

BAHRAIN

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

Bahrainis will enjoy real democratic elections after Alkhalifa debacle

As the Bahraini crisis deepens the embattled Alkhalifa regime sought to divert the attention away from its troubles by exaggerating the significance of the elections to their pseudo-parliament. They hoped the petro-dollars would succeed in presenting a positive image of a negative situation. They wanted to tell the world that elections meant democracy regardless of the scope of the anticipated closely engineered "parliament". For democrats elections are not an aim in themselves but a way to grant people their right to legislate for themselves, elect their government and monitor the performance of the executive power. The Alkhalifa tribal rulers have fundamentally different view of the whole process. They have emptied elections, parliament, human rights bodies, judiciary from real meaning and transformed them into weapons of war against the native majority. This has been the policy since they decided to change the whole country including its demographic composition. Since they dissolved the only legitimate parliament in August 1975 they have been experimenting various methods to silence their critics and subjugate the people. The country has experienced flare ups of popular anger in the forms of localised protests, massive uprisings and even revolution. To date they have been defeated to gain legitimacy through the use of military and security force. Bahrainis have shown a great degree of resilience and crushed the regime's attempts to buy its way to legitimacy using the massive petro dollars injected by the occupying powers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Last month Bahrain's dictator decided to stage elections for his powerless "parliament" hoping to divert the popular movement that has been staging non-sto daily protests since 14th February 2011. To his dismay, the Alkhalifa dictator had to swallow major defeat when the people boycotted his elections. He had threatened them with severe retributions if they did not vote. Explicit and implicit warnings were issued by regime's mouthpieces but the people have had enough of these threats decided to slap the tyrant in his face. The results have been disastrous to the tribal rulers. Only a trickle of voters went to the empty polling stations, many casting empty ballot papers. They had been given the chance to elect the bad, the worse and the terrible. Those with good patriotic creden-

tials had been banned from standing for elections in line with the political societies which had been dissolved. The Al Wefaq Society had already decided to slap the dictator by announcing their boycott of his show elections. As desperation took its toll, he ordered to punish anyone who did not participate. When former MP, Ali Al Ashiri tweeted that he and his family would not vote he was summarily snatched and dumped into the regime's torture dungeons. No dissenting voices were allowed. The regime paid for massive advert programme to give wrong impression of serious campaigning. But his serious threats of massive retributions fell on deaf ears in many quarters. There were protests denouncing his deception and mocking his desperate attempt to revive a dead act. The whole episode became a graveyard to his ambitions. He drew no popular legitimacy as scores of people were rounded and locked up behind bars. The people have sent their defiant message loud and clear: Native patriotic Bahrainis will not succumb to the intimidation of torturers, rapists, plunderers or occupiers. They will not rest until a representative government, elected by the people in accordance with a constitution written by them, is formed. The days of tribal occupation are over and there will be no reconciliation between democracy and dictatorship, native Bahrainis and occupiers.

The Alkhalifa regime is aware that the tide may have started to move against them. With the Saudis bogged down in the Khashoggi quagmire, Bahrainis are working hard to draw attention to the plight of many Bahrainis who had been tortured or bludgeoned to death, executed or assassinated on land and in the sea. Moreover they are particularly escalating their activism to highlight the predicament of the women activists behind bars; what kind of physical, psychological and sexual torture they had endured and how the dictator apparently gave orders to these practices in a similar way to the orders given by the Saudi crown prince to his killers to deal with Khashoggi. The Washington Post recently published an article titled: "After Khashoggi's murder, it's time for the world to stop ignoring Bahrain's abuses". The hope is that it will lead to more American and British interest in what is happening in Bahrain.

The suffering of the people could not go unheard. It will be compounded by the comprehensive defeat of the Saudi-Emirati-Alkhalifa alliance which is waging an illegal war on Yemen. The international opinion is totally against this aggression and pressures have been escalating on the Western world to stop this destructive war. This unholy alliance attempted to improve its military chances and achievements by waging an offensive to conquer the port Al Hodeida. They have failed disastrously. More than one thousand of their troops were slaughtered in the battles with the defenders of the city from the Houthis group. It was a total rout that has severely damaged the reputation of the Saudis and their allies as a fighting force. They had no alternative but to concede defeat and stop fighting.

