

BAHRAIN

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

Regime intensifies religious and political persecution; time to act

The political strife in Bahrain is escalating at an ever accelerating pace. The prospects of major confrontation between the natives and the Alkhalifa occupiers have never been clearer. It is only the intervention of the regime's foreign supporters especially in Washington and London that will stop them from waging catastrophic attack on peaceful protesters surrounding the home of the main religious and political leader, Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim. Targeting him in this humiliating manner is seen as an attack on the history, culture, religious, spiritual and political culture of the native Bahrainis who have been aspiring to achieve democratic transformation. In a region that is rife with tribalism, extremism and state-sponsored terrorism the advent of peaceful revolution aiming at removing autocracy and dictatorship may appear far-fetched, dangerous and may be suicidal. However, the Bahraini people have been paying hefty price for their decades-old peaceful struggle that has now reached its climax. The tribal junta has failed to quell the people's thirst for reforming the political system and has now reached the conclusion that it is no longer possible to co-habit with the natives. The decision to fundamentally alter the demographic balance appears to have been taken two decades ago and has been under gradual implementation since 1999, when the present dictator "inherited" the rule from his defunct father.

This time the regime's aims are grand; to root out the majority Shia Muslim natives from the land of their ancestors who had participated in building civilisations starting with that of Delmon. Within Islam the natives had embraced God's religion willingly seven years after the Holy Prophet's migration to Mecca. Over the centuries there have been giant scholars, the manuscript of whose books are stored at the British Library's archives in London. The great cultural and archaeological treasure inside the country is abundant. The story of civilisation is evident in the archaeological work begun early last century especially at the historic grave yards of Saar and Aali towns. The monument of AlKhamis Mosque stands a witness to the history of the natives whose extinction is one of the main objectives of the present-day rulers. It is this long and rich history

that has forced the Alkhalifa tribe to undertake one of the most outrageous projects in modern history; the total obliteration of the natives culture, starting with the Islamic part of it. In the past month the attacks on mosques, congregations and protests have been unprecedented in scale and ferocity. When the people realised that Alkhalifa were intent on enforcing demographic and cultural change they rallied around their religious leaders whose most prominent figure, Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim has been specifically targeted. Sheikh Qassim who is approaching 80, was main figure in writing the country's first (and last) legitimate constitution and the most outspoken national figure in both the Constituent and National Assemblies (1972-1975). While the present rulers were in their nappies he was spending his youth laying the foundations for the post-colonial Bahrain. He has remained a force for good, with his wisdom, knowledge, piety and patriotism. Those who are sheltering in palaces while plundering people's wealth are guilty of crimes against humanity as they continue to target activists, detaining and torturing them.

Today, the world has seen the Alkhalifa betrayal of people's trust and country's sovereignty. The present dictator is among the few leaders who beg foreigners to occupy their countries and pay them to do so. It is one of the bleakest periods of modern history which has also seen the systematic eradication of the natives of the land, the destruction of their cultural and religious heritage and the obliteration their places of worship. What makes the tragedy more sour is the policy of genocide being implemented by the present dictators, aided by the Saudis who are the main supporters of extremism and terrorism in the world. The Bahrainis deserve respect and support as they challenge with their bare hands and chests the columns of armoured vehicles and tanks as they target the civilian population. The UK's Foreign Office has fared badly in dealing with the Bahrain's situation. Finally parts of the failures of the former Foreign Secretary have been laid bare to everyone. Last month the FCO admitted to misleading MPs by its assertion that it had carried out an assessment of whether the Saudis had

committed war crimes in Yemen. It said that such assertion is not accurate. The FCO is being challenged at the High Court for supporting the Saudis in their aggression and illegal war on Yemen. The FCO must also come clean and expose the extent of its support to the Alkhalifa regime as it cracked down on native Bahrainis. The least it could do is top arms shipment to both Saudi and Alkhalifa tribal regimes, end close cooperation to provide security of those defunct regimes and warn the dictator of indictment and crimes against humanity if he went ahead to storm Duraz Town and seize the elderly cleric and political leader.

