

BAHRAIN

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Fifth year of Revolution could be decisive as Bahrainis remain steadfast

Despite the political cover provided by its supporters, the Alkhalifa regime is counting its days as its links with the people of Bahrain are comprehensively eliminated. The relations between the two sides have sunk to a stage which makes the regime unsustainable, despite the efforts by its supporters. It is becoming a liability and a source of shame to those supporters. When a regime needs the intervention and support of six armies to remain in power, it means that it has lost the ability to survive. For the past four years it has adopted most repressive policies against the most peaceful political resistance in modern times. Yet it has failed to quell the protests or create fear in the hearts of its thousands of victims. Revolutionaries are subjected to systematic torture administered at every stage after detention. It is clear that those tactics, including the use of shotguns, live ammunition, revocation of nationality, life imprisonment and death penalties, have lost their deterrent effects. People are becoming more defiant and insistent on fundamental change. Never before had the people been more adamant in their calls for the end of the Alkhalifa rule. People have lost their appetite for reactionary dynastical rule that has no popular or constitutional legitimacy.

When the regime's forces attacked the prisoners at Jaw Prison, it may have been under the illusion of subjugating them or deterring their families and friends from pursuing their political goal of achieving regime change. The anger that spread among the people for this heinous crime, perpetrated by mercenary forces including Jordanians, has been unprecedented. Cries of the victims as they were being tortured reached all the corners of the biggest prison. In fact the human rights activists attending the 28th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva were so moved that they left no stone unturned in their attempts to attract the attention of the human rights world to the plight of the Bahraini prisoners. To the world it was a situation in which natives were being mercilessly attacked by mercenary forces. With six armies joining forces against unarmed civilians calling for their natural rights, the situation is totally unbalanced in material terms. Yet, after four years of relentless attacks and aggression, the people are still steadfast, resilient and determined to pur-

sue their goals. No power on earth, it seems, will be capable of defeating the will of people who want to break free from chains and servitude.

The regime has all along relied on foreign help to sustain its existence. It has also worked to maintain the status quo that enables it to benefit from the power struggle among the various powers in the region. This is also true with other small countries. The situation in the past four years has demonstrated the fluidity of the situation and the enormous problems facing foreign powers in deciding what line of action to take in order to keep the lid on the intrinsic tendency for political and social explosions. Even Kuwait, which has a limited form of people's participation through special parliamentary process, is now being sucked into the quagmire of internal conflict. Recently its forces broke a small but peaceful demonstration calling for political reforms. Among those arrested is Nawaf Al Hendal, a young human rights activist who had just returned from Geneva where he had addressed the 28th session of the Human Rights Council. The Saudis are now passing through one of the most challenging periods of its history. Having failed in its quest to establish regional dominance in Lebanon, Syria and Bahrain, it is now challenged by events on its southern borders. The Yemeni internal political map is being redrawn to undo what the Saudis have been doing over the past four decades. Riyadh has spread its Wahhabi influence in that country and attempted to undermine the historic character of Yemen which had historically been characterized by its Zaidi religious affiliation (a branch of Shiite Islam, which is loathed by the Bedouin version of religious zealotry). The events of the past few weeks that saw the native Zaidis extending their influence into the capital, San'aa and beyond, have unnerved the Saudis and prompted them to call for help from other GCC states. There is now a threat of a regional war in which the Saudis may use their air power against Yemen. That will be a disastrous adventure that could lead to serious regional conflicts. The Saudis cannot win easily especially with the evolving displeasure of the West at the continued Saudi support and grooming of the extremism and terrorism. Riyadh has been planning with Tel Aviv for an eventual war

that would undo the psychological impact of the 2006 war with Lebanese Hizbullah which ended in what amounted to Israeli defeat. The Saudi-Israeli newly forged military alliance is seen as the most threatening development in the region and could lead to incalculable disasters.

