

BAHRAIN

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

Three years of Saudi occupation must end immediately

The activities by the people to mark the third anniversary of the 14th February Revolution have left no doubt in the minds that the counter revolution forces had failed in their quest to crush the people's will. Despite the various tactics adopted by the security forces and the expertise of the Western supporters of the regime, the people carried out a successful campaign that left no one under the illusion that the repression had achieved real results. There were rallies, protests and demonstrations inside and outside Bahrain to mark the occasion with high morale and expectations. Town after town, village after village the protests poured into the streets despite the enormous numbers of mercenaries imported to help put down the rebellion. The people faced a serious challenge but were able to ride the storm and emerge victorious. Pre-emptive strikes by the members of the Death Squads including the killing of Mrs Asmaa Hussain three days before the climax, failed to deter the people or diminish their resolve to tell the world that the voice of Revolution remains resonant at every corner of the country. The symbols of resistance behind bars who had led the Revolution expressed their support to the people's activism and urged steadfastness and strong resolve to achieve the noble goals of freedom and democracy.

The repression was horrendous. Hundreds of young activists were snatched by the regime's Death Squads to ensure the absence of any kind of leadership. Torture was administered by regime's torturers without mercy. Stories of ill-treatment were rampant with the aim of breaking the will of the revolutionaries. Those futile criminal acts only led to more determination by the youth who have nothing left to lose after years of intense repression and collective punishment. Life and death have now become equal in a country run by thugs and criminals whose only source of legitimacy is the use of force. Over the past three years hundreds of recommendations were issued by the world bodies to stop regime's crimes but the Western support, coupled with the Saudi occupation forces, have emboldened the ruling family to carry on its policies that, in certain cases, approximate to genocide. Anticipating pre-emptive crack-

down on Bahrainis, Amnesty International issued a Press Release on 13th February warning against the use of force against demonstrators: "The anniversary's protests are a test for the authorities to demonstrate internationally that they are committed to protecting human rights. They must allow the peaceful exercise of freedom of expression, association and assembly and release all prisoners of conscience," said Said Boumedouha. Yet, the regime's forces continued their tactic of using massive force to end protests. Shotguns were used extensively and many people were wounded by these lethal weapons.

The fourth year of the Revolution has begun on hopeful note. The extent of the hatred of the Alkhalifa dictatorship has reached unprecedented levels. Any mention of a meeting between the political societies and any of the Alkhalifa members is often met with disgust and fury. Demonstrators have clung to the slogans against talking to the ruling family and insisting on stripping it of the privileges and powers. Their argument is that we had given them the knife to protect us but they used it to kill us. They refer to five most significant tools of power; army, security services, police, media and judiciary. This knife must be retrieved from them. If these sectors remain with them in any political settlement they will re-use them against the people. That has to change. Whatever the cost, the next ten years must not be replication of past decade. This can only be achieved if the ruling Alkhalifa family are stripped of the power to hurt the people. These powers must be given to the people who will use them to defend the country within an established constitutional rule of law. The Alkhalifa have used these powers arbitrarily causing death, injury and misery for decades. The cry for salvation on 14th February 2011 cannot be ignored by supporters of the regime. The peaceful struggle will continue until this hereditary dictatorship is removed from power and brought to justice.

The people are now preparing to challenge the Saudi military occupation of Bahrain. On 15th March they will mark the third anniversary of this illegal occupation and alert the world to the need to take action to ensure that the Saudi troops are kicked

out of the country. The situation cannot be contained as long as the occupation remains. Bahraini people have been patient and peaceful in dealing with this sour issue. That patience must not be construed to mean weakness or acceptance. The Saudi invasion of a sovereign country with people who have always resisted foreign occupation has brought back the Alkhalifa whose political legitimacy was totally destroyed by the Revolution. The military aggression was against the people and cannot therefore be sanctioned. The third anniversary will emphasise the destruction of more than 40 mosques as a direct consequence of the Saudi military invasion, the killing of scores of Bahrainis, the arrest of the leaders of the Revolution, the implementation of worst possible forms of torture, the crackdown on the medics, athletes, teachers, women and children. The Saudi army is responsible for the rape of women behind bars and the subsequent killings including those by chemical gases.

