

BAHRAIN

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

Demise of Saudi monarch opens new opportunities for change

The death of Abdulla bin Abdul Aziz, the king of Saudi Arabia has been received with a mixture of relief and hope by many in the Arab and Islamic worlds. His kingdom is seen as being the main force behind many ailments in the region. Most notably is the rising Sectarianism linked to the Wahhabi school of thought which is allied to the Al Saud clan in the Arabian Peninsula. The past four years have been among the worst in the recent history of the region with widespread extremism, sectarianism and terrorism. The era of the late monarch is seen by some as the worst in the Saudi history at almost every front. There are no less than 10,000 political prisoners, mostly without charge or trial. Scores of activists including Ra'if Badawi, are languishing behind bars for expressing their opinion. Women are still barred from driving as two of them are still awaiting verdict from the ruling family on their fate. They had challenged the status quo and drove their cars in Riyadh, defying the religious police who act as "Big Brother" in every part of the kingdom. Abdulla has failed to take the course of "reform" which the Western powers had anticipated when his brother, Fahd, was on his death bed. Those Western powers had repeatedly hailed him as "reformist" even after his failure to deliver. Fahd had instituted what was called "The Government System"; the first written document to highlight the Saudi vision on how this vast kingdom would be ruled. Fahd also introduced the highly symbolic and powerless "Shura Council" and introduced limited elections to municipality councils. The "reformist" Abdulla went as far as freezing those symbolic bodies.

The Bahrainis have not forgiven the Saudi monarch for sending his troops to quash their Revolution. On 14th March 2011, exactly one month after they had launched their anti-Alkhalifa Revolution, the Saudi troops crossed the borders along the causeway linking the two countries and wreaked havoc on the native population. More than 40 mosques were obliterated, scores killed, thousands incarcerated, over 5000 sacked from their jobs and the Pearl Roundabout demolished. The Saudis had participated actively in crushing the Revolution. However, it is now safe to say that the Revolution has

survived this onslaught and outlived all other political protests of the Arab Spring. The Egyptians have completed a circle; from Revolution to victory to military coup financed and supported by the Saudis and back to join the Bahrainis in the spirit of Revolution. The Egyptians have yet to display similar deep awareness of the Saudi role in the counter-Revolution and adopt a similar stand. Many believe that the Saudis had crossed red lines in dealing with the Arab Spring especially the Bahraini Revolution and are unlikely to survive long as the Arab masses gather their strength and make a more serious comeback to the streets in search for freedom, liberty and democracy.

The Saudi monarch is also notorious for his stands in opposition to the national and Islamic resistance to the Israeli aggression on Lebanon in 2006 and Gaza in 2008, 2009 and 2014. Under the leadership of the late king Abdulla Riyadh has adopted unfriendly stands towards those who opposed the Israeli aggression. They went further to establish working relations with the Israelis establishing security links with them and drawing maps to allow them free use of their airspace should they decide to attack Iran. Under Abdulla the Saudis became so much polarized in their anti-revolution and anti-democracy that they allocated more than \$100 billions to finance wars, plots and media campaigns against any regime that succeeded in adopting democratic transformation. Beginning with Iraq, Saudis instigated sectarianism as a weapon against the new order after the collapse of Saddam Hussain's regime. They raised the banner of Shia-Sunni conflict to mobilized Arab public opinion against the new political order in Iraq. This tool was used again in Syria to ensure the failure of the people's initial quest to improve their political situation. They financed the creation of ISIS and continued their anti-Shia campaign until it the terrorist group turned against them last year. The Western powers adopted hypocritical approach and remained silent about the atrocities committed in Iraq over the past decade. Today the world is paying heavy price for those ill-conceived policies. Sectarianism has become the most effective weapon against the Arab and Muslim people leading to the fragmentation of the Muslims as never

before. Rising petrodollars were used to fan sectarian and religion feelings.

Under king Abdulla the price of oil has been hit hard in the past year. This is used as a weapon against those powers that had antagonised Saudi designs and policies on Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. In all those countries attempts to democratise were targeted by the Saudis who used money and political leverage on the West to ensure the failure of any of those Revolutions to achieve democratic transformation. Even within the GCC countries there have been serious rifts. The Saudis almost succeeded in tearing apart the GCC when they targeted Qatar for its support to the Muslim Brotherhood. Last year the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates were withdrawn from Doha in order to break its independent stands and policies and force it to abandon the Muslim Brotherhood. Eventually the last GCC Summit in Doha was only saved in the weeks before the due date.

