

# BAHRAIN

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

## **Saudis, Alkhalifa lost moral test; Bahrain must be liberated**

The events over the past few weeks have been dramatic with daily protests continuing unabated, repression intensifying and the international concerns rising. While the human rights situation has deteriorated sharply the political stalemate is boosting the trend towards major changes in the political structure of the country. As the noose tightens around the neck of Bahrain's dictator and his clique, the people's resolve has shown no sign of loosening. As the regime's repression becomes worse, the determination of the people to achieve their demands becomes deeper. For the Western supporters of the Alkhalifa dictatorship, the situation is gradually becoming more embarrassing to the extent that the two missions of both UK and USA to the Human Rights Council were forced to issue statements contradicting the regime's accounts of meetings with them. The Alkhalifa mouth pieces have altered the facts and attempted to deceive public opinion. At a time of regional and international efforts to re-draw the political map of the Middle East, the GCC regimes are becoming embarrassing liabilities to their friends especially in Washington and London. With more Bahraini casualties on daily basis, the sands are shifting in unfavourable directions and shapes to what the Alkhalifa wish.

It has now been proven that repression alone is not the answer to the Bahraini crisis. Even those groups that are considered benign are now being targeted by for repression. The second most senior figure of the Al Wafaq political society, Mr Khalil Al Marzooq has been detained and threatened with prosecution for insisting on the people's demands. In Geneva, the regime was on the receiving end of successive blows both by the Bahraini human rights activists and the international bodies and governments. A public statement against the Alkhalifa dictatorship was signed by 48 countries. To the dismay of the dictator the signatories include both UK and USA. However, more salt has been rubbed in the regime's wounds. The European Parliament issued a damning resolution against Bahrain's dictatorship calling for the release of the political prisoners, the trial of torturers and serious political reforms. Its 17 demands have been added to the long lists of recommendations by the Bissioni Commission, the 176 by the Human Rights Council and the countless demands by sev-

eral human rights bodies including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The latter has also published a lengthy and strong report about the ill-treatment of children languishing in Alkhalifa jails.

In essence the Bahrain's dictatorial regime is gradually becoming alienated by its own allies and friends. The country is becoming a pariah state with repression the main tool of dealing with the people's legitimate political and human rights demands. It is gradually becoming likely that a point of no-return may have already been reached and that no political initiative may salvage a hated regime that has routinely and systematically abused citizens. The Alkhalifa are now waging a war not only against the activists in the streets but also the religious personalities and institutions. The dictator's decision to close down the Islamic Scholars Council is another landmark on what is increasingly becoming the way to perdition. More than 200 of its members have been sent summons to appear at various torture centres. It is unlikely that they will respond to those illegal summons from an illegitimate regime. The absence of the rule of law and the intensification of repression are helping to focus the attention on the main core demand; regime change. The people, including those who had been reluctant to join the Revolution, are losing patience and joining the activists both in their perceptions and actions. The longer the Alkhalifa friends remain silent and inactive in terms of seeking a political solution the more likely that the region heats up to the sounds of revolutionary change emanating from the streets and alleyways of Bahrain's towns and villages.

Since Saudi Arabia invaded Bahrain in mid March 2011, its troops have been bogged down into a killing stalemate that is throttling the regime which it sought to salvage. The Bahrainis have defied all the odds to remain on the streets chanting anti-regime slogans and calling for an immediate and unconditional end to the Saudi occupation. The Arabian Peninsula has itself experienced intermittent outpouring of deep anxieties and anger among the inhabitants who see no glimmer of hope at the end of the tunnel. The situation in Bahrain is contributing to the intensification of revolutionary emotions among inhabitants of other GCC states. The United Arab Emirates which had dispatched its forces alongside the Saudi occupiers, is experiencing the backlash

of the Arab revolutions after it had arrested 100 members of its own branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was an outrageous move to arrest people who had done nothing wrong and whose only crime is affiliation to the Brotherhood who had contested and won the elections in Egypt before the military staged their outrageous military coup. The candle of Revolution has remained alight with the continuing public participation in the daily protests in Bahrain. The ruling Alkhalifa family is doing disservice to other ruling dynasties of the GCC with its harsh treatment of Bahrainis and its disrespect to the international bodies which have demanded real steps to curtail the excesses of the security forces and bring torturers to justice.