Among the most beautiful features of the Bahraini Revolution is its peaceful nature, the dedication of its youth to participate in the daily protests despite the collective punishment by the British-supported Alkhalifa terror machine, the clarity of purpose of its political and religious leadership and the comprehensiveness of the struggle. Today there are in excess of 4000 political prisoners including women and children. Hundreds of native Bahrainis have been persecuted for taking a stand against the tribal dictatorship with nationality revocation and deportation. The situation in that region of the world is so polarised that the whole Gulf region could be engulfed in popular uprisings as the cries for help from Bahraini victims shock the human conscience of the people of the other GCC countries. While the hopes are high, the agony of the people especially those under round-the-clock siege in Duraz has become a penetrating pain in the hearts of dignified people. The steadfastness of the grass roots in their endeavour to achieve change has become a source of inspiration to many around the world. There is now unprecedented support to those people who live under permanent threats of arrest, torture, killing, citizen revocation and deportation. The reality is shocking even regime's Western supporters. The greed that drives many politicians to compromise principles and policies for the sake of financial rewards are now being closely scrutinised. The likely verdict is to be damning of those whose personal riches is given priority to the interests of their countries which is seen as betrayal of human values.

FCO admits possible Saudi war crimes, Alkhalifa persecute Sh Qassim

On Thursday 21st July the UK's Foreign Office issued unprecedented six corrections to statements from ministers in Parliament over the past few months that international humanitarian law (IHL) had not been breached by the Saudi-led coalition. The British Government has dropped over its assertions that coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia had not breached humanitarian laws in Yemen in an embarrassing about-turn in Parliament. The corrections came after a United Nations' report released last month found that the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen was responsible for killing more than 500 children in its year-long campaign of airstrikes. The British government is also worried that a high court case against it for supplying arms to the Saudis will soon be heard and could lead to more embarrassment. It was brought by The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT). The Cameron government had been shielding both the Saudi and Alkhalifa tribal dictatorships for a long time and is worried that it may be implicated in their crimes.

Today the Alkhalifa dictator adjourned the case he brought against His Eminence Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim, the most senior religious and political leader of native Bahrainis until 14th August. The charge is money laundering and collection without Alkhalifa permission. Senior religious figures always received religious dues and donations for distribution to the needy. This has been practiced for the past 14 centuries by the natives, centuries before Alkhalifa clan occupied the land. Today's trial is seen as a trial of the regime whose senior figures are accused of plundering people's lands and wealth. The dictator and his immediate family occupy

more than half the country lands including at least four islands; Umm AlNa'san, Umm AlSubban, Jida and Huwar. In addition the dictator has been syphoning people's wealth to buy properties overseas including the Four Seasons Hotel in London.

In the week 18-24th July at least 59 native Bahrainis including 11 children were arrested as Akhalifa occupiers intensify their war of genocide. There were at least 56 protests in 35 villages as the strife takes hold in the country. Yesterday Ahmad Abdul Nabi Zayer Ali was snatched from Duraz and taken to the notorious Dry Dock torture centre. Sheikh Jassim AlKhayyat was also incarcerated and charged with "illegal" protest for attending the crowd protecting the most senior leader, Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim. Abdul Hadi Abdulla Qassim, 15, from Duraz was remanded in custody for 15 days for protesting against Alkhalifa brutality. A vicious attack on a marriage ceremony in AlMarkh town on Friday night led to the arrest of at least 11 people including the groom himself, Ahmad Jalal AlHamad. It was one of the shocking moments as the ISIS-style masked members of the Death Squads stormed the hall, stamping with their dirty shoes on old people and undermining the sanctity of the place. Four people from Abu Saiba were arrested as they left Duraz; Saeed Abdul Imam, Sayed Hussain Ali, Ahmad Abdul Ghani and Sayed Mohammad Salem. Mohammad Imran Tawq, 17, was arrested on 23rd July at the airport on his way to study abroad. Tayba Darwish, a woman protester and mother of three has been sentenced to five years imprisonment for taking part in anti-regime protests.

