

BAHRAIN

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

Revolution throttles dynastical rule on Day of Tamarrud

The reinvigoration of the people's Revolution will take a new dimension on 14th August when the Tamarrud (rebellion) Movement leads the way to encircle the embattled Alkhalifa regime. The hope is that the friends of this dictatorship take steps to prevent it from continuing its violent, repressive and cruel policies that aim to silence the pro-democracy movement. Silence on the prospect of intensification of state-terrorism must not be an option to those powers. It will be more shameful if they decide to grant the Alkhalifa more political and security support. One of the factors that encouraged them to attack peaceful protests on 14th February 2011 and kill demonstrators is what appeared, at the time, to be connivance in those immoral attacks. The Western powers have failed their moral and ethical test when they decided not only to abandon the popular Arab revolutions, but to support the dictators during those revolts and then to take part in the counter-revolution that sought to unseat the newly democratically-elected governments. The all-out war against the reform movements in the Arab World does not serve the strategic aims and interests of those powers. If it does, it is a disaster. If those interests are served by lending helping hands to murderers and killers the moral balance will certainly shift away from the present world order and force a fundamental rethink of any human rights achievement that may have been gained after the Second World War.

Bahraini youth have, once again, called for a genuine Revolution to tilt the balance of power away from the hereditary dictatorships ruling the Middle East. The world peace will be at greater risks if the dictators are allowed to assume leadership of their people. The duty of the world community is to stand up to this challenge and hasten the move to replace the dictatorial monarch with a regime chosen by the people. The world's problems in terms of security, extremism and human rights abuses are linked to absolute rule of despots who observe no values and abide by no international conventions. In the Middle East the ills of these regimes are visible in most countries, but the case of Bahrain stands out as being flagrant and heart-breaking. When jails are overcrowded with people whose only crimes are linked to calling for their rights and rejecting the authoritarian rule of a hereditary dictatorship, it only

indicates the immense challenges to the international community and especially those who claim to promote democracy and defend human rights. Silence by the Western governments is deafening. Turning blind eyes to the cries of victims is an affront to the human conscience and a flagrant abandonment of the most basic duties of any civilized system.

Bahrainis are aware of the dangers of challenging a status quo defended by armies equipped by most sophisticated and up-to-date technologies purchased by the petrodollars. But they have been left with no choice but to defend their humanity and dignity. When they launched their 14th February Revolution they were in a desperate situation with absolute power in the hands of the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship, supported by their allies in Washington, London and Riyadh. They were able to withstand the onslaught of the regime's security forces, army and armed militias. But then came the Saudi forces with their military might and took part in the merciless slaughter of the Bahrainis. The people did not give up, but waged a civilian campaign that has continued unabated for thirty months. Their aim is to defeat armies with their will, determination, patience and God's help. They are now celebrating the Independence Day with unprecedented determination to show to the world that they have always resisted foreign occupation and stood up to the invaders. This time, the withdrawal of the British forces on 14th August 1971 will be marked with absolute determination by the Tamarrud (rebellion) movement that will send a clear message to the Alkhalifa and Saudi occupiers that the "right is might" and that clinging to this right is a source of inspiration and power. They will not compromise their freedom, liberty and self-determination.

The regime's reaction to the announcement of the Tamarrud Movement that it would mobilize forces to re-invigorate the Revolution on 14th August, the Independence Day, has been gruesome. July has been among the worst months in terms of civilian casualties, mostly shot with shotguns, arrests and kangaroo courts. More than 200 Bahrainis were shot as they took part in peaceful protests at various locations, mostly in the towns and villages. They made clear to the regime and its supporters that state terror has failed to quell people's thrust to achieve freedom and democracy.