The UK has recently come under severe criticism by human rights organizations as well as Bahraini activists for its role in propping up a failed regime, proven to have used "systematic torture" against native Bahrainis. London could have led a move to modernize Alkhalifa system of government and contain the political situation. It chose a different approach by becoming the main political and security defender of the antiquated regime that has strong devotion to the extremist and terrorist ideology of ISIS. UK took no visible action against Alkhalifa when they allowed ISIS supporters to protest openly and participate in an open rally last year. UK has failed to stop the excesses of Alkhalifa regime even when it waged relentless attacks on the native Bahraini prisoners of Jaw prison last month. UK risks being accused of complicity in the Alkhalifa crimes that have been squarely condemned by almost every reputable human rights body. The continued detention and persecution of the leaders of Bahraini people, including Sheikh Ali Salman, Nabil Rajab and others are testimony to the cruel policies of a regime that has been rejected by its own people. The coming months will witness escalation of the pro-democracy protests as well as the regime's aggression against native Bahrainis. If UK or other regional or Western governments believe that the crisis in Bahrain will go away by continuing the ongoing human rights violations and the use of brutal force, then they are grossly mistaken. The 14th February Revolution was launched to enforce change. Alkhalifa had misused the trust of the people and used the state's power and mechanisms to inflict maximum pain on the people. That will not be allowed to continue. The Alkhalifa must be stripped of their powers and the people allowed to exercise their rights and take lead in the running of their political system. That demand stands until the regime is brought to its knees. It may take some time but it will happen. That is the divine law.

Amnesty calls for leaders release as Alkhalifa aggression intensifies

Under the title "Bahrain: Respect human rights of prisoners and release prisoners of conscience", Amnesty International issued a Public Statement about Bahrain on 18th March. It said: On the fourth anniversary of the arrests of 13 leading opposition activists and other prisoners of conscience in Bahrain, Amnesty International calls for their immediate and unconditional release and urges the authorities to ensure that the rights of all prisoners, including those held in Jaw prison, are fully respected. The statement also referred to Alkhalifa attack on Jaw prison saying: Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the allegations of beatings of prisoners in Jaw Prison on 10 March, as well as of the use of tear gas in confined spaces. It is urging the authorities to make public the results of its investigations into the events on that day. It is likewise concerned about the allegations of ill-treatment of prisoners in block six, and that children are being detained alongside adult prisoners, in violation of international human rights law and standards, and is urging the authorities to launch investigations into these allegations also. The organisation is also calling on the authorities to ensure that prisoners in Jaw prison are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, and that any prison officials responsible for committing such acts are brought to justice.

Meanwhile, clampdown on native Bahrainis has continued. This morning three young men from the town of Markh were arrested in raids on their homes: Ali Mohammad, Sayed Ali Hussain and Ali Hassan. Yesterday morning Mohammad Jaffar Sulail was kidnapped by masked members of the Death Squads at the industrial area of the town of Wadyan in Sitra. On Monday

23rd March two young native Bahrainis were arrested in raids on their homes in Maqaba. Mahmood Abdul Hassan and Hassan Mohammad Al Zaki were taken to the torture chambers. On 19th March Sayed Mohammad Sayed Saleh from Duraz was kidnapped by members of Alkhalifa Death Squads. Faisal Hussain Yateem, 17, was arrested from his home in Iskan Aali. The family of Dr Saeed Al Samaheji is extremely worried as no news have been received about him for 18 days. Many other prisoners are considered "disappeared" since they were taken away from Jaw prison after the most vicious attack in living memory on the inmates who were calling for improvements of their conditions.

14 years old Qassim Mohsin from Karbabad was remanded in custody for one more week after his arrest on 19th March. Also Jalila Al Sayed was given ten more days imprisonment for the fourth time.

On 18th March Brian Dooley, Director of Human Rights First published an article titled "Is Bahrain an Apartheid State". He said: The last few years have seen systematic discrimination, a repression of fundamental rights, and torture and deaths in custody. People aren't divided by race but by sect, which typically dictates where they live, what jobs they do, and whether they can achieve political power. Many government supporters sound like many white South Africans used to: defensive about their privileges, with an inflated sense of entitlement and phobia of democracy. He further added: The governments of the United States and the United Kingdom both backed the apartheid regime in much the same way they're now supporting the Bahrain dictatorship -- politically and militarily, while citing an

unpersuasive "constructive engagement" policy. As with South Africa in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, public criticism of human rights abuses is muted, with "security concerns" trumping a push for democracy. He ended saying: Then, as now, Washington, London and plenty of other Western capitals were on the wrong side of history during apartheid (although in apartheid's final years, the Reagan administration was forced by Congress to implement sanctions). But autocracies don't last forever. Apartheid eventually broke under the weight of its own immorality and inefficiency. And call it what you like, unless Bahrain's repressive system radically changes, it'll collapse too.