These developments have shocked the tribal chiefs of the Gulf who had thought they would conquer Yemen and subjugate the people of the region. The Bahrainis have all along argued that they would not submit to their dictators. The elections have further weakened the morale of the tyrant and his supporters. The low turnout, the low standards of the opportunists who nominated themselves in the absence of the real commanding political forces, the success of the people in exposing the Alkhalifa crimes and the numerous statements by international parliamentarians against these pseudo-elections have embarrassed the regime and opened up the possibility of further isolation of the anti-democratic tribal dictators. Members of the US Congress, the European, Italian, French and Irish parliaments signed statements arguing that the Alkhalifa elections were null and void and called for the release of political prisoners, bringing to justice of the torturers and rapists of activists and ending the emergency laws. The regime has never been so exposed to international scrutiny and criticism. This has emboldened the native Bahrainis to continue their struggle and insist on international intervention including visits by UN Special Rapporteurs on Torture and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The women detainees are now considered a time bomb as their tales of intensive physical, psychological and sexual abuses will pave the way for more serious charges against the dictator and his clique for crimes against humanity.

Trump's Saudi policy threatens his career; Alkhalifa humiliated by elections

Saudi Arabia's dwindling political luck will haunt Donald Trump and could signal the end of his career. Democrats on the U.S. House intelligence panel will investigate U.S. President Donald Trump's response to the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi as part of a "deep dive" next year into U.S.-Saudi Arabia ties, the committee's incoming head said in a report published on 23rd November. The committee will investigate the U.S. intelligence assessment of Khashoggi's death as well as the war in Yemen, the stability of the Saudi royal family and the kingdom's treatment of critics and the press, among other topics, U.S. Representative Adam Schiff told the Washington Post. Schiff, the committee's top Democrat, is in line to become committee chairman in January when his party takes control of the U.S. House of Representatives following gains in this month's congressional elections. That will allow Democrats to exercise oversight of Trump and his administration, giving them investigative power, including the ability to issue subpoenas and hold hearings. "Certainly we will be delving further into the murder of Khashoggi," Schiff said. "We will certainly want to examine what intelligence community knows about the murder."

On Tuesday 19th November Amnesty International accused Saudi Arabia of abusing several activists, including some female human rights defenders detained since May. The May arrests followed an earlier crackdown on clerics, intellectuals, and activists last year in an apparent bid to silence potential opponents of Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The torture allegations come with Saudi Arabia facing an international outcry over the killing last month of Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul.

Concerns are rising for Saudi activist, Israa Al Ghamgham after she failed to appear at the second session of her trial for freely expressing her views. In another development the father of a martyr has been detained by the Saudi authorities. Abdulla Al Qurairis was arrested last week for his human rights campaigning. His son Ali was killed by security forces in 2011. His other son, Murtaja was arrested in 2014 when he was 13. He is probably the youngest political prisoner in the world. His third son, Redha is serving a 12 year sentence.

Bahrain's dictator has been dealt a serious blow as the people ignored his threats and boycotted his pseudo-elections held on 24th November. Less than 20 percent voted as international bodies condemned them. In the third week of November at least ten native Bahrainis were detained by Alkhalifa torture apparatus. This was a prelude to the "elections" which were boycotted by the people. The Between 17 and 23rd November six towns were attacked, 14 houses raided and several summons were issued to appear at the torture centres. On 17th November Hussain Nassser from Nuwaidrat was detained, tortured and transferred to hospital. Other detainees were Zakariya Ahmad AlSheikh from Sitra, Ahmad Ali Jaber and his wife from Janabiya and Sayed Abdulla Sayed Jaffar Alawi from Sitra. On 22nd November two were detained from Abu Saiaba: Musa Ahmad from and Ahmad Abdul Rasool and two from Daih Town: Abdulla Abdul Ghani and Hassan Mushaima. On 23rd November two brothers from Karzakkan were held: Ahmad and Mohammad Juma. The extent of the abuse being inflicted on women political prisoners is beginning to filter out from behind the Alkhalifa iron curtain. An Early Day Motion circulating

in the British Parliament titled: Reprisals of female political prisoners and victims of torture and sexual abuse in Bahrain. It says: That this House: condemns the Bahraini authorities' torture, sexual assault, ill-treatment and unfair trials of women targeted for politically-motivated charges; deplores the assault of Hajer Mansoor, Medina Ali and Najah Yusuf in September 2018, led by the head of Bahrain's Isa Town Women's Detention Centre, Major Mariam Albardoli; highlights that the incident occurred soon after the cases of the three women were raised by this Parliament and the UN; ... voices discontent for their repeated denial of religious participation; condemns the increasing restrictions on emphasises the UN Secretary-General's concerns for the ongoing trend of harassment and intimidation of Bahrain's civil society who cooperate with the UN; condemns the Bahraini oversight bodies that have received UK-funded training for their systematic cover-up of abuses occurring in Isa Town Prison; urges the Government to sanction those responsible, including Major Albardoli; and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

Last week Amnesty International issued a statement condemning Alkhalifa regime. It called on Bahrain to reverse course and allow free expression of political dissent, including fundamental critiques of existing institutions, and to fully respect the right of its citizens to association and peaceful assembly. Given the largely uninterrupted regression in these areas over the past two years, Amnesty urges Bahrain's international partners and allies to hold Bahrain to the standards of the international human rights treaties it is party to.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
28th November 2018

MBS ordered Khashoggi's killing, Alkhalifa elections null and void

A sigh of relief and a wave of political panic have spread in the Western diplomatic circles when the pivotal role of Saudi Arabia's crown prince in the killing of Jamal Khashoggi was confirmed by several authorities. The CIA had confirmed that the order to kill the Saudi journalist had come from Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS). For seven weeks the House of Saud attempted to hide the true nature of its leadership but the Turkish approach to the crisis that had developed following the brutal murder of Mr Khashoggi on 2nd October has wrecked its reputation. It had to change its official version of that fateful day several times. The Turks continued to ration the information in their possession to force the Saudis into a political quagmire losing the respect of their most important allies in Washington and London. The future of the Saudi beast has now been sealed; he must go. But it is unlikely that his departure will satisfy those who have been

aggrieved by his policies; the families of more than 60,000 Yemenis who were slain by the joint Saudi-Emirati-Alkhalifa daily bombing of civilian population, the many Bahrainis who had been savagely treated by Alkhalifa tyrant supported by the Saudis, and the thousands of citizens in the desert kingdom who had been grossly ill-treated, beheaded, crucified or simply left to rot in the Saudi torture dungeons. Mr Trump told the world: Saudi Arabia buys US arms and creates US jobs and helps to fight Iran so who cares about the CIA probe pinning the Saudi crown prince with Khashoggi's murder. All I'll say is a meaningless, exculpatory "maybe he did and maybe he didn't." Many in the region demand that the era of the House of Saud and Alkhalifa must be brought to an abrupt end.

Yesterday it was announced that a young national had been killed by MBS's thugs. On 17th October Nadheer Ibrahim Al Ghazwi was hit twice with live ammuni-

tion at his town of Qatif, Eastern Province. Tomorrow the third trial session of six human rights activists could issue death sentences against Israa Al Ghamgham and five others: her husband, Sayed Moosa Al Hashim, Mujaba, Ali, Khalid and Ahmad. A female researcher and dentist, Abir Al Namnakani has been detained by the Saudis. The arrest follows her request to allow her daughter to travel without regime's restrictive orders. Instead of taming the blood thirst of the Saudi and Alkhalifa murderous regimes, the US president has given them free hand to carry out Khashoggi-style beheadings and dismemberment.

Yesterday Amnesty International issued a statement on the treatment of prisoners in Saudi jails: It said: Several Saudi Arabian activists, including a number of women, who have been arbitrarily detained without charge since May 2018 in Saudi Arabia's Dhahban Prison, have reportedly



Saudis cornered by Khashoggi's case, Bahrainis sentenced to death

Three significant issues linked to the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi have continued to haunt the Saudis: Who had given the orders to kill him? Where is the body? And that the criminal gang that had perpetrated the murder be tried in Turkey, where the crime had been committed. The Saudis have failed to cooperate with Turkey on all of them. So the saga continues with more embarrassing revelations about the details of the crime. The Turks know that Saudi crown prince, Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) had given the order to kill the Saudi dissident; that his body had not only been dismembered but possibly dissolved in acid and that the criminals will reveal more details about the planning and execution of the crime and will eventually implicate MBS. The Americans are working hard to shield the House of Saud by putting pressure on Turkey and divert the attention away from the Khashoggi saga by opening other fronts like the sanctions on Iran.

Meanwhile the Anglo-American alliance is working hard to prepare the ground for a face-saving exit from their quagmire in Yemen. This week the British Foreign minister, Jeremy Hunt flew to Riyadh to discuss the two issues. But the alliance has not declared its dis-engagement from the illegal war itself. Their logistical and intelligence support to the Saudi-Emirati-Alkhalifa criminal war remains at the same level. Their aim is to help the aggressors to capture the port of Hodeida, the only remaining lifeline to millions of Yemenis, so that their position at the negotiating table is strengthened. Meanwhile the pressure is mounting to stop the aggression as famine has already started and could affect up to 20 million people. Aid agencies estimate that one child dies every ten minutes as a result of famine. In the past two weeks since the Saudis escalated

their attacks on Hodeida more than 1000 of their troops have been killed. It could turn out to be the Leningrad of Arabia. The Saudi defeat has already been acknowledged by the world media.

The reverberations of the war are beginning to show results. On 9th November Norway announced that it was suspending new licenses for arms exports to Saudi Arabia following recent developments in the Gulf kingdom and the situation in Yemen. "We have decided that in the present situation we will not give new licenses for the export of defense material or multipurpose goods for military use to Saudi Arabia," Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soeride said in a statement. Germany last month that it would halt German arms exports to Saudi Arabia until the killing of Khashoggi was explained.

The reversals at the Yemen front has pushed the Saudis and Alkhalifa to commit more crimes on their citizens. The Saudis are preparing to execute at least four prisoners on false accusations. On 12 November 2018 Alkhalifa Fourth High Criminal Court sentenced four individuals to death on trumpeted charges of terrorism. Three were tried in absentia. The charges relate to an incident where a police car was damaged in Duraz on 18 June 2017. The regime claimed that one foreign mercenary had died in the incident. The citizenship of all four individuals has been revoked as well. This brings the total number of Bahraini revocation of citizenship cases to 764 since 2012, with an unprecedented 258 cases occurring in 2018 alone. The four individuals were also fined 1,000 BD each. The four are: Hussain Abdullah Marhoon Rashid who is in custody. The other three are: Sayed Mohammed Qassim Mohammed Hassan Fadhel, Hussain Ali Ahmed Dawood and Ahmed Mohammed Ali Mahdi Ibrahim Zain Al Deen. The last three

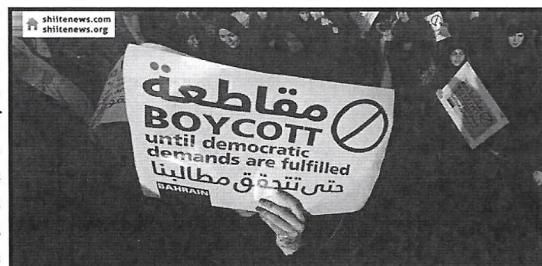
were sentenced in absentia and had already been given life sentences in an earlier trial. Jailed human rights activist, Hani Fateel has issued a statement from his cell calling for a halt to torture and bring torturers to justice. He also talked about the torture he had endured at the hands of Alkhalifa security officers. Another inmates, Ali Hajji, also issued a statement detailing his ill-treatment. Both were subsequently transferred to solitary confinement in revenge. As Bahrain's dictator is given the name "the Rapist" for allowing his henchmen to rape and sexually abuse native Bahraini women at a large scale, he has intensified his revenge from activist hoping to silence dissenting voices. He is angered by the realisation that his much-publicised elections for his pseudo-parliament have been declared null and void by international bodies and parliaments. Many American Congressmen, British MPs, French parliamentarians and MEPs have issued statements condemning these elections. The dictator has shot himself in the foot by banning the political societies and activists from taking part. He also reversed his earlier decision to acquit the leader of AlWefaq, Sheikh Ali Salman from the charge of spying for Qatar and ordered a new sentence of life imprisonment. He also imposed various forms of punishment on those who boycott his elections

In the past few days native Bahrainis staged many demonstrations against the new regime's policy of normalising relations with Israel while Palestinian land and people remain under occupation. They were also protesting the order by the dictator to imprison Sheikh Ali Salman, leader of AlWefaq Society, to life on false charges which had been quashed in an earlier "trial".

Bahrain Freedom Movement
14th November 2018

mass rights abuses persist. H-R-W also urged the Persian Gulf kingdom to immediately free political prisoners and review its decision to shut down independent news outlets and opposition groups. Since the nationwide anti-government protests started in 20-11, Bahraini authorities have devalued scores of human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers and opposition leaders. Formula One chiefs have admitted for the first time that they are "concerned" that an activist who protested against the Bahrain Grand Prix on Facebook was jailed for three years by the country's authorities. F1 has traditionally been reluctant to intervene on politics and human rights cases but has

made a rare exception in the case of Najah Yusuf, who was beaten, sexually abused and imprisoned following a series of posts in April 2017 that were critical of the race and the regime. In the court judgment against her it was noted that she had written "No to Formula races on occupied Bahraini land" and claimed that F1 coming to her country was "nothing more than a way for the [ruling] al-Khalifa family to whitewash their criminal record and gross human rights violations". She also called for a "Freedom for the Formula Detainees" march to put the spotlight on protestors jailed for criticising the Bahrain Grand Prix. A week later Najah was arrested. During her interrogation she claims she was beaten with shoes, groped and sexually assaulted. She also alleges that she was repeatedly asked: "How many times have boys ridden you?" before her questioner threatened to "ride" her several times.



Bahrain Freedom Movement
21st November 2018

F1 finally admits concern over woman jailed for Bahrain Grand Prix

Wed 14 Nov 2018

The Bahrain Grand Prix has divided opinion since its inception in 2004, with the race cancelled in 2011 after human rights protests. Photograph: Clive Mason/Getty Images

Formula One chiefs have admitted for the first time that they are "concerned" that an activist who protested against the Bahrain Grand Prix on Facebook was jailed for three years by the country's authorities.

F1 has traditionally been reluctant to intervene on politics and human rights cases but has made a rare exception in the case of Najah Yusuf, who claims she was beaten, sexually abused and imprisoned following a series of posts in April 2017 that were critical of the race and the regime.

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A week later Najah was arrested. During her interrogation she claims she was beaten with shoes, groped and sexually assaulted. She also alleges that she was repeatedly asked: "How many times have boys ridden you?" before her questioner threatened to "ride" her several times. There was no lawyer present and Najah says she was subsequently coerced into signing a pre-prepared confession which led to her being jailed in June.

Human rights groups say they first alerted F1 to Yusuf's plight in March. However they insist it was only after a letter from the Liberal Democrat peer Lord Scriven last week – followed up by another one from the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (Bird) – that F1 chiefs acknowledged their concerns about the Bahraini court's judgment against Ms Yusuf.

