

# BAHRAIN

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

## Year 2 of Saudi occupation: a wake up call to the world

All measures taken by counter-revolution forces to crush the Bahraini revolution have drastically failed to dislodge the people from their positions and stands. As the revolution enters its second year its enemies must realize that they have been defeated. No effort has been spared by those forces as they conspired against the will of the people, their aspirations and their demands. For twelve months, all means of repression and aggression were employed against the largest and most serious political strife since the Al Khalifa occupied Bahrain by the use of force, against the wish of its native inhabitants. Within a month of the 14<sup>th</sup> February revolution, the regime collapsed. It was a humiliating defeat for a regime that had thought it had crushed all opposition with the help of foreign security experts, political support and public relations companies. Prior to the revolution, the Al Khalifa hit their opponents at will, arresting and torturing thousands over the earlier three decades. The six months prior to 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at least five hundred people had been rounded up in a massive unprovoked crackdown on activists. Twenty three senior figures of the opposition were subjected to most horrific torture that had not been administered before on detainees. More than seventy young people were kidnapped, tortured and dumped in remote locations as the machine of terror continued to humiliate and repress the population. The dungeons of the National Security Agency, run and managed by Khalifa bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, became horror places with stories of extreme sadistic methods of torture rampant. The situation had become unbearable for thousands of Bahrainis whose children had been persecuted at levels unseen before. On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011 the revolution erupted in an expression of unprecedented anger. The Al Khalifa regime carried out a crackdown on the demonstrations causing deaths and injuries to many. The course of the political history of Bahrain was unfolding at a fast pace. Scores of people were killed as the regime gradually became more paralysed. Four weeks of protests within the Pearl Roundabout area and outside destroyed the regime; its legitimacy obliterated, power structure shaken and its ability to comprehend the consequences of

the revolution ceased. Instead of addressing the demands of the people, the Al Khalifa reacted in their vicious ways killing and maiming thousands of demonstrators. These tactics helped to galvanise public opinion against the hereditary dictatorship as never before. At first the people were calling for limited reforms such as removal of the prime minister who had spent more than forty years in his post or allowing some constitutional changes. But as the regime became more intransigent and adopted more repressive measures the people gave up any hope of reforming the regime. With other Arab countries continuing their revolutions, the people were emboldened to call for regime change. The ruler, Hamad, became symbol of hatred whose removal became a demand of the people. Down with Hamad has now become symbolic of the revolution. Any attempt to reconcile the two sides; the people of Bahrain and the Al Khalifa family, is seen as far-fetched. People have no stomach for a future with Al Khalifa retaining any power. The fate of monarchy in Bahrain has been sealed. The future of Bahrain can only be free of the Al Khalifa who are viewed as enemies of Bahraini people. No door has remained open for any future reconciliation especially after the ruler and his henchmen became enemies of the people. Torture chambers became houses of horror in which men, women and children were mutilated. Outside jails, the people were attacked in vicious ways; chemical gases became the main tool of repression against Bahrainis. Popular anger has reached new heights as collective punishment became rampant. Men, women and children were subjected to horrific treatment as torture became institutionalized. In the words of the BICI report, the Al Khalifa adopted systematic torture to repress Bahrainis. It has now been officially established that the Al Khalifa are torturers and killers; to put Bissiouni's report in simple terms. It is difficult to convince Bahrainis to accept Al Khalifa remaining in power after the experience of the past twelve months. The situation has been so polarized that the two sides can never co-exist again. The various approaches by the Americans to facilitate "dialogue" between the two sides have foundered as the distance between the people and the regime widened. It has now

become clear that the Americans are the main obstacle to change in the region. Following their debacle in both Tunisia and Egypt, they have become enemy of change and resorted to extreme measures to prevent success of the revolutions. They used Saudis as the main pawns in their endeavour to counter the revolution; a role the Saudis were more than happy to undertake. Together with the Saudis they hatched the plot for the Saudis to occupy Bahrain.

