

BAHRAIN

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

New year, Old policies, New spirit to defeat tribal hereditary dictatorship

Another year in the life of the Bahraini Revolution has ended with pain and agony but also with hope. As the people await to enter the third year of their political strife, they deserve to be saluted for their courage, stamina and faith in the ultimate victory promised by God Almighty to those who persevere. History will record that the past year has been very painful with massive inhumane onslaught by the Alkhalifa rulers on the Bahraini natives. A policy of collective punishment has been put in place over the past twelve months in a failed attempt to stem the ever-increasing political strife that sees no end in sight. According to available statistics, in the last six months of the year, at least 1800 houses were raided, some of which ransacked and their property destroyed. More than 1000 Bahraini youths were detained, ill-treated and tortured. Hundreds were given harsh prison sentences for their roles in the anti-regime protests. Children as young as ten were jailed, while human rights activists continued to be intimidated, jailed and abused. While the regime continued its policy of distortion, deception and appeasement of its allies, the world is beginning to wake up to the call of desperate people for a serious action against a regime that had failed its people and betrayed its humanity.

Some skeptics have been wary of the Revolution arguing that as long as Western support is granted to the regime arguing that altering the status quo in the region where the Saudis have exercised their domination for decades is not an easy task and the Bahraini Revolution had little chance of success. But if revolutionary zeal, perseverance, purity and clarity purpose are taken as measures of any revolution, then the political strife in Bahrain can only be viewed as a success. While other revolutions in the ill-fated Arab Spring have largely succumbed to the plots of the counter-revolution forces, through containment, co-option or military coups, Bahraini youth have remained conscious of the plots, continued their daily protests in almost every corner of the country and rejected half-solutions. Their leaders are steadfast as ever behind bars and all attempts to break their wills

have failed. They have been ill-treated in every aspect of life, including denial of medical care but their determination has not faltered. Two of them, Hassan Mushaima and Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace have not had family visits for the past nine months, yet they remain hopeful of the eventual victory over the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship. Two years ago people were talking of a war of wills between the ruling clan and the people. Now it is clear that the people have remained in the streets, insisted on their demands of fundamental regime change and defeated the mission of the Saudi army of ending the revolution.

This is in contrast to the other Arab revolutions that have been either stagnated or turned into civil war or overturned by military generals. Despite the media and public relations campaigns by the Saudi and Alkhalifa regimes, the world has accepted the people's version of events, that the Revolution is the most peaceful among other revolts and that the blame lies squarely on the ruling clan. It has failed to heed the local and international calls for reform and left no avenue for peaceful settlement with the natives. Instead, it continued to target the people; not only those taking part in street protests but peaceful resident in their homes. In the past six months more than 1800 homes were raided, some of which also ransacked. More than 1000 people were detained bringing the total number of political prisoners to more than 3000. This compares with 5000 in Israeli prisons. These policies have only solidified the people's stands and created a situation that is now beyond solution. The prospects of future co-habitation between the Bahraini natives and the Alkhalifa clan as rulers are non-existent. Neither side is now capable of accepting to live with the other. This means the conflict is likely to drag for longer periods and the final settlement could become very costly indeed.

From the people's perspective, the political societies that have called for constitutional monarchy, an elected government, fully-authorised parliament and pursuing torturers cannot market to the people a solution with lesser contents. On the other hand, the dictator cannot undertake these

"reforms"; first because he does not believe in them, second, his other family-members especially his uncle, who has been in his office for 43 years will not give up easily and, third, the torturers and other hardline elements such as the Khalwalids, won't sanction a deal that will eventually lead to their arrest and trial. For the majority of people, any prospect of a future under the Alkhalifa regime is unacceptable. They do not want a repeat of the tragic experience of the past three years when the ruling clan behaved as an enemy and transformed the whole state structures into weapons of revenge against the people. Five crucial state services must be liberated from the Alkhalifa after they had used them to inflict maximum damage on the people without compassion or mercy. It is imperative to ensure that any future settlement takes away those powers that ruling clan considers their own and that they have free hand to use them against the innocent civilians.

