

BAHRAIN

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The Saudi WikiLeaks shake the Houses of Al Saud and Al Khalifa

The Saudi WikiLeaks saga has shaken the foundations of the desert regime of Al Saud and exposed untold stories of corruption, intrigue, conspiracy and extravagance without limits. The hackers of the sensitive materials of the most reactionary and expansionist regime in the Arab World have done untold damage to the status of the kingdom of silence. How did they do it? Where will it lead to? And what are the lessons for the people and governments of the region? These are questions that will not be easily answered. However the whole saga has re-opened old wounds and revived memories to thousands of victims of the most reactionary regime in the world. On one hand the Saudis are engaged in relentless one-sided aggression on a neighbouring country whose only mistake is to exist on the borders of the oil-rich Arabia. That war has continued unabated for three months as the World watched its carnage without lifting a finger to stop the unprovoked aggression. On the other hand the Arab people in most Middle East and North African countries have been subjected to horrific political systems, supported and propped up by the Saudis. Even when those peoples revolted against the status quo, the Saudis were quick to re-formulate the regional alliances against democratic transformation. This has resulted in the imprisonment, displacement or the killing of thousands of youth who had been lured to the extremist groups.

Bahrainis are well aware of the niceties of the hereditary dictatorships. When they revolted against one of the most repressive regime in the Middle East, they were targeted by the Saudis in most vicious manner. In mid-March 2011 the Saudi tanks rolled over the causeway linking the two countries and were stationed at sensitive locations to prevent the downfall of the Al Khalifa hereditary dictatorship. For the past four years Bahrainis have lived under the tyranny of military occupation which had observed no limits in destruction of mosques and killing of people. The Saudis were heartened by the lack of any reaction or condemnation from the Arab people who were lured into the quagmire of sectarianism, extremism and terrorism. If the Arab people were faithful to the basic principles of democracy and rejection of

aggression, they would have been spared the subsequent tragedies inflicted by the Saudis on all Arab revolutions.

The West has also been incapable of supporting the pro-democracy movements in the region. As the Saudis amassed oil wealth over the past decades as a result of the spiraling oil prices, the Western countries were plagued by catastrophic failures in the banking sector that had almost caused the collapse of the capitalist system. The United States and Britain chose to remain on the wrong side of history by willingly choosing to side with the wealthy dictators of the Gulf. Instead of standing for the right of people to determine their own destiny and elect their political system, the West provided material and political support to those dictators. The British policy in Bahrain is testimony to this lack of principles or values. Today, the Al Khalifa tribal rule has unyielding security, political and moral support from David Cameron's government. Earlier this month the minister at the Foreign Office, Tobias Ellwood celebrated the opening of the new British military facilities in Bahrain. That happened on the eve of the sentencing of Sheikh Ali Salman to four years in jail for boycotting last year meaningless elections. The UK government has not condemned even once the policy of torture being implemented rigorously by the Al Khalifa regime. Instead of leading the calls for real reforms in the country and replacing the antiquated tribal regime with modern statehood, London has been active in pressurizing Washington to increase its support of that regime. This is totally misguided, unprincipled and immoral policy that can, in no way, benefit the British people on the long run. Democracies cannot be helped by dictatorships that flout the international laws banning torture and all means of degrading human dignity.

The WikiLeaks saga is likely to lead to more uncovering of the corrupt wheeling and dealing that have been ongoing behind the political scenes. The stands and policies of the Western governments are likely to be exposed by some of the half million documents to be released by the online hackers. Until now only 60,000 of those have been released. It is expected that this will be more dramatic than the Snowden episode that exposed massive secrets to the

Russians and compromised the UK's strategic interests. The Western countries are poised for more sensational revelations as research into the treasure of Saudi documents is rigorously studied by researchers. Tales of Western complicity in the immoral acts of the Al Saud and Al Khalifa tribal regimes are expected to surface in the near future with seismic shocks to the political figures and institutions in several Western capitals.

