

BAHRAIN

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

Political, moral bankruptcy of Alkhalifa tyrants

Among the worst moments of any despotic regime are those when its bankruptcy looms on the horizon, not only the fiscal but the political, moral and legal. The dictator who presides over a bankrupt regime becomes vicious in every sense. He loses the balance, acts irrationally and acts upon the dictates of his evil instincts. He becomes more vicious, immoral and inhumane as he attempts to brush aside the concerns of the honourable citizens. His dictatorship often pushes him to get rid of advisors who possess a degree of wisdom. His ears dance only to the tunes of praise, hypocrisy and unquestioning support from those who enjoy being enslaved. In these circumstances the dictator becomes more dangerous. His ego stands against sincere advice. The country becomes hostage to the unpredictable behaviour of such rulers. The Bahraini tyrant now lives in this state of mind. Having rounded up anyone who opposes his dictatorship, banished hundreds of others and silenced political and human rights activists, he has managed to surround himself with herds of slaves, opportunists, greedy and weightless people. Not only do they act as mouthpieces, but compete to offer their loyalty, praise and conformity. The role of reason rapidly disappears from the political and social environment. The Alkhalifa dictator enjoys empty gestures, hollow greatness and unquestioning servitude by sub-humans who have abandoned the main faculty that distinguishes mankind from other species of God's creation. The compete to show loyalty, praise the dictator's acts even when they know many of them are criminal and vie to secure his satisfaction at any cost. As the young Bahraini hero, Ali Mushaima, perseveres in his month-long hunger strike, the sad reality of the situation in Bahrain becomes clearer. Almost every human rights group, activist, politician or civil society enthusiast has expressed support to this native Bahraini who has sacrificed to achieve his noble goal; securing proper medical care for his father and hundreds of others languishing at Alkhalifa torture dungeons.

The hunger strike has become more than a one-man show. It has touched those active elements in the human rights world and motivated them to express solidarity with this form of pro-active civil resistance act. Here the activist is not causing harm to anyone and has solely shouldered the cost

of his personal action. He lies on his bed, having lost almost one fifth of his weight, and spends his time pondering the future of the country, reading a book or receiving well-wishers and supporters. The regime's mechanisms have failed the moral and professional tests. They resorted to fabrications and lying to undermine Ali Mushaima's actions. The Alkhalifa London embassy went further. At 01.50 am on Saturday one of its staff poured unknown liquid on Ali as he slept. The water was of such power that it pierced the umbrella sheltering Mr Mushaima. The police were called and "prepared" a report which to be submitted to the FCO. In previous attacks (in 2009) no action had been taken against the Alkhalifa or anyone else for at least a physical attack on two Bahraini activists and an arson attack on the home of a third. In all cases the police had "prepared" reports and documented the crimes, but no action had been taken against the perpetrators.

Whatever explanation is given to these Alkhalifa crimes, they are solid proofs of political and moral bankruptcy. This is also true about their treatment of Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim who is receiving treatment in a London hospital for illnesses he has developed over the past two years. It is now known that he had to endure house arrest for the whole period, surrounded by armoured cars. To ensure that he and his family suffered immensely the engines of those vehicles were left operating all the time. This caused two kinds of serious pollution; noise and fumes. The family were forced to keep the windows closed all the time to prevent both kinds of pollution. This meant that for two full years the house was not ventilated at all. The elderly leader developed various kinds of diseases including Bowel Cancer, bone brittleness, diabetes and heart problems. Those who supported Alkhalifa vicious killers are aware of their criminal behaviour, torture, attack on people's homes and arbitrary arrests. They chose to do nothing. That is not only shameful but could amount to complicity in crime.