In another development human rights activists have demanded that Scotland Yard arrest a Bahraini prince accused of torture – after the royal let slip he had returned to the UK by posting a video on Instagram. On 19th March campaigners presented the Metropolitan Police with a "dossier" of new claims against one of the dictator's sons, who they say was involved in the torture of prisoners during a pro-democracy uprising in Bahrain in 2011. Subsequently his lawyers wrote to The Independent arguing that submitting the dossier to the police was a political stunt and has nothing new.

In Kuwait a reputable human rights activist, Nawwaf Al Hendal, was arrested yesterday in an attack on a small protest against recent changes to the election law. Calls have been made to the government to release Mr Hendal. He has just returned from Geneva after addressing 28th session of the Human Rights Council.

Bahrain Freedom Movement (vob.org)
25th March 2015 (info@vob.org)

Saudis humiliated by Swedish stand, Alkhalifa attack prisoners

The heinous crime committed last week by Alkhalifa dictators on powerless prisoners at Jaw Prison is still reverberating within the community as well as the human rights world. In addition to more than 106 injuries, there are still over 50 inmates who have "disappeared". It is feared that they are being subjected to torture at the secret houses built for the purpose on "advice" of a friendly Western government. The images of injuries confirm vicious attacks by merciless members of the Death Squads, operated by the royal court.

Meanwhile in Geneva Alkhalifa regime has been squarely condemned by delegates of governments and NGOs. In a statement on 17th March the Denmark's Permanent Mission in Geneva called for the release of political prisoners in Bahrain especially the human rights defenders like Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja. This time Alkhalifa dictators will have no choice but to take the Danish call seriously. Last week Sweden condemned Saudi Arabia for its blatant violation of human rights and stopped military deal with Riyadh. The move was hailed by the human rights activists loath policies of some Western governments of

appeasing Gulf dictators and turning blind eyes to their attacks on civil liberties. Sweden's Social Democrat-led government, which came to power last October, has focused its foreign policy on human rights.

"The decision on the Saudi agreement had been made some time ago," the newspaper Dagens Nyheter quoted Prime Minister Stefan Lofven as saying in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. "What has happened in recent days hasn't been decisive." On Monday 9th March, Saudi Arabia blocked Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom from giving a speech to the League of Arab States in Cairo. A spokesman for Wallstrom said the decision stemmed from Sweden's criticism of Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

Yesterday Bahraini native, Munthir Hassan, from Buri Town was snatched in a dawn raid on his house. Ihsan Abdul Redha was arrested and accused of fabricated charges. Jaffar Mawali was snatched from his home despite his mother's pleas to leave him alone. She collapsed and was taken to hospital by her relatives. The family of Hassan Al Ma'yoof, 20, were subjected to horrific abuse including beating when

regime's Death Squads attacked their home last week to arrest their son on fabricated charges. Children were beaten and their mother was subjected to horrible abuse.

As the regime imposed blackout on the news of victims of its horrendous attacks on Jaw Prison, families have become extremely worried about the safety of their beloved ones. The family of Khalil Al Halwachi has not heard of him since he was taken away from his cell one week ago. Ahmad and Jaffar Awn have also disappeared from their cells with no news of their whereabouts. Mohammad Sahwan, who was seriously injured in the attack and his nephew, Yousuf Sahwan, have also disappeared with no news about their welfare or whereabouts. The disappeared include Ali Hajji, Ali Al Qaffas, Abd Ali Al Singace, Naji Fateel, Abbas Al Ekri, Mohammad Sarhan, Abbas Al Sami', Ali Al Ghanmi and Ahmad Humaidan. Several of the senior leadership of the Revolution reported continuing cries of the victims as Alkhalifa continued their merciless attacks on native Bahraini detainees.