Alkhalifa war on free speech continues unabated. Meanwhile the persecution of

Nazeeha Saeed, correspondent of Radio France 24 by the Alkhalifa dictators has enraged the human rights world and led to calls for punishing this rogue regime. She is now banned from work or travel after the dictators claimed that she had no permit to work as a correspondent. Her passport has been confiscated and is awaiting trial. This treatment is seen as revenge for insisting that her torturer be tried. On 22nd July poet Khalil Ismael was arrested for delivering a poem outside Sheikh Isa Qassim's house. A famous orator, Abdul Jabbar Al Durazi was also detained.

Today Human Rights Watch issued a statement on the detention of Nabeel Rajab calling for his release. "The charges against Nabeel Rajab, head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, a nongovernmental group, constitute a serious violation of his right to freedom of expression," Human Rights Watch said. The conditions of his detention also appear to amount to arbitrary punishment. He was in solitary confinement for more than two weeks after his arrest and denied compassionate leave to attend a relative's funeral. He faces an additional three years for comments about the Bahrain government's response to prison unrest. "Unlawful Saudi-led airstrikes bombed markets and hospitals, killing hundreds of civilians, but the person facing prison time is the one who criticized them," said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "The US and the UK, which have assisted the coalition, have a particular responsibility to insist that Bahrain drop the unlawful charges against Nabeel Rajab and immediately free him."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
27th July 2016

Saudis used UK arms to kill citizen; Alkhalifa genocide policies condemned

Pressure is mounting on the British Government to stop supplying Saudis with arms after confirmation that they had used them to kill innocent people. Powerful shotgun ammunition made by British firm Primetake and explosive breaching equipment bearing the stamp "Made In Canada," were used in a raid last month in which dissident Abdul-Rahim al-Faraj was killed. His family said he was unarmed and "murdered" by the security services, who made no attempt to arrest him. Details of the shooting come as newly appointed British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson welcomed his Saudi Arabian counterpart to London yesterday. The revelation could prove doubly embarrassing for the British government as it has been a long-time backer of Riyadh and Primetake also provides shells for the Queen's royal salutes, such as the 41 Gun Salute at Hyde Park to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. The specialist British shotgun ammunition, produced in Lincolnshire, was found at the scene of the raid in the Qatif region of Saudi Arabia's oil-rich but poverty-stricken Eastern Province. This adds

to the Saudi illegal aggression on Yemen which is supported by UK.

The Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) has criticised arrangement between the College of Policing and regimes with dubious human rights records. In highly critical findings about how security personnel from states such as Saudi Arabia benefit from British assistance, HASC describe the government's refusal to reveal details of "opaque" training agreements as "totally unacceptable". The former foreign secretary, Philip Hammond, was also criticised for not providing details of the contracts when requested by the committee. Its chair, Keith Vaz, said: "For a foreign secretary to act in this manner and tell the British parliament that he will not disclose such important information is totally unacceptable. Mr Hammond had declared in the MPs register of interests that he had accepted a Rolex Watch from a Saudi prince. The situation in Bahrain is escalating by the day as the Bahrainis and the ruling clan have reached a point of no return in their conflict. On Monday 18th July the four most senior religious scholars issued a brief

statement confirming that the native majority of the population are facing existential threats from the tribal occupiers. Alkhalifa decision on 17th July to dissolve AlWefaq Society, the largest political opposition in the country has outraged even regime's foreign supporters. On 18th July the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon "deplored" the decision and called for "the resumption of an all-inclusive national dialogue aimed at peace and stability in the country and the region." In his statement Mr. Ban stressed that the dissolution of Al-Wefaq, similarly to other actions taken in the country – such as stripping Sheikh Issa Qassem and others of citizenship, a travel ban on human rights defenders, and the increased sentence for the Secretary-General of Al-Wefaq, Sheikh Ali Salman – risk escalating an already tense situation in the country." The United States is also critical of Alkhalifa decision saying that "These actions are inconsistent with U.S. interests and strain our partnership with Bahrain. They also contradict the government's stated commitments

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More calls to stop arms to Saudis as Bahrain's situation worsens

Opponents of arms trade staged several protests in the past few days against supplying the Saudis with lethal arms to use against the Yemeni people. On 11th July The Committee Against Arms Trade (CAAT) held several protests outside the Underground stations where many people started their journeys to the International Farnborough Air Show calling for ban on arms to Saudi Arabia.



