

BAHRAIN

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

Eight glorious years of Bahrain's revolution herald a new dawn

As the eighth anniversary of the Bahrain's glorious Revolution approaches the balance of power on the ground appears to be gradually tilting towards the people as the Alkhalifa tribal dictatorship struggles to maintain its vicious grip on the people. With prisons overcrowded beyond belief with numbers exceeding 5000, native Bahrainis in the diaspora in thousands and natives whose nationality had been revoked exceeding 800, the human rights situation is becoming a serious embarrassment to the regime and its backers. It is true that violations of human rights in themselves do not necessarily tilt public opinion against the torturers, but the resilience of the people gradually becomes the cornerstone of change. If the people remain steadfast in the face of extreme forms of aggression, repression and human rights violations, then the regime begins to lose the purpose of its existence. Fear, intimidation and hopelessness are the weapons of the tyrants against their people. Once they lose their sharpness and become blunted, the regime's defences start to crumble, one after the other. The threshold of fear has shifted among Bahrainis thus causing the regime to panic and lose its motivation. The eight years of Revolution have blunted Alkhalifa weapons and the people are now poised to make inroads into the future of their country.

To elaborate, the case of Hakeem Al Oraibi, the famous native Bahraini athlete, has now become the talk of the international footballers. The Australian team that he had jointed, Pacoe Vale has now become party to the crisis. Pressures are mounting on the athletic world to take a stand and challenge the Bahraini regime head on with regards to Mr AlOraibi. International footballers have been urged to defend the Bahraini athlete and lay siege to the Alkhalifa regime in every possible way. The head of the Asian Football Association, Salman AlKhalifa, is probably the biggest loser in this political game. He has failed his duty by refusing to heed the call to intervene with his boss in Bahrain to release the native athlete. The soccer world has now realised that Alkhalifa has placed his tribal affiliation before his professional duties and failed to defend the human rights of Mr Al Oraibi. As chairman of the organisation he is duty-bound to take a stand, communicate with the Thai authorities about Hakim and mobilise forces to get him freed.

The case of Al Oraibi is symbolic of the political situation in Bahrain where men, women and children are targeted for revenge by the ruling tribe. Last month the dictator rejected an appeal by Sheikh Ali Salman against his life term jail sentence on the charge of "collaborating" with Qatar. Many have now spent eight years in jail for opposing Alkhalifa dictatorship. The past year has seen the highest number of nationality revocation of native citizens. Around 300 suddenly found themselves stateless, many had already been deported. The use of citizenship as a weapon has been adopted by a regime that suffers from severe inferiority complex for being of foreign origins. The Alkhalifa have never felt they are part of the country, its people or culture. They have sought to alter the population balance by persecuting the natives and importing new "citizens". Women and men have suffered from the use of this. One woman, Zainab Makki had been given six months sentence (later increased to one year) for opposing the regime, but also had her nationality revoked. Other weapons include employment, pensions, higher education and scholarships, hospitalisation, media and judiciary. None of these sectors are for the service of the people. They are used by the dictator as weapons against them. For example conformists will not be detained for their political stands, attacked in the media or denied the right to education or employment.

As the new year began more repressive decisions and measures have been imposed. In addition to upholding the earlier decision to jail AlWefaq's leader to life, the liberal Wa'ad political society had also had the decision to dissolve it upheld. International bodies including Amnesty International have criticised those decisions but the defenders of the regime in Washington and London have continued their support without due care about human rights or other considerations. The same goes for the war on Yemen. While the world opinion has decisively swung against the Saudi-led aggression, the attacks have continued unabated. Three months ago the American Secretary of State, George Pompeo pledged that the war would be stopped with a month (i.e. by the end of November). That has not happened. The Saudis,

Emiratis and Khalifis have continued their daily attacks killing and maiming innocent civilians. The present US administration has failed in almost every pledge or policy they had embraced, yet Mr Trump is still in his position wreaking havoc on the world. This has reflected badly on the oppressed people throughout the world, especially in the Middle East.

Eight years ago the Arab world staged its pan-Arab revolution that swept away some political figures. Their regimes have survived due to the unwavering support of the West. On 14th February 2011 the people of Bahrain poured onto the streets calling for regime change. They were full of enthusiasm, hope and bravery. They have now endured eight years of most vicious repression that led to the martyrdom of more than 200 people, the imprisonment of over 20,000 and the citizenship revocation of more than 800. Yet their resilience has surprised the world. The regime is still in power, not because of its own strength, but due to the presence of six armies in this small country.

