

BAHRAIN

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

Seven years of Revolution confirm need for fundamental change

Is it a miracle? Is it pure genius? Or Is it divine guidance that the Bahrain Revolution has survived seven years of unprecedented repression the like of which has not been seen in the history of the region? When the Bahraini people decided to rise up and challenge Alkhalifa domination and oppression, they were responding to the natural calls created by the Arab Spring in early 2011. In the normal sequence of events the calls to emulated what happened in Tunisia or Egypt was destined to failure. The regime appeared to be strong; the opposition fragmented with large portion working within the system; as members of the regime's Shura council. The regional politics did not favour a popular revolt in the country that had just succeeded in wooing the largest opposition group to contest the last elections, three months before the due date for the Revolution. With what appeared to be a functioning parliament (or pseudo-parliament), unlimited financial, security and political support from much larger powers such as Saudi Arabia, UK and USA, the Alkhalifa regime seemed formidable. Yet it had within its files and ranks every reason to fear a popular revolt. Six months prior to the due date of the proposed "Revolution" Bahrain's dictator had committed a fatal mistake; arresting more than 500 native Bahrainis with scores of them snatched by masked members of his Death Squads. The situation at the time did not merit such a crackdown. There were some dissenting voices but the overall situation was calm and the regime's "parliament" was functioning. The "elections" were only two months away and there was no need to panic or enter into a major conflict with the people. The sudden attack on the people at a scale and ferocity unseen since the uprising of the nineties created tension and anger among the people that would prove necessary for the eruption of the Revolution six months later. Bahrainis felt so humiliated by those events especially by the level of persecution, abuse and ill-treatment that followed. There are harrowing stories of violence by Alkhalifa torturers and tales of untold stories of heroism by the detainees. Within less than four months, the events in Tunisia began unfolding following the self-immolation of Mohammad Bu-Azizi, the street trader who had been humiliated by

an official of the local council. Ironically, the incident happened on Bahrain's Martyrs Day (16/17th December 2010). It is usually a time when the young people would pour into the streets to mark that important advent.

By January, the Arab Spring had started to blossom with the first of the Revolutions erupting in Tunisia and Egypt. The anger felt by Bahraini youth led them to declare their intention to start an all-out Revolution for the first time in the history of the conflicts with the Alkhalifa. Apart from the youth and the revolutionary forces none of the politicians or the political societies had anticipated the extent of the flare up. On the eve of the declared day of the mass protests, the regime aommitted another big mistake by attacking a marriage ceremony at the town of Karzakkan. People were furious at the way the regime attempted to disrupt their happy event. As the first glimpses of the sunrise were rising in the distant horizon, Mr Abdul Wahab Hussain, who had just finished leading the dawn prayer was at the forefront of a group of young people chanting anti-regime slogans. It was severely attacked by regime's forces injuring several people. The planned day of rage was underway with other protests erupting in various other towns and villages. The dictator who thought his regime was impregnable, was furious. He issued an order of "shoot to kill". The first martyr, Ali Abdul Hadi Mushaima had fallen killed instantly with live bullets. The momentum of the Revolution was gathering pace. The day ended with sombre feelings among the people. More intense outrage emerged the next day as the people, emboldened by mass protests in other countries, poured into the streets for the funeral of their first martyr. Another young man, Ali Al Mo'men was shot dead that day. The people decided to march to the Pearl Roundabout and occupy it. The circle of regime's violence in the first week led to encampment at that point. On the second night regime's forces attacked the hundreds of protesters encamped at the Pearl Roundabout, killing a number of them.

The Revolution was about to take more serious dimensions. With US President,

Barrack Obama, openly repudiating the criminal action against peaceful protesters, Bahrain's dictator was forced to concede the Roundabout to the protesters. From there on, the Revolution gathered momentum with the Roundabout becoming the rallying point for the revolutionaries. Within two weeks, the dictator ordered the release of those who had been detained in the summer. The immediately took charge of the Roundabout and the calls for regime change solidified.