Last month the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued a unique statement calling explicitly for the immediate and unconditional release of the most prominent and respected human rights activist in the region. Bahrain's

dictator has been ordered by the Working Group to compensate Nabeel Rajab for the pain he has endured as a prisoner of conscience, solely jailed for his opinion. To date, no effort has been made by Alkhalifa supporters to implement UN's demand. The regime is aware that if Mr Rajab is released then thousands others should also be released as they are all prisoners of conscience jailed for almost eight years for their peaceful political stands, opinions and activities. Within a year of their incarceration, the Bahrain Independent Committee of Investigation, headed by the late Sharif Bissioni had called for the release of the prominent political figures. The UK's FCO had ignored all these calls and recommendations. It went even further. The former Secretary of State caused serious provocation to Bahraini people when he said that the criminal regime was "moving in the right direction". Later he went to suggest that the security of the vicious Alkhalifa dictatorship's security is "our security". These statements could not be swallowed by the honourable majority of the British people.

Now that the UN has called for the release of Bahraini prisoners the UK must take a stand to avoid being dragged into the controversy of involvement in gross violations of human rights. Its support to repressive regimes like those of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain is not in line with its moral or political obligations. The Saudis, the Alkhalifa have slaughtered Yemeni children and may execute more natives for opposing their outrageous policies. UK must withdraw its experts from Control and Command centres in Riyadh, its security assistance to Alkhalifa and its Prison Inspection team which is assisting Alkhalifa torturers. Luckily there has been political and social awakening among the British public which will undoubtedly reflect on those in high office who are the main beneficiaries from helping those dictators. The British people are more honourable than allowing themselves to serve tyrants, dictators, baby killers and torturers. The extent of solidarity with the hunger striker in Belgrave Square shows the nobility and humanity of the British people who are committed to support noble causes and cleanse the reputation of their country of the ill-conceived policies of some opportunistic politicians.

UN accuses Saudis of Yemen war crimes, hunger strikes hit Bahrain's prison

Yesterday the UN Human Rights Council issued a statement on "possible war crimes" committed in Yemen. This forms a basis for two actions: the first is to start proceedings against all those who have allowed, planned or carried out these war crimes especially amongst the Saudi-led coalition forces. The second is to establish a special war tribunal for Yemen similar to those that dealt with genocide in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia. The Group of Experts' report, which covers the period from September 2014 to June 2018, analyses the main patterns of violations and abuses of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law committed by parties to the conflict. The report also identifies significant areas where violations and abuses may have been committed but further investigation is required. Among their conclusions, the experts say individuals in the Government of Yemen and the coalition, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and in the de facto authorities have committed acts that may, subject to determination by an independent and competent court, amount to international crimes. The report notes that coalition air strikes have caused most direct civilian casualties. The airstrikes have hit residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings, detention facilities, civilian boats and even medical facilities. Based on the incidents they examined, the Group of Experts have reasonable grounds to believe that individuals in the Government of Yemen and the coalition may have conducted attacks in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution that may amount to war crimes. There has been an international outcry after the Saudi prosecutors demanded the death penalty for a female activist, Israa

Al Ghomgham who had taken part in peaceful anti-regime protests. Four others are also threatened with beheading and possible crucifixion. Samah Hadid, Amnesty International's Middle East Director of Campaigns, said: "Israa al-Ghomgham and four other individuals are now facing the most appalling possible punishment simply for their involvement in anti-government protests. We are urging the Saudi Arabian authorities to drop these plans immediately." The Saudi regime has detained two brothers and several friends of activist Umar ibn Abdul Aziz in revenge for his activities. He is a refugee in Canada which is locked in political battles with the Saudi regime after it criticised its dismal human rights records.

As Bahraini activist, Ali Mushaima completes one month of his hunger strike, pressures are mounting on both the UK government and Alkhalifa tribal dictatorship to change their policies on dealing with the peaceful opposition by native Bahrainis. Since he began his strike last month the flow of well-wishers and supporters from various colours of the political spectrum have either visited him or issued statements of support. The UK government is under intense pressure to change its policy on Bahrain. Of particular significance is the role of the UK's Prison Inspection Directorate which has trained Alkhalifa security officials. Mr Mushaima is now showing signs of physical fatigue despite his high morale and insistence to continue his hunger strike to death unless his father and hundreds of other prisoners are granted adequate medical care, family visits and books. All these rights have been confiscated by Alkhalifa torturers.

