

BAHRAIN

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

Saudi, Alkhalifa humiliating defeat in Yemen, Bahrainis optimistic

The Saudi war on Yemen failed to achieve any of its main objectives; most notably, the destruction of AnsarAllah Movement led by Sayed Abdul Malik Al Houthi. The warmongers were subsequently forced to declare an end to the airstrikes. Although they continued their aerial bombardment on Yemen, the Saudis lost the argument as civilian casualties mounted. Those who had participated in their aggression were lured by the luster of oil money. Once it became clear that the war cannot be won and that the World's public opinion were shifting against the Saudis, they fled the scene. The Pakistanis avoided the embarrassment of direct rejection to join in the aggression and waited for the opportune moment to present the case to its Parliament. It was flatly rejected by Parliamentarians and enabled their government to swiftly announce that Pakistan would not take part in the aggression. So did Turkey. Later Egypt, Jordan and Sudan said they would not participate in any land invasion. This was the ultimate insult to the Saudis and the kiss of death to their aggression. They were left with no choice but to announce the end of their air strikes on Yemen to the dismay of their puppets and mouthpieces. It was nothing less than a humiliating defeat.

The Saudis and Al Khalifa should have learnt from the Israeli experiences in recent years. In 2006 they attacked Lebanon with the specific aim of destroying the military structure of Hezbollah. After relentless campaign including airstrikes and land invasion, the Israeli aggressors were forced to stop their war after sustaining heavy casualties and failing to secure their objectives. They also failed to destroy Hamas in 2009 and 2014. But the Saudis have in recent years become so complacent and aggressive that they wreaked havoc on the Arab and Muslim societies spreading extreme forts of hate culture. They used sectarianism as a tool to divide the Muslims and enable them to subjugate large sectors of the people to their domination. They participated in the destruction of Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt and Yemen. With their petro dollars they lured many into their network of hate, extremism and violence. The Muslim community is now so divided that it is not easy to imagine how to bring it together and end

the sectarian strife that has claimed the lives of thousands of innocent souls in many countries. This is one of their vicious criminal activities that aim to destroy the will of the those seeking change when they participated in the protests of 2011. The Bahrainis were the first to be subjected to the Saudi aggression when they invaded the country in mid-march 2011. Until today, these occupiers have continued their criminal activities against the native Bahrainis.

The war on Yemen was declared by the Saudis after securing the support of four GCC countries. Only Oman was brave enough to rebuff the call to attack Yemen. Others who responded positively include Sudan and Jordan. Yet one month after the start of the campaign this unholy criminal alliance is on the verge of collapse. Its leaders have been demoralized by the resilience of the people of Yemen. While those leaders remained in the shadow fearing for their lives and prestige, the leader of Yemen new national alliance addressed the Muslims repeatedly. For the world, he is the real field leader while the others were hiding in their palaces with no dignity or humanity. The aggression was a blessing in disguise for the people of Yemen. The infra structure of the country has been comprehensively destroyed, with more than 1000 civilians killed including more than 150 children. The world is now shocked to see the extent of destruction that brought back memories of the Second World War and Gaza. Mountains of rubble remind the people of the criminality of those regimes and how they had lost any sense of decency. The images of mutilated bodies of children and women are vivid in the memories of people and will remain reminder of one of the bleakest era of the Saudis and Alkhalifa. Indeed the Western powers, most notably UK and USA, have done their best to protect those dictators offering them security, military and political support, but this will not secure their future. If anything it is more likely to hasten their fall as the people grow more impatient with their criminal policies.

The aggression failed before it started. The Saudis could not secure a UN resolution to allow military attack on Yemen. They also failed to force the Arab League to back their aggression before it started. The peo-

