

BAHRAIN

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

Failure of Bahrain's economic workshop will sink its dictators

There is almost a unanimous verdict that the khalifi-sponsored economic workshop held on 25-26th June in Bahrain has failed to give impetus to the fledgling "Deal of the Century" announced by Donald Trump. Bahraini dictator sought to deflect attention away from his domestic troubles by sponsoring the meeting titled "prosperity for peace" with the hope that the attendance of world leaders would boost his struggle for survival after years of devastating defeats, politically and morally. The US has been supported by the counter-revolution forces of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, the khalifis of Bahrain and Israel. Media and political campaigns had been waged to woo Arab partners and encourage them to attend in order to enhance the chances of success. At the end only a handful of states took part while the vast majority of the Arab people voiced disapproval of the treacherous khalifi move. From the start it became clear that the initiative had no chances of making a breakthrough in the struggle for just peace in the Middle East. Under Benjamin Netanyahu the Israelis had become more aggressive and arrogant while the Palestinians were becoming more oppressed but determined to achieve the freedom of their land. Unfortunately, Gulf dictators, most notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain's rulers have abandoned the Palestinians and forged alliances with the Israelis. Bahrain's economic workshop is their making.

Bahraini khalifi occupiers have long hoped for normalisation of relations with the Zionists, considering them their saviours from their predicaments and defeats at the hand of the natives of the land. For the past eight years they have failed to dislodge the natives from their demands for justice, real independence, end of tribal dictatorship and emergence of people's power. The counter revolution forces waged their first all-out aggression on the country in mid-March 2011 when their troops crossed the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. They had believed that the incursion would mark the beginning of the end of Arab revolutions and that the West would not have had any interest in supporting the prodemocracy movements. They invested heavily in their aggression against Bahrainis and took serious steps to establish a new era of domination in the Arab world.

They hoped they would then be in a position to influence the other revolutions that were taking place at the time. They became more forceful, aggressive and determined to pursue the path of upholding the tribal rule at any cost in the future. The Bahraini experience had emboldened them to undertake more daring steps such as involvement in the terror campaign launched by terrorist groups supported by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. What followed would not have been possible without the blessing of those regimes especially the United States. Their offensive against the people of Iraq, Syria and now Sudan and Libya marked a new form of self-imposition by the US in the struggle to achieve a degree of dignity and rights by the Arab people.

Today, the situation has shifted markedly and is heading probably to the final stages of the war of wills among the various players. The forces of the counter revolution have been weakened despite their attempts to appear otherwise. Their aim is to subjugate the forces of change and independence in the region. They have spared no effort to annihilate these forces, but have failed to obliterate them. In the past. They adopt all means of compulsion in order to break the will of the people of change and progress. They give unequivocal support to the reactionary, repressive and hereditary dictators. The Bahrain workshop is a sign of weakness, not strength. They have failed to attract the Palestinians to participate in this latest attempt to eliminate the Palestinian case to the advantage of the occupiers. The people of Bahrain themselves have risen against their tyrannical regime which allowed the country to become the centre of conspiracy against the people of Palestine. The dictator had no choice but to implement the orders from Washington, London, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. He owes his existence to them. He was defeated within the first month after the Pearl Roundabout Revolution in 2011 and was only saved by the military intervention by the Saudi-Emirati forces. Since then he has become a lame duck ruler whose function is to receive instructions and implement them without a question or hesitation. He lost his digni-

ty, sovereignty and integrity and became the symbol of hate to the native Bahrainis. He sought to exact revenge on them, detaining and torturing thousands, killing hundreds and banishing many. Yet he has failed to quell the people's revolution which has remained on its peaceful path since its inception.