With these facts in mind, the world powers are advised to take realistic views of the Bahraini situation that has been volatile for the past nine decades and embrace the idea of fundamental change. This is necessary if peace, tranquillity and civility is to be established in the region. The Saudi influence is now clearly waning as their regime approaches its natural end. Linking the fate of Bahraini people to the will of the Saudis to change or reform is not only unjust but ill-advised. Hesitation to take action or make a stand does not tally will lead to disastrous consequences with the real possibility that the situation slides into chaos, serious instability, extremism and even terrorism. The experience has shown that the first inclination of the Saudis at times of political tension is to use the terrorist groups they have been grooming for some time, to settle accounts with their adversaries. This is what they are doing in Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Yemen and even Egypt. Their invasion and occupation of Bahrain serves a real example of their thirst for terrorising their neighbours into submission. It is time that this episode be laid to rest with the adoption of responsible responses to tribal hereditary dictatorship, collective punishment, state-terrorism and occupation.

Religious persecution continues, calls to investigate torture

In a flagrant attack on religious freedom, the Alkhalifa regime has summoned the heads[1] of three Hussaini Oration Centres to attend the prosecution centre where many others had been tortured before. The heads of Bin Khamis and Sanabis mourning halls have been asked to attend the prosecutor's office, which has become one of the main abusers of human rights in Bahrain. This follows the strong public participation in the mourning processions in the past few days to mark the Arba'een (Fortieth Day after Imam Hussain's martyrdom). Some anti-regime sentiments were expressed in those processions as people remembered their own dead, wounded and imprisoned by the Alkhalifa enemy.

Meanwhile the attacks on native Bahrainis have continued. In the early hours of this morning at least five[2] people were arrested; Sayed Mohammad Sayed Aqeel Al Mousawi, Salman Al Mawt, Baqir Ibrahim Khamis, Ali Hassan Al Tabbal and Hussain Ra'id from Sanabis.

The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights has issued a special report on the abuse of children[3] by the ruling Alkhalifa clan. It mentioned two boys aged thirteen years; Sayed Hashim Alawi and Sayed Tamim Majid. On 7th December they were arrested for taking part in anti-regime protests, but their detention has been repeatedly renewed and are still behind bars. They were accused of planning to overthrow the

Alkhalifa regime by force. On 20th December Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action[4] about the two boys. It said: "Cousins Sayed Tameem Majed Ahmad Majed and Sayed Hashim Alwai Ahmad Majed were arrested on 7 December in the north-western village of Bani Jamra, and taken to the police station in al-Budaya, Manama, in two separate incidents. Sayed Tameem, who turned 13 on 19 December, was arrested at about 3.10pm in front of his grandparents' house about 15 minutes after he had arrived with his family, for a visit, and while he was playing with a younger cousin. He had run away after seeing a police patrol car approaching, but his family did not see him being arrested. They were later told by eyewitnesses that he had been taken away by a police patrol. Sayed Hashim, aged 13, was arrested at about 3.45pm near his grandparents' house while on his way to a nearby shop". It also called for protecting the two children from torture and forming an independent commission to examine torture claims.

At another level, seven[5] human rights bodies have written a letter to Juan Mendez, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Mr Frank La Rue, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion. It said: The Media Legal Defence Initiative, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, Bahrain Center for Hu-

man Rights, Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights, Gulf Centre for Human Rights and Reporters Without Borders ("the signatory organisations") respectfully request that you consider investigating the claims set out in this letter of allegation in relation to the arrest, detention and torture of Mr Hassan, Mr Hubail, and Mr Zain Aldeen. The arrest and detention of all three men was also the subject of an urgent appeal made by the Media Legal Defence Initiative, English PEN and Article 19 to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression dated 6 August 2013, which was copied to the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

All three men face trial on charges relating to their activities reporting on recent protests against the government of Bahrain and were arrested within a few days of each other. All three have reported that they were subject to torture while detained in the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID), which has been the subject of numerous other allegations of torture and illtreatment. Mr Hubail and Mr Zain Aldeen remain in detention. Mr Hassan was released on bail at the beginning of October 2013.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
25th December 2013

Martyrs Day commemorated, children persecuted

The Martyrs Day was marked by Bahraini people on Tuesday 17th December in their revolutionary styles of protests, demonstration, visits to martyrs families and graves of those murdered by the Alkhalifa regime. On Tuesday night most towns and villages were engaged in an activity in one form or another to mark the occasion which has become rallying point for anti-regime activism for the past two decades. On 17th December 1994 two Bahraini youths were shot by police using live bullets. It was the beginning of the longest-ever uprising that continued until 2000. Hani Khamis and Hani Al Wasti were demonstrating against the regime in two separate locations (Jidhafs and Sanabis) when they were shot. Since then annual demonstrations continued to mark the "Martyrs Day". On that day in 2007 another martyr was killed. Ali Jassim, 22, lost his life after he had taken part in a demonstration to mark the day. The regime's forces took harsh measures in a desperate attempt to stop the country-wide protests. But it failed. To revenge that the regime's forces stormed the residential areas in Aali, Duraz, Bani Jamra, Sitra and other towns, arrested people and raided many homes. Among the detained is Isa Al Aali from Manama who had been taken away to unknown location, where torture is routine.