They also staged a protest outside the Science Museum which it accuses of accepting "blood donations" from arms dealers. A Bahraini refugee who was among the protesters was arrested and charged with obstructing a public path. Isa AlAali who was a victim of British arms supplied to Alkhalifa killers was singled out and charged in what appears to be flagrant racism by the UK police. Several of the protesters confirmed their view that to pick Mr AlAali while letting the others go is unjustifiable and could only be construed as racism. Other protesters handed a petition signed by 7800 people which they handed to the Prime Minister's office calling for UK to stop arming the Saudis in their war on Yemen.

Meanwhile the Saudis have raised the stakes with Iran when one of their senior figures called openly for the downfall of its Islamic system. Turki Al Faisal, former Ambassador to UK and spy chief, commended the leadership of Mujahideen-e-khalq at their annual conference in France. The organisation is labelled by the Western countries as "terrorist". It was responsible for several bombings and assassinations in Iran in the eighties. The Saudi prince crossed red lines when he openly called for the overthrow of Iran's regime. Alongside him was an official delegation from Alkhalifa regime who supported the Saudi policy on Iran and is considered enemy of the Islamic Republic. These are dangerous precedents in the regional politics and could lead to further tension in the region. In London The Parliamentary foreign affairs select committee said yesterday Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab states should do more to ensure their ruling families are not secretly funding Islamic State. In its most controversial passage, the committee points out that the interior ministry of Saudi Arabia only passed laws as late as March 2015 to make it illegal for Saudi residents to provide support to Isis.

On Friday 8th July Bahrainis poured into the streets in large numbers to protest against the Alkhalifa persecution of the mains spiritual figure in the country, Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim, the

highest ranking religious scholar and a former lawmaker. Participants raised slogans calling for the downfall of Alkhalifa dictatorship and the trial of torturers and persecutors. They were met by foreign-staffed mercenary forces which used shot-guns, chemical and tear gases to disperse the crowds. Many people were injured in ruthless attacks on protesters.

Yesterday regime's court adjourned the trial of Nabeel Rajab until 5th August. He has been in detention for one month accused of tweeting against the Saudi/Alkhalifa aggression on Yemen. Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action calling for Mr Rajab's immediate and unconditional release. Twenty six other international NGOs signed a statement calling for Mr Rajab's immediate and unconditional release.

The cycle of detentions, kidnapping and arrests has continued. Yesterday a senior civil service employee was arrested just for attending the open congregation around Sheikh Isa Qassim's house. Ali Abdul Rahim's photo was circulated by regime's militia and was immediately summoned and detained by Alkhalifa tor-

turers. He is a senior manager with the Labour Market Commission. On 11th July masked members of regime's Death Squads attacked a pregnant woman at AlMusalla Town and arrested two of her sons. Abdul Hussain and Hashim AlQassab were snatched from their family and taken to torture On 10th July, mercenary forces snatched Qassim Hamza Sarhan, and Khalil Marzoq from Ma'amir town. chambers. On 8th July Khalil Hassan and his brother Ahmad were detained at Hamad Town.

On Monday, Agence France Press said A Bahraini court would hand down its verdict next week in the government's bid to dissolve the main opposition group Al-Wefaq, accused of harbouring "terrorism," a judicial source said. The date of July 17 was set as the court convened in the absence of the defence team which walked out last month in protest at the government's push to accelerate the process. The United States has called on Bahrain to reconsider the move to dissolve Al-Wefaq, which it has called "alarming".

