

BAHRAIN

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

Bahrain's dictators used violence against the people; they must go

The use of violence by state in any country is symptomatic of deep crisis both legal and moral. This is usually a recipe for the eventual collapse of the state. This is especially true when violence persists for long periods. No country can be ruled by vicious regimes whose relations with the citizens are confined to suppression especially physical. This is also true when the people are overtly peaceful in their means and practices. Violence here refers to the official policy of the security forces who face the people in the street. One of the manifestations of stability and security in most Western cities is the civil appearance of the security forces especially the uniformed police. The scene of weapons in the hands of the law-enforcements agency officials confirm the violent nature of the relation between the two sides. This is particularly true when the state is totalitarian and despotic. This is why people are shocked at the level of violence in some circumstances such as in Spain and now Hong Kong. The progression of modern statehood implies deep-rooted civility at all levels. This does not mean that there are no thugs who resort to violence to achieve their means, but the overall picture is that of prevalence of peace in the relations among the constituents of the society. These facts are known to the political scientists and observers observing the state of affairs in modern societies which have adopted democratic norms to ensure pluralism, power-sharing, rule of law and mutual respect. Such observation does not materialise in Bahrain for example, whose regime has adopted violence as a means of settling accounts with the natives who have resisted its dictatorship and subservience to foreign powers. Violence is the ideology of the tribal regime in dealing with its opponents who are the vast majority of the society. The suppression has continued for years with no signs of abating. Many are killed in peaceful protests by police live bullets or tear gas bullets which are directed at people's heads and chests. The khalifi regime has inherent moral and legal crisis; it is viewed as foreign occupation by the natives. Over the decades this has reached the point where neither of the two sides is eager any longer to live with the other. As the Western powers distance themselves from the two pillars of the world's post-war order, neither democracy

nor human rights would surface in the propaganda machines of the West. This machine had been active in promoting these two pillars during the cold war, but this has changed. No sooner had the Soviet Union been fragmented in the early nineties than did the Western powers abandon them, apparently for good. Among the consequences of this abandonment is the gradual fragmentation of the world order at an alarming rate. Among the casualties has been the Arab World. In the past decade for example the regional geopolitics has fundamentally altered. Today, the Arab world is being subjected to fundamental changes under the auspices of the smallest and most irrelevant tribal states. The United Arab Emirates is assuming virtual leadership of the Arab world including the largest states. Today, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Egypt have become so marginalised in the regional politics that the UAE and Saudi Arabia are playing amok in the region. It must be left for the imaginations to visualise a region that is led by the UAE which has no qualification for the role except the petrodollars.

The khalifi regime of Bahrain has been emboldened by these developments. This is especially true in light of the British change of course in recent years and its eagerness to abandon Europe and establish own sphere of influence. The most significant soft ground for UK to expand is in the Gulf region. This anticipated political dominance could not be assured if the Arab big powers were exercising their roles in the region. The UAE has played a role in marginalisation of those big Arab countries, preferring the rise of dominance of the small and insignificant Arab tribal sheikhdoms. The world had aspired for a change of heart on the part of UK and USA after the gruesome murder of Jamal Khashoggi one year ago. After absorbing the initial shock the Saudis have been able to use its billions of petrodollars to buy off the stands of Washington and London. Today's reality is that the Arab world has become in extremely vulnerable position having been left with the leadership of the insignificant states of UAE and Saudi Arabia. The khalifis aspire to achieve continued foreign support. The Saudis have provided this support. The newly-formed alliance comprising Saudi Arabia, UK and UAE and Israel is capable of suppressing the masses

which are protesting in Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Syria. The result has been most dramatic. The khalifis will continue to resist calls for real reform for a simple reason. Their hereditary political system cannot be reformed. Any reform means they have to leave the scene as rulers and hand over sovereignty and government to the people.

In the past month the khalifi regime continued its crimes against the native Bahrainis. It claimed, as it had since December 1981, to have uncovered a "plot to overthrow the regime by force". Up to 40 people were detained and subjected to most severe torture. They are likely to be paraded on TV screens to "confess their crimes". The khalifis have done that many times before. Their media had often tried the accused before their guilt was established. Once a native is snatched by the vicious British-trained officers, there is no limit to the abuse they are subjected to. This December another "plot" has been allegedly uncovered with severe consequences to those unlucky individuals implicated in it. What these people and thousands others have been subjected to is beyond imagination. Many were killed, lost one or more of their limbs and more than 50 lost one or two eyes. It is a policy of state violence that has few parallels in other countries. This is testimony to the vicious nature of the regime against whom the native Bahrainis revolted and sought to change. They are aware that the task is challenging but as there is no alternative they will persevere until they succeed to put a line under the black ear of the khalifi dictatorship. The opposition has always urged the supporters of the regime to stop propping up khalifi torturers and despots but to no avail. The prime minister who has been in his post since 1971 has travelled abroad for treatment but even if he leaves the political scene for good the present ruler is more vicious and violent. He also must go. There is absolutely no prospect of positive reforms under this rotten corrupt regime. An interim civilian administration must take over and prepare for a plebiscite, constitution and elections by the people. This is the only way out of the quagmire created by the vicious khalifi hereditary dictatorship.