Residential areas were subjected to horrific tales of gas attacks by regime's forces, raids on homes and collective punishment. To add to these wounds, the Alkhalifa have intensified their sectarian policies against the majority Baharna natives. Attacks on their religious beliefs in semi-official media has increased as the ruling family tries to woo the Sunnis in their outrageous war against the population. The events in Egypt have dampened their inclination to support a regime that has attempted to divide the country in order to serve its repressive policies. Apart from the regime's paid agents the ordinary citizens, Shia or Sunni, would not defend a regime whose main aim is to secure dynastical rule. The events in Egypt have confirmed the fact that sectarianism is a tool employed by the counter-revolution forces against political change in the Arab World. It is designed and financed by Saudi petrodollars to keep the Arab populace engaged in internal pathetic internal conflicts while these dictators blunder people's wealth.

Alkhalifa are now defending their dictatorship in their last ditch. They know that their links with Bahrainis have been severed and that there is no going back to old days when they were raiding the country's wealth and sovereignty unimpeded. The situation has now fundamentally changed and that they have failed to quell people's thrust to achieve self-determination. In addition to the collective punishment they have been meting out against the people, they have sought to "legitimise" their crimes by the use of their "shura council" which has been rubber-stamping the dictator's decisions. The highly-paid employees of this symbolic body are ready to abandon their human values and obey the orders of the dictators. Last month they "approved" a set of punishments set by the ruling family against pro-democracy activists. They include withdrawing people's nationality if they take part in anti-regime activities. Nationality which is an inalienable right of people enshrined within the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, has become a weapon against the people. This is yet another indication of how far the Alkhalifa are prepared to go to punish Bahrainis and impose their ethnic cleansing policies. These policies are an affront to human taste, dignity and values and must be resisted by the world's community to stop sliding into laws of the jungle.

Horrific torture tales at Alkhalifa kangaroo court

The past few days have witnessed one of the harshest campaigns, collective punishment and en-mass trials in the country. Scores were kidnapped from their homes, offices or the street, taken to torture chambers and subjected to most horrific treatment. The towns of Samaheej, Duraz, Sitra, Karzakkan and others were raided by armed security men and hooded militias to induce fear in the hearts of Bahrainis. Those detained suffered great deals of torture to the extent that the regime's torture personnel have denied that they had arrested some of them, leading to fears that some prisoners may have perished in the torture chambers. This campaign of state-terrorism started at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadhan to disorientate the people and divert them from the path of worship and struggle.

At the same time the Alkhalifa kangaroo courts resumed their sessions to send more Bahrainis to prison on trumpeted charges. On Thursday 25th July scores of Bahrainis were brought into these courts only to be humiliated by the Alkhalifa judges. Among them was Raihana Al Mousawi, one of two women arrested during the Formula 1 race in April. At her last appearance two weeks ago she told the court that she had been subjected to torture, abused and stripped off her clothes. The judge refused to document her torture complaints and failed to take any action to investigate these heinous crimes.

The group which is being tried is accused of being members of the 14th February Coalition. Among those present were Jihad Mohammad Ali and Ali Habib who were limping as they entered the court room due to the severe torture they had endured. A third person was Abd Ali Al Singace whose hand and neck had wrappings indicating the extent of torture. The fourth was Naji Fateel who had removed his shirt in the last session to expose the horrific wounds due to severe beating and hanging from the hands and legs. Another person was Hamid Al Safi who became furious when he saw Raihana Al Mousawi at the court again after her first ordeal two weeks ago. The judge ordered his removal from the court. Three others were also brought; Jaffar Al Jamri, Mohammad Ali Ashoor and Abd Ali Mohammad Khair. The Bahraini patriots started detailing their torture ordeals, but the judge kept interrupting them and asking them to stop talking. The ruling family had prevented a representative of Front Line Defenders and a Bahraini human rights activist, Mohammad Al Masqati from attending in order to keep the lid on those tales of horror. The session was abruptly brought to an end when the defence team refused the presence of one of the Alkhalifa members and the son of a prominent regime's crony as judges. The families of the Bahraini victims were not allowed into the court room.

A Bahraini young man, Salman Ahmad Al Nakal, was arrested on Wednesday

24th July on the causeway linking Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. He was taken to an unknown location and nothing has been heard of him since.

