

BAHRAIN

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

Ninth anniversary of Revolution; a beacon of hope

The events of the New Year have caused a seismic upheaval in the political and military balance in the Gulf region. For the people of Bahrain, those events were necessary to break the deadlock in the political arena that appeared, for some time, to be under the full control of the evil powers dominating the people. The Bahrainis have withstood the political and security pressures of the regime that has exhausted its resources to defeat the native Bahrainis (Shia and Sunni together). Despite the support granted to the khalifis by the counter-Revolution forces, Bahrainis have been able to stand high-headed in the midst of human and political calamities. They managed to continue their defiance of the hereditary dictatorship, preserved their voice of defiance inside and outside the country and exercise their right to speak out and protest against the tribal despotism. The thousands of political prisoners languishing in jails repeatedly staged hunger strikes that attracted the attention of the outside world and embarrassed the regime's allies in Washington and London. The activists continued to roam the streets, raising the slogans of change. Women prisoners were particularly present in the midst of all this with hunger strikes and statements from inside the jails.

The internal situation was propped up by developments in the ambiance. The reversals suffered by the supporters of the khalifi tribal regime have not fared well. The Saudis have received blows at various levels. While the Khashoggi saga continued to haunt the Saudi crown prince, a new embarrassing episode has emerged. The crown prince, Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) accused of overseeing the Khashoggi's murder has now been accused of hacking the mobile phone of the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon. This has sent shock waves in the spine of Western powers that see one of their agents crossing border lines, challenging their authority and extending his influence far beyond his borders. Money speaks of course, but there is a limit to how much Donald Trump can silence opposition to his policies that have enabled MBS and others to cause mayhem in an already troubled world. Furthermore, the war on Yemen caused by the Saudi-Emirati-khalifi unholy alliance has not only stalled but started to backfire against

those who had ignited it. The Yemenis have regained the initiative and started infiltrating deep into the territories of their attackers. The Saudi oil production was cut to half in one single strike last year. The UAE which had boasted of its ability to extend its influence into the depth of Africa saw its political and military muscles shrink. Their country was threatened by the ability of the Yemenis to reach their heartland. The khalifis had to acknowledge that their policy of oppressing their people cannot be sustained for long. The British general election that saw the establishment retaining its power and influence is also under pressure to change its policy of blind support of the khalifi dictatorship and human rights violations. Regionally their influence is being challenged both by its own allies in Riyadh and its foes in Tehran. A new chapter of political brinkmanship must be adopted if UK's influence in the Gulf is to be preserved.

Then came the American attack on Iraq early in the New Year. This single attack that killed ten Iraqi and Iranian military men, two of whom were very prominent, has redrawn the rules of engagement. The Iranian retaliation by bombing the Ain al Assad base in Iraq where the Americans were stationed has crossed boundaries that had been considered unbreakable. A state of "balance of terror" has thus surfaced in the most sensitive regions of the world. The next thing will be a power game in which the small players like the Saudis, khalifis and Emiratis cannot fit. They have exhibited total inability to deal with serious conflicts. The war on Yemen has exposed structural weaknesses despite their overwhelming military superiority. With fragmented internal fronts, to say the least, the future of these tribal regimes is not sustainable. They are now providing services to the West, safeguarding Israel and ensuring smooth oil flow to the West. But their inability to function within the framework of modern statehood renders them valueless on the long run. The Arab people have been subjugated, humiliated and marginalised for too long. They have started to regain a degree of self-confidence and started to challenge these dictators. What is happening in Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan and Algeria can only be overlooked at the perils of the Western powers. With the ninth anniversary of the Arab Spring looming, the

feelings of anger run deep in the hearts and minds of the masses, and with them the urge to return to the streets with greater vigour.

