

# BAHRAIN

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

## Bahrain's international defeat heralds new hope for its victims

The events of the past few weeks in Bahrain have confirmed that the situation in the country has reached the point of no return. From now on, the struggle may take ugly forms as the regime becomes more belligerent, vicious and more dictatorial. It is thus difficult to anticipate the direction of events in the coming months as both sides, the people and the Al Khalifa dynasty, have axes to grind after one of the most bloody periods in the country since the Alkhalifa invasion more than two centuries ago. The scene is set for major showdown that could become more bloody especially if the American administration continues its immoral support to this murderous regime. Several facts are relevant to this argument: While the Alkhalifa maintained their innocence in regards to torture and ill-treatment of Bahrainis, the world has been unanimous in condemning their absolute disregard to the dignity and sanctity of human souls. In Geneva last week, representatives of many countries took their turns to stand up and denounce the dismal record of human rights in Bahrain when the Human Rights Council (HRC) discussed Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) presented by a representative of the Alkhalifa clique. More than thirty countries responded with dismay at the unfounded claims by the regime and condemned its total disregard to most basic forms of human rights. The regime appeared isolated as countries and independent bodies continued to direct the blame and unreserved condemnation to the Alkhalifa dictatorship. Even its allies were compelled to go along the line of condemnation and ignore the pleas by the regime to listen to its claims. Two days after the open forum on Monday 21st May, HRC issued 176 recommendations for the Alkhalifa regime to implement if it is serious about human rights.

The Alkhalifa are now under intense international pressure to change the course of their policies, especially in relation to the continued detention of prisoners of conscience and human rights activists. The detention and ill-treatment of the four most prominent human rights activists has really tarnished the image of the ruling clique and embarrassed its most loyal allies; the UK and USA. They have failed to make a case for their brazen human rights violations and disdain of the international opinion and the common standards of human decency. The

Alkhalifa are gradually digging their own grave as their arrogance has prevented them from understanding the depth of both the domestic anger and external fury at the way they have conducted their campaign of black terror. They are unlikely to change course especially in light of the non-stop campaign of violence and the policy of granting impunity to torturers and killers. Their crisis is compounded by the fact that the most vicious torturers are senior members of the ruling family. Nasser, the son of dictator Hamad, stands indicted of serious crimes against humanity with documented irrefutable evidence against him. Among the most damning of this evidence are the videos depicting him taking part in attacking peaceful protests, his threats on twitter against athletes opposing the regime and his torture of senior religious figures languishing at Alkhalifa jails. Another senior figure is Khalifa bin Abdulla Alkhalifa, former head of the National Security Agency (NSA) who had instituted torture in underground dungeons at NSA headquarters. There is irrefutable evidence linking him to sadistic forms of torture and abuse. Noura Alkhalifa, a female member of the regime is accused of inflicting horrible torture on female detainees including Ayat Al Qurmuzi. These people have become symbols of a regime intent on destroying the fabric of a society under foreign occupation.

3- The Human Rights Council has issued 176 recommendations for the Alkhalifa regime to adopt if it wants to be considered a decent member of the international community. Although these are not binding they have given the opposition figures and revolutionaries convenient tools to outcast the Alkhalifa and legitimize the call for their removal from power. If the world fails to acknowledge the people's grievances and demands for regime change then the country will remain in a state of political and human rights volatility for unspecified period. No Bahraini believes that the hereditary dictatorship is capable of implementing the serious articles of these recommendations especially the ratification of the International Criminal Court protocols. It is easier to remove the regime than forcing it to undertake this recommendation, the ones that seek to eradicate torture or the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that allow freedom of expression. A pathological dictatorship knows

that it cannot survive if it allows people to express their views freely or stops abusing its political opponents. While Bahrainis have welcomed these recommendations they are by no means optimistic about their implementation. Their approach will concentrate on the continuation of the revolution until the regime is removed for the sake of not only the people of Bahrain but of human values, decency and dignity.