Today, Bahrainis celebrate their Revolution that is the only one from the Arab Spring that survived the vicious onslaught by the forces of the counter revolution. The defunct Saudi king committed a grave mistake by invading Bahrain; a decision that would have already backfired against the ruling Al Saud dynasty in Arabia. Bahrainis are preparing to mark the fourth anniversary of their 14th February Revolution with stronger determination, zeal and clarity of purpose. On the other hand the dictator is gradually throttling himself and his dynastical rule by taking hawkish and criminal decisions that could prove fatal. The detention of Sheikh Ali Salman is tantamount to obliterating his much-publicised "reform programme". His decision to persecute Nabeel Rajab for a tweet has earned him public curse inside and outside the country. His supporters in London and Washington were left to lick their wounds and pride as international media and human rights bodies vented their anger against UK's Foreign Secretary for suggesting that Bahrain's tyranny was reforming itself. With their peaceful protests and civilised campaigns Bahrainis have proven themselves to be worthy of respect, trust and victory. That will happen soon.

Saudi monarch death ends bleak reign; calls to stop Bahrain F1 “blood race”

The death of the Saudi king, Abdulla bin Abdul Aziz, has been commemorated by victims of the Saudi invasion of Bahrain with a mixture of relief and hope that the occupation would be speedily ended. The Saudi army was ordered by the defunct king to invade Bahrain in mid March 2011. It gave material and moral support to the regime but failed to allay its fear of imminent fall.

Calls have been made by Bahraini people to stop the F1 motor racing scheduled to take place in Bahrain next April. Over the past three years this race has led to the killing, imprisonment and torture of many Bahrainis. On 29th April 2012 photo-journalist Ahmad Ismail was killed by regime forces for his anti-F1 activism. On 20th April 2013 two women activists; Nafisa Al Asfoor and Raihana Al Mousawi were arrested for attempting to protest at the F1 race course. They were severely tortured and jailed until now.

This morning Alkhalifa regime postponed the trial of Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of Al Wefaq to 25th February. This is further punishment at a time when international pressure is mounting for his immediate and unconditional release. Preparations for the fourth anniversary of the Revolution are being made by the revolutionary forces and the continued detention of Sheikh Salman will make them more comprehensive and devastating to the tribal clan.

The dictator is becoming more vicious in treating native Bahrainis, with more arrests and severe torture on detainees. In the early hours of every morning Death Squads attack people's homes in various towns and detain scores of people. Yesterday Ali Hassan Al Maqabi was snatched from his home and taken to the torture

dungeons. More native Bahrainis were arrested at police check points including Ahmad Al Shaarqi and Ghanim Abbas, 21 from Dair Town. On Monday 26th January regime's Death Squads attacked several houses and arrested more people including: Mohammad Al Taitoon and Sayed Hassan Al Ghuraifi. Isa Al Jawhar from Barbar Town was detained on Thursday 22nd January at the airport. Abdul Rasool Abdul Ameer was arrested on 22nd January off the coast of Karbabad and taken to unknown destination. He is originally from Ras Al Rumman but lives in Buri Town.

Two native Bahrainis have had their jail sentences confirmed; Murtadha Al Salatneh and Dhia Al Hasabi were kept in custody after their jail sentences had been renewed. Mahmood Al Mokhowdar was remanded in custody for further investigation after being severely tortured by Alkhalifa Death Squads, but nothing could be proven against him. There are growing fears for the safety and well-being of a native Bahraini youth who disappeared two weeks ago. Isa Moosa, from Al Ekr Town, was abducted by members of regime's Death Squads. Despite repeated requests for information, the regime refused to give any information about this native Bahraini victim.