In the past few weeks Bahraini people revolted with stronger zeal against the treacherous policies of the tyrannical khalifi rule. They have staged daily protests against the worship which was boycotted by the Palestinians who said it was part of the conspiracy against Palestine. The Bahrainis have all along stood for justice in their country and elsewhere. They supported the Palestinian cause and remained part of the Arab conscience that rejected occupation, dictatorship and terrorism. They have paid a hefty price for their humane stands. Scores of Bahrainis were detained and tortured last month for protesting against Alkhalifa treachery and betrayal. The detentions included underaged children who will face extensive persecution to deter them from future activism. Yet these actions have only solidified the stands of the Bahrainis who have defied the odds and remained steadfast. They have a share in ensuring the failure of the khalifi conspiratorial role against the main cause of the Arabs and Muslims. Bahrain should never have been a meeting place for dirty political games, immoral conspiracies and dirty tricks against the rights and existence of the Palestinians. The regime has always been part of the counter-revolution. It has always targeted Bahrainis for many reasons including their pro-Palestine stands. This was evident when, in September 2001, they killed Mohammad Juma Al Shakhouri, a native, as he chanted against the cold-blooded murder of Mohammad Al Durra. On the other side, the khalifi dictator has repeatedly welcomed Zionists to the country as natives were detained, tortured and killed. This time, the regime has allowed Israeli media to broadcast from Bahrain the proceedings of the failed workshop which was opened by Jarid Kushner, Trump's son in law. It was a failure that may have sown the seeds of the coming end of the khalifi hereditary dictatorship.

Saudis to behead under-aged boy, US Senators condemn Khalifi repression

An international outcry against the proposed beheading and crucifixion of a 10 year old Saudi boy has intensified the pressures on a regime intent on killing and murdering its people. Murtaja Al Qureiris from the Eastern Province has been condemned to death for protesting peacefully against the regime. He is now 18 but he was only 10 when he committed "the crime of protesting". On 9th June Amnesty International issued a statement on the issue which said: We call on Saudi Arabia to not use the death penalty to punish a young man, arrested at 13, for participating in anti-government protests. It is appalling that Murtaja Qureiris is facing execution for offences that include taking part in protests while he was just 10 years old.

Last week Republican and Democratic U.S. senators said they would introduce legislation to block President Donald Trump's plan for \$8 billion in military sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates without congressional review. Backers said the introduction of the 22 "resolutions of disapproval," one for each of the 22 arms deals cleared by the Trump administration, was intended to "protect and reaffirm Congress' role of approving arms sales to foreign governments." The announcement followed furious rejection in Congress late last month of the administration's declaration that a growing threat from Iran was an emergency that forced it to sidestep lawmakers' review of major arms deals and approve precision-guided munitions, aircraft engines, mortars and other equipment for Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan. "We are taking this step today to show that we will not stand idly by and allow the President or the Secretary of

State to further erode Congressional review and oversight of arm sales," said Senator Bob Menendez, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has been criticised for whitewashing the Khalifi regime's human rights crimes. Its annual report has diminished the human rights deterioration in Bahrain in its 2018 report on human rights and democracy priorities, labelling it a "mixed picture of challenges and positive developments." Similar labels were given in the 2017 and 2016 reports. It neglects to document the numerous allegations of torture, ill-treatment and abuse of anti-regime activists, glosses over issues such as the rise in death penalty sentences and citizenship revocation, and ignores the crackdown on freedom of expression and reprisals against activists and human rights defenders. The FCO also omitted to comment on the deterioration of prison conditions in the country. The report praises dysfunctional oversight mechanisms which have been criticised extensively, most notably by the UN Committee Against Torture. It condemned the use of "widespread" torture in Bahrain while labelling the oversight bodies as being neither "effective" nor "independent". With regards to the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman, specifically, Amnesty International highlighted in a report published in September 2018 that victims or their families had filed complaints with "no result" and that in cases where action had been taken by the Ombudsman, "its follow-up has been ineffective".