The third anniversary of the Saudi occupation comes this year amid rising anticipation that the Saudi era of domination is finally coming to an end. This may take time but their failure in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Bahrain will lead to mass awareness even among Saudi nationals whose political rights have been confiscated by the ruling House of Saud. Bahrain is gradually becoming a quagmire for those invading forces and the people of Arabia are gradually realising the necessity to challenge the tribal domination of the House of Saud and Alkhalifa. It will be an occasion for a final push against occupation and dictatorship in the Arabian peninsula.



Dictator threatens to execute Bahaini youth after 3rd anniversary protests

In a dramatic escalation of Alkhalifa enmity towards Bahrain's people, the dictator and his entourage decided to execute a young Bahraini man. Maher Abbas Al Khabbaz on trumpeted charges. He is linked to alleged bomb making and activities that led to the death of a policeman. Five others accused in the case have received five years prison sentence. One Bahraini has also been sentenced to six years imprisonment. This case resonates with that of Isa Qambar who was executed by the regime in 1996 on unproven charges. Despite the killing of more than 150 Bahrainis no person has been executed or properly jailed.

Bahrainis and their supporters are planning big campaign next month to call for an immediate end to the Saudi military occupation of Bahrain. This will include protests inside and outside Bahrain, seminars and press conferences, public meetings with participation from anti-war campaigners and lobbying of Western governments to stand up against this evil occupation and demand the immediate withdrawal of Saudi troops from Bahrain. They will also call for removal of Alkhalifa regime which had sold the country and compromised its sovereignty. The Saudis had invaded Bahrain in mid-March 2011 and participated in atrocities against Bahrainis, their mosques, doctors, athletes, teachers, men, women and children.

Following the successful campaign to reinvigorate the third anniversary of the 14th February Revolution the Alkhalifa regime has intensified its repression and crackdown against Bahrainis. On 13th, 14th and

15th the people showed the world that their Revolution was here to stay and that the ruling clan was completely isolated. On 13th February, the people observed a general strike, with most shops closed and attendance at government's offices at its lowest. Most parts of the country came to a standstill while protests spread to more than fifty areas. On Friday 14th February there were many demonstrations as many people marched to the iconic site of the Pearl Roundabout. There were skirmishes with the foreign-staffed riot police. The regime's Death Squads fired shotguns at the peaceful protesters, causing many injuries. On Saturday 15th February, one of the largest demonstrations ever seen in the country was staged. The political societies that had organized it estimated the participants at more than quarter of a million people. The regime's forces attacked the peaceful protesters and battles were fought between the Bahrainis and the foreign forces until late at night.

No sooner had these activities finished than did the ruling clan start its revenge on Bahrainis. On Tuesday 18th February at least three women were arrested during raids on their homes. Masooma Essa Naisar, Hamida Sarhan and Hala Abdul Jalil were forcibly pulled from their homes and taken to the Alkhalifa torture dungeons. Although Hamida Sarhan is disabled, her belongings including her computer were confiscated in the horrific raid at her home. On Monday 17th February, 11 years old Mahdi Ali Jaffar Shujaa, from Malikiya Town, was ordered to be detained for one week for taking part in peaceful protest. A

similar sentence was imposed on 14 years old Ali Hassan Al Aali. From Bani Jamra town Abdul Raouf Al Jamri and his son Ahmed were sentenced to 10 years, while Redha Al Ghasrah to 15 years on malicious charge of possession of arms. Also the ruling clan sentenced Jaffar Ahmed Mahfoodhs and Sadiq Al Sabba'a to seven years on trumpeted charges.

The political prisoners at the Dry Dock torture centre have continued their hunger strike for the past week in solidarity with the people who were commemorating the anniversary of the Revolution. Lieutenant Hisham Al Zayyani, threatened to blow them up if they did not end their strike. But they have insisted on ending the kangaroo courts, improve prison conditions and stop torture. Detainees at sections 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the prison took part in the strike. Their number exceeds 400.

