

BAHRAIN

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

For the sake of peace, end Alkhalifa reign of terror in Bahrain

Bahrain is one of those rare countries which has been subjected to intractable problems for decades. The most severe of these is the total incompatibility of its political system with its native population. The past 100 years have witnessed uninterrupted political turmoil for what appear to be different reasons, but which have one thing in common; the impossibility of co-habitation between the native Bahrainis and the khalifi ruling clan. Even the most glamorous political settlements could not break that fact. The 1971 British withdrawal from East of Suez including Bahrain provided the most celebrated event in recent history. An atmosphere of hope and optimism hovered in the air as the independence was declared, Bahrain became a member of the United Nations and the Arab League. It also joined various other bodies and treaties. It then embarked on drafting a permanent constitution to regulate the relations between the rulers and the ruled. It was drawn up by an elected body "the National Assembly" most of whose members were elected by the people. By December 1971 the people were electing their first parliament. But it was only a short-lived ceremony. By August 1975 the whole experiment collapsed when the khalifi ruling clan decided to abruptly abort it. The constitution was shelved and a state of emergency reigned for 25 years. The hopes turned into total dismay. Yet the people fought hard to regain their constitution. By they year 2001 the present ruler took the criminal step of abrogating that constitution and imposing his own. The opportunity for any rapprochement between the two sides ended. It is now accepted that it will never return. The past ten years have confirmed this fact. The present ruler deeply despises the natives. If he has it his way he would have started a bloody genocide against the natives. The first decade of his rule was full of deception and hollow promises. Once he was quoted saying: "The best days we have not lived yet". That bleak decade witnessed one of the worst forms of deceptive policies in the history of the country. The philosophy behind his constitution is that the khalifis did not need the natives to give them legitimacy to rule. This legitimacy was embodied in the 1973 constitution which is the only freely-drafted document that provided that legitimacy.

Hamad's doctrine is based on arrogance, occupation and subjugation. He felt he had the power to ensure total submission by the people to his will. His tribe has the upper hand; it possesses the military power provided by foreign countries. The native Bahrainis have only once choice; to submit to the khalifis, obey them and accept being enslaved by them. His 2002 constitution is based on that arrogance. The second phase of his plan was the transformation of the people. He started importing foreign mercenaries, employing them in the sensitive ministries especially the defence and the interior and give them a free hand to deal with dissent. Political naturalisation became the order of the day. Tens of thousands of foreigners were granted Bahraini passport. Rule of law evaporated and was replaced by royal decrees. The royal court became the de facto government which oversaw the implementation of Hamad's dreams of the "khalifi kingdom". He viewed the natives with disdain, disrespect and hatred. This attitude filtered through the hearts and minds of the natives despite Hamad's attempts to disguise them through elections. Some political groups naively took part in those elections hoping to implement positive change from within. After only five years of parliamentary experience with the dictator's parliament, Al Wefaq society realised it was impossible to attempt to change the unchangeable. In theory the participation of Al Wefaq which was supported by the senior religious leaders would end the rejection of Hamad's project. But that did not happen.

While Al Wefaq were functioning as MPs the people's revolution erupted on 14th February 2011, and the whole khalifi project was exposed. It became clear that it was impossible to achieve any real reform of a regime that is rotten to the core. Its mentality, perception, tribal values, personal greed are factors that make it impossible to reform. The events of the summer of 2010 sealed the fate of the relation between the two sides. The dictator ordered a vicious attack on the people, arresting more than 500 people in one month and subjected them to most cruel forms of torture. That single event prepared the people to the Revolution that would take place less than six months later. When it was declared on 14th February 2011 the response of the people was far greater than many had ex-

pected. Within a month the dictator became encircled inside his highly protected compound with revolutionaries chanting slogans calling for him to hand power to the people.

The Revolution had exposed the real feelings of the people towards the khalifi dynasty and the dictator himself. He is despised, hated and ridiculed by the vast majority of the people. He was seen as a puppet run by others with no personal character and unable to function as a sovereign head of state. To save his skin he called on the Saudis and the Emiratis to come to his aid. Since 15th March 2011 the sovereignty of Bahrain has been in the hands of this unholy alliance. Bahrain was even dragged to the Saudi-led aggression on Yemen. The dictator then called in the British to come back. He built the naval base to facilitate their return. The more he relinquished sovereignty to the outside, the more vicious he became inside the country. The native Bahrainis received the brunt of his criminal assault. It was becoming clearer by the day that the situation in the country was becoming worse as the khalifis imported more mercenaries and subjected the natives to harsher measures including collective punishment, mass arrests, revocation of citizenship, killing and execution.

