

BAHRAIN

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

Course of history will obliterate repressive monarchies

A new chapter in the revolution of the Bahraini people is unfolding as the world becomes more involved in the affairs of this troubled country. The extent of the horrors inflicted by the Saudi occupation and the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship is gradually becoming a world's concern with law suits being launched against senior members of the regime for war crimes, torture and extra-judicial killings. Several such lawsuits have now been deposited with the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as more calls from various quarters are made for the immediate end of the Saudi occupation and the removal of the regimes. The world has noted the dramatic failure of the Al Khalifa in the way it has dealt with the demands of the people and its lack of response to undertake serious reforms. There have also been expressions of disgust and anger at the systematic programme of routing of the culture of the natives that culminated in the destruction of more than thirty mosques. The US president has been accused of taking too long to denounce this destruction and of supporting dictatorship, thuggery and genocide. The Al Khalifa programme of routing the Shia natives who make at least 70 percent of the population is also becoming more pronounced as thousands are dismissed from their jobs. When Barak Obama spoke last month of his condemnation of the destruction of mosques, he was presenting the US policy on the ongoing Arab revolutions. His speech has exposed total incompetence, a degree of arrogance and an attempt to market a deficient political stands on issues of significant consequences to the world. With the assumed disappearance of Osama Bin Laden Mr Obama ought to adjust his policies especially in the Middle East. Support of real change in the status quo of the region, whether on the Palestinian front, the democracy movements or the war on terror. He ought to realize that it would be a catastrophic mistake to lose the present momentum for change in the Middle East if he were serious about confronting terrorism. Ten years after 9/11 are enough to bring home to the US that Saudi Arabia was, is and will remain the main cultivation grounds for extremism and terrorism. The Saudi-Wahhabi alliance has created a kingdom of silence that, over the generations, became hotbed for these phe-

nomenon. The Saudi regional dominance is not only dangerous to the blooming revolutions but to the US interests on the long run and the world stability and security. It is deafening to know that Washington has allowed the Saudi regime to assume a regional role far beyond the borders of the Arabian peninsula and has become the driving force behind the counter-revolutionary plots to undermine the wishes of the people in almost all countries whose peoples have taken to the streets en masse.

The people of Bahrain have been victimised by the US policies of the past decades and have paid heavy price to their determination to achieve a democratic transformation in their country. Washington still insists on supporting the Saudi occupation by providing it with the international political and diplomatic cover. It has failed to support the right of the Bahraini people to self-determination and ignored the pleas of the mothers of the victims of the Al Khalifa terrorism. Moreover, it has failed to reprimand the Al Khalifa dictators for the murder of Bahrainis, or the sentencing of innocent youth to death sentences by military courts. Almost all human rights bodies have called for the annulment of the charges and the verdicts which are based on confessions extracted under torture. The leaders of the political movement have remained behind bars since the Saudi intervention in mid-March and are being tried by military tribunals for leading the revolt. They face the prospect of death penalties in line with many other innocent victims. Regardless of what the US claims, the Al Khalifa are taking heart from Obama's lack of principled stands in support of the democracy movements in the Arab world and his cowardice or perhaps complicity in the Saudi occupation and counter-revolutionary plans. The world is thus becoming a less stable or secure place as the Saudis are allowed to run the show that would eventually produce more extremist and terrorist elements to serve the Saudi policies against popular revolutions.

On their part the people of Bahrain have shown extraordinary resilience in the face of the merciless dual attacks by the Saudi-Al Khalifa unholy alliance. The GCC has suddenly felt the aftershocks of the revolutions and decided to act against any local attempt to call for change. This is in paral-