Brian Dooley, President of Human Rights First published an article in "Huffington Post" asking President Obama to do four things: To speak out against the Alkahalifa crimes in Bahrain, re-instate arms embargo on them, ask Direct U.S. Ambassador William Roebuck to attend the trial of human rights defender Nabeel Rajab and Impose visa bans on Bahraini officials suspected of human rights violations.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
13th July 2016

Saudis used UK arms to kill citizens, *continued from Page 2*

to protecting human rights and achieving reconciliation with all of Bahrain's communities.". Washington went further: "We call on the Government of Bahrain to reverse these and other recent measures, return urgently to the path of reconciliation, and work collectively to address the aspirations of all Bahrainis."

In a statement on 18th July the German Federal Foreign Office spokesperson said: These measures targeting the opposition threaten to further polarise Bahraini society. They also raise serious questions with regard to freedom of opinion and association as well as the rule of law". On 19th July the EU said that it "expects this judgment to be reversed." It added: The EU considers that Bahrain's stability and security can only be achieved through reforms and inclusive reconciliation. The verdict on Al Wefaq, the arrest of activist Nabil Rajab and the revocation of the citizenship to Sheikh Isa Qassem go, on the contrary, in the direction to further divide Bahraini society."

On 18th July under-aged Fadel Abbas from Dair Town was snatched from the road by masked members of Alkhalifa Death Squads. From Ma'amir two sisters were detained and remanded in custody for a month: Rabab Hani and her sister, zainab were arrested for their anti-regime protests.

The kingdom of silence and fear has taken another gagging step to silence Nazeeha Saeed, by charging her with working as a correspondent for foreign news media (France 24 and Radio Monte-Carlo Doualiya) without permission. She had attended the prosecutor's office with her lawyer, Hameed Al Mullah, on 17 July in response to a summons without knowing what awaited her. Alexandra El Khazen, the head of the Middle East desk for Reporters Without Borders said: "We condemn the authorities' attempts to prevent her working, firstly by imposing an unjustified and incomprehensible travel ban on her and then by accusing her of working illegally although her papers were always in order."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th July 2016

France NCP announces agreement regarding French-manufactured tear gas in Bahrain

25 July 2016 – Paris, France – The French national branch of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) today announced ADHRB and riot-control weapons company Etienne-Lacroix had come to an agreement regarding the presence of the company's weapons in Bahrain. The agreement states that the company will take additional steps to protect against the re-export of its products to countries with poor human rights records. ADHRB acknowledges the company's commitment towards keeping its weapons out of Bahrain, and thanks French National Contact Point (NCP) for facilitating the agreement and for its help in resolving the issue of French tear gas in Bahrain.

In September of last year, ADHRB filed a complaint with the National Contact Point (NCP) of the OECD in Paris, France regarding potential violations of the OECD Guidelines committed by French company Etienne-Lacroix after subsidiary company SAE Alsetex's tear gas canisters surfaced in Bahrain. The tear gas canisters were found after Bahraini security officers attacked protests against the government; ADHRB contacts stated that the company's products were among those often used in Bahrain's assault on protests.

In 2011, France banned the export of all riot control products to Bahrain after determining that they had been misused to repress peaceful protests in February that year. As the products found in Bahrain bore markings indicating that they had been produced after the ban went into place, ADHRB asked the NCP to investigate possible violations of the ban as well as violations of the OECD Guidelines on human rights, a voluntary set of principles regarding responsible business practices in relation to human rights.

The NCP's decision today states that Etienne-Lacroix was able to demonstrably affirm that they had not violated the ban and had not contributed to human rights violations in Bahrain. The NCP also commented on the company's developing human rights policy, which it stated should be published as soon as possible.

Throughout the consultation process, however, ADHRB was able to identify and suggest improvements to Etienne-Lacroix in order to guard against the re-export of their products to human rights abusing countries, including Bahrain. ADHRB's recommendations included punitive fines for countries that re-export Etienne-Lacroix products, as well as the termination of all business relations in the case that a country re-exports such

products multiple times. The NCP agreed that ADHRB's recommendations would help the company better protect at-risk persons, and suggested that Etienne-Lacroix incorporate them into its new human rights policy. It is ADHRB's understanding that Etienne-Lacroix intends to do so.

