

# BAHRAIN

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

## Final phase of struggle begins after people's vote to oust Alkhalifa

Now that the much-publicised "elections" by the Alkhalifa regime are over, the people are back to the main demands; to achieve self-determination, write their own constitution and elect their government. The new "parliament" is a replica of the old one in terms of powers, independence and structure, but with weaker occupants. While the old council had some opposition figures, the new one is comprised of those who had no political demands or grievances, mostly pro-regime and dissociated from the Bahraini grassroots. Some of them are even foreigners who were naturalized by the dictator to defend him and his tribe from the wrath of the people. It is therefore only appropriate to suggest that the political situation has taken a plunge to the worse. It is seen by the opposition, both the revolutionary and the political, as a transgression, deeper dictatorship and more oppressive. Now that the world has seen how stubborn the ruling family has become, it needs to act in order to protect the notions of democracy, human rights, self-determination of the people and protection of the native populations. There are some countries who have either supported dictatorships for their own political and economic consideration or hesitated in taking a stand in support of democratic transformation. But the price of this policy has been high. Among the consequences of this policy has been the spiralling violence and terrorism and the transformation of the world into a less stable or hospitable place.

There is deepening anger among the people at three fronts. The first is the continuing repression by the regime. Last month it targeted native Bahraini women, arresting 14 of them, ill-treating and accusing them of serious charges simply because they had played a role in organizing the popular referendum. More native Bahrainis were sentenced to harsh terms of imprisonment, with three natives having their nationality revoked. The international pressure bore fruit in three cases; Maryam Al Khawaja, Nabeel Rajab and Zainab Al Khawaja. All three were released from the Alkhalifa pawns as the world expressed disgust at their treatment and demanded their immediate and unconditional release. It is clear that the Alkhalifa dictators are worried about their fate and

would not seek to anger Western powers. Apart from UK, no other Western country is happy about this regime and would rather see it removed as it is becoming a more serious source of instability in the region. As the world shrinks into a village due to the modern-day means of communication, it is not possible to confine the fallouts of the wrong policies to certain areas; the fires of this menace do not recognise geographical borders but can spread everywhere. This is what the past 12 years of the War on Terror has shown. It is not enough to deal with the phenomenon with the military means only. As long as there are incubational environment of extremism and terrorism will flourish and spread. The Saudis have provided religious ideology and institutions that have proven to be the best incubators for these phenomena. Unless there is democratic transformation in Arabia, these horrific tendencies will continue to mushroom.

The second source of anger among the people is the continued Saudi occupation of the country. The presence of foreign troops; especially Saudi and Emirati, has remained a source of anger and a cause for more popular protest as Bahrianis view that as languishing sovereignty over the country to those foreigners. Furthermore, since those troops came to Bahrain extremist groups have flourished, emboldened by the protection offered by the Saudis who have groomed, financed and sheltered extremist tendencies and terrorist groups. Last month the Alkhalifa interior minister claimed that the situation was stable, secure and free of any threat to the regime. If that is the case why are the Saudi troops still playing the role of occupation in Bahrain? The people continued their daily protests to achieve their goals and to demand the removal of those forces from their country. The dictator has remained isolated at his palaces and delegated the role of suppression to his lieutenants, starting with the minister of his court. As long as the Saudi and Emirati troops remain on Bahraini soil the people will continue their civil resistance along the lines adopted by Mahatma Ghandi in his opposition to the British colonial rule.

