

BAHRAIN

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

After Gaddafi, Al Khalifa on free fall to dustbin of history

The ongoing revolution in Bahrain has continued unabated despite the relentless efforts to extinguish its flames. Eight months after its launching, the Bahrain's revolution seems to have achieved at least one outcome that is necessary for the its eventual success. Both parties; the people and the Al Khalifa, are now engaged in relentless efforts to disengage from any further dealings or relations. Since he ascended to the throne following the death of his father in March 1999, the dictator has undertaken a programme of "Khalfanah" i.e, intensification of Al Khalifa presence in the various forms of the state. Within the cabinet their numbers have increased significantly with more than half cabinet posts occupied by the Al Khalifa members. Senior managers of government departments are also taken by them. This phenomenon has infuriated the majority of the population who have witnessed the gradual erosion of the country's identity as the dictator turned it into private ownership to himself and his clique. The revolution has galvanized the public perception that the Al Khalifa are the real enemies of people. This enmity has been crystallized in the minds of the public in response to several policies adopted by the ruling clan that have solidified this perception.

First came the repeal by the dictator of the country's legitimate constitution of 1973. This happened on 14th February 2002 when he addressed the people and confirmed that his constitution would be put into effect on that day. To Bahrainis this step marked the end of public legitimacy of the ruling clan. The 1973 constitution is the only official document that granted them public legitimacy. That constitution was drawn up by Bahrainis in an open elections in December 1972. It was the first time that the Bahrainis had ever granted the ruling clan the right to rule. The prime minister who is now 76 years of age had been aware of the implications of that document and, despite his appetite for dictatorship, had refrained from repealing that document that he had been aware of its significance as the source of legitimacy of the Al Khalifa rule. During the black era (extending between 1975 and 2000) the prime minister upheld the

constitution while suspending the articles that regulated the election process. The present dictator, however, has not recognized the role of people as a source of legitimacy and has acted as an absolute ruler who thought that he did not need the people's legitimacy. This implies that he was the constitution, the source of legitimacy and the main arbiter in solving disputes in accordance with the tribal regime. With the removal of the only source of public legitimacy the present dictator is running the country in the absence of political discourse that would provide the regime with the right to rule. Second; since his ascendance to the throne, the dictator has adopted policies of discrimination and marginalisation of Bahrainis. These policies have convinced the natives that they could not count on the regime to preserve their rights as partners in politics. They were side-lined as the dictator put into effect the manifesto of his chief of staff who runs his office. Khalid bin Ahmad Al Khalifa had published this "manifesto" in the form a poem back in 1996 that he had spread among the people and which had threatened to behead the Shia majority with swords and banish them to remote islands. Bahrainis became more convinced that they were dealing with an enemy; not just a dictator.

Thirdly; since he became the ruler, the dictator has been propping up the Al Khalifa elements within the cabinet posts and the wider governmental departments. Khalifanisation, as some tends to call it, has become part of everyday's life in the country while native Bahrainis has suffered enormously at the hands of the dictators who is intent on expanding his clan's rule and domination over the native Bahrainis. It is also known that within the Al Khalifa clan, there are differences as well as competition for political positions. This does not concern the people who want to rid themselves of this hereditary dictatorship sooner than later. The present dictator has done little to win the hearts or minds of the natives. Instead, he has enraged them through his dictatorial as well as partisan policies.

In addition to the above, Hamad and his son have expropriated vast areas of sea, reclaimed it at government's expense and

earned huge royalties from businessmen. Instead of distributing those new lands to the needy Bahrainis, the dictator has grabbed them to himself, leaving the people in ever more destitution. The policies of the past eight months, ie, since the inception of the revolution, have added to the perception of enmity between the two sides. With the return of torture as a tool against forthcoming discontent, the dictator has shown himself even more ruthless than his uncle, the prime minister, who has been the longest-serving prime minister in the world. The ruler had been preparing his counter-insurgency strategy for years and had anticipated the all-out revolution to oust the Al Khalifa. He has depended on foreign strategists with the hope that they will safeguard his interests and end his isolation. Hamad stands accused of deliberate preparation for activating torture with impunity to all those involved. Among them is the notorious Adel Flaifel who had personally tortured hundreds of Bahrainis in the past and is now presented as a force form democracy in the country.