The people of Bahrain are aware of the dirty role played by the United States, and to a lesser extent Britain in propping up the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship. At almost every opportunity Hillary Clinton has repeated her assertion that the Alkhalifa regime was a "close ally" to justify the unequivocal and uncritical support that has made the regime adamant on refusing to reform in any way. The Alkhalifa clique thinks that it can always ride the storm as long as it enjoys the American military, political and security support. Meanwhile Bahrainis will continue to suffer and pay high price for their eventual freedom. They are certain that they will be victors but they are also aware that the US support of Alkhalifa torturers will prolong their suffering and delay their freedom and liberty. In recent weeks they have demonstrated against the US policy in Bahrain and asserted that Washington is complicit in the suffering of Bahrainis.

The 14th February Youth who are spearheading the revolutionary activities have been heartened by the transformation of the struggle into an international and regional concern. While they await the outcome of other revolutions, especially the Egyptian, they remain optimistic of their eventual victory over the forces of darkness, backwardness and dictatorship. Despite the rising cost of the revolution Bahrainis see no alternative if the future is to be different from the present or the past. They are determined to leave no stone unturned in their struggle to achieve their liberty and defeat the Alkhalifa vicious dictatorship. They were also encouraged when the crisis in Bahrain was presented at the table of negotiation in Baghdad between the 5+1 group and Iran. Regional stability is threatened by the domination of dictatorial rule and that transformation into a region of democratic and human rights values will undoubtedly contribute to regional stability, development and cooperation.

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## After UPR Geneva session Alkhalifa lost legitimacy

The week's highlight has been the almost unanimous international verdict against the ruling Alkhalifa dynasty for its brutal violation of human rights. The regime was condemned by most of the EU countries at the Human Rights Council (HRC) meeting in Geneva on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May when Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was conducted. One of the ministers of the ruling Alkhalifa junta presented the report which failed to convince those present at the session. At least nine EU countries reacted with disgust at the dangerous abuse of human rights by the current dictator and his clique. Last year a commission funded by the regime confirmed that systematic torture and extra-judicial killings had taken place. The HRC then issued 176 recommendations, compared to nine in the earlier UPR session four years ago. The regime had dispatched scores of its mercenaries to lobby for support among HRC member states but it is clear that their mission has disastrously failed. Bahrainis are, however, unconvinced that the Alkhalifa would stop abuse of human rights, especially arbitrary detention, torture and attack on freedom of speech. The inability of the regime to respond favourably to the HRC recommendations was immediately visible in the way human rights activists have been treated at Alkhalifa courts where the judge is the adversary. The four most prominent human rights activists remain the torture

chambers for their peaceful expression of opinion; Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja, Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace, Zainab Al Khawaja and Nabeel Rajab. All of them have been tortured at one time or another. The first two have been languishing at the torture dungeons for fifteen months where most horrible forms of torture had been administered on them. Zainab has been charged with various "offences" for opposing the dictatorship and was sentenced yesterday to one month in jail. Nabeel Rajab has also been charged with trumpeted charges intended to keep him behind bars in an attempt to stop the demonstrations.

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja, was brought to a court run by a member of the Al khalifa enemy. After the most senior opposition figure, Abdul Wahab Hussain delivered a damning testimony to his torture ordeal, Mr Al Khawaja presented hair-raising description of the abuse he had been subjected to since his arrest in March last year. His torture include breaking his jaws in four places, urinating in his mouth, beating, electric shocks, deprivation of sleep, sexual assault and threat of rape. If the court case continues next week more damning testimonies will come out and the onus will be on the world community to take immediate action against Alkhalifa dictatorship that has administered torture on Bahrainis on a systematic and regular basis since Ian Henderson restructured the Special Branch in 1966 during the British

protection era. Many Bahrainis have died under torture since then. The failure of the world to take a stand allowed the regime to commit these heinous crimes with impunity.

