

# BAHRAIN

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

## **The dynamics of change in the Gulf will defy the strategists**

When the Arab people talk of ultimate victory by the people over tyranny and dictatorships some analysts will receive this with scepticism. Many are deceived by the apparent supremacy of those in high office especially when they have abundance of petrodollars. But those who pour in the streets with clear and legitimate demands for democratic transformation have their own ways of calculation and assessment. Material power is not necessarily the determining factor in people's struggle to achieve social and political change. If material leverage is the only factor in the struggle, tyrants would not worry too much about scores of youth marching the streets with their clinched fists being the only means of expression and exercising power. Why do those tyrants remain full of worry even when those revolutionaries are locked up behind bars? Why do they continue to abuse them at the torture dungeons? Why do they have to allocate large junks of their budgets to recruit mercenaries or public relations companies as part of their arsenal against those calling for change?

For the past seven years Bahraini youth have marched on the streets of their towns and villages calling for change and ignoring the excessive force adopted by the regime against them. They have endured enormous suffering and, in some cases, paid the ultimate price for their non-ending zeal. Even the elderly leaders who have now spent seven years behind bars have remained not only defiant but high-headed and non-yielding. Most of them suffer from chronic illnesses, including cancer. Yet their spirits are so high that the Alkhalifa regime has continued their policy of abuse and gross human rights violation. Last month these powerless elderly individuals were attacked in their cells, abused and had their belongings confiscated. Even their written memoirs and writings were deemed dangerous by the tyrants and confiscated. For the 15 men only two copies of the holy Quran were left behind to be shared by the group. Regime's newspapers were stopped and the TV only TV screen switched off. The group members have not had family visits for nine months, while medical care has been reduced to the minimum. Despite their ailment they have refused to accept the regime's humiliating conditions that they must be shackled if they want to see

their family members or visit the doctor. They flatly refused to give the dictator anything that would fulfil his evil desires. Parallel with this there is the group of women who have been incarcerated for their heroic opposition to the hereditary dictatorship. They have also refused to bend their heads to the dictator and remained defiant all the way. Last month they went on hunger strike to protest the placement of a screen between themselves and their family members during visits. The prison officers first agreed to remove the screens in order to break the strike, but later reneged on their promises. Bahrain's women have proven to be formidable, honourable and defiant all the way. They are unlikely to give in to the dictators even if that meant more sacrifices and agonies.

The nature of the struggle in Bahrain is vastly different from anywhere else. The people see themselves as the legitimate natives in that land and that the Alkhalifa are foreign intruders who used violence to grab the land and occupy the country. This goes deep into the psyche of the ordinary native Bahrainis who have endured enormous suffering over the centuries at the hands of these foreign occupiers. This may explain their resilience even when the odds are stacked against them. The new unholy alliance of the counter revolution forces aims at breaking the will of the people in order to forfeit their desire for change. But what is alarming is the abandonment by the West of the pro-democracy activism in the Middle East. Last month the former British foreign secretary, William Hague wrote an article calling on UK to promote democracy in order to offset what he perceives as China's support of dictatorships. Whether the British politicians are going to heed his call remains to be seen. But it is unlikely that the weak conservative government will take a pro-active role in supporting the pro-democracy movements and dump its traditional allies who are the worst dictators in the world.

In material terms, it is true that the balance of power does not favour those struggling for change. But sometimes dictators are self-destructive. This is probably what is happening in Saudi

Arabia these days. Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) has broken many taboos of the Saudi hierarchical monarchy. The House of Saud is passing through one of its most difficult moments since King Abdul Aziz founded the state 85 years ago. Many princes have not only been bypasses in the leadership struggle, but are locked up at the Ritz-Carlton hotel which has become their prison. They are being stripped of their wealth and accused of corruption. Many believe that this charge equally applies to MBS himself. Two years ago he bought a yacht for \$400 millions. In addition to his misadventure with Qatar, his doomed war on Yemen military occupation of Bahrain, MBS will find it extremely difficult to extricate himself from this unprecedented Saudi quagmire. Bahrainis view these developments with pain and agony but also with hope and aspiration. Finally, it seems, that the end of the leader of the counter-revolution forces is crumbling. Few tears will be shed for the end of the evil political, economic and media empire harnessed by the Saudi rulers.

