

BAHRAIN

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

Democratic transition in Arabian Peninsula is key to world stability

When dictators escalate their repression it means that their grip on the situation is slipping and that the whitewashing tactics can no longer work. Strong regimes do not need to sink into the quagmire of violence against their people. Those who do will leave no room for future cohabitation with the people of the land. Last month Bahrain's dictator asked his armed forces to use live ammunition to kill more native Bahrainis. His orders came five years of unstoppable revolution that has outlived all other mass uprisings within the Arab Spring. Several times in the past five years the Alkhalifa officials dismissed the revolution pretending it did not exist. At one point their interior ministry insisted that the situation was under control and that there was no real opposition to their hereditary dictatorship. Yet they failed to cleanse the country of the foreign troops that are occupying the country; most notably, the Saudis and the Emiratis. The people were not deterred by the regime's claims and persisted in their anti-regime activities that have the potential of implicating some Western supporters of the tribal rule of abetting in "crimes against humanity". There are increasing interest in the Saudi-Alkhalifa alliance which is also accused of committing war crimes in Yemen.

Last month the American president made a brief visit to Riyadh and met with officials of other GCC countries. Although the meeting was brief, it attracted the attention of the media as well as the international human rights groups. There is unanimity in both circles that the Western policies towards the GCC autocracies have not led to demoralisation or improvement of human rights. Many HR organisations sent letters to Mr Obama urging him to raise the appalling situation of those rights in those countries and use his leverage to curtail their excesses. It is unlikely that he stressed the point strong enough to make a difference. Many human rights activists and defenders remain in Alkhalifa and Saudi jails, while freedom of expression is increasingly being targeted. In recent weeks the Alkhalifa rulers have escalated their war on public freedoms; summoning those who venture to speak out their minds. When Al Wefaq members questioned the claims of the

torture officials they were summoned and threatened with imprisonment. Anyone who criticised the aggression on Yemen has been jailed for up to five years. The kingdom of silence is taking root in the world or repression and collective punishment. Despite achieving extremely low ranking in the areas of public liberties and freedom of expression, British Foreign Office officials have continued supporting and defending the Alkhalifa regime. The Human Rights 2015 report issued by the FCO has been shameful in its attempt to distort the facts, in complete contradiction to the US State Department's report for the same period. Mr Cameron's officials are placing UK in an unenviable position with the possibility that UK may be implicated in the crimes carried out by the tribal regime in Manama.

Where do we go from here? For a world free of the threats of extremism and terrorism, there needs to be a collective approach to uproot the hereditary monarchical dictatorships in the Gulf. The Saudis and Alkhalifa are of particular concern to the human rights world and the pro-democracy activists of the World. While the high ranking officials in Western countries are shielded by tight security arrangements, the public is exposed to the threats emanating from groups groomed and financed especially by the Saudis. Prior to Mr Obama's visit the Saudis had threatened to withdraw their \$750 billion investment from the US if the Congress passed a bill linking Saudi officials to 9/11. It was an absurdity that annoyed many in Washington, but the lack of the will to stand up to the Saudi threats has emboldened Gulf dictators to ignore calls for reform of their political systems or improve their dismal human rights. There is a universal view that is not embraced by Western governments; that the security of the world is one. If terrorism threatens one part of the world, it will sweep across the rest. Isn't this what had happened with AlQa'ida? Isn't it what is happening now with ISIS? If Washington and London accept that international terrorism does not have the potential to continue without support from oil-rich countries, then they must act immediately and decisively. Geopolitical considerations must be given lower priorities than the safety and well-

being of the Western public. While UK is preparing to decide its future in Europe, the United States is well-placed to devise universal policies that aim at reducing the security and terrorist risks of the modern world. They must start with deep understanding of the status quo and accepting that democracy is safer than dictatorship and that human rights violations are recipe for political strife that could alter the shaky political balance in modern world. Self-appointed dictators must be not only reprimanded in private, but named and shamed in public in order to achieve public consensus against vicious tyrants.