It may safely be assumed that the Saudi WikiLeaks episode is a divine revenge from those who have committed crimes against innocent people calling for their basic natural rights. In addition to the Yemen crisis, this episode could prove fatal to those arrogant regimes that observe no sanctity to human life. The people of Yemen have been targeted by the Saudis with the connivance of most Western governments in a way that has no legality in international law and abides by no civilized norms or principles. As the days and nights of the holy month of Ramadan fall the people of Yemen brace themselves for bombings by the most sophisticated man-made death machines. Those buried under the dusty rubble of the old Yemeni houses and huts may perish for good, but their cries and yawning will become the deafening sounds of political storms and tornados that will leave none of these tyrannies standing.

The people of Bahrain are battle-hardened. Their resilience has surprised their enemies as they braced themselves day in day out for more aggression by the Al Khalifa-Al Saud unholy alliance. History will have it on its pages written by blood red that those who refused to bow down to dictatorship and tyranny in Manama, San'aa and Cairo will not die in vain. Change is inevitable. That is the most basic of the lessons of history. Tyranny does not last forever. That is the second lesson and the blood of the martyrs never perishes in the sand of the Arabian desert. These lessons are facts that history has registered over its centuries long epics and battles between the right and the wrong. People have always prevailed as the satanic forces are defeated and crushed. These lessons have been learnt by the people who remained faithful to their principles and refused to perish into nothingness.

WikiLeaks unveil Saudi corruption, Alkhalifa crimes exposed in Geneva

The Saudis have been infuriated by the exposure of their secret immoral dealing and wheeling contained in the documents released last week by WikiLeaks. The anonymous hackers have published 70,000 secret documents containing classified Saudi information. A spokesperson for the WikiLeaks said: "It's just the beginning". Icelandic investigative journalist and spokesperson for the WikiLeaks organization Kristinn Hrafnsson told Russia Today: "We are seeing how the oil money is being used to increase influence of Saudi Arabia which is substantial of course - this is ally of the US and the UK. And since this spring it has been waging war in neighboring Yemen." On Friday 19th June, the whistleblowing website released the first tranche of secret government files, providing an insight into the kingdom's interior and foreign policies. Hrafnsson said that this is "only one tenth of the documents that we have which, will be released in the coming weeks." It is a strong blow to the Saudis who have, for decades conducted corrupt policies and created suspicious links with individuals and organisations including terrorist networks. The world is now more informed of the true nature of this most dictatorial reactionary backward regime.

In Bahrain, the situation is becoming more tense as the people escalate their resistance to the Alkhalifa regime. Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace, one of the Bahrain 13, has been on hunger strike for more than three months protesting the ill-treatment of prisoners. He has lost more than 25kg and developed several complications in his respiratory and blood circulation systems. Yet the regime has continued its attacks on

native Bahrainis. From 15th to 21st June 2015 at least 22 people were arrested including one woman and nine children. Yesterday seven young men from Duraz Town were arrested in house raids by masked members of the regime's Death Squads. Ali Sa'ad, 30, has been detained and remanded in custody for one week for joining a protest in Sanabis in support of Dr Al Singace. He is blind in both eyes and was imprisoned three times before.

The situation in the prisons has remained precarious. Families visiting their sons have been told that many prisoners are still kept in tents outside the prison buildings in soaring temperatures reaching 50 degrees. Many prisoners have been denied medical care and prevented from buying their basic needs from prison shops. They are allowed to go to toilet only three times a day. They also receive regular torture especially beating with canes.

Lars Adaktusson, a Swedish Member of the European Parliament, has written an article titled "Bahrain on the wrong track". Referring to the arrest and imprisonment of Sheikh Ali Salman, he said: "The development in the small gulf state Bahrain has been on the wrong path since the uprising in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2011". He added: "The individual examples of human lives affected by this development are many. One such example is the Swedish citizen Mohammed Habib al-Muqdad who in 2011 was sentenced to 46 years in prison for participating in the uprising. As a well-known dissident, al-Muqdad had often been critical of the regime. Now he is silenced as a prisoner of conscience under difficult circumstances." He also referred to the imprisonment of Nabeel Rajab and

concluded: "The Swedish government must intensify its efforts to get Mohammed Habib al-Muqdad free. Sweden and Europe must raise their voices for the vulnerable minorities in the Middle East. Whether they happen to be Christian, Yazidi, Jews, Kurds, Sunni or as in this case Shia Muslims. Stability and human rights are not opposites.