In these circumstances it is clear that the Bahrainis can no longer live under the tribal khalifi rule. Neither can the khalifis live alongside the natives who never recognised their right to impose their will on them. There is no love lost between the two sides if the khalifis left the scene. No tears would be shed, nor would they be missed. The khalifis, themselves would not mourn the split from the Bahrainis whom they consider the arch-enemy. In recent months they have gone too far in alienating the native population by allying themselves with the Israelis. Many among the Arabs and Muslims have now realised how has become an enemy, not only of Bahrainis, but of Arabs and Muslims, having allied itself with the occupiers of Palestine. For these reasons the time is overdue for the final divorce between the native Bahrainis and the khalifi clan, headed by the vicious dictator Hamad alkhalfifa.

Yemenis will defeat unholy alliance, Bahraini hunger strikers punished

Western powers, especially the US and UK are extremely worried that their investment in the Yemen war may have been lost. The discord between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has become apparent. UAE took a step away from Riyadh by announcing its drawdown of troops in Yemen, and then it took a step towards Iran by sending a coast guard delegation to Tehran who signed a memorandum on border security with the Iranians. Ever since, the rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE has grown and is playing out in the Yemeni city of Aden. The UAE took this step because Tehran seems to have made it clear to the leadership in Abu Dhabi that the UAE will be the first victim of a US-Iran war in the Gulf. The battle between forces aligned with the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the Saudi-led coalition which backs Mansour Hadi – signals the emergence of a new conflict in Yemen. But this time, the dispute is between two allies. The clashes began after the killing of Munir Al Yafi, a commander of the support forces — backed by the UAE — who died in a missile attack on August 1 during a graduation ceremony for newly recruited troops.

Human Rights Watch said the Saudis have killed many Yemeni fishermen. On 21st August it released a statement that said: Saudi-led coalition naval forces have carried out at least five deadly attacks on Yemeni fishing boats since 2018. Coalition warships and helicopters have been involved in attacks that killed at least 47 Yemeni fishermen, including seven children, and the detention of more than 100 others, some of whom were tortured in custody in Saudi Arabia. The coalition attacks on fishermen and fishing boats appear to be deliberate attacks on civilians

and civilian objects in violation of the laws of war. Coalition officials who ordered or carried out the attacks or tortured detainees are most likely responsible for war crimes. As the hunger strike by Bahraini prisoners of conscience continues for a third week fears are being expressed for the welfare and safety of many of them. Many have collapsed as the khalifi vicious officials started taking punitive actions against those brave people who have all along aspired to live in dignity and humanity. The strike was prompted by the imposition of inhumane policies by the dictator and his torturers on those detainees. They were denied proper medical care, family visits reduced to one a month for as little as half an hour with glass separating the prisoner from his children or other loved ones, removal of books or any other educational facilities, religious books withdrawn including copies of the holy Quran and supplication and daily exercise period outside prison walls reduced. Instead of heeding the calls for improving prison conditions, torturers have separated the strikers from other prisoners; some strikers were placed in solitary confinement as further punishment. Families, human rights activists and international NGOs have called on the dictator to stop harassing prisoners. Calls have also been made to allow the special rapporteurs on torture and other ill-treatment to be allowed into the country. Several Bahraini human rights bodies have signed an open letter to the khalifi dictators to release political prisoners, stop the practice of torture, end the culture of impunity and heed the calls by the striking prisoners to improve the conditions of prisons.

Among the hunger strikers are Mohammad Fakhrawi, Hussain Al Sahlawi and Abbas MalAllah. Last week they suffered irregu-

lar heartbeats and were bleeding from the bowl. They were denied access to medical care and their conditions continue to deteriorate. Another detainee, Sayed Hussain Sayed Salman has also developed serious bleeding and slipped into coma but was not treated. Ahmad Mirza was taken from his cell two weeks ago but has not been returned. His cell mates are extremely worried about him. Another victim is Ali Al Laith who was transferred to solidarity confinement.

Renowned journalist Mazen Mahdi was arrested, interrogated and threatened not to give details of his ordeal before he was released. He is a Bahraini reporter for the German News Agency DPA and has been detained and interrogated several times since 2011. In 1997 Ute Meinel, a German journalist working for the same news agency was given 24 hours to leave Bahrain because of her coverage of the khalifi crimes against Bahrainis. Hani Mohammad Al Najjar, 25 was arrested outside his workplace in Ras Rumman. He is a young Bahraini native of special needs, suffering a chronic illness that causes weak muscles and immobility of upper and lower limbs. There are serious fears for his life as he is unlikely to get proper medical care while incarcerated.

