

BAHRAIN

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

Saudi-Alkhalifa-Emirati war on Qatar proves them unfit to rule

The Gulf Cooperation Council is going through one of the most difficult periods of its history. Half of its members (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain) are grinding their axes against Qatar which is supported by Oman and to a lesser extent, Kuwait. The reasons for this sudden flare up of hostilities have not been fully explained but it is becoming clearer that political and economic greed is the main reason behind the decision to recall ambassadors, close the borders and threaten the state of Qatar. The latest episode has demonstrated the extent to which the Saudis are ready to go in order to establish dominance and expand influence in the region. They are vying for absolute power that would enable them to lead the Arab world which is lacking proper leadership. The Saudis are exploiting the void created by the state of chaos that it had participated to create in the big Arab countries like Egypt, Syria, Iran and Yemen. The Arab Spring had been a wake up call to the Saudis that they would be the next in line for real change. The people of Arabia have long been repressed and marginalised and the situation is ripe for change.

For the past six years the Saudis have been attempting to bury the Arab Spring by destructive means. They used three main weapons to achieve this; extremism, terrorism and sectarianism. The Arab and Muslim world have been polluted with these ideologies which are now coming to haunt their proponents among the oil-rich tribal chiefs in Arabia. The Saudis would go to any length to ensure the subservience of the Arab and Muslim people to their tyranny and dictatorship. The availability in abundance of the petrodollars has enabled the Saudis to buy off the stands of the leaders of the "free world". Today, the American president has become part of the Saudi lobby and is propagating the same ideas despite the fact that the US Congress had already decided to penalise them for their role in 9/11 atrocities. The JASTA Law that had been passed by Congress allows families of the victims of those atrocities to file law suits seeking compensation from the Saudi government. Mr Trump is using that as a means of pressure to syphon off whatever is left of the Saudi wealth.

The Saudis new policies centre around spreading confusion and instability that would prevent the emergence of popular

consensus for political change. The lessons of the 2011 revolutions is too bitter to ignore. The Saudis were spared the wrath of the ir people by adopting heavy handed policies at home and abroad. The repression in the Arabian peninsula has continued unabated with thousands of political detainees, hundreds of executions and the largest ever arms deals with America. When Mr Trump visited Saudi Arabia in May he snatched deals worth up to half a trillion dollars. The American military, political and logistical support has emboldened them to undertake initiatives beyond their capabilities. They interfered with bloody consequences in the affairs of other countries. Starting with Bahrain in 2011 they dispatched their army to crush the popular revolution, destroy mosques and annihilate the mass protests. They failed to achieve their aim but have remained a source of instability and destruction in the country. Emboldened by the connivance of the Anglo-American support, they went on to groom and finance extremism and terrorism. Syria and Iraq were targeted with most destructive consequences. They also interfered in the internal affairs of Egypt and supported the military coup by Abdul Fattah Al Sisi against the elected government of the Muslims Brotherhood.

Now came the turn of Qatar. For decades the Saudis had deep grudges against their Gulf neighbour. In 1992 they attacked the Qatari border post of AlKhafoos which led to military confrontation in which a Saudi and Qatari officers were killed. They were subsequently angered by two developments; the creation of the AlJazeera satellite channel and the forging of political links with Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Their links with the Brotherhood made them target for the wrath of not only the Saudis but also the leaders of the United Arab Emirates who loathe the group. Both see it as a threat to their rule, being the largest and oldest Islamic party in the Muslim world. Their unseating in Egypt was only possible with the help of the two countries. As for Alkhalifa of Bahrain they have become a non-entity, having to obey the Saudi orders and tow their line on regional and international matters. They were the only Gulf tribe

that agreed to dissolve in the proposed Saudi "Gulf Union" that would have given the Saudis total domination over the whole GCC countries. Their reputation among the Bahraini people has been further smeared by their stand with the Saudis against Qatar. They started accusing Bahraini activists of being supported by Qatar. For the past six years the accusation has been that they were agents of Iran. This sudden change has made the dictator and his clique a laughing stock in the media and the human rights world. Their supporters are embarrassed further.