ple of Arabia were baffled by what has been happening and were divided in their support and loyalty to the ruling clans. The determination of the Yemenis to reject any Saudi attempt to achieve face-saving exit from their aggression forced the Saudis to take unilateral decision to end their war. The Yemenis, led by the Houthis, became more united against the Saudi aggression. Those who allied themselves with the enemy lost their future political role in Yemen. They are viewed by their compatriots as traitors who abandoned their people and failed to call on the enemy to stop bombing residential and commercial structures. The Houthis have emerged victorious and their leader who has repeatedly addressed the people has been crowned as one of the most victory-making figure in the Arab World. The Saudis have now lost Yemen as a friendly ally and must now leave Bahrain. ISIS is being routed by the popular mobilization which is determined to end ten years of violent strife that denied the country the opportunity to rebuild the country in the post-Saddam era. Baghdad is becoming stronger and more stable as Iraqis rallied around the political and religious leadership to defeat ISIS. Also there is a realization that the crisis in Syria must be solved politically, not militarily. This call is coming from several world capitals and will now form the basis for the future. Saudi state-sponsored terrorism is waning as the World gradually moves to outlaw the Saudi policies and practices. In these circumstances Bahrainis are assured of an eventual victory that will obliterate the hereditary dictatorship and replace it with a system based on "One Man One Vote" representative political system. That is what the people want. The Saudi occupation of Bahrain will become under intense pressure to end. Their troops must withdraw without any condition; they are illegal occupiers of Bahaini land must be repelled. A new history in the region is being written by the martyrs; their blood is the ink for recording the most significant document of the modern history of the Bahrain. Their bodies are the nex structure for a better country.

Hammond fails Bahrain's test as Saudi, Alkhalifa face humiliating defeat in Yemen

The Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, failed the Bahraini test last night as victims of torture hammered him with questions about UK's support to Saudi and Bahraini dictators. As he was approaching an election meeting with constituents at Fullbrook School, New Haw, he was approached by five young Bahrainis who had all been subjected to torture in Alkhalifa jails. They questioned him about his public unwavering support to an antiquated regime that had been proven officially to have adopted "systematic torture". As he did not expect this open interrogation he appeared embarrassed and taken aback. The group followed him to the hall where more questions were put in the presence of the constituents who supported them by clapping.

In an interview with **Ian Sinclair**, the author of *The March That Shook Blair: An Oral History of 15 February 2003*, published by *Peace News Press Dr Alaa Shehabi* says: "Like many others, I have come to the slow realization of the sheer extent of British involvement in repression. I face things like British-manufactured spyware sent to my email by the Bahraini government. British 'consultants in London and Manama [i.e. the capital of Bahrain] are paid millions to be the designated legal defence team of the regime, or to organize prestige events like Bahrain Air Show (based on the Farnborough Air Show) and international security conferences by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. In the UK, the Bahraini King still gets the red carpet rolled out and enjoys tea and horses at Windsor every year."

Anger and frustration are growing among anti-war campaigners and peace lovers at the resumption of Saudi airstrikes on the

people of Yemen and the obliteration of more innocent souls and human habitation. They have intensified their aggression as their failure is compounded by disintegration of their unholy alliance. The Saudis are now targeting the countries that refused to participate in a land invasion, especially Pakistan. With mounting disgust at the barbarity of the attacks the Saudis and Alkhalifa are poised for massive moral defeat alongside the failure to achieve the main aims of their criminal aggression. Bahrain's dictator is aware of the disastrous consequences of the defeat in Yemen. Despite the hollow claims by the morally and politically bankrupt regime to have uncovered yet another "terrorist cell" of 28 people yesterday, the Revolution has continued unabated and its demands remain pivotal. Protests have continued in most parts of the country first to demand an end to Alkhalifa reactionary regime and second to support of the people of Yemen as they remain on the receiving end for the criminal Saudi, Alkhalifa airstrikes. In the past two days pictures of recently detained native Bahraini youth and children were circulated only to shock their families and friends. Most of them appeared drained out, tired and disillusioned with visible marks of torture on their faces. It was one of the most horrific moments of the Bahraini Revolution with its youth paraded on TV screens with the unmistakable message that the dictator would stop at nothing in his war with Bahrainis.

On Sunday 26th April Alkhalifa court extended by two weeks the period of detention for prominent rights activist Nabeel Rajab, falsely accused of spreading false news, for the second time this month. He was arrested on April 2 for posting comments on Twitter denouncing torture in a

prison where native Bahraini detainees including children are held. The prosecution "ordered that he remain detained for 15 days" pending the results of further investigation". This is part of the policy of revenge adopted by the regime.