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FCO insists on hiding truths as Alkhalifa detain more people

Today The Independent newspaper published an article on the UK's refusal to release documents showing its relations with Alkhalifa dictatorship. It said; The UK Government is refusing to release 38-year-old papers shedding light on Britain's relationship with the authoritarian regime in Bahrain, amid suggestions that it is protecting a deal on a new Royal Navy base in the Gulf country. Campaigners asked the Information Rights Tribunal to intervene and force the Foreign Office (FCO) to release the full text of a 1977 document detailing the conversation between British officials and Ian Henderson, a British military officer who ran the police force in the Sunni-ruled state for 30 years. Henderson, who died two years ago, was dubbed the "Butcher of Bahrain" after allegations that he was complicit in the ransacking of villages, the sadistic sexual abuse of Shia prisoners and the use of power drills to maim them. The document should be available under the 30-year-rule controlling the release of government papers, but Marc Jones, an academic and a member of the Bahrain Watch human rights group, says the FCO has refused to release it despite repeated requests. Instead, only a heavily redacted version has been released. Mr Jones believes the full document is highly critical of the Khalifa family, which rules the state, and is being held back to save them "embarrassment" and avoid jeopardising a deal for a new Royal Navy base.

On Tuesday 10th March Alkhalifa security forces tear-gassed and beat inmates at the notorious Jaw prison while trying to quell clashes that erupted during family visits, causing serious injuries among the detainees. Several detainees including Ali Hussein Abdel-Nabi and Jameel Abdel-Ghani from the village of Shahrakan, were severely beaten by police. Instead of giving them the necessary medical care they were transferred to Al Rafa' torture centre for further abuse. Jaw prison is the main facility for hundreds of people jailed over participation in anti-government protests, over the past four years. It is reputed for its "systematic torture" and lack of discipline by those running it. In 2013, at least 40 Bahraini prisoners were hurt when security forces used batons, tear and pepper gas and stun grenades against inmates protesting their conditions. As the protests continued throughout the country many more Bahrainis have been detained. Yesterday two native Bahrainis from Abu Saiaba' and Al Shakhoura were kidnapped by masked members of Death Squads; Hassan Tarikh and Hassan Fadhala. From Bani Jamra Yousuf Al Sheikh was arrested in a raid on his home. On Monday 9th March the third son of Hajji Mohammad Falah was arrested. From Samaheej Ali Hussain Al Haiki was detained. From Abu Quwwa, Hassan Aoun was arrested and tortured. He and his two brothers had been repeatedly arrested, tortured and sexually abused. None of their torturers has ever been

brought to justice. From Demstan young native Bahraini; Taha Al Fardan was detained in a raid on his flat. He was led to the torture chambers by masked members of Death Squads. From Bani Jamra Yousuf Ibrahim was arrested after being shot with bird guns. Since his arrest on Monday, Khalil Ibrahim, from Bani Jamra has not been heard of. There is rising concern for his safety. From Ras Al Rumman, masked members of Death Squads snatched Zakariya Abdul Redha after intentionally ramming and damaging his car. From Demstan; Mohammad Falah and Yasser Ibrahim were detained in a dawn raid on their home. Masked men from the Death Squads snatched Abdullah Al Makhloq from Manama. Muratdha Al Miqdad has been re-arrested at one of the check points manned by mercenaries. Bahraini prisoner, Jaffar Eid, told his family that one of his kidneys has ceased to function and that he vomits blood. Nader Abdul Emam whose image shocked the world when he was hit with rubber bullet two years ago has been sacked from his job at the ministry of education. This is an added punishment for native Bahrainis who oppose the ruling Alkhalifa dictatorship. He has been working at the ministry for 14 years and sacked for a tweet. A female prisoner; Jalila Sayed Amin has had her detention extended for ten more days for taking part in anti-regime protest.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
11th March 2015

Is Bahrain the New Apartheid State?

Brian Dooley, 03/18/2015

Director, Human Rights First's Human Rights Defenders Program

Over the last week at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, I've heard Bahrain described several times as an apartheid state. It's not a new comparison. A few days after the mass protests for democracy broke out in February 2011, New York Times columnist Nick Kristof wrote a piece from the tiny kingdom titled "Is This Apartheid in Bahrain?"

It's an obvious analogy: There is a minority (mostly Sunni) elite ruling over a (mostly Shia) majority. The last few years have seen systematic discrimination, a repression of fundamental rights, and torture and deaths in custody. People aren't divided by race but by sect, which typically dictates where they live, what jobs they do, and whether they can achieve political power. Many government supporters sound like many white South Africans used to: defensive about their privileges, with an inflated sense of entitlement and phobia of democracy.