The question now is not whether this paper tiger will disappear in the raging political wind in the Arabian shifting sands, but when and at what price. The people in the Arabian peninsula have been marginalised for too long. The West has sided with the House of Saud despite its notorious ideologies of extremism and exclusion. These ideologies helped groom the phenomenon of terrorism; the most evil of modern-day Arabia. Last year the US Congress legislated the JASTA Act that allows families of 9/11 victims to sue the Saudis for compensation. Yet the Trump administration has over-stepped the congressional legislation and become one of the most partisan supporters of the Saudi regime. America and the world will shoulder the bill for this ill-conceived policy. Yet it is hoped that the transition of the Middle East from absolute dictatorships to democracy will happen without much loss of lives or destruction of the infra structure of the region. Despite the odds against this transition, Bahrainis will always brace themselves to worse scenarios and slower pace of change. They will persevere and will undoubtedly reach the noble goals of freedom and democracy.

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## Investigate Saudi, UAE war crimes; Health of Bahraini cleric worsens

The Saudi-led coalition waging unjust war on Yemen has been humiliated into submission and forced to ease the criminal blockade. Both the US and UK were shamed into taking action to contain the famine and epidemic diseases especially Cholera which have spread across the country and affected millions. There was worldwide condemnation of the Saudis and their backers for their violation of the International Humanitarian Law in its war on Yemen. The Arab Organization for Human Rights in the UK has called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate war crimes committed by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in Yemen. The UAE reacted by accusing Qatar of standing behind the call.

Meanwhile, concerns have been expressed about the future of Saudi Arabia which is fragmenting from within. Those who initially remained silent on the rounding up of Saudi princes and business by self-appointed crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) are beginning to speak out against the move that has drastically weakened the fabrics of the House of Saud. It is reported that prince Mit'eb bin Abdulla, MBS's cousin has been freed from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel after agreeing to pay one billion dollars ransom to his jailers. Several others have also agreed to financial settlements that would set them free, while few have refused the offer. There is increasing rejection of bartering freedom for money and unease about the clear distinction between members of the royal family whose jail is the Ritz-Carlton and the ordinary Saudi citizens who are often held in squalid conditions. This Apartheid approach confirms the regime's persecution of the poor and the weak while seeking to attract the upper classes of citizens.

The events in Bahrain have taken a sharp

turn to the worse with heavier sentences and more nationality revocations. However, people were shocked to learn that the most senior religious figure in the country who belongs to the native majority, has been denied proper medical care and that his health had taken a sharp dive. He is reported to have lost 30 kgs in weight and his heart and general health are deteriorating. In the past few days he was bleeding. As no visitors are not allowed to see him, details of his health condition are not known. However there has been worldwide outcry from both religious and political circles who are worried about the continued persecution by the regime. Sheikh Qassim represents the people; he was one of the 30 elected members who drafted the country's constitution in 1973 and a member of the defunct parliament which was dissolved by the ruling tribe in 1975. At a briefing in New York yesterday, Stéphane Dujarric the UN Spokesperson said: We do hope that he receives the medical treatment that he needs". Human rights activists, senior religious scholars and public figures spoke of the need to end the persecution of the senior cleric and offer him proper treatment.

Tayba Darwish, a mother of 3 had her appeal turned down by Alkhalifa court. She is serving five year sentence for giving refuge to an injured youth targeted by the mercenary forces. She is one of many women languishing at Alkhalifa torture chambers for helping the needy. Yesterday, the Kuwaiti authorities handed Sayed Ali Al Abbar, a Bahraini citizens to Alkhalifa torturers, ignoring his rights and personal safety. Despite appeals from political and human rights bodies, Alkhalifa regime has resumed its travel ban on human rights activists. Last week the ban included Nidal Al Salman of Bahrain Human Rights Centre, Abdul Nabi Al Ekri of Transparency, journalist

Ahmad Radhi and Radhi Al Mousawi of Wa'ad Society.

Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of AlWefaq, refused to attend a kangaroo court ordered by Alkhalifa dictators to try him for "espionage". The Sheikh was involved with two other AlWefaq members, Sheikh Hassan Sultan and Ali AlAswad in a Qatari initiative to find a settlement of the situation in 2011 after the flare up of the Revolution. Their contacts with the Qatari foreign minister were known to the regime officials who were also talking to the Qataris and eager to find a way out. The regime has become so bankrupt politically that it is now digging in old files to punish anyone who has fallen out of favour.

The Bahraini regime has been criticised by Congressman Jim McGovern who is a senior House Democrat and co-chair of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, for ill-treatment of Nabeel Rajab. In a damning statement, he said: "Today Bahrain doubled down on its unjust treatment of Nabeel Rajab, a brave human rights defender and my friend. A Bahraini court rejected an appeal by Nabeel Rajab of the two-year sentence imposed on him and has again failed to uphold the most basic standards of justice. The statement added: "Nabeel's case is a textbook example of the misuse and manipulation of a judicial system for purely political ends. Bahrain simply cannot tolerate freedom of expression." It concluded: "This court decision will not silence Nabeel, and it will not silence those of us in the international community who stand with him. All Bahrain has accomplished is to prove Nabeel right: the Bahraini government systematically violates its citizens' most fundamental rights. Today's decision proves his point."

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
29th November 2017

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## Yemen war exposes Saudi criminality, Rajab haunts Alkhalifa tyrant

The New York Times editorial on 16<sup>th</sup> November called for a political solution to the Saudi-led war on Yemen. It said: On Monday (13<sup>th</sup> November), the United States Congress passed a resolution denouncing the targeting of Yemeni civilians and calling for all parties involved to "increase efforts to adopt all necessary and appropriate measures to prevent civilian casualties and to increase humanitarian access." The vote should serve as a warning to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is intent on expanding Saudi Arabia's regional influence, that while he may have the unreserved [blessing of President Trump](#), American lawmakers are less tolerant of flagrant violations of international law and of basic humanity. The editorial ended with the assertion that: "The only way to end the Yemeni people's hell is for Congress and the United Nations to keep pressing all parties for a political solution." 50,000 Yemeni children could die by the end of this year in what will be "the largest famine the world has seen in many decades."

On 21<sup>st</sup> November the Wall Street Journal reported some details about the ongoings at the Ritz-Carlton in Riyadh that has become prison for the Saudi princes and businessmen. Mohammad bin Salman's aim is to extract as much as possible of their wealth to subsidise his ambitious plans. Those who agree to deals may be allowed to go home and live under house arrest as the assets are transferred. Those who don't agree to forfeit assets could be moved to al-Hayer prison about 25 miles south of central Riyadh and face trial. According to the paper, the strain among detainees was showing, according to a Saudi officials. Some—especially the less prominent who stood to lose larger shares of their wealth or could implicate others by admitting to corruption—were hardly getting sleep, a Saudi official said. There are reports that torture is rampant at the makeshift prison. Prince Mit'eb bin Abdullah, the son of the late King Abdullah who was once considered a future crown prince, was beaten and tortured, along with five other princes, when he was arrested and interrogated in

Riyadh during the ongoing political purge in the kingdom.

Once again Bahrain's dictator has decided to prolong the suffering of the world-renowned human rights activist, Nabeel Rajab by confirming the two years prison sentence imposed on him in July for criticising the regime's internal policies. He ordered his court to adjourn his "trial" once again to 31<sup>st</sup> December amid international calls for his immediate and unconditional release. Mr Rajab is being harshly punished for his tweets condemning the illegal war on Yemen, criticising Saudi policies and Alkhalifa torture crimes in Bahrain. Yesterday, several human rights bodies staged a protest outside the Bahraini embassy in London calling for his release. They include Index on Censorship, English PEN, Committee Against Arms Trade (CAAT), BIRD and others.

Calls have been made by the families of the leaders of Bahrain Revolution for an immediate lifting of the most draconian rules and acts by the prison officials.