On 25th August Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action about Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace who has been denied medical treatment for his various ailments. The organization called for the immediate and unconditional release of Dr Al Singace, providing him with unhindered medical care, transferring him to hospital without shackles and stopping harassment of human rights activists.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
28th August 2019

Imminent defeat of Saudi war on Yemen, Bahraini prisoners on hunger strike

The war on Yemen is turning ugly for the Saudis. The attack on AlShayba oilfield on the borders with the United Arab Emirates by 10 Yemeni drones few days ago has shaken the kingdom to the core. Furthermore it opened an old wound in the relations with UAE, its partner in the criminal aggression on Yemen. Many believe the end of the war is imminent with humiliating defeat to the Saudi-Emirati-khalifi aggressors.

Yesterday, 20th August more than 75 organisations called for the mandate of Group of Eminent Experts (formed in 2017 by the UN Human Rights Council) to be renewed and emphasized the violations against human rights defenders. The open letter said: We, the undersigned more than 75 international, regional and Yemeni CSOs, call for the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to extend and broaden the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen (GEE), including a thorough investigation into specific violations against human rights defenders,

journalists and bloggers, and the closure of civic space. The mandate of the GEE, which was created in September 2017 and extended for one year in September 2018, is up for renewal at the 42nd session of the UN HRC in September 2019. The GEE's mandate is to "monitor and report on the situation on Human Rights in Yemen" through "a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights.... committed by all parties to the conflict since September 2014.

On Monday 19th August more than 600 native Bahraini political prisoners started hunger strike in protest at the deteriorating conditions in Khalifi torture chambers. Prisoners of conscience at the two most notorious jails, the Dry Dock and Jaw, took this unprecedented step to force the torturers to listen to their demands. They are protesting the lack of proper medical care, the imposition of glass barriers between the prisoners and their families during the irregular visits, the confiscation and destruc-

tion of their personal belongings and the continuation of torture including beating even after they have been sentenced. Senior torturers have warned the prisoners of more torture and punishment if they did not stop their hunger strike. Most likely the family visits will be stopped to ensure no news of this punishment is leaked out. A recently-released prisoner said that he had to share a small room measuring four by four metres with 11 others. They were kept for 23 hours each day inside this dungeon and share the meager toilet facilities. The demands of the prisoners include: merging isolated prisoners with the rest, allowing them to hold religious rituals freely and establish mass prayers, the abolition of the glass barrier between them and their visitors and increase the outdoors time. Last week a Bahraini citizen from Dair Town disappeared while in Saudi Arabia. Abbas Ali Abbas Al Dairi was on his way to Kuwait when he disappeared in Saudi Arabia. His Kuwaiti mother is seeking treatment outside Bahrain. The Saudis are

Saudi torture victims speak out as Bahrainis mark Independence Day

The family of Saudi political prisoner, Lujain Al Hadloul has confirmed that she had refused to accept a conditional release from her incarceration at a Saudi jail. She was told not to speak about her torture ordeal as a price for her release but she did not accept. They went further to demand that she denies being tortured. This is an outrageous condition. It simply means protecting the policy of impunity of torturers. This is the same in Bahrain where torture victims are threatened with further arrest and torture if they spoke about the crimes of their jailers. There are international pressures on Saudi and khalifi dictators to release women prisoners and engage in a political process, but these dictators who have been defeated by their own people and by the people of Yemen, want to present a defiant face for their defeat.

Another Saudi activist, Essa Al Nukhaifi has been in detention since December 2016 for tweeting on public issues. He had called for the founding of a virtual people's parliament and ending the large payments paid to Saudi princes from the public purse. Last week he told his story from behind bars that went viral on Twitter. Another prisoner of conscience has also spoken out about her ordeal. A human rights activist, Na'eema Al Matrood said she had been given six years prison sentence followed by six years of travel ban. The reason? She had taken part in protests, recording human rights violations and calling for political reforms. Her health deteriorated sharply in prison due to lack of medical care especially for her sickle cell disease.

On Friday 9th August Ahmed Abdullah Abdulrahman Shaa'yi died at Tarfiyyah political prison at Al Qaseem in Central

Arabia, in mysterious circumstances. He has been in political incarceration for over 18 months without charge or trial. Several other political prisoners had died in Saudi jails in the past two years.

Bahrainis are today marking the 48th anniversary of the independence of their country following the British withdrawal on 14th August 1971. People took part in marches and meetings inside and outside Bahrain to mark the occasion that the regime refuses to acknowledge. Yesterday there was a seminar and press briefing by Bahrainis and their supporters at UNITE The Union headquarters in London.

