

BAHRAIN

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

A New year; New hopes, wider vision

A black year in the political history of Bahrain has just ended with bad memories, recrimination and deeper resentments against the Al Khalifa occupiers of the land. When a Western diplomat complained to a Bahraini minister about the description of the ruling family as "occupiers" the minister politely said "go no farther than Umm Al Na'san (the third largest island) and Hwar (the islands that had been ruled by the International Court of Justice to belong to Bahrain) to decide whether this term is compatible with the situation". The past year has been particularly nasty even with the Al Khalifa standards. It started with serious attacks on liberties and freedom of expression against the widening opposition groups. This was followed by the illegal detention of two senior figures of the opposition; Mr Hassan Mushaime, the President of Haq Movement and Sheikh Mohammad Habib Al Miqdad, a senior preacher. For ten weeks the country was engulfed by protests, demonstrations and tension that attracted the attention of the outside world to the plight of the Bahrainis. There were further arrests among protestors, thus adding to the tension. The situation threatened to become an all-out revolt, forcing the Al Khalifa allies, including British and American diplomats to ask them to release the two leaders. The ruler had no alternative. The two leaders kept their heads high, refusing to ask to leave prison before the other political prisoners were released. The Al Khalifa were forced into a humiliating defeat, having to release those whom they had previously accused of committing arson attacks.

The situation remained volatile during the year. With scores of Bahrainis languishing behind bars in the notorious Al Khalifa torture chambers, the attention of international human rights bodies was focused on Bahrain for the first time in a decade. The ruler's political programme became stalled, and is now on the verge of total collapse. It has done to little to silence the real opposition who had refused to be drawn into the badly-presented stage-managed play. Those who were drawn to the doomed political programme have realized the futility of change from within

the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. Sheikh Hamad's political initiative is the worst in the history of the Al Khalifa occupation of the land. It has confirmed the suspicions, long held by opponents of the occupation, that he sought to complete the encirclement of the political situation in order to throttle any attempt to establish real political partnership. The way he dealt with the 1973 constitution enforced those suspicions and gave ammunition to the opposition which has grown stronger in the past three years. The shura council which the ruler had established as a show "parliament" failed to convince even its members who have expressed dissatisfaction at their inability to legislate, monitor or hold accountable those who abuse their positions of power. They have failed to dislodge any of the Al Khalifa ministers from their positions despite the enormous evidence of corruption, misuse of public office and inability to conduct their duties with efficiency within a framework of equal opportunities. They have continued the policy of discrimination against the majority native Baharna and created a clan-based political system.

Furthermore, the year had witnessed intensification of attacks against public liberties. Human rights activists have been particularly targeted by the regime's media. Political activists have particularly been targeted for attacks by the regime's paid mouthpiece journalists. The ruler's appointment of a notorious sectarian figure who had published his overtly sectarian manifesto has enraged the natives who have been subjected to extreme forms of discrimination on religious grounds. This figure, Khalid bin Ahmad Al Khalifa, the minister of the royal court, is the effective prime chief executive of the government, who determines the policies of employment, appointments to high offices, development plans and most importantly, the encirclement plans being implemented to obliterate the native Baharna, including the systematic liquidation of opponents. Out of 28 cabinet posts, 17 are held by members of the Al Khalifa, seven by Sunni Muslims and four by the native Shia

Muslims who represent more than 70 percent of the population. The systematic use of repression has transformed Bahrain into a security fortress with riot police, Death Squads, security apparatus, intelligence bodies controlling the lives of Bahrainis with the rigid rules of occupation. The Al Khalifa have hitherto failed to show a mentality of accepting the rules of normal citizenship and have turned the country into a caste system. The native Baharna are considered the lowest of all. The newly-made Bahrainis are replacing the natives in almost all walks of life.

The new year has thus carried no good news for the Bahrainis who have suffered immensely under occupation. They are the long-forgotten victims of vicious occupation by outsiders. The Al Khalifa who have no roots in the history of the country have lost every opportunity to integrate within the Bahraini society. They have treated the natives; Shia and Sunni, as underdogs while the naturalized foreigners are now occupying the most sensitive positions in the political hierarchy. With the ruler's insistence to shelter torturers, Bahrainis have been subjected to horrific treatment; in the streets, behind bars or even in their natural habitats within their downtrodden villages. It is a life of misery that is made worse by the injection of people's money into programmes of deception, distortion, cooption and containment. Despite these agonies, the opposition have succeeded to re-organise itself and launch a new mission of liberation. They are working against the odds; with the UK and USA governments fully supportive of the Al Khalifa occupation as they have supported the Zionist occupation of Palestine. Will this change the outcome of the struggle? Not really. It may delay the eventual victory of the people's will, but the occupiers' destiny is not in dispute. Aggression cannot win on the long run. Occupiers of other people's land will not reap fruits of aggression. People's will is the determining factor between the aggressors and the victims. A new ear of consciousness has begun as the evil political programme of annihilation and oppression is doomed.