As Bahrainis prepare to mark the 9th anniversary of their Revolution which started on 14th February 2011, the continuing heinous crimes by the khalifi dictatorship have ensured the continuation of rage and hate of the regime. Inside the torture chambers more than 5000 political prisoners have remained a source of inspiration to the masses, a beacon of change and an ever active spark for Revolution. They have rejected to play the regime's deceptive card, refused its "alternative" punishment scheme and insisted on fundamental regime change. On the streets, the people have continued their active presence with intermittent protests in various parts of the country. With mounting debts and bad economic policies, the khalifis have sold the country to the Saudi-Emirati alliance and compromised its sovereignty. Native Bahrainis have been angered by these policies and are determined to pursue their Revolution at any cost.

The next few weeks will witness a revival of the popular movement that lined up the Bahraini streets in recent years. The regime's suppression and the support it had received from outside have not succeeded in silencing the voices of the masses. The Bahraini diaspora is part of the dynamic revolutionary picture and will undoubtedly contribute to the activities to mark the anniversary. Over the past few years they have succeeded to influence public opinion on the world's political arena. Today, Bahrain is viewed as a country in trouble, and its dictator is seen as a vicious tyrant following in the footpath of despots like Saddam Hussain, Zain Al abideen bin Ali (of Tunisia) and Mubarak of Egypt. The world's institutions especially the UN's Human Rights Council as well as international NGOs have expressed opinions against the khalifis despite the relentless efforts by the Saudi-paid groups and individuals seeking to defend these cruel dictatorships. The future of Bahrainis will be bright despite the black era of the tribal rulers and elsewhere in the Gulf.

Saudi MBS in hacking drama, MPs condemn khalifi cruelty in Bahrain

In a new twist in the life of Saudi crown prince, new evidence has surfaced that he had hacked the mobile phone of a prominent businessman. The Amazon billionaire Jeff Bezos had his mobile phone "hacked" in 2018 after receiving a WhatsApp message that had apparently been sent from the personal account of the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, sources have told the Guardian. The encrypted message from the number used by Mohammed bin Salman is believed to have included a malicious file that infiltrated the phone of the world's richest man, according to the results of a digital forensic analysis. This new revelation will add more fuel to the calls for the Saudi crown prince be held accountable for his misdemeanors and criminal acts including that of the killing and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi.

In the week between 13 and 19 January at least 17 native Bahrainis were detained, including two children. They are accused of being anti-regime activists. The detentions followed two peaceful protests calling for political change in the country and an end to the hereditary dictatorship. The arrests are seen as a sign of desperation of the khalifi dictator and his lieutenants, and a pre-emptive move ahead of the 9th anniversary of the Revolution that had erupted on 14th February 2011. The arrests include: Ali Al Mutawwa from Daih Town, Ali Hassan Mansoor (Bani Jamra). From Duraz: Ali Nasser, Sheikh Isa Qassim's grandson, Sayed Mohammad Sayed Baqir and his brother, Sayed Reda, Laith Al Durazi. From Al Ekr: Yousuf Ahmad Mansoor Sarhan and Hassan Ali Reda from Ma'amir town. Most of these detainees were tortured on the spot and their houses were ransacked.

The dire situation in the prisons were re-enforced this week by video clips of the mothers of political prisoners crying and

calling for medical care for their children behind bars. Some of them have recently visited their sons and seen the extent of their suffering especially those who are riddled with skin diseases spreading among inmates like fire. Human rights activist, Ibtisam Al Sayegh revealed several clips of heart-broken mothers describing the pain of their children who are subjected to most horrific torture and ill-treatment by the khalifi killers. More than 100 prisoners detained at building 17 of Bahrain's Dry Dock Detention Centre will be launching a hunger strike to protest the lack of access to medical care, following an outbreak of the skin disease "scabies" which has infected over 50% of inmates, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) has learned. The 75 prisoners held at building 17, all under the age of 21, have long complained about poor and unhygienic conditions of incarceration which enabled the outbreak of what it is believed to be scabies, a highly infectious infestation of mites in the skin requiring urgent medical treatment and immediate sterilisation of clothes and bedding. While the outbreak was reported in building 17, it is possible that the infestation has spread more widely.

