

BAHRAIN

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

Cries from behind torture cellars: Time out for an antiquated regime

If the truth is allowed to be buried by the piles of banknotes, human decency will perish. For this decency is only protected only by the truth. Although almost everyone will claim to present or even represent the truth, truthful people are few and, in modern day life, are considered naïve, simple and out of touch with the reality. However, those few are the ones who had made history through their righteousness, sacrifice and even martyrdom. They are the ones who are ready to be witnesses on the eternal struggle between truth and falsehood. This role is often shrouded with sacrifices, blood and harshness. It requires deep faith in the goals, strong will and love for the good. Those who face the swords of the executioners have often shown themselves to the champions of the show. History would often glorify such individuals who pay the ultimate price so that others may live in freedom and peace. They have made their choice and chosen the red destiny so that the lives others may become green. It is a destiny by choice, not compulsion. To co-habit with oppressors, tyrants or despots is an insult to their human decency. This is the lesson Muslims had learnt from Karbala when Imam Hussain chose to stand up for justice and against oppression. He had the choice of not taking a stand as many would do in these difficult circumstances but he opted for the ultimate sacrifice. After all, what is to be hoped for a life that is full of humiliation, subjugation and submission to the tyrants?

Those are languishing in secret jails in Bahrain could have opted for another destiny; that of servitude and submission to the will of the enemies of humanity. Being a man of principle, the Imam chose the hard way. He declared civil disobedience, denying the tyrant Yazid the most important source of legitimacy. He found himself the man of the event; the person of responsibility and the Muslim leader without whose advice and direction Muslims would not be on the right track. He would not be the Hussain whom the Prophet had hoped would illuminate the way to the seekers of justice and liberation. Those pro-Hussain activists have taken the difficult choice of combating the illegitimate leadership and exposed their true image. In Bahrain they stood as one man to demand

an end to tyranny, dictatorship and totalitarianism. He succeeded in sowing the seed of the destruction of "the state". Whether in the past or the present, not many people would like to be called "anti-state", for fear of retribution from that pseudo-state. The state cannot be a state unless serious reforms are undertaken of these institutions whose legitimacy derives the popular support. If such legitimacy is not forthcoming the regime loses the right to remain in power.

Unelected governments often seek legitimacy through repression. The rulers of Bahrain have been troubled by the lack of legitimacy and have sought various ways to overcome this serious dilemma. They could have achieved a degree of legitimacy through power-sharing formula, but they have adopted an agenda of exclusion all along. This has led to endless political crisis. The present one is among the most serious and could be detrimental to their existence. The undisputed fact is that they had occupied the land by force, and that occupation cannot be ignored or forgotten unless they change the mentality often associated with occupation. The policy of exclusion they have all along adopted has only led to more polarization on the political spectrum. This time they thought that the splitting of the Bahraini people on the basis of sectarian affiliation would enable them to claim a fairer representation. So they decided to target the Shia Muslim community in such a harsh way as to induce fear in their midst to deter their activists from continuing their struggle. It is now clear that the policy has failed. They have achieved little in terms of political gain. They have lost any support among the majority Shia population and gained no more acceptance from the mainstream Sunni Muslims. The ongoing trials of 25 activists have been carefully planned so that no major disturbances took place. Among their aims is to stamp out any sign of serious opposition to their legal framework. What is evident now is the opposite. The pockets of civil resistance have continued unabated, with tyre burning in many areas, often sensitive ones. The electronic sites have become more polarised against the Al Khalifa family, while the local and in-

ternational human rights bodies have been infuriated by the extent of human rights violations. The traditional allies of the regime have been tested to the limits as the Al Khalifa policies failed, one after the other. With more than 400 political prisoners, more than one fifth of them children under 18, the Al Khalifa have lost the moral grounds for their offences.

The trials of the main figures of the opposition have exhibited incompetence, inhumane treatment and a sham of justice. The lawyers have become so infuriated by the extent of torture and the use of evidence extracted under torture as the basis of conviction, that they decided to stop their defence of their clients. They have called for new investigations under the jurisdiction of the courts after it has been established that the police and intelligence services have made mockery of human rights. The torture has been so intensive that the Al-Khalifa appointed judges could do little to stop the wide ranging criticism of the regime as one of the most violent and less respectful of the norms and treaties regulating human rights. The opposition has succeeded in drawing the attention of the international community and human rights bodies to the plight of the Bahrainis. In all court sessions so far, some international human rights and media observers were present. This has limited the ability of the regime to manoeuvre, and forced it to accede to the defence demands on matters relating to torture, meeting the defendants and possibly re-investigation. This time the Al Khalifa will not be allowed to have their own way of summary justice based on false confessions and torture. Despite months of enduring ill-treatment the Al Khalifa were shocked to see the steadfastness of these victims and their determination to tell the world of their ordeal. Time may have eventually caught up with the villains, torturers and criminals who have exploited every means of deception to fool the world, especially their allies in Washington and London, of their "good intentions" and "love for democracy". They have achieved only a disastrous failure which could seal their fate for ever. Such a regime does not deserve recognition or respect. It is doomed.