Internal and external activities on the Day of the Martyrs

State repression has never been made more flagrant and audacious than in the latest showdown between the people of Bahrain and the ruling Al Khlaifa family. The might of the state was used to crack-down against the freedom of expression, peaceful gathering or protest. As the people converged last Thursday on Ras Rumman in Manama to take part in a peaceful demonstration to remember victims of state repression, they were faced by large numbers of troops, riot police, Death Squads and secret service agents. The leaders of the opposition were surrounded by the troops who had prevented the people entering the area and threatened with "blood bath" if they insisted on demonstrating. The people then dispersed in various directions and held regional protests at smaller scales. Nonetheless the point was made that the people of Bahrain have their own agenda and national days that are in contrast to those of the ruling family. Throughout the day the youth were engaged in running battles with the aggressive foreign-staffed forces. From Dair to Manama, Sanabis, Daih, Abu Saibe, Duraz, Bani Jamrah, Karzakkan, Malkiyya, Ma'amir, Sitra and other towns and villages. It was damning public expression of anger against an increasingly-isolated regime that has resorted to extreme of repression against people with genuine peaceful demands.

The attacks on civil liberties has been spearheaded by the foreign mercenaries under the direction of the notorious symbol of sectarianism, Khalid bin Ahmad Al Khalifa, the minister of the royal court. Many Bahrainis were injured and arrested. Among those taken hostage by the regime's police are: Abdul Rasool Al Sasfi, 16, who is retarded and is cared for by a special body for those with special needs, Yousuf Ahmad, 14, Hassan Ali Asghar, 17, Ali Hassan Saleh, 15 and Abdulla Jaffar Abdul Wahab, 18. The detention of minors is a cause of concern among human rights activists inside and outside Bahrain. Their families have expressed fear for the well-being of their children with the knowledge that torture has become common place under the rule of Hamad bin Isa Al Khlaifa.

The ruling family has become more aggressive as the Day of the Martyrs had eclipsed their own "national day" which was chosen to remind Bahrainis of the ruling family's system of hereditary rule that is not subject to the democratic norms and practices. Over the past fifteen years it has become a national day for the Bahrainis who have rejected 16th December as nothing but a reminder of the bitter ordeal under members of the Al Khalifa who had occupied Bahrain by force. The people have attempted to celebrate on 15th August of each year to mark the withdrawal in 1971 of the British forces from the

country (and from the rest of the Gulf states) after decades of struggle by Bahrainis calling for independence.

The Day of the Martyrs was also remembered in London with two events. First was the protest outside the Dorchester Hotel in Central London on the evening of Tuesday 15th December. The Al Khalifa Ambassador to London had invited guests for his family's national day. The Bahraini opposition organised a protest outside the hotel to draw the attention of the guests and the public to several things. First that the situation in Bahrain is worsening as repression intensifies. Second that the continued detention of Bahrainis in torture chambers was unacceptable and that these hostages be freed immediately and unconditionally. Thirdly that their host; ambassador Khalifa bin Ali Al Khalifa, is a well-known torturer who had re-instated torture soon after he was appointed in charge of the national security body in 2005. There are several testimonies by his victims who gave graphic and harrowing details of the torture they had received under his tenure. There are now rising demands to bring this torturer to justice as a step to eliminate this evil practice that the present ruler had institutionalised by his notorious Law 56 which grants impunity to torturers. The guests of the Al Khlaifa were reminded of their human duty not to shake hands with torturers or take freebies from them.

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More attacks against Bahrainis to pre-empt Martyrs Day

As the Day of the Martyrs approaches, political tension is rising especially in the towns and villages which are commemorating their victims. The Death Squads have arrested scores of activists as a step to contain the growing unrest and induce fear in the hearts of others. Several activities have been planned to commemorate 17th December, the day when the first two martyrs were killed by the Al Khalifa forces in 1994. Two years ago, Ali Jassim, 22, was added to the list of martyrs as he took part in a peaceful protest to commemorate the anniversary. The people have been urged to participate in the national demonstration on Thursday to remember the martyrs, demand the repeal of the notorious Law 56 issued by the ruler to grant impunity to the torturers, and demand a committee for truth and reconciliation. The regime has flatly refused to open the black records of torture inflicted on Bahrainis in the past three decades.