The demise this week of the father of one of the martyrs has broken the hearts of Bahrainis. Moosa Al Abbar died of agony and anger, having suffered immense ill-treatment at the hands of the regime's torturers for asking for the killers of his son to be brought to justice. The son, Abdul Aziz was killed by regime's torturers in 2014. The khalifi criminals denied that they had murdered him. The father refused to receive the corpse unless the cause of death had been correctly specified and attributed to the regime's killers. After 75 days the khalifis relented and issued a different death certificate. But they pursued the father, Moosa for the past six years until he succumbed to death.

On 16th January an Early Day Motion on Bahrain was presented for signature by British MPs. It says: That this House strongly condemns the Government of Bahrain's increased use of capital punishment, including the recent re-imposition of death sentences against dissidents, Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa; is concerned that their sentences were based heavily on confessions extracted under torture and that the prosecution failed to present any physical or forensic evidence; that the defendants' allegations of torture were corroborated by a medical report; expresses further concern about the Foreign Office's failure to acknowledge evidence of torture and due process violations despite British diplomats monitoring the trial; is aware that there are twelve political prisoners on death row in Bahrain, of whom eight are at risk of imminent execution, having exhausted all legal remedies; that a further twelve individuals are sentenced to death on non-political charges; joins the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions in deeming the execution of five political prisoners in Bahrain since January 2017 to be arbitrary killings, including those of Ali Al-Arab and Ahmed Al-Malali in July 2019; raises concerns about the failure of British taxpayer funding to strengthen the rule of law in Bahrain; reminds the UK Government of its commitment to abolish the death penalty globally, especially given the UK's prolonged involvement in Bahrain's so-called justice reform; calls upon the UK Government to condemn the torture of Ramadhan and Moosa and their deeply unfair trial and to suspend its training to bodies accused of human rights violations pending an evaluation of evidence of genuine reform.

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22nd January 2020

Pressure on Saudis to stop executions as khalifis plan to kill two Bahrainis

The Saudis have been criticized for their policy of mercilessly beheading opponents and criminals. Reprieve, the anti-execution human rights body said in a report published this week: In total 184 people were executed last year, including 90 foreign nationals. Of those 82 had been executed for smuggling narcotics and 57 for committing murder, according to Reprieve's execution tracker. Maya Foa, Reprieve's director, called on the U.S. and U.K., two of the kingdom's major partners, to call out the executions in the "strongest possible terms," saying that international pressure "can make a difference." "Saudi Arabia's rulers clearly believe they have impunity to flout international law," Foa told ABC News. "International pressure can make a difference, as the case of Murtaja Qureiris showed last year. Saudi prosecutors spared his life following a worldwide outcry."

Saudi security forces have continued their incursion into the Eastern Province, targeting opponents and spreading fear among

the natives. Inside prisons, the situation is becoming dire for many of the political inmates. Human Rights defender, Walid Abul AlKhair has been transferred to the hospital as his condition worsened following a hunger strike. Mrs Nassema Al Sadeh who has spent more than one year behind bars has now spent 11 months in solitary confinement. She is one of the activists who had called for allowing women to drive.

A senior Saudi cleric has been denied defence lawyers at his trial last week. Sheikh Salman Al Odah, 61, He was arrested in September 2017 shortly after tweeting a prayer for reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and its former regional ally Qatar, three months after Riyadh had launched a blockade against the emirate. Odah is facing the death penalty, and a court was expected to announce a verdict in December. However after several postponements, the court decided that it would open a new series of hearings in the following weeks, according to his son. Amnesty International

has repeatedly called on Saudi Arabia's King Salman to release Odah.

