

BAHRAIN

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

Change will eventually come; let it happen peacefully and speedily

Between the boiling feelings of the native population and the rising pressure from the outer world, the struggle against injustice has continued in Bahrain unabated and assumed new dimensions which are becoming more complicated and entrenched. For the past decade the struggle for self-determination has continued in the country and rendered any attempt to jump over the fence an escape a futile attempt that possesses no chance of success. While the khalifi torture chambers have remained crowded with the native youths, their victims have remained vigilant and insistent on achieving long-range political changes that are likely to lead to the collapse of the tribal regime. Its losses will be huge, morally and physically. For the pro-democracy vanguards have dedicated themselves to the service of the human community and embarked on a long road to achieve salvation from evil and enjoy freedom and dignity. Their dedication is unquestionable and their yearning for liberty cannot be doubted. This partly explains their immense sacrifices and continued presence on the streets almost every day.

The regional politics have hindered the progress towards democracy. There is almost unanimous rejection of openness and constitutionalism. Instead deception has replaced real movement towards political rights reforms. As part of the complications some GCC tribal rules have adopted a policy of deception in order to dampen the international criticism of their approaches to the idea of modern statehood. This policy led to the creation to government-controlled political and human rights entities. Modern terminologies are extensively used to camouflage the reality of those institutions. There are "oversight" human rights bodies but only to defend the regime's brutal policies and engage the international bodies that deal with those issues. There are "parliaments" whose function is to rubber-stamp the regime's policies and hail its no-existent "achievements". There are "constitutions" that are drafted by regime's agents to institutionalise dictatorship and grant "legitimacy" to illegitimate dictatorships. There are "news media" with sophisticated approaches to brainwashing and appeasement. These are only examples of the methods being implemented vigorously by

the dictatorial regimes especially that of Bahrain.

Will this approach protect the khalifi regime? It may grant it periodic extensions of its lease of life but it cannot secure its future. The people are confident of their eventual victory, but are also realistic about the need to persevere and prepare themselves to more sacrifices. People die in jails as a result of lack of medical care, unhealthy diet and psychological pressures. Others are executed on trumped up charges. Some also die with police bullets. Yet most people have resigned themselves to more bleak days ahead. What they are confident of is that those sacrifices are not in vain. The country needs new political system, political direction and genuine desire to establish the rule of law, equal citizenship and a humane approach to others. The present culture of absolutism, indifference to the suffering of people, adoption of abuse as a means of subjugation is not sustainable. Change is a fact of life that is unstoppable. The people have already paid hefty price in terms of human sacrifices and deserve to be given the right to determine their destiny, choose their political system and control their affairs.

The regional developments are sophisticated and interlocked. On one hand the counter-Revolution forces are serious in their campaign against people's power. The Israeli involvement in the local and regional politics have added to this sophistication. But the shifting sands of popular politics may work against this flagrant enmity of what is normal, natural and necessary; that the people must be given their rights within the international laws, conventions, values and principles. The next phase of the struggle may prove to be more cruel, but it is a necessity. The "free world" has failed our people and betrayed their trust in their claims and slogans. But the Bahrainis have never linked their future to foreign intervention. They clearly envisage serious political transformation coming in their midst in not so far a future. The generational struggle of the oppressed create accumulative effect that eventually turns into a political psunami that sweeps tyranny, dictatorship and despotism.

There may have been only meagre success stories in the struggle to achieve political

transformation in the Arab world, especially the Gulf region. But the present status quo is not sustainable. The West especially the US and UK have failed the pro-democracy activists around the world. That is a serious failure of duty and human obligations. The region has remained under the mercy of despots and tyrants for a long time. The Saudis and Emiratis have emerged as the frontliners in the war against emerging movements calling for political development in the region. Of particular significant is the engagement of Israel as a central power in the region, empowering it with political legitimacy, economic support through joint industrial ventures and in the field of security and information. Bahraini regime had signed an agreement with the Israelis that allows them to inspect the activities of the National Statistics Office which holds personal information on Bahraini natives. This is serious violation of the principle of personal privacy and the peace and security of the country. Furthermore, the political map of the new Middle East is emerging with new realignment of the major powers on new fault lines. The people are not only kept away from these developments but are the main target for any present and future cooperation among the regimes of Saudi Arabia, UAE and the khalifis of Bahrain. What does this all mean? It is clear that the struggle to achieve political transformation and democratization is widening and taking more serious approaches. At the same time the counter-Revolution forces are adopting new tactics to defeat these moves, giving credence to the Israeli inroads into local politics and information. This is detrimental not only to domestic security of each state but to the pan-Arab security. This is a serious development that could lead to more instability, fragmentation and warmongering. Iran is central to these political developments especially as the US attempts to make headway in its approach to Iran. The people are empowered to challenge these policies at a time when the counter-Revolution forces spare no effort to kill the reform programmes of the local movements. Bahrain is thus likely to sink into more troubles. political bickering and economic crisis.

