns the committee has is the use of confessions in obtaining conviction, confessions that are obtained under torture. Also the problem the defendants have with the access to their lawyers, often not meeting their Lawyers until very shortly before proceedings commence, and so with little opportunity to properly brief their lawyers about their case. Similarly access to doctors and their family, just on a more personal level, which is often being problematic. Also the problems related to being detained without charge for considerable periods of time and there have been no right to appeal from convictions made in the State Security Court.

The hearings as I am sure many of you know are held in camera which means no one can attend. And just would like to refer to comments made by Mr. Da-Lage, that the committee had frequently requested that it be attend to observe the trials of the State Security Court. Because obviously that is one of the main areas of work the committee does but have frequently either

being ignored or refused any attendance. As Mr. Da-Lage pointed out, one of the things that the committee is very concerned about is to retain a balanced view and not to make wild accusation or wild allegations and this is clearly very difficult when there so little cooperation from the authorities within Bahrain either in allowing us to attend trial or even communicating to us about the various procedure that I have referred to".

Lord Avebury commented "Grace Malden mentioned the involvement of Ian Henderson and we all thought that he was going to disappear of the scene after he retired as the head of the security forces and to be by one of the royal family but this has not happened and Mr. Henderson is still there in the background offering his advice and now of course they have got a new official who is being sent from Britain. Mr. David Jump who is described as the legal adviser to the Ministry of Interior and I was told in a recent letter from Derek Fatchett, the Minister who deals with this region, that Mr. Jump is also acting as the spokesperson on human rights at the Ministry of Interior, a rather odd situation you may think for a sovereign state to have a foreigner acting as its spokesman for human rights!".

(Continued from page 2..)

* On the other hand, the United Kingdom has had its share of the slandering by the regime's sponsored press. So did the neighbouring State of Qatar. The Bahraini regime accuses the British Government of sponsoring terrorism and sheltering terrorists and supporting them financially.

* To show solidarity against the regime's plan to vandalise peoples' properties, the residents of Muqsh'a village have on Budayi Highway rebuilt, equipped and supplied a shop in the village that had been sabotaged by the security forces. The people wanted to deliver a message to the ruthless regime that they are aware of the government's policy of sabotaging citizens' properties in order to use it as an excuse to crackdown on them as well as a shield against international criticism. The people of Muqsh'a are simply saying, we care for one another, and the government is isolated and alienated from its own people.

* State-sponsored vandalism is used maliciously to ruin citizens' private properties. The latest victim of such policy is the "Mother Care" retail store in Muharraq town where a fire gutted out the store in the usual mysterious manner.

* Prisons all over Bahrain are overpopulated with political activists. Not a single day passes without arrests of innocent citizens. On 4 August, three of Abdul Aziz Al Zaimoor's sons. One of Al Zaimoor's sons (Mohammed) is a disabled child and psychologically unstable. The child's father presented medical documents that proves his son's condition but to no avail and Mohammed is still in detention.

* The 40th day of the martyr Nooh was commemorated across the country. The Al-Khalifa mercenaries besieged Al-Nuaim, but the heroic people of Bahrain defied