

BAHRAIN

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

A pariah ruler whose crimes against humanity must be stopped

Is torture an effective means of breaking the will of determined people who oppose tyranny and dictatorship? Most dictators would like to believe that harsh treatment of prisoners of conscience is the answer to their political crisis. But time and again, history has shown that to be untrue. Silencing opposition with harsh measures is not the answer to problems arising from the absence of justice and the rule of law. Those who had tortured Iraqis at Abu Ghraib prisons have lived only to see themselves being pursued by those crimes. They are haunted by their evil even when they go into retirement. Maltreatment of prisoners is a crime that does not fade away. Moreover, crimes of torture are never outdated, i.e. they remain punishable regardless of the length of time that has elapsed after being committed. In the case of Iraq, for example, the Ba'athist torturers have lived to see their victims trying them for the crimes of torture and mass murder. The officers at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo are also being pursued by their victims, and no power on earth can protect them from the rule of law.

One dictator, however, seems convinced that he would always be immune from the rule of law. The ruler of Bahrain has instituted extreme forms of torture against opponents in a way that has not been seen before. He has not only institutionalised torture, but he provided legal protection to torturers. In 2002 he issued the notorious Decree 56 that given immunity to those engaged in torture. To add salt to the wounds, he has elevated the most notorious torturer, Adel Flaifel, to a level that enables him to become a "legislator". He has been cleared to stand next year for election to Sheikh Hamad's shura council. The imperatives here are high. It has sent a clear signal to members of Death Squads and the officers of the notorious intelligence services that no harm would befall them if they engaged in full-fledged exercise of physical maltreatment of prisoners. When torturers become legislators, the boundaries of decency and evil become irreversibly demolished. Only a glimpse of what has been taking place in torture chambers has now come out to the public. Last month, victims of this policy have spoken for the

first time of their ordeals at the hands of the sheikh Hamad's torturers. Maitham Al Sheikh gave a graphic account of his treatment during his 16 months incarceration. In addition to hanging from the ceiling for hours, the deprivation from sleep, the electrocution on sensitive parts of the body and the continuous beating, Mr Al Shaikh conferred that he had been sexually abused by his jailers. He was released only when his condition deteriorated as he developed Multiple Sclerosis.

A ruler who goes to this extent in abusing the citizens of a country becomes addicted to mass obliteration. This may explain why Sheikh Hamad has implemented, in full, the manifesto presented to him by his closest lieutenant, Khalid bin Ahmad Al Khalifa. The manifesto first came to public glare in 1997 in a poem that he had written in reply to another member of Al Khalifa junta who was asking what was to be done with the natives of Bahrain. Khalid bin Ahmad produced the most abusive piece of Bedouin poems in which he presented his "alternative policy" towards the natives. He affirmed that he would commit genocide at the widest scale to ensure the subjugation of the natives. In the poem he said that the Al Khalifa would undertake the following: the mass displacement of the natives to the islands of Hwar and Jenan, the use of sword to ensure maximum slaughter of the natives, the expulsion of the rest from their jobs and the demolishing of their homes. This is possibly one of the most outrageous declaration of intent ever made by a politician anywhere in the world since Hitler. Instead of covering up this manifesto, Sheikh Hamad appointed Khalid bin Ahmad to become his closest lieutenant. In his capacity as the virtual prime minister through his position as the minister of the royal court, he started putting his plan into action. Over the past ten years, a process of silent genocide has been taking place in Bahrain, where the natives, the majority of whom are Shia Muslims, are being replaced by foreigners, forcibly retired from their posts in government departments, being denied

jobs or housing and forced to flee the country.