As the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (26th June) approaches, Bahrainis are working hard to tell the world of the horrific stories of their thousands of torture victims. In Geneva Bahraini human rights activists and their supporters have intensified their efforts at the ongoing 29th session of the Human Rights Council. ADHRB (Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain), BIRD (Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy) and The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights have been active in lobbying for the Bahraini cause and communicating with the activists in the field. They formed an active team to coordinate their activities, addressed the council session many times and held tens of meetings with officials from the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteurs and representatives of other countries. They are supported by the families of the torture victims who ventured out of the country to tell the world the stories of the "systematic torture" which is now camouflaged by sweet talk proposed by their London supporters. Other Bahraini human rights activists are present in Geneva, including the Bahrain Observatory of Human Rights.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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Jailing Sh Ali Salman marks final detachment between Alkhalifa and Bahrainis

Yesterday Bahrain's dictator ordered a four-year jail sentence on Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of Al-Wefaq Society. He has been in jail since 28th December 2014 when he was arrested from his home and taken to regime's torture chambers. The dictator, Hamad Alkhalifa, was angered by the decision of AlWefaq to boycott the election of his show parliament and has been planning the revenge from the AlWefaq and its senior leaders. In the Arab Bedouin culture no one is allowed to challenge the orders of the tribal chief. Bahrain's people have challenged the dictator to the extent that his picture is stepped on at daily protests as participants chant: Down with Hamad. Several UN Special Rapporteurs had written to the dictator to release Sheikh Ali Salman. They are: Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Special Rapporteur

on freedom of religion or belief; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; and Special Rapporteur on minority issues. Amnesty International said: "Today's verdict is shocking. It is yet another clear example of Bahrain's flagrant disregard for its international obligations. Sheikh Ali Salman has been sentenced solely for peacefully expressing his opinion."

As the holy month of Ramadhan approached, the regime's crackdown on native Bahrainis has escalated. On 15th June five children were detained from Tubli Town: Salman Meftah Haidar Al Hurr, Mohammad Al Mubarak, Mohammad Al Sairafi, Jaffar Sadeq and Fadhel Abbas. On 14th June at dawn masked members of the regime's Death Squads snatched three native Bahrainis from Aali Town; Ahmad Mohammad Hassan, Ali Ahmad Al Mokhtar and Sayed Hashim Al Ghuraifi. On 12th June Hussain Jassim AlMo'men was arrested from Dair Town. Also on 12th June The Saudi

regime's forces arrested Mohammad Ali Al Faraj from the town of Awamiya.

In his opening address to the 29th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ra'ad Al Hussain stressed the bleak situation in Bahrain and called for the release of the political prisoners. He said: "In Bahrain, dozens of detainees have reportedly suffered torture and ill treatment, including in Jou prison, and I urge an immediate investigation into these allegations. All those detained in connection with their peaceful activities should be released. The way forward to ensure peace, stability and prosperity for all Bahrainis is through genuine dialogue between the Government and the opposition, without preconditions." The Alkhalifa regime immediately dismissed those remarks and said that "dialogue is an internal matter". Addressing the 29th session of the Human Rights Council, Husain Abdulla, of Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain said:

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Saudis lambasted for lashing Badawi, Alkhalifa condemned in Geneva