"We are concerned by the citation in the court judgment of Ms Yusuf's comment opposing the staging of the 2017 Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix," Sacha Woodward Hill, general counsel for F1, told Scriven and Bird. "And we have raised our concerns with our counterparts in Bahrain, as part of our ongoing enquiries."

"Formula One is committed to respecting internationally recognised human rights in its operations globally. As part of our commitment we expect that commentators who may wish to use the occasion of a formula one grand prix event to express opinions peacefully will be able to do so without punitive action, before, during or after the event."

The Bahrain Grand Prix has had a troubled past, with the race being cancelled in 2011 after human rights protests in the country while in 2012 the race went ahead despite tens of thousands of anti-government protesters flooding a major highway to demand it was cancelled. It remains a flashpoint in the country.

During 2017 Formula One told human rights groups that "journalists and other commentators who wish to use the occasion of the [Bahrain] Grand Prix event to express their opinions peacefully will be able to do so without reprisal."

However human rights groups say that this standard was not applied in the case of Najah. They also say her ill-treatment is continuing in jail and that she was badly beaten in September as a reprisal for her case being raised in the British parliament. Since then she has also not been able to see her family.



Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, the director of Bird, told the Guardian: "Formula One is in a position of power; failure to act means they are complicit to Najah's suffering. Formula one must leverage the full weight of their authority to ensure their abusive business partner releases Najah immediately and unconditionally. If that requires cancelling the Bahrain Grand Prix in 2019, then so be it."

However the Bahrain government maintains Yusuf was jailed for "promoting and encouraging people to overthrow the political and social systems" between 2010 and 2017. And Fahad al-Binali, the first secretary at Bahrain's ministry of foreign affairs, told the Guardian his country took allegations about Najah's case and her ill-treatment seriously.

"Najah Ahmed Yusuf's complaint was submitted to the [Bahrain] independent ombudsman," he said. "After investigating the complaint of alleged mistreatment, the case was referred to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU)."

"Najah Ahmed Yusuf's conviction is a matter for Bahrain's courts. All individuals in the Kingdom are guaranteed fair and equal treatment within the criminal justice system, with the right to legal representation at every stage and the opportunity to appeal court rulings through multiple channels."

"In regard to peaceful protest, the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and to peaceful assembly are protected by Bahrain's constitution. The government continues to uphold this right robustly and no one is detained for expressing their political views."

Four sentenced to death, revocation of nationality

1 On 2nd November Bahrain's Fourth High Criminal Court sentenced four individuals to death on charges related to terrorism, three of them being tried in absentia. The charges relate to an incident where a police car was bombed in Duraz on 18 June 2017, leading to the death of a police officer according to the Ministry of Interior. While three of the four individuals are outside of Bahrain, the fourth individual is being held in detention. The citizenship of all four individuals has been revoked as well. This brings the total number of Bahraini revocation of citizenship cases to 764 since 2012, with an unprecedented 258 cases occurring in 2018 alone. The four individuals were also fined 1,000 BDH each.

The Court convicted:

Hussain Abdullah Marhoon Rashid: In custody. Hussein had already been convicted in absentia on terrorism-related charges in October 2014.

Sayed Mohammed Qassim Mohammed Hassan Fadhel: was already sentenced to life imprisonment in February 2016.

Hussain Ali Ahmed Dawood: Hussain was already sentenced to life imprisonment three times for three separate cases. Ahmed Mohammed Ali Mahdi Ibrahim Zain Al Deen: Ahmed was already convicted on terrorism-related charges.

As this deeply unfair trial concludes, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) condemns the ruling in the strongest possible terms and urges Bahraini authorities to issue a moratorium on executions, pending the abolition of the death penalty once and for all.

Commenting, Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, Director of BIRD, said: "There is no justice in this verdict. It is now the trend for Bahraini courts to use confessions extracted under torture to sentence people to death. The revocation of citizenship has become as commonplace as speeding tickets in Bahrain, where most victims are left stateless in blatant violation of international law. International monitoring is absolutely vital to ensuring some justice is administered by Bahrain's kangaroo courts."