As the atmosphere started to heat up, the foreign-staffed riot police and Death Squads on 12th December attacked the people at Jidhafs market. No demonstrations were present at the time. It was a provocative attack that reflected the

tense feelings of the ruling family. At Marwazan, near Jidhafs several police cars made provocative gestures against the Bahrainis. The ruling family has issued serious threats against the citizens, which are in gross violation of the basic principles of human rights. Live ammunition would be used against peaceful protesters, the ministry of the interior said in a recent statement. On 11th December, the mothers and sisters of Bani Jamra detainees gathered at the Budayya torture centre demanding to know the fate of their beloved ones who had been detained in recent days. One of the Al Khalifa judges has ordered their detention for one more month with no legal justification, except the desire for revenge. The families were attacked with tear gas and rubber bullets. Sounds of firing were heard in Bani Jamra itself.

The town had also been target by the riot police and Death Squads for holding a commemorative meeting on the third anniversary of the demise of Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, the leader of the popular uprising. They used intimidating tactics to induce fear in those who ventured to attend the meeting. Similar scenes were witnessed near the Duraz Roundabout and Abu Saibe last Thursday. The youth were seen on the

outskirts of the town, expressing their views, clinching their fists and burning tyres on the road. They demanded the immediate release of the political prisoners who have been subjected to horrific ordeals of torture. The town became the scene of intermittent confrontations between the heavily-armed troops and the stone-throwing youths. The town was searched thoroughly and several Bahrainis were kidnapped by the aggressors.

In Sitra, a young girl was severely injured when riot police and Death Squads used rubber bullets against demonstrators near heavily populated areas. The child was taken to hospital where she was treated.

Meanwhile, the Bahraini exiles in UK will take part in the annual seminar at the House of Lords, to be held on Wednesday 16th December. Human rights violations will be highlighted by several speakers including activists from human rights bodies inside and outside Bahrain. Lord Avebury will chair the meeting which will be held at Committee Room 4A at 11.00 am. Admission may be granted by Lord Avebury who may be contacted by email: ericavebury@gmail.com.

Bahrain Freedom Movement

14th December 2009

Countdown to the Martyrs day begins with arrests and torture

In unprecedented preparation to wage aggressive attacks against the Bahrainis, the security services have undertaken two serious steps: First the ministry of the interior issued a warning that its mercenaries would fire live ammunition against peaceful demonstrators in the coming days. Second, a wave of arbitrary arrests has been waged in which scores of Bahrainis have been unlawfully detained. This is in reaction to the mounting popular unrest against what is seen as an all-out assault by Sheikh Hamad's clique against the people. Among those detained in the past few days are: Sadiq Jaffar Al Nakal, 16 and Abdulla Ahmad Hubail, 20. Both were arrested outside their home in Sitra and accused of taking part in peaceful protests against the dictatorship. Last week the father of Hassan Abdul Amir Radhi, 20, from Al Ma'amir woke up to find out that his son was not at home. After several attempts to call him on his mobile during the day, a member of the Death Squads replied and told that Hassan had been detained the night before. The young Bahraini had been severely beaten and tortured despite his heart ailment. One of the Al Khalifa kangaroo courts ordered his detention for one month for investigation. Majeed Hassan Sulail, 28, was arrested after his father was forced to call him to hand himself to the torturers. He is reported to have been subjected to various kinds of torture including beating, hanging from the hands and legs and denial of food. Other new detainees include Abdullah Ahmad Hbail, 20, Sayyed Ali Sayyed Saeed, 20, Hassan Ali Hassan, 26, Hussain Ali Ahmad, 23, Abdul Azia Abdul Redha Ibrahim, 23 and Sayyed isa Sayyed Abbas, 22, Hussain Faisal, 17, Ahmad Atiyya, 18, and Ahmad Abdul Mutallib, 16. The case of Kumail Al Ghannami, 16 from Al Dair has shaken the hearts of the people as his body exhibited severe wounds as he was hit by live ammunition.