The counter-Revolution had been planning how to defeat the Arab people and quash their demands. In mid-March 2011 the Saudi forces crossed the causeway linking the two countries and a new era of repression, the like of which had never been seen before. Yet the people continued to challenge the GCC dictators. They knew that they were now facing the Saudi war machine as Alkhalifa conceded defeat by calling for foreign help. Seven years of intense repression have not helped the regime or the foreign forces fighting the people. The people have gained international respect as the Alkhalifa torturers have repeatedly been criticised for their intensive crimes against humanity. Alkhalifa crimes of using live ammunition to kill peaceful protesters, extra-judicial killings, mass arrests, torture, executions, citizen revocation and banishment of native Bahrainis have been added to the earlier crimes of demolishing mosques and conceding the sovereignty of the country to foreigners. The regime became devoid of shame, morality or legality as mercenaries wreaked havoc throughout the country ignoring basic human behaviour or decency.

What is next? The situation has reached a point of no-return. The massive onslaught on civil society has earned the tribal dictators notoriety and severe criticism. To limit the exposure of the massive crimes being committed against the native population, Alkhalifa have turned Bahrain into an iron curtain. No human rights bodies or news media are allowed to visit the country. People's wealth and resources are spent to recruit foreign agencies and companies to implement policies of extreme deception and misinformation. Last month Amnesty International (AI) issued a damning statement against the regime

HRW criticises Saudi, UAE as Alkhalifa wreak havoc in Bahrain

In its annual report (World Report 2018) published on Thursday 18th January Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain of violating international humanitarian law in Yemen and stepping up arrests and prosecutions of activists seeking reform or voicing peaceful dissent. The rights group reported it had documented 87 unlawful attacks by the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen, leading to nearly 1,000 civilian deaths. It said that more than a dozen prominent political activists convicted on "vague charges arising from their peaceful activities" were serving lengthy prison sentences. "Mohammad bin Salman's well-funded image as a reformist falls flat in the face of Yemen's humanitarian catastrophe and scores of activists and political dissidents languishing in Saudi prisons on spurious charges," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at HRW.

HRW also said that The United Arab Emirates was involved in abuses at home and abroad in 2017, arresting one of the last outspoken rights critics in the country and playing a role in torture and disappearances in Yemen. Coalition members, including the UAE, have provided insufficient information about the role their forces are playing in the campaign to determine which country's forces are responsible for unlawful attacks. The UAE operates at least two informal detention facilities in Yemen. Its officials appear to have ordered the continued detention of people held there despite release orders, as well as forcibly disappearing people, and moving high-profile detainees outside the country. Former detainees and family members have reported abuse or torture inside facilities run by the UAE and UAE-backed

forces. Yemeni activists who criticized these abuses have been threatened, harassed, detained, and disappeared. The US works closely with the UAE in Yemen. "Whenever the US and others praise the UAE for its critical counterterrorism support in places like Yemen, they paper over a much darker reality – of disappearances, torture, and detainee abuse, and their own potential complicity in these abuses," said Ms Whitson.

On Sunday 21st January, Habib Yousuf Al Shuwaikhat, 25, died at AlMabaheth Prison in Dammam, Eastern Arabia. He has been denied proper medication for his deteriorating health, as cancer spread in his body. He had been in jail since 9th September 2015. His family was forced to bury him in haste with no noticeable presence of mourners.

In London a public petition has been launched at the Parliament website. Under the title "Cancel the invitation for Saudi Crown Prince to visit the UK" the petition says: "We call on the Prime Minister to withdraw the invitation for the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia to visit the UK. The Saudi Arabian regime has one of the worst human rights records in the world. Torture and arbitrary detention are widely documented. In 2017 alone, over 100 people were executed. The Crown Prince has directed the bombardment of Yemen. Tens of thousands have been killed or injured. There is widespread famine and cholera, creating the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Yet, the UK still sells arms to Saudi Arabia. The Saudi regime has supported repression in Bahrain, where its military intervened to end peaceful protests in 2011. The lives of people in Bahrain, Yemen and Saudi Arabia are more im-

portant than arms sales. Stand up for human rights and cancel the visit."