Saudis defeat in Yemen, khalifis accused of attempted murder in London

In a clear admission of defeat Saudi Arabia is intensifying talks with the Yemenis led by Ansarullah Movement (the Houthis) on a ceasefire in Yemen which were launched in Jordan in late September. Riyadh is taking sole responsibility for military efforts by the Arab alliance fighting in Yemen after the exit of its main partner, the United Arab Emirates. The discussions began after the Houthis offered to halt cross-border missile and drone attacks on Saudi cities if the Saudi-led coalition ended air strikes on Yemen, they said. The Saudis want a ceasefire but to continue the blockade of the Yemeni borders. The Yemenis reject this and call for unconditional ceasefire and the lifting of the blockade. The Yemenis are in a stronger political, military and moral position as the world turned against the Saudis accusing them of war crimes.

Two people have died in detention in Saudi jails. Last week Hussain Al Ribh, 35, a body builder, who was held at al-Mabahith prison in Damam died. He had been subjected to horrific torture since his detention in August 2017. He had partial paralysis. The other was Fahd Al Qadi, 60, a cleric, held at al-Malaz prison Riyadh.

Woman Human Rights activist, Israa Al Ghamgham expressed from her prison cell in Saudi Arabia her fear for the life of her husband, Moosa. They were arrested together in 2018, charged with same offences, but given different sentences. Prosecutors are calling for the beheading and crucifixion of Moosa and lengthy imprisonment of his wife, Israa. Nawf Abdul Aziz, a Saudi woman activist has languished behind bars since June 2018 for her critical writings criticising the arrest of human rights defenders and other women activists.

Bahraini activist and photographer, Moosa Mohammed has this week formally lodged a criminal complaint with the Metropolitan Police Service about his attempted murder by staff at the Bahraini Embassy. The assault took place on 26 July 2019 after Mr Mohammed had climbed onto the rooftop of the Embassy to protest against the executions of two men in Bahrain. Mr Moosa attended Charing Cross Police station to make his allegation to the police in person. In a written statement given to the police, Moosa Mohammed said that staff attempted to push him off the Embassy rooftop, with one saying to him "we have two people being executed in Bahrain and you will be the third". In his statement he said that he was scared for his life and he had no doubt that they were trying to kill him.

Three native Bahrainis were detained last week from Daih Town; Saleh Mushaima, Yousuf Yaqoob and Abdul Aziz Al Mutawwa'. This brings to 36 the number of native Bahrainis arbitrarily detained this month. On her daughter's birthday Bahraini woman activist, Hajer Mansoor wrote to her: "Chains will not stop my happiness for you, you are my heart". Her daughter said: Mum, you are my best feast and hopes. I am waiting for you to celebrate together". Hajer will end her three years sentence in four months time. Sarah, daughter of Sheikh Ali Salman has celebrated her 5th birthday on Monday. She was only 40 days when her father was detained for supporting the people's demands for democratic transformation.

Human rights defenders who attended the 40th Congress of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in Taipei, Taiwan last month, have declared their full

solidarity with missing, kidnapped and detained rights defenders, online activists and journalists in Arab countries, calling for their immediate and unconditional release. On Bahrain they said: We are concerned for the health and well-being of colleagues and friends from FIDH member organisations, including Nabeel Rajab and Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, founders of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) and the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), who are imprisoned on lengthy sentences in Bahrain with inadequate medical care, along with Naji Fateel and Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace.

We call for freedom for all human rights defenders serving prison sentences in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), including GCHR Advisory Board Member Ahmed Mansoor, as well as human rights lawyers Dr. Mohammed Al-Roken and Dr. Mohammed Al-Mansori, and academic Dr. Nasser Bin Ghaith. All of them have been poorly treated in prison and Mansoor is held in isolation, where he is very ill.