There is a spirit of pessimism sweeping across the continents especially with the failure of big powers to challenge terrorism effectively and decisively. USA and UK need first to stop arms sales to those vicious dictators as a matter of urgency. Second: They must also lead the efforts to create international consensus opposing the Saudi efforts to extend their influence by supporting unruly terror groups. Thirdly; The West has to decide if it wants a democratic world ruled by its people or a planet controlled by oppressors, dictators, blood-suckers of nations and mass murderers. These are crucial times given the enormity in the Arab World of the post-Arab Spring political and moral transgression. World stability, security and prosperity will not be achieved by wars or super power domination. It is not political or religious doctrines that will lead to safer world, but justice is the main ingredient for a better world. This cannot be achieved if the West continues its support to GCC autocratic regimes. That will only lead to more grievances that push more people into the arms of extremists and terrorists. To avoid this, the world powers have to promote democratic transition, end their support (or indifference at best) and remain faithful to the values and ethical stands enshrined in the post-war spirit that led to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Saudis, Alhalifa and their likes must be challenged and forced to stop supporting terrorism, end aggression on Yemen, stop their intervention Iraq, Syria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt and hand over power to the people. This is the main moral duty of the West; it must not abandoned.

Saudi vision 2030 ridiculed; Alkhalifa detain more natives

Following the visit by the American President, Barack Obama, to Riyadh last week calls have been made for a new policy towards the Saudis. These calls intensified after the widely-publicised views presented by Mohammad bin Salman, the king's son had confirmed the lack of any desire to reform the political or religious system in what many describe as "Kingdom of Silence". Those views were hailed by official media as a "road map" to reforming the most antiquated political regime in the World. However, the editorial of The Times today picked up this issue and argued: "For all his vision, the prince has two blind spots. His plan does not address the excessive power of the country's fundamentalist clerics or the religious police who answer to them. Nor does it mention democratisation."

Another young citizen of Awwamiyah Town in the Eastern Province has been sentenced to death by notorious Saudi courts for opposing the regime. Yousuf Al Mushaikhus has been in prison since February 2014. On 6th January this year he was sentenced to death. Last week this death sentence was confirmed by the Appeal Court. Meanwhile, the family of Martyr Ali Mahmood who was killed by the Saudi forces in February is still waiting for his body to provide their son with suitable burial as a martyr for the cause of freedom. They live in agony as they await his corpse which they may never get. The corpses of other martyrs were also held by the regime including that of Martyr Sheikh Nimr AlNimr.

Foreign Policy has issued a long article on Saudi Arabia's influence on world stage supported by the USA and UK. It shows how the Security Council had failed to address the Saudi aggression on Yemen. The article said: Over the past year, they

(the Saudis) have wielded their diplomatic clout like a major power, shaping the 15-nation council's diplomatic strategy for Yemen and effectively suppressing U.N. scrutiny of excesses in their 13-month air war against the country's Shiite rebels." It said "The United States and Britain, two of the U.N. Security Council's five veto-wielding powers, have largely delegated Yemen crisis management to the Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council." Akshaya Kumar, the deputy director of U.N. affairs at Human Rights Watch, said: "They are able to shape discussion on Yemen even when they are not in the room... They are able to really maintain a one-sided approach to the Security Council's handling of the situation in Yemen and particularly relating to their abuses on which the council is silent." In the week 18-24th April at least 40 native Bahrainis were arrested including two children, according to the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. More than 72 percent took place in house raids at the early hours of the day. At least 36 protests were staged in 22 areas, some of which were attacked by regime's forces.

On Monday 25th April, Sheikh Hussain MalAllah was detained in a raid on his home in the early hours. He is a respectable cleric detained for expressing his views. From Bilad Al Qadeem two brothers were arrested. Sadiq and Adel Al Khaal were detained after a kangaroo court sentenced them to lengthy prison terms for opposing the regime. A young lady was sentenced to three months imprisonment for "insulting the king". Layla Mansoor Marzooq, from Bani Jamra Town was summoned by Alkhalifa court last September and charged following an incident earlier. Layla had gone to visit her under-aged son, Mohammad Jaffar Fateel, 16, who had been sentenced to ten years jail sentence

for his anti-regime activities. When one of the jail officers assaulted her she started shouting and was arrested and charged.

A renowned poet was arrested on 24th April. Salman Abdul Hussain from Nuwaidrat Town was taken into custody because Alkhalifa tribal chiefs did not like his latest poem about the situation in the country. Another poet/orator from Hamad Town, has also been arrested. Sayed Hassan Alawi was snatched shortly after reciting his poem at a public gathering. On 20th April two native Bahrainis from Karbabad were arrested; Sayed Haidar Mustafa and Kadhem Isa Kadhem. On 21st April Maytham AlBanna' was arrested after his home was raided. From North Sehla Town Ahmad Abbas Mahdi AlKhabbaz, 26, was arrested. From Daih Town Mohammad AlEkri was detained after being summoned by the prosecution office.