The targeting of Qatar by the four regimes of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain has threatened the GCC alliance itself. This is the most dangerous development since its inception in 1981. The Saudi-led alliance has imposed 13 conditions on Qatar if it wants the boycott and sanctions be lifted. They are humiliating to any country. They envisage that Qatar closed sown AlJazeera, the most important media outlet in the Arab world, severe links with the Brotherhood, compensate those countries, reduce its links with Iran and effectively give an undertaking to tow the Saudi line. The Qataris rejected them outright. The stage is thus set for new confrontation that may involve Turkey, the main supporter of the Qataris and who have had strong links with the Brotherhood. The Gulf has thus been put on notice for a major conflict, probably of the size of the Kuwaiti crisis of 1990/1991 when Saddam Hussain's forces invaded. The "liberation" war ensued and the Americans made their strongest ever comeback to the region. The Qatar-Saudi conflict is now poised for more serious developments and military confrontation cannot be ruled out. Saudis have thus demonstrated their appetite for destruction and mischief. The recent coup by the king's son, Mohammad, who made himself the crown prince replacing his cousin Mohammad bin Nayef, has shown that the Saudi kingdom is both unstable, untrustworthy and incapable of modernising their antiquated political system. The Arab and Muslim world must shoulder its responsibility to challenge Saudi mischief, ill-conceived policies and draconian rule. This is a matter of urgency. It must be addressed before the situation in the Gulf gets out of control.

Trump's failure pushes GCC to war; Alkhalifa target women activists

The failure of the Trump administration to take a leading role in diffusing the tension among its allies in the Gulf has led to serious escalation of the conflict. Last week the Saudis handed the Qataris a list of 13 impossible demands as a condition for ending their aggressive policy on the smaller neighbour. Those conditions were dismissed by other countries, including UK and USA as unrealistic. The Saudis wanted Qatar to submit to their orders, severing links with Iran, ending military cooperation with Turkey, severing ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, closing down Al Jazeera TV and paying billions in compensation to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt for what they called "domestic losses due to Qatar's policies and interventions in their domestic affairs". The Qataris dismissed the demands outright. Washington has been criticised for lack of leadership at time of crisis. New political alignments are now taking place with Qatar forging stronger links with both Iran and Turkey. Saudis have disastrously lost their risky venture and their political leverage in the region has been greatly weakened.

On 24th June UNICEF reported on the spread of Cholera in Yemen saying that "In just two months, cholera has spread to almost every governorate of this war-torn country. Already more than 1,300 people have died – one quarter of them children – and the death toll is expected to rise. It further added: "This deadly cholera outbreak is the direct consequence of two years of heavy conflict. Collapsing health, water and sanitation systems have cut off 14.5 million people from regular access to clean water and sanitation, increasing the ability of the disease to spread. Rising rates of malnutrition have weakened children's health and made them more vulner-

able to disease. An estimated 30,000 dedicated local health workers who play the largest role in ending this outbreak have not been paid salaries for 10 months.

On Saturday 24th June, Saudi security forces shot dead a young teacher near one of the check points in the town of AlQatif. Amin Al Hani, a father of three, is a community activist attached to the Quran Teaching Centre. As he approached Al-Nasira check point his car was targeted by police and immediately burst in flames. He died in the ensuing intense heat. On 22nd June The Associated Press reported that US forces were involved in the interrogation of detainees held in secret prisons in Yemen where torture is widespread. The centers are run by United Arab Emirati (UAE) and UAE-backed Yemeni forces. The details are grotesque: Prisoners in these centers were "crammed into shipping containers smeared with fences and blindfolded for weeks," beaten, and trussed up on a "grill" – a spit like a roast to which the victim is tied and spun in a circle of fire, the article says. Prisoners were also sexually assaulted, among other forms of abuse. The article also says that some prisoners were transferred to a ship where US "polygraph experts" and "psychological experts" conducted interrogations.