Meanwhile the people's preparations to commemorate the Day of the Martyrs on 17th December have begun in earnest. Daily protests and demonstrations have been taking place in various parts of the country. On Monday 30th November the people of Sitra went out to the streets, burning fires and raising anti-regime slogans. They were attacked by the foreign-staffed riot police and Death Squads before dispersing. In Malikiya where the youth went out to the streets, beating protesters and using chemical

and tear gases against innocent civilians. Rubber bullets and sound bombs were used against Bahrainis in the area. Near the Karzakkan Roundabout, police cars took positions to prevent any demonstration.

Demonstrations and protests have engulfed vast areas of Bahrain. In Karrana, Al Sehal Al Janubia and Al Duraz, Bahrainis protested against the regime, hurling Molotov cocktail against the invading heavily-armed troops who are alien to the country and its people. An official from the Police department of the Northern Directorate confirmed last week that his men had been authorised to use live ammunition against those whom he called "deviated" elements, ie, those who has refuse to acknowledge the occupational policies of the regime. His threats have not deterred the people of Jid-

hafs and Daih from expressing their anti-Al Khalifa sentiments. The feelings of anger and frustration have kick-started the country-wide protests and demonstrations to mark the Martyrs' Day.

In London, the Bahraini opposition has started preparations to express their solidarity with their expressed people back home, and will launch a media and political campaign against the oppressive Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship, including the annual seminar at the House of Lords and a picket of the ruling family's celebrations planned by the London Embassy, which is run by the former head of the torture apparatus.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
3rd December 2009



A photo of the Bahraini uprising which won a prize in Austria

Internal and external activities

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All guests were given expensive gifts paid for from people's wealth confiscated by the Al Khalifa.

The annual Winter Seminar was held on Wednesday 16th December at the House of Lords. Lord Avebury who chaired the meeting called for more rigorous work to challenge the Al Khalifa policies against the natives. Several speakers had come from Bahrain to address the seminar; Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace, the Director of International Relations at Haq Movement, Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, Mr Mohammad Al Tajir, a lawyer closely linked to the cases of detainees and a human rights activist. Huussain Abdulla also came from USA to tell the audience of the efforts un-

dertaken by Bahraini Americans to challenge the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. Mr Abed Chodhury, a lawyer at the Islamic Commission of Human Rights described his experience in Bahrain which he had visited few weeks ago to attend the trial of the Karzakkan group. The ruling family dispatched its own "team" to challenge the speakers, including Peter Sekton; the head of the Bahrain Society and Ken Purchase, MP. Both came to intimidate the opposition and speak to the Al Khalifa controlled Bahrain TV about the seminar. Mr Purchase was once described by the late Paul Foot in Private Eye magazine as "Purchase the man who cannot be bought". Both figures failed in their efforts and demonstrated how cheap some public figures can become.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
21st December 2009-

Escalation of arrests and torture prior to Day of Martyrs

The BCHR learnt that the Security Forces, made up of Special Forces and Intelligence Men (National Security), at different timings most of them before sunset, broke into several homes in the various areas and arrested at least 15 of the villages youngsters, and led them to the security centers without committing to any of detainees and families' rights during the arrest and search process and without considering the local laws and the international conventions that Bahrain sanctioned. Some protests were penetrated with the reciprocal violence between the parties and the use of excessive force and live ammunition by the Special Security men, and which is faced with stones and Molotov, setting fire to tires and garbage containers to close down the streets in the protest areas. Noteworthy, the villages of Der, Karana, Sihla, Sitra, Ma'ameer, Abu-Saibaa, Duraz, Sanabes, Deh, Jidhafs and Mugshaa – and some other villages – were the scene of the nonstop and escalating confrontations. The majority of detainees faced torture and abuse according to the statements filed by the lawyers working in defense of the detainees or by the statements of the families of detainees who had the opportunity to visit their children in prison.

Due to the deteriorating security, caused by the prevailing state of tension owing to the governing authority's disability to set down solutions or to end its policy that is causing this continuous and ever-growing crisis in the country, the BCHR fears that the apparent disability might lead the official institutions to cook up any security incidents or an imaginary terrorist act, following it with more arrests as it had done during the month of December in the last years.