**BFM**, 22nd November 2017

## UK urged to stop arming Saudis, Alkhalifa intensify revenge

Under the title "WORLD WAR 3 will be fought 'with British weapons' as UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia soar", Simon Osborne wrote an article in the Express on 9<sup>th</sup> November. He said that "more than £4.6bn of British-made bombs and missiles were sold to the Saudis in the first two years of airstrikes which amounts to an increase of almost 500 per cent. Figures from the Department for International Trade (DIT) show in the two years leading up to the Yemen war, £33m of ML4 licences covering bombs, missiles and countermeasures were approved. But in the two years since the start of Saudi bombing in March 2015, the figure increased by 457 per cent to £1.9bn, according to Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT). Licences covering aircraft including Eurofighter jets rose by 70 per cent to £2.6bn in the same period."

Meanwhile, The United Nations said air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition were the main cause of almost 5,295 civilian deaths and 8,873 casualties confirmed so far, warning that the real figure is "likely to be far higher". It said that British-made bombs have been found at the scene of bombings deemed to violate international law but the UK has continued its political and material support for Riyadh's campaign. Amnesty International UK said a total halt to British arms exports to Saudi Arabia was "long overdue". Polly Truscott, its foreign affairs analyst, told the Independent: "When the High Court made its very disappointing ruling in the summer, we said there was a clear human rights need for the UK and other governments to stop selling arms to the Saudi coalition unless they were willing to risk becoming a party to terrible crimes in Yemen. "These figures are a further re-

minder of how the UK Government is apparently more interested in the financial bottom line for the arms industry, than in the need to protect civilians."

In a rare exercise of its war-making role, the US House of Representatives on 13<sup>th</sup> November overwhelmingly passed a resolution explicitly stating that U.S. military assistance to Saudi Arabia in its war in Yemen is not authorized under legislation passed by Congress to fight terrorism or invade Iraq. It states, in part, that U.S. military operations are authorized to fight only Al Qaeda and other allied terrorist groups in Yemen, not Shiite Muslim rebels. "To date," the resolution says, "Congress has not enacted specific legislation authorizing the use of military force against parties participating in the Yemeni civil war that are not otherwise subject to" the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force or the 2003 AUMF in Iraq. The House resolution "expresses the urgent need for a political solution in Yemen consistent with Security Council Resolution 2216 ... or otherwise agreed to by the parties," and "denounces the conduct of activities in Yemen and areas affected by conflict that are, directly or indirectly, inconsistent with the laws of armed conflict, including the deliberate targeting of civilian populations or the use of civilians as human shields."

On 10<sup>th</sup> November Saudi kangaroo court has sentenced human rights woman activist, Na'eema Al Matrood to six years in jail and travel ban for further six years after completing her prison term. She had been arrested for the first time on 23<sup>rd</sup> February and again on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The charges include taking part in protests and demonstrations, membership of media network, running two social media outlets on Twitter and Facebook and calling for release of

political prisoners.

In Bahrain the daily popular protests have continued unabated. Scores of protests and demonstrations took place in Karzakkah, Abu Saiba, Shakhoura, Daih, Ma'amir and other towns. Although these protests have become a routine, they reflect deep conviction that eventually the world will pay attention and realise that supporting the criminal tribal junta is betting on a losing horse. In its 2017 report, Freedom House has classified Bahrain as "Not Free". It cited the closure of internet services in Duraz, the banning of the websites of political societies, the imposition of strict regime on social media, and the closure of AlWasat newspaper as symptomatic of deliberate policy to curtail freedoms.

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November Alkhalifa junta's military court adjourned the trial of several Bahraini natives to 30<sup>th</sup> November for the fourth time. The victims had been forcibly disappeared for up to one year while regime's torturers were compiling false evidence extracted under torture. Even regime's media was banned from covering the secret pseudo-trials for fear of leaking the most horrific forms of torture inflicted on the victims. On Sunday, the dictator's propaganda machine announced that Sheikh Ali Salman, Sheikh Hassan Sultan and Ali Alswad (leaders of the Al-Wefaq Society and former MPs) had been sent to the criminal court on several charges including "spying for Qatar. The case is fabricated on the basis of an initiative undertaken by Qatar in the weeks after the Revolution started in 2011. It was done with regime's knowledge. The case shows how low the criminal regime has sunk and how it twists facts.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
15th November 2017

## UK sales of arms and military kit to Saudi Arabia hit £1.1bn in 2017

Jessica Elgot, The Guardian 24 October British sales of military equipment to Saudi Arabia topped £1.1bn in the first half of this year, with government data showing a spike in sales since the spring. The statistics from the Department for International Trade (DIT) show the UK sold £836m of arms and military hardware to Saudi Arabia between April and June, up from £280m between January and March. Saudi Arabia – which was visited by the UK prime minister, Theresa May, as one of her first trips after triggering the formal Brexit process in March – has purchased arms including air-to-air missiles, aircraft components and sniper rifles. The sales also include anti-riot gear, ballistic shields and body armour.