On 21st April, Alkhalifa court sentenced photo journalist Hussain Suroor and his brother, Hossam, to 15 years. Reporters Without Borders issued a report on the treatment of journalists by the regime. It said: "Ruled with an iron hand by the Khalifa royal family, Bahrain is notorious for jailing many journalists. Fear that the regime could be overthrown led to an increase in the persecution and censorship of dissidents in 2011, especially after the uprisings by the Shia opposition in the east of the country. Convicted on such charges as participating in demonstrations, property destruction and supporting terrorism, journalists are given long jail terms and sometimes even life sentences. Many have been mistreated in detention and some have even been stripped of their citizenship." It was given rank 162 out of 180 countries.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
27th April 2016

Doc 17 implicates Saudis in 9/11, Alkhalifa deploy army against Bahrainis

President Obama's visit to Saudi Arabia has been marred by controversy, anger and accusations of political hypocrisy. There is mounting popular anger at Riyadh's ideological and political policies that have greatly contributed to instability, bloodshed, terrorism and extremism. The American President was accused of a cover up when he refused to release a confidential report linking at least one Saudi official to the 9/11 terrorist attack of 2001 on New York and Washington. Of particular importance is Document 17 of the report which was written by two US investigators about possible Saudi involvement in 9/11 atrocities. The Saudis had threatened to withdraw their \$750 billion dollars investments in the United States if Congress passed a law implicating them. Mr Obama has not heeded the calls to reprimand the Saudis or threaten to punish them for their unequivocal and persistent support of terrorism. He is urged to raise other matters, like with-

drawing Saudi troops from Bahrain, stopping the Yemen war, intervention in Iraq and Syria and HR. Of particular concern are the cases of three young men from the Eastern Province; Ali AlNimr, Dawood AlMarhoon and Abdullah AlZaher. Human Rights Watch which has raised their case also said that they had been forced to give false confessions which were used as basis for their death sentences.

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have received a '4' ranking in the 2016 Terrorism and Political Violence Map, by Aon in partnership with The Risk Advisory Group. All of the other GCC states – the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman – received a '2' ranking, meaning that they are at low risk of terrorism and political violence disrupting international business.

Emboldened by the American support, the Alkhalifa dictators have escalated their repression and state-terrorism against the natives. Bahrain's dictator has ordered the armed forces to adopt a new policy of

"shoot-to-kill" in a desperate attempt to stem the emerging new realities in the country which are more polarised against the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship. This decision follows an incident at the Town of Karbabad in which one of the mercenaries was killed. His death came one week after the killing of a native Bahraini youth, Ali Abdul Ghani, by foreign mercenaries. Scores of native Bahrainis were arrested in brutal raids on their homes in the town. More than ten people were snatched at gun point from their homes, ill-treated at the scene and transferred to the torture dungeons run by foreign torture "experts". Among the detainees are: Ali Abdulzahra AlShajjar, Qassim Radhi Abdalabbas and Mohammed Abbas Abdulla.

The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights said that at least 22 native Bahrainis were arrested in the week 11-17th April, including one child.

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Negative assessment of Saudi economy; bleak outlook for Alkhalifa HRs

Yesterday Fitch Ratings cut Saudi Arabia's credit rating, another sign of how low oil prices are taking their toll on the kingdom's finances. Fitch reduced Saudi Arabia's long-term foreign and local currency ratings to AA-minus from AA while retaining a negative outlook. The ratings agency predicts oil prices for 2016 and 2017 to be at \$35 and \$45 a barrel, a level that would have "major negative implications for Saudi Arabia's fiscal and external balances." Other rating agencies like Moody's and Standard and Poor had given similar assessments in recent months. In another development, the most senior religious leader in the Eastern Province, Sheikh Hussain Al Radhi, who was detained last month for expressing different views from those of the ruling tribe of Al Saud, has been struck with heart ailment. His condition is not known but there is increasing concern for his life. Freedom-lovers have called for his immediate and unconditional release as they consider him "Prisoner of Conscience".

On 8th April Dr Saeed Al Samahiji, 62, was sentenced to one year in jail for tweeting. He is a senior Eye Specialist and had been detained several times since 2011 for treating injured people injured by regime's forces. He spent much time in torture dungeons. He was arrested on 4th January after he had tweeted remarks against the execution of Martyr Nimr Al Nimr. He was charged with "insulting friendly country".

