

BAHRAIN

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

The point of no-return has been reached, Alkhalifa must go

What is the way forward in the revolutionary process? How long will the people have to wait before victory is achieved? These are legitimate questions that are posed not by revolutionaries but bystanders who await which side wins in order to achieve relative settlement. In every society the vanguards of change are few, while the majority are able to accommodate themselves within the status quo. While many would encourage change, few are ready to accept prolonged conflicts and revolutions. This is one of the factors that encourage despots and dictators to cling to power, adopt harsh measures against adversaries and hope for time to dampen the zeal for change. They hope public impatience will become a factor against those seeking change. This is why revolutions are often short events that could either win or lose. If they become protracted they are seen as having lost momentum and any chance or real change. Repression is essential tool in the hands of dictators that help prolong the conflict and help them regain control. In the process they expect to be condemned for all sorts of human rights violations, excessive use of force, extra-judicial killings. This is the basic theory that leads despotic regime to reject change and insist on maintaining the status quo. Usually these despots receive all kinds of support from their foreign allies whose credentials in terms of human rights and democratic values are becoming under greater scrutiny. The past six decades have seen the emergence of a new culture in the world that gives greater value to human rights following the atrocities committed in the second world war. The West has prided itself as a champion of this culture and has challenged its adversaries on this platform. However a closer scrutiny of human rights in modern times reveal shocking results. Not only has the West tolerated enormous violations of these rights by its own allies, but it has often participated in committing them. Sending troops and security "experts" to countries like Bahrain has not resulted in any improvements in the way the despotic rulers have dealt with the rights of their people. People like Ian Henderson, David Jump and now John Yates have not curtailed the excesses of the torturers who had worked under their command, directly or otherwise. The British and American governments have not raise eyebrows when they were informed by

victims of torture that their allies in Manama had committed gross violations of their rights. The international community has failed to create a regime that would scrutinise the excesses of dictatorships or take action against sadistic elements within those regimes. As recently as July when the Olympics were held in London, the UK government was ready to embrace Nasser, the son of Bahrain's dictator who had personally tortured helpless prisoners. The opposition is in possession of documented evidence linking him to abuse of prisoners. The UK government had turned blind eye to two former ambassadors who had run the most notorious torture agency in Bahrain; the National Security Agency (NSA). The opposition had written to the Foreign Office with details of their involvement in torture but the FCO turned a blind eye to those claims. Two years ago a British citizen was subjected to most horrific forms of torture at the NSA; he told a British Embassy official of his ordeal when he visited him in jail but no action was taken. If opposition groups thought that administering human rights abuses by their dictators would deter Western governments from dealing with those dictators, they could not have been further from reality. Modern politicians have excelled in policy phrasing and apologetic approaches to such serious crimes that has convinced dictators that they would be immune from serious scrutiny let alone being held to account for their torture crimes. Adoption of human rights is a noble cause but the world has become so absorbed by real politique that it can no longer act against torturers> Tyrants and despots are enjoying the lack of scrutiny of their actions despite the noise that has come from Geneva in recent years. As for Bahrain, there is an abundance of documentation incriminating the regime including several of its senior members in crimes against humanity. But this has not stopped it committing more of them. It is being sheltered rigorously by the West although it has been proven to be biological torturer. Violence is another means of change. Bahrainis have refrained from armed struggle and confined their struggle to peaceful demonstrations and protests. It is clear that this is not appreciated by US, UK governments; which are the main supporters of the Alkhalifa regime. In recent months the two governments have adopted a devious approach. In every meeting with the political

opposition their officials insisted that these societies "condemned" what they call "violence" referring to the use by some youth of Molotov bottles to fend off regime's criminal attacks. These undisciplined forces have targeted residential homes with their lethal chemical gases that have resulted in more than fifty deaths over the past twelve months. Armed struggle has never been adopted by the Bahraini opposition despite their mounting casualties. They will continue civil disobedience strategy with daily demonstrations and protests until they overthrow the regime.

The revolution has marched forward embracing more people and entrenching itself as the final choice of the people of Bahrain. It is clear that the Alkhalifa are incapable of reform, unable to respect human rights or allow freedom of speech and assembly, or engaging in meaningful dialogue with the political opposition. These facts have helped the pro-revolution forces which have argued for the removal of the regime as then only viable and possible solution to the ills of the country. Almost other alternative solutions have been attempted but none has helped the people. When the present dictator promised reform 12 years ago many people had big hopes and thought he would be different from his predecessors. But within those hopes were swiftly dashed. He gradually became more dictatorial and despotic than those before him. Today, Bahrainis are witness to the darkest era the country has ever passed through for centuries. The extent of violence, torture, discrimination, enmity and arrogance have no parallels in the history of the country. No native Bahraini wishes that his reign to extend one day longer. The world must understand the predicaments of the victims who are ready to face more miseries in the revolutionary process to remove him and his clan from power. The "civilised" world ought to be brave enough to support the pro-democracy movement seeking to achieve change in their land. The revolution, this time, is serious, adamant and final. Whatever pains may be suffered in this revolutionary process of change will be much less than the future suffering if the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship is allowed to remain under any pretext. The point of no-return has been reached and no one can change the course of the unfolding history of the new Bahrain.

HRW's Targets of Retribution focuses on Alkhalifa crimes

The Washington-based Human Rights Watch has published a 56-pages report titled "Targets of Retribution, Attacks against Medics, Injured Protesters, and Health Facilities". This report documents the key elements of what appears to be a systematic campaign by the Bahraini government aimed punishing and intimidating medical professionals suspected of sympathies with protesters and hindering access to health care facilities for persons wounded by security forces. This is yet another addition to the countless reports of documented abuses committed by the Alkhalifa junta against Bahrainis who are subjected to dual and brutal occupation by the Al Khalifa and Al Saud clans.

On Wednesday 26th September the Alkhalifa clan decided to add two months prison sentence to a prominent human rights activist. Zainab Al Khawaja, who has been in jail for two months has been jailed for two more months with more sentences expected in the coming weeks. Bahrain's judiciary has become another tool of repression in the hands of the repressive ruling family.

Yesterday Nabeel Rajab who has been in the torture dungeons for the past three months was brought to the court handcuffed for taking part in a peaceful demonstration. His case, as usual, has been adjourned until 16th October. In contrast a policeman who had shot Martyr Hani Ab-

dul Aziz from a close range came to the court on his own, without even being detained. He was sentenced to seven years and is expected to be "pardoned" by the dictator within a shorter period. The killers of Ali Al Mo'men and Ali Mushaima was set free, while the most prominent human rights activist is languishing behind bars for peaceful expression of opinion.

Bahraini people were shocked yesterday by the news that two young men were killed by the Saudi forces at the town of Awwamiya. Khalid Abdul Karim Al Labbad, 25, was shot dead by the Saudi special forces who are trained to shoot-to-kill and liquidate enemies of the regime. Another younger boy, Mohammad Habib Al Manasef, 16, was also executed in the street by those evil forces. The Saudi regime claims that Martyr Al Labbad is on the wanted list that it had issued containing the names of 23 people it considered responsible for the massive protests that have wrecked the Eastern peninsula for more than a year. So far 17 people have been killed by the regime forces which are known for their total disregard to human rights or compassion. A day earlier a senior cleric was arrested for speaking against the Al Saud dictatorship. Sheikh Hussain Al Radhi was abducted and taken to unknown location. His whereabouts are unknown.

While the Shiite Eastern Province is being subjected to murderous attacks by the Saudi

forces, hundreds of Sunni families in Riyadh, Al Jawf, Alqassim, Medina and Jeddah have been protesting outside prisons and other offices of the interior ministry. These are the relatives of more than 10,000 political prisoners who have languished in torture cells for the good part of the past decade. None of them has been charged or tried. Few family visits are permitted under strict supervision. The lives of those families have been devastated as they parted with their loved ones who spend their youth behind bars. The Saudis and Alkhalifa are emboldened by American support under the unfounded claim of fighting terrorism. It is these repressive policies that nurture violence and cause political polarisation.

On Tuesday 25th September two opposition members were in Rome for a meeting with the Italian Senate's human rights commission. Sayed Hadi Al mousawi and Dr Jassim Hussain said they are inspired by Gandhi, the late leader of the Indian independence movement. 'In Bahrain we have learnt very well the lesson of Mahatma Gandhi', said Jasim Hussein. 'Our protest is peaceful', said Hussein and Almosawi, who were invited to talk by Senator Marco Perduca. 'Our movement can be compared to the non-violent one of Gandhi. But the state has chosen since the beginning to respond with unprecedented violence'.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
28th September 2012

Alkhalifa defeated in Geneva

The Alkhalifa clan has been handed serious defeat at the UN Human Rights Council this week. As the session on Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) got underway it became clear that the Saudi-Alkhalifa spin policies and companies had been working for a long period to change the course of the debate. Apart from the GCC member states, no other country came to the support of a regime that has been found guilty by its own investigation commission of "systematic torture", extrajudicial killings and unprovoked destruction of mosques. The hawkish Alkhalifa foreign minister brushed aside any talk of reform or respect of human rights. He shocked the international audience in the Geneva session when he insisted that jailed political opponents were "criminals" thus dashing any hope of releasing them. The Austrian delegation grilled the Alkhalifa regime exposing its gross violations of human rights and calling for the immediate release of the political leadership of the revolution. While the British and American delegates disguised their support of the regime by urging it to undertake more serious reforms, ten international human rights bodies, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others, lambasted the Alkhalifa FM and scrutinised the embattled and

unpopular tribal regime. It was one of the worst moments for the Alkhalifa who had thought they would turn the deliberations at Geneva to their own favour.

Amnesty International commented on the UPR outcome arguing that "Unless Bahrain's government now puts into practice the UPR's recommendations at the national level, this will have been just a hollow box-ticking exercise." Others who addressed the 21 session session include journalists Without Borders, Ifex for freedom of expression, Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, the Arab Network for information of Human Rights and the International PEN. They called for an immediate stop to the repression against human rights defenders and the release of all political prisoners.

Meanwhile the US-based Freedom House has issued its annual report on the state of democracy and human rights in the world. It concluded that "Bahrain, once seen as one of the more developed countries, saw its measures decline across the board pulling its country average down to 2.03, the level of pre-uprising Syria, from a recent peak of 3.27 in 2004."

On Wednesday 19th September a new martyr submitted his soul to God after inhaling excessive amounts of chemical

and tear gases fired on orders from Bahrain's dictator. Hajji Hassan Abdulla, 59, passed away after struggling with the after-effects of those gases. His home was repeatedly attacked in Sitra, causing him to inhale excessive amounts of these fatal gases. His funeral on Wednesday attracted thousands of Bahrainis who braved Alkhalifa attacks. Anti-regime slogans were chanted by mourners

The mother of a 14-years child spoke of her anguish as her son was kidnapped by the regime's Death Squads last week. Faisal Hussain Al Tarrah, 14, was snatched as he played in the street with his colleagues. He was taken to what is known as "Youth Houses" in Sanabis which are used as a staging post where initial torture takes place before the victim is taken to prison. He was then taken to the prosecution office which ordered his detention for longer period to conceal torture marks. The boy told his mother that he had been severely tortured.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
21st September 2012

Eight years old girl summoned, US admits role in Rajab's detention, torture

The United Nations has singled out 16 nations for cracking down on critics, including Bahrain, saying most of those countries' governments are going unpunished for their acts of reprisal. Yesterday U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay told a special session of the Human Rights Council that the 16 nations detailed in a new report "have been far from sufficient" in preventing members of their own governments from resorting to intimidation and attacks on various activists.

The report to the Geneva-based council for its session this month details alleged cases of killings, beatings, torture, arrests, threats, harassment and smear campaigns against human rights defenders, some arising out of backlash from the Arab Spring last year. The report covers mid-June 2011 to mid-July 2012 and cites cases in Algeria, **Bahrain**, Belarus, China, Colombia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uzbekistan and Venezuela.

One activist, Mohammed Al-Maskati, told the council Thursday that as president of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights he had "received more than a dozen anonymous phone calls threatening my life and the safety of my family" during the previous three days because he tweeted that he would be attending the council session.

Mr Sadiq Rabi' who was hit by regime's forces on 5th September and seriously injured has been transferred to a private hospital to continue his treatment. His condition is serious but stable. He had received direct hits on his back, shoulder and face as he marched with others to protest the death of a fetus, named Zainab, as a result of inhalation of chemical gases by her pregnant mother, fired by the regime's special forces at a demonstration in Sitra earlier. None of the criminals who had fired the shots was arrested. When human rights activist, Yousuf Al Mahafdah, visited him three days ago he was not allowed into the room and was threatened with arrest and torture if he did not leave the hospital which is under military rule.

The Bahraini protesters, Sayed Hadi Alawi, 24, is still in intensive care after being hit with live ammunition by security forces earlier this month. One of his kidneys was removed and his other organs were seriously damaged. He is under military surveillance 24 hours by the hospital's military authorities. His would-be murders are still at large and the dictator, who had given permission to shoot at protesters is considered the main culprit like Mubarak and Ben Ali.

The Alkhalifa have summoned an eight years old girl to appear at their prosecu-

tion office for questioning about her role in plotting to overthrow the regime. The child, Abrar Al Omran, 8, faces an uphill struggle to prove her innocence and that as a child she could not have had part in the alleged plot. The US administration has emboldened the Alkhalifa into adopting such criminal steps.

Last Monday human rights activists were summoned by the American Embassy in Manama and told to accept "dialogue" (Alkhalifa way; we speak, you listen) and refrain from protests. If they fail to follow these orders, given in the presence of a State Department's official visiting Bahrain, they will face the same fate as that of Mr Rajab. This is the first time the Obama administration has indicated that it had given green light for the arrest and torture of the most senior human rights activist in Bahrain.

On 12th September The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), said it had sent a trial observa-

tion mission to Bahrain to observe the opening of the appeal in cases against Mr. Nabeel Rajab. It remains very concerned at the continuation of the policy of silencing and criminalising legitimate human rights activities. While welcoming the cooperation of the Bahraini authorities during the mission, the Observatory recalls that the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly, including by calling for reforms and denouncing human rights violations, is not a crime. Those rights constitute legitimate freedoms necessary in a democratic state. For this reason, it firmly condemns the continuing campaign to criminalise dissent and human rights defenders. The continuing repression of free speech in Bahrain violates Bahrain international legal obligations and urges the Bahraini authorities to comply with the rights to peaceful assembly and expression, and to immediately release those arbitrarily detained for exercising their legitimate freedoms.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
14 September 2012

World reaction unanimous on rejecting military court sentences

On Tuesday 4th September, the Alkhalifa Appeal Court read out the dictator's decision to uphold his earlier decision to jail the leaders of the Revolution. In June 2011 the 21 leaders had been "tried" by the military court which sentenced eight of them to life terms; the others to 5-15 years. It was a political decision that was seen as revenge by the dictator. That decision was condemned by almost every independent human rights body in the world. When the Bissioni Commission investigated regime's crimes it called for the release of all political prisoners including the leading figures. Alkhalifa allies; most notably USA and UK called for the release of the leaders. But when the Appeal court was convened last month the leaders refused to attend after it became clear that it was acting on orders from the top authorities. The show trial gradually transformed into chaos as it became clear that the decision would be political. They demanded that their defence witnesses be allowed to speak openly, but the dictator refused and insisted that they could only speak behind curtains. The leaders became convinced that the "retrial" by a civilian court was nothing more than a smoke screen. The decision would be the same and there was no point in attending the procedures as the enemy and the judge were transformed into one.

When the Alkhalifa decision reached them, the leaders reacted in one fashion;

congratulating each other on what they saw as vindication of their calls for regime change. The Al Khalifa regime has become so intolerable that whatever happens would be less painful than their rule. They should not be allowed, under any circumstances, to remain in power. The leaders have their conscience completely cleared as this new decision erodes any remnants of hope in a reformed Alkhalifa regime. To them, the number of years of their sentences has no real meaning. Whether the sentence is ten years or life makes little difference to the situation. If they are released today they may be detained again in few years. This has happened repeatedly in the past three decades and will continue to happen if the Alkhalifa remain in power. Wisdom dictates that any price is right for their removal after the world has witnessed the wickedness of a regime of evil and crime.

The world's reaction to the Alkhalifa decision has been unanimous in condemnation. Brian Dooley of Human Rights First said: "The crackdown in Bahrain continues in the courts and on the streets. The denial of the men's appeals shows the regime has little intention to reform. Bahraini government claims that they are on the path to human rights progress appear to be a sham," Dooley was denied courtroom entry in May 2011 when he arrived to observe the men's military trial.

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Reform claims shattered as court confirms sentences against 13 leading dissidents

September 4, 2012

Washington, DC – Today's confirmation of jail sentences against 13 leading Bahraini dissidents show the regime's promises of reform are a hoax, said Human Rights First. "The crackdown in Bahrain continues in the courts and on the streets. The denial of the men's appeals shows the regime has little intention to reform. Bahraini government claims that they are on the path to human rights progress appear to be a sham," said Human Rights First's Brian Dooley.

Today's appeal verdicts for the 13 dissidents follow the original sentences handed down by a military court in June 2011. The men were arrested, detained and tortured in March and April of last year and have been kept in jail throughout the appeal process.

The 13 men whose sentences were reaffirmed today include Hassan Mshaima, 'Abdelwahab Hussain, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Dr 'Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Mohammad Habib al-Miqdad, Abdel-Jalil al-Miqdad, Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri, Mohammad Hassan Jawwad, Mohammad 'Ali Ridha Isma'il, Abdullah al-Mahroos, 'Abdul-Hadi 'Abdullah Hassan al-Mukhodher, Ebrahim Sharif, Salah 'Abdullah Hubail al-Khawaja.

Hussain Parweez, whose father Mohammad Hassan Jawwad is one of the 13, told Human Rights First, "Everyone is shocked. My dad is 65 and has been very sick these last few weeks. We thought that he would be released because of his health with at least some of the others. We were expecting something better – some villages are already protesting. It seems the Government of Bahrain doesn't want things to get better."

A group of 28 medics were also due to hear their verdicts today, but that hearing has been delayed until September 11.

"All of the 13 dissidents deserved to be acquitted, immediately and unconditionally. President Obama told the Bahraini regime in May 2011 that 'The only way forward is for the government and opposition to engage in a dialogue, and you can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail.' If that's what the U.S. government still thinks, it should say so, publicly and clearly," Dooley concluded.

Dooley was denied courtroom entry in May 2011 when he arrived to observe the men's military trial. The United States government sent observers to the dissidents' trial and knows this has not been a fair legal process.



Bahrain Documentary Shows the Brutality Supported by the US

John Glaser, September 06, 2012

Yesterday, in our news section, we provided a link to Glenn Greenwald's article on CNN International's refusal to air a documentary it commissioned uncovering the brutal crackdown by the US-backed dictatorship in Bahrain. Greenwald linked to the documentary, now available on YouTube, but many people still have not seen it. It does a brilliant job of illustrating the abuses the people have suffered at the hands of the regime. It's useful to remind yourself while watching this that Washington wholeheartedly supports this kind of repression. The US has sent more than \$60 million in direct aid to Bahrain since 2008, and has another \$11 million scheduled for 2013. In recent years, the US has sent Bahrain riot gear, tanks, helicopter gunships, and over a million pounds of ammunition – all of which have been integral to the ruthless crackdown imposed on reform-minded Bahrainis. After international condemnation, the Obama administration was forced to suspend a new \$53 million package of military equipment, making it conditional on reform. And when Bahraini opposition groups and a U.N. statement acknowledged that no substantive move towards reform had been made, Obama began secretly pushing through the arms package, circumventing congressional rules and failing to inform the public.

The protests in Bahrain are not just protests against that particular regime; they are de facto protests against this reprehensibly US foreign policy, which bribes dictatorships in order to maintain control of the Middle East. As a 2004 Defense Department report put it, when referring to the Gulf Arab states, "Without the US these regimes could not survive."

World reaction unanimous, *Continued from Page 3*

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"Today's court decision is yet another blow to justice and shows once more that the Bahraini authorities are not on the path of reform but seem rather driven by vindictiveness," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, deputy director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Program, who also noted that many of the defendants have testified that they were tortured during their initial detentions. "Instead of upholding the sentences...the Bahraini authorities must quash the convictions for the 13 men who are imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their human rights and release them immediately and unconditionally," she added. In a statement yesterday, Acting Deputy Spokesperson for the White House stated that the US is "troubled" by the appeal verdict:

UK's Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said: "I am very disappointed at the Bahraini civilian court's decision to uphold all the sentences of 13 political activists in Bahrain. While the UK welcomed Bahrain's decision to review these cases in a civilian court, as recommended by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), we remain concerned about the strength of the convictions. Reports at the time these individuals were sentenced, which were acknowledged by the BICI,

suggested that some had been abused in detention, denied access to legal counsel and were coerced into confessing.

Joe Stork, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division, said the court ruling "only compounds the travesty of justice that has characterized this case.

Meanwhile, the news giant CNN is under criticism for refusing to air a documentary it had commissioned and produced that featured a lengthy segment on the uprising against the U.S.-backed regime in Bahrain. The segment featured interviews with Bahraini activists facing repression and footage of U.S.-armed government forces shooting unarmed protesters. The documentary, called "iRevolution: Online Warriors of the Arab Spring," aired once on CNN for a U.S. audience. But it never aired on CNN International as initially intended, meaning no audiences in the Middle East or elsewhere outside of the United States ever watched it. CNN has refused to provide an explanation for the move but critics call it political censorship. The correspondent on the Bahrain segment, Amber Lyon, said she was told by CNN colleagues that the network had received numerous complaints from the Bahraini government.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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