The third source of anger is the British policy that has unreservedly supported the Alkhalifa torturers. Despite the claim by the FCO that their role was to engage with

the regime in order to "improve" human rights and achieve stability in the country, four years of political, security and moral support have led to deterioration of the situation. For example at the end of October UK sent a team from the Prison Inspection Directorate to help the regime run its over-crowded torture chambers. Within two weeks two major crimes were committed. The first was the torture to death of Hassan Al Shaikh while in prison on criminal charges. The second was the circulation of a video which shows a native Bahraini being tortured by police officers inside a police car, in the presence of several other officers. The two crimes shocked the nation and caused extreme anger at the UK's policy of this relentless support of the torture regime. Over the past three years, since the first Bissioni recommendations were issued, the dictator and his clique have failed to implement the serious implementations relating to general freedoms, ending torture, safeguarding public freedoms and liberties, ending the policy of impunity, allowing freedom of expression, association, press and political choice. The UK has failed its human and political responsibilities. The British negative role was expressed more ashamedly in the period preceding the elections. Instead of asking the regime to implement the hundreds of recommendations, release political prisoners and bring torturers to justice, UK exercised enormous political pressure on the political societies, threatening them to stop meeting with them if they boycotted the elections. Bahrainis ignored these warnings, knowing that UK has become party to the conflict and decided to continue supporting the dictators and torturers, not the pro-democracy activists. Now that the elections saga has ended in total failure, the UK is advised to re-appraise its policies, dis-engage from its relations with the Alkhalifa dictatorship, join the rest of the world in calling for the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners, bring torturers to justice and declare its support for a transition to democratic rule. Without this fundamental change in policy, the UK stands accused of complicity in the crimes perpetrated by the Alkhalifa against native Bahrainis, including those that are described as genocidal.

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## Bahraini natives reject Saudi-backed regime; repression intensifies

The successful campaign by the revolutionary forces of conducting the unprecedented referendum on 21st and 22nd November has shaken the Alkhalifa regime to its core. Out of over 177,000 of those who participated in the process, more than 170,000 said "Yes" to self-determination. The outcome has now become a serious proof of the lack of legitimacy of the Alkhalifa rule. Compared with the doomed elections held by the regime on 22nd November and boycotted by the majority of the natives, the referendum has become a landmark in the contemporary history of Bahrain, and a development that will only solidify the people's position in demanding regime change. While UK still clings to the hereditary dictatorship, the world is expected to gradually shift its position and demand an end to the political crisis by handing the power to the native Bahrainis. The total boycott of those pseudo-elections by both the revolutionary and political factions has rendered the regime lacking in popular or constitutional legitimacy.

The frustration of the regime was clearly manifested in its massive crackdown on the natives. It was driven by anger and desire for revenge by the dictator himself. It is believed that he ordered his Death Squads to attack the house of the highest ranking religious figure in the country. On Tuesday 25th November, the home of Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim was raided by those vicious elements, its contents turned upside down and its occupants terrified. The message is clear; Bahrain's dictator has declared war not only on the

natives but on their spiritual figures as part of the genocidal policy adopted and implemented by Hamad Alkhalifa, the most vicious Alkhalifa dictator to rule Bahrain since his family occupied it by force in 1783.

The raids on people's homes have continued unabated. On Monday 24th November, young native Bahraini, Hassan Ahmad Al Biladi was detained in a raid on his house. He was transferred to unknown destination. The whereabouts of Hajj Ali Mansoor, who is in his sixties, are unknown. He had been snatched nine days ago and taken to the regime's torture chambers. On Saturday 22nd November regime's Death Squads arrested three young natives from Duraz; Qassim Mohammad Fadhel, Bader Mohammad and Sayed Hussain Sayed Faisal. They were shot at close range with shotguns and were taken away bleeding. Their families are extremely worried about their safety. Patches of blood were seen at the spot where they were shot. Also Abdullah Ali Ashoor and Hussain Yousif Sudaif were detained on 24th November when their homes were raided at dawn in Sitra. Fadhel Ali AbdAli was snatched by members of Death Squads in a dawn raid on his home in Jannussan. From Jidhafs town, Nidal Abdulaziz Alghazal was arrested after his home was raided at dawn Monday. From Bani Jamra, Mohammad Al Ghanmi, Ali Abbas Atiyaa and Qassim Abdul Hassan Fateel were arrested in home raids on Monday. The life of Ammar Hussain Adam from Sitra is in danger after his arrest two days ago. His brother, Jaffar, had been sentenced to a total of 82 years