On 6 August 2019, members of the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) arrested former Bahraini parliamentarian Osama Jaber Muhana al-Tamimi at his home. The CID announced that he had been arrested for fraud. Excessive force was used during the arrest and Mr Tamimi was severely beaten to the extent that he had a stroke. He is now fighting for his life at the military hospital. Since 2012 notorious khalifi regime has subjected Osama al-Tamimi to false accusations in the government-linked press. In recent months, he has been summoned several times for questioning. Amnesty International has adopted Mr Tamimi's case and urged people to write to the Bahrain's dictators to demand his immediate release.

A young native political prisoner has been subjected to horrific torture at the hands of khalifi thugs. Mohammad Ibrahim Yahya has recently placed in solitary confinement for fifteen days, beaten daily and his belongings confiscated. The beating was directed at his neck and head which had suffered injuries in the past. Political prisoner, Hassan Al Ghasra has said that he will enter an open hunger strike to press his demand for proper medical care and to be removed from

repeated solitary confinement. Bahraini journalist, Hussain Khalaf, who is a refugee in UK has tweeted about his jailed brother, Mahdi giving gruesome details of his torture ordeal. He said Mahdi had been tortured with electric shocks for 24 days. He was then beaten mercilessly for many more days. After treating him, a doctor at the military hospital said to him: It is a miracle that you are still alive. The tweet mentioned the name of the main torturer of Mahdi Khalaf.

International calls have been made for the immediate arrest and trial of the khalifi rapists who had assaulted several native Bahraini women prisoners. Five women prisoners have been released following intensive pressures from human rights bodies. Among those released is Najah Yousuf who was detained for tweeting in 2017 against holding the Formula 1 race in Bahrain. She was subjected to extreme forms of torture including sexual assault. The court judgement against Yusuf said she had written "NO to Formula One races on occupied Bahraini land" and that the F1 race 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 "Freedom for the Formula detainees" march to raise awareness of the protestors jailed for criticising the race, which was cancelled after demonstrations in the country in 2011. There are six more native Bahraini women languishing at khalifi torture chambers: Hajer Mansoor, Madina Ali, Zakiya Al Barbouri, Iman Ali and her two sisters; Aamaal and Fatima. They have spent most of their jail terms but are still being ill-treated on daily basis.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
14th August 2019

urged to clarify what had happened to him.

Scholars at Risk (an international network of higher education institutions and individuals working to protect scholars and promote academic freedom) has highlighted the plight of Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace and urged people to call for his release. It said: Dr. AbdulJalilAlSingace is a scholar of mechanical engineering and #HumanRights activist who was sentenced to life in prison in #Bahrain and has been denied access to appropriate medical care despite ongoing medical complications. Sign to #FreeAlSingace:

Former Bahraini MP Osama al-Tamimi who had received written summons to appear at al-Hooraa Police station on 18 August appeared at the torture centre but was hurried to hospital when his medical condition worsened. When his home was raided

by khalifi police last week, his children who were home alone were terrified and shocked. He was taken to a medical clinic. The police officers had threatened to raid the house in case of non-compliance. As he remains bed-stricken at the hospital his daughter has appealed to the dictator to allow her father to seek treatment abroad. Today she said his kidney had stopped functioning.

On 16th August 14 members of the European Parliament sent a letter to the Khalifi ambas-

sador to Belgium, Bahya al-Jishi, expressing deep concern and condemnation of the execution of Bahraini activists in late July following unfair trials and "confessions" obtained by coercion. The members expressed their unequivocal condemnation of these atrocities, especially after several UN human rights experts had called on the government of Bahrain to stop them, stressing that the victims had been tortured and had not received fair trials. The deputies

urged the Government of Bahrain to re-freeze the death penalty and to ensure that victims of human rights violations receive rehabilitation in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution of 18 December 2017. The letter pointed out that this issue will be discussed by the European Parliament in the absence of a convincing response to what is contained therein.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
21st August 2019



Amnesty International calls for immediate release of Dr Al-Singace

URGENT ACTION

Bahrain: Human rights defender and academic Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace needs immediate medical care

25-August-2019

Imprisoned human rights defender Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace, currently serving a life sentence in Bahrain, is suffering from mounting health problems. The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) calls for the authorities to provide immediate medical care, without any restrictions, and to release him from prison. According to local reports, Dr Al-Singace has recently begun suffering from numbness in his fingers and his left hand shakes, in addition to having prolonged chest pain. He is unable to sleep due to the discomfort. In addition to having post-polio syndrome which requires him to use crutches to walk, he suffers from other health issues (vertigo, cervical disk herniation, spinal disc herniation) caused by the torture and ill-treatment to which he has been subjected since his arrest in March 2011. His crutches are worn out and he needs new ones.