In the past week Amnesty International issued two statements. The first was a warning to the Alkhalifa clan not to use force to crackdown on the proposed protests marking 3rd anniversary of the Revolution People must be allowed freedom to congregate, protest and express their demands freely without fear of attacks or retribution. The ruling Alkhalifa clan did not heed the call. Many Bahrainis were injured either by shotgun pellets or chemical gases used extensively by regime's forces. The second was about Zainab Al Khawaja who was released this week but awaits dictator's decision in other charges against her.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
19th February 2014

Taste of freedom: *What Zainab Khawaja wrote one day after her release*

I woke up to the beautiful voice of my daughter Jude "wake up mum, the sun is shining". My love for my family and people is too great of a feeling to be imprisoned in language or words. I hope that my actions reflect that love, and those of the people of Bahrain who are bravely and patiently suffering so that one day we can be free.

I thank my father for always being with me. We might be in different prisons, but his love makes me feel like we're in the same cell. My mother is our voice because she carries our words and thoughts out of our prison cells and to the world.

The Bahraini regime has failed to silence me or my father for one reason: we have a strong voice, and that voice is my mother's. I thank my amazing mother, she truly is a superwoman. She taught me strength and patience, she is my rock.

I thank everyone who has supported me, my family, our people and our cause. Your support strengthens a freedom loving people and weakens a dictator, for I will be joining those who I know that, despite the cells containing them, are the

most free of the daughters and sons of Bahrain.

I might be re-arrested today and taken back to the same cell I have lived in for the past year, and our oppressors should know that our patience in walking this path has no limits. But if that happens I will thank God for these past three days and go back to prison with my head held high and a smile on my face.

An unbreakable bond unites us on this path towards a country of freedom and dignity. Though they tried to isolate me, I never felt alone. The truth is I felt like I'm surrounded by the thousands of political prisoners in Bahrain.

Yes in my prison cell I feel more proud and fearless than any dictator does on his throne and in his palace. Sacrificing for our country

and our children and for a better future is something we should celebrate. But my love for Bahrain and the people of Bahrain makes me find joy in my prison cell as well.

Yes, joy is a great word to describe my feeling to be among my people.. to see my country, the streets the homes and the villages. The words of Gibran Khalil Gibran echo in my mind "the deeper that

sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain"

I sit with family, relatives and friends, and just seeing them all talking and laughing makes me feel great happiness. When you feel the wind on your face or the heat of the sun, that's a miracle

I woke up today, not to the sounds of the big locks on the prison doors.



Seven years for criticising dictator as Saudis intensify occupation

The latest martyr on the road to freedom and democracy is 50-years old Asmaa Hussain whose soul ascended to Heavens yesterday. In the early hours of Tuesday, 11th February members of Death Squads attacked several houses at Jid Al Hajj town, West of Manama, breaking doors, smashing furniture and terrorizing whole families. The victim was frozen to death when heavily-armed "security" thugs broke into her home while the family were asleep. She immediately collapsed. Attempts by her family to rush her to hospital failed because of the refusal of the attackers to allow them out. People were enraged as they were also attacked during her funeral few hours later. They remained defiant calling for regime's downfall and calling on the world to take the killers to task and defend Bahraini native population from Alkhalifa policies of extermination. Meanwhile the preparations for the third anniversary of the 14th February Revolution continued amid unprecedented crackdown on activists. Many young Bahrainis have been kidnapped and taken to the regime's torture dungeons. The aim is to break the will of the people who are more enthusiastic than ever to pursue their peaceful activities until their demands are fulfilled. Three years of unprecedented