Today is the third anniversary of the execution of three Bahrainis; Sami Mushaima, Abbas Al Sami' and Ali Al Singace. They were falsely accused of crimes they had not committed. The khalifi dictator signed the death order. International pressure is now mounting on the khalifi dictator to stop the execution of two other natives, Mohammad Ramadan and Hussain Mousa. The European Union has "called upon the Bahraini authorities to halt the execution of the two individuals and ensure that their trial will be in accordance with international law and standards." It added: "The death penalty violates the inalienable right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Capital punishment also fails to act as a deterrent to crime. Miscarriages of justice are irreversible. Amnesty International said: " The two men were taken to the Criminal Investigations Department where

America places the Gulf on war footing; dictators escalate repression

The Gulf region is under intensive pressure as the people await the anticipated ugly consequences of the American state terrorism. The reckless act by the American president, ordering the assassination of ten Iraqi and Iranian officials has been condemned by decent people the world over. On Thursday night (2nd January 2020) an American drone fired two missiles and hit two cars as they were leaving Baghdad Airport. The ten occupants including the two most prominent military figures, General Qassim Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al Mohandis were killed instantly. The world erupted in disbelief, anger and fear. This blatant attack amounted to state terrorism that could lead to major military conflict in the region. The American president threatened more "disproportionate" attacks if Iran sought revenge for its slain commander. Last night the Iranians fired 22 missiles at two American bases in Iraq. No fatalities have so far been reported.

Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the American attack had violated international law. When the US foreign secretary, Pompeo challenged her assessment she silenced him with five reasons why the action he had engineered was unlawful. Human Rights Watch described the threats by Trump to destroy Iran's cultural heritage and to carry out "disproportionate" response to any Iranian reprisal attack as "war crimes".

As the world awaits the possible flare-up of military confrontations, the Saudi, Emirati and khalifi rulers are bracing themselves for possible annihilation, hav-

ing contributed financially, logistically and politically to Trump's hawkish anti-Iran policy. Despite this, the Saudis have continued their own unlawful attacks on civilians in the Eastern Province. Yesterday, their security forces using armed vehicles fired randomly at houses and people. Gun shooting was also heard as the Saudis prepared for possible uprising against their dictatorship, extra-judicial killings and executions.

Today Bahrain's khalifi High Criminal Court of Appeals has upheld the death sentences of Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa. Both men were convicted in an unfair trial that used evidence obtained through their torture. Their cases have been highlighted by many NGOs and parliamentarians. The original death sentence was rejected after it became clear that the khalifis had lied to a British official about the case and the notorious dictator Hamad Alkhalifa ordered a retrial. The same evidence that had been extracted under torture was re-used and the same verdict has now been issued on orders from the dictator's office. He may still try to win back some people by not signing the death decree although he is known for his cruelty, viciousness and bloodmindedness. The UK government can still order him not to carry out the criminal decision to continue murdering native Bahrainis.

On 7th January, Mohammad Ramadan whose death sentence has been upheld today, wrote a column in The Metro newspaper. He said: While most people begin the new year with optimism, I am facing a death sentence in my country, Bahrain. There are two sorts of 'justice' in Bahrain: the performance put on in courtrooms, and the retribution dispensed behind closed doors. I have been condemned to die many times in dark cells, by state security officers, for simply standing

up for democracy. Now a judge could make the death sentence official despite me not having committed a crime. My torturers told me as much. 'We are the ones who determine the verdict,' they said, as they beat me. They revealed they were waiting for the right case, so they could frame me, as punishment for joining pro-democracy demonstrations. That I was a security officer myself, at Bahrain International Airport, made it worse that I had joined the marches. 'This is what we do to traitors,' they said.

On 3rd January the khalifi dictators summoned several native Bahrainis for tweeting against the American attack at Baghdad airport. Among them were Fatima Al Hawwaj (lawyer), Aqeel Swar (columnist and Nader Abdul Emam (activists). In the "kingdom of silence" no one is allowed to express an opinion different from that dictated by the khalifi despots.

On 2nd January the American Herald Tribune published an article titled: Bahrain: Prisoners' health neglected as a form of reprisal. It said: The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, aka Mandela Rules, stresses on the prisoners' right to receive treatment in specialized hospitals. Nevertheless, Bahrain arbitrarily withholds medication for prisoners as a form of reprisal; it denies them medical treatment, prevents them from referring to specialists and fails to disclose their tests result. For at least four months, hundreds of Bahraini inmates have been appealing for international action over a scabies outbreak that has been plaguing in Bahrain's Jaw Prison amid deliberate negligence and worsening sanitary conditions.

