

BAHRAIN

Issued by the "Bahrain Freedom Movement" to promote human and constitutional rights

UN intervention needed to protect Bahraini people

The year 2005 ended on a dramatic note in the Gulf state of Bahrain. December was a particularly eventful month with demonstrations, arrests and intimidations. It brought back memories of the eighties and nineties when human rights violations were rampant and the dictatorship was at its worst. The U-turn in the political situation in the country is now haunting everyone, not least the supporters of the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship in Washington and London. The torture chambers built and run by the Al Khalifa rulers are now receiving greater numbers of pro-democracy Bahraini youth. Administering torture is not confined to the torture cells but has been assigned to a large group of mercenaries forming the special forces under the direct command of Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa whose dictatorship has surpassed that of his father. During the month, many Bahraini youth were attacked by his hit squads as they marched peacefully demanding jobs, calling for democracy or calling for the release of other prisoners of conscience. The names of the various repressive bodies may have been changed in the past few years, but the spirit of revenge within the Al Khalifa rulers has taken more dangerous levels. Religious scholars have been persecuted, human rights activists intimidated and demonstrators beaten to near death. Societies have been forced to change their own constitutions to accept the Al Khalifa rules, regulations and laws or face closure. Job seekers are prevented from calling for job opportunities and torture victims are not allowed to call for prosecution of their torturers.

It is now clear that the political programme imposed on the people of Bahrain had been designed by American and British "advisors" and that diplomats and semi-official bodies from USA and UK are openly urging the people of Bahrain to submit to the Al Khalifa dictatorship. The US Ambassador in Manama had openly promoted Sheikh Hamad's programme and promoted the Al Khalifa dictatorship as a beacon for democracy. He went on the record to ask the Bahraini opposition to accept the imposed constitution by tak-

ing part in the elections of bodies that are powerless. American and British diplomats are promoting the Bahraini model despite their knowledge that it has nothing to do with democracy, and that the hereditary dictatorship has not given an inch of its power to the people. They are aware of the facts pertaining to the present situation; the prime minister has ruled the country for 35 years, the people have no right to change their government, the elected bodies have no role in forming the government and are only used to act as a rubber-stamp to approve what the Al Khalifa ruling family wants. Furthermore, they have turned a blind eye to, and may have acquiesced in changing the demography of the country. Other American bodies such as the NDI have opened offices in Manama and are engaged in relentless efforts to ensure that the Sheikh Hamad gets his own way.

The events of the past few weeks have proven that this is a short-sighted policy that benefits no one and can only confirm the Al Khalifa dictatorship. Demographic Engineering is a risky business and the people of Bahrain will never accept its results. The historical, cultural and religious history of the country are being deformed in line with what Sheikh Hamad and his clique aspire to achieve, with tens of thousands of non-Bahrainis naturalised. This is not done in accordance to the rule of law but through royal acts and decisions that are put into effect with no room for objection or accountability. The daily attacks on demonstrators in various parts of the country has, once more, exposed the incompatibility of the hereditary rule with notions of democracy and modern modes of governance. Experience has proven that dictatorships may succeed in deceiving people for a while, especially if they are supported by foreign powers, but that is unlikely to extinguish the flames of freedom in the hearts and minds of oppressed people. The recent events in Bahrain, including the arrest of a senior cleric, the attacks on human rights activists and demonstrators, the

use of torture at a wide scale against activists, the nationalisation of political societies and the adoption of policies of corruption to silence dissenting voices, are testimony to the bankruptcy of the system and the inability of its supporters to comprehend the extent of resilience of people with long experience in civil disobedience. Despite the Al Khalifa's large propaganda machine, they have failed to silence the people or defeat the civil resistance movement that has mushroomed in the past twelve months. On the contrary, the determination of the popular committees formed last year and the creation of the first movement outside the Al Khalifa domination is a clear proof that civil resistance is on the rise and that the repressive policies of the Al Khalifa have failed to make headway.