repression and state terrorism have convinced most native Bahrainis that nothing short of regime change could salvage the country and the people. Yesterday two children, Ahmad Jaffar, 14, and Salman Abdullah, 15, from Abu Saiba' town were condemned to imprisonment in torture dungeons. Many others were also detained to ensure that maximum Bahrainis are taken off the streets during the anniversary activities. On 10th February, Sayed Ahmad Salman Al Mousawi, a photographer from Duraz and his brother, Mohammad were arrested as part of the regime's campaign to round up independent journalists and photographers. From Karranah, Hassan Ahmad was arrested by members of Death Squads operated by royal court. Sayed Ali Nazar was arrested on Monday from Qurayya Town. The face of Mohammad Abd Ali, 13, reflects the horrific wounds sustained when he was hit by police with shotgun s. On Saturday 8th February, the boy opened the door of his house to go out when he was showered by police using lethal shotguns. These attacks happen daily in most parts of Bahrain as the regime continues to use shotguns as a weapon against peaceful protesters.

An Emirati company has decided to close down its operations in Bahrain after accu-

mulating losses exceeding 7 million Bahraini Dinars (around \$20 millions). The company had opened six branches for Waitrose in the towns of Saar, Barbar, Mahooz, Rafaa and Sitra. The Bahraini economy has been hit hard by the Revolution and all attempts by Alkhalifa crown prince to change the image of his family rule have failed. This year's Formula 1 race, scheduled for April, has already been thrown into turmoil as Bahrainis intensify their efforts to stop the race. Last year, a Bahraini activist, Salah Abbas, was killed by regime's Death Squads in their attempts to stop protests in the days leading to the race that is now commonly known as "blood race". Two women are languishing at Alkhalifa torture dungeons for attempting to take the political case of Bahrainis inside the F1 race course.

Meanwhile Freedom House has issued a statement entitled: Bahrain Toughens Imprisonment, Fines for Anyone "Insulting" Monarch". It said: King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain should rescind a new law imposing prison sentences of up to seven years for anyone convicted of publicly insulting the king or national emblems, a measure that violates fundamental rights of freedom of speech,

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Saudi-backed regime intensifies repression ahead of 14th Feb

As preparations for the third anniversary of the 14th February Revolution approaches, the regime has intensified its mass arrests and other means of repression. On Monday 3rd February, several people were arrested. Mohammad Al Sheikh and Mohammad Al Oraibi were detained at the airport upon their return from a religious trip. Jaffar Al Shughul, Sadiq Hassan, Hassan Ayyoub and Hussain Ahmad Kadhem were arrested in the early hours and their homes at Aali Town were raided and ransacked. The regime has refused to release an underage child, Ammar Yasser Abdulla despite pleas by human rights activists to do so. The family of Mohammad Bader Al Sheikh is extremely worried about his welfare after his house had been raided again and his belongings either confiscated or destroyed. On Monday 3rd January, Hussain Ali Abbas and his brother, Hassan, were arrested in a raid on their home at Bouri Town.

In a serious violation of basic norms of human rights and justice, Death Squads kidnapped a grandfather and forced his grandson to hand over himself to the torturers. Sayyed Mahamood Sayyed Saeed from Bouri Town could not tolerate his grandfather's abduction and ill-treatment by those heartless people, so he handed himself to the torturers. From Malikiya two people were arrested on 4th February; Abdulla Al Sheikh and Ali Al Habbash. From Karzakkan Abbas Mansi Yousuf was detained yesterday and taken to torture dungeons.

Meanwhile the regime has refused to release the internationally-renowned human rights activist, Nabeel Rajab who had lodged an appeal against his latest conviction. He has to remain for several more weeks before another appeal is heard. The decision whether to release Nabeel Rajab or other human rights and political activists rests with the dictator who directs his "judiciary" what to do.

The fate of a Bahraini artist, Sadiq Al Sha'bani is still unknown since his disappearance in Oman on 27th January. He may have been handed to Alkhalifa torturers. His family is extremely concerned for his well-being and is anxious to know where he is. The Omani Government must inform his family of Mr Sha'bani's whereabouts.

On another level, sixty towns and villages signed a statement distancing themselves from any attempt to normalise relations with Alkhalifa clan through the empty slogan of "dialogue". There is widespread anger among Bahrainis that this process aims at dampening people's zeal and determination to cleanse the country of the tribal rule which is guilty of most heinous crimes against humanity, including torture, extra-judicial killings and genocidal policies.