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they were tortured during interrogation. Mohamed Ramadhan refused to sign a "confession" but Hussain Ali Moosa said he was coerced to confess to the crime and incriminate Mohamed Ramadhan after being suspended by the limbs and beaten for several days. His "confession" was later used as main evidence in the trial to convict both men."

Al Wafaq Society has published a damning report on the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain. It recorded 154 violations that happened in December including life imprisonments and fines that reached 1.7 million Bahraini Dinars (\$5 million). It now appears that Tuberculosis is fast spreading among the inmates at the Central Jau prison. At least 18 of them have been isolated but fears are growing that the regime is taking no serious measures to stop the spread of infectious diseases in those filthy uninhabitable torture chambers.

Political prisoner, Ayyoub Adel has broadcast an appeal to save his life while serving jail sentences of almost 100 years for opposing the khalifi killers. In his appeal this week, he said: I have lost my voice calling for help but no one responded. All I want is treatment for my pain. He suffers various ailments in his body especially his back which needs an immediate operation. When he was detained in June 2013 he was hospitalised for four months but treatment has stopped since then. Another young native Bahraini, Ahmad Hassan Al Madhoon, 24, from Karzakkan is struggling inside

the khalifi torture chambers with his epilepsy fits. He has served half of his 8 years sentence at the notorious Jau prison, block 6. He has not received proper medication for his ailment and his family are extremely worried for his life.

Meanwhile protests have continued in several towns and villages. The people of Abu Saiba and Shakhoura went to the streets calling for fundamental political rights including the right to self-determination. They also called for regime change to end the hereditary dictatorship. Other protests erupted in several other places.

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15th January 2020



Bahrain: Prisoners' Health Neglected as a Form of Reprisal

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, aka Mandela Rules, stresses on the prisoners' right to receive treatment in specialized hospitals. Nevertheless, Bahrain arbitrarily withholds medication for prisoners as a form of reprisal; it denies them medical treatment, prevents them from referring to specialists and fails to disclose their tests result. For at least four months, hundreds of Bahraini inmates have been appealing for international action over a scabies outbreak that has been plaguing in Bahrain's Jaw Prison amid deliberate medical negligence and worsening sanitary conditions. Scabies is a skin infestation caused by a parasitic mite known as the *Sarcoptes scabiei*. Untreated, this contagious mite lives and reproduces on the upper layer of the skin causing severe itching, pimple-like skin rash, unbearable pain, and permanent scarring.

Instead of properly treating and quarantining the inmates to prevent the infection from spreading especially in this overcrowded prison where inmates are in close contact, Manama has repeatedly been accused by Int'l human rights groups of blatantly disregarding detainees' health and willful medical negligence, ahead of its heavy-handed clampdown on political dissidents. Activists are blaming poor prison authorities for the deteriorating health of Hussein Deif. The detainee is serving a 10-year sentence in prison and who suffers from sickle cell anemia has been diagnosed with tuberculosis after being rushed to the hospital.

High-profile political prisoner, Sheikh Hassan Mushaima, 71, who needs regular screening tests after recovering from lymphoma, is not receiving proper treatment. Besides, Abdul-Jaleel Singace's health has significantly deteriorated as he suffers from severe chest pain and other complications as a result of inhumane torture and a prolonged hunger strike. After months of medical negligence, the prison authorities canceled his scheduled appointment with a heart specialist as he had refused to put on the prison uniform or wear shackles.

Head of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights and prominent human rights defender, Nabeel Rajab's health is also critical as he has suffered two bouts of heart palpitations and he has developed a low white blood cell count and depression.

For his part, Elias al-Mullah who was transferred for the hospital in August for chemotherapy sessions had not been provided with the necessary immunity medication. Naji Fateel, who suffers from spinal and other injuries resulted from torture, is also prevented from required operations along with Ali Hajee who has been denied permission for urgent dental surgeries.

Bahraini human rights activists have long expressed serious concern over the wellbeing of the detainees' in the notorious

prisons. Late in October, at least 30 detainees went on a hunger strike demanding better conditions, most importantly, unobstructed family visits.