This form of civil resistance is resonating even inside the torture dungeons of Bahrain where more than 4000 political prison-

ers are seeking justice. A jiu-jitsu medalist and prominent Bahraini detainee has declared a hunger strike in solidarity with fellow prisoner Hassan Mushaima. Mohamed Mirza, who achieved a medal for Bahrain at the 2008 Asian Open Championships in Thailand, launched his hunger strike to protest the treatment of Mushaima, a Bahraini opposition leader serving a life sentence for his role in Bahrain's pro-democracy protests and uprising. According to Mirza, Mushaima is being denied access to proper medical treatment, which has caused his health to deteriorate. Mirza is also protesting his own poor treatment at Jaw prison, which includes lack of access to proper health care and restrictions on family visitations such as glass barriers. He had filed five complaints with the prison.

Other prisoners have also joined the hunger strike. On 25th August they issued a statement to explain the horrific situation inside the regime's torture cells. They said that they had begun their strike due to the "deteriorating prison conditions" in the prison and called for real pressure on Alkhalifa regime to stop further deterioration and possibly death. They called for special medical attention and care for several seriously sick inmates; Ilias Nasser who suffers Bowel Cancer, Fadhel Abbas who has a disease called "red wolf", Ahmad Saeed whose health has recently deteriorated rapidly and Aqeel Hassan Jassim who has developed psychological disorder. Another victim of Alkhalifa denial of medical care is Dr Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim who has been denied medical care after his family complained about the conditions of his incarceration. He suffers high temperature and severe pains. He has also been denied contact with his family.

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Saudi woman faces beheading; More Bahrainis on hunger strike

Another UK ally has asked one of its kangaroo courts to sentence a woman activist to death for her human rights activities. On Monday 13th August a criminal court in Riyadh held the first session of the trial of Mrs Israa Al Ghamgham for her anti-regime protests and human rights work. The Saudi prosecutor called for the woman to be beheaded and crucified. She had been detained with her husband, Moosa Jaffar Al Hashim on 8th December 2015 in a house raid at AlJish town in AlQatif province in Eastern Arabia. Her father has pleaded for help to appoint a lawyer to defend his only daughter. Mrs Israa Al Ghamgham is the first woman political prisoner from that region. Since Mohammad Bin Salman grabbed power he has detained many women. At least ten of them including academics and human rights activists are languishing at Saudi torture chambers. "Any execution is appalling, but seeking the death penalty

for activists like Israa al-Ghomgham, who are not even accused of violent behavior, is monstrous," Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch (HRW), said in a statement on Wednesday.

As Bahrain's pro-democracy activists intensified their civil resistance insurrection, more native Bahrainis have joined the hunger strike that Ali Hassan Mushaima had started three weeks ago. Yesterday Mrs Du'aa Al Wada'ei, wife of human rights activist, Sayed Ahmed Al Wada'ei stopped eating solid food demanding proper medical treatment and care for her jailed mother, Hajer Mansoor and brother, Nazar. The two had been in jail for almost two years as Bahrain's dictator exacted revenge for Mr Al Wada'ei's protest against the dictator at Windsor horse race three years ago. A mother of two, Mrs Al Wada'ei spent her first day yesterday on hunger strike outside Bahrain's embassy at Belgrave Square in Central London.

Another hunger striker is Mohammad Mirza who began his action yesterday inside the notorious Jau Prison. He suffers from various ailments but he is denied medical care. The UK's Prison Inspection Directorate which is "training" Alkhalifa torturers has failed to call for halting the use of medicine, food and family visits as weapons by Alkhalifa regime. More political prisoners are expected to join the hunger strike as the Bahraini people entered a no-return struggle with the hereditary tribal dictatorship who had been emboldened by UK's former foreign secretary's notorious declaration in 2014 at Manama Dialogue conference: Your security is our security.