The hopes of those who had been relentlessly promoting the Alkhalifa crown prince that he may lead a reconciliation process were dashed in the past two days after he uttered statements that exposed his real nature and that he is no more reformist than the rest of his family members. While visiting the house of one prominent people he called on the Bahrainis to apologise to the his family for calling for their natural and legitimate rights. He insisted that the victims of his family's state terrorism stop their political campaigns and ask for forgiveness from those who have been abusing and torturing them. The people reacted in fury to those comments that were ill-placed and ill-advised. If anything, those words have exposed the reality of his personality and that he is not different from the rest of the Alkhalifa thugs. Those remarks came only a few days after he had met with the military and security personnel and thanked them for the crimes they are committing on daily basis against Bahrainis. If this is the kind of man the Western allies have in mind to lead what they perceive as "reconciliation" process, then the whole exercise has exposed its futility and failure.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
26th July 2013

One martyr as world responds to victims cries and awaits Day of Tamarrud

A citizen was martyred on Sunday 14th July as a result of inhaling excessive amounts of chemical gases used by regime's forces. Hajj Saeed Abdulla Al Marzooq, 55, from Duraz Town was in an area which was bombarded with large amounts of killer gases to subdue the people who seek political change in the country. He collapsed and his life could not be saved as the gases had managed to destroy his internal organs.

In continuation of the repressive policies and terrorizing tactics, several Bahrainis have been kidnapped by members of regime's Death Squads. Two youth from the town of Al Ma'amir were snatched by those forces and nothing has yet been disclosed about their well being or their whereabouts. On Tuesday 16th July, Abdulla Al Qassas and Mohammad Eid were taken to an unknown location by members of Death Squads. One week earlier, Dhaif Abdul Nabi was also kidnapped by those forces from his home town of Sitra. Sayed Saeed, the father of one of the young martyrs, Sayed Hashim (martyred January 2012) from Sitra has also been abducted. The people of Sitra staged several protests demanding his release or disclosing his whereabouts, but Alkhalifa have refused.

On Wednesday night, 17th July, a gas cylinder placed in a car at a mosque car park exploded causing loud noise in the vicinity. The regime was the first to announce it and blamed the opposition for it. But its claim was ridiculed by the opposition many of whom believe that the regime had planned this incident to justify more crackdown against the people of Bahrain. The cylinder was allegedly placed near a Sunni mosque where people were attending prayers. It was clear from the moment of the explosion that the aim was to create the atmosphere for more sectarian strife after it had become clear that both Shia and Sunni Bahrainis were calling for serious political reforms.

Two weeks ago a Sunni Muslim group presented a set of steps that would see the longest serving prime minister in the world, go unceremoniously. The Alkhalifa have all along been worried by the revival of a nation-wide awareness that could culminate in collective challenge to Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship. The explosion is clearly meant to forestall any attempt of political reconciliation between the two major components of the Bahraini society; the Shia and Sunni Muslims. As the opposition condemned the dirty plot by Alkha-

lifa, it also challenged the dictator to stop killing Bahrainis, and bring to trial torturers and abusers.

On Monday 15th July The Times newspaper published a story titled "Bahrain; torture double standard". It said: "Britain has been accused of operating "double standards" for turning a blind eye to human rights violations in Bahrain, while taking a much tougher stance with some other countries in the region. Nazeeha Saeed, a Bahraini journalist who was detained and tortured by her own Government, said that it was time the international community took stock of the human rights abuses going on there. The article added: "People think that the UK and the international community have been soft regarding violations of human rights and of freedom of speech [in Bahrain] ... They say that they are 'concerned' about what's going on but they don't help the people there get justice. It's double standards," she said.