On 22nd April Sheikh Ali Salman was also remanded in custody for another month. Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action calling on its members to write to the authorities: Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Sheikh 'Ali Salman immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression; and Urging them to uphold the right to freedom of expression and repeal laws that criminalize the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

At least 30 people were arrested in the week of 20-26th April including four children and three women. Alkhalifa kangaroo courts continue to send native Bahrainis to torture dungeons for opposing Alkhalifa dictatorship. Mahmood Al Mansi, Ahmad Mirza, Mansoor Khalaf and Saeed Hassan were each sentenced on 27th April to ten years jail. Akbar Ali is a 19 year old who has been sentenced to 64 years in prison. 1 of 1000s of political prisoners. On 24th April Sayed Salman Sayed Mohammad was arrested and taken to the notorious CID department. 13 years old Hassan Al Aradi was arrested for taking part in peaceful protes. Zahra Al Sheikh has started hunger strike to protest the ill-treatment of women prisoners. She is accompanied in prison by her one year old baby.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
29th April 2015 (*vob.org, email:*

Saudis & Alkhalifa defeated in Yemen, revenge from people ex-

The abrupt decision by the Saudis to end their unprecedented aggression on Yemen has baffled its own people and supporters and exposed the fact that the regime is unfit to lead. After 27 days of relentless bombing, Yemenis have emerged victorious even before engaging the aggressors. The country's infrastructure was destroyed and one thousand people, largely civilians, were killed in most vicious form of criminality by Al-Saud and Alkhalifa tyrants. But Ansarul-lah Movement, led by the Houthis, emerged unscathed, apart from scores of casualties among its members. The ailing Saudi king took the decision to obliterate his Southern neighbor, relying on the American and British "intelligence and logistical" support and aided by other criminal regimes in the region; like those of Bahrain, UAE and Sudan. The result was forecasted by the Yemeni leader, Sayed Abdul Malik Al Houthi who had

predicted that his country would defeat the aggressors. The world is now poised for the ramifications of this adventure, including the waning of the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Despite warnings from international and domestic human rights bodies of expected serious violations, Formula 1 management went ahead with the car race last weekend. Scores of Bahrainis, including women and children were arrested and tortured in the run-up to the race as the people protested for their rights. It is now clear that the recent undertaking by F1 management to cater for human rights in their races, is nothing but hollow and meaningless statement. There were several statements, press releases and articles on Bahrain: On 15th April, Amnesty International issued a statement titled: Bahrain: Hopes of reform crushed amid chilling crackdown on dissent. Amnesty also urged its members to write to Bah-

rain's regime to release prisoners of conscience, drop charges against them and repeal laws curtailing freedom of expression.

In the first twenty days of this month almost 100 native Bahrainis were arrested by regime's Death Squads and foreign mercenaries. Bahrainis continued their daily protests against the Saudi aggression on Yemen and what they call Formula 1 Blood Race held last weekend in Bahrain. On 19th April Fawzi Al Durazi was snatched in a raid on his house in Duraz in the early hours of the morning. On 15th April Ahmad Abbas Abdul Shahid Al Ghasra was snatched from his home. Alkhalifa kangaroo court and taken to the notorious Jaw Prison to serve six months in its torture dungeons. On 14th April, Qassim Amin from AlNa'aim was arrested in a house raid on his home.

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Bahrain protest rally draws thousands ahead of F1 Grand Prix

20 April 2013

Tens of thousands of anti-government protesters blocked a major road in Bahrain ahead of Sunday's F1 Grand Prix in the Gulf kingdom.

Some in the crowd carried banners with the slogan: "Don't race on our blood."

The rally along Budaiya Highway followed a night of heavy clashes between demonstrators and security forces.

Activists have demanded that F1 bosses cancel the race due to Bahrain's poor human rights record.

The race, which was first run in Bahrain in 2004, was cancelled two years ago following the forced clearance of a Manama landmark, Pearl Roundabout.

In the unrest that followed more than 50 people died, hundreds were arrested and thousands dismissed from their jobs.

Last year's race went ahead in an atmosphere of heightened security. One protester was shot dead by police.

Bahrain crisis timeline

14 February, 2011: Demonstrators occupy Pearl Roundabout in the capital

14 March: Gulf Cooperation Council force led by Saudi troops enters Bahrain. Police clear Pearl Roundabout

March-April: Hundreds arrested, thousands sacked from their jobs. Protest continue, 35 killed

23 November: Protests continue as Cherif Bassiouni releases damning report on human rights abuses. Authorities accept findings

Feb 10, 2013: Opposition and pro-government groups open dialogue but unrest continues

But in a joint statement on Friday, motor-sport's world governing body and Formula One management said this year's race should proceed as planned.

The Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and Formula One Management (FOM) said they "also strongly believe sport can often be a force for good and that the staging of the Grand Prix in Bahrain will come some way in helping soothe some of the issues which have been raised in the media".

Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa told the BBC's Dan Roan the event would be safe for teams and spectators.