Among the many women human rights defenders arrested in Saudi Arabia who remain in prison are Loujain Al-Hathloul, Samar Badawi, Nassima Al-Sadah, Nouf Abdulaziz, Mayya Al-Zahrani, Israa Al-Ghomgam, and Naima Al-Matrod. Many other human rights defenders remain in prison in Saudi Arabia serving lengthy sentences including Raif Badawi, Walid Abu Al-Khair, Issa Al-Nukheifi, Essam Koshak, Mohammed Al-Oteibi, Dr. Abdullah AlHamid and Dr. Mohammad Al-Qahtani.

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20th November 2019

Saudi spies arrested by US, scores of Bahrainis detained by khalifis

Two former employees of Twitter and a third man from Saudi Arabia face U.S. charges of spying for the kingdom by digging up private user data and giving it to Saudi officials in exchange for payment, a complaint from the US Department of Justice shows. Ali Alzabarah and Ahmad Abouammo, who used to work for Twitter, and Ahmed Almutairi, who then worked for the Saudi royal family, face charges of working for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia without registering as foreign agents, according to the complaint filed against them last week. The indictment points an unusually public finger at Saudi Arabia, a U.S. ally that maintains warm ties with President Donald Trump despite its spotty human rights record. The two former Twitter employees were given cash and other rewards, such as an expensive watch, in exchange for the information they shared, the complaint said. Abouammo later claimed the watch was worth \$35,000 in communications with prospective buyers on Craigslist.org. They appeared to have been cultivated by a senior Saudi official, identified by the Washington Post as Ba-

der al-Asaker, Prince Mohammad's close adviser who now heads the crown prince's private office and charity MiSK.

The United Arab Emirates has hosted the second World Tolerance Summit on November 13 and 14, 2019 in Dubai as part of UAE efforts to present itself as the "global capital of tolerance." Human Rights Watch issued a statement describing the reality of "tolerance" in the UAE. "Despite its assertions about tolerance, the UAE government has demonstrated no real interest in improving its human rights record," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "To truly prove itself tolerant, the UAE should start by releasing all those unjustly imprisoned for not toeing the official line. "The UAE cannot credibly promote itself as a tolerant state while men like Ahmed Mansoor, Nasser bin-Ghaith, and Mohammed al-Roken, who risked their freedom to make the UAE a better and more just place, languish behind bars," Whitson said. A letter signed by 29 international NGOs called for the release of these prisoners of conscience.

The khalifi ailing regime in Bahrain has

claimed to have uncovered another "December plot" to justify more persecution of native Bahrainis. This follows a major aggression on towns and villages around Bahrain leading to the arrest of scores of innocent citizens. The attacks started in the early hours of Wednesday 6th November and led to the arrest of at least 38 natives. From Nuwaidrat Hussain Abbas was detained from his house as the family was asleep. Two brothers from Musalla town were seized: Sayed Ali and Sayed Hussain when their homes were ransacked. Ali Hassan Mahdi Abdul Muhsein Al Tawq was detained from Sitra Wadyan. From Duraz Mahmood Mohammad Saleh Al Durazi was seized. Other detainees include Ahmad Qahir and Ali Jamil Al Khawaja. The raids continued on 7th November leading to more detentions. Orator Fawwaz Abdul Nabi from Sanad town was snatched from his home. From Musalla town Mohammad Abdul Hadi Al Baqqali was detained when his house was raided by ISIS-style security men.

A prominent religious scholar who has been unjustly jailed for more than 50 years

HRW criticizes Saudi HR record, hunger strikes at Bahrain's prisons

On 4th November, Human Rights Watch published a report on Saudi Arabia titled "Change comes with punishing cost". The New York-based group, in a 62-page report, said scores of people - including prominent Muslim scholars, women rights activists and members of the royal family - have been targeted since Prince Mohammed became the kingdom's crown prince and de facto ruler in June 2017. Soon after his elevation, authorities quietly moved to sideline anyone in Saudi Arabia who could stand in the way of his political ascension. The campaign began with a purging of former security and intelligence officials and placing the country's prosecution service and security apparatus under the royal court's oversight, the HRW said. Saudi authorities then launched a series of arrest campaigns, beginning with the detention of 70 critics, including Muslim leaders, academics and intellectuals in September 2017. In November of the same year, at least 40 elite princes and businessmen were held - some for weeks - at Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel, in what was billed as a move against corruption that was draining state coffers.

Dr Abdullah Al Hamid, one of the founders of Hasm society who has spent over five years in Saudi jails is serving long prison sentence for civil stands that do not amount to a criminal activity including: forming un-registered body (HASM) and urging the public to call for change and addressing public gatherings. He was given nine years & ordered to pay large sum. Saudi forces have stormed the house of Martyr Zahir AlBasri at Tarut town in the Eastern Province. The attackers used several armed vehicles. This is second time that the martyr's house had been stormed.