As the revolution in Bahrain begins its second year it faces not only the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship but with it the American rejection of democracy in the GCC countries, the new security arrangements and plans hatched by the American and British officers seconded to Bahrain by Washington and London and the Saudi forces supplemented by the petrodollars. However, Bahrainis are aware that their aims are noble, their methods have always been peaceful and that falsehood, injustice and dictatorship cannot be allowed to prevail. They are also aware that the popular movement behind the revolution has gathered enough momentum to enable it to continue the path until final victory. Bahrainis are more determined today than at any time before that if the painful past is to be prevented from returning, then the Al Khalifa rule must not be allowed to prevail. The only choice available to them is to continue their struggle until they achieve victory which will not only belong to them but to all those who aspire for freedom, justice, rule of law and supremacy of humanity over other concerns. Over the past decades they suffered greatly under the hereditary dictatorship. If it is allowed to continue it will grant the land of our grandfathers to the Saudis under the illusive term of union. Other GCC states have refused to join up with Saudi Arabia, knowing the nature of its expansionism, backwardness and cruelty, but the Al Khalifa are of different creed. They owe their existence today to the Saudi occupation that had invaded the country on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2011 and intends to expand its territory to other GCC countries. It is time that the world stood by the Bahrainis in their struggle to enable them build their democratic future and fulfill the wishes of their martyrs.

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## Martyrs fall, Western activists expelled but revolution continues

Two Bahrainis were martyred in recent days. The first is Hussain Al Baqqali, 21, who died as he was participating in an activity to close the road near his hometown of Jidhafs. He was mourned by his colleagues and the people as a young man of action who has always been on the scene at the forefront of demonstrators and protesters. His funeral on 21<sup>st</sup> February was severely attacked by the Al Khalifa mercenaries who flooded the area with large amounts of chemical and tear gases. The second martyr was Mansoor Salman from Sitra who was in his seventies. He had been in his house when lethal chemical gases were thrown inside the house. His daughters struggled to save him and he was taken to hospital where he died on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February. With his martyrdom the people who were gassed to death by the Al Khalifa has risen to more than 20 in the past six months. His town was sealed to prevent people attending his funeral. At the end of the mourning services three days later, no people were allowed into Sitra where he had been buried.

As the revolution enters its second year, new aura of enthusiasm is spreading among the youth who are leading the daily protests that the collapse of the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship is drawing nearer. Furthermore, it is becoming more resolute in its aims and strategies. It is no longer confined to limited demands but is intent on achieving real transformation into a democratic system that respects the will and aspiration of the people. Daily protests have continued in all parts of the country with men and women taking to the streets chanting anti-regime slogans and demanding the end of its black era. Security forces directed by John Timoney and John Yates have committed serious war crimes, many of which are documented on videos. They shot people at close range; used excessive lethal gases against demonstrators, threw chemical gas canisters inside inhabited houses and shot live ammunition, rubber bullets or shotgun at peaceful demonstrators. An international campaign to stop the Formula 1 race being held in Bahrain has been launched. Human Rights Watch

voiced its opposition to the prospect of the taking the race back to Bahrain while torture and killing by the regime have continued unabated. Outrage by racing drivers, human rights activists and political campaigners has been expressed. Bernie Ecclestone, the F1 supreme authority is accused of succumbing to financial and political pressures by agreeing in principle to go to Bahrain, despite his knowledge that regime is involved to its knees in torture and other abuses. The online petition site, Avaas has launched a campaign to stop the race being held in Bahrain. It included an online petition calling for the race to be transferred somewhere else. The petition says: *This week, the Bahrain government is desperately trying to cover up its crackdown and show it's now fit to host the Grand Prix. But if we expose their abuses, we can keep wavering F1 teams out of brutal Bahrain. Six months ago the regime was shooting protesters and Avaaz got F1 teams to unanimously refuse to race in Bahrain. Now the Bahrain government is*

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## More martyrs, international activists deported

The latest martyr is a 19-years old young man who died today as a result of second and third degree burns to his body. Hussain Mohammad Al Baqqali had been arrested and released last month only to go back to demonstrate in the streets alongside his people. His martyrdom has fuelled more anger among Bahrainis who are now more determined than ever to achieve the liberation of their country from both the Al Khalifa hereditary tribal dictatorship and the Saudi illegal occupation.