How does the ruler of Bahrain really think? Instead of heeding the repeated calls for a civilised code of rule and treatment of the Bahraini people, the ruler has adopted a regime of terror against his opponents. For the first time in the history of Bahrain, Sheikh Hamad decided to "export" state terrorism to UK streets. Three members of the opposition were targeted for revenge. Two were beaten up near Euston station by mercenaries working for the regime while the third had his house attacked with arson that potentially would have killed his whole family. It is a grim situation for the natives of this Gulf island that needs the immediate attention of the international community. While torture is in itself a crime against humanity, genocide is a more serious crime that must be countered with the full power of the international law and institutions. Bahrain may be small as a country, but its natives are being subjected to a process of annihilation on three fronts; through torture, genocide and targeted attacks against activists inside and outside the country. In the past twelve months alone dozens were kidnapped from the streets by members of the Death Squads, operated by Khalif bin Ahmad Al Khalifa, tortured and left for dead. Several others had been killed through special targeting. To date, not a single official has been brought to account for any of the crimes committed against the Bahrainis. It is thus a matter of life or death to many natives. Whose responsibility is it then to protect these powerless people? How far can the policies of appeasement by Western governments be allowed to continue before the rule of the international law is upheld and the perpetrators of these crimes are brought to justice? The Bahraini ruler has now become a pariah and legal action must be taken to stop his excessive use of illegal power against the innocent civilians of Bahrain. Failing to heed the calls of the victims of torture, genocide and barbaric attacks by Death Squads is tantamount to the abandonment of human responsibility and the rule of law. Do we want that state of affairs to continue?

Bahrain: protesters demand the release of political prisoners

The fate of 30 Bahrainis, illegally imprisoned by the Al Khalifa occupiers is stirring up emotions and causing unease among citizens. Some of them had languished behind bars for more than 20 months for taking part in peaceful demonstrations in December 2007. They are held hostage by the ruling junta in order to exact concessions from the opposition groups which have refused to acknowledge the illegal Al Khalifa occupation of the country. The allegations presented against them, including that of killing a foreign mercenary or taking one gun from a police car have all been proved false. The foreign mercenary had died six months before he was allegedly killed by demonstrators, according to a death certificate issued by the ministry of interior. The gun that was allegedly stolen has not been retrieved. So where is it? If the victims had taken it from the police vehicle it would have been found by now. In reality, no gun had been possessed by these innocent people. Human rights activists are reversing the question and accusing the Al Khalifa occupiers of using live ammunition against unarmed demonstrators. Why do policemen carry such guns in a country where the victims have always been innocent citizens?

The people of Karzakkan, Marwazan and Jidhafs have repeatedly taken to the streets to demand the immediate and unconditional release of the political prisoners.

In the village of Mhazza, pro-democracy activists on Wednesday 19th August, painted their slogans on the walls in several areas. They include portraits of the political leaders who are steadfast in their anti-regime stands. In the early hours of yesterday (Thursday 20th August) demonstrators in Sitra burnt tyres at the main Majlis Al Ta'awun Road to protest the continued detention of Bahrainis. They were pursued by three cars whose occupants, believed to be foreign mercenaries, came out and sprayed the protesters with tear and chemical gases as well as rubber bullets. The protesters reacted angrily and threw stones at the attackers. A mouse and cat game then followed in the alleys of the village.

In the town Jidafa, protesters burnt tyres near the graveyard and at the entrance to the town. They hurled stones on the attacking police. Riot police and Death Squads were in force to face the protesters. They used tear and chemical gases to disperse protesters. Some of them were heavily armed indicating the seriousness of the ongoing confrontations and the extent of violence which the foreign mercenaries are ready to deploy against the unarmed civilians. On 17th August protesters from Daih and Jidhafs went out in strength to protest the continued dictatorship and their heavy-handed treatment of prisoners and protesters. Scores of mercenaries used banned substances against

them. After 20 minutes of confrontations, the attackers stormed Jihafs in pursuit of the protesters. A house in nearby Marwazan village was burnt. The inhabitants were attacked mercilessly by them before leaving in a hurry. Similar protests were held in Samheej. In this town, the people held a commemorative meeting to remember two of their martyred colleagues killed by the Al Khalifa. Sheikh Isa Al Samahiji and Ali Yousuf Al Habeeb had perished as a result of the maltreatment by the Al Khalifa occupiers. In the meeting which was held last night Mr Hassan Mushaime, the Chairman of Haq Movement delivered a speech, followed by Sheikh Abdul Jalil Al Miqdad. The poet, Hussain Al Samahiji, recited a powerful poem. A short documentary film on the lives of the two martyrs was then shown.