lel to its participation in the counter-revolutionary plans that have delayed the outcome of these revolutions. Despite their serious predicaments, the people of Bahrain have been able to sustain their zeal and determination to rid themselves of the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. They have been particularly heartened by the gestures of other people in the region and elsewhere who rushed to offer their moral and psychological support. In addition to this the humanistic approach by most of the Western press to the way they had been treated by the Saudi-Al Khalifa occupiers have been significant in exposing the double standard policies and stands. When the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, received Salman bin Hamad, the Al Khalifa crown prince the Independent newspaper grasped the mood of the public when it described the meeting in the following headline at the front page: "Cameron embraces tyranny". Nothing could have been nearer to truth. Whether Downing Street has received the message or not remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that the world media has been more forthcoming with regards to the situation in Bahrain and it pinpointed accurately the faults of the Western diplomacy. The leaders of the revolution who are mainly the youth who had called for the 14th February "Day of Rage" are determined to pursue their goals regardless what other factions of the opposition claim. Their main demand was and still is the change of the regime. The GCC leaders have put their weight behind the Al Khalifa but they themselves are being scrutinized by their own population as to their political openness and reforms. Those of them who had sent troops to crush the Bahraini revolution, demolish mosques and wreak havoc in the country will be severely punished by their own people who are also determined to seek their rights. The winds of change have blown over the calm waters of the Gulf, and nothing could shelter its autocratic hereditary dictatorships from the inevitability of change. No miracle will happen, and the course of justice and history will ensure that democracy will replace tyranny. The GCC regimes cannot be sheltered for long by the US, UK or Israel. They are doomed.

International support for the people as Al Khalifa commit more crimes

With the prospect of further flare ups next week of the people's revolution, the Al Khalifa have been working around the clock to elicit some international support and legitimacy as a way out of the crisis. Their efforts have, however, failed drastically. The Al Khalifa crown prince's visit to UK and Europe brought not tangible support to his policy of repression and dictatorship. He proved to be an embarrassment to his hosts as people were infuriated by his presence. In London Bahrainis protested outside Downing Street as the Independent Newspaper declared on its front page: "Cameron embraces tyranny". In a speech addressing the Middle East, U.S. President Barack Obama said that "mass arrests and brute force are at odds with the universal rights of Bahrain's citizens, and will not make legitimate calls for reform go away." Calling for dialogue, he added, "You can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail." This statement followed the sentencing of two Bahrainis to death on a false accusation of participating in the killing of two policemen. There is now a feeling of outrage at the way the Al Khalifa have been allowed to kill Bahrainis with impunity; whether by bullets while protesting, torture in detention or execution in courts where the judge is the executioner. The ruling has been unanimously condemned throughout the world. Yesterday, a protest delivered to the Bahrain Embassy in Brussels today by international, European and Belgian trade union organisations called on the authorities in the Gulf state to stop their violent campaign against the country's trade union movement, to reinstate over 1,000 workers sacked and to drop false charges against union leaders, journalists and human rights defenders. "The Bahraini authorities have launched a vicious crackdown on peaceful and legitimate civil society organisations, including the trade union movement. There are real threats to the personal safety of people who are simply calling for legitimate reform and social justice. The government's attempts to promote division and avoid change by misusing the power of the state are wrong and unsustainable. We are calling on them to stop repression, release all detained trade unionists, teachers, journalists, students and workers. The only way to end this impasse which threatens the country's future is to open genuine dialogue for progress, and stop the repression," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "Embassy officials refused to talk to the delegation delivering today's protest, which, led by ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow, included the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Education International (EI), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the Belgian trade union centres ACV/CSC, ABVV/FGTB and ACLVB/CGSLB, as well

as the Tunisian trade union centre UGTT. The Global peace index 2011 was published on 25th May and showed that Bahrain has dipped down the ladder in terms of peace. It's made up of 23 indicators, ranging from a nation's level of [military](#) expenditure to its relations with neighbouring countries and the level of respect for human rights. The 2011 data shows that:

- Libya (143) saw the most significant drop – falling 83 places; Bahrain (123) dropped by 51 places – the second largest margin; while Egypt (73) dropped 24 places.

Alba (Aluminium of Bahrain) has downgraded 60 Bahraini employees for taking part in demonstrations. This is in addition to hundreds who had been sacked. The policy of starvation is one of the tools employed by the ruling family as part of its policy of genocide.

Meanwhile the Al Khalifa have been working hard to attract back the Formula 1 racing into the country. However, senior members of the race remarked that it was impossible to go back when at least one fourth of the employees attached to the race course are being tortured behind bars. The chances of the Al Khalifa ever enjoying holding the race in Bahrain have gone for good as their own existence as rulers is now in serious doubt.