for anti-regime activities

On 20th November Alkhalifa court sentenced three native Bahrainis to ten years imprisonment and ordered the revocation of their nationality. The victims are: Mohammad Abdul Amir Abbas, Hussain, 23, Ahmad Yousuf Jassim, 24 and Salman Isa Ali Salman, 30. This is part of the policy of genocide implemented by the Alkhalifa on native Bahrainis. The three were falsely accused of an attack on regime's mercenaries last year at the town of Daih. Total sentence against Hassan Sabah now reached 45 years after he was sentenced to another 15 years today.

On 25th November Amnesty International (AI) issued an Urgent Action on Ahmad Hassan Mushaima, the son of the jailed political leader, Hassan Mushaima. He was kept incommunicado for 24 hours, and his lawyers were not allowed to see him when the prosecution questioned him when he was arrested on 13th November. AI has called on people to urge the authorities to allow Ahmad Hassan Ali Mshaima immediate access to his lawyer and to release him if he has been detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Meanwhile the Alkhalifa ruling clan has refused to allow Nabeel Rajab to travel abroad for fear of exposing its crimes to the outside world. Upon his return last month to Bahrain he was arrested, but the regime was forced to release him under international pressure. Despite the judge's decision not to impose travel ban on him, the ruling family imposed the ban later.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
26th November 2014

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## Saudi forces must leave Bahrain, Alkhalifa angry at Popular Referendum

The continued Saudi occupation of Bahrain is still viewed as a major factor in continuing abuses and human rights violations by the Alkhalifa regime against native Bahrainis. There is unanimity among Bahraini natives that this military aggression by the Saudi forces be ended immediately.

The regime's frustration has intensified in recent days as the Day of the popular referendum on the country's political system approaches. As the much-publicised "elections" failed to attract domestic or international attention, the Alkhalifa dictatorship has become more vicious with more intensive forms of crackdown on native Bahrainis. In the past week 14 women and 35 men were arrested. The treatment of the women was barbaric and contrary to the native customs. They are accused of taking part in the running the forthcoming popular referendum on 21st and 22nd November to determine the wish of the native Bahrainis. This step, alone, has created deep fear in the hearts and minds of the Alkhalifa tribal chiefs who are certain that the referendum will reject their occupation of the islands. Among those arrested were: Zakia Alawi Sayed

Mohammad, Iqbal Al Sanabsi, Nawal Al Basri, Zahra Al Ekri, Huda Abdul Nabi, Ibtisam Al Sayegh, Zainab Abd Ali, Zahra Mirza, Maryam Mansouri, Amina Mahdi and Karima Al Arnout. Most of them were released after a major outcry inside and outside the country.

The past week has witnessed massive attacks by regime's forces on residential areas. Last night the town of Bani Jamra received its big share of the revenge with raids on many houses. The towns of Sitra, Nuwaidrat, Duraz and other areas were bombarded with chemical and tear gases. Shotguns were used to injure and maim peaceful protesters. At least ten people were arrested from the town alone. From Ras Rumman, Adel Ahmad was arrested in the early hours of this morning. From Arad Town Ali Abdul Mutallib, 17, was detained in a raid on his home, His brother, Ahmad, is already behind bars. Ahmad Al Badr, of Al Wefaq Human Rights Committee, was arrested last night. In the early hours of Thursday 13th November Mohammad Abdul Wahed was snatched in a raid on his home at Hamad town. Another youth, Abdulla Jamil, was also taken away in another home raid. Hajji Hussain Matar was de-

tained from the same town. The youngest son of Hassan Mushaima, one of the most senior leaders of the Revolution was arrested at the causeway on linking Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The father of Martyr Jaffar Al Durazi was arrested yesterday and taken to the torture chambers.