The latest export licence figures are released amid continued concern over the Saudi military intervention in Yemen. DIT is facing criticism after it was revealed that UK soldiers were carrying out demonstrations for weapons manufacturers. The department refused to say which countries had attended.

DIT said identifying the delegations

would "prejudice the relationship between the UK and other states". A freedom of information request by the Observer showed British forces were involved in demonstrating the Firestorm targeting systems, used by Gulf coalition forces involved in airstrikes in Yemen.

The department added that the increase in the value of licences issued this quarter was due to a single licence for approximately £830m, originally granted in 2015 which expired without being completed.

A government spokesperson said the licence was "not for use in any ground campaign" and the majority of the export licences issued by the UK were for non-military goods, though their value is far lower. The goods include intelligence equipment, such as telecommunications jamming and security software.

The deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats, Jo Swinson, said the huge sums were "shameful profiteering by the arms companies from a conflict which has killed thousands of civilians and subjected millions to famine and disease".

Swinson said the government should imme-

diately suspend arms sales to Saudi, regardless of the cost. "There is no justification for the UK to continue selling billions of pounds worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia while they continue their operation in Yemen," she added.

"We must suspend arms sales to Saudi immediately. Britain is better than this – we should stand firm for our values, not sell them to the highest bidder."

The shadow foreign secretary, Emily Thornberry, said in her party conference speech last month that a Labour government would overhaul the process of approving export licences, which she said currently took place "behind closed doors, and shrouded in secrecy".

Thornberry said Labour would commit to "wholesale reform of the legal and regulatory framework fully implementing the International Arms Trade Treaty", and introduce a new, more transparent system.

A government spokesman said: "The UK government takes its export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world.

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# My son is tortured in Bahraini prison, UK government is silent

By Ahlam Hasan

He said: "Mum, don't cry. The cameras are on us. I don't want to see you like that, don't let them use it against us. I will tell you what I've been through, stay calm as I do."

With great difficulty, I have held my sorrow inside – but I have never stayed silent. Elyas is dying in prison, and must be freed so he can fight the cancer that is killing him. He has been failed by the Bahraini justice system. This month he was again failed by the UK's Middle East Minister Alistair Burt and the Foreign Commonwealth Office, who visited Bahrain knowing about my son's case and stayed silent on human rights.

Elyas was just 21, a fit and healthy young man, when he was arrested in 2012 at our home by Bahrain's security forces. In detention, they beat and tortured Elyas and prevented him from sleeping, until he finally signed prepared confessions and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

In March 2015, security forces abused him along with hundreds of other inmates. In the notorious incident at Jau Prison, where torture of detainees is common, the inmates were collectively punished for weeks. Elyas choked on tear gas chucked down corridors and into rooms. Several police officers beat Elyas violently on his stomach.

We discovered the cancer months later, in August 2015. Elyas had been in prison for three years by then. The prison didn't inform us when they transferred Elyas to the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital.

We found out from another inmate, who used his precious weekly phone call to give us the news. We rushed to hospital, but the security forces denied us entry. It was 5 August: that same day, Elyas underwent surgery, and a sample of his colon was taken for analysis.

Elyas Al-Mulla has been tortured in Jau prison and trapped in his cell for 23 hours a day Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy

It was five days before I was allowed, finally, to see my son. He looked exhausted. Prison, torture and disease have aged him far beyond his 24 years. The hospital staff gave us the diagnosis: stage 3 colon cancer. They had not informed him, and instead left it to me to break this news to my son.

Elyas has been fighting his cancer for two years now. His health is worsening, and the prison's negligence is a root cause. The prison often neglects to take him to hospital for appointments that are sometimes set months in advance.