In UK, the Bahraini opposition organized several events including a special service for the martyrs at one of the mosques, protests outside Downing Street and the Saudi Embassy, a demonstrations on Saturday 14th December, a roundtable discussion among Bahraini human rights bodies at the Headquarters of Human Rights Watch (Monday 16th December) and a seminar at the House of Lords on Tuesday 17th December. Lord Avebury chaired the event at the House of Lords saying that the situation in Bahrain has now sunk further into repression and dictatorship. He criticized the UK government for failing to support the people and continuing to receive Bahrain's dictators. A prominent Human Rights lawyer, Daniel Carey of London-based Pierce Deighton Glynn law firm talked of his work trying to stop the 1.6 million gas canisters to be supplied by a South Korean company to Bahrain's brutal regime. Sarah Walden of the Campaign Against Arms Trade said that the UK is likely to approve more arms deals to Bahrain, thus offering legitimacy to the regime. When Bahrain buys UK arms, she said, it knows that it buys UK silence too. Jawad Fairouz, a former MP from Al Wefaq block talked about the significance of the Martyrs Day and called for concrete international action to bring those responsible

for human rights violations in Bahrain to justice. Mrs Jalila Ni'ma, the aunt of Martyr Ali Ni'ma talked about the ordeals of the martyrs families and how they are persecuted to the limit. She called on the world to exert pressure on the regime to stop this persecution and prosecute killers of their sons instead.

A special report by Amnesty International published this week described how Bahrain's children have become victims of regime's brutality. The report said that children are being routinely detained, ill-treated and tortured. It provides an insight into the secret world of the Alkhalifa dungeons where children are subjected to horrific torture including beating and rape. The use of public relations firms in UK and USA by the Alkhalifa regime is increasing with people's wealth lavishly spent to defend the hereditary dictatorship. According to John Horne of Bahrain Watch, the Washington-based PR company, Qorvis was paid \$239,844 by Bahrain Embassy in US between April and September this year. An article by former Bahrain Ambassador to US in The Hill was secured by PR firm Qorvis. He also said: that one of Bahrain's favorite UK PR firms "Gardant Communications" is now called Meade Hall & Associates.

BFM. 18th December 2013

Joint statement by Bahraini Human Rights institutions

The Bahraini human rights bodies meeting at the London office of Human Rights Watch on Monday 16th December are calling for the following:

1 The UN Human Rights Council has been reluctant to seriously address the deteriorating human rights in Bahrain. The Council must hold a special session on Bahrain at the earliest possible opportunity.

2- As the Bahraini regime has disastrously failed to implement the hundreds of recommendations made by the BICI report, the Human Rights Council, the European Parliament and other specialist UN committees, the Security Council is urged to take up the case of Bahrain immediately.

3- Since the administering of torture by the Bahraini authorities has never ceased, the big powers must push for an immediate visit by the Special Rapporteur on Torture who has been repeatedly prevented from visiting Bahrain.

4- The UK Government is urged to implement the recommendations set out by the Foreign Affairs Committee at the end of its investigation of the UK relations with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

5-A ban on travel by known Bahraini human rights abusers, most of whom have been named and shamed by the Bahraini Centre for Human Rights, must be issued, and their names must be placed with Interpol.

6- As the Bahraini regime has firmly adopted the culture of impunity (effected by the Law 56/ 2002, respect of human rights cannot be guaranteed without international intervention by human rights bodies first to repeal this Law and second to bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice.

7-The Bahraini regime must be forced to sign and ratify the

ICC protocols, in light of its failure to implement the said recommendations that involve ending impunity.

8. The Bahraini human rights bodies call the world powers to link political, economic and military cooperation with the Bahraini regime to implementation of the mentioned recommendations, ending the culture of impunity granted to human rights abusers, allowing visits by the Special Rapporteurs on Torture and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and ratifying the Rome Protocols regulating the International Criminal Court. The real intention of the Bahraini authorities must be tested by the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners especially the Bahrain 13 leading figures.