After jailing him for two years, Khalifi dictators have banned a senior religious scholar from performing his duties. Few days ago Sayed Majeed Al Mesh'al was summoned by the torture apparatus and

forced to sign an undertaking not to deliver religious sermons or lead prayers at Imam Sadiq Mosque in Duraz. The mosque has been without an Imam for more than two years. His long-standing Imam, Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim was banished from the country last year after spending two years under house siege which was ended only after five native Bahrainis were butchered by regime's forces.

This year Bahrainis marked the Eid Day (at the end of Ramadan) with a mixture of defiance of the regime and sadness at the plight of the country and its faithful youth. On Wednesday 5th June many people visited the graveyards to recite Quran for the souls of the martyrs. One martyr stood out for remembrance. Ali Jawad Al Sheikh was killed by regime's forces on 31st August 2011 which was Eid Day. Not only have his killers been spared justice, but his father has been languishing in jail for the past three years for demanding that his son's killers be brought to justice. Journalist Jaffar Al Jamri has been charged by Khalifi "kingdom of silence" for his tweets that are incompatible with their policies. Yesterday he appeared at a Khalifi "court" (commonly known as revenge centres) where his trial was postponed until 25th June.

A seminar at US Congress in Washington yesterday on the political crisis in Bahrain was addressed by prominent figures like Senator Jim McGovern and Senator Ilhan Omar. Senator McGovern said that he had adopted the case of Nabeel Rajab within his capacity as a member of Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. He said Mr Rajab's detention is "unconscionable".

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been offered at the torture dungeons, the lack of medical care and the squalid conditions of the prison. His death is reminiscent of the evil nature of those tyrannical regimes supported by the US and UK.

On 12th June native Bahraini woman activist, Hadeer Abadi was brought to the khalifi prosecutor who extended her custody one more month. This is the sixth time she had her custody extended without charge or trial. She has now spent over five months behind bars. This is a new form of the old "state security law".

The Arab world has reacted in anger against the khalifi dictators for allowing anti-Palestine conference to be held in Bahrain. Natives have been protesting against this treacherous act and calling for the workshop to be cancelled. The Palestinians have reacted angrily against the meeting scheduled for 25th and 26th June titled "prosperity for peace". The main Palestinian movement, Fateh has called for a general strike on 25th June in all Palestinian territories in protest against the

meeting. Hamas has also called for general protests against what amounts to the throttling of the Palestinian cause and protecting the occupiers of Palestine.

Last week Nabeel Rajab completed three years of incarceration at Khalifi torture chambers for tweeting against the Saudi-led aggression on Yemen. Many human rights bodies issued statements calling for his immediate and unconditional release. They include: The Observatory for human rights defenders, the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), Frontline Defenders, BIRD and ADHRB.

Members of the Irish Parliament have called



on their government to spearhead a statement to call on the Bahraini government to release political and human rights leaders. 91 MPs have issued the call which is likely to put pressure on the government, hoping it will be a wake-up call for the European Union to take the lead in calling for democratic transformation in Bahrain.

On 17th June the khalifi judiciary upheld life sentences and revocation of nationality against several native Bahrainis. Mohammad Abdulla AlMahroos, Anwar Abdul Aziz Mushaima and Fadel Mohammad Jaffar had been sentenced to life and nationality revocation. Ten years and revocation of nationality were upheld against Adel Ahmad Ali Saleh and five years against Hassan Mohammad Fadel. Human Rights woman activist, Ebtisam AlSayegh said that the court ignored the testimonies of the victims on the torture they had endured and based its verdict on false confessions extracted under torture.

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UN calls for investigating MBS as khalifi treachery exposed at workshop

On 19th June, Agnes Callamard, the U.N. special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, said that Evidence suggests Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman and other senior Saudi officials are liable for the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. She called for countries to widen sanctions to include the Crown Prince and his personal assets, until and unless he can prove he has no responsibility. "It is the conclusion of the Special Rapporteur that Mr. Khashoggi has been the victim of a deliberate, premeditated execution, an extrajudicial killing for which the state of Saudi Arabia is responsible under international human rights law," Callamard said in her report based on a six-month investigation. Callamard went to Turkey earlier this year with a team of forensic and legal experts and said she received evidence from Turkish authorities. "There is credible evidence, warranting further investigation of high-level Saudi officials' individual liability, including the Crown Prince's", she said. "Indeed, this human rights inquiry has shown that there is sufficient credible evidence regarding the responsibility of the Crown Prince demanding further investigation," she added, urging U.N. Secretary-General to establish an international probe. Saudi prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against a Saudi religious reformist thinker on a host of vague charges relating to his peaceful religious ideas, Human Rights Watch said on 23rd June. Saudi authorities arrested Hassan Farhan al-Maliki in September 2017 and have detained him since, finally bringing charges in October 2018. Prosecuting al-Maliki for peacefully expressing religious ideas appears to contradict Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's statement in October 2017 that he wanted to "revert" the country to "a moderate Islam open to the world and all religions." The Public Prosecution re-

ports directly to the Saudi royal court. Human Rights Watch reviewed al-Maliki's charge sheet, which consists of 14 charges, nearly all with no resemblance to recognized crimes. The charges do not qualify as crimes for which capital punishment can be justified under international human rights law. International standards, including the Arab Charter on Human Rights, ratified by Saudi Arabia, require countries that retain the death penalty to use it only for the "most serious crimes," and in exceptional circumstances. Saudi woman activist, Naseema Al Sadah, from the Eastern Province remains in solitary confinement without charge or trial. She has not seen her three children for months. Amnesty International said about Mrs Al Sadah: "Her crime is defending human rights and women freedom".

Amid local and regional anger khalifi dictators yesterday opened the notorious "workshop" to design ways of ending the Palestinian hope of an independent free state on their land. It was the most outrageous step ever taken by the traitors who betrayed the cause of the Arabs, Muslims and freedom-loving people. What angered the Americans and their regional allies is not only the absence of the Palestinians but their angry protests and strikes throughout the occupied territories, as well as the angry protests by native Bahrainis. The presence of Israeli media that operated freely from any spot of the land has added salt to the injury. This comes only days after the demolishing of the building of the only independent newspaper in the country, Al Wasat two years after the regime ordered its closure. Many journalists and bloggers remain at the torture chambers while the Israelis were roaming the streets freely. Arrests were made in several areas. From Nuwaidrat town, at least eight people were detained on Monday 24th June: Ahmad Al

Shaikh, Ahmad Jaffar Eid, Ahmad Al Qayyem, Ahmad Qambar, Ahmad Al Hedi, Ali Jum'a, Jaffar Sarhan and his brother Hamid.

Fadel Abbas, a native Bahraini political prisoner has spent the past three months pleading with the khalifi jailers to treat his extremely painful teeth ailment. He has not been able to eat or sleep because of the excruciating pain. On 23rd June, Mohammad Al Singace, another native political prisoner started a hunger strike in protest against his ten year prison sentence. He had been accused of crimes he had not committed.

Following the court judgement in London last week that the UK government had acted illegally by exporting weapons to the Saudis for use against Yemen, the opposition Labour Party has urged the government to immediately halt arms sales to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate and Bahrain for participating in the aggression on Yemen and persecuting their people.

On 18th June sixteen cross-party MPs and Peers, including Caroline Lucas, Layla Moran, Diana Johnson and Sir Peter Bottomley delivered a letter to the British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt urging him to press the Bahraini government to end the abuse of female political prisoners. The signatories outlined a number of abuses reported by prisoners at Bahrain's Isa Town Prison, including unjust restrictions on family visitation and accusations of medical negligence. The letter highlighted the case of Hajer Mansoor, mother-in-law of the Director of BIRD, Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, who claims that prison authorities have restricted access for several months to mammogram results for a range of conditions including a lump in her breast and kidney stones.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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Fear for Saudi, Bahraini detainees after Morsi's suspicious death

Political activists and political prisoners have expressed fear for the lives of thousands of political prisoners in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. This follows the mysterious death of Dr Mohammad Morsi, former elected president of Egypt. International pressure has forced the Saudis to abandon an earlier decision to execute a young boy from the Eastern Province. Murtaja Qureiris, the 18-year-old had been facing the death, but he will still be jailed for 12 years for protesting against the regime. He was arrested at the age of 13 by Saudi authorities and he could be released by 2022. An anonymous Saudi official confirmed that timeline.

On Wednesday 12th June Austria's foreign ministry said that his government would implement a vote by MPs calling for the closure of a controversial Saudi-funded center for religious dialogue in the capital Vienna. MPs had voted on that day to demand the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz

International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) be closed down following repeated criticism of Saudi Arabia's human rights record. The vote was prompted by the case of Murtaja Qureiris. The centre has been a source of controversy since opening in 2012, with critics saying it offered the government in Riyadh a way to gloss over accusations of severe human rights violations.

Bahraini citizen Usama Al Tamimi would have had at least a degree of diplomatic immunity, having been an elected member of the dictator's pseudo-parliament. But instead he became a wanted man for criticising the regime's policies. Last week he sought refuge at the American Embassy in Manama to apply for political asylum. Instead of being granted asylum the guards of the embassy forced him out of the compound with his family. The incident brought back the memory of another Bahraini activist Nazar Al Oari' who, in 1998,

entered the British Embassy in Manama and asked for political asylum. He was swiftly handed over to the regime's torturers. The two, however, were more fortunate than Jamal Khashoggi who, last October, entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul only to be cut into pieces by the henchmen of his country's crown prince,

The cruelty of the counter revolution forces led by Saudi Arabia knows no bounds. These include United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and Israel. None of these countries binds itself to human rights principles and international conventions. On Monday 17th June, the only elected president in Egypt's recent history died at the court as a result of his deteriorating health at the jails of the military junta. He had just presented his argument against a charge of "espionage" related to meetings he had as a president with Palestinian group, Hamas. Human Rights Watch attributed his sudden death to the degrading treatment he had

FCO Continues to Deceive the Public over Bahrain's Rights Record

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) diminished the human rights deterioration in Bahrain in its 2018 report on human rights and democracy priorities, labelling it a "mixed picture of challenges and positive developments." Similar labels were given in the 2017 and 2016 reports.

Torture and Unfair Trials

The 2018 report neglects to document the numerous allegations of torture, ill-treatment and abuse of individuals who dissent against the Bahraini government; an issue which the US State department acknowledged had "continued during the year" in their respective report on Bahrain. Widespread reports of unfair trials and due process violations stemming from a corrupt criminal justice system were also included in the US report, but were omitted from the UK equivalent.

Death Penalty and Citizenship Revocation

The FCO also glosses over issues such as the rise in death penalty sentences and citizenship revocation, which have gained significant international criticism. In 2018 alone, 304 individuals were arbitrarily stripped of their citizenship by either civil or military courts - the highest number since this practice was introduced in 2012 to silence political dissent. That same year, 12 individuals were sentenced to death with the UN expressing serious concerns that that capital punishment cases in Bahrain involve "allegations that confessions [...] were obtained under torture and used as evidence in court, thus forming the basis for conviction [...]" in December 2018.

Freedom of Expression and Human Rights defenders

Criticism of the country's crackdown on freedom of expression and reprisals against activists and human rights defenders in 2018 is also scarce. The clampdown on freedom of expression is only referenced in relation to the 5-year sentence handed down in February 2018 on the country's leading human rights defender, Nabeel Rajab. However, the report fails to acknowledge the severity of the situation. Despite his conviction stemmed from his peaceful twitter activity, with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) declaring him "arbitrarily detained" in August 2018, the FCO failed to call for his release.