Shocking treatment of Bahraini jailed children, EU presses Saudis on rights

Bahraini unsung hero dies, Saudi football club takeover condemned

Bahrainis are mourning the martyrdom of an activist who died on Monday as a result of denial of medical care. Four years ago, Ali Qambar, 48, was a much loved and respected political prisoner had developed cancer in prison, and was denied urgently-needed medical care. He was temporarily released to seek self-treatment abroad. Bahraini communities inside and outside Bahrain raised part of the funds he needed for a new treatment in Singapore. When these funds dried up, he returned to Bahrain. Although Hamad's hospital has the treatment, Mr Qambar was left to die without treatment. He wasn't outspoken, just deeply committed to the betterment of his community, a quiet field soldier who gave priority to helping others even at his dead bed. Despite regime's repression and hate, his funeral became a rallying point for revolutionary against the khalifi occupiers of Bahrain. In 1996, Isa Qambar, Ali's brother was executed by the khalifis after an unfair trial that was criticized by human rights bodies. Ali was in jail at the time and was not allowed to attend the funeral of his brother.

A bill released yesterday by the US Senate Appropriations Committee directly addresses ongoing human rights violations by the Government of Bahrain. "Chairman Christopher Coons and the Senate Appropriations Committee have shed a bright light on the brutality and inhumanity of the Government of Bahrain against its own people," said Husain Abdulla, executive director of Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain. The report accompanying the Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman's note on the FY 2022 State Foreign Operations Bill high-

lights the appalling human rights situation in Bahrain: "The Committee remains concerned about reports of the widespread use of arbitrary detention, torture, due process violations, and unfair trials in Bahrain, and notes that the suppression of peaceful dissent and freedom of expression may negatively impact the stability of Bahrain. No later than 60 days after enactment of the law, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Appropriations Committees, which may be in classified form if necessary, detailing the efforts made on behalf of political prisoners in Bahrain and the response of the Government of Bahrain. Regime's security apparatus has summoned more people this week. Haidar Ali Nasser Al Abbood, Sayed Hussain Sayed Muhsin and Mahmood Jaffar Dhaif were summoned to appear at Sitra torture centre. No reasons were given for these summons. The underaged native Bahraini boy who was detained two weeks ago is suffering from a rare skin disease. Sayed Reda Sayed Baqir has developed severe rash in his face for which he has not been treated. The symptoms have reached the eye and there are fears that he may lose his sight.

The suffering of the prisoners has continued unabated. Ahmad Isa has been forced to go on hunger strike. Two years ago he suffered serious foot injury. A specialist who saw him two months ago asked for him to be transferred to Salmaniya hospital for surgery. He was given appointments three times but the prison management repeatedly refused to take him. A native Bahraini political prisoner, Jaffar Abbas Al Fardan has been denied access to his parents who were seriously ill before their death last week. He has not met them for two years because of Covid-19 restrictions and has not been allowed out of his cell to attend their funerals.

The director of the notorious Jaw Prison has ordered his staff to extend the punishment of native Bahrainis for one more week. Their crime this time? They had recently marked their religious rituals including the demise of Prophet Mohammad. This "criminal act" merited revenge. On 14th October Protesters gathered outside Bahrain's embassy in London in solidarity with Bahraini academic and political prisoner Dr Abduljalil AlSingace, who had completed 100 days on hunger strike the following day. The speakers included Lord Scriven, Amnesty International and English PEN. They called on Bahrain to end their ill-treatment of AlSingace and return his academic research which was confiscated by prison guards in April. The Bahrain Institute for Democracy and Human Rights organized the event. The international support to this Bahraini hero is widening as politicians, human rights activists, intellectuals and artists rally in his support. Four members of the French Parliament have raised human rights abuses, including

He has served six years of 20 years jail sentence imposed by the khalifis on him for his anti-regime activities.

On 21st October protesters gathered outside the Premier League's headquarters in London to campaign against Saudi involvement in football. The protest took place just weeks after the Premier League confirmed that Newcastle United had been sold, with a Saudi-backed consortium replacing Mike Ashley as the club's owners.

Many people were opposed to the prospect of Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) becoming the Magpies' new owners - with a number of human rights issues linked to Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. The English top flight approved the deal after being given assurances that the PIF was separate to the Saudi state - despite the fact it is chaired by Bin Salman.