Native Bahraini women have, once again, been targeted by Alkhalifa torturers. Najah Ali, has been remanded in custody for 30 days for accusing the regime of abusing her young son, Ali Juma, 17. He had been detained, tortured and sentenced to three years for taking part in anti-regime protests. She has been denied access to see him. Her other younger son, Kumainl, 14, has been in hiding for fear of arrest.

The management team of the only independent daily newspaper, AlWasat, has laid off its staff, two weeks after Alkhalifa

dictator ordered its closure. There was a slight hope that Alkhalifa allies in London and Washington would intervene to save the only independent newspaper in the country, but that did not happen. Yesterday the employees were sent a letter by the Editor, Dr Mansoor Al Jamri, thanking them for their services and terminating their contracts.

As the policy of tribal revenge replaces the rule of law, Bahrain's dictator has escalated his atrocious crimes against family members of activists working outside the country. The latest victim is the son of a prominent AlWefaq former MP, Sheikh Hassan Sultan. Mohammed who is an apolitical young professional, was summoned four times by the notorious National Security Agency (NSA), interrogated, tortured and threatened with more severe abuse. There is fear for the safety of human rights activist, Ebtisam Al Sayegh, after she exposed the heinous crimes committed against her by NSA's torturers earlier this month. She was tortured and sexually assaulted after being summoned. Fears are rising for her life.

Alarmed by the deteriorating health of Nabeel Rajab, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament, Mr Pier Antonio Panzeri made a statement yesterday on the fate of Nabeel Rajab, in which he said: "I am alarmed at his state of health which has steadily worsened during his lengthy detention and especially after he underwent surgery in April". Mr Panzeri said: "Nabeel Rajab's detention violates his right to freedom of expression. I call on the Bahraini authorities to grant lawyers and family members access to Nabeel Rajab, to drop all charges against him and to free him immediately."

Bahrain Freedom Movement

28th June 2017

Palace coup in lawless Saudi as UN experts criticise Alkhalifa killers

It may not have surprised many because it has long been anticipated, but the palace coup in Riyadh has proven that the House of Saud is rife with intrigues, thirst for power and as lawless as their nomadic ancestors. With the whim of a pen, "king" Salman removed his nephew, Mohammad bin Nayef, and appointed his son Crown Prince (CP). It may be a white coup but its ramifications are still to emerge. Further coups are possible to determine whether the hawkish CP will confine future power within his own household. Since his father grabbed power following his brother's (Abdulla bin Abdul Aziz) death in 2014 the region has entered a new phase of turmoil culminating in the Saudi-led aggression on Yemen, supporting more terrorism, continuing to interfere in the internal affairs of other states like Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Bahrain and using more of the petrodollars reserves to buy off political allegiance and commitment to defend the new rulers. The coup, announced today, confirm the view that the era of the House of Saud will soon end. It has pushed Saudi

Arabia to a state of total disrepute, political anarchy, extremism, sectarianism and adoption of terrorism as a means to settle scores with opponents.

Meanwhile the Saudi atrocious campaign on Yemen has come under new scrutiny. On 19th June the EU spokesperson commented on the bombing of a market in Yemen's Northern province of Saada 17th June that killed at least 20 civilians and injured many more. He said: The EU expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery to all those injured. The bombing is a stark reminder that Yemeni civilians are the ones bearing the brunt of a war that has devastated their country, threatening to undermine regional stability. The EU is increasingly worried by the humanitarian situation in the country, on the verge of widespread famine and most recently hit by a cholera outbreak. The EU "expects all parties to re-engage constructively, under the auspices of the UN, to find a peaceful and negotiated political solution to the conflict so as to bring an end to the current unprecedented

humanitarian crisis."