The Egyptian Government has advised its citizens not to live in Shia areas in Bahrain. On the Foreign Ministry website (<http://www.mfa.gov.eg/Missions/travel/guide/consulate/ar-EG/guidances2/countries/Asia/bahrain.htm>) a clear advice is given to Egyptians visiting or working in Bahrain not to live in Shia areas in the villages or the areas of their congregation in cities. It said that crimes were committed against Asian communities during disturbances due to their large numbers.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th August 2009

Torture testimony at the House of Lords infuriates Al Khalifa

Today, the people of Bahrain have celebrated the "National Day" in their own way; silence. As the ruling family has increasingly become agitated at the prospect of new revolutionary culture replacing their antiquated arguments, the people are bracing themselves for eventual showdown with the Al Khalifa who are viewed as invaders and pirates who snatched their land and attempted to subjugate them. On 14th August 1971 the British forces were withdrawn from all areas East of Suez, ie. Including Bahrain. That is the day the Bahrainis aspire to celebrate as a national day. The preceding decade had been a period of anti-British agitation with frequent demonstrations and violence. The independence of the country was of paramount significance for several reasons: First it symbolised the aspiration of the people. Second it represents the unity of all native Bahrainis (Sunni and Shia) in their struggle to achieve independence and justice. Thirdly, it also affirms one important fact; that no power can have monopoly over the affairs of other people forever and that such regimes often come and go. The Al Khalifa are not necessary to

run a modern state.

Meanwhile, the ruling junta has employed every dirty means to ensure that a planned celebrations on this occasion would not be allowed. Haq Movement and the newly-formed Council of resistance had planned a special meeting today as part of their education programme in relations to local events. The Al Khalifa junta took immediate steps to prevent the convening of this meeting. They considered it as a threat to the history of Bahrain. Hundreds of heavily-armed police were deployed to create fear in the hearts of the people. Eventually the meeting was banned, a step that was considered a step backward in the process of educating the people. The Al Attar Mosque, in Sitra was also surrounded by the police to prevent major activities that may be construed as being firmly against it. The opposition held a press conference at Mr Hassan Mushaim's house. The crisis of confidence between the two sides was highlighted and the aspirations of Bahrainis for a better future based on a constitution drawn up by the people were highlighted. Sheikh Saeed Al Noouri and Mr Abdul Wahab Hussain took part in the conference. Bahrainis have all along re-

fused to recognise 16th December as National Day. It is the day when Sheikh Salman, the grandfather of the present ruler, became the ruler following the demise of his father. Bahrainis have never identified with this day as it only confirms the occupational mentality of the Al Khalifa.

In response to the successful seminar organised by Lord Avebury at the House of Lords on 6th August, the Al Khalifa junta reacted angrily at the event. They focused their attacks on the testimony given by Maitham Bader Al Sheikh, who has recently been released from jail after being illegally incarcerated for 16 months. In his testimony he gave a graphic account of the torture inflicted on him by the torturers acting on orders of the present Al Khalifa ambassador to UK, Khalifa bin Ali bin Rashid Al Khalifa. The audience were furious to learn that a diplomat in London was so deeply involved in the criminal act of torture. The present head of the torture apparatus is the former Al Khalifa ambassador to London, Khalifa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa under whose orders scores of Bahrainis have been tortured.

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Torture victim: They electrocuted and sexually assaulted me

The following is the brief testimony delivered by a torture victim inside the torture chambers operated by the Al Khalifa:

Testimony

Mr. Maitham Bader Al-Shaikh A Bahraini Victim of Torture

TO THE MEETING ON BAHRAIN

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

6th August 2009

My name is Maitham Bader Al- Shaikh 32 old married and I have two children. I work in a local company.

I am a member in an unemployed committee as well as underpaid committee and I am a human rights activist.

My unforgettable story started just since one year ago when I had been arrested and tortured on December 2007 and the story continued until today as I had a very dangerous disease (MS) because of torture.

The Bahraini special force attacked my father house to arrest me in 21st of December 2007 at around 5 am that time I was sleeping with my family when the "Militia" masked mercenaries had come to arrest me. They entered the house and broken the furniture. Although I did not refuse or resist going with them they had

beaten my family and me badly and they showed excessive violence while arresting me. Within 30 minutes, I was handcuffed and eyes blinded to find myself in unknown place and they immediately started torturing me.

First, they hanged me from my wrists on the air so that my feet could not reach the ground and they were beating me on every part of my body especially on under chest area. They had kept me on that painful situation until next day afternoon, after that they forced me to stand for around 6 six hours then again I was hanged and they started another meal of torture but that time they used an electric shocking device (a small device like a shaving machine with adjustment voltage) they were using that electric shocking device in several parts of my body especially those sensitive ones like my chest and my sexual parts. I was screaming but they did not stop. Torture was continued for 3 nights while they were just saying confess.