On 17th January the Spokesperson of the European Union (EU) issued a statement on the trial of Nabeel Rajab, saying: The EU has been following the case of Mr Rajab very closely. He has been serving consecutive terms in prison since his arrest in spite of his poor state of health. We reiterate our call on the Bahraini government to release Mr Rajab, including on humanitarian grounds. The Government of Bahrain should show commitment to its own reform agenda by upholding freedom of expression. Suppressing voices of dissent can only contribute to fuel resentment and instability."

Regime's forces in Bahrain have launched a new massive campaign of raids and arrests in various towns and villages. In the week 16th-22nd January there were at least 37 detainees including three children. From Duraz three were detained yesterday: Sayed Adnan Sayed Hashem, Khalil Ibrahim and Fadhel Abbas. Two were detained from Aali Town: Sayed Ibrahim Sayed Hassan and Mahmood Ali. Mahdi Isa Al Murri was detained at Maqaba town. From Iskan Aali Badr Al Shamlan was arrested. From Samaheej: Hassan Abd Ali, his brother Hussain. Ali Abdul Hussain from Al Daih was arrested. Mohammad Abdul Hussain was arrested upon his return from abroad. Two years ago, Sayed Hadi Ali Ni'ma was kidnapped, imprisoned and abused. After enduring horrific torture he was sentenced to two years. Two months ago he was arbitrarily transferred to solitary confinement where he is terrorised on daily basis.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
24th January 2018

Saudis furious at BBC documentary, Amnesty exposes Alkhalifa lies

The Saudi government is reported to be extremely furious at the airing of a three-part investigation by the BBC into the House of Saud. In the first part broadcast last week links were made between the Saudis and international terrorism. The programme said in the past 40 years, the Saudis spent 90 billion dollars on their international networks of groups, religious institutions and Islamic bodies. Last night, the second part was broadcast. It highlighted the extent of corruption and bribery in the arms deals between UK and Saudi Arabia, starting with the Al Yamamah deal in 1985. It cost £43 billion and involved bribes at highest levels. BAE systems is said to have participated in these practices. The programme questioned the claims by the present crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) to be fighting corruption. It cited his own practices including the purchase of £452 million yacht, a French home for more than \$300 million and the purchase of Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi (Saviour of the World) painting for \$400 million.

The forthcoming government alliance in

Germany has taken a decision to stop arms supplies to Saudi Arabia. On Friday 12th January the negotiators of the Christian Alliance and the Socialist Democratic Party unanimously agreed on an initial parliamentary deal with regards to arms exports. It said: "The coming German Government will immediately impose a ban on arms exports to countries that take part in the Yemen War".

On Monday 15th January, Saudi forces assassinated an innocent citizen at Al Awamiya Town. Abdullah Mirza Al Qallaf was sprayed with bullets while driving his car in one of the roads of the town. The criminal forces had raided the town in early morning in preparation for the second anniversary of the killing of Sheikh Nimr Al Nimr by Saudi executioners. Before the identity of the victim was known, the regime propaganda machine claimed that the victim was a wanted man called Munir Al Qudaihi. It is clear that they killed an innocent man.

Bahrain's dictator has re-affirmed the two year jail sentence he had ordered on Nabeel Rajab, the president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. Mr Rajab is being per-

secuted for speaking out in defence of the thousands of native Bahraini victims of Alkhalifa repression. He criticised the appalling human rights situation and questioned the regime's propaganda that justifies its reign of terror. The earlier sentence had been imposed last July. Mr Rajab is awaiting another trumpeted up charge of questioning the legitimacy of the Saudi-led aggression on Yemen. He faces up to ten years imprisonment for that "crime".