Saudis, Alkhalifa slapped by other GCC states at Manama Dialogue

The Manama Dialogue[1] which has been used by the ruling Alkhalifa clan as flagship to prove international stature turned into a nightmare when it was held on Friday 6th December. First came the “Omani bomb[2]” when the Sultanate’s Foreign Minister, Yousuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla, announced his country’s flat rejection of the Saudi-proposed “Gulf Union”. The audience was stunned by such flagrant announcement at a forum that had been hoped to bolster the fledgling political status of Saudi Arabia that has been seeking to dominate the region. The Omani senior official elaborated further saying that if the proposed union was formed Oman would withdraw from the Gulf Cooperation Council. Two days later Kuwait announced its rejection of the Union. Qatar is unlikely to agree to a Union that would allow the Saudis free hand in their internal and external affairs. The Saudi invasion and occupation of Bahrain has awakened other Gulf monarchies to their vulnerability to Saudi aggression and their greed to grab lands

Another negative outcome of the “Manama Dialogue” has been the media interest in the Bahraini Revolution. Foreign journalists who went to Bahrain ignored the hopeless forum and, instead, attended the anti-regime activities. On 8th December The Sunday Times published a report titled: Tear gas replaces talk in Bahrain’s ‘liberal oasis’, with a clarifying paragraph saying: “As the royal family of Bahrain receives William Hague and other western ministers, it is accused of cracking down on all opposition”

In another serious attack on free expression, the Alkhalifa court sentenced a senior physician to long-term sentence for expressing his opinion about Bahrain’s dictator. Dr Saeed Al Samaheji[4], was sentenced to one year in jail for criticizing the ruler who is becoming more despotic and aggressive against Bahrainis. Many others are serving jail sentences for expressing their opinion about the regime. Earlier this year the Alkhalifa clan issued a law banning people from tweeting against the hereditary dictatorship. Since then many young men and women have been given jail terms for this “offence”. Under such regime hopes of a peaceful solution to the political crisis have been dashed.

An attack last night on the town of Bani Jamra by masked members of the regime’s Death Squads resulted in many house raids and scores of arrests. Families were frightened in the early hours of the morning as those criminal gangs smashed homes of Bahrainis. A young man, Abdul Amir Abdul Nabi Al Mahfoodh, from the town was arrested on 8th December. Another man was tortured and abused as he was being arrested from Bani Jamra. Jaffar Hussain Mohammad was severely beaten by members of the Death Squads as he was being arrested. A Bahraini youth from Nuwaidrat, Redha Ali Ahmad MaAllah was snatched from his home on 7th December and transferred to the Dry Dock torture centre.

The International Human Rights Day[8] yesterday was commemorated by the regime with more arrests, torture and abuse. As several prominent Bahrainis continued their hunger strike for the tenth day, the dictator has ordered their detention for arbitrary periods of 30 and 45 days. Among them are Makki Abu Taki, Jawad Al Sheikh, (Both

are fathers of martyrs), Hussain Jawad, and Najeeb Abu Taki[, Another Bahraini whose torture had been highlighted few weeks ago has been given extra jail sentence. Talib Ali who is falsely accused of sabotage has been repeatedly sentenced to a total of 50 years in jail.

Meanwhile Bahrain Watch which is following the most controversial deal by a South Korean company has issued urgent appeals to UN OHCHR to Stop Tear Gas Shipment. The monitoring body lodged complaints with several United Nations Special Rapporteurs, as part of the ongoing #StopTheShipment campaign to stop a shipment of South Korean tear gas to Bahrain. The complaints request that the Special Rapporteurs take urgent action to halt further shipments of tear gas to Bahrain, and investigate the legality of previous shipments of South Korean tear gas. The complaints argue that Bahrain’s government has used previous shipments of tear gas to violate the freedoms of association, expression and movement, and for systematic repression that amounts to degrading and inhuman treatment and collective punishment. Separate complaints were sent to: The Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, The Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, The Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Killing and The Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Bahrain Freedom Movement
11th December 2013

Amnesty International: Halt detention, abuse and torture of children

16 December 2013

By rounding up suspected under-age offenders and locking them up, Bahrain's authorities are displaying an appalling disregard for its international human rights obligations

Said Boumedouha, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and

Children are being routinely detained, ill-treated and tortured in Bahrain, said Amnesty International in a new briefing published today.

Scores of children arrested on suspicion of participating in anti-government protests – including some as young as 13 – were blindfolded, beaten and tortured in detention over the past two years the organization said. Others were threatened with rape in order to extract forced confessions.