The sexual abuse I had was the cruelest way of torture:

In the third night of torture I was quite tired and disappointing when they came and tolled me " don't you want to confess " " We knew how to let you do so " " If you did not want to listen to us and confess

then we would rap you" and two of those masked "Militia" started touring my pant and removing my under wear I was afraid when they had used a hard stick and put it on my back badly.

I was tortured in the public prosecution too:

When they had taken me to the Public Prosecution after those 3 days of continued torture, I thought that it was the end of torture but what had happened there showed that the torture was not going to have an end. I entered the Public Prosecution at around 3 am without my lawyer so I immediately asked the public prosecutor that I need to call my lawyer but he refused my demand and asked me just to put my signature on a ready testimony I refused that so he asked some officers to take me to another room they took me and started beating me every where on my body until I said ok I would do what ever the public prosecutor want from me. Torture continued until the day I was given a sentence of 5 years imprisonment but I was released after 1 year due to my bad health situation as a result of torture.

This is a part of my testimony

Maitham Al- sheikh

6th August 2009



Torture testimony: *Cont from P2*

At the end of the seminar a resolution was passed calling on the British government to step in and call on the Al Khalifa not to retaliate against the victim who had been subjected to the most horrific treatment including sexual abuse.

In the mean time, a Bahraini youth was kidnapped from the town of Jid Hafs. The Death Squads stormed a mosque in Jidhaf's Housing, near Sanabis, abused him and beat him on all parts of his body to the brink of death. The youth was kidnapped at 1.00 am today by members of the Death Squad, run by the royal court, tortured and abused before being dumped in a remote area. He was spotted at 9 am by some farmers who rushed him to his brother's house nearby. He is recovering from his horrific wounds.

Bahrain Freedom Movement

14th August 2009

Al Zayani: "Maithem allegations at House of lords are false"

Al Waqt Newspaper: August 12, 2009
The President of the Security Staff Major General Abdul Latif

Al Zayani has said that the citizen Maithem Badr Al shaikh had submitted false allegations in front of the British House of Lords on 6 August 2009 and that he had been tortured after

his arrest on 21 December, 2007, resulted the serious illness.



Al Zayani said that the Secretary-General of the Bahrain Human Rights society Abdullah Al Derazi himself had followed the case.

Ministry of the Interior under the condition of coordination between the

Ministry and Al Derazi the Interior Ministry issued Decree No. 30 of 2009 on the amnesty question and the shooting down of the sentence imposed by the conditions of sick due to scientific reasons «viral or environmental », proof of the falsity of the claim, and it is important to emphasize that the effects of such claims not to adversely affect the fulfillment of a focus on the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms."

Lord Avebury counters Al Khalifa allegations

House of Lords, London August 6

Over the many years that we have been holding these twice a year seminars, we have discussed the whole catalogue of human rights abuses that have been inflicted on the people of Bahrain, for which there has always been the same basic cause: the requirement by a widely unpopular hereditary dictatorship to maintain itself in power.

And to do that, the al-Khalifa family has used every technique in the book, plus one extra that isn't even in the list covered by the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. There has been extrajudicial execution; arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, clampdowns on freedom of expression, and the large-scale demographic engineering, which has been successful to the extent that Bahrainis may now be a minority in their own country.

But up to now, we have been looking at these events as phenomena affecting people six hours flight time away, not in the heart of London. We never imagined that they would spill over and have a direct effect on us, and on those who came here to escape from the al-Khalifa tyranny. Some of the contributors to this seminar are exiles who will give first-hand accounts of attacks and intimidation they have experienced while going about their normal lives in our midst. It is significant that both the present Ambassador and his

predecessor are closely connected with the national security apparatus, and that the Minister of the Interior, yet another member of the al-Khalifa family, had called our Ambassador in Manama in to protest about the activities of exiles who were using Britain as a platform to 'orchestrate unrest at home'.

Our Ambassador told Sheikh Rashid that we apply the same laws to exiles as natives, and incitement to commit a criminal offence would be treated the same whoever did it. This becomes important, because speeches made by opponents of the regime, for example recently by our friend Abdulhaji al-Khawaja, are said to be incitement. I want to submit this to your judgement, and to the judgement of lawyers who may have some advice to offer.

