

BAHRAIN

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

Executing 81 people in a day is outrageous, Saudi killers must be punished

The mass executions carried out by the Saudi regime on Saturday 12th March were unprecedented. They were carried out en-mass without prior announcement or declaration. The victims were from all regions of Arabia and none is known for his violence or terrorism. Half of the victims were from the Eastern Province; their families were kept in the dark for years as to the fate of their beloved ones. There were mass executions before, but no in those numbers. The largest was 41 in 2020. The killings happened at a time when the West was busy with the events of Ukraine. Many believe that even if that was not the case, little action would have been taken by the West to stop Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) committing his heinous crimes. He was the man behind the butchering of journalist, Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018 whose body was cut to pieces at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. If it was not for the Turks who adopted strong stands to uncover what had happened to their friend, Jamal, behind the closed doors of the Consulate, the crime might not have been exposed. His fiancé was waiting for him outside the building. When he failed to return to her she raised the alarm and the events of that fateful day were brought to the attention of the world. Yet no major political or diplomatic steps were taken against the main perpetrator of the crime even when MBS's role was proven beyond any reasonable doubt.

The indifference shown by leaders of the "free world" to the fate of the people of the region has encouraged dictators to continue their oppression against the people especially those who aspire for change. The wrath of the counter-Revolution alliance over the past 11 years has surpassed imagination. The jails of countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are overcrowded as thousands were subjected most horrific forms of revenge by the Wester-backed dictators. Executions of innocent citizens in these three countries have risen to new levels as the world continued business as usual with the executioners and torturers. The only freely-elected president in Egypt was toppled by the generals in 2013, jailed and subjected to horrific treatment that led to his death in his jail cell. No western tear was shed to mourn him or the brief democratic experience that swept him to power. On the contrary, his military killers were

received at the highest levels as statesmen as their torturers continued ill-treatment of political detainees. The khalifis of Bahrain were given every possible, security, military and political support by the leaders of the "free world" to enable them crush the pro-democracy movement that has, hitherto, remained steadfast and defiant. Innocent blood was shed by the khalifis in their quest to end the Revolution that has removed any source of legitimacy of the ruling clan.

The Saudis, in conjunction with the Emiratis and khalifis have endeavoured to change the political map of the region. They have adopted new policies aiming at the elimination of the Palestinian cause, recognising the occupiers and normalising relations with them. They went further to forge new military and security alliance with the occupiers of Palestine against Iran. In return for implementing the dreams of the Zionists in Tel Aviv and Washington, these leaders have been given a free hand to deal with their opponents in the way they like. The leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have embarked on a new policy of violent crackdown against those seeking democratic transformation. Fear is the one of the main tools to achieve this, they believe. Arbitrary arrests, torture and executions have become rampant and an atmosphere of total fear has ensued. The khalifis have continued to detain innocent people for their peaceful expression of opinion and political demands for more than 11 years. Children and women are among the victims of this dawn of terror unleashed by these dictators.

In the midst of the political confusion created by the Ukraine crisis the Saudis took the decision to execute over 80 innocent people in one day. No logical justification was given for the mass killings. Their wester backers did not even bother to ask for reasons. Apart from the customary declaration that they are against capital punishment as a principle, the leaders of the "free world" continued business as usual with the killers. The UK's prime minister even took the decision to visit Saudi Arabia within 24 hours of those executions. The blood of victims that was spilt on the ground as their throats were severed did had not yet dried up. Even as Mr Johnson's plane was in the air ferrying

him to Riyadh three more innocent Saudis were beheaded. On his arrival he was received by the killers with whom he exchanged smiles and greetings. What message did this behaviour send to the executioners? What are the values that the West wants to propagate in the world in the 21st century? The moral blackhole is every widening. On the 11th anniversary of the military incursion into Bahrain by the Saudi-Emirati forces, many wondered why the leaders of the "freed world" had remained silent on that illegal and barbaric attack? It was an aggression by outside powers on people who were attempting to end the hereditary tribal dictatorship in their country. Neutrality dictates that the "free world" that stands against the Russian war in Ukraine must also condemn the Saudi-Emirati on Bahrain and later on Yemen. Double standards do not lead to peace or security.