From April 4th to April 10th, there were a total of 53 marches in 28 towns and villages. Ten marches were attacked by the riot police using excessive chemical and tear gases, as well as shot guns. In the first three months of this year, the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights recorded at least 448 cases of arbitrary detention including 95 children under 18. On 10th April 15 years old Basil Abbas was arrested. He was first taken to Roundabout 17 police station at Hamad Town where he was severely tortured. He was then taken to the notorious CID headquarters where torture use is routine. He was released after six hours. He could not sit properly from the beating. His mother told him to sleep. But the CID officers called again and summoned Basil. He was taken back and was detained.

The American policy on Bahrain has come under fire by activists and human rights bodies worldwide, following John Kerry's visit to the country. His remarks have infuriated the Bahrainis who viewed his visit as active moral support to a faltering regime riddled with accusations of committing crimes against humanity including torture. International human rights groups have criticized the Bahraini government since a security clampdown on protesters demanding reforms and a greater voice in the governing of the kingdom, which is led by tribal rulers. Human Rights Watch says there has been little

meaningful progress in reforms since then, and it accused the government of pressuring the opposition by detaining activists. Ahead of the trip, Kerry found himself under fire from human rights groups, who called for a tougher U.S. stance on the government's violent suppression of dissent. They cited the cases of several bloggers and political opposition leaders serving jail terms or awaiting sentences.

Despite Alkhalifa foreign minister's promise to John Kerry to release Zainab AlKhawaja and her infant son, she is still languishing in their torture chambers. 37 NGOs have called for her unconditional



Martyr Ali Abdul Ghani

Clashes broke out between angry mourners and Alkhalifa forces on Friday (April 8, 2016), after regime forces used tear gas and sound grenades to disperse hundreds of mourners participating in the final funeral procession of martyr Ali Abdulghani. Mourners held pictures of Abdulghani who died of injuries sustained during his arrest the night before the Formula One race kicked off in Bahrain.

release. In an open statement to Bahrain's dictator, Hamad Alkhalifa they said: "We, the undersigned, unequivocally condemn your government's arrest of human rights defender Zainab Al-Khawaja along with her infant son." They called for their immediate and unconditional release. They added: "The broad criminalization of peaceful dissent and free expression in Bahrain, as well as the government's continued harassment and detention of human rights defenders, contravenes your obligations under international law, and is wholly unacceptable."

Jane Kinninmont, deputy head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House, published an article titled: "Why won't the UK Government speak out on human rights abuses" on UK's policy on human rights. Ms Kinninmont said: It is one thing to use a softer tone in public statements, but at times these statements are actively misleading. A minister may tell parliament a country is moving in the right direction when the diplomats on the ground are privately telling colleagues there are at least two steps back for every step forward. Ms Kinninmont said that British diplomats lobbied the UN Human Rights Council to water down the language in a resolution on Bahrain, deleting the word "torture". She added: The UK government's security strategy recognises that rights and values are part of security. To advance them, clearer public statements must be part of the full spectrum of policy tools.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
13th April 2016

MPs to investigate evidence of illegal weapons sales at London's DSEI arms fair

MPs are to investigate allegations of illegal weapons sales at British weapons fairs after a judge ruled there was "credible" evidence of wrongdoing at the biggest event in the arms trade's calendar.

The House of Commons Committee on Arms Export Control, made up of MPs from all the main parties, will look into the allegations that a judge said had not been "appropriately investigated by the authorities". The probe into the fairs comes after the acquittal of eight anti-arms trade protesters who tried to blockade the 2015 DSEI arms fair in London's docklands – on the grounds that they were trying to prevent a bigger crime from taking place. Among them is Isa Al Aali, a Bahraini young man who had been jailed, tortured and threatened by the regime's forces. The guns used are probably British-supplied.

Campaigners were angered this weekend after a spokesperson for the business department, which regulates arms export licences, gave no indication that a Government inquiry into DSEI would take place when asked.

A spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police said the service was "considering the judgment, and will discuss it with the Crown Prosecution Service".

DSEI, the world's largest arms fair, said on Friday it complied with all relevant arms control regulations in 2015, that it allowed government agencies full access to its premises, and that it was constantly tightening its compliance procedures.