The situation in the country has been volatile and is becoming increasingly agitated as the 1st June approaches. It is expected that the revolution would flare up again after the martial laws have been suspended.

International stands humiliate Al Khalifa, Saudi occupiers

In the past few days more Bahraini men and women were arrested and taken to the torture chambers being operated by the Al Khalifa and the Al Saud occupiers. Yesterday, Maryam Al Sayigh, 19, was detained and abused. Talal Abdul Hamid (Abu Yaqin) and his cousin, Ahmad Jaffar (Abu Yasser) from Bani Jamra were also arrested yesterday morning. Dr Majid Khalaf was arrested from the Salmaniya hospital. He is a senior surgeon of blood vessels. Saeed Mahdi Ayyad has been arrested when he refused to sign a paper alleging that the family's house was burnt due to an electric fault. The reality is that the house was burnt by the excessive firing of tear gas canisters. These arrests followed the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Ali Al Mahfoodh, 52, the Secretary General of the Islamic Action Society, a registered political society which has been targeted during the recent events. Nothing has been heard of the Sheikh since his arrest on Monday 2nd May.

Meanwhile, the news from the prisons have described an atmosphere of sheer terror as the main figures of the opposition are being tortured mercilessly. Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja has broken skull, jaw and hand. His face is full of stitches while his hands and

ed. In the past few days more protests have taken place in Al Ekr, Al Kawara, Sharakan, Al Musalla, Al Sanabis, Al Dair. A special protest was organized yesterday at Al Malikiya village to mark the 29th birthday of one of the martyrs; Abdul Redha Bu Hamid. Meanwhile a new drama unfolded at yesterday's court session of the 21 leaders accused of attempting to overthrow the Al Khalifa. Sheikh Mohammad Habib Al Miqdad exposed a deep hole in his leg to the judge saying it was a result of torture by an electric drill. The judge-executioner refused his request to expose more torture marks on his body. Another known case of daily torture is that of Ali Al Singace who has been condemned to death.

More women have been detained in the past few days including Hayat Abdul Aziz Al Haddar, an employee at an Aluminium company. Her request to have medicine for her stomach ailment was refused. Nazihah Saeed, a correspondent of France 24 in Bahrain who was arrested for one day and subjected to most horrific torture and abuse. Unlike the British Embassy which has ignored the pleas by British Bahrainis to help them out of their torture, The French Embassy intervened and flew Miss Saeed out of the country. Another student, Nawf Al Khawaja has been arrested from the examination room and taken to an unknown location.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
27th May 2011

Bahrain upholds 2 death sentences in police killings

DUBAI (Reuters) - A Bahrain emergency appeals court upheld death sentences on Sunday for two men found guilty of killing police officers during recent unrest, punishments human rights activists said were designed to prevent more protests. Two other men who were among the four initially sentenced to death on April 28 had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment, the state news agency said.

The report did not say when the two executions would be carried out, but Manama-based legal expert Mohammed Ahmed said they would first need to be approved by Bahrain's king.

Bahrain, home of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, faced a wave of Shi'ite-led protests in February and March demanding democratic reform and an end to sectarian discrimination in the Sunni-ruled kingdom. Some hardliners demanded a republic.

Bahrain's rulers imposed emergency law and called in troops from neighbouring Gulf countries in March to quash the protests, which amounted to the greatest threat to the island kingdom's Sunni rul-

ers in Bahrain's history.

Nabeel Rajab, head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, questioned the ruling. "This is a political case and it's aimed at stopping the protests," he said by telephone. "It's believed that they were targeted because of their (political) activities."

He said one of the two people sentenced to death had a full-length cast on his left leg when the killing took place.

"The man had a broken leg and was moving with crutches, how could he drive a car?" he added.

At least 29 people, all but six of them Shi'ites, have been killed since the protests started, inspired by Arab revolts that ousted the autocratic rulers of Egypt and Tunisia.

The six non-Shi'ites included two foreigners -- an Indian and a Bangladeshi -- and four policemen. A hospital source said in March that at least two of four Bahraini policemen killed during the protests had been run over by cars on March 16.

The death sentences were only the third in more than three decades issued against Bahraini citizens of Bahrain.