Meanwhile, people's revolution has continued. Every day and night have seen demonstrations and protests in almost every corner of the country despite the vicious attacks by the forces of Timoney and Yates. Since Alkhalifa interior minister threatened two weeks ago to escalate violence against the people the use of shotguns against protesters has increased dramatically. Everyday tens of Bahrainis are injured, but they cannot seek treatment at hospitals which are under military management and instructions to report any injured Bahraini to the torture dungeons run by Timoney and Yates.

Hopes have been raised that Nasser bin Hamad Alkhalifa, one of the most notorious torturers will be arrested upon his arrival in London for the Olympics. UK's Foreign Office Minister Jeremy Browne told MPs that leaders linked to such crimes (torture) will not be allowed into Britain to attend the summer Olympic Games. "Where there is independent, reliable and credible evidence that an individual has committed human rights abuses, the individual will not normally be permitted to enter the UK," Browne said. Attempts are being made to present this reliable evidence to UK courts in due course to indict this torturer.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2012

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## Dictator unwelcome to jubilee, repression rises

The invitation of the dictator, Hamad bin Isa Alkhalifa to the Queen's Diamond jubilee celebrations has been marred by controversy and media attention that has clouded the event. Human Rights activists have expressed dismay at the invitation and called for banning the dictator from attending. Bahraini activists have held protests at the Bahrain Embassy while other activists called for protests at Buckingham Palace. Media interest has embarrassed the royal family as criticism is being levelled at the Foreign Office which should have not recommended the inclusion of Bahrain's dictator in the guest list. The failure of the attempt to annexe Bahrain to Saudi Arabia has been greeted by Bahrainis with relief and a feeling of victory for the blood of the martyrs. The Alkhalifa and Alsaud families had conspired to make the Saudi occupation of Bahrain that began on 14th March 2011 a permanent annexation as a means of defeating the revolution seeking to achieve regime change in Bahrain. The periodic GCC summit in the Saudi capital, Riyadh last Monday failed to agree on the move to create a Gulf Union which had been proposed by the Saudi king Abdulla dur-

ing the winter summit last December. The mouthpieces of the two dictatorships had spent the past six months promoting the idea to the extent that it became a virtual reality. But when they met this week they failed to achieve a consensus and the Saudi foreign minister, Saud Al Faisal, revealed the failure at a press conference shortly after the three-hour summit. The Alkhalifa were morally and politically defeated as they woke up to the reality that their power and might are limited and that defeating the Bahraini people's revolution is a fantasy. This disastrous foreign policy and strategic failure has demoralized the regime and its supporters. The revolutionaries had long believed that other Gulf monarchies would not accept being subjugated by the Alsaud regime which is most backward, reactionary and dictatorial in the world.

The demise of the proposed union between Alkhalifa and Alsaud has so infuriated and angered the dictator and his family that they have now decided to increase their repression against Bahrainis. In the past week the dictator has instructed his troops and Death Squads to use live ammunition and shotguns randomly. The

daily and nightly demonstrations yesterday were attacked with these lethal weapons. Tens of Bahraini protesters were injured by shotguns and the lives of several of them are threatened. They cannot go to hospitals for treatment because the Alkhalifa interior ministry had placed medical institutions under military control and any injured Bahraini seeking treatment must be reported to the torture apparatus run by John Yates and John Timoney. The 14th February Youth have instructed victims to seek treatment at field clinics run by volunteer doctors and nurses, but in cases where their lives are threatened they should seek treatment at hospitals and prepare themselves for arrest and torture.

In his comments at the House of Lords yesterday at the Foreign Relations Debate on the Queen's speech, Lord Avebury said: In Bahrain, after 15 months of bloodshed, torture, extrajudicial executions, and arbitrary detention of human rights activists, there is no sign of an Arab spring. Let it be clear to those who believe in human rights and democracy that King Hamad is not welcome at the Jubilee celebrations.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
18 May 2012

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# Revolution continues, regime squeezed into last repressive stand

With four most prominent human rights activists languishing behind bars at torture dungeons, the Alhalifa rulers have shot themselves in the leg. Many voices have been raised against the invitation of the self-styled king, Hamad Alkhalifa to the Diamond Jubilee in London later this month. Media interest in the Bahraini revolution has been revived and calls made to the organisers of the celebrations calling for removal of the dictator from the guests list. Bahrainis have planned to act against this visit and expose the crimes of the regime.