Background

After protests that lasted more than a week, the village of Der witnessed violent confrontations where the Security Forces intensely used teargas, rubber bullets and live ammo which resulted in the injury of some of them[i][i], and some of the villages cars were damaged by the security forces as part of the collective punishment, and those confrontations were followed by an arrest campaign in the early hours of dawn on Wednesday 18 November, and which included 9 juveniles and youngsters of those villages, the known ones are:

- 1- Kumail Hasan Al-Ghanami, 16
2. Sayed Ali Sayed Saeed, 22
3. Hasan Ali Hasan (26 years old)
4. Hussein Ali Ahmed Al-Umr, 23
5. Mohammed Faisal Al-Umr, 19
6. Hussein Faisal Al-Umr, 17
7. Ahmed Atyat Al-Umr, 18
8. Ahmed Abd-UL-Mutalib Al-Umr, 16

9. Ridha Rajab Al-Umr (15 years old)
The reports that were documented by the BCHR indicate that the majority of those youngsters were arrested from their homes, except for Hussein Faisal who was arrested from the streets, and that the arrests took place without presenting any official orders of the arrest or its reasons. Their families were prevented from knowing anything about them until three days elapsed from their arrest, as well as in the Prosecution, which ordered that they be held in custody for 15 days on the charges of crowding, riot, arson and damaging public property. They were interrogated and subjected to torture and inhumane treatment during the questioning without the presence of a lawyer or any legal representation.

In Sihla village, a peaceful protest ended in heated confrontation between the Special Security Forces and protestors, which – as stated by the Ministry of Interior – resulted in the suffering of one of the Special Forces from burns due to a protestor throwing a Molotov cocktail on him, and some protestors were injured, but they were treated at home in fear of being arrested. Those clashes were followed with arrests, which included:

10. Abdul-Aziz Abdul-Ridh Ibrahim (23 years old), Hamad Town, and who was arrested in the morning of Sunday 22nd November from his place of work. The campaign also included:

11. Sayed Sadiq Sayed Ali Mahdi (17 years old), a student in secondary school, a Hamad Town resident, arrested on 23rd November.

12. Sayed Isa Sayed Abbas (22 years old), a Hamad Town resident, arrested on 23rd November, were reports documented by the BCHR stated that the doors to the homes of both Sayed Isa and Sayed Sadiq were damaged, and the contents of their houses were messed and destroyed by the intruding forces.

Other villages witnessed several arrests, the known ones were:

13. Isa Abdul-Allah Kadhim (21 years old), from Karana village, and which is witnessing along with its neighbouring villages such as Abu-Saibaa and Mugshaa – a series of almost daily protests, and they are surrounded at night by the Special Forces for several weeks. The village of Ma'ameer witnessed the same protests at Tuesday noon on 17th November. The Special Security Forces broke into the house of:

14. Majeed Hussein Salil (28 years). He faced se-

vere torture after the arrest by hanging him from his hands and beating him while being hung. The detainee's family indicates that Majeed was prevented from eating for two days, and during those two days he was beaten with the Falaqa and hung in what was known as the "drawer", and which is a place that is used for hanging the detainees and subjecting them to torture, to get them to confess. Majeed was put into solitary confinement for 7 days and was prevented from showering, and he was forced to confess what the interrogators dictated him.

15. Hasan Abdul-Ameer Radhi (20 years old), from Ma'ameer village, arrested on 11th November in Belad-Al-Qadeem area. According to his family's statement to the BCHR, he was forced to confess what the interrogators dictated him. He was prevented from eating and drinking for two days, and during the interrogation he was subjected to beating and hanging in the Falaqa way or hanging in the "drawer" room. He was beaten continuously on his feet until his feet became black, and he was forced to stand for a long time while being handcuffed with metal cuffs, and he was subjected to insults and curses that touch on his sectarian beliefs and threatened to sexually abuse him before detaining him in solitary confinement for 14 days, during which he was prevented from showering.

Violations in the Arrest, Detention and Interrogation Procedures

Most of the cases documented by the BCHR indicate that the Security Apparatus utilized Special Forces and Civil Militias affiliated with the National Security Apparatus in all the arrest processes, however they were without any official permission clarifying the organization or the reasons of arrest, as well as preventing them from calling their lawyers or their families during the first days of arrest. According to Article 61 of the Code of Criminal Procedures of 2002 which states, "No one shall be arrested nor imprisoned except by an order of the legally competent authority. He shall be treated in such a manner as to maintain his human dignity and shall not be subjected to any bodily or psychological harm. Every person who is arrested shall be informed of the reasons for his arrest. He shall have the right to contact any of his relatives to inform him of what has happened and to seek the aid of a lawyer."

**The Bahrain Centre
for Human Rights**
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