Within a month of the Revolution, the Saudis and Emiratis invaded the country to crush the Revolution. They achieved partial success; the dictator remained in power but the people's revolution could not be crushed. The most important outcomes of that Revolution are; first it enabled the people to declare their long-term desire; the ending of the tribal hereditary dictatorship, the removal of any form of legitimacy from the regime; constitutional and popular, the exposure of the Alkhalifa as a foreign brutal occupation entity and the polarisation of the Bahraini society into native people (Shia and Sunni) and the Khalifi occupation. It was the end of the co-habitation of the two sides. The presence of the Saudi, Emirati, Pakistani, Jordanian, American and British forces has failed to dislodge the people from their moral high grounds and political determination. After eight years of struggle the people have no stomach to return to the pre-14 February status quo. They are adamant on achieving fundamental political change. They will achieve it. They have the desire, the will and the determination. There will be more sacrifices as the counter-revolution forces continue their collective work against any change in the status quo. But dictatorship must not be allowed to flourish.

Saudis, Khalifis escalate repression with more arrests, torture

The human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain is taking a turn to the worst. The two regimes have been emboldened by Western indifference towards the rising trend of ill-treatment and abuse under the Saudi and Alkhalifa tribal rulers. On Monday Saudi forces handed the body of a young man from Qatif. Nayef Ahmad AlOmran had been in jail for over six years for taking part in anti-regime protests. He had been subjected to torture and denied medical care. The immediate cause of his death is not immediately known but close relatives believe that his death is linked to his treatment behind bars. On the same day another man lost his life. A prominent Saudi cleric has died after five months in detention, his family and rights activists said, amid heightened criticism of Riyadh's human rights record following the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Also Ahmed al-Amari, who had previously served as a dean at Islamic University in Medina, was transferred to a government hospital earlier this month after suffering a brain haemorrhage, London-based rights group ALQST and activists said. Amari's son, Abdullah, confirmed the death on Twitter and said funeral prayers would be held last Monday afternoon.

While Western politicians continue to ignore the excesses of their allies, good-hearted people have made a stand against their inhumane policies. More than 200 scholars worldwide have signed an open letter to the Saudi authorities in support of a jailed woman academic. Dr Hatoun Al Fassi has been in detention for almost a year for defending women rights. The signatories include the founding director of Prince AlWaleed Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Also the Canadian prime min-

ister, Justin Trudeau has called on the notorious Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) to release blogger Raif Badawi saying that it is "a priority to all Canadians". Mr Badawi has been behind bars for eight years for writing critical comments about the regime. On 17th January the American Senator Bernie Sanders tweeted against MBS: "Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, has been hailed as a progressive reformer. But his track record of imprisoning, torturing and murdering activists begs to differ. It's time that the U.S. and the international community hold this despotic regime accountable."

Australia's peak workers group, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, has called for a formal inquiry into the AFP's processes and the role of Australian authorities in the lead up to the arrest of Hakeem AlOraibi. Key questions about the complicated case remain unanswered, including the actions of the AFP and its officers seconded to the country's Interpol bureau, which alerted Thailand to Al-Araibi's travel plans because of a false red notice. The red notice was erroneously issued by Interpol against its own protocols which ban the granting of red notices for refugees on behalf of the country from which the individual fled. "It's deeply disturbing that our own authorities would help a country to extradite an Australian resident when they are accused of torturing that person," said the ACTU president, Michele O'Neil.

On 16th January A group of football-loving Rohingya refugees called on relevant authorities to free Hakeem al-Araibi while at the same time slamming the "hypocrisy" that sees their people displaced and stateless. Arakan Times Rohingya Football Club official Mohammed Faruk said he hoped the world can unite to win Oraibi's release and end the Rohingya

suffering. "As refugees ourselves, we know the kind of sacrifices Hakeem had to go through. We don't want to go back to a place where our lives are in danger and Hakeem should not have to go through that anxiety. We hope he is released and can go back to Australia," Kuala Lumpur-based Faruk told the South China Morning Post.

In another development Bahrain's dictator has ordered his "court of cassation" to enforce the ban imposed by the tribal dictatorship on "Wa'ad" society, a liberal leftist political group. It had already dissolved Al Wefaq and Al Amal societies for siding with the people against Alkhalifa occupiers. Yesterday Amnesty International issued a statement against this decision. It said: "Amnesty International calls on the Bahraini authorities to ensure that Wa'ad is allowed to reopen and resume its activities without delay and uphold the rights to freedom of association and expression. The international community must also use its leverage with the Bahraini authorities to push them to put an end to their systematic crackdown on opposition, which has been going on for far too long, unchecked."