Another example of the use of health care as a weapon against native Bahrainis is that of Abdulla Al Awd. On 18th August he said: I have lost my job, studies, family and freedom, but I do not want to lose my health. Since I was jailed I have been suffering severe pain in my stomach

Bahrain's Independence Day marked, Saudi students want to stay in Canada

Yesterday was the Independence Day of Bahrain. It was the day in 1971 when the British completed their withdrawal from all areas East of Suez, including Bahrain. The regime has all along refused to acknowledge this day and insisted on UK's military presence in the country. Four years ago the dictator offered to build a naval base for the UK marine corps. It was officially opened in the presence of Prince Charles two years ago. The British legacy has been marred by dictatorial rule, bleak record of human rights and demographic engineering to replace the native majority with foreign mercenaries. Over the past half century, the people have struggled to achieve modern statehood and have paid dearly for challenging the tribal dictatorship that has been propped up by the British. Today, Bahrain has become a graveyard for the modern principles envisaged by the world community after the calamities of the First and Second World Wars, and enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN covenants regulating the rights of the people.

Meanwhile the Bahraini activist, Ali Mushaima has now spent two weeks on hunger strike outside the Bahraini Embassy in London. He is demanding the provision of proper medical care to his ailing jailed father, Hassan Mushaima and hundreds other political prisoners. Ali Mushaima has now lost at least 8 kgs and is showing signs of real fatigue, dizziness and general weakness. He has survived on liquids as he braved changing weather, heavy rain downpours and continuous threats on his life from Alkhalifa thugs working at their London's den of corruption. In the early hours of Monday morning he survived an assassination attempt. He was asleep when at 01.50 someone poured unknown liquid from the first floor

balcony of the embassy. An umbrella saved his life. The police were called and they prepared a report to be handed to the FCO. As in several other attacks on Bahraini exiles in London, nothing is expected to be done to challenge the murderous Alkhalifa regime which killed hundreds of native Bahrainis in the streets and torture cells. Mr Mushaima has received many well-wishers including politicians, human rights activists, musicians, religious scholars and journalists. The UK government has so far refrained from encountering Alkhalifa on their serious criminal human rights violations.

On Monday 13th August, the Bahraini prisoners at the notorious Jau prison issued a statement detailing their agonies within Alkhalifa torture cells. They listed their most serious grievances; awful physical and psychological treatment, lack of proper medical care, unhealthy amenities and services and denial of proper contacts with families with short and infrequent family visits. An example of the ill-treatment of native Bahraini prisoners is Ali Omran. He is a Taekwondo enthusiast who has languished in alkhalfifa torture dungeons for the past three years. He has now been denied family visits and his relatives are extremely concerned for his welfare. He was a member of the National Taekwondo League before his detention. He is holder of two Black Belts and several gold, bronze and silver medals. This 30 years old native Bahraini has been given several jail sentences totalling 44 years, reduced to ten years. His nationality has been revoked.

The London-based Salaam for Human Rights has documented 108 cases of torture in custody of Bahraini prisoners in the two months of June and July. They include children like Mohammad Esa Al A'adhab from Duraz and Ahmad Isma'il from Nuwaidrat.

Both were severely beaten and suffered broken limbs.

The death in custody of Sheikh Salman AlDawish in a Saudi jail has, once again, exposed the human rights crisis in Saudi Arabia. This religious preacher had been detained on 22nd April 2016 and has hardly had contacts with the world outside prison. Saudi activists believe that torture is the main cause of his death. Last month another preacher, Safar Al Hawalli was detained. In September last year two clerics had been imprisoned: Salman al-Odah and Awad al-Qarni.