A wave of protests has emerged against the Saudi authorities following the confirmation of an earlier sentence to flog Ra'if Badawi 1000 lashes for criticizing the regime. The Swedish foreign minister has said she stands by her denunciation of a Saudi blogger's flogging as medieval, three months after her criticism of the Gulf kingdom's human rights record ignited a diplomatic crisis and infuriated business leaders fearful for trade losses. Speaking on Monday, a day after it emerged that Saudi Arabia's highest court had upheld Badawi's punishment, Margot Wallström said she was unrepentant and said again that the flogging amounted to medieval methods. "I would not have done things differently," Wallström told the Guardian "No, I do not regret the medieval remark; we have not excused ourselves. But we have explained that this was not an attack on Islam." Campaigners have called for a radical shift in Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia. Andrew Smith of CAAT said: "The human rights situation in Saudi Arabia is dire. The fact that it is also the world's largest buyer of UK weapons is a sign of the real hypocrisy at the heart of UK foreign policy." A Foreign Office spokeswoman said on Monday: "We are extremely concerned that Raif Badawi's sentence has been upheld ... We have raised his case at the most senior levels in the government of Saudi Arabia and will continue to do so."

In Bahrain similar verdicts have been issued in recent days. On 9th June Bahrain's dictator ordered the imprisonment of Ghada Jamshir for 20 months for criticizing the excesses of regime's officials. She is a liberal Sunni woman who had refused to be silenced by force. AlWefaq Society said that 1741 people had been arrested in 2014 for their anti-regime activities, including 245 children and 31 women. There were 2328 home raids resulting in the arrest of 812 political activists.

The political arrests have continued unabated. Two people were snatched from the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. Sadeq Majid Thamer and Jaffar Mohammad Sultan. were roughly handled as they were led away to the torture chambers. More youths from Dar Kulaib Town were subsequently arrested. Among them are Ali Hussain Ramadhan, Taha Isma'il Ramadhan, Ali Saeed and Mohammad Amir Thamer. Hajj Abdul Shahid (Abu Hamid) was also arrested by the Saudis who took him to Dammam prison.

On 6th June Mohammad Mahdi Hussain Al Mawali from Maqsha Town was arrested. Nine people were arrested from Duraz; Abdulla Mohammad, Ali Moosa, Mahmood Abu Ruwais, Haidar Khalil, Yasser Abu Ruwais and Qassim Habib. Mohammad Jaffar Mo'men was detained at the airport upon his return from abroad.

On 5th June an elderly man, Amir Marhoun from Abu Quwwa Town was arrested. On 9th June regime's masked members of Death Squads raided Tubli Town

and arrested Redha Hassan Hayat, an underaged native Bahraini.

At its annual Congress on 24th May The London University and College Union noted: The intention to establish a permanent British military base in Bahrain, The brutal repression of the Bahraini uprising by the Al Khalifa monarchy, The use of systematic torture, fraudulent elections, victimisation of trade unionists, academics, and human rights activists, and religious discrimination and The use of troops from Saudi Arabia and UAE, and non-Bahraini mercenaries, to repress the population. The Congress condemns the British government's support for the monarchy. Also Congress instructs NEC to: support campaigns against the base and against arming or training security forces of repressive regimes within the region; work with EI and TUC for unbanning Bahrain Teachers Association, and for the release of Mahdi Abu Deeb and work with MENA Solidarity to produce a public report on human rights in Bahrain, making recommendations to the NEC for future solidarity action, including

an international trade union led inquiry into British support for the regime.

At a Press Briefing on 5th June Rupert Colville, Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said: We are concerned about the harsh treatment of detainees at the Jaw Prison in Bahrain following a riot there in early March which was put down by security forces using rubber bullets, tear gas and shotguns, resulting in many injuries but no deaths. After the riot was quelled, the detainees were allegedly forced to spend 10 days out in the open courtyard of the prison before eventually being placed in two large plastic tents (reportedly around 300 detainees per tent). Around 100 other detainees, those accused of instigating the unrest -- were subsequently transferred to another section of the Jaw prison, and there are allegations that they were subjected to ill-treatment and torture. He mentioned the cases of Sheikh Ali Salman and Nabeel Rajab

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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Darkening reality of human rights defenders in Bahrain Imprisonment, torture and statelessness

Human rights defenders in Bahrain are operating in a shrinking space, says the Observatory in a report published 25 June.

The report documents the judicial harassment of 11 human rights defenders including lawyers, teachers, doctors or bloggers. All have suffered or been threatened with imprisonment, torture or statelessness as a consequence of their activities in defense of human rights.