As the Saudi-led boycott of Qatar escalates, Amnesty International issued a statement on 19th June warning of severe consequences of the conflict. It said: "Thousands of people in the Gulf face the prospect of their lives being further disrupted and their families torn apart as new arbitrary measures announced by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the context of their dispute with Qatar are due to come into force from today" said Amnesty International. The three Gulf states had given their citizens the deadline of 19 June to leave Qatar and return to their respective countries or face fines and other unspecified consequences. They had given Qatari nationals the same deadline to leave Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE and have refused entry to Qatari nationals since 5 June. "The situation that people across the Gulf have been placed in shows utter contempt for human dignity. This arbitrary deadline has caused widespread uncertainty and dread amongst thousands of people ...*Continue on Page 4*

Saudi war led to Cholera epidemic, Nabeel Rajab's case haunts

The cholera outbreak in Yemen has claimed the lives of more than 1000 people in one month. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates more than 100,000 have been affected. The human conscience is crying out for an immediate halt to the Saudi criminal bombing and blockade that have led to the spread of the disease. The American president is coming under intense pressure to stop arming Saudis who are committing enormous war crimes in that country and at home. Almost half of the Senators are opposing these sales. Senator Rand Paul has tweeted: I don't think we should sell arms to Saudi Arabia if it might wind up in the hands of ISIS and if they punish people for protests... Saudi Arabia is causing a humanitarian crisis with a war in Yemen. It funds extremism worldwide. Abuses human rights. Stop arming them now. We must stand up and tell Saudi Arabia ENOUGH. They are the biggest exporter of extremism and hatred in the world." Those arms sales are causing human catastrophe inside Saudi Arabia itself. The town of Awwamiyah in the Eastern Province is suffering daily fatalities as the Saudi troops attack the residents at will. Two days ago a young man was killed with life bullets by Al Saud attackers. Abdul Mohsin Abdulla Al Faraj, father of five, received a direct bullet hit. At least thirty people were shot in dawn attack yesterday, including Mohammad Al Nimr, brother of Martyr Sheikh Al Nimr, executed last year. Meanwhile the GCC crisis resulting from the Saudi decision to punish Qatar for adopting independent foreign policy has escalated sharply. The Kuwaiti mediation has faltered as the Qatari Emir refuses to

submit to the Saudi humiliating demands. Qatar has now been blockaded from all sides except on its maritime borders with Iran. Qataris stranded in Saudi Arabia, UAE or Bahrain are subjected to harsh conditions as these regimes abandoned notions of brotherhood and humanity. Saudis are in deep quagmire because of its ill-conceived policies on Yemen and Qatar. Apart from few marginal states, no country of significance has severed its links with Qatar. On 8th June Alkhalifa followed the UAE in announcing that it would fine and jail anyone expressing sympathy for Qatar over the Saudi-led sanctions. "Any expression of sympathy with the government of Qatar or opposition to the measures taken by the government of Bahrain, whether through social media, Twitter or any other form of communication, is a criminal offence punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine," a Bahraini official said. Meanwhile the human rights world commemorated one year of incarceration of Nabeel Rajab. Yesterday there were many statements, protests and solidarity campaigns around the globe calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the world-renowned human rights activist who is jail for expressing his rejection of the Saudi-led war on Yemen. Yesterday 13th June Congressman Jim McGovern delivered a speech at US Congress calling for the immediate release of Nabeel Rajab. In Brussels 36 MEPs signed a letter directed to Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy asking her to take a stand on Nabeel Rajab's detention. They called on Union Member States to urge the Government of Bahrain both pub-

licly and privately to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Nabeel Rajab and all political prisoners;
- Ensure he is granted immediate and regular access to his lawyer, his family, and any medical treatment he may require;
- Halt the harassment of those who peacefully exercise their freedom of speech or assembly.