When Saudi crown prince, the notorious MBS decided to murder 81 people outside the rule of law, the world should have taken action. Bloodshed must not be tolerated, The need for Saudi oil must not blind the eyes and minds of the Western powers. They must remain faithful to the slogans of human rights and democratisation that they had raised during the cod war with the Soviet Union. The democratic transformation is what the people of the region stand for. They aspire to live in a world that respects the natural rights of people to determine their destiny, draft their own constitution, choose their political system and elect their government. These are basic demands of all human beings. To establish a political system on the basis of "One citizen one vote" is what our people in the Gulf have been aspiring to achieve through peaceful means. To find themselves targeted by their hereditary dictators has shocked them throughout. But what has been more shocking is the indifference of Washington, London and in the EU towards the evil regimes of the region. The hunger for oil is an excuse that does not stand the scrutiny. Several counties can help fill the oil shortage if Russian's oil stops. Nigeria, Venezuela, Chile, Algeria, Kuwait and Iraq can increase their production levels to meet the world's needs. The Saudis must not be allowed to blackmail the world and behead people.

UNHCR urged to stop khalifi attacks on HRDs, F1 condemned for its Saudi race

A joint statement by Luxemburg, Holland and Belgium has called on the world community to stop the revenge acts against the Bahraini human rights activists especially those who deal with the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR). The statement was delivered by the representative of Luxemburg at the interactive dialogue continuing at the 49th session of the UNHRC. The three countries urged the Council to investigate cases of threats and revenge, such as those against Ebtisam Al Sayegh and Sayed Ahmad Al Wadaei. They also raised the cases of Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja and Dr Abdul Jailil Al Singace who has been on hunger strike for over eight months.

As the khalifi regime's repressive campaign of arrests continues more people have been summoned by the torture apparatus. Yesterday, Ali Muhanna, a former detainee and father of political prisoner, Hussain, was called and asked to appear for interrogation at "Office 46". He was not told of his "crime". Earlier in the month Mohammad Abdul Nabi Al Sheikh from Karzakkan was detained from the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. According to Raids Monitor Network (a local group documenting raids and arrests by the regime forces) at least 39 native Bahrainis were detained this month (March) so far.

The regime's policy of throttling native Bahrainis has continued. As more foreigners are brought in for jobs, young Bahraini Ilyas Yousuf has been banned from selling water bottles on the side of the road. He was taken to the police station for interrogation and to be officially banned from what he has been doing to feed himself.

On 24 March, American for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

delivered an oral intervention at the United Nation Human Rights Council session 49 under item 6, during the General debate. ADHRB urged the international community to pressure Bahrain into implementing UPR recommendations. On 23 March, ADHRB delivered an oral intervention at the United Nation Human Rights Council session 49 under item 4, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Bahrain.

Following repeated warnings from human rights organizations about the alleged crimes of Emirati head of International Police (Interpol), French judiciary launched an investigation of the case. French anti-terror prosecutors have opened a preliminary inquiry into torture and acts of barbarism committed by Emirati general Ahmed Nasser al-Raisi, according to judicial sources. The inquiry follows a legal complaint by an NGO that accused al-Raisi of being responsible in his role as high-ranking official at the United Arab Emirates interior ministry for the torture of an opposition figure, The Guardian reported. The GCHR, which holds al-Raisi responsible for inhumane treatment of Ahmed Mansoor, an opponent of the Emirati government, lodged its complaint in January with the anti-terror prosecutors unit whose brief includes handling crimes against humanity.

The sale of Chelsea Football Club took a major step towards conclusion when a number of bidders, including Saudi Media Group and Woody Johnson, were rejected. US bank the Raine Group, hired to sell the club by sanction-hit owner Roman Abramovich, contacted a number of unsuccessful bidders as it whittled down would-be buyers. Saudi Media Group was among those told they had been unsuccessful, according

to multiple reports. Saudi human rights and political groups had written to the Premier League expressing concern about the Saudi group which is closely linked to the Saudi rulers. They have welcomed the decision to exclude SMG from the sale.

On 27th March the Specialised Criminal Court (SCC) in the Saudi capital, Riyadh decided to postpone the trial of ten Egyptian Nubian citizens until June 2022. The charges directed against the men include spreading false and malicious rumors on social media, and establishing an uncensored association, in violation of their rights to freedom of expression and association. It was the fourth hearing in the trial of ten Egyptian Nubian citizens.