On 21st January regime's courts passed one year prison sentences on eight natives for taking part in anti-regime protests. They are all children under the ages of 18. Meanwhile two human rights prisoners, Naji Fateel and Ali Hajji have completed 65 days on hunger strike to protest the denial of medical care and proper family visits. Lord Scriven and Lloyd Russell-Moyle have urged UK's foreign minister to ask Bahrain's dictator to heed the calls for proper treatment of detainees especially the two hunger strikers.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
23rd January 2019

International action needed to tame Saudi, Alkhalifa torture regimes

On 13th January Alia al-Hathloul, sister of the jailed Saudi women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul, published an article in the New York Times about her sister. The letter appears to be an open letter to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who was visiting Saudi Arabia, urging him to take up the case of her sister. She said: "I am struck by what is not included in Mr. Pompeo's itinerary: the brave women activists of Saudi Arabia, who are being held in the kingdom's prisons for seeking rights and dignity. Mr. Pompeo's apathy is personal for me because one of the women detained, Loujain al-Hathloul, is my sister. She has worked relentlessly to earn Saudi women the right to drive." After giving brief background information about her sister's case Alia said: "I am torn about writing about Loujain, scared that speaking about her ordeal might harm her. But these long months and absence of hope have only increased my desperation to

see the travel bans on my parents, who are in Saudi Arabia, revoked and to see my brave sister freed."

Yesterday, the court case of Saudi woman activist, Israa Al Ghamgham,29, was adjourned without giving a date. She is being tried for taking part in anti-regime protests in 2011. The prosecution has asked for her execution for challenging the regime. International pressures on the Saudis have mounted in the hope that Al Ghamgham would not be executed. There has been unease among human rights activists after reports detailing ill-treatment of Saudi women prisoners had circulated. The newly-detained activists have been subjected to horrific treatment. Dr Ruqayya Al Muhareb has been subjected to horrific treatment. The prosecutors have also called for her beheading. Another prominent figure is Sheikh Ayedh Al Qarni who was admitted to hospital after his health had deteriorated due to psychological and physical pressures. Dr Ali Amri who has

languished in Saudi jails for more than 18 months, is said to have been subjected to ill-treatment including beating, electric shocks and cigarette burns. He is accused of belonging to a "secret organization" and criticizing the regime. Last September the prosecutors had asked for his execution. Sheikh Hassan Farhan Al Maliki, another prominent scholar who has languished in jail since September 2017, is also threatened with beheading and crucifixion.

As the New Year began Alkhalifa regime has escalated its attacks on native Bahrainis with mass arrests of young men and women. Two women have been detained by Alkhalifa notorious torturers. Yesterday, Zainab Makki Marhoon was snatched from Alkhalifa court to the torture chambers to spend one year sentence that she had received in August. Her nationality and that of her husband had also been revoked, Hadeer Abdulla Hassan



Saudis murder seven natives, Thailand must free Bahraini athlete

On Monday 8th January seven natives of Qatif in the Eastern Province of Arabia were murdered by Saudi forces. It was cold-blooded pre-meditated killing by a regime whose crimes have largely been overlooked by the outside world despite its cruelty and what the dismemberment of Jamal Khaggohi had shown. An online video broadcast by Reuters shows a military vehicle firing in the residential area of Umm Al Hamam district of Qatif. The victims are: Mohammad Hussain Al-Shabib, Abdul Muhsin Taher AlAswad, Ammar Nasser Abu Abdulla, Ali Hassan Abu Abdulla, Abdul Muhsin Abu Abdulla, Yahay Zakariya Al Ammar and Adel Jaffar Thaifa. Qatif, in an oil-producing province and the home of the large native Shi'ite population has suffered discrimination and marginalisation. Since 2011 when its people joined the Arab Spring many of its inhabitants have been targeted for execution or assassination. Three years ago a senior religious figure, Sheikh Nimr Al Nimr was executed by the regime. His body has never been handed to his family for burial.

On 4th January the UN Human Rights Council said that it could not verify the fairness of a Saudi trial of the killers of Jamal Khashoggi and said that the trial is not enough in any case. The Council insists on an independent international inquiry into the murder last October of Mr Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. His body was dismembered and all indications point to the order of the killing coming from the crown prince personally. The Turks have always asked for the trial to be held in Istanbul where the crime had been committed. The Saudis know that such a trial will expose

the real killers among the most senior figures of the House of Saud.

On 4th January the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ravina Shamdasani called for the release of Nabeel Rajab. She said: We call on the Government of Bahrain to immediately and unconditionally release prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab and to ensure that all Bahrainis are able to exercise their rights to freedom of opinion and expression without fear of arbitrary detention.