Their allies in Washington and London are under increasing pressure to act to stop this human tragic fiasco. Citing growing violence and polarization along sectarian lines, human rights groups and independent experts in Washington are urging Obama administration to exert more pressure Bahrain's regime to free political prisoners and launch a serious dialogue with its opposition on major democratic reforms. The administration "should be telling the Bahraini government that time is short, and, if they don't act, there will be an escalation on the U.S. side," said Tom Malinowski, the Washington director of Human Rights Watch (HRW), who was briefly detained by police at a demonstration during a visit to the Gulf Kingdom last month. Emil Nakhleh, who also headed the CIA's Political Islam desk said: "The huge U.S. naval presence in Bahrain has not improved Western security in the Gulf; has not altered Iran's behavior; and, more important, has not silenced the anti-regime opposition in the Gulf and in other Arab countries." According to Joost Hiltermann, a Gulf expert at the International Crisis Group (ICG) the government appears intent on increasing its dependence on Saudi Arabia — hundreds of whose troops remain in Bahrain after they were sent there to back up Bahraini forces during the crackdown — to the extent of favoring a "Saudi-Bahraini confederation" that, if consummated, would mean "political suicide by Saudi embrace." He said the situation on the ground is deteriorating as more radical anti-monarchical elements in the Shi'a community, notably the February 14 Youth Movement, gain support at Al-Wefaq's expense.

On another level the regime has reversed a previous decision to grant visas to representatives of several U.S. and international mainstream organizations — including the Committee to Protect Journalists, Freedom House, Index on Censorship, and Reporters Without Borders — to travel to the kingdom next week to assess press and free-speech conditions there.

Meanwhile, a UN official in Malaysia has clarified the UN's stands on the use of gear gas in comments on a recently-published article. He said the United Na-

tions in Malaysia would like to refer to the article published in The Star on May 7, 2012 titled 'Police: Tear gas used at rally safe, UN-approved'. The UN has consistently condemned the excessive use of force, including through the use of tear gas. Please also note that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council have on various occasions publicly expressed concerns about reliable reports indicating that civilians who died from tear gas suffered complications from gas inhalation, and that security forces have been firing metal tear gas canisters from grenade launchers into

crowds. Moreover, unlike what is alleged in the article, the UN does not set international standards on different kinds of irritants, nor has the UN approved 'CS Gas' as a 'riot control' agent. As far as the use of force is concerned, the relevant UN instrument is the Basic Principles on the use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which was adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990, not the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of 1993.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**

11 May 2012

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## Bahrain should free uprising leaders - HRW

By Aamer Mohammed, 1st May 2012

MANAMA (Reuters) - Human Rights Watch urged Bahrain on Tuesday to immediately free leaders of last year's uprising after an appeals court ordered a retrial, raising pressure for farther-reaching gestures to defuse resurgent street protests.

Bahraini authorities also heard a call from the U.N. human rights agency to move a jailed hunger striker to a civilian hospital. Opposition leaders have said the court's gesture was insufficient and street unrest would resume later on Tuesday.

Majority Shi'ite Muslims, whose unrest is seen by the Sunni ruling elite as a subversive bid to put U.S.-aligned Bahrain under the sway of Shi'ite Iran, complain of discrimination and marginalisation in political and economic life. The government says many Shi'ites hold state posts and help run the economy and that police and judicial reforms have begun. But there has been no progress on the main opposition demand for a parliament with full powers to legislate and form governments.