Once again we appeal to the people of the world to support the struggle by the people of Bahrain against the hereditary dictatorship that has ransacked the country, plundered its wealth, changed its demographic balance and threatened to destroy the historical cultural and religious character of Bahrain. The ruling family which had invaded the islands in the eighteenth century and had always felt alien, is an antiquated political system that must be rejected by the world community which is striving to promote democratic and representative governments. It is an affront to modern civil society to attach itself to absolute dictatorships such as that of the Al Khalifa which has refused to negotiate a code of conduct with the people of Bahrain, repealed the only source of political legitimacy (1973 Constitution) and imposed a tailor-made code that denies the people their right to self-government. In the past few weeks, several senior figures in the country proposed a new referendum to be conducted by the United Nations to determine the future of the political system of Bahrain. The world community is well-advised to support this proposal. The events of the past thirty five years have proven that the Al Khalifa have forfeited their obligations and are thus not fit to rule. A UN intervention has thus become inevitable.

Urgent Press Release and Appeal

Bahrain : Activists and Detainees of Consciousness Under Danger

At least 15 (fifteen) citizens were reported to have today received official call by the Bahrain Criminal Investigation Bureau-CIB (place of torture and detaining of innocents citizens occurred during the nineties). Some of received a notification to the police station while others received telephone calls demanding their immediate presence. Others have been picked up by security forces from their houses while others from the street. Those, like Mohsen Al-salman, who are not present when the security forces attacked their houses, where threatened to have members of their family detained instead.

This came after hundreds of citizens participated in the protest which occurred in after detaining a leading Scholar at the Bahrain International Airport . The Scholar, Shaikh Mohammed Sanad, was interrogated for several hours on Sunday evening (25th December) by Officials from the Interior Ministry. Upon the spread of the news, hundreds of people rushed to the airport in protest against the detention. The protesters' main demand, as indicated by the banners they raised, was the immediate

release of the senior cleric . Shaikh Sanad has been known to have been critic to the government of Bahrain for the continuous violation of the human rights for the Bahrainis. Shaikh Sanad has recently focused on the right of having a referendum on the legitimacy of the regime of Al-khaifa, as they are not protecting the welfare of the people, but rather theirs. The protesters have expressed their views very peacefully, and were attacked by security special forces who used plastic sticks and rubber hoses on all those presents including women, men, youngsters and clerics who were also there.

The names of activists and detainees of consciousness are :

Nader Ibrahim, Yaser Khalifa, Ismael Hasan Maki, Jawad Abdulla Alsalman, Mohsen Abdulla Alsalman (Jidhafs), Hasan Majeed Aljishi (Manama), Hasan Alhaddad (Muharraq), Bader Ahmed Al-jazeerai (Dhaih), Mohamed Hasan Ashoor and Qasim Mohamed Khalil (Karzakan). Hasan Abdalnabi (Sitra). Those were interrogated by the Public prosecutor yesterday for over seven hours and were kept in custody for 15 days for further interrogation.

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Bahrain rights activists take refuge at UN offices

Wed Dec 14, 4:38 PM ET

DUBAI (AFP) - Nine Bahraini human rights activists took refuge in the United Nations offices in Manama to seek protection from security services, a rights organization said.

"Activists and human rights defenders have sought refuge in the UN house in Manama, Bahrain, where they asked for intervention for their protection and safety against the state terror," the Committee of Solidarity with Activists and Detainees of Conscience in Bahrain said.

The statement added that state security forces had threatened to remove the activists, a claim denied by officials.

It also said one of the group had been on hunger strike since November 30 and had been joined by the others.

The activists represented the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, National Committee for Martyrs and Victims of Torture, the Unemployed Committee and the Decent Housing Committee.

The nine were named as Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Abduraof Al-Shayeb, Nader Abdulimam, Hassan al-Haddad, Hasan Abdalnabi, Mohsin Abdullah, Layla Dashti, Sayyed Sharaf al-Sitri and Abduredha Abdullah.

The incident follows a protest Friday in which thousands of Bahrainis marched in Manama following a call by four political opposition groups to protest against the alleged beating and sexual assault of Musa Abedali, an activist from a group representing the unemployed.

Abedali said he was beaten and sexually assaulted during a demonstration last week broken up by security forces.

Bahrain's elected chamber, scrapped in 1975, was revived in 2002 as part of reforms spearheaded by King Hamad which turned the Gulf state into a constitutional monarchy.

All four opposition groups boycotted the 2002 parliamentary polls in protest at the amendment to the 1973 constitution which split legislative power equally between the elected chamber and the consultative council.

Shiites make up a majority of the population in Sunni-ruled Bahrain, which is a base for the United States Navy's Fifth Fleet.