The Saudi-initiated crisis with Canada has not shown any sign of abating. The Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has been praised by international human rights bodies for taking up the human rights issue with the Saudis. Since Riyadh unilaterally took its punitive actions against Canada, a stalemate has developed. Mr Trudeau has insisted that he would not back down from his commitment to defending human rights but sought other means of reconciliation with Riyadh. The Saudis have instructed that university students be withdrawn from Canada and relocated in other countries. But the students have reacted angrily. On 12th August they issued a statement saying that they had formed a "Coordination Committee" to deal with this crisis. It said: "The committee calls for the immediate review of our government's decision, which will have many negative repercussions that will blow our scientific, professional and academic future." The Committee "will reject ideas that affect our future, including the idea of closing the scholarship system to Canada, which would hamper our achievements for several years." There is wide criticism of the decision to move students.

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which is becoming worse by the day. I asked the management of Jau prison to transfer me to an outside hospital for treatment or give me painkillers, but they have rejected my requests". Is this how to run a modern state? Is this cruel regime worth defending?

On 20th August several international bodies signed a joint statement expressing indignation at Bahrain's GONGOs for



disregarding the case of Hassan Mushaima. The statement said: The Bahraini human rights mechanisms have largely failed to properly address concerns raised on behalf of Hassan Mushaima, and his life remains at risk. Because of this, his son, Ali Mushaima, is on his 20th day of a hunger strike outside of Bahrain's Embassy in London. It further added: The Bahraini government's illegal restrictions on healthcare violate international detention standards, and prisoners of conscience have been singled out for mistreatment. Prison authorities force prisoners of conscience, including the elderly Mushaima and Dr. Al-Singace, to be strip-searched, chained, shackled, and marched to medical facilities if they want to attend medical appointments. They must face this treatment when attending external appointments, and when transiting within the prison to the internal medical facilities, which they refuse to do. There is no security justification for this treatment, as Mushaima and al-Singace have never presented any security risks in detention, nor posed any

flight risk. This treatment is therefore interpreted by the prisoners, and by our organisations, to be both arbitrary and punitive, with the intention to humiliate and degrade prisoners of conscience. Such treatment contravenes the United Nations (UN) Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the Mandela Rules.

The relations between Alkhalifa tribal dictatorship of Bahrain and the state of Qatar has deteriorated further. Ten days ago Bahrain's dictator hinted at his right to rule Qatar arguing that his tribe had lived there in mid-17th Century. He continued his aggression with another decree banning Qatari nationals from obtaining visa or entering Bahrain. He is also targeting Pakistan by denying its nationals obtaining visa to enter Bahrain. This follows the victory of Imran Khan in the latest parliamentary elections. The regime is ill-advised to wage foreign wars when its home front is fragile and against him.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
22nd August 2018

UK spooks involved in controversial police training for dictatorship

Ali Mushaima protesting outside the Bahrain embassy. Photograph: PR

The government of Bahrain is slowly killing my father, Hassan Mushaima. This week I began a hunger strike outside Bahrain's London embassy to save him.

My father is a leader of the political opposition in our homeland. In 2011 he was at the forefront of Bahrain's Arab spring protests – a mass movement that peacefully called for human rights and democratic reforms in the authoritarian Gulf kingdom.

Police violently crushed the demonstrations, killing dozens and jailing thousands. Early on the morning of 17 March 2011, security forces broke into our home and arrested my father. Along with other leading human rights defenders and opposition figures – known collectively as the Bahrain 13 – he was tortured and hauled before a military tribunal. After a patently unfair trial, the court sentenced him to life, simply for calling for democracy in Bahrain.

I have no choice but to follow his commitment to peaceful protest and launch my own hunger strike against oppression. I was part of the same case as my father, but I was convicted in absentia because I was in London at the time; a year later my Bahraini citizenship was revoked. If I return home to see my father, I'll be jailed along with him.

Throughout this time, Bahrain's authorities have punished my father by subjecting him to humiliating, inhumane treatment in the kingdom's notorious Jau prison – a horrific detention centre overcrowded with hundreds of political prisoners. The torture my father has endured has caused such severe problems that he has required surgery four times. Jau prison's abusive and unsanitary conditions have seen his health sharply deteriorate, and authorities are denying him the medical care he needs to survive.