Civil resistance escalates as the security clampdown continues

As the Bahrainis prepare to commemorate the Day of the Martyrs on 17th December, the regime has embarked on more repressive measures to deter the activists from their peaceful pursuit of their legitimate aims. More attacks have been reported on various parts of the country. On Edi Day cars full of members of the Death Squads roamed the roads in search for anti-regime activists in Karbabad. Although the scene has become familiar, yet the atmosphere was transformed from joy to anxiety and fear especially among children and women. Other foreign forces raided the towns of Sfalah and Mhaza, speeding along their narrow lanes and searching a mosque between the two localities. They grabbed a 14-years old child and took him to an unknown destination. In Karzakkan, the police raiders imposed strict orders on people as they raided the town in the past two days. The sounds of whistles echoed in various parts of the town while tear gas was used extensively against those who ventured to protest against the ruling family and called for the release of the political prisoners. The town was placed under virtual curfew. Riot police continued for several hours intimidating the Bahrainis in a desperate attempt to contain the rising anti-regime protests especially tyre burning on the main roads. In both Duraz and Saar children were detained in raids during the early hours of the yesterday morn-

ing. Members of the National Security Agency (NSA) were seen roaming the roads to flush the pro-democracy activists. On their part, the youth have taken to the streets in various areas. On the highway leading to the Bahrain-Saudi causeway, fires were seen on Tuesday and Wednesday near the entrance of Sar. It was dramatic to see such actions as the heavily-armed government forces continued their attacks on civilian areas without mercy or compassion. The youth of Mhazza in Sitra continued their struggle on the Day of Eid in defiance of the regime's brutality. Tyres were burnt near the water tanks. The people had reacted furiously against the raids on their towns and villages.

On another level, the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights has issued a detailed report on the detention of children. It counted 76 children (aged 10-17) who are languishing in torture chambers. This number amounts to 21 percent of the total number of prisoners who are in excess of 400 political prisoners. This percentage is much higher than in the occupied territories. There are fears that some of those children may have been sexually abused on orders from the royal court in retaliation for the failure of the political programme of the ruler.

With the failure of the government to make a sound case against Bahrainis, the official anger against those opposing it could not have been harsher. The deputy

prime minister has gone to USA as part of the lobbying by the Al Khalifa of persons and institutions who have taken noble stands against the repression being committed in Bahrain. Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa met with some members of Congress. He also specifically targeted Human Rights Watch (HRW) and met with Joe Stork the Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa section. The Al Khalifa have adopted a policy of buying off journalists, activists and politicians to support their unjust cause. So far they have had a limited success, although some notable personalities and organizations have been under pressure to accept bribes. In 1998, one of the UN specialists was bribed by the Al Khalifa when her "charity" was granted one million dollars by the Khalifa. The visit by the Al Khalifa to Washington comes two weeks before a planned visit by the US Secretary of State to Bahrain to attend a conference on regional security. Hillary Clinton is under pressure to do something to stop the torture being inflicted on Bahrainis. Several politicians, including members of the US Congress and Senate as well as NGOs have complained to the State Department that the Embassy officials in Bahrain may have turned a blind eye to the ordeals of Bahrainis.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th November 2010

More Bahrainis incarcerated on false charges and tortured

The use of the tailor-made laws to counter the rising popular rejection of the oppressive regime has intensified in recent months. On Sunday 7th November the Al Khalifa-controlled judiciary (court three) passed an eight years jail sentence against a young Bahraini. Abdulla Abdul Mahdi Hassan Al Aradi was accused of taking part in anti-regime demonstration. The same court adjourned the case of the Sanabis group until 28th November after the Bahrainis shocked the court by revealing horrific wounds inflicted on them by torturers over the past two months. They had been detained in early September after taking part in protests calling for a people's constitution and an end to the emergency rules that have institutionalized torture and ill-treatment. The group is made of five Bahrainis, one of who is believed to be in hiding. Those who documented evidence of torture were: Sami Mirza Mushaime, Ahmad Abdulla Sha'ban, Ali Ahmad Al Ninoo and Hassan Yousuf Al Sami'. The Al Khalifa-appointed judge failed to form an independent inquiry into the torture allegations. In the past forty years the regime has never formed a single inquiry into torture claims despite irrefutable evidence of torture and ill-treatment