In London Amnesty International joined 15 major human rights bodies issued a joint open letter to UN members and observer states to call for the release of Nabeel Rajab immediately. Several NGOs held a vigil outside Bahrain's Embassy in London to demand the release of Nabeel Rajab. Sayed Ahmad Al Wadaei, a human rights activist was arrested by police when he held Nabeel's photo against Embassy building. He was charged with "trespassing" while not setting foot inside the building. It was harsh treatment in parallel with what Alkhalifa torturers are doing to his family. His mother and brother in law and a cousin have been in custody for two months in retaliation for Al Wadaei's anti-regime activities. Several other activists are being punished by arresting their relatives in Bahrain. On 12th June Amnesty International issued a public statement on this issue. It called on the Bahraini authorities to put an end to the continuous harassment and targeting of the family of human rights activist Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, who resides in the UK, which Amnesty International believes is an attempt to force him to halt his peaceful activities. In the week 5-11th June there were at least 8 arrests including a child. There were 63 protests in 28 towns and villages.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
14th June 2017

Bahrain must end worsening human rights clampdown, UN experts say

A group of United Nations human rights experts has urged the Government of Bahrain to halt its orchestrated crackdown on civil society. "Over the past year, there has been a sharp deterioration of the human rights situation in the country," the experts* said. "This has included unacceptable restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, aimed at muzzling any discordant voice and suppressing dissent." The repression took a new turn in June 2016 when the Ministry of Justice began legal moves to dissolve Bahrain's main opposition party, the Al-Wafaq Islamic Society, and stripped the country's highest Shia religious authority, Mr. Isa Qassim, of his citizenship. The crackdown has continued to intensify since then, with the last major opposition party, Wa'ad, dissolved at the end of May 2017. On 23 May, security forces began an operation in the city of Duraz, the centre of the peaceful demonstrations, using excessive and lethal force to disperse peaceful protesters who had gathered in a sit-in, resulting in the deaths of five persons and injuring dozens of others.

"For use of force by security forces in managing peaceful protests to be legal, it must be necessary and proportionate, and aim at protecting the right to life. The reported use of tear gas, shotguns equipped with birdshot and lethal antipersonnel weapons by security forces to disperse a peaceful demonstration was neither necessary or proportionate and therefore excessive, qualifying the five deaths as unlawful killings. It is tragic that while security forces are meant to protect life, their actions have shown otherwise," the experts said. "The authorities have resorted to drastic measures to curb dissenting opinions such as torture, arbitrary detention, unfounded convictions, the stripping of citizenship, the use of travel bans, intimidation, including death threats, and reprisals for cooperating with international organizations, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights," they noted. "We are particularly worried about these measures, coupled with the campaign of harassment aimed at human rights defenders, who are increasingly being charged with offences for which the death penalty may be imposed," the experts said, high-

lighting in this regard the use of repressive legislation, in particular the Law of Associations, and anti-terrorism laws. The experts are also particularly concerned at the resumption of executions after a de facto moratorium in place since 2010, the broader powers given to National Security Agency officers and a constitutional amendment allowing for military courts to try civilians. They added: "Trying to quell protests and criticism by resorting to repression and violence is not only a violation of international human rights law, it also undoubtedly leads to an escalation of tension. We fear that this increasingly hostile environment is undermining any prospect of alleviation of social and political unrest in Bahrain." "We call on the Government of Bahrain to immediately cease its campaign of persecution against human rights defenders, journalists and anyone else with divergent opinions, and take all measures to guarantee a safe and enabling environment for all Bahrainis, independent of their political opinions, beliefs or confession," the experts concluded.

Continued on Page 4

Brian Dooley, Contributor Senior Advisor, Human Rights First

What's Happening on 3rd Floor of Bahrain's Muharraq Police Station?

June 2017

Horrifying details are emerging from those detained in Bahrain over the last 10 days. President Trump met the king of Bahrain on May 21 and assured him of an improved relationship with the United States. Two days later a police raid in the village of



Duraz left five people dead. Over the last week hundreds of people have been arrested, and dissidents targeted.

On the afternoon of Friday May 26 human rights defender Ebtisam Al Sayegh texted me, saying she had been summoned for an interrogation that was to start an hour later, at 4pm. It was the third time this year she had been called for questioning, but the atmosphere is dramatically different since Trump met the king. "I know that the situation has changed a lot from previous times," she said. We've known each other six years, and last met in March at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, where she was drawing international attention to human rights abuses by Bahrain's regime.

Her interrogation on Friday on the third floor of Muharraq police station in the offices of the National Security Service lasted seven hours. She was immediately hospitalized on her release, injured and traumatized.