He added: "I'm sure that after the demonstration, which is legal and licensed and has gone through all the proper procedures, there'll be a very small minority of violent protesters who will try to cause some trouble with the police.

"But that's par for the course, unfortunately."

Protests were reported across the kingdom on Thursday night, with demonstrators chanting "No Formula on Bahrain's occupied land", according to AFP news agency.

Protesters blocked roads with burning tyres, and police responded with tear gas and stun grenades.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights says 13 people were arrested on Thursday and that there had been clashes in villages close to the Sakhir track, the site of the race, south of the capital, Manama.

A centre spokesperson said police had fired tear gas and birdshot against protesters in the towns of Sitra and Diraz.

The authorities are anxious for Sunday's race to pass off without incident, and checkpoints have been set up at junctions leading to the track, AFP reports.

F1 practice sessions were held at the circuit on Friday, ahead of qualifying rounds on Saturday.

Arrests

The main opposition society Al-Wefaq says more than 100 people have been arrested this month, many from the villages near the circuit.

The organisation appealed for massive peaceful protests on Friday, but it has not called for the race to be cancelled.

Clashes have escalated in the run-up to this weekend's Grand Prix race

For the past two years members of the Shia majority have been protesting against alleged human rights abuses by the ruling Sunni minority.

The latest clashes come after days of escalating tensions.

On Tuesday, police fired tear gas and clashed with students in a raid on a secondary school in the capital, Manama.

Officers stormed the Jabreya school for boys after students staged a protest demanding the release of a colleague arrested on Monday, activists say.

On Sunday a car bomb blew up in the heart of the financial district in Manama, though without causing injuries.



Saudis & Alkhalifa defeated in Yemen Continued from P 2

A more serious case is that of under-aged youth from Bani Jamra, Ahmad Al Arab. He was shot on 14th April and forced into the car boot of the regime's Death Squad. Under-aged Mohammad Jawad Abdul Emam, 15, has been remanded in custody for one week for taking part in protests against holding Formula 1 in Bahrain.

Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Khalid Al Khalifa, rejected US calls to Bahrain regarding releasing the prominent human rights defender, Nabeel Rajab, and dropping the charges against him. Alkhalifa tweeted on his Twitter account that the statement of Abdulla Bin Howail "concerning the refusal of inference in Nabeel Rajab's case and respecting the Bahraini judiciary, is a true statement that clearly reflects the public's opinion."

Alkhalifa are refusing to heed the calls to release Mr Rajab by leading international human rights bodies. On 13th April fifteen of them signed a statement saying: "We call on the government of Bahrain to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Nabeel Rajab from custody and drop all charges against him. We further call on Bahrain to ensure free and peaceful expression, and to cease all harassment of and restrictions against civil society and human rights defenders in Bahrain." It was signed by: Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), Bahrain Center for Human Rights

(BCHR), Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS), Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, English PEN, European Center for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR), FIDH, within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Index on Censorship, International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), No Peace Without Justice, OMCT, within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Rafto Foundation for Human Rights, VI-VARTA and World Movement for Democracy. Another body; PEN Center USA calls on the Government of Bahrain to drop all charges against prominent activist and internationally recognized human rights defender Nabeel Rajab.

It said: "His arrest, in response to his speaking out about an outbreak of violence at Central Prison in Bahrain, is yet another attempt to suppress his legitimate right to freedom of expression. PEN Center USA calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those currently detained in the Kingdom of Bahrain solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to free expression."

Bahrain Freedom Movement

22nd April 2015

Bahrain: Hopes of reform crushed amid chilling crackdown on dissent

Amnesty International,

A new report by Amnesty International details the rampant abuses including torture, arbitrary detentions and excessive use of force against peaceful activists and government critics, which continue to take place in Bahrain four years after the uprisings that rocked the Gulf kingdom in 2011.

Behind the Rhetoric: Human rights abuses in Bahrain continue unabated, demonstrates that the authorities have failed to deliver crucial reforms to end repression, despite repeated assurances to their Western allies that they are truly committed to human rights. The report is being published days before the world gathers in Bahrain for the Formula One Grand Prix tournament this weekend.

“As the world’s eyes fall on Bahrain during the Grand Prix this weekend, few will realize that the international image the authorities have attempted to project of the country as a progressive reformist state committed to human rights masks a far more sinister truth,” said Said Boumedouha, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme.

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“Four years on from the uprising, repression is widespread and rampant abuses by the security forces continue. Bahrain’s authorities must prove that the promises of reform they have made are more than empty rhetoric.”