Among the most outrageous acts of revenge by the Al Khalifa in recent days is

that of a 14 years old boy who was kidnapped by members of the Death Squads on Wednesday 3rd November, beaten, abused and threatened with more torture if he spoke of what had happened to him. The family of Ali Radhi (from the town of Daih) said that their son "suffered broken leg, deep wounds to his head and various wounds on his body. He was transferred to the hospital after he was summarily subjected to most horrific torture. The father said: "I sent my son Ali to buy few things from the grocery shop after we had finished our dinner. There were no troubles at the time in the area. Few minutes later he returned in bad shape, his clothes blood-stained, with a deep wound in his head and several others in various parts of his body. He said that the security men had beaten him". The boy said he was crossing the road when one of the members of the Death Squads placed his feet in his path causing him to fall. He was then set on by the others, kicking and beating him mercilessly. Bahrainis have been outraged by this crime which is a continuation of a long series of mafia-style kidnapping and cruel treatment.

On Sunday 7th November, several youth from the town of Sar were arrested in raids on their homes. Computers and other personal belongings were seized during the raids. The town has been under siege by the security forces for the past few days.

Among those arrested are: Sayyed Ayman Makki Adnan, 20, Sayyed Sadeq Jaffar Hamid, 18, Sayyed Abbas Amin Ibrahim, 24. The families of these young Bahrainis who had been active during the election campaign by the Al Wafaq Society, and are not known for other anti-state activity. Members of Death Squads, operated jointly by the royal court and the National Security Agency, continued their attacks on Bahrainis in other parts of the country. Two days ago they raided the houses of Martyr Hassan Taher Al Sami' in search for his brother and that of Abdul Karim Taher, to arrest his son. In Sanabis, these forces raided the house of Yousuf Al Sami' looking for his son and his nephew. Meanwhile fifty Arab NGOs signed a statement calling for the immediate release of the activists who were put on trial for opposing the dictatorship of the royal family. They condemned the extensive use of torture on detainees and the fabricated charges which were prepared by the security forces. This statement has probably been signed by the largest number of NGOs in the Arab world. It reflects the extent of the popular and professional anger against the ongoing crackdown against the Shia activists and other opposition figures in Bahrain.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
9th November 2010

Attacks on Shia continue as US expresses “concerns” about torture

It did take the torturers long to exact their revenge against those who spoke out against them. Within hours of returning from the first court session on 28th October, Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the head of the National Security Agency (NSA) gave the orders to inflict maximum pain on the 23 Bahraini hostages. From what has leaked from behind the bars, it has now been confirmed that the detainees were subjected to the same treatment they had complained against when they appeared at the court last Thursday. They were hung from their hands and feet, beaten severely on their soles, faces and ears and subjected to more electric shocks. And as they were “Prepared” to meet their relatives today, they were given creams to sooth their pains. It was a callous act that has confirmed the assertion that Bahrain’s judiciary is nothing but a mockery. The Al Khalifa-appointed judge had ordered that the hostages be transferred from solitary confinement at the NSA torture chambers, managed and directed by Khalifa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, the former Ambassador to UK, to an open prison. That order has been ignored. As for the torture, it has now been intensified to the extent that today’s family “meeting” turned into a mourning session as armed torturers stood at the heads of the hostages counting any small move, hint or whisper. The message was clear; We will torture them whatever it takes to make them submissive to what the Al Khalifa wanted them to sign as “confessions” and never to retract them again as they did last week.

Alongside these atrocious acts, the regime’s Death Squads continued roaming the Shia towns and villages to detain more Bahrainis. Early this morning, at least seven young people were detained in Al Ghuraifa, during raids on their homes. In Karzakkan, Hussain Al Sahlawi was injured by the Death Squads when they aimed a shotgun at him near his grandfather’s house. More than 73 shrapnels penetrated his body. He had been in jail for three months before being released only to be detained again. Several people from Bilad Al Qadeen have been also arrested in the past two days. In the early hours of Saturday 30th October, Sayyed Hashim Sayyed Hassan from Sanabis was arrested, beaten and taken away for few hours. He was kidnapped by the occupants of three NSA cars, beaten until he lost consciousness before being dumped in the sea. When he regained his consciousness he followed the lights and found himself in Sitra without money or telephone. He was given a lift by a passing car which took him to his town of Sanabis. Another young man from Daih was subjected to a

similar ordeal and ended at Sulaimaniyah hospital after being picked up by a passing car. He is still receiving treatment at the hospital.