She describes how, during those hours, she was severely beaten and punched, and subjected to sectarian abuse. In strong echoes of what happened to many political prisoners in 2011 after thousands of people were arrested following widespread protests for democracy, she reports how she was forced to chant the Bahraini royal anthem and to describe those killed by the police as terrorists. She says she was severely beaten and punched on the head and different parts of the body when she used human rights terms to describe to her work, and that they threatened to harm her children.

She describes too how she was forced to stand throughout the interrogation, blindfolded, and sexually assaulted. She also says she was threatened with rape.

Many of the questions, she says, focused on her work at the UN Human Rights Council. Bahrain's ruling family is obviously sensitive about its dire international image. Her telling the truth about the country's human rights work has clearly hit a nerve.

She told me that during the torture she was questioned about other Bahraini activists, about myself and Human Rights First, and told "there is no organization in the world that can save you or

save the activists and we will target them one by one."

Other detailed reports of interrogations will emerge in the coming days and weeks. More rights activists are also likely to be targeted.

In 2011 Bahrain's government promised to comply with a recommendation from an independent commission that "There should be audiovisual recording of all official interviews with detained persons." That clearly hasn't happened.

In May this year the UN Committee Against Torture noted in its observations on Bahrain concern "at continued numerous and consistent allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in all places of detention It is also concerned at the climate of impunity which seems to prevail as a result of the low number of convictions for torture and the sentences given to persons responsible for torture resulting, inter alia, in death, which are not commensurate to the gravity of the crime."

Torture in custody in Bahrain has been a chronic problem for many years, but be-

cause international journalists and human rights organizations are de facto banned from visiting Bahrain we can't visit the Muharraq police station to ask directly what's happening on its third floor.

But it's a question UN representatives, US embassy staff in Bahrain and other foreign governments should be asking urgently and publicly, and it should be the first question every diplomat asks when they next meet a Bahraini government official.

Saudi palace coup

Continued from Page 2

who fear they will be separated from their loved ones," said James Lynch, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Global Issues Programme.

Meanwhile the Alkhalifa regime has intensified its crimes against Bahrainis. On 18th June Nabeel Al samee' was abducted by masked members of Death Squads, tortured beyond imagination and murdered. His mutilated body was dumped at his small farm near his town of Sanabis. The martyr is cousin of at least two other martyrs: Hassan Taher who was killed by regime's forces in 1995 and Abbas Al Samee' who was executed in January on trumped up charges and confessions extracted under torture.

A group of UN human rights experts has urged the Government of Bahrain to halt its orchestrated crackdown on civil society. "We call on the Government of Bahrain to immediately cease its campaign of persecution against human rights defenders, journalists and anyone else with divergent opinions, and take all measures to guarantee a safe and enabling environment for all Bahrainis, independent of their political opinions, beliefs or confession," the experts concluded. The experts are: Ms. Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Ms. Annalisa Ciampi, Special Rapporteur freedom of peaceful assembly and association; Mr. Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; Mr. José Antonio Guevara Bermúdez, current Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

On 19th June Alkhalifa kangaroo court ordered the execution of Bahraini native, Hussain Marzooq and three year imprisonment for: Khalil Marzooq, Amir Bu Dahoom, Mohsin Ali Yaqoob, Mohammad Isa Habib and Hassan Ali Ibrahim. The group was falsely accused of causing the death of Mrs Fakhriya AlMuslim who was shot dead by the security team of one of the royals at Al Ekr town. Instead of charging the killers the regime fabricated a false story implicating these innocent youths.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
21 June 2017



Martyr Nabeel Al Samee, killed by regime's forces Monday 19th June

Bahrain must end worsening Human Rights?

Continued from Page 3

The human rights experts have sought clarifications from the Bahraini authorities on the issues in question.

(*) The experts: Ms. Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Ms. Annalisa Ciampi, Special Rapporteur freedom of peaceful assembly and association; Mr. Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; Mr. José Antonio Guevara Bermúdez, current Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.