On Tuesday 16th July the Washington-based CATO Institute published an article on its website by Ted Gallen Carpenter titled "Bahrain Emerging as Washington's Next Middle East Crisis". Please read it on Page 4

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Severe torture claims exposed at show trial

The extent of torture and humiliation being inflicted on Bahraini detainees has been exposed at Thursday's "trial" of activists in Manama. Several people were brought to the court after weeks of horrific torture, humiliation and ill-treatment. They are accused of forming secret organisation to overthrow the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship. The tails of torture they described raised the hair of those present. Among the most horrific stories is that related to a female prisoner, Raihana Al Mousawi whose description of her ordeal forced those present at the court to cry. She was arrested during the Formula 1 race last April. She said that she had been sexually assaulted by the regime's agents. She was stripped naked twice and assaulted by her torturers at the police station. Then she was forced to sign prepared "confessions" that would corroborate what the regime falsely accused her of doing. What made the situation worse was the role played by the Prosecutor, Ahmad Bu Chiri, who threatened more torture if the victims spoke of their ordeals. Another victim is the human rights activist, Naji Fateel, who was subjected to severe torture. At the court, he removed his shirt to show the "judge" the marks of his torture which had been inflicted on him over the past two months and are still visible. The "judge", Ali Al Dhahrani, refused

to hear the complaints of torture or record them in the official register. Another victim was Hussain Ramadhan who said that he had been tortured and threatened by Ahmad Bu Chiri with more torture if he did not sign the "confessions". Another victim was Mohammad Al Singace who told the "judge" that he had suffered severe torture that broke his hand. He was wearing neck support due to the torture that affected his neck.

The people's anger has reached unprecedented levels. Bahrainis have now decided to re-invigorate their Revolution on 14th August, to mark the Independence Day when the British forces withdrew from Bahrain in 1971. Under the name "Tamarrud" young revolutionaries will stage massive protests on that day to unseat the Alkhalifa dictatorship. Many individuals and groups have signed up to the pledge of leading a new Revolution to complete the work of the 14th February Revolution. This time, they hope, they will be able to pin down the regime and expose its bleak record of human rights violations, dictatorship and corruption. Tamarrud will follow a month long programme of activities during the holy month of Ramadhan that started this week. Under the motto "The Revolution of the those who are fasting" there will be more protests and demonstrations similar to the daily protests that have continued despite the

regime's suppression. Yesterday the people of Sanabis, Buri, Duraz, Dair, Jid Hafa and Ma'amir protested peacefully but were attacked by the regime's Death Squads using chemical gases and shotguns. Many were injured and scores arrested. The protesters called for the right to self-determination and a new political order in the country to replace the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship.

Meanwhile, the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) has issued a report accusing the regime of insensitivity towards Bahraini prisoners who lose one of their relatives. Those victims are not allowed to attend the funerals of their relatives or receive condolences. It said "The Ministry of Interior does not consider death a sufficient reason for the temporary release of detained activists". BCHR expressed its "grave concern over the ongoing harassment by the authorities in Bahrain against imprisoned activists and political prisoners. This includes the recent cases of depriving several political prisoners from the right to temporary release to attend the funeral of their relatives. Some of the recent cases included human rights defender Naji Fateel, author and photographer Mahmood Alabdulsahib, and the cousin of the victim of extrajudicial killing Ahmed Farhan, Hassan Abdulghani."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
12 July 2013

Amnesty International on Bahrain: Still no justice for torture

25 July 2013

A decision by the Public Prosecution not to appeal against an acquittal verdict in a torture case brings to a close what to-date has been the only effort to obtain justice for the torture of Nazeeha Sa'eed. Twenty third of July was the deadline for the Public Prosecution to appeal on behalf of Journalist Nazeeha Sa'eed who said she was tortured in 2011, but it decided not to.

The closure of the case initiated by the journalist is yet another example of Bahrain's justice system's inability to offer an effective remedy for victims of human rights violations. Many complaints of torture were dismissed by the authorities and in those cases where investigations of torture allegations and excessive use of force resulting in deaths were carried out by the Public Prosecution, those found responsible, usually low ranking security men, were either acquitted or received lenient prison sentences which they are appealing against.

Nazeeha Sa'eed, a 31-year-old Bahraini journalist who has worked as a correspondent for French Television news channel France 24 since June 2009 and for Monte-Carlo TV since 2004, was detained and tortured in 2011.

According to Nazeeha Sa'eed, in the evening of 22 May 2011, she was summoned to al-Riffa'a police station. She was first questioned by a policeman who told her that she was accused of being a

member of a group that wanted to overthrow the monarchy and that she had spoken to some of the leaders of the opposition. She denied the accusation.