The first anniversary of the revolution was marked with country-wide protests, demonstrations and strife. The 14<sup>th</sup> February youth have been organising themselves and mobilising the public to participate in the week-long programme of protests designed specifically to remember the revolution that had started on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011. On the first day a young man, Ali Abdul Hadi Mushaima was martyred, thus starting a wave of enthusiasm unseen before. As he was being carried for burial the following day, another young man, Fadhel Al Matrook was gunned down by the Al Khalifa murder squads. The two martyrs set the ball rolling for the revolution that has grown bigger every day.

However, the enemies of Bahrain and its people, namely the Al Khalifa and the Al Saud who have killed around 70 people so far in their quest to effect a population change are determined to continue their killing spree. In anticipation of country-wide demonstrations and protests, the

regime had devised various tactics to suppress the people, aided by American and British military personnel. Today, Bahrain's dictators enjoy American and British support with the help of John Timony (America's worst cop, according to Miami New Times) and the British officer, John Yates, who had linked to the phone hacking fiasco. Washington has ignored the plight of American citizens arrested, abused and humiliated by the Al Khalifa regime. Last night two American activists who were travelling in the car with Nabil Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, were arrested. On 15<sup>th</sup> February, six other Americans who had come to join the protesters and support the movement for change had been arrested and deported. On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February two American activists; Huwaida Arraf and Radhika Sainath were arrested and deported. This is part of the policy to keep the lid on the atrocity of the regime that has sought to bring Bahrainis to their knees and accept the continued dictatorship of the Al Khalifa.

Last week many journalists were banned from entering the country to report on the deteriorating situation especially as the regime became more vicious and cruel in dealing with the Bahrainis.

On 15<sup>th</sup> February The Times newspaper published an editorial titled "Race to the bottom, Bahrain is not ready for the return of Formula 1. It said: "A year after a "day of rage" that shook Bahrain, the authorities are keen to show that stability has

returned. They are, indeed, quite right. Since demonstrators were cleared from the Pearl Roundabout in the centre of Manama; since protests were crushed; since fifty died and scores were arrested; since tanks and troops provided by Saudi Arabia crossed the King Fahd Causeway to crush remaining dissent; since protesters were subsequently rounded up and arrested; since those jailed included 20 doctors and nurses, sentenced to up to 15 years for treating the wounded, those opposed to the Government in this tiny corner of the Gulf have, indeed, quietened down." It concluded: "The Pearl Roundabout became a symbol of dissent in Bahrain. It was torn down in March, and coins that featured its image were withdrawn from circulation. These were the actions of a regime determined to airbrush protest. A Bahrain Formula One would mean they had succeeded."

Meanwhile the Revolution continues with no sign that the horrific repression, including the use of excessive amounts of chemical and tear gases on demonstrators and houses, the arrest and summary torture, the draconian jail sentences and the media campaign against Bahrainis, have dampened the zeal to achieve real change in the country. Recently the Al Khalifa have indicated they were going to forge a union with the Al Saud as a means to deflect the attention away from the Revolution. The people have only one way to go; to bring down the Al Khalifa hereditary tribal despotic rule with all legitimate peaceful means

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
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# The Times: Bahrain is not ready for the return of Formula One

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A year after a “day of rage” that shook Bahrain, the authorities are keen to show that stability has returned. They are, indeed, quite right. Since demonstrators were cleared from the Pearl Roundabout in the centre of Manama; since protests were crushed; since fifty died and scores were arrested; since tanks and troops provided by Saudi Arabia crossed the King Fahd Causeway to crush remaining dissent; since protesters were subsequently rounded up and arrested; since those jailed included 20 doctors and nurses, sentenced to up to 15 years for treating the wounded, those opposed to the Government in this tiny corner of the Gulf have, indeed, quietened down.