As the Grand Prix prepares to race in Saudi Arabia this weekend calls have been made for its cancellation due to the enormous human rights violations. First there was the execution this month of 81 innocent people by the regime. Then there is the fact that the Grand Prix tracks were built by migrant workers, who suffer under Saudi Arabia's abusive visa sponsorship (kafala) system. Thirdly the recent highlighting of the disturbing pattern of violations in the kingdom and the call for a monitoring mechanism on the human rights situation. Fourthly, the unease among the racing drivers about the moral dilemma of racing in a country which butchers its citizens mercilessly. The seven times champion, Lewis Hamilton has voiced concerns about the human rights situation in the kingdom. Other racers have been urged to express their sentiments, like Max Verstappen and Sebastian Vettel.

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F1 criticised for ignoring Bahrain HR, anger at Saudi mass executions

On 19th March former Formula One World Champion, Damon Hill, says F1 has an "opportunity to draw attention" to human rights issues in countries it races in ahead of the Bahrain Grand Prix, and he hopes the sport is a "positive influence". The seven-time world title winner, Lewis Hamilton has been sent a drawing of his car by 12-year-old Bahraini Ahmed Ramadhan, whose father Mohamed is on death row in the country. He has called on Hamilton to draw attention to his father's plight. M Hamilton has said he needs 'allies' to help resolve global human rights crises. Formula 1 has long drawn criticism for holding events in countries which are accused of carrying out human rights abuses though with the exception of Russia this year, they have not withdrawn their races from any country. Hamilton said he still hoped F1's presence could have a positive effect: "I haven't seen the drawing but each year I receive letters from those who are suffering and all I can do is try my hardest

to empathise with those who face these challenges and have these tragic stories to tell. Jeremy Corbyn said that the F1 race presents real example of the double standards of sports politics. In a letter to F1, 27 NGOs said: "Formula 1 must uphold values of peace and unity everywhere, particularly in the countries where they are racing. At present the F1 races in the Gulf are only enabling Bahrain and Saudi to sportswash their abysmal human rights records, which continue to deteriorate."

In the past few days khalifi regime's forces detained several people for their anti-regime peaceful activities. Among them was Naji Kamal Marhoon from Al Ma'amir town. Another detainee was the well-known elderly activist, Majid Abdul Muhsin, 72, also known as Hajji Sumood (steadfast) who was arrested and given six months prison sentence. He was forced to pay 1000 BD (\$2500) to get a bail. He suffers several ailments and was detained while receiving treatment at the hospital.

Political prisoner, Hussain Al Sahlawi who was infected with Covid-19 last month is still suffering from its effects. His breathing is difficult and he feels pains in his body. His family has been pressing for a more humane treatment but the khalifis refuse to provide adequate medical care.

Last week a senior religious scholar was sentenced by the khalifi regime to one year imprisonment. Sheikh Mohammad Al Madhi was accused of criticizing the oppressive Umayyad ruler, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan. The cleric is paying heavy price for expressing an opinion on a historical matter.

On 17th March Scholar At Risk organisation tweeted: Today marks 11 years since the arrest of Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, who remains imprisoned in Bahrain for engaging in peaceful protest and exercising his right to free expression. It urged people to sign a petition calling for Dr Al Singace's release.

The wife of a political prisoner has con-

81 executed by Saudis as the Johnson barter their blood for oil

On Saturday 12th March Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior announced that it had executed 81 individuals whom it says were "convicted of terrorism". 41 of the men were from Saudi's Shia Muslim community of the Eastern Province. The men were tried in the country's Specialized Criminal Court pursuant to the Counterterrorism Law, which has been widely criticized as politicized and for lacking basic due process. The bodies of the victims have not been handed to their families. "Today's unprecedented shocking mass executions in what we know to be sham trials under sham laws in Saudi Arabia should dispel any mythology about MBS's transforming into some kind of 'reformer'," said Sarah Leah Whiston, Executive Director of Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN). "Coddling MBS has only made him more brazen, from holding hostage the price of oil amidst a global crisis, to killing dozens of his countrymen in a single day." The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet has condemned the mass executions carried by Saudi Arabia. On Monday the UN human rights chief condemned the executions and urged the kingdom to stop using the death penalty. Michelle Bachelet said war crimes may have been committed if people were beheaded following court cases that do not offer proper fair trial guarantees. "I condemn Saudi Arabia's mass execution on Saturday of 81 people on terrorism-related charges," Bachelet said in a statement. Yesterday khalifi regime's courts issued a one-year prison sentence on young Bahraini native, Sayed Hussain Mahmood from the town of Al-Markh. He was also fined 100 Bahrain Dinars (\$250) for opposing the khalifi hereditary dictatorship. Political prisoner, Yousuf Hussain who