Parallel with the arrests and detentions, the regime has meted severe prison sentences on people who expressed an opinion. Sayed Ahmad Al Alawi has been sentenced to five years imprisonment for tweeting anti-regime criticism. Yesterday, Zainab Al Khawaja's trial resumed without her presence at the court. She had refused to attend knowing that the court was not impartial and that the sentencing is political, not judicial. The regime is now punishing her further by adjourning the trial to force her to attend.

On 15th November The Economist published an article titled "The New Un-People" highlighting the plight of activists whose nationality has been revoked by regimes of Bahrain, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates. The writer dealt with Statelessness as punishment against political dissent in the Gulf.

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## Anger at Saudi martyrs funeral; Alkhalifa torture recorded on video

The eight victims of the terrorist attack on Al Dalwa town in the Eastern Province of Arabia were laid to rest on Sunday 9th November. Thousands of people turned out and the funeral became a landmark in the political strife in that region. Members of the Saudi ruling family attempted to exploit the situation by taking part in the funeral and appearing to take action against the takfiri terrorists. The people, however, are aware of the role played by the regime, the scholars of the royal courts and the media in fomenting sectarianism and spreading hatred along the sectarian divides. The regime cannot be absolved of responsibility in fanning the feelings of hatred and demonizing the Shia Muslim community which makes up to 20 percent of the population of the Arabian Peninsula. They live in the main areas where the largest oil fields in the world exist, but who benefit little from the oil revenues. In the past four years 25 people from Eastern Province were killed by regime forces.

In one of the most bizarre developments, the GCC foreign ministers meeting scheduled to be held in Doha on 10th November was cancelled due to intractable differences among member countries. This means that next month's annual GCC summit in Qatar will unlikely be held. If that happens it will probably sig-

nal the end of the Saudi-dominated and controlled regional alliance. This means that the Arab Spring whose flame was distinguished by GCC member may have succeeded in shaking and weakening one of the most stumbling blocks on the way to democracy in the Middle East. In the past few days a video has been circulating which shows a known officer from the Alkhalifa Death Squads torturing a native Bahraini in a police vehicle. The terrified youth was surrounded by several other officers and was being subjected to questioning relating to his religious beliefs. Suddenly, the clip shows, the officer started his ferocious attack with a police baton on the boy whose head was covered with his own sleeveless short. The crime is believed to have happened recently. Caught red-handed the regime hurried to claim that it had taken place in 2011 and that it would "investigate" it. Human Rights activists who are familiar with the Bahraini situation confirm that it is a new video and the crime happened recently. This is the second hard proof of systematic torture since a British team from the Prison Inspectorate went to Bahrain apparently to run the Alkhalifa torture chambers. The first crime happened last week when a young Bahraini, Hassan Al Sheikh, was tortured to death by Alkhalifa torturers. Again, they said they would "investigate".

The regime has maintained its tight grip on the people with the most vicious means. Scores of native Bahrainis have been detained in the past week, and many houses raided. Among the newly-detained are: Saleh Al Asfoor, from Duraz where seven houses were raided on 8th November, Sayed Ali Taj and Mahdi Hassan from Bori Town. From the town of Nabih Saleh, Fadhel Abbas, 29, has been taken to the notorious Jaw Prison eight days after his abduction by members of the Death Squads. His mystery caused enormous fear for his life. It is now clear that in those eight days he was severely tortured and abused. He had previously been sentenced in absentia to seven years imprisonment. Sayed Ahmad Sharaf has also disappeared ten days ago and nothing has been heard of him since. It must be pointed out that the regime seeks to avoid accusations of torture in different ways. Among them is snatching native Bahrainis, taking them to torture houses, inflicting maximum pain and injuries through torture, before taking them to the known prisons.