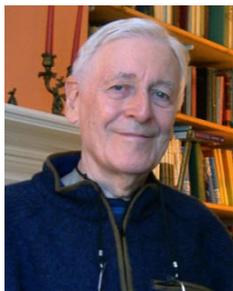
Amnesty International issued two Urgent Actions this week to deal with the deepening human rights crisis in Bahrain. On 31st January an Urgent Action Update was issued on behalf of Bahraini activist Zainab Al-Khawaja who was sentenced to a further four months in prison by a Criminal Court in relation to two new cases brought against her for "destroying government property". It emphasised that Zainab Al-Khawaja is a prisoner of

conscience held solely for peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and urging the authorities to release her immediately and unconditionally. It urged the regime to quash her prison sentences, drop all the charges and overturn all her convictions; and to respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly and ensure that all human rights organizations and human rights defenders are able to carry out their work without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

Another Urgent Action was issued on 4th February about 22 years old Ahmed Mohammad Saleh Al Arab who had been held incommunicado since his arrest on 9th January. Amnesty expressed fear that this Bahraini citizen is at risk of torture. It said: Ahmed Mohammad Saleh al-Arab continues to be denied family visits after 27 days of detention. There are fears the authorities are hiding that he has been tortured while held incommunicado. He has been denied medical care. It urged the Bahraini authorities to provide Ahmed Mohammad Saleh al-Arab with immediate access to his lawyer, family and any medical care he may need; called for an investigation of allegations that Ahmed Mohammad Saleh al-Arab was tortured and otherwise ill-treated and bring those responsible to justice. It also called on the Alkhalifa regime to either charge Ahmed Mohammad Saleh al-Arab with a recognizably criminal offence or release him.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
5th February 2014

Lord Avebury on third anniversary of the Revolution



Lord Avebury, speaking at a meeting to commemorate the third anniversary of the Bahrain revolution, February 11, 2014 in Committee Room G, House

of Lords, at 11.00, will say:

This meeting is being held to mark the third anniversary of the beginning of the Bahraini revolution in February 2011. The uprising has continued unabated ever since, in spite of the relentless efforts of the al-Khalifa dictators to suppress it by extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary arrests, deprivation of citizenship, and attempts to deny the people's rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

This inhuman strategy has utterly failed to quell the spirit of the people., who are more determined than ever that the al-Khalifa family must go. The most popular chant at the demonstrations in the villages is

"Yesqat Hamad" meaning 'down with Hamad'. There is of course a law making it illegal to insult King Hamad, as you find in most dictatorships, but Hamad has gone one better now by increasing the

penalties for this so-called 'offence'. You risk a 7 year prison sentence plus a fine of £16,300, a bit of an increase on the extra four months Zainab al Khawaja got for tearing up a picture of the King recently. The European Parliament has called for the release of Zainab, of her father the esteemed human rights activist who is serving a life sentence, Ibrahim Sharif, Nabil Rajab, head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, and all other prisoners of conscience, political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and peaceful protesters who are arbitrarily detained by the regime, and we would like to see the EU's foreign policy chief Cathy Ashton going to Manama to present these demands.

It would also be good if the UN Special Procedures would make a joint report to the March meeting of the UN Human Rights Council on Bahrain's killings, tortures and arbitrary detentions. The UN Rapporteur on Torture was originally invited by the regime, but the invitation was cancelled and there is no sign that it will be revived for the foreseeable future. But the Rapporteurs have plenty of evidence of abuses, and the March Council meeting would be the time to consider it.

Meanwhile, al-Wefaq has set conditions for resumption of the collapsed 'political dialogue'. They also want the

political prisoners to be released, including the 'Bahraini 13'; a parliament with full legislative powers; a government chosen by the people, equality of citizens, reform of the judiciary, fair and transparent elections supervised by an independent electoral commission, a guarantee of equality between all citizens. and an end to the policy of extra-legally naturalising foreigners.