"The decision from the OECD means the absolute end of French tear gas flowing into Bahrain," said Husain Abdulla, the executive director of ADHRB. "While we commend the French government for instituting its tear gas ban in 2011, it falls to individual companies to protect against the threat of re-export so that their products can in no way be used towards oppression. We hope that other companies will follow

the NCP's advice, so that the Government of Bahrain has nowhere else to go to obtain its repressive tools."

Alsetex tear gas is not the only riot control product from an OECD country available to Bahraini security forces. Last year, ADHRB filed a complaint with the Brazilian NCP against Condor Non-Lethal Technologies, another company who exports products used for abuse in Bahrain. While the Brazilian NCP conducted preliminary investigations, the Brazilian government ultimately blocked the case from proceeding.

"Just as France should be commended for helping to keep weapons out of the hands of serial abusers, Brazil should be ashamed for effectively aiding in the repression of the Bahraini people," said Abdulla. "The international community must come together in solidarity in order to deny Bahrain, and all other human rights abusers, the tools for violence."

HRW: Activist on Trial Over Twitter Comments

(Beirut) – A Prominent Bahraini human rights activist faces up to 12 years in prison for criticizing the Saudi Arabia-led military operations in Yemen, Human Rights Watch said today. The charges against Nabeel Rajab, head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, a nongovernmental group, constitute a serious violation of his right to freedom of expression, Human Rights Watch said. The conditions of his detention also appear to amount to arbitrary punishment. He was in solitary confinement for more than two weeks after his arrest and denied compassionate leave to attend a relative's funeral. He faces an additional three years for comments about the Bahrain government's response to prison unrest.

"Unlawful Saudi-led airstrikes bombed markets and hospitals, killing hundreds of civilians, but the person facing prison time is the one who criticized them," said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "The US and the UK, which have assisted the coalition, have a particular responsibility to insist that Bahrain drop the unlawful charges against Nabeel Rajab and immediately free him."

Rajab's Twitter comments led to his arrest on April 2, 2015. Authorities released him on July 13, 2015, but prosecutors did not close the cases and ordered his re-arrest on June 13, 2016. His trial began on July 12, with the next session scheduled for August 2. If convicted of spreading "false or malicious news, statements, or rumors," Rajab faces up to 10 years in prison under article 133 of Bahrain's penal code. If convicted of "offending a foreign country [Saudi Arabia]," Rajab faces a maximum two year sentence under article 215 of the penal code.

If convicted of "offending national institutions," based on comments about unrest that broke out in Jaw Prison in March 2015, Rajab, faces an additional three-year sentence under article 216 of the penal code.

Human Rights Watch has analyzed Rajab's Twitter comments between March 10, 2015, when the Jaw Prison unrest broke out, and his arrest on April 2, including nine tweets about the military operations in Yemen. On March 26, 2015, Rajab tweeted that "wars bring hatred, destruction, and horrors." Rajab also tweeted graphic images purporting to portray the effects of the bombing. Rajab's comments about the unrest in Jaw prison and the authorities' response are consistent with the accounts of four former detainees who, in the aftermath of the unrest, told Human Rights Watch that security forces subjected prisoners to abuse that would appear to amount to torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. In an August 2015 letter to Human Rights Watch, the Interior Ministry Ombudsman said that his office had met with 156 inmates and that it had referred 15 formal complaints to the body charged with investigating allegations of torture, the Special Investigations Unit, "for criminal investigation."

Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Bahrain has ratified, protects the right to freedom of expression. In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the body of international experts who monitor compliance with the covenant, issued guidance to state parties on their free speech obligations under article 19 that emphasized the high value the treaty places upon uninhibited expression "in circumstances of public debate concerning public figures in the political domain and public institutions." It said that "state parties should not prohibit criticism of institutions, such as the army or the administration." "If the Bahraini authorities don't like criticism of the Saudi-led airstrikes, they should focus their efforts on ensuring that their Gulf allies don't bomb schools and hospitals," said Stork.