Six cars of riot police and two of Death Squads raided the house of Hassan Sarhan in the village of Abu Al Aish in Sitra, but he was not present. They left behind a trail of fear and destruction. Several houses in the village of Al Musalla were raided at dawn today and arrested three Bahrainis: Ali Al Alwani, Mohammad Al Nashmi and Ahmad Al Alwani. They were taken to an unknown destination.

In its today’s edition the Los Angeles Times published an article titled: “BAHRAIN: Activists' torture allegations shadow elections”. The article by the paper’s correspondent in Beirut, Meris Lutz, published some of the testimonies by the

detainees at their trial last week, including Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace, Sheikh Mohammad Habib Al Miqdad. The paper added: Asked about the recent crackdown and allegations of torture last month, State Department spokesman Philip J. Crowley told reporters that the U.S. had “expressed concerns” to the government of Bahrain, but human-rights groups have been critical of the American stance. “The government has taken over associations and shut down media it doesn't like to silence the loudest critics and intimidate the rest, and Washington says nothing publicly,” Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement released by the group in the wake of the arrests.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
2nd November 2010

US embassy cables

Bahrain king: Attack Iran’s nuclear programme

guardian.co.uk, Sunday 28 November 2010
Classified By: Ambassador Adam Erel, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

1. King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa tells head of US central command, General David Petraeus, that Arab states need to do more to engage Iraq, and urges American action to stop Iran's nuclear programme. Key passage highlighted in yellow.

2. Read related article

1. (C) SUMMARY: In an hour-long meeting on November 1 with CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus, Bahrain's King Hamad said Arab states need to do more to engage Iraq, discussed Afghanistan and the positive role India could play, urged action to stop Iran's nuclear program, and reviewed regional plans for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. END SUMMARY.

2.(C) IRAQ: King Hamad fully endorsed General Petraeus's point that increased Arab engagement and influence would help frustrate Iranian designs in Iraq. He added that the Arabs need Egyptian and Saudi leadership in this matter and that he had tried to make this point to the Saudi government, but with little effect.

3.(C) AFGHANISTAN: General Petraeus praised Bahrain's commitment of a police company for internal security at FOB Leatherneck. King Hamad confirmed that he would personally see the force off at the airport on December 16. This date will be the 10th anniversary of the King's assuming the throne, and General Petraeus said that U.S. air assets would be available on the 16th to transport the company to Afghanistan. King Hamad inquired about the extent of India's involvement in Afghanistan and noted that Bahrain saw India as very positive force in the region. "It's a new era," he said. "They can be of great help."

4.(C) IRAN: King Hamad pointed to Iran as the source of much of the trouble in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He argued forcefully for taking action to terminate their nuclear program, by whatever means necessary. "That program must be stopped," he said. "The danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of stopping it." King Hamad added that in light of these regional developments, Bahrain was working to strengthen GCC coordination and its relations with allies and international organizations. He specifically mentioned NATO and confirmed that Bahrain had agreed to the Alliance's request to use Isa Airbase for AWACS missions, although the detail on numbers and timing have yet to be discussed.

5.(S/NF) BAHRAIN AIR SHOW AND NUCLEAR ENERGY: King Hamad asked General Petraeus for his help in encouraging U.S. aircraft manufacturers to participate in the inaugural Bahrain Air Show, scheduled for January 2010. He said that France was pushing the Rafale and would be there in force, although he agreed with Petraeus that the French fighter was yesterday's technology. Warming to the subject of French commercial diplomacy and referring to President Sarkozy, King Hamad said, "The UAE will give him a hard time soon," over France's proposed deal for nuclear reactors. "They're not happy with the project he's offered them." King Hamad also mentioned that Bahrain was studying options for using nuclear power to generate electricity. He said he had asked the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Public Works to present him recommendations and invited the Ambassador to discuss with them possible U.S. involvement. Post will do so.

The price of blogging

By Adrian Monck

Managing Director and Head of Communications and Media at the World Economic Forum, October 28, 2010

In the mid-2000s City University's Journalism school — well me, to be precise — had a number of conversations with the Bahraini authorities about journalism education, in the context of a more open and robust political culture. The conversations began with an approach by a junior member of the ruling family, a former academic of liberal inclination who wanted to do something to support change.

As a journalist with CBS News, I was deported from Bahrain back in 1992 so I was a little wary of their enthusiasm. (The Information Minister Dr Tariq Alomoayyed summoned me to his office and asked why I had entered Bahrain on a tourist visa: “No one comes to Bahrain as a tourist, Mr Monck.”)