The UN WGAD also found the targeting of London-based human rights defender Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei and his relatives to be unlawful and in reprisal to Mr Alwadaei's human rights activity. The FCO, however, is yet to acknowledge the reprisals and missed

the opportunity to do so in their report by neglecting to mention the case entirely.

The WGAD further raised concerns that in Bahrain, the "widespread or systematic imprisonment...in violation of the rules of international law may constitute crimes against humanity". Similar concerns were echoed in a resolution adopted by the EU parliament in June 2018, which condemned the "increased crackdown on human rights defenders" by imposing "prison sentences, exile, travel bans, revocation of citizenships or severe threats and intimidation". In its 2018 report, Human Rights Watch stated that "civilian and military courts continue to convict and imprison peaceful dissenters, including prominent human rights defenders and opposition leaders, under the guise of national security".

Treatment of Political Prisoners

Despite substantial reports of punitive measures, threats and physical assault being brought to the attention of the UK government, the report omitted to comment on the deterioration of prison conditions in the country. In July 2018, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concerns for the "inhuman prison conditions, including serious overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, inadequate access to drinking water and unhygienic toilet facilities, particularly in the Jau prison". In September 2018, Amnesty international discussed the "disruptions, delays and needless, petty cruelty" as well as the general negligence of healthcare in Jau prison and Isa Town Prison, the country's only female detention centre. Political prisoners Hassan Mushaima, Hajer Mansoor and Ali Al-Hajee, for example, are just a few individuals who were denied adequate medical care for a series of urgent medical issues.

Impunity and Oversight Bodies

The impunity with which public bodies and individuals act is also underplayed. The report comments on oversight mechanisms in Bahrain, which, according to the FCO, "have already had a positive effect". The FCO supports these bodies - the report elaborates - and has helped them develop "effective mechanisms to hold state institutions, including the police, the security service and the prison service, to account."

These bodies, however, have been criticised

extensively, most notably by the UN Committee Against Torture which condemned the use of "widespread" torture in Bahrain while labelling the oversight bodies as being neither "effective" nor "independent". With regards to the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman, specifically, Amnesty International highlighted in a report published in September 2018 that victims or their families had filed complaints with "no result" and that in cases where action had been taken by the Ombudsman, "its follow-up has been ineffective".

Following the physical assault led by prison officers against female political prisoners Hajer Mansoor and Medina Ali, for example, the National Institute for Human Rights issued a statement denying the allegations of mistreatment. Their conclusion fell in line with the position of Bahrain's Ministry of Interior (MOI), who claimed that the bruises suffered by Hajer were self-inflicted.

Despite the concerns of the international community, including the UN, the report states that "the UK will continue to support Bahraini-led reform in 2019 by providing a range of technical expertise to promote the rule of law and further develop the work of Bahrain's human rights oversight bodies."

Endorsement of Widely-Criticised Electoral Process

With regards to the parliamentary elections held in November 2018, the report welcomes Bahrain's "commitment to the democratic process" and highlights a statement issued by former FCO MENA Minister Alistair Burt welcoming the "successful conclusion" of the elections. These elections, however, were condemned by international legislative bodies extensively. The UK Parliament, US Congress, EU Parliament, Irish and Italian Parliaments have all thrown into question their legitimacy. In May 2018, this same Council of Representatives - for which Bahrain held the November election - passed an amendment to the Law on the Exercise of Political Rights. The legislation barred anyone who belongs to major political parties and those who have spent more than six months in prison from running for elected office. The Bahraini government has in fact dissolved all

political opposition parties, including Al-Wafaq National Islamic Society in 2016 and the secular-left National Democratic Action Society (Wa'ad) in 2017. In addition, no independent electoral commission currently exists, while international media and human rights bodies, including the UN, have been barred from entering the country, therefore no impartial body is capable of monitoring the elections.