One of the prior death penalty cases came

in the mid-1990s, during the greatest political unrest Bahrain had seen before this year. A protester was put to death by firing squad for killing a policeman during that time.

Hundreds of people, mainly Shi'ites, have been arrested and dozens put on trial in Bahrain's crackdown on those who took part in protests. Others have been fired from government jobs. A state of emergency is due to be lifted on June 1.

"There's no household in the Shi'ite community that doesn't have a member arrested by the government or a member that was sacked from his job," Rajab said.

He said his own house was attacked twice in the past few weeks. On Saturday, two tear gas grenades were thrown into his house where his mother, brother and their families live, he said. Two other grenades landed outside the house, he added.

Last week, four journalists from the kingdom's only opposition newspaper, Al Wasat, pleaded not guilty to charges of fabricating news about the security forces' crackdown on anti-government protests.

Embassy Protest Against Bahrain's Anti-Union Repression

26 May 2011: A protest delivered to the Bahrain Embassy in Brussels today by international, European and Belgian trade union organisations calls on the authorities in the Gulf state to stop their violent campaign against the country's trade union movement, to reinstate over 1,000 workers sacked and to drop false charges against union leaders, journalists and human rights defenders.

"The Bahraini authorities have launched a vicious crackdown on peaceful and legitimate civil society organisations, including the trade union movement. There are real threats to the personal safety of people who are simply calling for legitimate reform and social justice. The government's attempts to promote division and avoid change by misusing the power of the

state are wrong and unsustainable. We are calling on them to stop repression, release all detained trade unionists, teachers, journalists, students and workers. The only way to end this impasse which threatens the country's future is to open genuine dialogue for progress, and stop the repression," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

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Our government must not look the other way as Bahrain commits gross violations of human rights

The Muslim Council of Britain today expressed its deep disquiet at our government's apparent inconsistency in foreign and human rights policy.

The Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa's visit to Britain and his meeting with our Prime Minister in Downing Street today flies in the face of British commitments to democratic change in the Middle East. It is untenable that we are prepared to take robust action to protect civilian populations from the actions of brutal regimes in some countries and not others. For the last month the news from Bahrain has been one of security forces using live ammunition on civilian protesters, destruction of mosques, brutal treatment of opposition figures and even medical staff in hospitals.

In February, our Prime Minister said "Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism." Amongst his criteria for engagement included a demand that people sign up to universal human rights. For Bahrain, these criteria seem to have been suspended.

The Muslim Council of Britain urges the Government to cease turning a blind eye to human rights abuses in Bahrain. We are also deeply perturbed by recent media reports that the Bahraini government has targeted pro-democracy campaigners in Manchester.

Muslim Council of Britain
20 May 2011



UK training Saudi forces used to crush Arab spring

British military personnel run courses for snipers

• Human rights groups furious over Riyadh link

Jamie Doward and Philippa Stewart
guardian.co.uk, Saturday 28 May 2011
21.00 BST

Britain is training Saudi Arabia's national guard – the elite security force deployed during the recent protests in Bahrain – in public order enforcement measures and the use of sniper rifles. The revelation has outraged human rights groups, which point out that the Foreign Office recognises that the kingdom's human rights record is "a major concern".

In response to questions made under the Freedom of Information Act, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed that British personnel regularly run courses for the national guard in "weapons, fieldcraft and general military skills training, as well as incident handling, bomb disposal, search, public order and sniper training". The courses are organised through the British Military Mission to the Saudi Arabian National Guard, an obscure unit that consists of 11 British army personnel under the command of a brigadier.

The MoD response, obtained yesterday by the Observer, reveals that Britain sends up to 20 training teams to the kingdom a year. Saudi Arabia pays for "all BMM personnel, as well as support costs such as accommodation and transport".

Bahrain's royal family used 1,200 Saudi troops to help put down demonstrations in March. At the time the British government said it was "deeply concerned" about reports of human rights abuses being perpetrated by the troops.

"Britain's important role in training the Saudi Arabian national guard in internal security over many years has enabled them to develop tactics to help suppress the popular uprising in Bahrain," said Nicholas Gilby of the Campaign Against Arms Trade.