But in the mid-2000s, the country seemed to be on a path to slowly opening up. The old king and his ministers were gone. Exiles had been recalled.

One of the more encouraging signs was a tolerance of digital dissent, embodied by bloggers like Ali Abdulemam, who ran bahrainonline.org. The Wall Street Journal (article [here](#)) noted Abdulemam's blog as a pointer to progress in the Gulf. He was part of the Global Voices network.

The conversation about journalism education carried on for a year or two, went up the official chain of command, and eventually went cold. The promise of a more robust political culture cooled too. That chill brought not only silence, it also



brought arrest and imprisonment for some.

Today Ali Abdulemam is on trial, having been arrested for “diffusing fabricated and malicious news on Bahrain's internal situation to spread rumours and subvert the Kingdom's security and stability.” (<http://english.bna.bh/?ID=89532>).

I know the progressive and enlightened people I met in Bahrain's government will be

embarrassed and saddened by this trial, and that their public silence will not reflect their private views. They will also know that their efforts to promote Bahrain as a modern and business friendly state risk being undermined by the actions of the security apparatus. In building a better future for Bahrain enabling dissent — and integrating it — is as important as international advertising campaigns.

<http://adrianmonck.com/2010/10/price-blogging>

Facts about the second court session

The second session of the trial of the 25 prisoners of conscience on Thursday 11th November turned into a farce after it became clear that the “judge” had failed to act in a professional way. Here are highlights of these failures:

He adamantly refused to investigate allegations of torture despite the unanimous claims by all detainees in the first session on 28th December that they had been severely tortured.

The “judge” refused to allow the lawyers to sit with the detainees in private prior to the court proceedings.

He accepted the charges against the detainees which are based on confessions drawn under torture. All detainees denied the charges and said that they had been forced to sign those confessions.

In the first session on 28th October the detainees exposed their wounds to the court to prove the torture inflicted on them. The court clerks recorded that the detainees had rolled their sleeves, without mentioning the word torture. This perjury is a serious slap to the principles of justice.

The lawyers unanimously refused to continue their litigation unless a new investigation is ordered by the “judge” under a neutral body. Those confessions are completely false and have been written by the blood of the detainees. There is no truth in them whatsoever.

The detainees have confirmed that they had been tortured twice in the two weeks separating the two sessions.

The first was after they returned from that session. They were severely tortured for speaking out of the torture they had endured in the two months after their arrest. Then they were tortured again after they had met their lawyers on 6th November. The regime had insisted that they did not speak to anyone about any torture they had been subjected to. Every time the spoke of it they were re-tortured.

It is clear that the whole play had been pre-set and that the ruling family wanted to teach Bahrainis a lesson by issuing heavy sentences on them based on the false allegations levelled by the security services.

It is now clear that the National Security Agency (NSA) has new cellars under the main headquarters which were extensively used to inflict the worst possible torture on detainees. The fate of those Bahrainis has thus been decided and sealed before they had been arrested.

When the representative of FrontLine came to the court, she was admitted but her interpreters were denied access. So she could not follow what was going on. This is one way of controlling the flow of information. The President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, Mr Nabeel Rajab was denied access to the court. Only one relative of each of the detainees was allowed into the court. The lawyers gave their pledge not to continue their defence until a new investigation has taken place. They did not want to be exploited to legalise a defective process.

Dictators will always lie

The Al Khalifa foreign minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa described the release of secret US embassy cables as illegal because they exposed they exposed He also said information contained in the documents was open to 'false, incorrect and inaccurate' interpretations, since it only reflected the US views on meetings between American officials and other world leaders.

'The illegally leaked and published documents by the WikiLeaks reflect US officials' own analysis and understanding of their joint meetings with leaders and officials in the region, as well as from other relevant events,' Shaikh Khalid said in a statement. However, he did not deny that the ruler had said what had been attributed to him,

One of the documents suggests Bahrain supported efforts to end Iran's nuclear programme, but Shaikh Khalid said all nations had the right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes - although he stressed the need for a Middle East free from weapons of mass destruction.

'The foreign policy of Bahrain on regional issues has clearly been declared and confirmed at all of our joint meetings with international officials, as well as in our public statements, official meetings or Press conferences,' he added, warning that jumping to one-sided conclusions based on the documents could lead to 'false, incorrect and inaccurate results that would not serve security and stability in the region'. -TradeArabia News Service. The ruling family tried to please both American and Iran. He often expressed friendly remarks about Iran, but the Ambassador in Washington has repeatedly attacked Iran. Lying is a losing game.