The cassations court, the highest judicial body in the Gulf Arab state, on Monday shifted the case of 21 men who were convicted in a military court to a civilian court and freed one, lesser-known prisoner. Seven of the 21 are abroad or in hiding. But the court ruled the men would remain in jail, including Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, who was being fed intravenously in a military hospital after nearly three months of hunger strike.

"More than a year after they were arrested, the Bahraini authorities have produced no evidence that the jailed leaders were doing anything but exercising their basic human rights," New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

"The Court of Cassation made no reference, however, to the fact that the defendants had merely been exercising their basic human rights."

Government officials were unavailable for comment.

"We have urged the Bahraini authorities to take steps to ensure the release of Mr al-Khawaja and his transfer to a civilian hos-

pital," U.N. human rights agency spokesman Rupert Colville told a news briefing in Geneva on Tuesday.

"There is no reason for him to be held incommunicado and he should be given immediate access to his family, to the Danish ambassador...and to a doctor and a lawyer of his own choosing."

UPHEAVAL

Bahrain, where the U.S. Fifth Fleet is based as a bulwark against Iran across the Gulf, remains in turmoil over a year after Shi'ite-led protests first erupted, inspired by uprisings against autocratic regimes in Egypt and Tunisia.

Opposition parties stage big rallies every week and clashes between riot police and youth protesters break out nightly in Shi'ite neighbourhoods around the island country, whose government is dominated by the Sunni Muslim al-Khalifa family.

The unrest has cracked the stability of Bahrain and spurred Saudi calls for a union of oil-exporting Gulf Arab monarchies to help counter Iranian influence and neutralise protest movements.

The Manama government brands the opposition as Shi'ite Islamist extremists in the pocket of Shi'ite clergy-ruled Iran. The opposition denies this, saying such accusations are a pretext to cling to unfair privileges.

Britain's Foreign Office said the new trial should be completed quickly and expressed concern for Khawaja's health, calling for an "urgent and compassionate solution".

"We now urge the courts to move this forward urgently, with due process and transparency. We call for all other upheld convictions by the military courts to be reviewed without further delay," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

The government also intends to put on trial 20 medics on charges of incitement to overthrow the government and trying to occupy a hospital. Rights groups say the 20 have been victimised for treating protesters wounded by security forces last year.

Opposition leaders said the protest campaign would continue until all prisoners were released and political and human rights reforms enacted.

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## UN does not approve tear gas as a riot control

By Dr Lin Mui Kiang\*, 10May 2012

The United Nations in Malaysia would like to refer to the article published in The Star on May 7, 2012 titled 'Police: Tear gas used at rally safe, UN-approved'. We very much regret that the UN in Malaysia was not consulted before the publication of this article as it contains serious inaccuracies.

The UN has consistently condemned the excessive use of force, including through the use of tear gas. Please also note that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council have on various occasions publicly expressed concerns about reliable reports indicating that civilians who died from tear gas suffered complications from gas inhalation, and that security forces have been firing metal tear gas canisters from grenade launchers into crowds.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression after his mission to the Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) in December 2011 noted that "while the use of tear gas to disperse a crowd may be legitimate under certain circumstances, tear gas canisters should never be fired directly at demonstrators." Moreover, unlike what is alleged in the article, the UN does not set international standards on different kinds of irritants, nor has the UN approved 'CS Gas' as a 'riot control' agent. As far as the use of force is concerned, the relevant UN instrument is the Basic Principles on the use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which was adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990, not the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of 1993. Below are general provisions:

1 Governments and law enforcement agencies shall adopt and implement rules and regulations on the use of force and firearms against persons by law enforcement officials. In developing such rules and regulations, Governments and law enforcement agencies shall keep the ethical issues associated with the use of force and firearms constantly under review.

2 Governments and law enforcement agencies should develop a range of means as broad as possible and equip law enforcement officials with various types of weapons and ammunition that would allow for a differentiated use of force and firearms. These should include the development of non-lethal incapacitating weapons for use in appropriate situations, with a view to increasingly restraining the application of means capable of causing death or injury to persons.