Native Bahraini actor, Fawzi Ahmad has been given 15 years jail sentence for taking a stand in support of the highest religious authority in the country, Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim. Despite this horrible treatment the prisoners have resorted to other means of protest. This week Sayed Hussain Al Tublani joined two other inmates; Naji Fateel and Ali Hajji in their hunger strike which has lasted more than 50 days. They are calling for proper medical care. This negligence has led to several deaths including: Mohammad Sahwan, Mohammad Mushaima and Jaffar Al Durazi. Two seriously ill prisoners, Sayed Kadhem and Ali Qambar were released to die outside the prison.

On Monday 8th January, members of Alkhalifa Death Squads attacked the Building No 3 at the notorious Jaw prison, beating the inmates, dispersing their belongings and attacking their religious symbols including books. Many prisoners were injured in this unprovoked criminal attack. The prison authorities have also targeted the families of detainees, curtailed their visits and confined them to the first line of relatives. They first erected the glass barrier to stop the intimacy between the prisoner and his relatives, then reduced the time of the visit and now they decided to prevent the

relatives from the second level from those visits. In recent months prisoners have protested and staged hunger strikes to demand proper medical care that the regime has denied them.

The Thai authorities are facing renewed calls to release Bahraini athlete Hakeem Al Oraibi who is languishing in one of its jails since he arrived at Bangkok Airport at the end of November to spend his honeymoon with his wife. The calls are intensifying following the case of a Saudi young girl, Rahaf Alkanun. She was arrested at Bangkok airport after fleeing her family in Saudi Arabia and renouncing her religion. Her case was resolved within two days, while Hakim's case has not attracted such attention. The football world is asking Salman Alkhalifa, president of Asian Football Association to choose between his tribal loyalty and the ethics of international soccer. He has hitherto failed to support the call by FIFA and other bodies to release native Bahraini athlete, Hakeem Al Oraibi. He is awaiting the decision by the Thai authorities whether to release or hand him to Alkhalifa torturers. Australia's football federation executives have finally met with al-Khalifa, more than 40 days after Hakeem al-Araibi was detained. The meeting is understood to have occurred at the AFC Asian Cup football championships in the United Arab Emirates, with FFA chair Chris Nikou expressing Australia's desire to have al-Araibi freed and returned. "FFA requests the governments of Australia, Thailand and Bahrain to continue their efforts to enable the release of Mr Hakeem al-Araibi and to ensure his safe return to Australia in accordance with internationally recognised human rights conventions."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
9th January 2019

Abadi was detained on Monday 14th January. On 15th January two brothers were seized in a home raid in Duraz. Mahmood and Hussain Al Durazi were snatched from their beds and taken to the torture chambers. From Sanad Town Mohammad Jaffar Shamloh, 18 was detained from his home. Murtada Hussain Awal, 17 was arrested after he had been summoned by the torturers. From Arad Town home raids in the early hours of yesterday were conducted and Hussain Ali Al Ujaimi was detained. The arrests in the past week include: Hussain Al Markhi on Sunday, Saleh Abbas Mushaima from Daih yesterday, Jaffar Saeed Ahmad Al Jazeeri on Friday, Sayed Ahmad Sayed Moosa (detained at the causeway), Hassan Aqeel Zain Al Deen (from Dair Town), Ali Al Qassab and Abdulla Shamsan

The United Nations has directly challenged the UK's Foreign Office over the jailing by Bahrain of the family of a prominent British-based activist. The UN formally rebuked Bahrain, accusing it of detaining them as a reprisal for Mr Alwa-

dae's opposition work. The targeting of Mr Alwadaei's relatives follows closely his human rights activities in Britain. In September, after Mr Alwadaei briefed MPs on the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain, his mother-in-law, Hajer Hassan, 50, was taken from her prison cell and beaten. She had not been permitted to see her family since. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the three were "deprived of their liberty, interrogated and prosecuted for their family ties with Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei and that these were acts of reprisal" It accused Bahrain of "torture, ill-treatment and threats against family members in order to extract confessions," saying that their cases fit a pattern of abuses in Bahrain that "may constitute crimes against humanity". The group concluded: "No fair trial is possible under such an atmosphere of fear."

The human rights world is in shock as Bahraini athlete, Hakeem Al Oraibi remains in a Thai jail. He has now spent 52 days behind bars despite pleas to release him. Speaking at the Asian Cup finals in the UAE, chief executive of the

Professional Footballers Association John Didulica said the time had come to bring the issue to a head. "I think we have a stunning conflict at the apex of the Asian Football Confederation which sees the president of the federation, Sheikh Salman, also being an influential Bahraini — and we have a Bahraini international footballer jailed in Thailand," he told the ABC. "To add an additional sting to that, Hakeem spoke out about Sheikh Salman's previous tilt at the FIFA presidency in 2015, drawing on his experience in having been a tortured".

Bahrain Freedom Movement
17th January 2019



Bahrain detained activist's family over UK protest, UN rules

Bahrain has been found guilty by a UN body of arbitrarily detaining three relatives of a British-based human rights activist as a reprisal for his protest in London against the visit of the country's king in 2017.

In a judgment published on Thursday, the UN called for all three to be released from detention and suggested evidence showed they had been victims of torture and false confessions.

The case raises questions about the extent to which the Foreign Office is willing to protect the right of exiles to protest in the UK, especially against Gulf States with which Britain has close links.

The ruling came from the UN's working group on arbitrary detention, a subsidiary of the human rights council.

It said the trio were arrested without legal basis and arbitrarily detained without the use of an arrest warrant or legal representation. The judgment also found Bahrain did not undertake any credible investigation into allegations of torture of the detainees.

All three detained by the Bahrain government are related by birth or marriage to Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, a Bahraini activist.

Alwadaei was given asylum in the UK in 2012 after being sentenced to six months by the Bahrain government for his role in protests against the royal family's rule at the time of the Arab spring.

He has continued to demonstrate against British support for Bahrain's rulers, including by protesting against the visit of the king to Downing Street in 2016.

The relatives were his brother-in-law Sayed Nazar Alwadaei, his wife's cousin Mahmood Marzooq Mansoor and his mother-in-law, Hajar Mansoor Hassan.

In the finding, the working group said it was "persuaded that Sayed Nazar Alwadaei, Mansoor and Hassan were deprived of their liberty, interrogated and prosecuted for their family ties with Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, and that these were acts of reprisals. This is the only plausible explanation for the subversion of the equal protection of the law they have experienced."

The judgment added that "no one should be detained for the crimes that may or may not [have been] committed by a family member".

All three claim they were maltreated after their arrests. They were subsequently charged with terrorism-related offences, including planting or helping to plant fake explosives in January 2017, and sentenced to three years in prison.

They allege, according to the UN report, that they were interrogated as much about Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei's movements in London as the crimes for which they had been charged. They also claim that no arrest warrants were provided and, on arrest, they were tortured.

Maya Foa, the director of the human rights organisation Reprieve, said: "As the world rightly condemns Bahrain for punishing family members of human rights activists, and British MPs stand up in parliament to demand action from the government, the Foreign Office continues to offer only vague, mealy mouthed expressions of concern."

"Britain has provided the Bahraini regime with millions of pounds in security assistance. The least the government can do is demand the end of the arbitrary detention of, and torture of, peaceful dissenters."

Bahrain remains a pillar of the British and US alliance in the Gulf.



Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **Release Nabeel Rajab immediately, unconditionally**

Geneva Date: 4 January 2019

We call on the Government of Bahrain to immediately and unconditionally release prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab and to ensure that all Bahrainis are able to exercise their rights to freedom of opinion and expression without fear of arbitrary detention.

Rajab has been imprisoned since June 2016 for tweeting in 2015 about Saudi Arabia's airstrikes in Yemen and allegations of torture inside Bahrain's Jau Prison. One such tweet read as follows: "We have the right to say no to the war in #Yemen and should struggle for peace and security but not bloodshed #Sanaa." On Monday this week, Bahrain's highest court – the Court of Cassation – upheld Rajab's conviction and five-year prison sentence on charges of "spreading false news and rumours in time of war", "insulting foreign countries" and "insulting publicly the interior ministry". The UN Working Group of Arbitrary Detention had last year declared Rajab's detention to be arbitrary.

Monday's court decision brings into focus the continued suppression of Government critics in Bahrain through arbitrary arrest and detention, travel bans, harassment, threats, revocation of citizenship and other means. There have been numerous reports of human rights defenders, political activists, journalists and opposition figures being targeted for the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assem-

bly and association. The UN Secretary-General's report on reprisals in September 2018 highlighted several specific cases where civil society activists and their families in Bahrain suffered reprisals for seeking to engage with UN human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council. In some of the cases, the activists were accused of terrorism-related offences.

The arrest, detention and imprisonment of individuals for the exercise of their fundamental human rights is in violation of Bahrain's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which it has ratified. We urge the Government of Bahrain to stop criminalising dissenting