I'm going to read you what he said, translated from a video of the speech and with two alterations. I have substituted the words 'the ruling Labour clique' for 'al-Khalifa', and 'the Party' for 'the clan'.

"In regard to a slogan such as 'Death to the ruling Labour clique', this slogan is full of outrage and seems powerful, but it is negative, unrealistic and unspecific. It focuses on the Party's name and not their action and role. It is not dynamic since it doesn't reflect our role and responsibility. If we only keep chanting 'Death to the ruling Labour clique', will they die? No

they won't. However, if the slogan is 'Lets overthrow this ruling gang', it would focus on those who are in power, it portrays them as a gang, because of their policies and method, it gives us a clear goal, which is the overthrowing of the gang and it focuses on our role and responsibility'.

If I were to say this at Speakers' Corner, wouldn't it be treated as legitimate political rhetoric, and if it were referred to the Crown Prosecution Service, would they need five minutes to throw it out? In Bahrain it may be another matter, because nobody can ever change the government, but surely we should defend the right of anybody to advocate the replacement of a dictatorship by a government that is democratically elected.

Nearly four weeks ago I asked the new Foreign Office Minister responsible for Bahrain, Ivan Lewis MP, to confirm this analysis, and I am still waiting for an answer. One detects a lack of enthusiasm among Ministers for upholding the principle of freedom of expression in Bahrain, and this is perhaps one of the problems. The regime knows that we and others treat them with kid gloves, so they don't need to try very hard. But when their attempts to silence their opponents lead to physical attacks and arson on our own doorsteps, its time to adopt a more robust policy, and that's what I hope we shall be calling for this morning.

Bahrain Security Forces tortures Trade Unionist

In a chilling personal testimony in a House of Lord's annex, horrified listeners heard the details of how a Bahrain trade unionist suffering from Multiple Sclerosis was regularly tortured by Bahrain prison officials.

Maitham Al-Shaikh, a 32 year old married man with two children was among several people who gave personal testament of the use of torture in Bahrain at a seminar convened by the Human Rights Campaigner, Lord Avebury in London last week.

Maitham's "crime" was to be an active trade unionist campaigning on behalf of the unemployed and a vocal opponent of the Al-Khalifa family, the Hereditary Dictatorship that rules Bahrain.

Speaking in a quiet trembling voice to a shocked audience, Maitham described how he was dragged from his family bed in Bahrain at five o'clock in the morning on 21st December and beaten severely by officials before being taken to prison in Manama. There they hanged him from his wrists so that his feet were off the ground. Then they beat him for hours at as time concentrating on knocking the air out of him.

After suspending him there for 24 hours, they cut him down, forcing him to stand

for 6 six hours.

He was then hung up again as professional torturers entered the interrogation room holding small electric devices like a shaving machine with adjustment voltage, High Voltage current was passed through the screaming Maitham with the guards concentrating on his chest and genitals for over three nights.

All he heard from them were repeated demands to "confess"

On the third night of Maitham's resistance to torture they came and threatened to rape him for not confessing.

First he was beaten on his back with large rods, then tearing off his underwear, a large stick was inserted into his body.

At that point he passed out again.

Eventually he was dragged before the public prosecutor at 3 in the morning, where the Public Prosecutor for the Capital Directorate, Ahmed Bucheery demanded his signature on a prepared confession.

When Maitham refused to sign and asked for a lawyer, Ahmed Bucheery, told the guards to take him to a side room and beat him until he was ready to sign.

Unable to take anymore, he signed and was immediately sentenced to 5 years in

prison.

Below:- Maitham (middle) giving testimony at House of Lords hearings for Bahrain's Judicial Torture Victims.

One year later after Multiple Sclerosis worsened he was released and sought asylum in London, where several of his fellow countrymen, also tortured in Bahrain, have also taken refuge.

However, recent events show that agents of the Bahrain Security Forces are determined not to let a little matter like refugee status in Britain preventing them from violently pursuing anyone who actively speaks out against the political system in Bahrain.

Emulating the Russian assassination on British soil of a Russian dissident, Bahrain warned their opponents in London to either give up their public campaigns or face a similar fate.

To back up this threat, three members of the Bahrain opposition sheltering in Britain received a telephone warning that they had been targeted for attack if they went ahead with the House of Lord's seminar.

Three days later, two members of the group were beaten up in Church Way and a leading opposition member had his family house in North London set on fire.