The governments of the United States and the United Kingdom both backed the apartheid regime in much the same way they're now supporting the Bahrain dictatorship -- politically and militarily, while citing an unpersuasive "constructive engagement" policy. As with South Africa

in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, public criticism of human rights abuses is muted, with "security concerns" trumping a push for democracy.

When American singer John Legend performed in Bahrain last month, the calls for him to boycott were reminiscent of activism during the Sun City era.

I was one of few people who managed to evade South Africa's security forces in defiance of the notorious Group Areas Act, which forced people to live in designated areas according to their race. For a year in the early 1980s, as a young white man living illegally in a "Blacks Only" township, I witnessed the cruelty and non-sense of apartheid: its absurd "pass laws" and racist legislation, its rule by fear and its police violence. I've seen Bahrain up close too: its smearing of dissidents as terrorists, its tear-gassing, its bogus trials based on false confessions secured through torture.

The two systems are different. Bahrain has no Immorality Act, which outlawed physical relations between different parts of society (depending on their race). And during apartheid, only white adults -- about 9 percent of the population -- got a vote to select the country's prime minister. In today's Bah-

rain, the prime minister is appointed by the king (his nephew), and zero percent of the people get a say in who gets the job.

Whether or not Bahrain's regime is better or worse than South Africa's apartheid regime isn't important. Human rights activists shouldn't have to prove that the regime is like apartheid before the world takes their oppression seriously and steps in to help. Bahrain's political opposition shouldn't have to show they have Nelson Mandelas or Steve Bikos or Helen Josephs as leaders before their struggle is recognized as authentic, and they shouldn't have to organize mass sporting or economic boycotts in an attempt to get international help.

Then, as now, Washington, London and plenty of other Western capitals were on the wrong side of history during apartheid (although in apartheid's final years, the Reagan administration was forced by Congress to implement sanctions).

But autocracies don't last forever. Apartheid eventually broke under the weight of its own immorality and inefficiency. And call it what you like, unless Bahrain's repressive system radically changes, it'll collapse too.

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Respect human rights of prisoners and release prisoners of conscience

Amnesty International PUBLIC STATEMENT 18 March 2015

On the fourth anniversary of the arrests of 13 leading opposition activists and other prisoners of conscience in Bahrain, Amnesty International calls for their immediate and unconditional release and urges the authorities to ensure that the rights of all prisoners, including those held in Jaw prison, are fully respected.

Four years ago, starting on 17 March 2011, security officers in Bahrain raided the houses of several opposition activists, took them to unknown locations and detained them incommunicado for several weeks. Amongst them were 13 opposition activists, 'Ali al-'Ekri, a medical doctor, and Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb, the head of the Bahrain Teachers' Association.

Many of the 13 later said in court and to their relatives and lawyers that they were tortured during their first days of detention while they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA). The torture they described included beatings, being forced to stand for extended periods, and being threatened with rape. After grossly unfair trials they were convicted of, amongst other offences, setting up "terror groups to topple the royal regime and change the constitution" and sentenced to between five years and life in prison. To date, no adequate investigation is known to have taken place into their allegations of torture, despite the authorities putting in place institutions since 2012 to investigate such allegations.

Some of the 13, as well as Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb, and other prisoners held in Jaw prison, have complained about the lack of adequate medical treatment and the deterioration in their health as a result of inadequate treatment for injuries resulting from torture.

During meetings with Amnesty International in 2014, the Bahraini authorities stated that adequate and specialised medical treatment is available at the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) hospital. While Amnesty International understands that treatment at the BDF hospital is of an adequate standard, some prisoners have been reluctant to receive their treatment at that hospital because they allege that they were tortured there in 2011. Referring to the 2011 events, the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which was set up by the King to examine allegations of human rights violations in the February-March 2011 anti-government protests, states that "[...] Detainees stated that they were taken to hospital for treatment and they were beaten and verbally abused during transfer and in the treatment facilities. This pattern was particularly common to detainees who were treated at BDF Hospital and the MoI Hospital in Al-Qalaa." (para. 1198)



On 2 March 2015 one of the 13 opposition activists, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, started a hunger strike to demand, amongst other things, that he and his family have access to his medical records in order to allow him to get a second opinion by a medical professional outside the BDF hospital with regard to a surgical operation that has been recommended to him for injuries he sustained as a result of having been tortured in 2011.