Daughter of ex-Saudi official says her family is being targeted. Hissah Al-Muzaini has called for the release of her husband, brother and sister. She says they are innocent and were targeted because of a "personal vendetta" against her father, the former Saudi intelligence official Saad Aljabri. The Saudi government says the three are guilty of a range of corruption and money laundering offenses.

As the Emirati human rights activist, Ahmed Mansoor remains behind bars, well-wishers including English PEN have sent him birthday wishes and escalated their campaign to force the authorities of the United Arab Emirates to release him. In addition to his human rights work, he is a poet and award-winning activist. Scores of other activists remain behind bars

Bahrain Freedom Movement

27th October 2021

UK's tear gas supplies to Bahrain, Saudi Arabi challenged: morally wrong

Bahrain's Khalifi regime has imposed 15 years prison sentence on a juvenile for a trivial "crime". Sayed Reda Sayed Baqir Sayed Mahdi, 15, from Duraz was accused of raising about \$75 dollars for "a banned group". He was severely tortured and abused to force him sign a false confession which was subsequently used to indict and imprison him for a jail sentence equivalent to his age. What a travesty of justice.

A native Bahraini political prisoner has apparently been forcibly disappeared with no news about him for over two weeks. Mustafa Khatam has not spoken to his family who are worried that his health may have deteriorated following his infection with Covid-19 in May. At first his health improved but he suffered further deterioration. In August a doctor said he needed surgery but that was not done. In the last contact with him he complained of severe pains in his body. He has spent eight of his ten-year prison sentence, but the khalifis refuse to release him despite his adverse health conditions.

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Four members of the French Parliament have raised human rights abuses, including

arbitrary detention, repression of free speech and torture in Bahrain, with the French foreign minister. They urged him to speak out over these abuses. The four lawmakers - Gerard Leseul, Jean-Christophe Lagarde, Isabelle Rauch, and Dominique Potier - highlighted several cases with Le Drian, including that of academic and blogger Abdul Jalil al-Singace.

The UK government has authorised tear gas exports to a third of the countries of the world, including one in five of the nations listed on the UK's own human rights concern list. Tear gas sales to six (Bangladesh, Bahrain, Egypt, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka) of the 30 nations on the UK Foreign Office's own list of 'Human Rights Priority Countries' were rubber-stamped by the Government. However, due to the opaque UK export system the value of these deals cannot be calculated. Reflecting on Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) findings, Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament Fabian Hamilton MP said: "The UK Government must

Saudis to execute two Bahrainis; 3 years after butchering Khashoggi

On 7th October the Saudi regime decided to behead two native Bahrainis. Jaffar Mohammed Sultan and Sadeq Majeed Thamer have been condemned to beheading and crucifixion for crimes they had not committed. They had been detained at the Bahrain-Saudi causeway on 9th May 2015. Nothing has been heard of them since. They were held at Al Mabatheth prison and were subjected to severe torture to force them to sign false confessions that they were trying to smuggle weapons. The court announced its verdict after a short "trial" on the basis of confessions extracted under torture. They could be executed any time now.

On Friday 8th October, the regime's torture officials at Al Hoorah and Al Qudaibiya police stations, detained ten native Bahrainis for one week pending investigation. Some of them had participated in a protest that day against the newly forged alliance between the khalifis and Israeli occupiers. Peaceful protest is banned by the khalifis who often equate it with "terrorism". The detainees include Hajji Ali Hammam and Hajji Abdul Nabi Al Hawaj. Fifteen citizens from Sitra Island were also summoned after their participation in similar demonstrations as part of the series "Voices Opposing Normalization with the Zionist Enemy"

Torturers at Dry Dock prison have exacted revenge on underaged political prisoners. The boys denied on social media statements extracted from them under torture and broadcast by regime's media. The revenge took several forms including torture, ill-treatment and denial of medical care. Another Bahraini detainee had to be hospitalized after fainting due to an extended period of medical negligence. Younis Al-Fatlawi, who is serving an arbi-

trary 10-year-prison sentence, is reportedly suffering from unspecified stomach and kidney complications.

On 5th October English PEN called for the release of Dr Abul Jalil Al Singace. It tweeted: "Today marks 90 days since imprisoned academic, activist and blogger Dr Al-Singace launched his hunger strike in Bahrain. We have joined lawmakers, NGOs and academics in urging the UK to demand his release".