The appalling medical care of thousands of native Bahraini prisoners of conscience is getting worse. The senior figures of the opposition, like Hassan Mushaima and Abdul Wahab Hussain, have been denied medication and consultation to the extent that they have run out of the tablets to treat their diabetes. Their sugar level has risen to dangerous levels and the possibility of strokes or heart attacks has risen sharply. Another inmate, Ayyoub Adel, detained for his peaceful anti-regime protests is another victim denied proper medical care. Both his legs are chained most of the time, causing him more pain.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
17th January 2018

“Fire and Fury” shakes Washington & Riyadh, high prices rattle Bahrain

The White House has been shaken by the publication of "Fire and Fury", the book written by Michael Wolf which detailed Donald Trump's failings, his deteriorating mental health and his treatment of women. On Saudi leadership the book attributed to Mr Trump saying: "We've put our man on top" referring to crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS). The author anticipated that the US president would be forced to resign as a result of the book. Meanwhile Saudi authorities made a fresh round of arrests of royal-family members as a group of princes staged a palace protest in the capital over the policies of the self-appointed crown prince. On Thursday 4th January Security services arrested the 11 princes after they refused to leave Qasr Al-Hokm in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's Attorney General, Sheikh Saud Al Mojeb, said in an emailed statement. The princes, who objected to the palace coup staged by MBS and his subsequent crackdown on senior Saudi princes, will be held at al-Ha'er prison pending their trial, Al Mojeb said.

Yesterday, Sheikh Mohammad Al Habib, a Shia cleric from the Eastern Province of Arabia was sentenced to seven years in jail. Last year he was acquitted of the charges against him, but the prosecution appealed forcing another court to impose the long prison sentence. He was detained in July 2016 for promoting reforms and condemning the execution of Sheikh Nimr Al Nimr in January 2016. He was kept in solitary confinement for 130 days.

In Bahrain, Mrs Najah Al Sheikh, a female native, has had her detention renewed for 15 more days for her anti-regime protests. She is one of a dozen native women who

are undergoing severe forms of persecution at the regime's torture centres. Mrs Fawzia MalAllah, the eldest among the women detainees was imprisoned despite her failing health. She has now suffered a heart attack behind bars. Her condition is unstable, as the only treatment she was given was a "sublingual tablet"

Ahmad Ali Hussian Al Atiyya who has lived all his life in Bahrain has been deported. He has spent several years in jail for taking part in anti-regime protests. His mother is native Bahraini while his father has Saudi nationality. He has two brothers serving long prison terms. Both have spent four years behind bars. Faisal Al Atiyya was sentenced to 45 years, and Hassan Al Atiyya to 15. Their mother has none of her children with her now. Meanwhile there are growing concerns for the four citizens sentenced to death two weeks ago. No news have been heard of them and fears are growing for their safety.

The health of senior opposition figure in jail is rapidly deteriorating. Mr Hassan Mushaima has been denied access to proper medical treatment for his cancer and other ailments. His sugar level in the blood has taken a sharp rise due to lack of medicines. He was forced to use the tablets of Mr Abdul Wahab Hussain. Both men desperately need these tablets and other medicines for their serious ailments. Periodic cancer screening have also stopped. This new policy is clearly aimed at causing slow death.

Public fury has surfaced among Bahrainis who have been shocked by the sudden decision to raise prices of basic commodities, after subsidies had been curtailed. The price of petrol and other items have sharply increased as the regime continued its struggle

to fund its ill-fated political policies. In the past three years Bahrain's dictator has plundered people's wealth on recruiting mercenaries at every level, starting with the riot police, intelligence officers, experts and advisors and reaching public relations mercenaries. The aim is to silence opposition views and activism and to transfer the battle away from the streets to the places where deportees reside in. The result is the depletion of the country's reserves. The people's purses have been raided at an alarming rate with the removal of subsidies and raising the prices of essential commodities. Supporters and opponents of the regime are tweeting against the raising of petrol cost using the hashtag #petrol price increase, #Corruption and regime policies affect everyone in the end, not just those critical of the regime.