In a serious escalation in the war against freedom of expression the regime announced yesterday that it had arrested nine people for tweeting negative remarks about the defunct Saudi king. The victims are: Mohammad Saeed Al Adraj, 24, Mohammad Ahmad Ali, 21, Yousuf Fadhel Salman, 21, Abbas Ali Ahmad, 23, Ali Jaffar Ahmad, 29, Sayed Hussain Jaffar, 28, Ali Ibrahim Ali, 21, Ibrahim Yousuf, 19 and Hussain Mohammad Ahmad, 22. The nine were subjected to horrific treatment by

Alkhalifa torturers. They face the prospect of jail for two years. This is the “reform” hailed by UK. Nabeel Rajab was recently sentenced to six months imprisonment for tweeting negative remarks about one of Alkhalifa departments.

In another development the family of Ali Haroon, who had been handed by the Thai authorities to Alkhalifa last December were detained by Alkhalifa torture officials. They were on their first visit to see their son who had been subjected to most horrific torture both in Bangkok and in Bahrain. His mother, blind brother, three sisters and their children were taken to Al Rafa's torture centre. The children were later released but the rest of the family remained in custody. The family of another prisoner, Hassan Al Haddad, was also detained and taken to the same torture centre. No further details were available.

Bahrain Watch has established a link between the recent death of a Bahraini native citizen, Abdul Aziz Al Saeed and tear gas supplied by Brazil. Prominent Human Rights Defender Nabeel Rajab posted a picture of a tear gas projectile he had found on the doorstep of Al-Saeed's house along with empty tear gas shell casings close by in the same area. The shell casings are consistent with Rheinmetall Denel Munition (Germany/South Africa) and Condor Non-Lethal Technologies (Brazil) tear gas. However, only the Condor tear gas has inner projectiles matching that in the picture posted by Rajab. Pressure is expected to mount on the Brazilian authorities to stop shipment for further gas canisters and could be held responsible for the death of Abdul Aziz Al Saeed.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
(www.vob.org),
28th January 2015

Saudis beheadings criticised; Alkhalifa condemned for jailing Rajab, Salman

Under the heading “Saudi Arabia's Beheadings Are Public, but It Doesn't Want Them Publicized” the US-based Foreign Policy published an article today by Justine Drennan denouncing the ongoing executions by the Saudi regime. It said: “Saudi Arabia, a world leader in beheadings, has a policy of carrying out the gruesome punishment in public to serve as a warning for other citizens. But as the arrest of the man who filmed a recent beheading demonstrates, the kingdom is much more wary of publicizing its brutal methods abroad. “Clearly, Saudi Arabia is pretty ashamed at having its brutality exposed,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division. She said the punishments are meant for the kingdom's domestic public... and not for international viewers. brutal punishments, which she said have served as a model for the Islamic State.

On 17th January a native Bahraini was martyred after inhaling large quantities of chemical and tear gases fired by foreign

mercenaries. Abdul Aziz Salman Al Saeed, 65, from Bilad Al Qadeem, inhaled large quantities of these lethal gases outside his home. When he returned he suffered shortness of breath and continuous coughing. He passed away shortly afterwards. His funeral was mercilessly attacked.

The Sentencing yesterday of Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, to six months in jail for his critical tweets of Alkhalifa dictatorship has been widely condemned by world's human rights bodies. It was seen as another marker on the road to more repression in the kingdom of fear. Yesterday, Amnesty International said: “Nabeel Rajab is being unjustly punished simply for posting tweets deemed insulting to the authorities. His conviction is a blow to freedom of expression – it must be quashed. He should be released immediately and unconditionally,” said Said Boumedouha, Deputy

Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme. He added: “Instead of persecuting activists who dare to speak out freely the Bahraini authorities should repeal these repressive laws and uphold the right to freedom of expression,” said Said Boumedouha. Seventy two Members of the European Parliaments signed a petition calling for the quashing of Nabeel Rajab's charges.

After detaining him for three weeks, the Alkhalifa have decided to put Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of Al Wefaq Society, on trial for refusing to take part in the tribal elections in November. The regime considers him and Al Wefaq responsible for defeating the regime in its attempt to promote its tribal elections as real reforms. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.



Vicious attacks by Saudi, Alkhalifa regimes on people confirm state ter-

The attack on Awwamiya Town in Eastern Province of Arabia on Saturday 10th January has caused enormous damage to property and peace of the citizens in that area. It was both unprovoked and unnecessary and was meant to create fear in the hearts of the people. Live ammunition was used piercing screens and bodies of stationary and moving cars. The Saudi regime is intent on punishing anyone calling for real reforms in the political system. The decision to flog Raif Badawi 1000 lashes and imprison him for ten years has been condemned by human rights bodies. He will receive the first 50 lashes on Friday. Opponents of the sentence said that "Badawi is 'being used as an example' in crackdown on reform calls".