Nazeeha Sa'eed was then taken to another room, where a group of policemen and policewomen reportedly started beating her with a hose-pipe, punching and kicking her. She was then taken to another room, blindfolded and pulled by her hair into other rooms. She was reportedly beaten on her back and feet by one policewoman who later used electric shocks on Nazeeha Sa'eed's arm. The policewoman also made her pretend to be a monkey and forced her to drink an unidentified liquid while she was blindfolded. The policewoman pushed Nazeeha Sa'eed's head down a toilet and said, "This water is cleaner than you, you Sh'ia". She also accused Nazeeha Sa'eed of fabricating her television reports. Nazeeha Sa'eed was then questioned again. She was asked about the sources of her media reports on deaths of protestors. When she replied she had received the information from doctors, her investigators told her that these doctors were lying and that she had fabricated the information. When her blindfold was eventually removed, Nazeeha Sa'eed could see there were nurses detained in the room with her. Ten hours after she arrived at the police station, Nazeeha Sa'eed was taken to the officer in charge, who asked her to sign some papers. But she was too afraid to ask to read them before signing. The officer told her, "whatever happens in this police station is my reputation and You don't want to ruin it."

Following her release Nazeeha Sa'eed filed a complaint with the Public Prosecution Office (PPO). The PPO carried out an investigation and it referred the case to a lower criminal court. On 4 March 2012 the lower criminal court returned the case to the PPO arguing it was a felony case and not misdemeanour, and therefore not within its jurisdiction. The PPO then referred the case to the High Criminal Court which acquitted the policewoman in October 2012 despite the overwhelming evidence that Nazeeha Sa'eed had been tortured.

Two forensic reports, prepared by two Ministry of Interior forensic experts who examined Nazeeha Sa'eed's body on 24 and 25 May 2011 respectively, noted marks of torture and beatings on several parts of her body. In the PPO's investigation two policewomen, from the same police station, testified for Nazeeha Sa'eed, confirming her torture and beatings.

The Public Prosecution appealed against the verdict. However, on 23 June 2013 the High Criminal Court of Appeal confirmed the verdict issued on 22 October. The Public Prosecution had 30 days, as stipulated in the law, to appeal the verdict before the Court of Cassation, but it declined to do so. The Public Prosecution has also refused to give the 23 June verdict by the High Criminal Court of Appeal to Nazeeha Sa'eed and her lawyer. Amnesty International calls on the authorities to ensure that Nazeeha Sa'eed and other victims are afforded effective remedy.

Bahrain Emerging as Washington's Next Middle East Crisis

JULY 16, 2013

By Ted Gallen Carpenter

The Obama administration, already preoccupied with the unpleasant developments in Syria and Egypt, may soon be facing a new crisis in the small Persian Gulf nation of Bahrain. If violence in that country continues to grow, it will have a more immediate and significant impact on Washington's role in the region. Bahrain is the home port for the U.S. fifth fleet, and is, therefore, the linchpin of the U.S. naval presence in that part of the world and a crucial component of Washington's power-projection capabilities. It would not be easy to replace that facility—and impossible to do so quickly. Consequently, U.S. policy makers have been more than just interested spectators to events in Bahrain.

There is little doubt that Bahrain's political environment is increasingly volatile. The country is on the front lines of the Sunni-Shiite struggle for dominance in the Middle East. The Sunni monarchy of King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa rules a population that is nearly 70 percent Shiite, and stark discrimination against the latter is evident in nearly

every aspect of life. Tehran openly backs Shiite factions in Bahrain, while Saudi Arabia is the king's primary patron. When massive anti-regime demonstrations erupted in Bahrain's capital, Manama, in early 2011, government security forces responded harshly, including with volleys of live ammunition, killing several dozen demonstrators. Despite that crackdown, though, insurgents might well have toppled the monarchy if Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies had not intervened with 2,000 troops in March 2011.