The next few months will be crucial not only to Bahrain but to the whole of the Arab World. With the Egyptian Revolution overturned by the Counter Revolution Forces and the military attempting to throttle the people, there needs to be a revival of the Arab Spring. The West and its regional allies are risking their chances of survival by ignoring the demands of the Bahraini people and believing that the Alkhalifa rulers are capable of reform, or that the people's revolt can simply be crushed with military might of the Peninsula Shield and Western security agencies. The realities on the ground have changed and the Saudis are gradually losing influence. It has now become common knowledge that as long as the Saudis are allowed to stretch their political and financial influence on others, change will become difficult to achieve. Democracy and tribalism are mutually exclusive; petro-dollars are enemies of change and corrupt regimes cannot reform themselves. There are glimmers of hope in Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and the Arabian Peninsula that the black days are coming to an end and that the people will rise again to achieve democracy and respect of human rights. The rapprochement between America and Iran and the spread of terrorism covertly sponsored by Riyadh are new factors that will lead to the realisation that peace and security in the Middle East cannot be achieved without comprehensive political change especially in the countries comprising the GCC. That is the dawn of freedom, liberty and human values. The counter revolution forces must be defeated to make fundamental political changes possible That will happen soon.

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## Intensification of repression as people insist on regime change

In one of the most outrageous acts of revenge a victims of police brutality has been detained for 60 days. Haidar Al Shughul is the victim in a short video clippe commonly known as "The video of the slap". In the clip Mr Al Shughul, his child in his arms, approaches a policeman in uniform to ask for information. The police immediately slaps him for no reason whatsoever. When the victim was slapped again, the child started to cry and the man walked away, having been humiliated and abused. As usual, the Alkhalifa interior ministry said it would "investigate" the incident. Instead of arresting the policeman, the victim was arrested and taken to the torture dungeons.

A young man, Yousuf Ali Al Nashmi, has been transferred to intensive care after his health had deteriorated due to severe torture and lack of medical care. The Dry Dock prison is notorious for the lack of care and serious abuse of Bahraini prisoners of conscience. At the Jaw prison, a young Bahraini boy has been banned from setting his exams. Hassan Mahdi who had been sentenced to 15 years in jail for taking part in anti-regime protests hoped he would continue his studies behind bars.

Three Bahrainis, one of them holding an American passport, have been given harsh prison terms for taking part in protests against Alkhalifa dictatorship. Taqi Abdulla Al Maydan, (with US passport), Ali Yousuf Abdul Redha and Ali Al Banna

were sentenced to 10 years in jail for protesting against Alkhalifa regime. Any protest is now considered by the ruling family a "terrorist act". Amnesty International has issued an Urgent Action calling for investigation of torture inflicted on Mr Maydan and that confessions obtained through torture are not used in evidence against him.

The raids on towns and villages have continued. In a lightning attack on Sitra on 25th September, 15-years old child was snatched. Nidal Ali Hussain was taken to an unknown location and there are fears for his safety. The father of the martyred journalist, Ahmad Ismael, has been snatched from his house by hooded members of the Alkhalifa Death Squads. On Tuesday 24th September at least six Bahrainis were kidnapped by those Squads from Duraz Town during raids on homes. From Bani Jamra Town a young boy, Mohammad Jaffar was also kidnapped and taken to the torture dungeons.

The father of Yousuf Al Mawali, who was tortured with electricity before his body was dumped in the sea in February 2012, is still behind bars since his arrest two weeks ago. He is charged with taking part in "Illegal gathering". The father has been calling for the arrest and trial of his son's torturers, but dictator Hamad Alkhalifa insists on protecting those torturers. He believes without them (alongside the Saudi forces occupying Bahrain) his family's rule cannot continue.

Joe Stork, the Deputy Director of the Middle East Department at Human Rights Watch called on the US to condemn the arrest of Khalil al-Marzooq of Al Wefaq Society. He said: "When a reporter at the State Department daily briefing in Washington DC asked deputy spokesperson Marie Harf to comment on al-Marzooq's arrest, she said she was "disappointed that opposition groups have suspended their involvement in the national dialogue ... we'll continue to encourage everyone to participate in it." Her line never wavered, even when she was asked follow-up questions. Thursday evening, US officials expressed concern about al-Marzooq's detention – but still didn't denounce it. He added: "Given the failure to produce any evidence that al-Marzooq or Al Wifaq advocated violence, Harf's ham-fisted evasion on Wednesday of repeated opportunities to criticize al-Marzooq's arrest must have been sweet music to the ears of Bahrain's ruling family hardliners who are determined to quash all manner of dissent. Her next-day reversal displays an alarming inconsistency in US messaging aimed at a government known for repression." Mr Stork concluded: "Washington now needs to publicly denounce al-Marzooq's arrest, and condemn the wider escalation of repression in Bahrain."