This last process has been going on for some years, as revealed in the Bandargate report. DrSaleh al-Bandar showed that there was a conspiracy to alter the demographic balance in Bahrain, turning it into a Sunni majority country, in the expectation that the native Shia would be put in their place electorally. And although the struggle for democracy in Bahrain has never been expressed in sectarian terms, the al-Khalifas have used the sectarian card by systematically excluding Shias from public life and the professions, and by demolishing their Mosques and Matams. It is impossible to conceive that the al-Khalifas would agree to al-Wefaq's list of preconditions for talks, but they may try to keep 'talks about talks' going in an attempt to prevent unification of the opposition. For the time being there is a division between the constitutionalists who believe that progress can be made by negotiations with the regime, and the realists who say that the dictators will never relinquish their power voluntarily. But the split has narrowed, if al-Wefaq means that 'road-map' has to be guaranteed before they will sit down at the table. It isn't clear how that could be accom-

plished; perhaps they have in mind some kind of international oversight of the process.

What al-Wefaq might like to stipulate is that some reforms should be enacted before he talks start, instead of being merely items on the agenda. The release of the political prisoners is the obvious one to pick, because those activists have earned the right to play an important role in any transitional process towards a democratic system. As President Obama told the Bahrain government soon after the start of the uprising in 2011,"You can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail" Failure to heed that advice has encouraged many people to think that the regime intends to hold onto their power by hook or by crook. Their foiled attempt to buy enormous quantities of gas grenades from South Korea may have been an indicator that the hardliners are in control and the Crown Prince's manoeuvres are no more than a trick to keep al-Wefaq docile.

Of one thing I am certain. The UK's behaviour is not helping. Not only are any criticisms we make sotto voce; not only have we failed to point out, following President Obama , that there is no hope of a peaceful political outcome to the revolution while there are Mandela-like figures in prison, but we give the al-Khalifas the red carpet treatment at Ascot, Sandhurst and Buckingham Palace whenever they come here. Last month Prince Andrew visited Bahrain and our ambassador told the Gulf Daily News that he had a close relationship with King Hamad and the Crown Prince, two of the pinnacles of the repression. As long as the despots know they have such powerful support from the British establishment, why should they bother making any concessions?

Seven years for criticising dictator , *Continued from Page 3*

Freedom House said. It further added that the new law "went beyond existing law measures by providing for the prison sentence as well as fine of up to the equivalent of \$26,500. It also applies to "whoever has insulted, in any kind of public manner, the king of Bahrain, or its national flag or its national emblem." The measure clearly targets protesters whose calls for greater political freedom began in February 2011. The Bahraini government has increasingly used national security arguments and the threat of terrorism to enact legislation curbing basic freedoms, such as freedom of assembly and free expression online. Continuing human rights abuses have worsened tension between the Sunni-dominated government and the majority Shiite population, which is largely unrepresented in state institutions like the police and military, and has accounted for the bulk of protesters. Freedom House calls on Bahraini authorities to guarantee all citizens their rights to freedom of speech and assembly.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
12th February 2014

Two martyrs in February

On Tuesday 11th February, Mrs Asmaa Hussain, 52, suffered a massive heart attack when a contingent of Death Squads attacked her home at the town of Jidd Al Hajj, looking for her son. It was in the early hours of the morning and they were heavily armed, abusive and evil was coming from their eyes. She was so frightened that she collapsed and died on the spot. Even when her family attempted to take her to the hospital, the attackers refused and threatened other members of the family who were awoken by the ferocity of the attack.

Mr Jaffar Ahmad Al Durazi, 22,, who had been detained several times in the past, was arrested in January and subjected to horrific torture for taking part in peaceful pro-democracy protests. He has sickle cell abnormality in the blood. Sufferers of this disease need great care and attention. As his jailers were aware of his condition, they took every possible measure to deny him proper treatment. He was eventually transferred from his prison cell to Salmaniyah Hospital which is managed and run by the military and the Death Squads. Even as his condition deteriorated his pleas for treatment were ingored until he passed away on 26th February.