The human rights world has been shaken to the core by the decision taken by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Office to end the investigation into Saudi war crimes in Yemen. Saudi Arabia has lobbied heavily against a Western resolution that would extend the mandate of U.N. investigators who have documented possible war crimes in Yemen, including by the Riyadh-led coalition, activists said on 6th October. The motion, brought by countries including the Netherlands and Canada, was debated on Thursday in a session of the U.N. Human Rights Council. The Group of Eminent Experts, set up by the council in 2017, has found repeatedly that coalition air strikes and shelling during the seven-year conflict may amount to war crimes. Kamel Jendoubi, head of the Group of Independent Experts, said: "Since March 2015, Jendoubi said, it is estimated that over 23,000 air strikes had been carried out by the coalition and that over 18,000 civilians had been killed or wounded.

Musa al-Qarni, a Saudi cleric and prominent member of the 'Jeddah reformers' group, has reportedly died in prison. Rights group ALQST is calling for an investigation, alleging that al-Qarni was tortured and given 'unsuitable medication' by the authorities. A native political detainee is fighting for his life at the notorious Jau prison after attract-

ing Covid-19 in his cell. Last week Ali Ma'tooq was first diagnosed with skin disease. Then they contacted his family and told them about his Covid-19 infection. He remains in isolation without proper medical treatment.

A state of anger is rising among human rights bodies and activists at the UK's decision to back the nomination of a UAE official for the presidency of Interpol and defend Bahrain torturers. Leaked documents have revealed details of a proposed covert campaign to make the UAE's Major General Ahmed Naser Al Raisi the new head of Interpol. Daniela Tejada, wife of Matthew Hedges, a British victim of torture at UAE prison tweeted: "My blood boils when I recall Alistair Burt, then Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, looking at me in the eyes and saying he had Matt's best interests, after months of torture and abuse by the same man he's now helping to lead Interpol". On 8th October Dominic Dudley tweeted: "Civil societies across the GCC remain among the most repressed in the world" and highlight cases of Abduljalil Al-Singace and Hassan Mushaima - in jail for over a decade for calling for democracy in Bahrain - and UAE human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor."

On 6th October, a court in Saudi Arabia upheld a 20-year prison term imposed on a Saudi aid worker who had criticized the government on Twitter, drawing a rare public rebuke from the U.S. in another sign of tension between the Biden administration and the kingdom. The ruling also upheld a 20-year travel ban on Abdulrahman al-Sadhan after his release. His case is the latest example of the continued crackdown against those who criticize the Saudi regime.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
13th October 2021

consider the impact that the sale of this equipment has on human rights around the world and MPs on the Committee on Arms Export Controls must be permitted to undertake appropriate scrutiny." He added: "It is vital that the Government is not granting licenses for arms sales to countries where there are legitimate concerns that equipment may be used for internal repression or in violation of international law."

Three human rights organisations have called for an independent international investigation into the death in Saudi cus-

tody of a senior opposition figure. Musa al-Qarni was beaten around the head and face with sharp objects, causing facial injuries and fractures to his skull that led to his death. The signatories, ALQST for Human Rights, Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN) and MENA Rights Group said: Al-Qarni's killing is a stark illustration of the violations suffered by the majority of prisoners of conscience in Saudi jails, including torture, lack of medical treatment, and denial of family contact.

The wife of Saudi Professor Muhammad Kadwan Al-Almai has been arrested. Mu-

hammad Al-Almai is one of the detainees of the Abha campaign in July 2021. Nothing has been heard of her since the arrest two days ago.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has questioned the Premier League's silence on human rights issues following the Saudi Arabian-backed takeover of Newcastle. The Premier League approved the takeover after receiving "legally binding assurances" that the Saudi state would not control the club. Saudi Arabia has been accused of human rights abuses and women's rights campaigners have been imprisoned and Amnesty International described the takeover as a "bitter blow for human rights defenders". Klopp was expecting more leadership from Premier League chief executive Richard Masters on the subject. "I actually was waiting for some official statements about it. Like from Richard Masters or somebody else," he said. "We all know there are obviously some concerns over human rights issues. That's clear. We all think the same there."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th October 2021



Protesters at Bahrain's London Embassy in support of AlSingace



14 October 2021 – Protesters gathered outside Bahrain's embassy in London this afternoon in solidarity with Bahraini academic and political prisoner Dr Abduljalil AlSingace, who will reach his 100th day on hunger strike tomorrow, with speakers including Lord Scriven, Amnesty International and English PEN calling on Bahrain to end their ill-treatment of AlSingace and return his academic research which was confiscated by prison guards in April, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) stated today.