On 28th October the khalifi appeal courts in Bahrain rejected the appeals of the native prisoners in 101 cases, re-confirming the harsh sentences against innocent natives. The jail sentence on special need inmate Hani AlNajjar was upheld despite his need for specialist treatment.

In the police state the rule of law is replaced by the powers of the police which use them arbitrarily. They will enact their own rules that often lead to unrestricted oppression. This is what is now taking place at Bahrain's torture chambers. The natives are being subjected to most horrible treatment at the hands of the torturers who fear no retribution for their crimes. The hundreds of prisoners of conscience who had staged hunger strike in the past month have demanded basic rights but the British-trained officers continued to inflict pain and agony on them. Their demands are simple: provide us with the necessary medical care and medicine, remove the glass barriers during family visit and let us hug our children, mothers and relatives, bring back the weekly family visits that last one hour each time, allow us to have the necessary religious and educational books and stop draconian rules that aim at humiliating natives and exact revenge on them. Some prisoners were promised to have their demands fulfilled. The prisoners at Block 1 of Jau prison have suspended their strike after they were promised to have their demands fulfilled. But others were subjected to horrible treatment. Ali Hajji who spent more than two months on hunger strike said he would continue his action for 100 days even if that meant he would lose his life. Political inmates at the notorious Jau prison have complained about the treatment by officers at Jau prison for refusing to provide medical care to them. They were protesting the de-

lays in providing medical care, the cancellation of hospital appointments and refusal to provide emergency treatment. An inmate who had been on hunger strike for 20 days has been transferred to solitary confinement. Miqdad Al Jaziri, one of the hunger strikers had written on his shirt: On hunger strike against glass barriers.

The Facebook subsidiary WhatsUp has filed a legal case against the Israeli spy group NSO for helping the khalifi regime spy on opposition and HR figures. It said that spying programmes were sent to more than 1400 phone sets of civil society activists including journalists, political and HR activists. The legal case aims to stop NSO using its services. The spyware was sent to activists in Bahrain, UAE and Mexico.

Two women prisoners of conscience have issued an open statement, published by MS magazine, about their horrific treatment at the hands of khalifi torturers. Hajer Mansoor and Madina Ali describe in the statement the extent of abuse they are being subjected to for their peaceful opposition to the regime. Hajer described her illegal imprisonment with her nephew. She described how the jailers continue to torture her for the smallest of movements such as waiving to another detainee. Madina Ali described her ordeal that started when ISIS-style masked men snatched her from her car two years ago, threatened to rape her and her relatives and started physical torture. She was held up to 23 hours every day in her cell. But the worst of all is the constant psychological torture being separated from her children and the pain she feels when she is separated from them by glass barriers during the brief and distant family visits.

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6th November 2019

has been moved to exclusion detention as punishment for teaching younger inmates, an activity considered a crime by khalifi dictators. Bahrain's jiu-jitsu champion, Mohammad Mirza has decided to go on strike in protest at holding martial arts games in the country. He wrote a letter to the president of the games protesting against allowing the khalifi dictators smearing the name of the games.

The persecution of the native majority during the Muharram commemorations intensified this year to reach 98 attacks, according to Ghena Al Rabba'ei, a researcher at the Bahrain Forum for Human Rights. These include 51 summons to orators and lamenters and eight arrests.

On 8th November SNP Westminster leader Ian Blackford, Lib-dem leader Jo Swinson, Plaid Cymru Westminster leader Liz Saville Roberts, and Caroline Lucas from the Green Party, raised the cases of four Bahraini women who have fallen victim to the government's crackdown on dissent which has intensified since 2017. As revealed in a joint-report released in September by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) and Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB), this crackdown has increasingly targeted women. Two women featured in the report, Najah Yusuf and Ebtisam AlSaegh reported sexual assaults by officers from Bahrain's National Security Agency during interrogations in 2017. Najah was imprisoned for criticising F1's Bahrain Grand Prix on social media, while Ebtisam was targeted for her human rights activism.

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Breaking the silence

A report on the Bahraini women political prisoners, their ordeal, treatment and aspirations has been published jointly by the American for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy.

The report exposes the abuse & torture of nine former and current women Political Prisoners from the moment of their arrest to detention. It contains harrowing details of abuse, torture and humiliation and the feelings of despair and determination among those brave prisoners of conscience.

Read more: http://birdbh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BIRD-ADHRB_BreakingTheSilence.pdf...