"There is no doubt that the judiciary is doing everything to help the regime silence dissent and muzzle those who speak out against the human rights violations being perpetrated in Bahrain," said Safya Akorri, French lawyer mandated by the Observatory to collect testimonies from Bahrain about the situation of human rights defenders.

Four years after the massive pro-democracy demonstrations at Pearl Roundabout, the Bahraini legal arsenal has evolved to allow even greater repression of the right to freedom of expression and assembly. Amendments made to the anti-terrorism laws in 2013 and to the Bahraini citizenship law in July 2014, the latter of which enables the Ministry of Interior to revoke the citizenship of those it deems to have "caused harm to the interests of the Kingdom", have ravaged Bahraini civil society.

"Human rights defenders in Bahrain are living the worst moments of their lives," reports Mohammad al-Maskati, Former President of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR) and current Digital Security Consultant at Front Line Defenders.

While the trial of FIDH Vice Secretary General, Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), was the impetus for the mission, the new

report also documents the cases of lesser-known human rights defenders, all of whom have suffered judicial harassment at the hands of the Bahraini authorities. Some of them are currently in prison and have been exposed to severe torture.

From teacher Mahdi Abu Deeb, nurse Ibrahim Al-Dimistani, blogger Naji Fateel, women's rights activist Ghada Jamsheer, activist Hussain Jawad, lawyer Taimoor Karimi, activist Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, blogger Zainab Al-Khawaja to activists Mohammed Al-Maskati, Nabeel Rajab and Sayed Ahmed Al-Wedaei they are prosecuted for a variety of charges, ranging from "obstructing traffic" to "collecting funds from Bahrain and abroad without authorisation," from "illegal gathering" to "inciting hatred against the regime." [1] Such constant judicial harassment has psychological, social and physical impacts on its victims and impedes those subjected to such abuse from conducting their human rights work. Some of them have also reported suffering severe acts of torture while in detention. To date, the authorities have failed to conduct effective investigations into such allegations.

"We reiterate our call for an immediate release of FIDH Deputy Secretary General Nabeel Rajab, and of all human rights defenders currently in arbitrary detention in Bahrain," FIDH President Karim Lahidji said today.

"It's time for the Bahraini authorities to leave behind the empty rhetoric of human rights reforms at the international level and to actually undertake genuine and effective reforms in line with their international obligations and commitments," OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock concluded.

Lord Avebury: Mercenaries must not deter people from call for rights

Lord Avebury, The Vice-Chairman of The Parliamentary Human Rights Group: We are here to discuss the role of the Saudi and UAE forces in Bahrain, the increasing number of foreigners being recruited into the Bahraini police and security services, and what this means for the future cohesion and stability of Bahraini society.

About 1,000 Saudi troops and 500 UAE police rolled across the causeway into Bahrain in response to an invitation by the al-Khalifa hereditary autocrats in March 2011 after a peaceful uprising the previous month demanded that the ruling family give up most of its powers to a freely and fairly elected parliament.

They were supposed to be there to protect key installations, releasing the national police and army to suppress the mass demonstrations which have continued over the four years and more since then.

In fact they are seen by local people as a reserve occupation force, ready to step in when the regime can't cope. In response to unrest in Jaw prison in March, Saudi troops backed by helicopters supported the police in an onslaught against the inmates including long term political prisoners whose detention has been condemned by the United Nations.

When the Saudis first arrived, the White House spokesman Tommy Vietor said:

"We urge our GCC partners to show restraint and respect the rights of the people of Bahrain, and to act in a way that supports dialogue instead of undermining it." In March, Saudi troops and helicopters participated in an attack on prisoners in Jaw prison, beating them severely and using tear gas in confined spaces.

As for supporting dialogue, the regime, protected by the occupation forces, embarked on a massive programme of repression including arbitrary detention, torture, attacks on demonstrators and trials of leading activists, including our friends who have spoken at these press conferences such as Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Abduljalil al-Singace, Hassan Mushaima and Nabeel Rajab.