Amnesty International calls on the Bahraini authorities to ensure that all prisoners have access to adequate and timely health care by independent doctors. In view of the fact that the Ombudsman for the Ministry of Interior has stressed in its 2013 report that the clinic at Jaw prison is not well equipped to provide specialised treatment, as well as the well founded lack of trust in the BDF hospital, steps should be taken to enable prisoners, especially those who allege they were previously tortured at the BDF hospital, to receive medical treatment in different hospitals or medical centres.

Amnesty International reiterates its calls on the Bahraini government to immediately and unconditionally release the 13 opposition activists, Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb and Dr 'Ali al-'Ekri as they are prisoners of conscience. The organization also urges the authorities to ensure that independent and impartial investigations take place into their allegations of torture, that the victims have access to an effective remedy and reparation, that those found responsible are brought to justice in prompt and fair trials without recourse to the death penalty, and that the outcome of the investigations are made public.

Recent abuses in Jaw prison

According to local activists and media reports, anti-riot police beat inmates and used tear gas inside Jaw prison on 10 March. The Ministry of Interior issued a statement on the same day claiming that the incidents had started when a visitor who wanted to see a prisoner without presenting an ID card was stopped by the security guards and family members of that visitor 'vandalized parts of the building' and prisoners had started a riot. The following day the government announced that an investigation into the incidents had been launched. Since this incident, families of some prisoners have reported that communications with the prisoners have been interrupted and local activists have reported that prisoners continued being beaten after 10 March. Apparently other prisoners are being questioned in relation to the incidents on 10 March.

The previous month Amnesty International wrote to the Minister of Interior raising concerns about the denial of visits and phone calls to prisoners in blocks three and six in Jaw prison. Apparently the visits had been stopped after some prisoners had heard other prisoners in block six, some of whom are

children, that is, under 18 years old, screaming and calling for help. The 13 opposition activists, then started a hunger strike on 18 February in protest at the treatment of prisoners in bloc six. Families told Amnesty International that visits were restored on 25 February.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the allegations of beatings of prisoners in Jaw Prison on 10 March, as well as of the use of tear gas in confined spaces. It is urging the authorities to make public the results of its investigations into the events on that day. It is likewise concerned about the allegations of ill-treatment of prisoners in block six, and that children are being detained alongside adult prisoners, in violation of international human rights law and standards, and is urging the authorities to launch investigations into these allegations also. The organisation is also calling on the authorities to ensure that prisoners in Jaw prison are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, and that any prison officials responsible for committing such acts are brought to justice.

Saudis humiliated by Sweden

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The Jordanian government is under pressure to withdraw its police forces from Bahrain in the wake of their participation in the bloody attack on Jaw Prison last week. Human Rights activists have accused the Jordanians of brutality and mercilessness as they waged their ferocious attack on native Bahraini prisoners. The regime depends on foreign forces to quell natives and remain in power.

It has been revealed that UK has increased its supplies of lethal weapons used to kill Bahrainis. According to the Committee Against Arms Trade (CAAT), More than \$100 million worth of light arms (used to shoot protesters) have been supplied to Bahrain since 2011. Lawyers in London are threatening a judicial review of military assistance and support provided by Britain to the Bahraini government. Solicitors at Deighton Pierce Glynn, in London, are challenging the legality of the move on the grounds that Britain did not conduct a review of human rights risks before agreeing to build the base. "Your security is our security," declared British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, signing the agreement to construct the base, alongside Bahrain's Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed al-Khalifa. British lawyers are asking the government to hand over documents that might shed light on the precise nature of military and security cooperation between the UK and Bahrain. "If [the government] has nothing to hide," said Deighton Pierce Glynn lawyer Sue Willman, "why is it refusing to release documents about what assistance is being provided and to whom?". In February, Jane Kinninmont, a senior research fellow at the London-based think tank Chatham House, told VICE News that Bahrain's clamp down on the opposition has "only intensified since the base was announced...The base has probably given the government more confidence."