

BAHRAIN

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Political naturalisation is a crime tantamount to genocide

The issue of political naturalization is taking wider and more dangerous dimensions. Since the present ruler, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa became ruler following the death of his father in March 1999 he has adopted a virtual iron fist policy which he has been slowly implementing. First he deceived the people into voting for his national charter after promising them to re-instate the 1973 constitution. Then he abrogated it and imposed his own document. Parallel with this Hamad has adopted a new policy to impose a demographic change that will alter the social, religious and political balance in his favour. Today, Last month he issued a new decree to grant any citizen from other GCC countries Bahraini citizenship if he/she requested it. Furthermore, this newly naturalized citizen to keep their original citizenship. The aim is to make the natives a minority in the land of their predecessors. Bahrain is a collection of islands with a small area, so how could it accept up to 20 million other Gulf citizens who are potential claimants of Bahraini citizenship according to the new decree. These new citizens enjoy better facilities in their homelands and are not in need of the Bahraini papers. Two years ago the head of Passports and Immigration Directorate, Rashid Al Khalifa claimed that his family had granted Bahraini citizenship to 50,000 only. But last month the government responded to a question from the regime's "parliament" about the number saying only 35,000 were granted. What do these figures indicate?

Since 1975 the people have been demanding their legitimate constitution. Now it seems that the issue of political naturalization is the main worry of the natives. The constitutions come and go but the inhabitants of the land will determine its identity. Native Bahrainis have now to resist the regime's policy of political naturalization in order to defend the identity and culture of Bahrain. The ruler and his clique have now adopted this policy as a repressive measure to ensure no future repetition of the uprising of the nineties. Demographic engineering, to them, is the ultimate weapon against the natives. The regime has benefited from the Israeli experience

with the Palestinians and has maintained in close contact with its officials. The British have, over the centuries, managed to dominate several countries from Australia, New Zealand, Rhodesia (that later became Zimbabwe) and the United States through demographic engineering. Native inhabitants of America, the Red Indians and the indigenous Australians (The Aborigines) were obliterated in the process.

But the most prominent example is that of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The occupiers had managed to change the demography of Palestine to its advantage. Palestinians were systematically purged and displaced. Jews from all over the world were encouraged to migrate to Palestine and were granted citizenship of the Israeli occupation. In addition to the use of the Israeli experience in demographic engineering, the Al Khalifa tribe sought the help of the Israeli intelligence services. In 1998 Ma'arev (Israeli newspaper) had said that the help of Mossad was sought by the regime to crush the uprising, having been in endless conflict and war with the native Palestinians. These dealings were shrouded in secrecy. Dealings between the ruling tribe and the Israelis go back to 1994 when Israeli delegations were received in Bahrain. It is clear that the regime has been implementing its policies (that are tantamount to genocide) in total secrecy. This secrecy was used to cover up the work of the Committee of the constitution that was given the task to draft a new constitution to replace the legitimate one. For one full year it carried out its mandate with no interruption by the media.

It is now clear that the demographic change is the other weapon in the hands of the Al Khalifa in their war against the natives. With a new constitution and a new populace, the ruler thinks that he will be able to control the situation and avoid giving any concessions to the people. One of its aims is to create disappointment in the minds and souls of the Bahrainis who have been struggling for decades to establish a modern statehood. The newly naturalized foreigners feel

empowered to challenge the natives. They often say: No one can ever withdraw our citizenship. It is clear that the rule of law has not been upheld in the process and that the ruler has adopted a dictatorial approach in his dealing with the people. The leaders of the uprising have a duty to reorganise themselves and lead the people on the path of struggle to stop the regime's crimes that are becoming more serious by the day.

There are several steps that must be adopted by the people: First, to consider political naturalization a serious crime against the country and the people, with the aim of permanently securing the Al Khalifa rule which must always take precedence over the interests of the natives. It is more serious than the suspension 28 years ago of the articles of the constitution that regulate the democratic practices. Second: To address the international bodies and inform them of the details of this criminal plan, and urge them to take a pro-active stand in order to stop it. Third; to urge the United Nations to intervene in order to protect native Bahrainis. Fourth, to force the ruler to abandon his decree and also Law 56 in order to protect the interests and well-being of the people. Fifth: Political naturalization null and void and not to recognize the citizenship of the foreigners who have been naturalized outside the rule of law. Sixth; the new settlers must be addressed in a civilized way to urge them to reject this naturalisation because it will be swiftly revoked when the opportunity arises.

These are few steps that must be adopted in order to rally the native Bahrainis to a common goal of protecting the country and the people. The Al Khalifa regime is gradually roving itself to be an enemy of the people especially in light of the recent developments including the imposition of an illegal constitution and the political naturalization. The path of struggle has not ended and those developments will only encourage people to escalate their civil resistance to stop these criminal policies. The ruler must be under no illusion of the willingness of the people to pursue their goals and achieve their demands. The blood of the martyrs has become a source of inspiration that the regimen can only ignore at its own perils.