In recent years, authorities have continued to assert their power through a chilling crackdown on dissent; peaceful activists and government critics continue to be rounded up and jailed across the country.

All public demonstrations in the capital Manama, have been banned for nearly two years. Protests occurring outside the capital are regularly dispersed by security forces often firing tear gas and bird-shot pellets, resulting in cases of serious injuries or death.

A 17-year-old boy told Amnesty International how he was struck on the right side of his face by a tear gas canister which tore his flesh and broke his jaw while he was chased by security forces as they dispersed a procession he had joined in December 2014. He said the officer who arrested him placed his foot on his head and said: “I will kill you today”.

The officers who then took him to hospital mocked him and left him screaming with pain for around half an hour before he fell unconscious. He was later re-

leased without charge only to be re-arrested during a raid by police at a later date.

Other protesters detained described being brutally beaten, tortured, and threatened so as to force them into “confessions”. One said he had been struck with the claw of a hammer on several parts of his body.

Those held in pre-trial detention are also routinely tortured in order to extract “confessions”. The report highlights dozens of cases of detainees brutally beaten, deprived of sleep and adequate food, burnt with cigarettes, sexually assaulted, electrocuted including on the genitals and burnt with an iron. One was raped by having a plastic pipe inserted into his anus.

“The widespread accounts of torture and violence in this report show how little has changed since 2011. Brutality remains a hallmark of Bahrain’s security forces,” said Said Boumedouha.

“The authorities must take action to eliminate years of entrenched impunity in order to end the downward spiral of abuse in Bahrain.”

Despite a series of legal reforms and the creation of new national human rights institutions, based on recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), a body established to investigate the government’s heavy-handed clampdown on the 2011 protests, most of these measures have had little impact in practice.

In line with BICI’s recommendations, new institutions such as the Ombudsman of the Ministry of Interior and the Special Investigation Unit, have been set up for oversight and to investigate human rights violations by the security forces. However, none are sufficiently independent, impartial or transparent. Legal reforms introduced to lift restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly have come hand in hand with moves to strengthen and maintain repressive laws.

“Hopes that the BICI commission will bring about true change have now evaporated. The authorities must end the façade that they have learned from their past mistakes and take immediate action to ensure reforms that they implement are meaningful and in line with their human rights obligations,” said Said Boumedouha.

Activists and political leaders who have been arrested often face broad national security charges such as “inciting hatred against” or “threatening to overthrow” the government. The leader of the main opposition group, al-Wefaq, is standing trial on such charges. Others have been detained under laws prohibiting insults or the disrespect of heads of state, public officials and military or other government institutions, flags and symbols. Prominent activists including Nabeel Rajab and Zainab al-Khawaja are among several people detained or sentenced to prison terms merely for posting comments on Twitter or in one case, reading a poem at a religious festival.

Laws restricting the freedom of political associations have also been introduced enabling the executive authorities to suspend or shut them down, and to take part in their meetings with foreign organization or government representatives.

“The notion that Bahrain respects freedom of expression is pure fiction. Where is the freedom in a country where peaceful activists, dissidents and opposition leaders are repeatedly rounded up and arbitrarily arrested simply for tweeting their opinions and reading a poem can get you thrown in jail? The authorities must release anyone detained purely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression,” said Said Boumedouha.

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Said Boumedouha

Despite claims that NGOs can operate freely in Bahrain, the authorities have broad powers to interfere in their affairs. Human rights defenders face routine intimidation and harassment and a draft NGO law threatens to further restrict their freedoms.

Access to the country for international human rights organizations, and foreign journalists has also been tightened in recent years in what appears to be a concerted effort to limit scrutiny of Bahrain’s human rights record.

The authorities have also sought to strengthen anti-terrorism legislation in the face of increasing violence against security forces, and expanded their powers to revoke the nationality of anyone considered to be a government opponent. The failure to deliver on government promises has led to rising tensions within Bahrain with protests, recurring bouts of street violence and an increase in attacks on police officers.

“Responding to security threats by tightening the authorities’ iron grip on power will only fuel tensions and exacerbate human rights abuses,” said Said Boumedouha.

Amnesty International is calling on the international community – in particular the UK, US and EU governments – to pressure Bahrain to improve its human rights record.

“The government of Bahrain must recognize that it cannot continue to count on the support of its allies if it continues to flout its most basic international human rights obligations. The authorities must swiftly bring about true human rights reform and ensure accountability for past violations,” said Said Boumedouha.

15th April 2015