Torture and the Amnesty Decree in Bahrain

The obligation on the state to provide an effective remedy and the needs of the torture survivors to receive compensation and other forms of reparation was stressed by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The views of civil society have also placed emphasis on the need for effective and enforceable remedies for torture survivors: "that mainstream opinion puts the highest priority on victims' right to compensation inter alia for torture, and in particular to the medical care with specific physical and psychological attention.

However, to date, no alleged perpetrator has been tried for torture or ill treatment even though the practice of torture in Bahrain during the 1980s and 1990s has been well documented.[15] There have been reports of one case in 2001 where an individual who suffered torture while in police custody was personally compensated by the Emir, and in November 2002, 8 torture victims lodged complaints relating to their treatment with the Directorate of Public Prosecutions for an effective investigation, and requesting that charges be laid against one of the alleged perpetrators, Adel Felailfel, who was already being investigated on relation to fraud and embezzlement charges. There have also been numerous demonstrations and calls from the public for such a prosecution to be initiated. Additionally, more than 30,000 people were

reported to have petitioned the King to repeal Decree No. 56. At the time of writing, no known investigation has been opened in relation to these cases.

The calls for an investigation with a view to prosecuting such crimes has been met with stiff opposition from the Government. Decree 56 of 2002, which purports to grant a blanket amnesty for any case (civil or criminal) lodged by persons accused of or convicted of "offences that endangered or pose a threat to state/national security" which fell within the jurisdiction of the State Security Court, effectively extends Decree 10/2001, the general amnesty of February 2001, to cover human rights violations committed by government and security officials as well as offences by political opponents of the government. It appears to be in direct contravention with the provision in article 89 of the Penal Code that only allows amnesty laws which do "not affect third party rights," and counters the prohibition of torture in the National Charter which provides that:

"No person shall in any way be subjected to any kind of physical or moral torture, inhumane, humiliating indignant treatment... Law ensures punishment of those who commit an offence of torture, a physically or psychologically harmful act".

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torture in Bahrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torture_in_Bahrain)

Torture in Bahrain

Chief Engineer dismissed for opposing the government policies

Suppression, Arrests, physical and sexual assaults and dismissal, are only some of the illegal practices adopted by the Al Khalifa regime in Bahrain against those who oppose its policies. The list continues to grow as the people show more determination to achieve their legitimate rights. The Government is resorting to old practices to suppress the opposition to its policies. These policies were employed during the reign of terror in the eighties and nineties during which the notorious state security law was imposed on the people of Bahrain. These practices are now common in the country.

Last night, the streets of the Capital Manama were full of anti-riot police for the second consecutive night. Many visitors who were spending the weekend in Bahrain were astonished by the intensive security presence on public roads.

Few days ago, Jalal Fairouz, was dismissed from his post as a Chief Engineer working with the Bahrain National Gas Company (BANAGAS). The press releases published in the official papers following the dismissal justified it on grounds of poor performance. However, reports from inside the BANAGAS confirm that, prior to his dismissal, Mr Fairouz was given an award by Senior Management in recognition of his dedication and outstanding performance. Earlier this year, another scientist, Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace, was demoted from the post of Head of Department at the University of Bahrain for his political activities.

Reliable sources suggest that the dismissal came in an instruction from the Prime Minister in response to the many seminars held during the past few months, during which Mr Fairouz publicly criti-

cized the policies of the Government. The sources also confirm that this dismissal is the first of a series planned against popular and prominent opposition figures in the country. It has now become a policy of the ruling family to adopt repressive measures, including spreading hunger and poverty among the

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They face three main charges amounting to an imprisonment of up to five years. These include damaging public properties, assaulting officers, and creating havoc and terrorizing people. All proofs from witnesses, photos and videos show that the protesters were peaceful and were sitting on the floor and chanting with slogans when they were barbarically attacked by the special forces.

Today, the following were arrested:

Mohamed Majeed Aljishi (Manama), Nasser Alrasummani (Ras Rumman-Manama), Yousef Ahmed Husain (Ma'ameer), Fakhri Abdulla (Sanabis), Mohamed. Others have been sent an official notice to show up at designated police station. These are:

Mohamed Majeed Aljishi (Manama), Abdulla Zain (Sanabis) Ali Qamber (Nuwaidrat), Atef Mahdi Ahmed (Jufair) This evening, at 8pm local time, the committee of solidarity with the activists and detainees of conscience carried out a sit-in near the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) when they were brutally attacked by the special forces broke the leg of one citizen, Mohamed Abdulla yousef Alsingace (Magabah), in front of the public and then detained him. He is still detained in Nabih Saleh Police Station. His family managed to locate him and saw how miserably and dreadful his status is; full of blood and find difficulty to speak. He is leaning on the chair, evidence showing that he was further beaten after being taken to CIB. Officials at the police station are refusing to take him for medical examination and his family are extremely concerned for his safety and health.

We appeal to all human rights organizations and diplomatic establishment to approach the Bahraini Authorities to protect the citizens from torture and harassment and respect freedom of expression and all liberties.

We hold the Bahraini Authorities for the safety and security of all those detained during the past few days and consider such act a blatant violation to all international treaties and human rights declarations.

**Committee of Solidarity with Activists
and Detainees of Conscience
in Bahrain**

29 December 2005

Detention of a senior scholar sparks unrest

In a clear move of provocation, the Government of Bahrain detained a leading Scholar at the Bahrain International Airport. The Scholar, Sheih Mohammed Sanad, was interrogated for several hours on Sunday evening (25th December) by the Interior Ministry officials.

Upon the spread of the news, hundreds of people rushed to the airport in protest against the detention. The protesters' main demand, as indicated by the banners they raised, was the immediate release of the senior cleric.

The detention was, apparently, in response to a public gathering in which Sheikh Mohammed Sanad was critical of the Government. This detention seems to be part of a systematic campaign to curb opposition figures who are in disagreement with the ill-fated political programme of they self-styled king, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. Criticism of this programme has been mounting for the past three years amongst politicians and pro-democracy activists. This is caused by the continuous breaking of promises and violation of the Al Khalifa-sponsored National Action Charter.

Shortly after the protests started, anti-riot police attacked the peaceful demonstrators, injuring many. The brutal attack on demonstrations has been the norm in the Government response to demonstrations on several occasions over the past 12 months. Sheikh Mohammed Sanad later said after his release that he was accused of encouraging hatred of the Government, an accusation the interrogators could not prove.

The undemocratic practices of the ruling Al Khalifa family against the people of

Bahrain are gross violation of the principles of freedom of speech and civil liberties. Many fear the brutality of the special forces against them will lead to more chaos and civil unrest. It has been increasing both in intensity and frequency

Arrest of APHRA correspondent in Bahrain

The Arab Program for Human Rights Activists (APHRA) received information that the executive director of Bahrain Center for Human Rights and APHRA correspondent in Bahrain Mr. Abd Elhadi Al Khawaga was arrested in December 5 while he was going to protest to the King of Bahrain against the sexual abuse of the activist Mr. Musa Abd Ali. During his arrest, Mr Al Khawaga was beaten up severely by security forces and the assault resulted in breaking his shoulder's bones. He was released an hour after the arrest.

It is worth remembering that Mr. Al Khawaga was previously arrested and sentenced in September 25, 2004 and released after a royal pardon.

APHRA condemns the frequent security atrocities against human rights activists in Bahrain Kingdom, such violations and maltreatments contradict sharply with the International covenants for human rights in particular with the Declaration on human Rights Defenders of 1998.

The Arab Program for Human Rights Activists

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Policy Brief: Bahrain on Verge of Turmoil after Rape of Activist

Nov 29, 2005

Washington DC – Following the assault and rape of a young Bahraini activist, from the unemployed commission, two nights ago by the Bahrain security forces, hundreds of Bahrainis went to the streets and chanted anti government slogans.

The chants called for the removal of the uncle of the Bahraini King and Prime Minister Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. The International Crisis Group issued a report in May 2005 warning of turmoil if the Shia majority's grievances are not addressed.

American policy has been lackluster on Bahrain and is in support of the absolute monarchy. The policy is clearly perceived by the majority of Bahrainis as working against them, and in contradiction to the American public policies of supporting democratic reforms. While the US embassy in Kuwait welcomed and met with Sunni/Wahhabi political activists, namely Hizb AlUmah, it refused to meet with Shia activists from Al-Wifaq and other independent activists.

Similarly the Bahrain desk officer in Washington refused communications with any Bahraini Shia activists. This exclusively pro-Sunni approach stems from the State Department's decade-long relationship with Sunni Arab governments and organizations. Not until the liberation of Iraq the State Department witnessed meetings between Shia Arabs and American officials. Even in ceremonial events, such as the State Department annuals Ramadan Iftar, only one Shia was invited from the over 120 Muslim guests. This has been the case in the past years also.