suffers from acute form of diabetes is struggling to receive medical care for his condition. On Monday his appointment to see a diabetes specialist was cancelled. He has been waiting for this appointment since last July. He has also been waiting for months to see a skin specialist as his condition continues to deteriorate. The mother of political prisoner, Hassan Abdulla Habib who has acute form of sickle cell disease has been begging to see her son at the Salmaniya Hospital where he was recently transferred. He has had a tumor removed from his lung and his family is extremely worried about his health.

As this year's car race in Bahrain Formula scheduled for this weekend approaches, human rights activists have raised serious concerns about the human rights situation in the country and called for the cancellation of the race. They are aware of the "sports wash" as a means of marketing a rotten regime that has been plagued by serious human rights crimes over the past decade.

To add salt to the injury the Formula 1 management has extended its contract to continue racing in Bahrain until 2036, saying that the Middle Eastern country holds a "very special place in our sport." Ahead of the Bahrain Grand Prix last year, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton urged the global racing series to not ignore human rights violations in the countries where it stages races. Bahrain has been accused of exploiting the series to gloss over, or "sportswash," its human rights record. Last week 27 NGOs wrote to the CEO of Formula 1 (F1), Stefano Domenicali, to condemn the company's "clear double standard" on Ukraine in comparison to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE ahead of the Bahrain Grand Prix this weekend. Rights groups raised concerns over F1's failure to engage with rights groups in spite of

"continued institutionalized repression" in Bahrain. They also called on F1 to use their platform to secure redress for victims in Bahrain, reconsider their policy on racing in Gulf states due to their role in waging war in Yemen, and evaluate their contract with Bahrain, said the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) and Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) yesterday.

Today, political prisoner Husain AlSahlawi was transferred to Jau Prison clinic in Bahrain, following the deterioration of his health due to a chest infection; an apparent complication linked to his testing positive for Covid-19 in prison for more than 11 days last month. Earlier this week, Husain was rushed to Salmaniya hospital for the same health concerns linked to his chest infection and Covid. He was prescribed medication and returned to Jau Prison where authorities refused to provide him with his prescribed medication.

The death toll of the Saudi-Emirati war on Yemen is estimated to be at least 377,000 individuals, as of the end of 2021. More than two-thirds of these Yemenis killed were likely children. These statistics come from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which reported in November that the number of deaths by direct and indirect causes in Yemen was projected to surpass 377,000 by the end of 2021. March 2022 will mark the seventh anniversary of this war, which has caused the largest humanitarian crisis on Earth.

The young Saudi youth, Abdullah Al Huwaiti who was recently sentenced to death has been on hunger strike for the past week. He was banned from communicating with his family and his mental health has deteriorated. He has been transferred to the psychology hospital.

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firmly that her husband had started a hunger strike to demand proper medical care for his serious ailments. On Saturday, 19th March Ali Hassan Hammad, from Dair Town, suffers acute pain in his back and limbs. On 24th January while at Bloc 10 Wing 2 of the notorious Jau prison he suffered a fall in the bathroom and was taken by Ambulance to the hospital, but he did not receive proper treatment. He is now unable to stand up when praying and cannot sleep at night due to the excruciating pain. This month his wife handed a written complaint to prison officials but little has been done to relieve his pain. The failed visit to Saudi Arabia by Boris Johnson has been widely criticised. Last week he travelled to Riyadh one day after the Saudis had executed 81 political prisoners in one go.

But this heinous crime did not deter Mr Johnson from shaking hands with the notorious Saudi crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman who is widely accused of ordering the butchering of Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018 at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. On the day of the trip the Saudis executed three more people. Mr Johnson failed to criticise this mass murder. The anti-capital punishment

Reprieve said the killings emphasised how little rulers like MBS were concerned by their public perception. "Carrying out these executions while the leader of a western power is on Saudi soil was a provocative act designed to flaunt the crown prince's power and impunity to the world," said Reprieve director Maya Foa. Michelle Bachelet, UN-HRC said in a statement. "I condemn Saudi

Arabia's mass execution on Saturday of 81 people on terrorism-related charges."