In an impassioned speech, Lord Scriven urged the UK government to “step up & use all their available leverage to urge Bahrain to meet Dr AlSingace's demands” and called out Bahrain's ambassador for refusing to meet with him to discuss the case. He closed his remarks by stating that Dr AlSingace has “been in prison for ten years too long” and urged Bahrain's rulers “to listen to the international community and order Dr AlSingace's immediate and unconditional release.”

Lord Scriven was followed by Dan Gorman, Director of English PEN, who shared messages of solidarity sent by supporters around the world through English PEN's PENWrites campaign. One message by a fellow writer in the UK urged Dr AlSingace to continue his fight for democracy in Bahrain, stating “As long as you have light, you have hope.”

A message from Dr AlSingace to his supporters was also read out by BIRD Director Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, in which he stated: “I learned from those who stand against injustice that when you fall, the most important thing you can do is stand again and continue. Falling repeatedly does not mean failure, as long as you stand again because every hurdle takes you closer to your noble target.”

Sima Watling from Amnesty International's Bahrain team also shared a few words on Dr AlSingace's case, noting that Dr AlSingace is recognised as a prisoner of conscience who is imprisoned solely for his peaceful activism during Bahrain's 2011 pro-democracy uprising. She was

followed by Dr Saeed AlShehabi of the Bahrain Freedom Movement, who called for Dr AlSingace's release in a speech in both English and Arabic.

The final speaker, Josie Thum of BIRD, challenged the UK government's failure to comment on Dr AlSingace's case, noting that four Westminster leaders, the Conservative Father of the House Sir Peter Bottomley and over 50 other MPs had backed calls for his release. She also drew attention to the £53 million of taxpayer money sent by the UK government to dictatorships in the Arab Gulf, some of which went to institutions in Bahrain implicated in whitewashing torture allegations by children and death row inmates. She concluded by urging supporters to go to BIRD's website to encourage their MPs to demand action from the government.

Dr AlSingace's hunger strike

Dr AlSingace launched his hunger strike on 8 July 2021 to protest “persistent mistreatment by prison authorities” and demand that a book he wrote in prison on Bahrain's culture and dialects, to which he dedicated four years of research, be returned, following its confiscation in April 2021. Since launching his strike, he has lost over 20kg and has been in hospital since 18 July. Family members recently reported that he has begun to lose muscle mass due to lack of food.

Calls for Dr AlSingace's demands to be met and for Bahrain to order his immediate and unconditional release have been backed by over 50 UK MPs, over 101 global academics and dozens of human rights groups, lawyers and trade unions. During this period, the Foreign Office is understood to have received at least four letters from MPs urging them to intervene to secure Dr AlSingace's release, but the Foreign Secretary has yet to make any public comment on his case.

In communications with BIRD, family members reported that Dr AlSingace is currently suffering from constant and severe muscle pain and has experienced seizures. Despite a physical disability limiting his movement, police officers are posted in his hospital room 24 hours a day, preventing any privacy. Rights groups including Human Rights Watch and BIRD have repeatedly accused

Bahrain of medical negligence against high profile political prisoners in recent years, including Dr AlSingace.

Background on Dr AlSingace

Dr AlSingace is a 59-year-old academic and blogger currently imprisoned at Bahrain's notorious Jau Prison, after being handed a life sentence by a military court for his leading role in Bahrain's 2011 pro-democracy uprising during the Arab Spring. Since being imprisoned, the international community has made consistent calls for his immediate and unconditional release, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy and American, British and European legislators.

As well as being a prominent opposition figure, he is a former lecturer in the Mechanical Engineering department at the University of Bahrain and has a PhD in Impact Mechanics from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, now the University of Manchester. Almost 60 University of Manchester staff members signed the letter in solidarity. In 2007, he was also a Draper Hills Fellow at Stanford University's Center on Democracy Development and the Rule of Law.

Dr AlSingace has several chronic illnesses, including post-polio syndrome and a musculoskeletal condition, requiring the use of crutches or a wheelchair, making his hunger strike particularly detrimental to his health.

Martyrdom of a patriot

On 25th October, former political prisoner Ali Qamber (48) from cancer at Salmaniya Hospital which developed during his imprisonment at Bahrain's notorious Jau Prison.

Hundreds of mourners gathered in his home village of Nuwaidrat and participated in his funeral procession.

Ali was subjected to medical negligence by Jau Prison authorities, who ignored a 2017 recommendation by his doctor to grant him a compassionate release for over a year

Ali was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2014 on charges linked to his political activities and was subjected to severe torture during unrest at Jau Prison in 2015

His brother, prominent Bahraini dissident Isa Qamber, was executed by the Bahraini regime in 1996