Dr Al-Singace also has sickle cell disease which causes pain and fatigue, especially if the prison food is not suitable to combat the effects of the disease (for example, too many legumes are not good for him.) This has been reported to the Jaw Prison authorities as well as the Red Cross but nothing has been done to remedy the type of food provided.

Since February 2017, Dr Al-Singace was deprived of family visits, medical treatment, canteen visits to buy hygiene supplies, and all his books were confiscated, in part because he did not follow the rules to wear the prison uniform. But in March 2019 he was allowed to have family visits despite his refusal to wear the prison uniform or to be shackled when leaving his cell. He believes that he is not a criminal so he will not dress like one. However, the authorities refuse to take him outside the prison for medical treatment without the prison uniform and shackles.

This treatment is in violation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules), specifically Rule 47, which states that "The use of chains, irons or other instruments of restraint which are inherently degrading or painful shall be prohibited."

Dr Al-Singace is a blogger, engineer and academic who is a member of the Bahrain 13, a group of activists and human rights defenders (including Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja) who were arrested for their role in peaceful protests in 2011. A military court sentenced him to life in prison on 22 June 2011. The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry met with Dr

Al-Singace in 2011 and collected testimony regarding his arbitrary arrest and torture; nonetheless in 2012 a civilian appeals court refused to investigate credible allegations of abuse and torture and upheld his sentence.

In addition, GCHR is concerned about poor conditions in Bahrain's prison system. Currently, over 600 prisoners are on hunger strike in protest of degrading and inhumane prison conditions and ill treatment such as beatings by prison guards, restrictions on religious practices, cell raids and the use of prolonged solitary confinement. Prisoners also protested the use of glass barriers during family visits. The hunger strike started on 15 August 2019 by 15 prisoners in isolation and ballooned to over 600 prisoners of conscience in Jaw and Dry Dock Prisons. Supporters are asked to tweet solidarity photos and statements with #BahrainPrisonersStrike.

Take Action Now!

GCHR asks supporters of Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace to please tweet in English or Arabic call-

ing on the authorities in Bahrain to:

Immediately and unconditionally free Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace and all other human rights defenders from prison; While he remains in prison, allow Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace unhindered access to medical care, including immediately transferring him to the hospital without shackles; and Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Bahrain are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.



Bahraini NGO's petition HCHR on prisoners strike

On Sunday 18 August 2019, hundreds of political prisoners in Bahrain's Dry Dock and Jaw (Jau) prisons started a hunger strike in protest against inhumane treatment inside Bahraini prisons. As of 21 August, some commentators have estimated that there are around 600 prisoners taking part in the hunger strike.

We believe that most Bahraini prisoners are political prisoners and prisoners of conscience whom the authorities subject to harassment, abuse and torture. The trials they faced often lacked minimum fair trial standards. Officials have subjected prisoners to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, including forms of humiliation. Hundreds have faced delayed or sometimes denied medical care. They have faced overcrowding and poor quality of food. The authorities have selectively banned religious practices.

We, the signatories of this petition, call on the Bahraini government and international community to take immediate action to improve prison conditions in Bahrain in order to save the prisoners.

We call on the Bahraini government to:

- Immediately release all prisoners of conscience;
- Release political prisoners convicted following unfair trials, who have no prospect of fair trial;
- End political trials that do not comply with minimum, international fair trial standards;
- End torture and ill treatment in Bah-

rain's prisons;

- End the routine practice of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, used during pre-trial custody to extract confessions and after conviction in order to 'punish' prisoners;
- Ensure that prompt and adequate medical attention is provided to anyone who requires it;
- End overcrowding and degrading treatment that can accompany overcrowding;
- Ensure that the manner of family visit adheres to international standards;
- Allow religious practices practiced widely throughout the country, without harassing the prisoners or insulting their beliefs;
- Allow students to continue their studies, whether in schools or universities, and provide them with all what they need to achieve this;
- Treat all prisoners and their requests with respect and humanity, in order to foster a rights-respecting culture; and
- Immediately release, on humanitarian grounds, children, women, elderly prisoners, and those with chronic and serious diseases.

Signatories:

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), Bahrain Forum for Human Rights (BFHR), Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), European-Bahraini Organisation for Human Rights, Gulf Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (GIDHR), SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights