

BAHRAIN

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

The tide is turning against the hereditary dictatorship

The dramatic events of the past month have confirmed beyond doubt several points. First, the situation in Bahrain is so fragile that it will be impossible for anyone to contain sudden explosions of public anger similar to those that happened in recent weeks. Second, the failure of Sheikh Hamad's political programme has put the country on the verge of a major catastrophe after his adoption of overtly sectarian policies and totalitarian regime. Third, the economic situation of most Bahrainis has become more dire as Sheikh Hamad and his clique assumed ownership of the country, its land, seashores and oil revenues. Only a trickle of the \$6 billion annual income finds its way to the country's treasury, the rest is stolen by the Al Khalifa rulers. Fourth, the absence of the rule of law has deprived the citizens of their rights and enslaved them to the tyranny of Sheikh Hamad. Fifth, the tide may have decisively turned against the hereditary dictatorship as more people, including many who had been deceived by Sheikh Hamad's political programme, have now realised the destructive nature of that programme and the extent of deception employed by the regime to market it to the people.

The recent escalation of tension began on Friday 9th February with the unlawful arrest of two prominent figures: Mr Hassan Mushaime, the Secretary General of Haq Movement and Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja, President of the Bahrain Centre of Human Rights. The country erupted in anger, with massive uprisings in many areas. It was a stupid act by the Al Khalifa that has demonstrated to the world the lack of popular legitimacy to their regime and the readiness of the people to rise up against their dictatorship and felony. The intensity of the uprising forced some "friendly" countries to put pressure on Sheikh Hamad to release the pair or risk losing his authority. A spokesman for the ruling family issued a press release outlining the charges against the two opposition figures, which would carry a sentence of at least ten years imprisonment. But the popular uprising defeated the Al Khalifa comprehensively. They had no choice but

to lick their wounds, swallow their pride and order the immediate and unconditional release of both Mr Mushaime and Mr Al Khawaja. It was the snub of the life time to the ruler and his clique who have failed to understand the logic of political entrepreneurship.

The events of 9th February set the ball rolling, and the people were heartened to find the effect of their power and their ability to influence events outside the controls of the Al Khalifa rules. The people's uprising continued for the following two weeks as the fate of the two prisoners of conscience, Dr Mohammad Saeed Al Sahlawi and Hussain Abdul Aziz, attracted their attention. Demonstrations continued unabated in several areas of the country. International news agencies took a special interest in the internal events of Bahrain at a time when the United States was looking for supporters and sympathisers for their policies in the region. What Washington regarded as a "beacon of democracy" in the Middle East has become an unwanted distraction from the real issues and an unnecessary liability. As the demonstrations dragged on with smoke rising over the horizon in many areas on daily basis while the sounds of exploding gas cylinders became deafening, Sheikh Hamad was forced by the people's power to make yet another U-turn in regards to political prisoners. The two prisoners of conscience who had been in jail since 16th November for printing leaflets calling for boycotting the empty elections for the Al Khalifa powerless bodies, were hurriedly released without any preconditions. Meanwhile scores others had been arrested during the recent uprising. Pressure is now mounting on the Al Khalifa to release them lest their case becomes yet another embarrassing saga.

As the Shura Council (with its appointed and elected members) becomes more stagnant powerless and embarrassment to its proponents, the public feelings against the regime are rising. More young people are now subscribing to the view of the opposition that Sheikh

Hamad's programme was a failure, a distraction from real issues and an attempt to re-shape the country on an overtly sectarian line.

The Al Khalifa suffered a major setback in their clandestine designs with the publication of the second part of Dr Salah Al Bandar's report. It has uncovered more sinister designs by the Al Khalifa against the people of Bahrain with plans to neutralise public and religious bodies and sow seeds of sectarian conflicts among the Shia and Sunnis who have cohabited together over the decades with mutual respect and unlimited tolerance. The Al Khalifa have long realised that their main enemy is a united popular front comprising Bahrainis of different religious persuasions. Although sectarianism flourished during the past four decades under the premiership of Sheikh Khalifa, the present policies of the ruler are solely based on sectarianism and factionalism. Sheikh Hamad has employed the oil revenues to buy off people with money, posts and "gracious acts". For the past five years, he appeared to have won the day. Now, however, his fortune may have run out. There is now more scepticism about the reality of his programme as he turned the country into a fiefdom over which he rules with the use of vicious tactics and the unethical divide-and-rule policy. The past few weeks have demonstrated the limits of these policies in neutralising public fury. The coming period is expected to become a transition phase in the struggle of the people of Bahrain. There is now a movement towards a total divorce with the past, and with it the hegemony of the Al Khalifa. The hereditary dictatorship has become a thing of the past and its existence in the country has become undesirable. Sheikh Hamad and his clique have only a limited time to reform or face the wrath of the natural law that tolerates no deception, tyranny or dictatorship. The writing is on the wall for them to see. They may choose to ignore it on their perils. The outcome will be disastrous to their outdated rule. The Al Khalifa rule may have reached the end of the road. That will be the most welcome news to the people of this troubled country.

More victims of torture as the situation becomes more volatile

Bahrain's ruler has ordered the re-commissioning of the massive networks of torture chambers which had been temporarily closed in 2001. More Bahrainis are now detained, tortured and then released. It is a practice intended to inflict maximum pain to opponents in a short time to avoid attracting outside attention. People of Bahrain are now feeling the extent of betrayal of the Al Khalifa ruling family as it seeks to alter the social and religious composition of the country. Death squads have become the main force in combating the rising public discontent. A new element has made these squads more dangerous. Recent reports have spoken of a new recruits from former Ba'thists from Iraq. Camps have been opened to train members of the death squads to deal with the new realities following the failure of Sheikh Hamad's political programme and the new resurgence among the discontented youth.

The arrival of hundreds of former soldiers in Saddam's special forces coincided with a massive media campaign promoting sectarian hatred in a last ditch attempt to fragment the opposition which

is gathering momentum and crossing the sectarian barriers created by the Al Khalifa.

Last Friday, the death squads snatched Saeed Ibrahim Ali, 34, from the small coldstore of his father near the town of Sanabis. He was sitting with a group of people when the attack happened. He was pulled from the shop into the street, beaten up to the verge of death and left for dead. No reason was given, but Sheikh Hamad has now decreed to rule the country by spreading fear especially among the young and the vulnerable. They used electric batons in addition to their hands and feet. Ali suffered grievous wounds and a broken finger. Saeed later described the Al Khalifa crime: "The riot police pulled me from inside the coldstore while I was talking with other youth. I was dragged outside and beaten by masked plain clothed officers. They used a black tool in their hands. One of them then hit me on my head with his rifle and I felt blood spilling. I tried to tell them I was not one of the demonstrators, but to no avail. Then they sat me against the wall where blood stains are still visible".

In another development several people at

Bani Jamra town were arrested and tortured before being released except for one, Jaffar Fardan Salman Yousef (23yrs) a residence of Karranah village. In the following evening, the death squad snatched another youngman, Radhi Ali Radhi (22 yrs), from his house in the village of Abu-Saiba, which has witnessed protests and clashes with these forces, for three nights in a row. The two have been accused of using molotov bottles against foreign-staffed riot police who attacked a peaceful demonstration in the town. The fate of another young Bahraini, Jaffar Fardan from Karrana is still unknown. He was taken to hospital after being severely tortured by the death squads last week. He was due to appear at a kangaroo court, but no more information was available. One of the Al Khalifa henchmen, Adel Khalifa Al Fadhel, failed to present a credible case for the maltreatment of Bahrainis when he attempted to present the group as part of a plot to destabilize the country. The arrests came in the wake of a demonstration in Bani Jamra.

Meanwhile the Al Khalifa torturers summoned four other Bahrainis to one of their torture centres. They are: Sayyed Mohammad Al Kamel, Sadeq Hussain Jaffar, Hussain Mohammad Ahmad Salman and Ahmad Jaffar Al Mutaghawwi for more interrogation. They had been detained for over six months without trial before being released. They exposed to malicious torture including sexual harassment and forced to walk barefoot in the open yard, where the hot summer temperature exceeds 45degrees. This is to induce as much pain and punishment as possible for taking part in peaceful demonstrations against the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. Another citizen, Hassan Hamada was also detained last week while Sadeq Hussain and Salman Naji were summoned for more questioning.

The Al Khalifa have lost their nerves following the fiasco they had suffered when they unlawfully arrested two prominent figures earlier this month; Hassan Ali Mushaima and Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja. A one-day uprising flared up throughout the country, and Sheikh Hamad was forced to order their immediate release. Mr Al Khawaja subsequently flew to Washington, for pre-arranged meetings. He was accompanied by Dr Salah Al Bandar and Nabil Rajab. The delegation held a Press briefing at the America Institute Enterprise and held meetings with political and human rights bodies. A week earlier, Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace and Hussain Abdulla also flew to Washington to highlight the plight of the people of Bahrain and present a case against the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th February 2007**

Bahraini police, protestors clash over arrest

(DPA) 18 February 2007

ABU SAIBA, Bahrain - A new wave of clashes between Bahraini police and protesters broke out Saturday night in the Shia village Abu Saiba, west of the capital Manama, after the authorities arrested a youth earlier in the day.

Radhi Ali Radhi, who is in his early 20s, was arrested at his home on suspicion that he took part in a riot in the Shia village of Bani Jamarah earlier in the week where anti-riot police came under attack by Molotov cocktails. The protests on Wednesday occurred on the anniversary of democratic reforms in the country.

Radhi was arrested Friday following a dawn raid, which provoked relatives and friends to organize a protest in front of the village entrance to demand his release. His family tried to see him at the

police station but they were denied and turned away without being given a reason for his arrest.

The protest turned into clashes after police tried to disperse the crowds, after organizers failed to do so.

Protesters burned trash and hurled stones and empty bottles at anti-riot police who responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. At least two protesters suffered exhaustion following inhaling tear gas, but there were no reports of injuries among police. "This was a peaceful protest and it would have ended peacefully had the police not intervened," one organizer said.

A police official on the scene pointed out that Bahraini law prohibits holding protests without prior notice and following sunset.

"They were given a five-minute warning to disperse and we had anti-riot police placed visibly at distance to encourage a peaceful end to this situation before they started hurling stones at police," the police official said.

Another youth was arrested on the scene following those clashes.

The unrest in Abu Saiba village quickly spread to the neighbouring village of Karanah where protesters set refuse on fire.



Al Khalifa Torture Chambers receive more innocent Bahrainis

The political crisis in Bahrain is deepening following the decision by the Al Khalifa rulers to open up their notorious prisons to Bahraini political activists. Six were snatched yesterday by their death squads, while three others were detained and interrogated at the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. Meanwhile, protests have continued against the detention of the two prisoners of conscience, Dr Moahammad Saeed Al Sahlawi and Hussain Abdul Aziz Al Habshi. Both are reported to be subjected to ill-treatment by their jailers.

On Saturday night (10th February) a demonstration at Tubli village was viciously attacked by the Al Khalifa mercenaries who used tear gas and rubber bullets against peaceful protesters. Scores were injured and at least six were arrested. They are: Mohammad Abdulla, 24, Mohammad Ahmad Al Ammar, 19, Mohammad Ali Al Ammar, 17, SAyyed Ibrahim Sayyed Hussain, 19, all from Tubli, Abdulla Ali Ne'mach, 20 from Saddad village, and Muhsin Al Miqdad, 40 from Jid Ali. He is a member of the National Committee of Martyrs and Torture Victims. They were severely tortured. The Al Khalifa-appointed prosecutor ordered their detention for one week.

Mr Al Miqdad was later released.

Protests have continued in other areas of the country to demand the immediate release of the two prisoners of conscience and the arrest of their torturers.

In a separate development, three Bahrainis were detained upon their return from Saudi Arabia via the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. The three are members of the National Committee of the Unemployed: Abdul Amir Madan, from Sitra, Hassan Abdul Nabi, from Ma'amir and Ahmad Jaffar, from Daih. They were subjected to inhumane treatment, interrogated and searched. They were stopped for more than five hours as part of the psychological torture. Two of them, Abdul Amir Madan and Hassan Abdul Nabi had been imprisoned for nine months last year following the Airport protest in December 2005. Their fate remains unknown, for fear for their safety is growing.

On Friday night, 9th February, a peaceful demonstration was held outside the village of Karranah to protest the political naturalization process being implemented by the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. In the past two years, they are thought to have granted Bahraini citizenship to thousands of former Ba'athists who fled Iraq after the downfall of Saddam's regime. Fires were

seen burning near the main road as foreign-staffed riot police engaged the Bahrainis in the area before leaving to attend another protest at Bani Jamra. Eyewitnesses reported deafening sounds of exploding gas cylinders in the area.

Similar protests were held in Sanabis, Duraz and Bani Jamra against the continued detention of the two prisoners of conscience and the Al Khalifa policy of political naturalization.

On Friday evening, another protest near the village of Jid Ali was mercilessly attacked. The demonstrators fled the area, only to regroup near the Tubli roundabout. They raised their slogans against the dictatorial regime and for the immediate release of Bahrain's prisoners of conscience. In the past ten days, Bahrain has witnessed scenes reminiscent of the days of the popular uprising a decade ago. Politicians in Washington were questioning the validity of Sheikh Hamad's programme which has led only to more political polarization, sectarianism and human rights violations.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
12th February 2007

Disastrous day for the Al Khalifa and victorious for the people of Bahrain

Calls are being made for an urgent investigation into the misadventure ordered by the royal palace in Bahrain last week after it emerged that several people were injured as a result of police aggression. The uprising of Friday 2nd February had shocked the Al Khalifa occupiers and forced them to concede defeat as wave after wave of protesters emerged in various parts of the country not only to challenge their authority but also to declare their rejection of the hereditary dictatorship and its outdated mode of rule.

The uprising was a spontaneous reaction by the people to arrest earlier that day of the two popular heroes: Mr Hassan Mushaime', the Secretary General of Haq Movement and Mr Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja, the President of the Bahrain Centre of Human Rights. The arrest was an act of aggression against the people of Bahrain by the Al Khalifa occupiers and was allegedly linked to the speeches delivered by the two on Monday evening (20th January) in Manama in which they allegedly blamed the ruler, Sheikh Hamad, for the deteriorating political and economic situation in the country. The arrest was carried out in a vicious way with armed police adopting harsh tactics to subdue the two

public figures. The Al Khalifa's venture failed disastrously. Not only did they fail to impress the world of the wisdom, legality or wisdom of their crime, but their action became a public relations fiasco. They ended in a similar situation as that of the Zionists after their ill-fated aggression against Lebanon. They were forced to withdraw in humiliation as their position became untenable. From Daih to Sanabis and Jidhafs in the North of the country to Karzakkan and Sitra in the South, the people rose in anger and the position of the Al Khalifa occupiers become so tenacious that a "friendly" big power intervened and told them to release the two public heroes lest they are comprehensively defeated.

The streets of Bahrain became battlefield between the people of Bahrain and the mercenaries employed by the Al Khalifa occupiers. Pickets, demonstrations, fires and slogans became the order of the day. The mercenaries used extensive fire power,

including tear gas canisters, rubber bullets and other projectiles. In his press conference yesterday, Mr Hassan Mushaime' exhibited the wide range of repressive tools adopted by the mercenaries during their early morning assault on his house. The aggression

was intended to spread fear in the hearts of the victims and break their will. It has now transpired that these methods failed to produce the intended results, and the aggressors had to back away from their plan.

The people of Bahrain, however, continue to pay the price. Scores of young men were wounded in the clashes between the freedom fighters and the mercenaries, property was damaged and scores were arrested, but subsequently released. The events are yet another indication of the divergence of relations between the two sides, the failure of Sheikh Hamad's political programme and the continuing strength of the anti-Al Khalifa forces. The regime's attempt to test the popularity of the opposition leaders has backfired and it is now time that the international community adopt deterrence means against this illegitimate regime in order to end the suffering of the people of Bahrain.

On another level, concerns are growing for the safety of a young Bahraini, arrested by Al Khalifa death squads for the past six weeks. On 26th December 2006, Kumail Hussain Al Manami, 24, from Ma'amir, was arrested following a protest in Duraz. He remained in torture cell without charge or trial. His ordeal has continued for the past six weeks. It is feared that he is being subjected to torture and ill-treatment.



Continued detention of minors facing Assembly charges and two years imprison-

Despite his denial of the charges against him, the prosecution ordered custody for 15 days for Ali Jaffar Ali (17 years old), after security forces raided his father's house, located in the Sanabis for several times, without his presence. The Public Prosecutor sent a formal order for his presence, which his family complied with, yesterday. The public prosecutor accused him, as for others, of being part of crowd and assembly as stated in article 178 of the universally condemned Penal Code of 1976.

According to Article 178 of the Bahraini Penal Code, "shall be punished by a term of up to two years and a fine no more than two hundred Dinars, or both, who participated in a gathering in a public place consisting of five persons at least, the purpose of which is to commit crimes, or acts equipping or facilitating for it, or disturb public security, even if that was to fulfill a legitimate objective". These charges have been brought to all prisoners - including the minors- in the latest protests, which according to this article, means the possibility of their imprisonment up to two years.

It should be noted that during the past two days, the Public Prosecutor had ordered the release of Mohamed Yousef Zayed (27 yrs) from Duraz, Ahmad Ali Daggag (14 yrs) from Karbabad. From Daih area, the release included Ahmed Bader Al-Jaziri (15 yrs), Jaafar Saeed Al-Jaziri (15yrs), Fadel Abbas Mushaima (15 yrs), Mahdi Abdulla Saad (14 yrs), Fadhel Mulla Abdulla (16 yrs) and Husain Makabees (14 yrs).

On the other hand, the two brothers Jassim Mirza (17yrs) and Mohammad Mirza (16yrs) are still in anonymous detention for more than three weeks from their arrested on February 3, 2007 after besieging their house by large numbers of heavily armed special forces. Nobody knows their fate until this moment. They were arrested the following day to popular protest upon the arrest of Hassan Mushaima-secretary general of the Movement of freedoms and Democracy "HAQ" - and Abdul Hadi Al-Khawaja-President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. There is great concern over their life and wellbeing, as nobody of their family or lawyers, were allowed to see them and assure their safety. In this way, the number of those in custody is 11 citizens, including five juveniles. (See table below).

The Committee of Activists and Detainees of Conscious reiterate the demand for the release of all citizens, arbitrarily arrested in the street, or by raiding their houses and assaulting them, upon the protests which took place in the past few days. In particular, the call is meant for the minors who are still regular schools, demanding facili-

tation of their release, to safeguard their future and return to their normal lives.

The Committee also condemns the excessive use of force by the Bahraini security troops in dispersing the demonstrators or during arrests, crackdown and interrogation, before presenting them to the public prosecution office, stressing the need for the commitment of the Authorities towards the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Also allowing citizens to express themselves peace-

fully without exposure to abuse or attack, as happened in the last few days, which caused tension and unrest.

The Committee of Activists believes that confiscation of freedom of expression, by use of violating laws and excessive force will only lead to further tension, deterioration of the overall situation, and destabilize it.

Committee of Solidarity with Activists and Detainees of Conscience in Bahrain, February 26th, 2007

Calls for help as more Bahrainis are subjected to ill treatment in torture chambers

Political disturbances in various parts of the country erupted yesterday and today as the people of Bahrain continued their pro-democracy protests and called for an end to the hereditary dictatorship of the Al Khalifa clan.

At mid day today, the people of Bani Jamra staged a major protest against the allegations made by the ministry of the interior earlier in the week, that 35 of its citizens had been "trained" at a nearby farm to use Molotov cocktail against the death squads. It later transpired that the allegations were baseless and that the "box containing Molotov bottles" was the same box exhibited by the Al Khalifa last year as a proof against another group of Bahrainis. Today's protest passed peacefully as the death squads did not intervene.

The new wave of protests came at the background of earlier arrests among citizens of Bani Jamra, Abu Saibe' and Karrana, and the continued unlawful detention of Dr Mohammad Saeed and Husain Abdul Aziz Al Habshi. The past 24 hours have been among the busiest in terms of anti-regime protests. A massive crackdown against peaceful protestors resulted in 16 arrests in various parts of the country. Yesterday afternoon, a demonstration in Sanabis marched peacefully to the main road before dispersing. None of the Death Squads was present. It became clear that when those squads do not intervene, no violence happens. They are adopting violent means against the Bahraini people as a routine. Last night the area was cordoned off as more demonstrations took place near Karbabad and the Al Seef Mall. The Death Squads, in plain clothes and armed with electric batons and other arms, waged a wave of terror against the peaceful demonstrators. Several Bahrainis were arrested including a 15 years old boy. Many Bahrainis were injured while others were arrested. Some needed hospital treatment. Those detained include: Mahmood

Ali Mahdi, 22, Ahmad Ali Al Daqqaq, 14, SAyyed Ali Sayyed Akbar, 20 and Sadiq Jaffar Kadhem, 21.

Further protests then erupted in Sitra, Sanabis, Daih, Karrana and Zenj. Columns of black smoke were seen rising above the horizon as the demonstrators burnt tyres. Loud explosions were also heard resulting from burnt gas cylinders, a familiar form of protest in Bahrain. Death Squads reacted angrily using disproportionate amounts of tear gas, chemical gases and rubber bullets. Among the detainees from Duraz was Mohammad Yousef Zayed, 27. From Sanabis Ahmad Jamil Abdulla Radhi, 19 was arrested. The detainees were tortured by the Death Squads, apparently on orders from the royal court.

Calls went out for more protest demonstrations in the village of Saar, Abu Saibe, Karranah, Sanabis and Bani Jamrah. Public emotions are running high as a result of the heavy-handed treatment of the demonstrators by the Death Squads. The case of Saeed Ibrahim, 32 from a small village called Marwaza near Sanabis has enraged human rights activists who called for an immediate inquiry into the crime. Another Bahraini (A.A.) is being treated in a private hospital after he was hit by the Death Squads with a rubber bullets in one of his eyes. Four Bahrainis from Daih are also among the detainees: Ahmad Bader Al Jaziri, 15, Mahdi Abdulla Sa'ad, 17, Hussain Makabees, 14, Fadhel Abbas Abdullah Mushaima', 15 and

The people of Bahrain appeal to the world for an immediate intervention to curtail the excesses of the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship which has hitherto insisted on ignoring the wishes of the people for a contractual constitution to determine the shape and basis of the political system in this country.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement
23 February 2007**