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
26th September 2013

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### Arrest of senior political figure; scores detained, abused

The arrest, interrogation and abuse of one of the most senior figures of the political opposition group; Al Wefaq, has been roundly condemned without reservation from all local and international bodies. Khalil Al Marzooq, the Deputy Leader of Al Wefaq was summoned to the public prosecution office where he was interrogated for several hours and ordered to remain in detention for one month. His continued refusal to bow down to the regime's imposed political decisions has angered the main figures of the ruling family. His detention is thought to have been approved by the dictator, his uncle and son who are at the helm of power, and are responsible for the actions by their henchmen at the torture dungeons. Almost all independent civil society bodies and political opposition have condemned the arrest of Mr Marzooq and called for his immediate and unconditional release. Amnesty International issued a statement calling for the same: The arrest of the prominent opposition leader Khalil al-Marzooq in Bahrain last night is the authorities' latest move to tighten the noose on political opposition in the country and silence anyone seen to be critical of the authorities, Amnesty International said. "Khalil al-Marzooq is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned only for of his vehement criticism of the government.

He must be immediately and unconditionally released," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director at Amnesty International.

At least 24 Bahrainis have been abducted in the past 24 hours from various parts of the country. Five were abducted in the early morning of Thursday, four from Dair Town, several others from Abu Guwwah village. They were ill-treated and abused as they were being arrested. In the Town of Karbad the detainees include: Hassan Marzooq, Ali Abdulla Radhi, Mohammad Abbas and Marzooq Jaffar Marzooq.

The regime's aim is to overwhelm the people and subdue them into submission. The outcome has always been the opposite. There is today more determination to cleanse the country of the Alkhalifa dictatorial regime whatever the cost.

A young Bahraini prisoner of conscience has been prevented from attending his wife's funeral. Redha Al Ma'youf has been languishing in Alkhalifa torture dungeons for several months. His wife had been stricken by the arrest, torture and abuse of her husband. She fell ill and died of anger and sorrow. But the regime refused to allow the husband to attend the funeral of his wife.

In another development the ruling family has now decided to target the religious

establishment of the native Bahrainis. They have instructed their "judges" to ban the "The Scholars Council" which is the umbrella body for the religious leaders and scholars. This is another step on the way to dominating the various aspects of people lives. The Alkhalifa had attacked the medics, the teachers, the students, the women and the athletes. Now they are targeting the religious leaders in revenge for their impartial stands.

A senior religious scholar has been given few days to leave the country after his nationality had been revoked, Ayatullah Sheikh Hussain Najati has been told to leave the country.

The repressive policies meanwhile, have led to more criminal acts by the regime. Dawn raids on houses have led to 24 arrests on Thursday morning and many more the past few days. Many of those kidnapped by the members of the Death Squads in those raids are under-aged children. In parallel with those attacks the regime's judiciary has issued sentences against many Bahrainis. In one case four people were given harsh sentences; In what is known as the "Case of the Secretariat" four Bahrainis were unjustly jailed for varying sentences; Sayed Faisal and Mahdi Mahboob were sentenced to 10 years each, Mohammad Al Sahi and Ahmad Al Saro to three years each.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
19 September 2013

## EP blasts Alkhalifa dictators, protesters call for arms embargo

In one of the most damning developments for Alkhalifa regime The European Parliament on Thursday 12th September issued a long and powerful resolution on the human rights in Bahrain. The resolution listed a long series of human rights crimes including the attacks on children, women, journalists, the banning of the the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the new draconian laws issued by the ruling family and rubber-stamp[ed] by Hamad's council, the repeal of nationalities of Bahrainis, the banning of foreign human rights bodies and journalists, the various repressive laws on terrorism and the continued imprisonment of political leaders, women and human rights activists. The regime's attempts to deceive the world by establishing various human rights bodies have not fooled the world which is aware of the tactics by dictators to deflect the attention from their torture and other forms of human rights abuses. The document is one of the most powerful international indictments against the Alkhalifa rulers. It has proven the futility of the regime's deceptive tactics and the hopeless performance of its "human rights" bodies, officials and the minister himself.

One more martyr fell in the battle of dignity. Mohammad Abdul Jalil Yousuf, 20, passed away as he was doing his duty,

fending off attacks by the Alkhalifa militias and Death Squads in the town of Karbabad. He was blocking the road to stop the enemy forces from raiding people's homes, terrorising its people and destroying their property.