The violence has continuously simmered since then, punctuated by periodic surges. As of February 2013, more than 100 people had died in police crackdowns on anti-regime demonstrations and retaliatory attacks by insurgents. The government also has imprisoned hundreds of other political opponents. Those numbers might not seem all that large, but Bahrain's population is barely 1.2 million. Earlier this month, a bomb explosion killed a police officer in the city of Sitra, and a similar attack seriously injured three officers in the city of Janabiya. The BBC reports that "youths armed with petrol bombs attack police on an almost nightly basis in villages and towns around the capital."

Frederic Wehrey, a scholar with the Carne-

gie Endowment for International Peace, notes in his important study on Bahrain that "the United States finds itself in the undesirable position of maintaining close ties with a repressive regime that has skillfully avoided meaningful reforms..."

As I discuss here, the deteriorating situation in Bahrain creates major headaches for the Obama administration. Muslim audiences have already noted the apparent double standard between Washington's vehement condemnation of brutal, undemocratic behavior in such countries as Iran, Syria, and Gaddafi's Libya—all adversaries of the United States—and the solicitous U.S. treatment of Bahrain's repressive regime. And that was before the Obama administration's mild reaction to the military coup in Egypt produced additional charges of hypocrisy. The burgeoning tensions in Bahrain may soon compel U.S. officials to decide whether their professed commitment to democracy and human rights in the Middle East is a serious policy goal or merely diplomatic posturing. If it's the former, it may mean losing a keystone military presence in the region.

The Cato Institute, Washington

Urgent Action: release of Prisoner of Conscience denied

Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Deeb the former president of the Bahrain Teachers' Association (BTA) had his request for temporary release rejected by the Court of Cassation on 1 July. He is a prisoner of conscience.

On 1 July 2013, the Court of Cassation in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, rejected a request made by lawyers acting on behalf of Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Deeb and Jalila al-Salman not to implement the previous verdict until the two defendants' allegations of torture are investigated. This refusal means that Mahdi Abu Deeb will remain in prison. The Court of Cassation has not yet set a date for taking a final decision on the two defendants' appeal. Mahdi Abu Deeb has already spent some two years and three months of his five years' sentence in Jaw prison. Jalila al-Salman completed her six-month sentence last November.

As well as being a diabetic and having high blood pressure, Mahdi Abu Deeb suffers from neck, lower back and knees pain resulting

from the torture and other ill-treatment he was subjected to. He was initially receiving physiotherapy and medical treatment in the Salmaniya Medical Complex but this was stopped around October 2012. Since then he has only been seen by the prison doctor as he has been refusing to be referred to the Bahrain Defence Force military hospital in al-Riffa'a in central Bahrain where he said he was tortured and ill-treated.

Both were initially sentenced before a military court in 2011 on charges including using their positions as vice-president and president of the BTA to call for a strike by teachers, halting the educational process, "inciting hatred of the regime", and "attempting to overthrow the ruling system by force". On 21 October 2012, an appeal court upheld the verdict against the two but reduced their prison sentences. Mahdi Abu Deeb's sentence was reduced from 10 to five years in prison while Jalila al-Salman's was reduced from three years to six months, the lawyers then submitted the above-mentioned request before the Court of Cassation.



One martyr as world awaits Day of Tamarrud

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It said: "The Obama administration, already preoccupied with the unpleasant developments in Syria and Egypt, may soon be facing a new crisis in the small Persian Gulf nation of Bahrain. If violence in that country continues to grow, it will have a more immediate and significant impact on Washington's role in the region... There is little doubt that Bahrain's political environment is increasingly volatile. The country is on the front lines of the Sunni-Shiite struggle for dominance in the Middle East. The Sunni monarchy of King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa rules a population that is nearly 70 percent Shiite, and stark discrimination against the latter is evident in nearly every aspect of life. It further added: "Despite that crackdown, though, insurgents might well have toppled the monarchy if Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies had not intervened with 2,000 troops in March 2011." The article quoted Frederic Wehrey, a scholar with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who noted in his important study on Bahrain that "the United States finds itself in the undesirable position of maintaining close ties with a repressive regime that has skillfully avoided meaningful reforms..."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
19th July 2103