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Saudi Arabia, Bahrain said to pose highest terrorism risk in GCC

By Sarah Townsend, Thursday, 14 April

Terrorism and political violence poses a high risk to international business in two of the six GCC states, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, according to new research.

Both countries received a '4' ranking in the 2016 Terrorism and Political Violence Map, by Aon in partnership with The Risk Advisory Group.

All of the other GCC states – the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman – received a '2' ranking, meaning that they are at low risk of terrorism and political violence disrupting international business.

Overall, the Middle East was by far the most active region for terrorism in the past year, due mainly to ongoing conflicts, lack of state control and political instability, with 40% more attacks (1,114) than the next most active region. of South Asia (799). North Africa was

the third most affected region (491).

The largest number of attacks recorded in the Middle East was in Iraq, which had almost three times as many attacks as the next most afflicted country (Afghanistan).

The report said it recorded fewer attacks in the Middle East than in 2014 – though it did not give a figure – but said this was largely due to “a lack of reliable open-source reporting from the conflict zones in Syria, as well as a blurring of definitions of incidents of terrorism and those classified as irregular warfare and armed conflict or war crimes”.

It added that, despite the dominant threat posed by so-called Islamic State (ISIL), sudden and potentially violent political upheaval is just as severe a risk for international business.

The risk of coup d'état and insurrection has been attached to twelve more countries this year, among them Angola, Saudi Arabia,

Kazakhstan, Zimbabwe and Angola.

Henry Wilkinson, head of intelligence & analysis at The Risk Advisory Group, which has collaborated with Aon to produce the Terrorism and Political Violence map since 2007, said: “This year's Aon Terrorism and Political Violence Map shows a rise in political violence and terrorism risks for the first time since 2013.

“The threat of terrorism is critical, but sudden political change at the top as well as war can arguably be more catastrophic for business.

“These risks are less manageable and less foreseeable and have the potential for cascading political risk ramifications across a region.”

He said businesses needed to be flexible and robust in how they anticipate and manage risks to ensure they contain the potential negative ramifications.

BIRD raises concerns of HR abuses with FIA

The Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy has written to Jean Todt, president of Formula One's governing body, the FIA, raising its concerns about alleged serious human rights violations in the country. Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, director of advocacy at Bird, said: “In the past five years severe human rights violations have been committed during the race authorised by the FIA. These include arbitrary arrests, torture and killings. Until now the FIA have shirked responsibility and failed to use their leverage. We want to remind them of their responsibilities, which means being prepared to cancel the race in coming years.”



Protest against killing of Ali Abdul Ghani

Doc 17 implicates Saudis

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It said 45 peaceful protests were held, some of which were attacked by Alkhalifa mercenaries. Seven people were tried by regime's courts and jailed for a total of 36 years. Another 14 had their sentences totalling 136 years confirmed by “appeal courts”

On 16th April a senior religious cleric was arrested for speaking out against regime's oppression. Sheikh Mohammad Al Mansi, is accused of undermining regime's security. Jalal Ali Mohammad was snatched by armed masked and plain-clothed men. From Jabalat Habshi two brothers were detained: Hassan and Hussain Ramadhan Taher Al Sami'. Amnesty International has issued an Urgent Action on behalf of Dr Sa'eed al-Samahiji who was sentenced to one year in prison on 7 April, on charges including “insulting a brotherly state” and

“calling for participation in illegal demonstrations”. He was on hunger strike between 14 February and 31 March in protest at his ill-treatment in prison. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Terrorism and political violence poses a high risk to international business in two of the six GCC states, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, according to new research. Both countries received a '4' ranking in the 2016 Terrorism and Political Violence Map, by Aon in partnership with The Risk Advisory Group. All of the other GCC states – the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman – received a '2' ranking, meaning that they are at low risk of terrorism and political violence disrupting international business.

On 15th April Stratford Magistrates Court acquitted eight anti-arms trade protesters, including a young Bahrainis ac-

tivist, Isa AlAali, who tried to disrupt Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) last September. District Judge Angus Hamilton accepted the defendants' argument that they had tried to prevent a greater crime from occurring by blocking a road to stop tanks and other armoured vehicles from arriving at the exhibition centre. He said that there was compelling evidence that arms were illegally being sold at the world's biggest arms fair which takes place in London every year.

The House of Commons Committee on Arms Export Control, made up of MPs from all the main parties, will look into the allegations that the judge said had not been “appropriately investigated by the authorities”.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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