A local newspaper said on Monday (January 8, 2018) that the government plans to borrow 8 billion BD (\$13 billion.) The government raised the ceiling of public debt last year to 13 billion BD. Al-Bilad local newspaper said that Bahrain's Central Bank intends to issue government debt instruments that exceed 5.2 billion BD, within the annual plan for borrowing from the market in coordination with Finance Ministry.

In his first decree for 2018, Bahrain's dictator issued orders for appointment and promotion of senior figures at the interior and finance ministries as well as the endowment directorates. Out of the 12 posts none has been given to members of the majority Shia citizens who are more than 70 percent of the population.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
10th January 2018

Misinformation on Amnesty International in Bahraini embassy

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

11 January 2018

In response to erroneous statements by the Bahraini embassy in London about the organization's planned work on Bahrain, Amnesty International clarified today its recent discussions with the embassy and urged the authorities in general to respond positively to human rights concerns it raises and to its repeated requests for access to the country for it and other human rights organizations.

On 5 January 2018, the Bahrain News Agency (BNA) published the annual report of the Bahraini embassy to the United Kingdom entitled, "Tireless efforts to confirm the Kingdom's presence and to identify its positions and defend its interests". The report included two paragraphs relating to the embassy's work "to correct the negative views on the situation of human rights in Bahrain and to clarify the fallacies and negative perceptions circulating in the United Kingdom and other countries covered by the Embassy diplomatically". It said that "the Bahraini embassy responded to requests for clarification and questions raised by British parliamentari-

ans, human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and others, as well as providing the British Foreign Office with legal updates in order to enable it to respond to any parliamentary inquiries in detail."

The report went on to say: "The embassy's efforts with Amnesty International have yielded positive results, including the organization's goodwill initiative not to issue any reports on Bahrain's human rights file until February 2018 and to only briefly address the situation in Bahrain in its annual report, in addition to dedicating two pages to the Kingdom of Bahrain in the organization's forthcoming report in the month of February in such a way that the Kingdom is able to present any clarifications or responses relating to matters of interest in it."

The statements are a serious misrepresentation of the outcome of a meeting held between representatives of Amnesty International and the Bahraini embassy in the United Kingdom on 2 November 2017. In addition to specific human rights concerns, including some of those documented in Amnesty International's report of September 2017, 'No one can protect you': Bahrain's year of crushing dissent, the meeting dis-

cussed ways to improve communication between Amnesty International and the Bahraini authorities and specifically the most effective means for the organization to receive responses to requests for clarification relating to its ongoing monitoring of and reporting on human rights violations in the country.

During the meeting, Amnesty International clarified its universal methodology with respect to communications with governments, notably the fact that it seeks clarification about human rights developments or specific cases from relevant authorities in order to reflect any responses received in its publications. At an operational level, Amnesty International agreed to copy in the Bahraini embassy in London to requests for clarifications from government authorities in Bahrain so that it could facilitate the communication process. The embassy committed to help obtain such responses. Amnesty International also mentioned that it would be publishing its next Annual Report in February 2018. It clarified that the entries in this report, which covers some 160 countries around the world, are short summaries,

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UN experts decry Saudi Arabia's persistent use of anti-terror laws

to persecute peaceful activists
GENEVA (2 January 2018) – Top United Nations human rights experts* have deplored Saudi Arabia's continued use of counter-terrorism and security-related laws against human rights defenders, urging it to end the repression and release all those detained for peacefully exercising their rights.

Religious figures, writers, journalists, academics and civic activists are being targeted, along with members of the banned Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), in a "worrying pattern of widespread and systematic arbitrary arrests and detention", the experts said.

"The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are severely restricted in Saudi Arabia," said the group in a joint statement.