Human rights defender, Ebtisam al-Sayegh posted on her Twitter account an audio recording of an inmate called Hassan Attia who describes the conditions as "inhumane" and calls the authority of the detention facility to eliminate the causes of the infestation. In the same audio, another inmate, Hussein Abdullah confirms that 10 of his cellmates are infected saying the confinement cell houses 16 inmates, while it is designed for only 8. Al Sayegh is outspoken human rights advocate was detained, tortured and sexually assaulted in May 2017, by Bah-

rain's National Security Agency, aka NSA, merely for her activism reporting violations and demanding justice for victims.

Since the eruption of the pro-democracy protests in 2011, Manama has deliberately prevented prisoners of conscience from accessing physicians and specialized care. Human Rights Watch's deputy Middle East director, Joe Stork, said, "it is outrageous that Bahraini authorities are denying detainees medical care that they urgently need, in some cases putting their lives in danger," adding that many of those "should not have been imprisoned in the first place," and that their arbitrary denial of medical care "may amount to extrajudicial punishment."

Bahrain: Worsening Rights Record

(Beirut) – Bahrain's human rights record worsened in 2019, as the government carried out executions, convicted critics for peaceful expression, and threatened social media activists, Human Rights Watch said today in its World Report 2020.

The government executed three people in July, including two prisoners convicted in a mass trial marred by serious due process violations and allegations of torture. On December 31, 2018, the Court of Cassation upheld a five-year sentence for the human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, arising from his social media activity. The courts subsequently rejected motions filed by Rajab's lawyer requesting that he serve a non-custodial sentence. The Court of Cassation upheld the life sentence against Shaikh Ali Salman, leader of Al-Wifaq, Bahrain's largest but now-dissolved opposition political society, on January 28 on dubious "espionage" charges.

"Bahraini authorities have silenced, exiled, or imprisoned anyone who criticizes the government," said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "To make matters worse, Bahrain's allies are burying their heads in the sand and conducting business as usual instead of pressing Bahrain to release Nabeel Rajab and others jailed for speaking out."

In the 652-page World Report 2020, its 30th edition, Human Rights Watch reviews human rights practices in nearly 100 countries. In his introductory essay, Executive Director Kenneth Roth says that the Chinese government, which depends on repression to stay in power, is carrying out the most intense attack on the global human rights system in decades. He finds that Beijing's actions both encourage and gain support from autocratic populists around the globe, while Chinese authorities use their economic clout to deter criticism from other governments. It is urgent to resist this assault, which threatens decades of progress on human rights and our future.

In 2019, Bahrain widened its suppression of online and social media activity. On May 30, the Interior Ministry declared that it will

prosecute people who follow "inciting accounts" or share such posts on Twitter. No independent media have operated in Bahrain since the Information Affairs Ministry suspended Al Wasat, the country's only independent newspaper, in 2017. Foreign journalists who have written critically about Bahrain as well as Human Rights Watch and other rights groups are routinely denied access to the country.

Bahrain's prison authorities are failing to provide adequate medical care to high-profile prisoners, some of whom are in critical condition. On August 15, more than 600 prisoners in the Jaw Prison and Dry Dock Detention Center began a hunger strike to protest prison conditions, including denial of medical care and placement in cells where prisoners are held with people with whom they do not share a common language, culture, or religion. Oversight bodies set up in 2012, such as the Interior Ministry's Ombudsman office, have not investigated credible allegations of prison abuse or held accountable officials responsible for torture during interrogations.

In a positive move, on April 20, 2019, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa reinstated the citizenship of 551 people whose citizenship had been stripped. In July, the courts restored the nationality of another 147 people. Almost 300 people whose citizenship had been stripped in recent years remain without Bahraini nationality and in most cases are stateless.

Despite significant human rights concerns in Bahrain and its participation in the Saudi-led coalition responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen, the United States State Department approved two major weapons sales to Bahrain in May. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, in its human rights report for 2018 released in June, gave a highly misleading picture of Bahrain's human rights crisis, lauding its "unprecedented reform programme."