In the United Arab Emirates, Ahmed Mansoor completed five uninterrupted years in a tiny isolation cell yesterday, deprived of any meaningful engagement with other prisoners. International law deems prolonged solitary confinement for more than 15 days as amounting to torture.

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Saudi Arabia executes 81 people in a single day

Saudi Arabia has executed 81 men over the past 24 hours, including seven Yemenis and one Syrian national, on charges including "allegiance to foreign terrorist organisations" and holding "deviant beliefs", state news agency Saudi Press Agency said, in the largest known mass execution carried out in the kingdom in its modern history.

The number dwarfed the 67 executions reported in the kingdom in 2021 and the 27 in 2020. "These individuals ... were convicted of various crimes including murdering innocent men, women and chil-

dren," SPA said on Saturday, citing a statement from the interior ministry.

"Crimes committed by these individuals also include pledging allegiance to foreign terrorist organisations, such as ISIS [ISIL], al-Qaeda and the Houthis," it added. Some travelled to conflict zones to join "terrorist organisations", according to the SPA.

"The accused were provided with the right to an attorney and were guaranteed their full rights under Saudi law during the judicial process," it said.

"The kingdom will continue to take a strict and unwavering stance against terrorism and extremist ideologies that threaten the stability of the entire world," the report added.

The men included 37 Saudi nationals who were found guilty in a single case for attempting to assassinate security officers and targeting police stations and convoys, the report added.

Saudi Arabia's last mass execution was in January 2016, when the king-

dom executed 47 people, including a prominent opposition Shia leader who had rallied demonstrations in the kingdom.

In 2019, the kingdom beheaded 37 Saudi citizens, most of them minority Shia, in a mass execution across the country for alleged "terrorism"-related crimes.

Saudi Arabia's human rights records have been under increasing scrutiny from rights groups and Western allies since the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018.

It has faced strong criticism of its restrictive laws on political and religious expression, and the implementation of the death penalty, including for defendants arrested when they were minors.

Saudi Arabia denies accusations of human rights abuses and says it protects its national security according to its laws.

SPA said the accused were provided with the right to a lawyer and were guaranteed their full rights under Saudi law during the judicial process.



Bahrain Grand Prix: Formula 1 accused of ignoring abuse and suffering

Formula 1 has been accused of ignoring the abuse of human rights in Bahrain on the eve of the new season starting in the country this weekend.

The Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (Bird) says F1 has "abandoned those who have been tortured and imprisoned" partly as a result of criticism of the race.

An F1 spokesperson said: "We take our responsibilities on rights very seriously and set high ethical standards for counter-parties and those in our supply chain."

These were "enshrined in contracts, and we pay close attention to their adherence".

Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, the director of advocacy for Bird, has written a letter to F1 president and chief executive officer Stefano Domenicali following the decision to award the Bahrain race a new 15-year contract.

The letter says that the contract "directly contradicts your claim from last year that F1 takes 'violence, abuse of human rights and repression very seriously'".

It adds that the grand prix "has contributed to the abuse and suffering of individuals, and F1 has failed to adequately use its platform to put an end to abuses or secure redress for these victims". It said Bird supported F1's decision to cancel the Russian Grand Prix contract in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine but said

there "is a clear double-standard being applied with countries in the Middle East" in the context of Saudi Arabia's involvement in a conflict in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia hosts the second race of the season. Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, which hosts the season finale in Abu Dhabi, were also involved in Yemen, Alwadaei said.

He asked F1 to review its policy on races in the Middle East and reconsider its po-

sition on an independent commission to investigate human rights violations linked to the Bahrain Grand Prix.

Bird has also written to some drivers asking them to "publicly stand up for human rights in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, including on social media platforms".

The F1 spokesperson said: "For decades, Formula 1 has worked hard to be a positive force everywhere it races, including economic, social, and cultural benefits.

"Sports like Formula 1 are uniquely positioned to cross borders and cultures to bring countries and communities together to share the passion and excitement of incredible competition and achievement."

A statement from the Bahrain government said the kingdom had "led human rights reform in the region" and that to single it out was "absurd and lacks context".

It said it "welcomes and actively supports the role Formula 1 can play in shedding light on human rights issues in all countries it operates in". And it said Bahrain has "the region's most robust human rights protections in place", including an independent human rights ombudsman, police code-of-conduct reforms and criminal justice reform.