In London anti-arms campaigners protested against the sale of lethal arms to the Alkhalifa rulers. From Sunday 8th September the exhibition halls of Excel Exhibition Centre at the Docklands in East London were picketed by hundreds of peace campaigners who blockaded the entrances and impeded the movement into and out of Exhibition halls. Bahrainis also took part raising their flags and chanting anti-regime slogans. Jalal Fairouz, former MP from Al Wefaq block, addressed the rally expressing dismay at the invitation of Bahraini officials to this major defence exhibition. Police arrested scores of protesters after trying to evict them from the path of the incoming vehicles. Many campaigners presented images of barbaric acts by Alkhalifa and Saudi regimes against their own people. The killing last week of Ahmad Al Muslab by Saudi forces has infuriated the public who rushed to the streets in an expression of solidarity. Bahrainis also took part in anti-arms protest outside Parliament on Thursday. Jeremy Corbyn, MP, talked about the grim situa-

tion in Bahrain and called for arms embargo against the Alkhalifa dictatorship.

In a joint operation by the militia and the mercenary forces of Bahrain's Alkhalifa regime, a young Bahraini athlete has been kidnapped and taken to an unknown place. Ammar Hassan Mansoor, 20, the handball player of Al Ittifaq Club, was taken away during a raid on his house in the early hours of Tuesday 10th September. The militias attacked the house without legal permission or arrest warrant. The family of this young Bahraini have expressed deep concern about his fate. Nothing has been heard of him since his disappearance.

Amnesty International has issued an Urgent Action in relation to the detention and torture of a Bahraini child by the Alkhalifa regime. Under the heading "Child tortured in detention in Bahrain" it said: Bahraini boy aged 14, Ali Hatem Ali Salman, was arrested on 26 August 2013 and reportedly tortured and otherwise ill-treated during interrogation to "confess" to rioting. On 3 September the Juvenile Prosecution extended his detention for another week. AI has called for the immediate release of the child and urged its members to write to the authorities asking for his release.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
13th September 2013

## US Thinks Arresting Peaceful Opposition is OK – in Bahrain, at Least

By Joe Stork, Deputy Director, Human Rights Watch

The US State Department gave Bahrain's ruling family a big assist yesterday in its efforts to suppress the opposition party Al Wifaq. Bahraini authorities arrested Al Wifaq's deputy leader, Khalil al-Marzooq, on what appears to be trumped up charges. But instead of denouncing the arrest, a US spokesperson criticized Bahrain's opposition groups for withdrawing from a "dialogue" with the government to protest the arrest.

Al-Marzooq is a prominent public figure and a chief interlocutor with Western governments. According to the Public Prosecution Office statement, officials are holding al-Marzooq for 30 days as they investigate charges of "inciting and advocating terrorism." Al-Marzooq had been "speaking at many forums, inciting violence and promoting terrorist acts, advocating principles which incite such acts, supporting violence committed by the terrorist coalition, and legally justifying criminal activ-

ities," the statement said. Bahraini authorities provided no examples of remarks by al-Marzooq supporting their allegations.

Al-Marzooq was the deputy speaker of Bahrain's 40-member parliament until he and others walked out in 2011 to protest the government's violent crackdown on protesters. Al-Marzooq's arrest came after he spoke at a rally earlier in September. Human Rights Watch reviewed a video of the rally, in which al-Marzooq said, "We support peaceful movements and transparently state [...] that we are not part of the violent groups or their actions." But it's the following remark that may have triggered his arrest: al-Marzooq said that the anti-government February 14th Youth Coalition is not a terrorist group, contrary to government assertions.

After the arrest, Al Wifaq and other opposition groups withdrew from a "national dialogue" with the government that appeared to be getting nowhere fast in efforts to address Bahrain's political crisis.

On Wednesday, when a reporter at the State Department daily

briefing in Washington DC asked deputy spokesperson Marie Harf to comment on al-Marzooq's arrest, she said she was "disappointed that opposition groups have suspended their involvement in the national dialogue ... we'll continue to encourage everyone to participate in it." Her line never wavered, even when she was asked follow-up questions. Thursday evening, US officials expressed concern about al-Marzooq's detention – but still didn't denounce it.

Given the failure to produce any evidence that al-Marzooq or Al Wifaq advocated violence, Harf's ham-fisted evasion on Wednesday of repeated opportunities to criticize al-Marzooq's arrest must have been sweet music to the ears of Bahrain's ruling family hardliners

who are determined to quash all manner of dissent. Her next-day reversal displays an alarming inconsistency in US messaging aimed at a government known for repression.

Washington now needs to publicly denounce al-Marzooq's arrest, and condemn the wider escalation of repression in Bahrain.