Access to the country by international journalists and human rights experts such as the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has been denied. Increasingly, people have been deprived of their citizenship without due process.

With the arrest of Sheikh Ali Salman on charges of threatening to overthrow the government, the so-called political dialogue has come to an end after years of sterile discussion.

Meanwhile, the regime has followed the tradition established by the UK when it was the colonial power up to 1971, of recruiting foreigners into its police and security services. The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry said that a large proportion of the Bahrain Defence Force's 12,000 personnel were from Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Pakistan and Yemen. In

August 2013 al-Jazeera reported that there were 3,000 Pakistani troops alone in the Bahrain armed forces.

The post 2012 exodus of refugees from Syria has given Bahrain an easy source of Sunni recruits. They have established an office in the country's embassy in Amman with an outpost near the al-Zaafari refugee camp where there are 80,000 Syrian refugees, half of whom are registered with UNHCR and exist on an allowance of \$28 a month. The rest apparently get nothing, because donor fatigue has dried up international funding. There must be a long queue to join the BDF in the camp.

The UN has a Special Procedure under the Human Rights Council entitled 'Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination', which fits exactly what is happening in Bahrain. The mercenaries are using violence against people demonstrating in favour of human rights and democracy, particularly the right to change the constitution from the present system of absolute rule by the al-Khalifa family to a system of free and fair elections that would decide on the government. That is what the people want, and the right of self-determination, and since that is the first article of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is the prerequisite for the existence of all other rights and freedoms.

The al-Khalifas are also undermining the rights of Bahrainis to self-determination by granting the foreign mercenaries citizenship. Tens of thousands are being naturalised - the exact number

can't be calculated because the process is shrouded in secrecy - and as this continues the result will be to create a majority loyal to the al-Khalifas.

The Working Group on the use of mercenaries is required by the Security Council to develop new standards aimed at filling gaps in the Convention, and an obvious omission is the prohibition of demographic engineering by states via the recruitment and naturalisation of mercenaries to increase support for the government. This might only be relevant for states with small populations like Bahrain, but the Working Group should request the government of Bahrain to let them have statistics on the number of naturalisations granted year by year and country by country in the 21st century to see what effect they might have on the rights of the native population.

Whether or not the regime would cooperate with them, the Working Group should conduct a desk inquiry into the role of mercenaries in Bahrain and their effect on the rights of the people to self-determination, which is squarely within their remit.



Jailing Sheikh Ali Salman , Cont from Page 2

"Bahrain's politicised courts are disenfranchising an entire generation of Bahrainis with unfair imprisonment,"

In one the most outrageous miscarriages of justice Alkhalifa regime has jailed 57 native citizens, and stripped all but one of them of their nationality, for their anti-regime political activities. Bahrain human rights groups condemned the unfair trial and sentences. The defendants were given sentences ranging from three years to life in prison. There are minors among those jailed. The total jail sentence amounted to 786 years. The revocation of nationality is a new method of revenge by Bahrain's dictator at a time when it continues to naturalise foreigners. This is seen by experts as a form of genocide. On 12th June regime's court sentenced Taher Mohammad to 10 years jail for taking part in anti-regime protests.

Bahrainis have been outraged by the suggestion that the United States would resume arms shipment to the Alkhalifa brutal regime. Washington is quietly working

to lift a four-year ban on delivering weapons that was imposed because of the crackdown. Britain, which ruled Bahrain until independence in 1971, has been criticised for providing the regime with political, military and security support. . This week it opened a new naval base there in the presence of Tobias Ellwood, the UK foreign office minister. "The message to Bahrainis is that the UK cares only about its arms business, and its talk of human rights is just empty," said Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, of the opposition Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy. Tobias Ellwood was in Bahrain on the eve of the decision to jail Sheikh Ali Salman. He issued the mildest of rebukes. "I am concerned by the verdict and the sentence handed down to Sheikh Ali Salman and I raised this case with the Bahraini authorities during my visit last weekend," he said in a statement. He did not call for Salman's release.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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