"We are witnessing the persecution of human rights defenders for peacefully

exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, association and belief, as well as in retaliation for their work. The Government has ignored repeated calls by UN experts and others to halt these violations, rectify them, and prevent their recurrence."

More than 60 prominent religious figures, writers, journalists, academics and civic activists are reported to have been detained in a wave of arrests since September, adding to a list of past cases which had already been raised by UN experts with the Government.

"We have written to the Government requesting detailed information about these numerous arrests on terrorism, cyber-crime or any other state security-related charges during that period," the experts said.

"We are also seeking the Government's clarification about how these measures are compatible with Saudi Arabia's obligations

human rights defenders and critics."

In addition to the new series of arrests since September and previous cases notified to the Government, the experts also pointed to Saudi Arabia's failure to implement two recent opinions of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (A/HRC/WGAD/2015/38 and A/HRC/WGAD/2017/63). In both cases, which involved 10 individuals, the Working Group determined that the detentions were arbitrary.

"We call for the release of all the human rights defenders concerned in these cases, and we appeal to the Saudi authorities to ensure their right to reparation and compensation," the experts said.

The leading human rights defenders held since September include reformist Salman al-Awdah, an influential religious figure who has urged greater respect for human rights within Sharia; academic and writer Abdullah al-Maliki; entrepreneur Essam al-Zamel; and ACPRA founding members Abdulaziz Al Shubaily and Issa bin Hamid al-Hamid.

The UN experts stated: "These and a large number of previous unsolved cases depict a worrying pattern of widespread and systematic arbitrary arrests and detention in Saudi Arabia.

"Since the ACPRA was banned in 2013, we have witnessed with alarm the arrest, detention and prosecution of people peacefully voicing criticism of the Saudi Government's policies and lawfully working to protect human rights.

Repeated calls by the United Nations Human Rights Council's experts to curb the repression - the most recent of which was in May 2017 - have remained unheeded.

ENDS

*The UN experts: Mr. Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Mr. José Antonio Guevara Bermúdez, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Mr. David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; and Ms. Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.

The Independent Experts and Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.



Stephen Bell of Stop the War Coalition addresses a rally in Downing St on 25th January to protest MBS visit to UK

Misinformation on Amnesty International; *Continued from P 3*

typically of around two pages in length, of the human rights situation in each country rather than the product of new research. For that reason, the organization does not tend to submit the findings summarized in the entry to the government for response ahead of publication.

In no way did Amnesty International commit not to publish any document related to Bahrain before February 2018, nor to restrict the Annual Report entry on Bahrain to a particular length, nor to submit the entry for comment to the Bahraini authorities before publication, as erroneously indicated by the annual report of the Bahraini embassy in London.

Subsequent to the meeting of 2 November 2017, Amnesty International submitted requests for clarification on a number of ongoing human rights concerns to both the Interior Minister and Justice Minister in letters sent on 21 November and provided copies of both letters to the Bahraini embassy in London at the same time. Amnesty International was disappointed not to receive a response to the requests despite the assurances it had been given that the embassy would make efforts to obtain responses to such correspondence. Amnesty International was therefore forced to

publish its concerns, in a public statement entitled Bahrain: Human rights violations unabated and issued on 21 December, without a response from the authorities.

In its meeting with the embassy, Amnesty International also raised its concerns that the Bahraini authorities had failed to respond positively to a series of requests the organization had made to visit the country since it was last given access in January 2015. It presented this in a context in which the authorities had denied other human rights organizations access during the same period. It emphasized the point that, if the authorities wished to demonstrate that they were serious about wanting to develop a constructive dialogue with organizations such as Amnesty International, they needed to allow them access to the country to meet government officials, civil society actors and others. The embassy made no mention in its annual report of any efforts it may or may not have made to facilitate access to Bahrain for Amnesty International or others.

Amnesty International has written to the Bahraini embassy to the United Kingdom to raise its concerns about the statements published in its annual report and to request that they should be correct or clarified