Bahrain Freedom Movement  
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### Saudi forces must leave

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It said: "In Bahrain most of the 31 citizens stripped of their nationality in 2012 were abroad, but ten were left stateless in the country, unable to undertake any official business, be it registering newborns or getting a job. They cannot pass nationality to their children, who will be born into statelessness. On October 28th a court ordered the ten to be deported from the country as illegal residents"

The British policy on Bahrain is being increasingly scrutinized both by the Bahraini opposition and the international human rights bodies. On 29th October a team from the Prison Inspection Directorate at the Home Office visited Bahrain with the aim of taking part in inspecting Bahraini prisons. Since then, two major crimes have been committed against Bahraini people. The first was the killing under torture of a young Bahraini inmate. Hassan Al Sheikh was brutally tortured to death. Images of his mutilated body have surfaced on the internet after they were taken at the mortuary. They are extremely shocking. The second is a circulated video clip which shows physical torture of a detained native Bahraini inside a police vehicle. He was surrounded by police officers while one of them was abusing him in the most disgusting language, before starting brutally torturing him. The British team has yet to justify this systematic torture. Silence on what has happened since the visit could be construed as complicity in these documented crimes.

Bahrain Freedom Movement  
19th November 2014

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## Bahrain rocked by violence as election turns to chaos

*By Hugh Tomlinson, The Times 24th Nov.* Violent clashes and a boycott by opposition parties marred elections in Bahrain at the weekend, the first held in the gulf kingdom since protests at the height of the Arab Spring. Nearly four years on from the 2011 uprising that rocked Bahrain and prompted a crackdown in which dozens were killed, the parliamentary vote on Saturday underscored the sectarian rift that still divides this western ally.

While Downing Street has thrown its weight behind the ruling family, meeting persistent allegations of human rights abuses with only mild criticism, the kingdom's lack of reform is an embarrassment to the UK. Britain has been quick to defend Bahrain despite the fact that it imprisoned doctors who treated protesters for bullet wounds sustained during demonstrations. The West relies on the kingdom for hosting the US navy's Fifth fleet. The UK is also bidding to sell Typhoon fighter jets to the kingdom and has held talks about a £100 million expansion to the Royal Navy's facilities in Manama.

Bahrain's mainly Shia opposition dismissed the election as a "farce", boycotting the poll in protest at the Sunni royal family's failure to implement political reform after the 2011 crisis. The walkout wrecked any chance that the vote could ease the political deadlock.

Dozens were killed and thousands more thrown in jail when the government sent in

troops to crush the Shia-led uprising in 2011. Hundreds of people, including opposition leaders, are still behind bars. Efforts at dialogue between the sides have collapsed. With votes still being counted yesterday, the two sides accused each other of fraud and malpractice. Opposition groups accused the ruling dynasty of rigging the turnout.

Bahrain's Shia community is a majority in the tiny island kingdom but the electoral commission placed the official turnout at 51.5 per cent yesterday. Opposition parties claimed that the true figure was closer to 30 per cent amid signs that many Shia voters stayed away. Al-Wefaq, the largest party in the opposition bloc, derided the government's claims as "amusing, ridiculous and hardly credible".

In loyalist areas, the government laid on free transport to get out the vote and opposition groups scorned a competition to win an iPhone linked to the ballot. Government officials countered that candidates in Shia areas had been threatened and voters intimidated into staying away. In Shia villages west of the capital, Manama, youths throwing stones clashed with police who responded with tear gas. "This election has no legitimacy and no one has faith in it," said Nabeel Rajab, a human rights activist recently released after two years in jail. "After more than three years, the government still has no solution for Bahrain's deep political and human rights problems."