Analysts believe the Saudi royal family is desperate to shore up its position in the region by preserving existing regimes in the Gulf that will help check the increasing power of Iran.

"Last year we raised concerns that the Saudis had been using UK-supplied and UK-maintained arms in secret attacks in Yemen that left scores of Yemeni civilians dead," said Oliver Sprague, director of Amnesty International's UK Arms Programme.

Defence minister Nick Harvey confirmed to parliament last week that the UK's armed forces provided training to the Saudi national guard. "It is possible that some members of the Saudi Arabian national guard which were deployed

in Bahrain may have undertaken some training provided by the British military mission," he said.

The confirmation that this training is focused on maintaining public order in the kingdom is potentially embarrassing for the government. Coming at the end of a week in which the G8 summit in France approved funding for countries embracing democracy in the wake of the Arab spring, it has led to accusations that the government's foreign policy is at conflict with itself.

Jonathan Edwards, a Plaid Cymru MP who has tabled parliamentary questions to the MoD about its links to Saudi Arabia, said he found it difficult to understand why Britain was training troops for "repressive undemocratic regimes". "This is the shocking face of our democracy to many people in the world, as we prop up regimes of this sort," Edwards said. "It is intensely hypocritical of our leadership in the UK – Labour or Conservative – to talk of supporting freedoms in the Middle East and elsewhere while at the same time training crack troops of dictatorships."

The MoD's response was made in 2006, but when questioned this week it confirmed Britain has been providing training for the Saudi national guard to improve their "internal security and counter-terrorism" capabilities since 1964 and continues to do so. Members of the guard, which was established by the kingdom's royal family because it feared its regular

army would not support it in the event of a popular uprising, are also provided places on flagship UK military courses at Sandhurst and Dartmouth. In Saudi Arabia, Britain continues to train the guard in "urban sharpshooter" programmes, the MoD confirmed.

Last year, Britain approved 163 export licences for military equipment to Saudi Arabia, worth £110m. Exports included armoured personnel carriers, sniper rifles, small arms ammunition and weapon sights. In 2009, the UK supplied Saudi Arabia with CS hand grenades, teargas and riot control agents.

Sprague said a shake-up of the system licensing the supply of military expertise and weapons to foreign governments was overdue. "We need a far more rigorous case-by-case examination of the human rights records of those who want to buy our equipment or receive training."

An MoD spokesman described the Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, as "key partners" in the fight against terrorism. "By providing training for countries to the same high standards used by UK armed forces we help to save lives and raise awareness of human rights," said the spokesman.

Labour MP Mike Gapes, the former chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, said British military support for Saudi Arabia was about achieving a "difficult balance".

"On the one hand Saudi Arabia faces the threat of al-Qaida but on the other its human rights record is dreadful. This is the constant dilemma you have when dealing with autocratic regimes: do you ignore them or try to improve them?"

UN urges Bahrain to free detained activists

05 May 2011

UN's human rights chief has called for Bahrain to free activists it has seized since crushing anti-government protests and for an independent probe into allegations of torture. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's remarks on Thursday were the sharpest international criticism yet of the crackdown in Bahrain where the Sunni-led government has arrested hundreds from its Shia Muslim majority since the protests began.

"All political detainees must be immediately released and all detainees must have prompt access to legal counsel," Pillay said in a statement.

"My office has also received reports of severe torture against human rights defenders who are currently in detention... There must be independent investigations of these cases of death in detention and allegations of torture."

At least four people have died in detention, and rights groups have criticised death sentences handed out last week to four men accused of killing policemen in

March during protests that began with calls for more political liberties in the kingdom.

The defendants in that case were accused of running down two policemen with a car in March.

Families of the condemned men and rights groups say the court, which also sentenced three men to life in prison, kept the defendants from meeting lawyers and mounting any defence.

"The application of the death penalty without due process and after a trial held in secrecy is illegal and absolutely unacceptable," Pillay said.

The UN statement said more than 1,000 may have been detained, and the whereabouts of 50 of them are unknown.

New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement on Wednesday that it had received credible reports that a detained human rights activist, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, had been hospitalised following beatings while in custody.

Amnesty International also appealed to Bahrain's rulers to bring an end to a campaign of arrests against its opponents.