“By rounding up suspected under-age offenders and locking them up, Bahrain's authorities are displaying an appalling disregard for its international human rights obligations,” said Said Boumedouha, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“Nearly three years after Bahrain's security forces used excessive force to crush anti-government protests, they now appear to be targeting children in an intensified crackdown. All children under the age of 18 who have not committed any recognizable offence must be released immediately. Any allegations of torture and ill-treatment must be thoroughly investigated.”

According to reports received by Amnesty International there are at least 110 children aged between 16 and 18 held at the Dry Dock Prison, an adult facility in al Muharraq Island, pending investigation or trial.

Most children have been arrested on suspicion of participating in “illegal gatherings”, rioting, burning tyres or throwing Molotov cocktails at po-

lice. Many were seized during raids while they were playing at home and even at a local swimming pool. Several were denied access to their families for extended periods and interrogated without their lawyers.

Children under the age of 15 who have been sentenced are held at a Juvenile Centre in Manama under Ministry of Interior control. During the day they are attended by social workers but at night, when most abuses tend to take place, Bahraini police take over. At the age of 15 those held in the Juvenile Centre are transferred to adult prisons such as Jaw Prison in southeast Bahrain to serve the remaining prison sentences.

Bahrain is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which defines a child as anyone below the age of 18. The convention also explicitly prohibits the torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The organization is also urging the government of Bahrain to review legislation including the Juvenile law and the Penal code to ensure that they are fully compatible with international standards.

In August, Bahrain's juvenile law was amended to indicate that the parents of anyone under the age of 15 who takes part in a demonstration, public gathering or sit-in would receive a written warning from the Ministry of Interior. If a second offence is recorded within six months the child's father could face jail, a fine or both.

“Bahrain's government purports to respect human rights yet it is brazenly flouting international obligations on a routine basis by resorting to extreme measures such as imposing harsh prison sentences on children,” said Said Boumedouha.

Amnesty International is calling on Bahrain to consider alternative penalties for children who have committed internationally recognizable criminal offences such as probation and community service.

Background

Since Bahrain's popular uprising began on 14 February 2011, gross human rights violations have been committed by security forces who used excessive force against protesters killing dozens. At least 2,000 people are languishing in jail. Many trials fell short of fair trial standards. Amnesty International has adopted 20 of those jailed as prisoners of conscience. Widespread impunity for abuses carried out by the security forces continues to be a problem.

Highlights

* The body of Ali Aqeel Abdulla Marhoon[1], 18, carries the marks of sadistic torture inflicted on him two days ago. The Bahraini youth was walking on his own just before sunset on Tuesday 3rd December in the middle of his town, Al Sanabis, when he was abducted. Several masked men belonging to Alkhalifa Death Squads jumped out of a civilian vehicle, grabbed him and forced him into the car. Six hours later, at 1.30 AM he was dumped at the graveyard[2] of Barbar's town, four kilometres to the West of Sanabis. His mutilated body indicated the horrific torture he had endured at a secret torture house used by Hamad's thugs. His father took him to Salmaniya Hospital which is run by the military. The officers asked his father to sign an undertaking not to reveal anything about what had happened to his son in return for treatment.

* A young Bahraini youth, Ahmad Abdul Ameer[3], from Aali Town, died at the same hospital. He had suffered burns to his body resulting from an exchange with the foreign-staffed riot police. His condition was not life-threatening when he was taken to the hospital. The military officials at Salmaniya are now adopting a policy of liquidating anyone who is brought to the hospital for treatment from injuries incurred in demonstrations. Because it is managed by the military, Salmaniya is the only hospital allowed to receive Bahrainis injured in clashes with the police or Death Squads. There were serious clashes both at his burial and at the end of the three days of mourning. People chanted anti-regime slogans including: “People want regime change” and “Down with Hamad [4]”.

* On Wednesday 4th December a Bahraini youth confirmed that he had been severely tortured and forced to sign false confessions. Two years ago Ali Al Taweel[7] was sentenced to death for his alleged role in the death of a policeman. The regime failed to produce compelling evidence and the sentence was seen as another case of brutal revenge against Bahraini natives. He is illiterate but was forced to sign the pre-prepared statement. In the past two years he and his family have endured enormous pains and ill-treatment. His family blame Alkhalifa Western friends for encouraging them to commit heinous crimes against humanity.

Korean activists staged protests against proposed shipment by a Korean company of 1.6 million canisters to Alkhalifa regime.