# European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain

## The European Parliament

1. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, both online and offline, and freedom of assembly; deeply regrets the recent restrictive orders by the Parliament and the King of Bahrain, and calls for a lifting of the ban on the right to peaceful demonstrations and free assembly in the capital, Manama, and a repeal of the orders of the Minister of Justice of 3 September 2013, which are irreconcilable with the government's commitment to launching reforms and will not help progress on national reconciliation or build trust among all parties;

2. Urges that the legitimate right of Bahraini citizens to express their opinions freely, organise gatherings and demonstrate peacefully be respected; underlines the importance of free and pluralistic media; calls for full access to the country for international NGOs and journalists;

3. Welcomes the steps taken by the Bahraini authorities to implement the recommendations by the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry; recognises that some efforts have been undertaken in this respect, but stresses nevertheless that more must be done to improve the human rights situation in the country; calls on the Government of Bahrain to implement fully and swiftly the BICI and Universal Periodic Review recommendations; recommends that the UN Human Rights Council's 24th Session set up a monitoring mechanism mandated to follow the implementation of the BICI recommendations and the overall resolution of the human rights situation in Bahrain;

4. Calls on the Bahraini Government to implement the necessary democratic reforms and to encourage an inclusive and constructive national dialogue and reconciliation, including the release of dissidents;

5. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to put an immediate end to all acts of repression, including judicial harassment, and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, political activists, journalists, bloggers, doctors and paramedics, human rights defenders and peaceful protesters, including Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Nabeel Rajab, Ibrahim Sharif, Najji Fateel, Zainab Al-Khawaja, Mohammed Al-Maskati, Mahdi Issa Mahdi Abu Deeb and Jalila Al-Salman;

6. Welcomes the fact that King Hamad Bin Isa al-Khalifa has set up an independent commission for the rights of prisoners and detainees, and calls on this commission to effectively monitor and improve the conditions and treatment of

prisoners and detainees;

7. Welcomes King Hamad Bin Isa al-Khalifa's setting up of a Ministry for Human Rights and Social Development in Bahrain, and calls on that ministry to act in accordance with international human rights standards and obligations; notes in particular the progressive stance of Bahrain towards women in society;

8. Notes the formal establishment of a Police Ombudsman by the Bahraini Interior Ministry in July 2013, and expresses the hope that this move will mean that the complaints and grievances of Bahraini citizens can be effectively looked into;

9. Notes the Bahraini Government's ongoing efforts to reform the penal code and legal procedures, and encourages this process to continue; calls on the Government of Bahrain to take all necessary steps to guarantee due process, and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Bahrain, and to ensure that it acts in full accordance with international human rights standards;

## Sadiq Sabt killed by police

The martyrdom of Sadiq Sabt, 22, on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August, after several weeks in coma after he had been run over by a police vehicle, has inflamed the emotions and led to new confrontations. His funeral the following day was attacked with shotguns, chemical and tear gases causing more injuries and anger. The young man lost his life calling for the rights of the people; his killers remain at large.



10. Urges that independent investigations be conducted into all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, and that the results be made public; takes the view that accountability for past violations is a key element on the path towards justice and genuine reconciliation, which are necessary for social stability;

11. Urges the Bahraini authorities to respect the rights of juveniles, to refrain from detaining them in adult facilities, and to treat juveniles in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Bahrain is a party;

12. Believes that arbitrary deprivation of nationality could lead to statelessness, with serious consequences for the protection of the human rights of the individuals concerned; notes that withdrawal of the citizenship of political opponents by the Bahraini authorities is contrary to international law;

13. Regrets the weak EU response to the ongoing situation in Bahrain and calls on the HR/VP to condemn the ongoing violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to impose targeted restrictive measures (visa bans and asset freezes) against those individuals responsible for, and involved in, the human rights abuses (as documented by the BICI report);

14. Calls on the VP/HR and the Member States to work together to develop a clear strategy as to how the EU will, both publicly and privately, actively push for the release of prisoners of conscience, and calls on the VP/HR to work with the Member States to ensure the adoption of Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the human rights situation in Bahrain, which should include a specific call for the immediate and unconditional release of those prisoners;

15. Expresses regret that the visit of the Special Rapporteur on torture was again postponed, and calls upon the Bahraini authorities to facilitate visits of the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of association and assembly and on the situation of human rights defenders;

16. Welcomes the decision by the Arab League to set up a Arab Human Rights Court in Manama and expresses its hope that it may act as a catalyst for human rights across the region; urges the Government of Bahrain, as well as its partners in the Arab League, to ensure the integrity, impartiality, efficiency and credibility of this Court;

17. Instructs its president to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the government and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.