The call by the most senior religious figure in Bahrain to consolidate the peaceful protests against the Alkhalifa dictatorship has been welcomed by the revolutionary groups. Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim, considered the detention of the people's leaders a futile aggression by the regime which will only lead to more tension and protests. He urged the people to continue their political action until their rights are fulfilled. He said the people are ready to pursue their political goals despite the intensive repression by the Alkhalifa dictatorship. However there are fears for the safety of Sheikh Isa Qassim who had been repeatedly attacked and threatened by the regime's press and its Death Squads.

On 10th January Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action with regards to the detention of Sheikh Ali Salman. It called on the Bahraini authorities to drop the charges against a leading opposition figure and to release him without delay after his detention was renewed for 15 days. The organization "considers the detention and prosecution of Sheikh 'Ali Salman a flagrant violation of his right to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and urges the Bahraini authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally". It further added: "If convicted, the organization would consider him a prisoner of conscience."

The defence team of Sheikh Ali Salman has accused the regime's prosecutors of withholding vital papers containing information of the Sheikh's interrogation for fear of uprooting the regime's fabrication against the Sheikh. Meanwhile the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Defenders, Michel Corus has called for the immediate release of Sheikh Salman.

Demonstrations have continued throughout the country, fuelled by the continued detention of AlWefaq's leader. Most areas witnessed increased protests against the Alkhalifa dictatorship, but were attacked mercilessly by the riot police and Death Squads. The protesters expressed solidarity with the native Bahrainis who had been sentenced to death for their anti-regime activism. From Sitra to Karzakkn to Karrana, Daih and Musalla native Bahrainis called for funda-

mental change of the political system. One native Bahraini from Saar Town was seriously injured. Three days ago a woman from Daih was hit by police in her leg. The protesters were also outraged by the Alkhalifa decision to put Sheikh Ali ibn Ahmad AlJidhafi, an elderly cleric and former prisoner, on trial for taking part in protests.

On 12th January at least seven youths from the town of Buri were arrested. Their homes were raided and searched for three hours to find or plant incriminating evidence. In Sitra mercenary forces attacked schools whose youth were sitting the finals exams. At least three boys were arrested at a time when they were sitting the end of term exams: Mahmood Jaffar Khalil, 15, Abbas Hassan AlNakal, 15, and Hussain Ali Isa, 14. The regime's attacks on peaceful protests caused many casualties. On 10th January 45 native Bahrainis were injured.

In Tunisia human rights activists participating in a seminar hailed the Bahraini Revolution and called for the immediate release of Sheikh Ali Salman. Zuhair Makhloof, of the Truth and Dignity Commission said that Bahrain is still in the hearts of the Tunisians; especially those working with civil society institutions. In the first week of January there were 45 arbitrary arrests, 119 peaceful protests and 46 cases of collective punishment. At least eleven native Bahrainis were injured with shotgun pellets.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
13th January 2015

King Abdullah and the UK: When Arms Sales Trump Human Rights

By Andrew Smith*

Many of the gushing tributes to King Abdullah have painted him as a man of peace and a force for good. In reality he was the figurehead of one of the most violent and oppressive governments in the world.

One thing that remained all too consistent throughout King Abdullah's reign was the brutal and repressive manner in which his family ran its Kingdom. Another was the uncritical support that it enjoyed from countries like UK.

To question the Saudi authorities has always been to risk long term imprisonment or even your life. The terrible punishment of blogger Raif Badawi is only the latest example of the oppression and barbarism that the Monarchy exercises against its people. Last March saw the introduction of a new 'terrorism' law that treats all atheists and political dissidents as enemies of the state. Torture is widespread and LGBT citizens are routinely punished by some of the most restrictive and homophobic laws in the world.

Public executions are still commonplace, there have been ten beheadings in 2015 alone. All of this has contributed to why the Economist Democracy Index listed it as the fifth most oppressive government in the world.