Sheikh al-Jamri returns from treatment abroad

After spending 14 months abroad for treatment Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri returned on Saturday 12th July 2003. He was received by the senior religious figures led by Sayed Jawad Al Wada'ei, Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim and Sayed Abdulla Al Ghuraifi. This is his third time of "return" to the people. The first was in 1995 when he was released from prison and was received by people who flocked to his house in their thousands. The second was in 1999 when he was also released from jail. But this time, his return is different. He was not in a good shape for major public reception. In May 2000 al-Jamri suffered a heart attack. He was taken to the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital, where he underwent surgery. In May 2002, al-Jamri traveled to Germany for spinal surgery. While undergoing medical checkups, it was discovered he had a thrombus behind his eye, which had developed when he was in prison. Following the surgery he suffered a stroke, also developing kidney problems

and a blood infection, soon falling into a coma. He woke from the coma on 30 June, but shortly after suffered a second stroke, resulting in internal bleeding, and incapacitating him for the rest of his life.

On 27 January 2003, al-Jamri was transferred from Germany to Sultan bin Abdulaziz Humanitarian City in Saudi Arabia, where his medical condition improved slightly. He returned to Bahrain on 12 July and was welcomed by hundreds of his supporters. Sayed Abdullah Al Ghuraifi described Sheikh Al Jamri's return as "the coming back of the lion to his den". Sheikh Isa Qassim said that his return may enable him to play a leading role especially with his reformist mentality.

On 14 February 2002, the Emir introduced the new constitution of 2002, which

gave him wide-ranging powers and gave the upper appointed house more powers than the elected lower house, including the right to legislate. The "honeymoon" period between the opposition and government was over; al-Jamri stated his disappointment with the new constitution, stating that it fell short of the opposition's demands. "[T]his is not the type of parliament we had demanded," he said.



Journalists on trial face prison time

MANAMA, 2 July 2003 — A Bahraini court yesterday adjourned the trial of two journalists accused of flouting a ban on publishing details about a suspected "terror" cell in a case which has put press freedom in the kingdom in the spotlight.

The court adjourned the trial to September, the journalists' lawyers said.

The trial has drawn interest because Bahrain last year passed a new press law as part of a number of political and economic reforms.

Mansour Al-Jamri, editor of Al-Wasat newspaper, and a reporter at the daily, Hussein Khalaf, face charges of breaking a prosecutor's ban on publishing information about a suspected "terror" cell. They first went to court on June 21.

Bahrain last February arrested five Bahrainis who it said were plotting "terrorist" acts in the country before the launch of the US-led war on Iraq in March. A verdict is due later this month. Al-Wasat wrote in March that three of the five suspects had been freed from jail, apparently flouting the publication ban. The trial was closely observed by international bodies.

On 1st July The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) issued a statement that said: The CPJ is alarmed by the prosecution of Mansour al-Jamri and Hussein Khalaf, editor and reporter, respectively, of the independent Bahraini daily Al-Wasat.

Today was the second hearing in a trial that began on June 21, and is to resume in September. The case against Al-Jamri and Khalaf stems from a March 26 arti-

cle by Khalaf reporting that three men, who had been arrested in February 2003 and accused of being members of a terrorist cell, had been released from custody.

Al-Jamri told CPJ that after the men were arrested in February, the Prosecutor General ordered the newspaper not to publish anything relating to the proceedings. Al-Jamri said that the paper complied with the order until the release of the men was published in other news outlets such as Agence France-Presse, Deutsche Presse Agentur, and the London-based pan-Arab daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat.

Within days of the article being published in Al-Wasat, the Prosecutor General brought a case against al-Jamri and Khalaf. They were charged, in accordance with the 2002 press law, with violating a gag order.

The paper's lawyer said that if convicted, the journalists face up to six months in prison and a 1,000 dinar fine (US\$2650).

"These prosecutions are a setback for press freedom in Bahrain," said CPJ senior program coordinator Joel Campagna. "The authorities should be encouraging more open media discourse, rather than imposing media blackouts and bringing journalists before the courts. We call on the authorities to dismiss this case immediately."

On 30th June Reporters Without Borders urged Bahraini authorities to call off the trial of the editor of "Al-Wasat", the kingdom's leading independent daily, and

one of its reporters. The journalists face six months in prison and/or a fine of 1,000 dinars (approx. \$US2,650; 2,300 euros) for reporting in March 2003 that three suspected terrorists had been released on bail. Editor Mansour Al-Jamri and reporter Hussein Khalaf are facing sentences that are disproportionate to the alleged offence, said RSF. The authorities claim that they did not have the necessary authorisation from the public prosecutor's office to publish information about the alleged terrorists.

Many journalists and human rights activists attended the trial's opening on 21 June. The next hearing is scheduled for 1 July.

In November 2002, King Hamad ben Issa Al-Khalifa enacted a new press law guaranteeing the right to "express one's opinion and to disseminate it orally or in writing." However, offences "against the Islamic faith, the unity of the people and the person of the king," and "inciting division or sectarianism" are punishable by six months to five years in prison.

After objections from the Bahraini Centre for Human Rights and an independent union of Bahraini journalists, which is in the process of formation, the authorities announced that the new press law would be amended after consultation with journalists. Al-Jamri lived in self-imposed exile in London for many years and was the spokesman of the opposition Bahrain Freedom Movement.



Martyrdom anniversary of Ali Taher marked

The seventh anniversary of the martyrdom of Ali Taher was observed by people in a specially-convened public meeting on 3rd July. The commemoration was chaired by Mr Ibrahim Isma'il. It was inaugurated with recitation of Quranic verses by reciter Mo'ayyad Al Sheikh. There were two speeches by Abdul Wahab Hussain and Abdul Aziz Abul, the president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. The martyr was killed on 2nd July 1996 in Isa Town as he was handling a dispensing cash machine.



Bahrain joins WTO's Information Technology Agreement

On 18 July 2003 Bahrain joined a WTO agreement on removing all tariff barriers to information technology products such as personal computers and telecoms equipment.

The Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products approved the participation of the country, which became the 60th member of the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA).

The other ITA participants are: Albania; Australia; Bulgaria; Canada; China; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Egypt; El Salvador; Estonia; European Communities (the EC schedule comprises the commitments of the 15 member states); Hong Kong, China; Iceland; India; Indonesia; Israel; Japan; Jordan; Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Latvia; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mauritius; Moldova; New Zealand; Norway; Oman; Panama; Philippines; Poland; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Switzerland (on behalf of the customs union Switzerland and Liechtenstein); Chinese Taipei; Thailand; Turkey; and the United States.

This WTO agreement is helping push the information technology revolution forward. Beginning in 2000, most of the world trade in information technology products (worth \$828 billion in 2001 for office and telecom equipment, a large part of which are IT products) became completely free of tariffs under ITA. Participation in the ITA means that the country must eliminate tariffs and all other duties and charges on covered IT imports from all WTO members.

From the 29 participants that negotiated the ITA during WTO's First Ministerial Conference in Singapore in December 1996, membership has now risen to 60 that account for more than 95% of world trade in IT products.

A Line in the Sea: The Qatar v. Bahrain border dispute in the World Court

By Jawad Al-Arayd (Autor)

The border dispute between Qatar and Bahrain simmered for more than 50 years before it was adjudicated by the International Court of Justice—a process that took ten long years. This authoritative book documents the controversy in the context of its imperial roots, the countries' ruling families, the discovery of oil, and the political destinies of the emerging Gulf states. This color illustrated historical account includes the forensic evidence that identified key forgeries in the case.

The an insight into the continuing turmoil in the Arabian Gulf region. The adjudication of the border dispute between the nations of Qatar and Bahrain before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) began in 1991 and ended with the Court's final decision on 16 March 2001. But the dispute had simmered - and sometimes boiled over - for more than fifty years before that. Much of the dispute was played out against the backdrop of the

first discoveries of oil in the Arabian Gulf, and the rush by oil companies, foreign powers, and the leaders of the Gulf nations to find and exploit those lucrative assets. The roots of the dispute lie tangled within the history of British and Ottoman Empire involvements in the Arabian Gulf, and the political destinies of the emerging Gulf states.

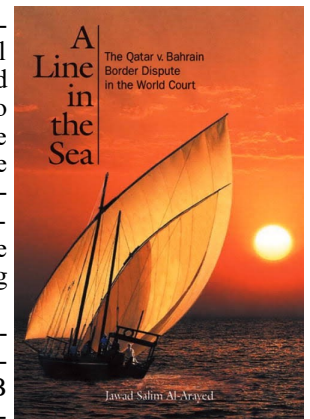
Jawad Salim Al-Arayed is currently Minister of Justice for the Kingdom of Bahrain. He holds LLB and LLM degrees from Leeds University (UK), and is a member of Gray's Inn.

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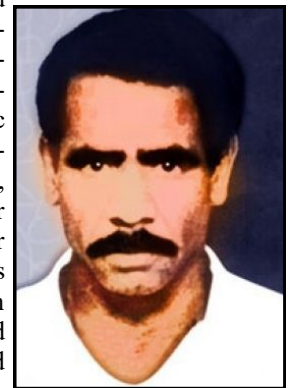


Pictures of martyrs in Duraz

On 27th July the youth of Duraz town displayed the pictures of Bahrain's martyrs on walls, electricity poles and other places. They said they wanted to pursue the goals for which the martyrs had given their lives, and that they would not rest or allow the grim situation to continue. More than 700 posters were placed to remind people of their duty to carry the flag of their martyrs. The sudden activism among the youth is an indication to the extent of disenchantment of many after the ruler made a U-turn on his earlier promises to re-instate the 1973 constitution and the subsequent policies especially the political naturalization. Programme.