## Lord Avebury on revocation of nationality

Bahrain press conference 5 Nov 2014

I was asked on a TV programme last week how the political and human rights situation had changed since the uprising of 2011 began. I said that no progress had been made towards more democratic systems of governance in spite of the clear demands by the people on the streets. The Prime Minister, uncle of the king, remains in office after nearly 43 years. Other members of the al-Khalifa family occupy key positions in government, all of them appointed by the king. The 'National Dialogue', initiated again by the king in July 2011 and involving just three members of al-Wefaq, the only legal opposition, out of 300 participants, was denounced by the US State Department after a senior US official was expelled from the country in July. That showed that Bahrain was not ready for dialogue according to Human Rights Watch; but the absence of any progress after three years of the process had already demonstrated the need for a different approach. It showed that the so-called dialogue was just a trick to buy off more active opposition. The expulsion of a Congressman in August and the cancellation of an agreed visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture proved not only that the regime was not ready for internal dialogue, but that they would not even risk criticism by impartial international actors.

But today we are concentrating on the reversion to an older form of repression which has recently been brought back to life by the regime: the deprivation of citizenship without due process. 31 people were stripped of their citizenship in July 2012, and another 19 have been added to the list since. A law was enacted in July this year giving the Ministry of the Interior the power to deprive anybody of their citizenship who fails in their 'duty of loyalty' to the state, a vaguely worded provision that allows the authorities to act against their crit-

ics.

Political and human rights activists were already being arbitrarily arrested and tortured; now they can be made stateless at the stroke of a pen, violating not only customary international law on the prevention of statelessness, but the fundamental principle of due process, the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which in the signing of the Magna Carta by King John we shall be celebrating here next year. According to this principle, the accused has the right to a prompt trial before an impartial court; to be informed of the precise acts he is said to have committed against what provisions of the law; to call witnesses of his choice, and to appoint counsel in his defence. You often hear human rights defenders talking about the 'rule of law': this principle of due process is an essential ingredient of the rule of law. The UK claims to be providing Bahrain with 'a comprehensive package of reform assistance, with a focus on strengthening human rights and the rule of law'. There is no visible evidence of this dealing with the issue of due process and on the contrary, some of the victims of arbitrary deprivation of citizenship were stranded here, cut off from their families, without access to resources, and unable even to return to Bahrain and contest the Ministry of Interior's decree because they would be laying themselves open to spurious criminal charges and long prison sentences.

On Monday I tabled a Parliamentary question asking the Government *What representations they have made to the government of Bahrain about deprivation of citizenship of 49 of their nationals, and what effect the Foreign Office's 'reform assistance' has had on the state of Bahrain's law on citizenship.* It will be interesting to see how they justify a programme during which the law has actually spelled out that criticism to the government can and does lead to people becoming stateless. This is yet another drastic method of stifling all opposition, to add to arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killing, long prison sentences and the use of disproportionate force against demonstrators

## Protest and Press Conference

On 18th November Bahraini opposition held a protest and press conference in front of the Embassy of Al Khalifa in the British capital London. The Bahrainis were protesting against the regime on the day it had designated for "voting" by those living outside Bahrain. It transpired that the aim was to legitimise the crime of political naturalisation that the regime had adopted within its strategy to alter the demographic balance in the country. The Bahrainis held their banners and chanted their slogans throughout the day, while the regime's embassy officials were clearly embarrassed by the law turnout for voting. The students were given material incentives to take part, while transportation was provided to many in order to make a show.

The conference opened with a speech of Bahraini prominent opposition leader Dr. Saeed Shihabi, who stressed that the people decided to boycott Al Khalifa regime which one of these aspects not to participate in coming elections. The former parliamentary member Jalal Fairuz said in his speech that this council does not have the ability to bring about change in the country, as it was in the past sessions.

Fairuz added saying that (Regime Under the popular boycott, they seek to falsify the popularity through fraud election). Then, the political activist Ali Faiz delivered his speech in which he said that the regime launched a campaign of arrests against women and there are thousands of detainees in the prison and wants to hold elections in such atmosphere. He added that these elections will inspire people to proceed with the revolution.

Mr. Ahmed Wadaei spoke, saying that "the regime seeks through these elections to show that situation in the country is normal," adding that the defenders are languishing in prisons and there are thousands of detainees and victims of torture. He called for immediate release of those prisoners of conscience and end the culture of impunity of torturers.