But when they do take Elyas to hospital, it is an ordeal. Elyas's immune system is not working properly, yet he is transported in an armoured vehicle without ventilation, often with inmates suffering infectious diseases. They cuff him by the wrists and ankles, as though my son, who can barely eat or sleep, poses a threat. When he was receiving chemotherapy, they would not

even let him rest: as soon as treatment ended, he was on the way back to prison. By the end of the day, he'd be suffering severe back pain and bleeding from the legs because of the cuffs and chains.

Police fire tear gas at detainees at Jau prison in Bahrain in March 2015 Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy

This year, prison conditions have been steadily worsening. Elyas is kept in filthy prison conditions, and trapped in his cell for 23 hours a day. Bahrain is violating its own law in leaving prisoners to die. Elyas is being denied access to needed medication. The hospital cannot prescribe it without a stool analysis, but for the past month and a half the prison has failed to provide a container for Elyas. My boy lives in excruciating pain. He has told me he would rather die than be subject to this continued humiliation.

When Elyas was first diagnosed with cancer, his lawyer wrote immediately to the judiciary requesting his release. Bahraini law states that a detainee suffering a life-threatening illness may have their penalty postponed. The letter never received a response. Yet the support for Elyas has been heart-warming. The UK-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) helped us raise the issue in the British parliament, and we are grateful to Tom Brake MP, who asked the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if they will raise Elyas' case with the Bahraini government.

It took a month for the Middle East Minister Alistair Burt to respond with just two sentences: "We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to report these to the relevant human rights oversight bodies. The UK continues to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments."

Yet I have submitted eight complaints to Bahrain's Police Ombudsman since 2015 and received no help. The first complaint was about Elyas' torture alongside hundreds of other inmates in Jau Prison in March 2015, when officers beat him senselessly. I received no response.

I was appalled when Mr Burt visited Bahrain this month and praised "the creation of the human rights oversight bodies and the

development of effective and accountable justice institutions". Mr Burt knows about my son's case, and the cases of so many others suffering today, yet there is no indication that any concern was raised.

If such bodies and institutions actually existed, as Mr Burt and the British Embassy in Bahrain insist, then Elyas would not be dying in prison.

## UK's military sale to Saudi

*Continued from Page 2*

For the past nine months these figures, including Abdul Wahab Hussain, Hassan Mushaima, Sheikh Ali Salman, Dr Abdul Jalil AlSingace and Abdul Hadi AlKhawaja have been subjected to most atrocious treatment. They have been denied family visits, proper medical care or proper sanitation. Last month they had all their books confiscated with only two copies of the Holy Quran left to be shared among 15 of them. All books, personal memoirs and manuscripts were stolen by regime's mercenaries. They also stopped regime's newspapers and TV channels. Other detainees are also subjected to criminal treatment. Hisham Al Sabbagh, a widower and a father of two has been transferred to solitary confinement for protesting against the ill-treatment of native Bahraini prisoners. Another inmate, Ammar Abdul Ghani, has been in solitary confinement for the past four weeks. Another detainee, Maher AlKhabbaz, has been tortured for taking longer time at the toilet. He was set upon by regime's torturers, beating him mercilessly, before being moved to unknown location.

A new wave of collective punishment has been unfolding in the past few days. Yesterday, Hajji Abdul Majid Abdulla (also known as Hajji Sumood) was sentenced to six months detention for continuing to protest against Alkhalifa brutality. He is in his mid-seventies and suffers various ailments. From Jidhafs Town Mohammad Nasser AlAshoori was snatched in a raid on his home. Several others from various towns were detained including Ahmad Sultan, Hussain Ali, Ayman Salman and Isa Adel. The misfortunes of Alkhalifa are mounting. Now they face the prospect of inability to pay for the debts they accumulated. Bloomberg classifies Bahrain one of seven countries that are unlikely to service their debts. It said: Bahrain's spread rose dramatically in late October to the highest since January after it was said to ask Gulf allies for aid. The nation is seeking to replenish international reserves and avert a currency devaluation as oil prices batter the six Gulf Cooperation Council oil producers. Although its neighbours are likely to help, Bahrain could still be left with the highest budget deficit in the region, according to the IMF.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
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