Remembering Bu Naffoor

On 2nd July scores of liberals and leftists attended a memorial gathering at The Bahrain Society of Engineers centre to remember Mohammad Bu Naffoor. He was a patriotic citizen who died in a suspicious explosion 1976. One of his daughters, Buthaina spoke about the life of her father who died at the age of 29. Her memory of her beloved father was faint as she was a young child when his life was cut short. His second daughter, Khawla raised the shield given by the people in his memory.



President George W. Bush talks with King Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain near the shore of the Red Sea in Egypt June 3, 2003.



Is the UK facing up to Bahrain's past?

Jon Silverman BBC, 16th April 2003
Home affairs analyst

The security services of Bahrain - a close Gulf ally of the UK - are alleged to have violently repressed dissident voices. A Briton commanded these forces. So why no prosecution?

With Britain a key player in the war with Iraq, what are the chances of a prosecution being launched in the UK which would cause severe embarrassment to one of our staunch allies in the Gulf, Bahrain?

This is not a hypothetical discussion topic, but a dilemma which arises from a little-noticed investigation being conducted by Scotland Yard.

In 2000, serious allegations of torture against a British citizen, Colonel Ian Henderson, were passed to detectives from the Yard.

Colonial past

Colonel Henderson, who is in his mid-seventies, has had an interesting career. In the 1950s, as a colonial police officer, he helped stamp out the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya.

When Kenya gained its independence, he was dispatched to Bahrain - then a British protectorate - where he became head of state security for some 30 years.

Pro-democracy unrest was ruthlessly suppressed in Bahrain and allegations of brutality were made against both Colonel Henderson and his deputy, Adel Felaifel.

According to organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty, the methods used to cow anti-government activists included beatings, sexual abuse and the ransacking of whole villages.

The fact that Colonel Henderson owns a property on the edge of Dartmoor puts him within the jurisdiction of the British courts and explains why Scotland Yard opened a file on him.

No formal details have been disclosed about this inquiry, although detectives are believed to have travelled to a number of European countries to interview potential witnesses.

At first, organisations which campaign against the use of torture, like Redress, were delighted at the possibility of justice for the many Bahraini victims of the regime.

Now, though, after nearly three years, questions are being asked about how serious this inquiry is and whether, even if the evidence is strong enough, the political will exists to prosecute.

'Leaden-paced' investigation

Carla Ferstman, of Redress, says: "As far as we know, the police have not been to Bahrain - presumably because they would not be welcome there - and they have not questioned Colonel Henderson. Given the length of this inquiry, this may be thought surprising."

The vice-chair of the parliamentary Human Rights Group, Lord Avebury, goes further. "This is by far the strongest UK torture case we have seen, and yet the police investigation seems extraordinarily leaden-paced.

"We are completely in the dark about what the Yard has been doing. But if we discovered that they had been given a nod and a wink not to investigate too thoroughly to avoid embarrassing Bahrain, there would be a hell of a row."

In response to inquiries, a Yard spokesman would say only that "a report was sent to the Crown Prosecution Service in August 2001 but no formal decision has been taken on charges."

In a letter to Lord Avebury, the Attorney-General - who would have to approve any prosecution - said he was "serious about the UK's commitment to the UN Convention Against Torture".

As it happens, Bahrain is also a signatory to the convention - although in July 2002, the king showed his commitment to it in rather an odd way by issuing an amnesty to public servants who had committed acts of torture.

Australia, another signatory, had an opportunity to detain Adel Felaifel last year, when he visited Brisbane. But a similarly lethargic approach allowed him to leave the jurisdiction and return to Bahrain.

Lord Avebury said that when he visited the Gulf state in early January, victims of the state security police were "lining up" to show him the marks of their torture and many would welcome the chance to testify in an English court.

The chances of that happening do not look high. As for Ian Henderson, he denies the allegations of torture.



King Sheikh Hamad Bin-Isa Al-Khalifah is supreme authority His family, from a Sunni Muslim tribe, has ruled since 1783 Bahrain gained independence from the UK in 1971 National Assembly dissolved in 1975, provoking Shia Muslim majority into years of unrest In 2001, Bahrainis backed plan to turn their state from emirate to constitutional monarchy An elected parliament and independent judiciary should be in place by 2004 Bahrain is an important military ally of the US and UK



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Lord Avebury, parliamentary Human Rights Group