For the same purpose, it should also be possible for law enforcement officials to be equipped with self-defensive equipment such as shields, helmets, bullet-proof vests and bullet-proof means of

transportation, in order to decrease the need to use weapons of any kind.

3 The development and deployment of non-lethal incapacitating weapons should be carefully evaluated in order to minimise the risk of endangering uninvolved persons, and the use of such weapons should be carefully controlled.

4 Law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms. They may use force and firearms only if other means remain ineffective or without any promise of achieving the intended result.

5 Whenever the lawful use of force and firearms is unavoidable, law enforcement officials shall:

- (a) Exercise restraint in such use and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved;
- (b) Minimise damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life;

(c) Ensure that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons at the earliest possible moment;

(d) Ensure that relatives or close friends of the injured or affected person are notified at the earliest possible moment.

6 Where injury or death is caused by the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials, they shall report the incident promptly to their superiors, in accordance with principle 22.

7 Governments shall ensure that arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offence under their law.

8 Exceptional circumstances such as internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked to justify any departure from these basic principles.

We at the United Nations appeal to all journalists to correctly and accurately research and report all matters and procedures related to the UN. We believe that such professionalism should also extend to all public officials.

\*UN Coordination Specialist, Malaysia

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## Calls mount for stronger U.S. stance as Bahrain

By Jim Lobe, 10th May 2012

WASHINGTON — Citing growing violence and polarization along sectarian lines, human rights groups and independent experts here are urging Washington to exert more pressure on the government of Bahrain to free political prisoners and launch a serious dialogue with its opposition on major democratic reforms.

While the administration of President Barack Obama has repeatedly called on the al-Khalifa monarchy to follow through on recommendations made by an international commission last November, it has been reluctant to take stronger steps for fear of alienating Saudi Arabia, Bahrain's much larger neighbor, according to analysts here.

The Pentagon also does not want to jeopardize its use of the island as the headquarters for its Fifth Fleet, particularly given its strategic location directly across the Gulf from Iran. The administration "should be telling the Bahraini government that time is short, and, if they don't act, there will be an escalation on the U.S. side," said Tom Malinowski, the Washington director of Human Rights Watch (HRW), who was briefly detained by police at a demonstration during a visit to the Gulf Kingdom last month. In addition to maintaining a de facto suspension on arms sales to Bahrain, he called for Washington to consider supporting a resolution on the situation at the U.N. Human Rights Council and denying visas to senior officials deemed responsible for abuses committed during the past year's crackdown against the predominantly Shi'a opposition.

Speaking at a forum sponsored by the Washington-based Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) Thursday, Malinowski also urged Washington to signal its

willingness to consider moving the Fifth Fleet out of Bahrain. "The military base is not sustainable as violence grows," he said. Malinowski's advice fell short of that of some Gulf specialists here, notably a former top Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analyst for Near Eastern and South Asia. Writing in the Financial Times just after the controversial running of the Formula One race in Bahrain last month, Emile Nakhleh urged the administration to begin pulling the fleet out now.

The BICI's key recommendations included the release of all political prisoners, investigation and prosecution of senior officials suspected of giving orders to carry out abuses, and launching a serious dialogue with the opposition, which has been led by the al-Wefaq party, leading to democratic reforms that would give the Shi'a community, which is believed to comprise between 60 and 70 percent of Bahraini citizens, a much bigger voice in the government.

While some technical suggestions, such as the installation of cameras in jails to discourage torture (although Malinowski noted that police now commit abuses against detainees in the streets and back alleys) have been implemented, the government has done little or nothing on the more overarching recommendations designed to further reconciliation and prevent radicalization.

He also noted that the government appears intent on increasing its dependence on Saudi Arabia — hundreds of whose troops remain in Bahrain after they were sent there to back up Bahraini forces during the crackdown — to the extent of favoring a "Saudi-Bahraini confederation" that, if consummated, would mean "political suicide by Saudi embrace."