Regardless of its appalling human rights record, the family has had no shortage of international supporters and admirers. In the last few years it has enjoyed flattering and ego-boosting meetings with leaders

like Angela Merkel, Barack Obama, David Cameron and a sword-dancing Prince Charles, all of whom flew out to see them.

These high profile visits have only served to strengthen the family's archaic and authoritarian rule, allowing them to continue their repression unabated. In fact, the day after Prince Charles' recent visit, seven Saudi citizens were jailed for 20 years for 'offences' that included protesting.

These often sycophantic political relationships have been backed up by strong commercial ones. A particular area of focus has been the arms trade.

Saudi Arabia spends billions of pounds on weapons every year, and has been the largest buyer of UK-made arms over a period of decades. Major arms sales to the kingdom have come with the explicit support of successive UK governments and benefited from a high level of institutional support; with the Saudis paying for around 240 Ministry of Defence civil servants and military personnel to support the contracts.

The scale of these arms sales has led to close three-way co-operation between the UK government, the Saudi state and companies like BAE Systems. This was evident in the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher presided over the corruption-riddled Al Yamamah Tornado deal, and when Tony Blair oversaw the signing of a provisional multi-billion pound agreement for BAE Eurofighter jets in 2005.

In 2006 Blair's Eurofighter deal came under threat due to an ongoing Serious Fraud Of-

fice investigation into allegations that BAE had paid bribes to secure arms sales to the Saudis. However, just as the Saudis began threatening to pull out and move the order to France Blair intervened and had the investigation dropped.

The arms sales have continued under the Coalition government, which has licensed over £3.8 billion worth of weapons to the Saudis since taking office in 2010.

With the King's death there is a chance for governments like the UK to re-evaluate their relationships with the Kingdom. Abdullah's successor, Prince Salman, is unlikely to bring in any major political change, or to willingly cede any of his power, but much of his regime's global influence and legitimacy comes from the close relationships it enjoys with world leaders.

Western arms sales and fawning visits from government ministers haven't just provided military support for the dictatorship; they have also sent a statement of political support for the repression it has presided over. On top of that, they have given a message to Saudi citizens and the wider region that their rights to human rights and democracy are a lower priority than steady oil supplies and arms company profits. Germany has just announced that it will cease selling arms to the Saudis. It is time for the UK to do the same.

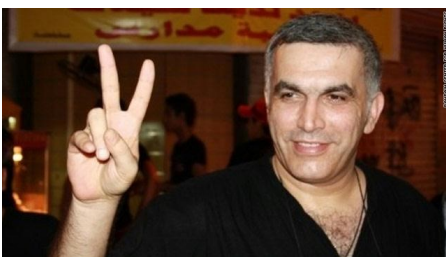
Andrew Smith is a spokesperson for Campaign Against Arms Trade

*Andrew is an anti arms-trade activist and political campaigner

90 MEPs call for dropping the charges against Nabeel Rajab

80 Members of the European Parliament, more than 10% of the total number of the European chamber, support the call for the charges against Nabeel Rajab to be dropped.

Addendum January 2015: Since this letter was first published, the situation has continued to deteriorate in Bahrain. Sheikh Ali Salman, General Secretary of the Al-Wefaq, the last opposition political party, was detained on 28 December and is charged with inciting hatred against the government. Zainab Al-Khawaja was sentenced to 4 years and 6 months for insulting the King, though she remains on bail currently. As Nabeel Rajab's 20 January trial approaches, the Bahraini government appears to be silencing all its major critics.



Brussels, 28 October 2014

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, call for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Nabeel Rajab — President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights, Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and member of the Human Rights Watch's Advisory Board. We believe that his arrest, interrogation and arbitrary detention in relation to an offending tweet are meant as a form of reprisal against Mr. Rajab for his recent advocacy on behalf of human rights in Bahrain. His advocacy recently included speaking before the Human Rights Subcommittee (DROI) of the European Parliament, and participating in the 27th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Less than 24 hours after completing his human rights advocacy mission in Europe, the Bahraini government summoned Mr. Rajab to the Central Investigations Directorate's (CID) Cyber Crimes Unit for interrogation, whereupon security forces arrested and interrogated him for a number of hours in relation to a tweet he published while abroad. After 19 days in pre-trial detention, Mr. Rajab's court proceedings began to hear opening arguments on 19 October. The court postponed any decision or sentencing a first time until Wednesday 29 October, then a second time until 2nd November.