Despite the Al Khalifa persistence in their anti-Shia policies and strategies, they have failed to dislodge them from their entrenchment as leaders of the most reactionary and outdated rule of debate in this tiny island. The future of the Al Khalifa rule in Bahrain has been severely undermined and the most likely outcome of the current crisis is the end of the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. The situation has reached the point of no return as the dictator and his clan have treated Bahrainis with extreme forms of enmity, disdain and hatred. The two sides see each other as real enemy and there is little room for a compromise. The people have raised the stake by blatantly calling for the end of the Al Khalifa regime while the ruling clan has responded with policies of revenge that no other embattled regime had adopted yet, starting with destroying mosques, detaining and torturing doctors, raping women and institutionalizing racism in its most outrageous forms. It can thus be claimed that regime change has become unavoidable because the two sides have become staunch enemies and cannot live together any more.

“Arrows of Dignity” pierce the body of dictatorship and occupation

The brutal end meted on Colonel Gaddafi of Libya has sent shock waves to Bahrain's dictator and his regime. Bahrainis were encouraged by the downfall of the dictator as they acted firmly during the week they had termed “Arrows of dignity” during which they demonstrated in many parts of the country. They chanted the main slogans of the revolution: “People wants regime change” and “Down with Hamad”. The situation has now reached a point of no return with no chance of accepting to deal with the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. From the town of Dair in the North to Karzakkan and Sitra roads were closed by the revolutionary youth who used burnt tyres to disrupt traffic. Most of the main roads were closed bringing traffic to a halt. The main highways, including the one that links Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, were closed. The regime's Death Squads went into action, firing live bullets at demonstrators in Samaheej, Dair, Nowaidrat, Duraz and the “triangle of resistance”. Women were out in strength especially in Duraz and faced the notorious riot police which were heavily armed and vicious. Many arrests were made in various parts of the country. The Shia of Muharraq now live in constant fear after the regime's militias issued warning and threats that they would be wiped

out in retaliation for the revolution that had exposed the brutality of the Al Khalifa. These threats have made more serious by the presence of the Saudi army which had invaded the country and kept it under occupation since mid-March. The death of Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, the Saudi defence minister, has highlighted the possibility of more radical and vicious elements in the “Big neighbor”. Bahrainis were indifferent to the demise of Sultan, knowing that whoever replaces him would not be less brutal or dictatorial. Bahrainis have appealed to the world to stand up to the challenge of the Saudi occupation and take a stand to end it sooner than later. They are confident that occupation cannot win, and that the revolution has survived its brutality and viciousness. The Bahraini people expect the Security Council to address this unprovoked aggression. Efforts are being made by friends of Bahraini people to urge the organizers of the International Bahrain Air Show, scheduled to take place in January, to cancel the show in protest at the brutality of the Al Khalifa dictatorship. The Show is held once every two years and organized by the Farnborough Air Show organizers. Human rights and pro-democracy activists have raised their total objection to the show on the basis that it will only strengthen the resolve of

dictatorship and condone aggression and brutality. During this year, Formula1, the international car race organizers, cancelled two scheduled races planned in Bahrain after international human rights and pro-democracy bodies urged them to do so. Bahrain Air Show 2012 must be cancelled. That is the message of the revolutionaries to the world today.

Meanwhile, concerns for the life of Mr Hassan Mushaima, the most prominent leaders of the pro-democracy movement have been raised by many quarters including his family. He has been denied proper treatment for his cancer ailment. His family has sustained ferocious attacks by the Death Squads operated by the dictator's office. In the early hours of Wednesday 19th October, his son, Mohammad, 24, who was released from jail last month was kidnapped from his bed, together with his brother-in-law and taken to one of the secret locations used for ill-treatment of prisoners. They were both severely tortured before being dumped near the family's home. Images of their mutilated bodies were distributed on websites that shocked the world. How could human beings be driven to this extent of brutality and how such policies could save a dictatorship.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
23rd October 2011

Massive protests on Independence Day, Bissiouni's mission doomed

The past few days have witnessed dramatic escalation in demonstrations and protests in most towns and villages. ill-treatment and torture threaten the lives of leaders

Fears for the lives of the opposition leaders jailed for their opinion and political demands have grown in the past two weeks after reports of criminal behavior by the Al Saud and Al Khalifa security forces were reported. The case of Hassan Mushaima, the leader of Haq Movement, has been of special concern due to lack of treatment to his cancer ailment. Last year he was treated at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London and was completely cleared of cancer. This was concluded by his doctor after a PET scan confirmed that all traces of cancer had disappeared. However, the ill-treatment he received after his arrest last March and the lack of proper medical care had led to serious concerns about his condition. He had been given three doses while blindfolded the nature of which is not known. His condition deteriorated for a while and his real condition now is unknown. International human rights bodies are urged to take the cases of Bahraini detainees seriously, especially those of Mr Hassan Mushaima and Mr Abdul Wahab Hussain who also has been ill-treated despite his serious illness in the nervous system.

The anger of the people has been expressed by demonstrators in the past few days. Last night the people of Dair demonstrated in the streets raising slogans that called for regime change and the downfall of the dictator, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. They were at-

tacked by the Al Saud and Al Khalifa riot police and chemical weapons (in the form of tear gas canisters) were extensively used against them. One chemical device was thrown inside the house of a local family with the clear aim to kill its occupants. There are now several video clips showing these forces attacking homes of Bahrainis. At least seven citizens were killed by these chemical weapons. Despite repeated calls to the UK and USA to stop supplying the Al Saud and Al Khalifa regimes with lethal weapons, there has been little response from either. However, calls have repeatedly been made by news media to stop arms sales to those two regimes who have proven themselves to be brutal, ruthless and inhumane.

It has now been reported by several news media, such as the Agence France Press and the Wall Street Journal that the US has frozen an arms deal with Bahrain. In its yesterday's edition the paper said: “The Obama administration won't proceed with a planned arms sale to Bahrain until it reviews the monarchy's progress investigating alleged human rights abuses and implementing reforms, the State Department told Congress in a letter”. It further added: “The State Department notified Congress last month of plans to sell \$53 million in arms to Bahrain, including more than 40 armored Humvees and 300 missiles. Last week, several prominent U.S. senators criticized the deal and asked the State Department to put any sales on hold.”

Meanwhile two teachers have been arrested for despite their release last month. Amnes-

ty International has issued a statement expressing concern at the way those two teachers were treated. Amnesty International said that “it feared both Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb may be imprisoned solely on account of their legitimate exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, in which case they should be released immediately and unconditionally and their convictions should be quashed. “She has told us how she was previously ill-treated and verbally abused after she was arrested in the middle of the night by armed officials following popular protests in Bahrain last March. This action by the security forces inevitably raises renewed concerns about her safety in detention.”

The Bahraini people have now called on the organisers of the Bahrain Air Show scheduled for January 2012, to abandon the idea of holding the event in Bahrain. The organisers; Farnborough International, have been urged not to go ahead with organizing this even for several reasons. The first is that the country is unstable; it has serious human rights crimes committed by senior members of the regime. The second is that the regime has lost its legitimacy and is no longer representative of Bahraini people. The third is that by inviting the Saudi troops to occupy the island, the Al Khalifa had forfeited the sovereignty over the islands and are thus considered null and void.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th October 2011

Al Qattan's blood will haunt the Twin Evil Alliance and defeat it

Yesterday's funeral procession of the latest martyr has confirmed without any doubt that killing of Bahrainis has only solidified their position and crystallized their vision for fundamental political change. The killing of Ahmad Jaber Al Qattan, 16, with live ammunition has dealt the Al Saud occupiers and Al Khalifa dictatorship serious blows that has now polarized the situation as never before. He was shot at close range with shotgun that penetrated his chest and head. He was taken to hospital but died almost immediately. The Al killings by the Al Saud and Al Khalifa have enraged Bahrainis and all freedom-loving people of the world, but their allies, especially the US, UK and Israel have used their influence to shield them at the UN. Despite the numerous calls by human rights bodies to refer Bahrain to the Security Council, the resistance by these countries to these calls has made it almost impossible to secure a consensus on referral. Bahrainis will not forget this inhumane treatment by those countries as they bury their sons and brother almost everyday. Mr Al Qattan was taking part in a peaceful demonstration on Thursday night (6th October) at the town of Abu Saibe' when one of the mercenaries acting on orders of the dictator, shot him at blank range with his rifle. His colleagues rushed him to hospital but he was dead on arrival. The Saud and Al Khalifa military commanders issued a statement confirming the crime and said it was "investigating". None of the killers of more than fifty Bahrainis has been charged. Tens of thousands took part in the funeral yesterday amid tight security presence, while helicopter gunships hovered overhead to intimidate the mourners. The chanting of the people with slogans that have now become familiar such as "The people want regime change" and "Down with Hamad" has sent a clear message to the occupiers and their supporters that Bahrainis have no stomach to accept either the Saudi occupation or the Al Khalifa regime. Both must go.

In another development, the Al Saud and Al Khalifa are preparing for the prospect of massive political defeat in the case of the Bahraini doctors who have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment ranging between 5 and 15 years for treating the injured in February and March. A military court confirmed the sentences which had been condemned by almost every human rights body in the world. The verdicts were so outrageous that the American and British allies of the Saudis and Al Khalifa were forced to condemn them. But instead of calling for their immediate and unconditional release, the UK Government "welcomed the intended retrial" of the medics by a civilian court. According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, these people should not have been in jail in the first place as they had com-



mitted no crime.

The doctors, themselves have issued a statement condemning the sentences and argued that they have sent a dangerous message to the people; that treating the injured is a crime. The Al Saud occupiers and Al Khalifa dictators have failed to produce a shred of credible evidence that any of the medical staff had committed a real crime. These trials have only shown that the regime is simply corrupt and is un-reformable. The Twin Evil Alliance (Saudis and Al Khalifa) are expected to be defeated in the stand off with the medical staff and will be forced to release them soon and will have to face a humiliating climb down. The world will see for itself the

crimes of the Twin Evil Alliance when their victims are released and the lies and fabrications of their torturers are exposed.

In Beirut a special conference on human rights in Bahrain was convened on Wednesday and Thursday (6th and 7th October) in the presence many HR bodies and news media. Many speakers gave horrifying accounts of the human rights violations in Bahrain. The final statement called for immediate investigation by the international community into those violations, the referral of Bahrain to the UN Security Council and the immediate withdrawal of the Saudi forces.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
8th October 2011

Deteriorating human situation as leaders and doc-

The martyrdom of Jaffar LutfAllah, 74, from Abu Saibe' village on Friday 30th September has enraged the people of Bahrain and called on the international community to take serious actions to stop the onslaught by Saudi and Al Khalifa forces on the country. Mr LutfAllah had inhaled large amounts of chemical gases fired by the regime's security forces on Sunday 18th September and went into coma. He was taken to hospital and passed away 12 days later. The family described in detail the crime to the Bissiouni committee supposedly investigating the crimes committed by the Al Khalifa against the people, but it failed to take serious action. The attack happened when the regime's forces attacked a peaceful protest near the entrance of the village with large amounts of chemical and tear gases. It has now been established that those forces often throw gas canisters inside people's homes where the effect of the gases become more lethal in confined spaces. This brings to four the number of martyrs in September. The earlier martyrs are: Ali Al Sheikh, Jaffar Hassan Yousuf and Sayyed Jawad Sayyed Ahmad.

Meanwhile it has been reported that the health of both Abdul Wahab Hussain and Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace have deteriorated as a result of hunger strike and ill-treatment by the regime's torturers. Today is the eighth day of the strike. The leading figures who had been incarcerated in Al Khalifa jails since the Saudis invaded Bahrain in March had gone on hunger strike to protest the vicious attacks on women that had taken place last week. News from inside the jail have confirmed that the hunger strikers have been severely punished in recent days. They have been denied medical care which is greatly needed as most of them suffer various illnesses due to relatively old age and ill treatment. More than 30 women had been arrested, shackled and thrown on the street before being taken to torture cells. Images of women, handcuffed and scattered on the roads had cause enormous anger and pain among



the people who, unlike the Al Khalifa, hold women at high esteem and respect. Senior religious scholars had also staged a protest against the ill-treatment of Bahraini women by the Saudi-backed Al Khalifa forces. A rally was held on Thursday by Bahraini women to protest this crime and was addressed by former women hostages including the poet, Ayat Al Qurmuzi.

On another level the international community has been outraged by the death and lengthy prison sentences passed by the military court against a large number of Bahrainis. On Wednesday 28th September the Saudi and Al Khalifa clans, through their military court, confirmed the earlier prison sentences passed against the leading figures. Eight were given life sentences and 14 were given prison sentences ranging between 5 and 15 years. On Thursday 29th September, 20 doctors were sentenced to lengthy prison sentences. Most were given 15 years and the rest five to ten years. The doctors were released two weeks ago in response to international pressures only to be charged and summoned by the military court to serve their jail terms. The American President, as usual, expressed "concern" at these sentences while the British Foreign Secretary condemned them. Irish doctors who had staged hunger strike last month in support of Bahraini doctors, are planning to lobby the American professional bodies to take action in support of these victims whose main crime was performing their duties and treating the victims of the vicious attacks by the Saudi and Al Khalifa forces in March.

The Saudi and Al Khalifa forces have continued to arrest more Bahrainis. Among the latest are seven from Bilad Al Qadeem, arrested on Friday 30th September: Abd Ali Hayat, his daughter, Fathiya and two sons: Jassim, Mohammad. Three brothers were also arrested; Ahmad Al Madani and his two brothers; Hussain and Abdulla. Demonstrations have continued in various parts of the country. Last night the people of Dair took to the streets but were severely attacked by hooded members of the Death Squads when they reached Zakariya Al Ahsiri Square.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
2nd October 2011

Arms sales to repressive Bahrain misplaced

By Editorial, Thursday, September 29, 7:38 PM

THE RULERS of Bahrain, an island nation in the Persian Gulf that hosts the U.S. 5th Fleet, undoubtedly worry that their harsh crackdown on a peaceful pro-democracy movement could damage vital relations with Washington. The government has hired a pricey Washington lobbying firm and regularly dispatches senior officials to stroke the administration and Congress. It has repeatedly promised to free political prisoners, reverse a mass purge of suspected protesters from government jobs and negotiate meaningful reforms of the al-Khalifa monarchy, a Sunni dynasty that rules over a majority-Shiite population.

Yet the regime hasn't kept its promises — and its unjustified and self-defeating repression goes on. The latest brazen step came Thursday, when a special security court sentenced 20 doctors and other medical professionals to lengthy prison terms after a grossly unfair trial. The doctors were charged with stockpiling weapons and trying to overthrow the regime; in fact, their offense was treating injured protesters who arrived at their hospital and reporting what they saw to international media. A host of human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, pronounced the trial a travesty; Human Rights First said the medics had given "consistent and credible accounts of being tortured into giving confessions."

The convictions came just a day after a court upheld the convictions of 21 oppo-

sition leaders, including clerics, members of political parties, human rights activists and bloggers. None are guilty of violence, but all were nonetheless accused of terrorism; eight received life sentences. They, too, have offered credible reports of torture. Another human rights group, Freedom House, said the rulings continued "a pattern of repression that belies any promises of meaningful reform by the government."

Such a unanimous verdict from human rights groups ought to spell trouble for a government that depends on the United States for defense and enjoys a free-trade agreement with it. Yet there is no sign of serious friction between the Obama administration and the al-Khalifa family. Administration spokesmen have largely kept quiet as the crackdown has proceeded. On the military front, it is business as usual. This month the Pentagon notified Congress of a plan to sell Bahrain armored Humvees and anti-tank missiles worth \$53 million.

The message this sends is unmistakable: The regime's crackdown will not affect its cozy relationship with the United States. This is dangerous for the United States as well as for Bahrain, because the government's attempt to suppress legitimate demands for change from a majority of the population is ultimately doomed to failure. Bahrain's ruling family should be given more reason to worry about its standing in Washington. A congressional hold on the arms package would be a good way to start.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE 18 October 2011

Catherine Ashton condemns kangaroo trials

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, issued the following statement today: "I would like to express my deep concern about the recent trials of civilians in Bahrain's Courts of National Safety. Harsh prison sentences have just been reconfirmed against medical personnel, teachers, opposition and political activists. I urge the Bahraini authorities to fulfil their promises and bring the use of these courts to an immediate end. Further appeals should be heard transparently and fairly in regular courts in full accordance with Bahrain's own laws and international obligations. I also want to condemn the use of the death sentence and call on Bahrain to re-establish a moratorium on its use.

These sentences risk further exacerbating tensions in Bahrain. I reiterate my call for dialogue between the regime and the opposition, as the only way to promote national reconciliation. The EU is ready to extend support, as and when requested.

Finally, I am looking forward to the conclusion of the inquiry by the independent Commission on the events surrounding the unrest earlier this year, and call on the Bahraini authorities to accept the requested visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as soon as possible."



Fears for Bahraini teacher after pre-dawn arrest

There are fears for the safety of a former vice-president of the Bahrain Teacher's Association after she was arrested in heavy-handed fashion before dawn this morning after recently speaking out about earlier abuses.

Jalila al-Salman was taken from her home in Bahrain by a force of more than 30 security officials, including riot police, who arrived in seven vehicles. The officials reportedly said that they were enforcing a court order for her arrest though they refused to produce a formal arrest warrant.

Last month, Jalila al-Salman was convicted on charges that included attempting to overthrow the Bahrain government after a trial before the military National Safety Court, although she is a civilian.

Her appeal is due to be heard in a civilian court on 1 December. "The manner in which Jalila al-Salman was arrested this morning appears to have been intended to intimidate her and her family and to put them through another terrifying ordeal," said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International's Middle East and North



Africa Director.

"She has told us how she was previously ill-treated and verbally abused after she was arrested in the middle of the night by armed officials following popular protests in Bahrain last March. This latest action by the security forces inevitably raises renewed concerns about her safety in detention."

"The Bahraini authorities also need to explain why Jalila al-Salman has been arrested at a time when others who are waiting for their promised civilian court appeals to be heard have been allowed their release on bail." "She does not present a serious flight risk but has continued to speak out about her own experiences in detention and the plight of others, leading us to fear that this is the reason for the action taken against her this morning."

Jalila al-Salman was sentenced to three years of imprisonment on 25 September. Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb, former president of the Bahrain Teacher's Association, was tried with her and



sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

The charges included using their positions within the BTA to call for teachers' strike, organize marches and demonstrations, incite "hatred of the regime" and seek its overthrow by force, and their trial was unfair.

In recent weeks, Jalila al-Salman has given a media interview and spoken at a conference about the human rights situation in Bahrain.

Amnesty International said that it feared both Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb may be imprisoned solely on account of their legitimate exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, in which case they should be released immediately and unconditionally and their convictions should be quashed.

"If their civilian court appeals are to go ahead, then there must be a totally new investigation, including into the defendants' allegations that they were tortured and otherwise ill-treated in pre-trial detention and forced to sign statements incriminating themselves, and any officials found responsible for such abuses must be brought to justice."