My father is 70 years old and suffers from serious chronic illnesses, including high blood pressure, diabetes, gout and a urinary tract infection. He is in remission from lymphoma. He needs to take many different pills a day to help with these conditions: without them he could die.

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An anti-government demonstration in the centre of Manama, the capital of Bahrain, in 2011. Photograph: Hamad I Mohammed/Reuters

Since 2016, however, the government has prevented him from seeing a physician needed to ensure the cancer has not returned, despite the need for screenings every six months. More recently, the authorities have singled out political prisoners for further insulting restrictions on healthcare, forcing them to be strip-searched, chained, shackled, and marched to external facilities if they want

to attend medical appointments. Human Rights Watch found that this “degrading” treatment “violates international standards”. Now my father's medication is running out, and the government simply doesn't care. Just last week the UN human rights committee found that Bahrain is failing to meet its treaty obligations under the international covenant on civil and political rights. It cited inhumane prison conditions and denial of medical care for political prisoners.

Despite numerous requests for assistance from my family and international campaigners, Bahrain's so-called human rights bodies – such as the UK-funded police ombudsman and National Institution for Human Rights – have done nothing but whitewash continued abuses. Earlier this year the NIHR outright denied that my father even had any health problems that required treatment.

Without urgent medication and treatment, my father will die – and Bahrain's chief western allies in London and Washington are letting this happen.

Since 2012, the UK has provided £5m in “technical assistance” to Bahrain. This was ostensibly meant to facilitate reforms and improve institutions like the ombudsman,

but it has had the exact opposite effect: providing diplomatic cover for intensifying repression and police abuse. The UK government is aware of my father's case, but it has entirely failed to take any action to rectify the situation, merely raising his case “at a senior level”.

Likewise, the Trump administration in the US has signed off on billions of dollars of new arms deals and abandoned human rights conditions altogether. Trump even told Bahrain's king that there would be no more “strain” between the two countries, effectively green-lighting the kingdom's bloodiest protest raid in years just days later.

The UK and the US are directly enabling Bahrain's repression and they're contributing to the brutal conditions killing my father. But it's not too late. Leaders in London and Washington can still intervene to save my father and stand up for human rights. I urge them to use their influence to ensure he is immediately provided with the medical treatment he needs to live, and ultimately to secure his release.

Until my father is safe, I have no choice but to follow his commitment to peaceful protest and launch my own hunger strike against oppression. The regime should know that actions against him will not change my political views. The will of the pro-democracy fighters who started the revolution in 2011 against dictatorial rule remains strong, and we are now even more convinced that this regime can't reformed itself.

- Ali Mushaima, a political activist based in London, is the son of the jailed Bahraini opposition leader, Hassan Mushaima



127 Rights groups: Release Nabeel Rajab immediately

For the second time since 2013, the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) has issued an Opinion regarding the legality of the detention of Mr. Nabeel Rajab under international human rights law. In its second opinion, the WGAD held that the detention was not only arbitrary but also discriminatory. The 127 signatory human rights groups welcome this landmark opinion, made public on 13 August 2018, recognising the role played by human rights defenders in society and the need to protect them. We call upon the Bahraini Government to immediately release Nabeel Rajab in accordance with this latest request.

In its Opinion (A/HRC/WGAD/2018/13), the WGAD considered that the detention of Mr. Nabeel Rajab contravenes Articles 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Articles 2, 9, 10, 14, 18, 19 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Bahrain in 2006.

The WGAD requested the Government of Bahrain to “release Mr. Rajab immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law.”

This constitutes a landmark opinion as it recognises that the detention of Mr. Nabeel Rajab – President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Founding Director of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), Deputy Secretary General of FIDH and a member of the Human Rights Watch Middle East and North Africa Advisory Committee – is arbitrary and in violation of international law, as it results from his exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression as well as freedom of thought and conscience, and furthermore constitutes “discrimination based on political or other opinion, as well as on his status as a human rights defender.” Mr. Nabeel Rajab's detention has therefore been found arbitrary under both categories II and V as defined by the WGAD.