On that date, the Court decided to provisionally release Mr. Rajab until the next hearing scheduled on 20 January 2015. However Mr. Rajab has been baned from leaving Bahrain and still faces up to six years prison for "insulting a public institution and the army" via Twitter, pursuant to Article 216 of the Bahraini Penal Code.

Given the Bahrain government's history of targeted reprisals of arbitrary detention and torture against Mr. Rajab, including a two-year arbitrary detention completed in May 2014, we are deeply concerned that Mr. Rajab's renewed arbitrary detention in relation to his free expression is likewise meant as a form of reprisal for his human rights advocacy at EU and UN levels.

In addition to the recent detention of Mr. Rajab, the Bahraini government has also reignited its campaign against the Bahraini-Danish citizens and human rights defenders of the al-Khawaja family. Abdulhadi al-Khawaja continues to serve his arbitrary life sentence in Bahrain after peacefully calling for reforms during the 2011 popular protest movement in the country. His daughter Zainab al-Khawaja — herself a prominent human rights activist who is currently eight months pregnant — now faces fresh charges of insulting the king of Bahrain, a crime that can carry a sentence of seven years imprisonment and a fine up to BD 10,000 (€20,900). Her trial is set to resume on Thursday 20 October.

In February of this year, the European Parliament unanimously passed an Urgency Resolution recognizing that "the Bahraini

authorities continue to violate and restrict the rights [...] of individuals to peaceful protest, freedom of expression and digital freedom, [and that] human rights activists face ongoing systematic targeting, harassment and detention." The Resolution also called for "the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and peaceful protesters, including Nabeel Rajab [...]"

We therefore urge the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Member States to publicly condemn the ongoing violations of the basic human rights of free expression in Bahrain, and call for the release of Mr. Nabeel Rajab and other human rights defenders targeted in Bahrain. We further hope that Member States will continue to call on the Government of Bahrain to ensure that all civil society organizations and human rights defenders in the kingdom are able to conduct their work without fear of retaliation or reprisal. Finally, we again urge the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs to stress the European Parliament's calls for imposing 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 or by the Special Procedures of the United Nations).

Yours sincerely,

Alkhalifa condemned for jailing Rajab, Salman, *Cont from P2*

On Sunday 18th January Human Rights Watch urged Bahrain's Western allies to press the Alkhalifa to release detained activists, including Sheikh Ali Salman, the head of the influential Al-Wefaq bloc, who has remained in custody since authorities arrested him on December 28 on charges including seeking regime change. "When it comes to punishing peaceful critics of the government or ruling family, Bahrain is a serial offender," said HRW's deputy MENA director Joe Stork. Salman's arrest "seems calculated to send a message to Bahrainis and the world that political reconciliation and respect for fundamental rights is completely off the table," said Stork. HRW said that authorities have so far "failed" to release evidence against Salman, urging his immediate release and calling for charges against him to be dropped.

Meanwhile six native Bahrainis were arrested on Monday from the town of Jid Ali after their car was surrounded by foreign mercenaries employed by Alkhalifa junta. They are: Ali Marhoon, Ali Al Uraibi, Hussain Al Herz, Naji Al Adem, Hussain Jamil and Hussain Khamis. On Monday 19th January Alkhalifa sentenced a young Bahraini woman an activist to one year in jail for taking part

in anti-regime protest. Ayat Al Saffar joins several other native Bahraini women at Alkhalifa incarceration dungeons. Today several native Bahrainis from Duraz were given five years jail terms and asked to pay 150 BD (400 dollars).

On 18th January Human Rights First urged the United States to publicly state how it plans to respond to the ongoing crackdown on peaceful dissent in Bahrain, its military ally and home of the Navy's Fifth Fleet. On January 20, Bahraini authorities have scheduled a court verdict for leading human rights defender Nabeel Rajab and are slated to decide whether to extend the custody of prominent opposition leader Ali Salman. "The Bahraini regime seems to have interpreted United States' lack of response to this new wave of repression as a sign that it can get away with targeting peaceful dissidents without consequences from its allies. The United States should make clear that it will respond to the harassment of Bahrain's peaceful opposition and human rights defenders," said Human Rights First's Brian Dooley.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th January 2015