Human Rights Watch report on Saudi Arabia **Change comes with punishing cost**

4 Nov 2019

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) has pursued landmark reforms since coming to power, but his rise has been accompanied by "deepening repression and abusive practices", a prominent human rights group has said.



Despite a perception that the outcry over the October 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi had left the Saudis chastened, critics of the kingdom

are still being vigorously pursued with measures including arbitrary travel bans and harassment of their families, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Monday.

More:

The New York-based group, in a 62-page report, said scores of people - including prominent Muslim scholars, women rights activists and members of the royal family - have been targeted since Prince Mohammed became the kingdom's crown prince and de facto ruler in June 2017.

Soon after his elevation, authorities quietly moved to sideline anyone in Saudi Arabia who could stand in the way of his political ascension.

The campaign began with a purging of former security and intelligence officials and placing the country's prosecution service and security apparatus under the royal court's oversight, the HRW said.

Saudi authorities then launched a series of arrest campaigns, beginning with the detention of 70 critics, including Muslim leaders, academics and intellectuals in September 2017. In November of the same year, at least 40 elite princes and businessmen were held - some for weeks - at Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton hotel, in what was billed as a move against corruption that was draining state coffers.

The next year, beginning in May, dozens of women rights activists were detained or arrested, the report said. Some were allegedly tortured in custody. The waves of arrests were often accompanied by defamation and slander of those arrested in the country's pro-government media, HRW said.

"Detaining citizens for peaceful criticism of the government's policies or human rights advocacy is not a new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia," it added.

"But what has made the post-2017 arrest waves notable and different, however, is the sheer number and range of individu-

als targeted over a short period of time as well as the introduction of new repressive practices."

The crackdown came as Prince Mohammed, also known as MBS, announced a modernisation drive with reforms, including allowing women to drive, and to receive passports and to travel abroad without permission from male relatives.

"Mohammed bin Salman has created an entertainment sector and allowed women to travel and drive, but Saudi authorities have also locked away many of the country's leading reformist thinkers and activists on his watch, some of whom called for these very changes," Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at HRW, said in a statement.

"A truly reforming Saudi Arabia would not



subject its leading activists to harassment, detention, and mistreatment."

HRW said that since Khashoggi's murder by Saudi agents in the kingdom's consulate in Turkey - a crime Prince Mohammed has sought to distance himself from - at least 30 more detentions and arrests have been carried out.

Apart from those dramatic moves, HRW said Riyadh had more quietly been targeting family members of prominent dissidents and activists.

HRW also cited reports that Saudi Arabia has used surveillance technologies to hack into the online accounts of government critics and infected their mobile phones with spyware.

After this week's announcement that state energy giant Aramco is destined for a blockbuster stock market debut, the rights group also highlighted the case of economist Essam al-Zamil who, activists believe, was targeted because of his scepticism over the IPO.

Zamil, "who had called into question Saudi projections of revenue from the Aramco initial public offering", is on trial for alleged membership of the Muslim Brotherhood, it said.

52 MEPs send letter to EU Ambassador in Riyadh on medical neglect in Bahrain

This morning, 21 November, a Joint letter on the medical treatment of prisoners in Bahrain, signed by 52 Members of the European Parliament, was sent to the Head of the European Union Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman, Mr. Michele Cervone d'Urso.

The letter was signed by MEPs representing all of the political groups in the European Parliament. It addressed the denial of medical treatment to political prisoners in Bahrain, some of the details are outlined below:

The letter raised concerns regarding the cruel and inhumane treatment of several high-profile prisoners in Bahrain, and asked that the Ambassador urge the Bahraini authorities to immediately allow those prisoners access to adequate medical care.

Academic and political opposition leader Hassan Mushaima suffers from a range of serious medical issues including diabetes, gout, heart and prostate problems, numbness and is in remission from lym-

phoma cancer, requiring PET scans every six months. Prison authorities insist on shackling Mr. Mushaima during transfers to hospital appointments, but he has refused to go under these circumstances, considering it humiliating and unnecessary.

Abduljalil Al-Singace, who suffers from post-polio syndrome and depends on a wheelchair, has also been denied access to medical appointments unless he subjects himself to humiliating treatment that violates the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Officials have assaulted and targeted female political prisoner Hajer Mansoor by deliberately denying her medical care for a lump in her breast and kidney stones.

The European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR) welcomes this initiative by the Members of the European Parliament, and calls on the European Union to act on this sign of concern by these elected officials.



On Saturday, Nov. 23 U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Connecticut, center, visited the family home of imprisoned Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, Murphy had been in Bahrain for the annual Manama Dialogue security conference.