Bahrain, for a year, has been a source of Western shame. After Tunisia, after Egypt, it was here that people next streamed on to the streets demanding reform. Yet, while the West assisted the side of freedom in Libya, and may yet have to do the same in Syria, Bahraini unrest has been met with a largely embar-

## Congressman denounces Alkhalifa use of force

In a statement released 15th February, Congressman James P. McGovern (D-MA) denounced the use of force by Bahraini authorities preventing Bahrainis from assembling to commemorate the one-year anniversary of mass demonstrations. The use of tear gas, armored personnel carriers, and other forceful actions by security forces to impede Bahrainis from freely gathering in public spaces is “inconsistent with the fundamental human rights to assemble peaceably and express one’s views.” The Congressman went on to urge the Bahrain government to make lasting reforms that ensure greater freedom, address the human rights abuses, and implement all of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry’s recommendations. “Bahrain will be a stronger country when the rights of all of its citizens are fully respected,” said McGovern.

The one-year anniversary was marked by arrests and over 120 protesters injured, with medics reporting some of the casualties had been hit by birdshot – a controversial ammunition Bahraini police deny using. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights said the Bahraini authorities were working to “brutally suppress the protests,” and cited excessive use of tear gas, stun grenades, and shotguns. Meanwhile, Ban Ki-moon, secretary-general of the U.N., released a statement urging all parties to exercise “maximum restraint and expects the Bahraini authorities to act in accordance with their international human rights obligations.”

rassed silence. Oil rich and shielded by essential allies in the Arab League and the hosts of the United States’ Fifth Fleet, the Government appeared to have been given a free pass. Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa was invited to last year’s Royal Wedding, deciding only at the last minute, diplomatically, not to attend. He was subsequently hosted by David Cameron in Downing Street.

Bahrain is a tiny country, with a population similar to that of Birmingham, where — in the reverse of the Syrian situation — a Shia majority is largely ruled by Sunnis. Western entanglements are many, but are not the sole reason for inaction. Heinous as oppression has been, this is not Syria, Libya, or even Egypt. Government fears of an Iranian-influenced Shia revolt may be unrealistic, but few in this prosperous country have much to gain from a sudden collapse of government. The Crown Prince has a reputation as a moderate, and is widely believed to be locked in a power struggle with a reactionary lobby dominated by the Prime Minister. There have, indeed, been creeping reforms of parliament, policing and human rights.

For all this, the regime obviously deserves stronger condemnation than the mealy-mouthed platitudes occasionally uttered by Western foreign ministers. It also, emphatically, does not deserve Formula One.

The Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix was cancelled last year, amid unrest. This year, on April 22, it is scheduled to go ahead. It should not. A global display of Western-backed oil consumption, policed by an autocratic regime, would be a wholly shaming

## Martyrs fall, journalists expelled

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*again trying to whitewash its image. But this weekend a young boy's mutilated body washed up on the beach -- a tragic sign of continued repression of democracy activists. We know Red Bull and Mercedes care what we think -- let's call on them to stop the race again until independent observers say regime violence is over and democratic voices are free. We have only days before the decision. Let's stop the Bahrain F1 and show the regime that only an end to brutality will unblock business. Sign the urgent petition now and send this to everyone -- when we reach 200,000 signatures, we'll deliver directly to the teams.*

Meanwhile the repression of the regime has extended to non-Bahrainis who went to the country to support the pro-democracy activists. Ten Americans and four of other nationalities were expelled from the country for joining the protests. The Obama administration has failed to take action against the Al Khalifa and the Saudi occupiers supporting them.

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spectacle. Teams must boycott it, sponsors must avoid it and the drivers must be called upon to account for their actions, should they take part.

The authorities in Bahrain may, indeed, be sincere in their desire for reform. But they have not reformed yet. A 2012 Bahrain Formula One would be a victory for oppression not freedom, validating the regime’s decision to crush, not reform, its way back to stability. The Arab Spring has stalled in Bahrain, not ended.

The Pearl Roundabout became a symbol of dissent in Bahrain. It was torn down in March, and coins that featured its image were withdrawn from circulation. These were the actions of a regime determined to airbrush protest. A Bahrain Formula One would mean they had succeeded.



## American activists deported

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February, Bahrain arrested and deported two U.S. human rights lawyers, **Huwaida Arraf** and **Radhika Sainath**, for their role in recent protests. They were deported Sunday and returned to New York last night. Both Arraf and Sainath are human rights lawyers and members of the Witness Bahrain initiative, which places international observers in the country in the hopes of preventing violence by security forces. “[We] also were getting reports of journalists and human rights organization representatives being denied entry into the country in the lead-up to the first anniversary of the Bahrain revolution. And this caused great alarm, that the government was planning to escalate its oppression of the people,” says Huwaida Arraf.

DUBAI, Feb 15 – Bahrain has deported six US citizens for joining pro-democracy demonstrations, a statement said Wednesday, as the opposition reported dozens of arrests on the first anniversary of a Shiite-led uprising. The deportations bring the number of Americans expelled from Bahrain to eight after two human rights activists were ordered out the country on February 11 after being accused of “illegal” activities. The six “activists” who were deported had entered the country on tourist visas in the past week and were sent home after “participating in illegal demonstrations,” an Information Affairs Authority statement said.

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## Proceedings of House of Lords seminar

A seminar marking the first anniversary of the Bahrain 14<sup>th</sup> February revolution was held today at the House of Lords, chaired by Lord Avebury the Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary HR Group. The seminar was attended by leading human rights activists, key actors and witnesses, who all presented and discussed the tragic line of events that have taken place in Bahrain since the government's harsh crackdown on peaceful protesters last year.

On 14th February 2011 Bahraini youth declared their revolution demanding a fundamental change in the system of government, that hereditary dictatorship must end and that the people are given the right to determine their own destiny. The Saudis intervened militarily while the Americans failed to support the pro-democracy activists. The revolutionary youth are determined to make the change and end the black era of the Al Khalifa, their dictatorship and torture. The seminar aimed to raise awareness and condemnation of the systematic torture and denial of human rights in Bahrain.

Lord Avebury opened the seminar stating Article 1 of the International Covenant on Human Rights that declares that all peoples have a right to self-determination. He stated that political change is crucial for Bahrain in order to bring about any stability to the Kingdom. There have been over 60 people who have died at the hands of the government from the use of torture yet this suffering and agony has not been to no effect according to Lord Avebury. The Bassiouni report has been a step in the right direction and a 'valuable exercise' that reveals the extent of the gross consistent violations that occurred in Bahrain and are still occurring. The BICI Report stated that all persons charged for freedom of expression should have their convictions reviewed and all intended political prisoners to be exonerated and released.

Lord Avebury went on to mention specific cases of victims such as Abdul Khwaja who has been sentenced to 10 years and is currently undergoing a hunger strike protesting his innocence. The BICI report recommended that all torture victims should be appropriately compensated. None of these recommendations have been implemented.

In discussing the UK's stance on the situation in Bahrain and their continual of 'Business as Usual', Lord Avebury considered the British Government's attitudes as 'naive' and inappropriate. The idea that the way forward in Bahrain is to seize the movement for reconciliation and broader reform through dialogue was recommended by MP Alistair Burt. However with all the political opposition behind bars, the arrest of bloggers, the refusal of journalists into the country, the continual crackdown on peaceful demon-

strators through the use of force and excessive tear gas, how is any dialogue possible? Lord Avebury questioned.

Lord Avebury pointed at the British government's naivety on the issue and their desire to 'bury their heads in the sand' as opposed to aiding Bahraini citizens in their fight for self-determination. The UK have fallen for the 'good intent words of the Al Khalifa regime' and their promises to bring reform to the Kingdom and change for the people.