Current American policy is ultimately pushing the Shia majority towards Iran who is willing to offer them support. The increase of Iranian influence in Bahrain will be a direct result of American officials' unwillingness to speak honestly to its Bahrain ally about his discriminatory policies against the Shia majority. These policies include preventing Shia from working in security, diplomacy, and senior government positions. Others include giving Sunnis larger votes than Shia. Small Sunni districts are allowed to pick the same number of representatives as much as large Shia districts. Also, in a bid to alter Bahrain's demography, The Al-Khalifa government has imported and nationalized over 100,000 Sunnis from Arab and non-Arab countries and offered them jobs and housing. Meanwhile the Shia majority suffered from high unemployment and lack of housing.

The Monday night attack and sexual assault on Mosa Abd Ali (24) from Al-Oker village and the harassment of other members of the unemployed commission who were working to end the high unemployment among the Shia is a dangerous development that the US must take seriously.

The assault and rape and the resulting protest might trigger larger turmoil than those in the 1990. American active involvement is needed to stem such possibility. The Bahrain majority must receive more than promises and lip service from its government and its American ally. On Tuesday, the US State Department denounced United Arab Emirates for arresting dozens of gay men, but remained silent on the rape of the Bahraini Shia activist. US silence here would be seen as an approval of the rape.

To watch the protests please click on the link below:

<http://70.84.12.173/hasan/manama.wmv>

International Concern

December 6, 2005

The international human rights organisation, Human Rights Watch, sent the following letter to the ruler of Bahrain demanding an explanation for the physical torture of Musa Abd Ali:

H.M. Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
Office of H.M. the King
Rifa'a Palace
Kingdom of Bahrain

VIA FACSIMILE: +973 668884
Your Excellency,

We are contacting you with regard to the case of Musa `Abid `Ali. According to Mr. `Abid `Ali, a 24-year-old activist with the Committee of the Unemployed, plain-clothes persons affiliated with or acting on behalf of Bahraini security forces abducted him on the night of November 27. His abductors released him the same night. On November 30 he filed complaints with the police at `Isa Town and with the Public Prosecutor's office in Manama alleging that his abductors beat him severely, assaulted him sexually, and threatened him with further harm unless he ceased his activities on behalf of the Committee of the Unemployed.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights provided Human Rights Watch with copies of medical examinations on Mr. `Abid `Ali, one dated November 28, from the International Hospital of Bahrain, and the other dated November 29, from the Accident and Emergency Department of Salmaniyya Medical Center, a facility of the

Ministry of Health. The International Hospital report noted contusions on both his legs and his upper back consistent with his allegation that he was beaten. The Salmaniyya Medical Center report also noted contusions on Mr. `Abid `Ali's legs, and that the alleged sexual assault did not involve penetration, according to Mr. `Abid `Ali. The Salmaniyya Medical Center report also contained a notation, "Police to be informed."

We are encouraged to learn that yesterday, December 4, Lt. Gen. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah al-Khalifa, the Minister of Interior, met with Mr. `Abid `Ali, his father, and Nabil Rajab, vice-president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, to discuss the attack against Mr. `Abid `Ali. This meeting followed several days of disturbances in Manama in which police clashed with demonstrators protesting Mr. `Abid `Ali's treatment. We understand that at this meeting yesterday Shaikh Rashid affirmed that the security services under his authority would fully cooperate with an investigation that the Public Prosecutor is conducting into the matter. We strongly urge the government to conduct a thorough, impartial, and speedy investigation into Mr. `Abid `Ali's allegations, to make the results public, and to hold accountable any security officials or other persons found to be responsible for this attack. We also hope that the government will as a matter of course conduct serious and thorough investigations into all credible allegations of serious human rights violations of this nature. Thank you in advance for your government's attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director, Middle East and North Africa Division

Cc: Ambassador Dr. Naser Al Belooshi

Chief Engineer dismissed,

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people, to subjugate them. The ongoing "uprising of the hungry" claimed more victims last night as the Al Khalifa mercenaries attacked peaceful demonstrations in the capital, Manama.

The new strategy of employing old repressive measures is aimed at terrorizing the people of Bahrain and scaring prominent figures out of the opposition groups. Such measures proved ineffective during the era of the state security law for three decades. They will certainly fail to realize their objective today, as the people of Bahrain are equipped with stronger determination and will to continue their struggle for their rights and freedom.