Sara Yasin, of Index on Censorship was next to address the audience and discussed her findings in Bahrain after the release of the BICI Report. Sara was in Bahrain as part of the delegation and field mission for the report released by IFEX earlier this year. Sara stated that what they found on the ground in Bahrain were 'troubling images' and a 'cycle that has continued and is in fact getting worse.' She went on to condemn the recommendations of the BICI report in that they were not matching the severity of the human rights abuses and that they had a 'lack of action'. Freedom of expression in Bahrain does not exist and this is proven by the banning of foreign journalist and Human Rights activists into the country. 'This is the narrative that needs to get out but the government is trying to hide this narrative from the international community.'

People are being targeted based on posts they have made on twitter, blogs or other means of social media posts. This government needs to be held accountable. Sara met with the UK ambassador who said that they would take the findings of the Bissouni Report very seriously and that recommendations will be implemented. Despite this no real effective change has occurred and the process has been extremely slow. Political prisoners are still being held in detention for expressing their views. According to Sara the BICI Report can be seen as successful and a progressive step, but only if the recommendations are implemented and followed through. The UK and U.S need to focus on pushing the Bahraini government to implement them and listen to the demands of the people of Bahrain.

A video of a Bahraini woman, Fadheela Mubarak who was arrested for listening to revolutionary music was then shown to the audience. She described her ordeal of being ill-treated by security forces, her possessions raided and her children violated.

The Crown Prince was sidelined as he started to build parallel institutions from April to September 2010 and the clampdown on villages continued. When Mr Dibbel returned to back in 2011 he was harassed and his belongings were searched. He was told that somebody would meet him at the airport but he did not want to face that prospect and so he resigned. Mike Dibbel is forbidden from entering Bahrain and so are his wife and young children. According to Mike accounts the abusive gas that is cur-

rently been condemned has been used for many years before and he was exposed to it in the early years of 2008. If the likes of Mike Dibbol, a British national, was treated in such a manner and can be branded as a threat to national security, then what about the Bahraini people themselves?, he asked.

Lord Avebury stated that in regards to the tear gas being used in Bahrain, it is supplied by British Aerospace and when questioning the government regarding this concern, he was told that 'we have no jurisdiction on the sales of arms to Bahrain.' This is something that must be addressed and condemned.

Maryam Abu Deeb a Bahraini national whose father is currently in prison then spoke via Skype. Maryam spoke of her home being raided, her family attacked and her father abused in front of her on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Her father was sentenced to 10 years and is a prisoner of conscience who has been tortured for confessions. Maryam believes that what is happening to her father is an act of revenge on the part of the Bahraini government for revolting against the regime and that the brother has had to flee the country in fear for his safety.

Howeida Arraf an American citizen was next to also give a Skype account of her ordeal in Bahrain. Howeida was recently in Bahrain reporting on the events leading up to the revolution but was deported back to New York yesterday. Arriving in Bahrain last week Howeida and her colleagues were public and open about their presence in Bahrain, in the hope that the government would realise that international observers were present and so would not continue their harsh treatment of the people. Howeida described a peaceful protest she attended, where the security forces attacked the demonstrators with tear gas canisters aiming at low-level causing serious injury.

During the protest she and her colleagues were confronted by police officers who demanded to see their I.D. On establishing that it was Howeida Arraf they quickly arrested and detained her. They were forced onto a 7 hour flight where they remained hand cuffed through-out and denied access to water, food or medical assistance. During her ordeal Howeida contacted the Vice Consul of the American Embassy for help but were told that they did not have the power to do anything. Howeida stressed that the U.S government's stance on Bahrain was in fact shameful in their failure to pressure the Bahraini regime and instead continue 'business as usual'. Steps need to be taken to isolate the regime and sever whatever ties that exist. The US government must exert their influence on Bahrain and push to end the crackdown and to take immediate steps to address the demands of the pro-democracy demonstrations.