

BAHRAIN

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

Bizarre policies by the khalifis to stifle opposition and protect occupation

The holy month of Ramadan this year has been a unique one, with protests taking root on several issues, revolts by political prisoners, escalating repression including detentions and provocations and escalating tension as a result of the regime's continued abandonment of the Palestinian cause. On each of these issues, polarisation has become apparent as never before. As the days and nights of the holy month passed, the people's attachment to spiritual practices did not stop them pursuing their lively matters including their political aims and objectives. Similarly the regime's tools of repression also continued their attacks on native Bahrainis, aided by foreign expertise especially those of the Mossad. The polarisation was so obvious that one of the regime's officials, Abdulla Al Khalifa boasted in one of his appearances about the presence of Mossad in the country. It was seen a flagrant admission at a time when the Palestinians were targeted and killed on daily basis.

As the machine of khalifi terror continued to function, more Bahrainis were detained during the month on trivial charges, mainly participating in peaceful protests either calling for rights, releasing the political prisoners or against the normalisation with the occupiers of Palestine. Several others were summoned to appear at torture centres. Among them were an elderly veteran activist, Majid Abdulla (Hajji Sumood) and Ali Muhanna, a teacher who was himself jailed and his son is serving five year prison sentence for his peaceful activities. Also the heads of the congregation halls were targeted before major religious events and warned against exercising their natural religious rights. The repression has been so widely administered that the people have become immune to its psychological impact. They would not be deterred by the threats of the khalifi dictators who are now viewed as occupiers especially after their unholy alliance with the occupiers of Palestine.

At another front, the regime has had axes to grind. The political prisoners have been once again targeted for serious repression. When they congregated behind bars to observe their religious duties while fasting, they were attacked mercilessly and threatened with further reprisals if they did not stop their acts of worship. The martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali on 21-23rd April

was observed by many inmates with speeches, sermons and chanting. That was enough for the khalifi torturers to set in motion. Attacks were waged and several were given horrendous treatment. The religious rights of the natives have always been targeted by the regime which has been attempting to deceive the outside of its "tolerance" of other faiths. This hypocritical policy, however, is short-lived. It may be used by its defenders in Washington and London to justify their support to a dictatorial junta, but it did not stand the test. The attacks on prisoners and persecution of preachers, lecturers and lamenters is well-documented and is persistent. It is seen as one of the most outrageous policies of the khalifi dictatorship.

Last month the regime was shaken by a US decision to take close interest in the cases of the political prisoners. President Biden had signed a law requiring the State Department to present a detailed report on Bahrain's political prisoners and present it to the White House within sixty days. This decision has rattled the khalifi torturers. For the past several weeks, emissaries from Saudi Arabia, UAE and UK have been exercising pressure on the White House not to go ahead with the report. But since it was signed as a law, they appear to have failed to stop the executive order. However, they have been lobbying to convince the White House to keep the findings secret. They fear that its exposure in the public domain could have further consequences on the khalifi regime. For years activists have been calling for human rights tribunals to try khalifi torturers who have adopted torture as a systematic policy. They have also called for the Magntsky protocols to be applied to those torturers. The publishing of the report will make that goal easier to achieve. The American politicians will be forced to sanction those found to administer torture within the khalifi regime. The joint Saudi-UAE-UK efforts aim to stifle those attempts.

The future of the political situation in Bahrain is thus becoming more complicated. This is especially true as the regime's new alliances have widened the political and psychological gap with the natives. It is gradually becoming more plausible to assume that the situation has become so polarised between the two sides, that any rapprochement may not be possible. When

the despotic king summoned a senior religious leader to his palace recently it was immediately realised how weak he has been and how much of his pride had been taken away by the people who raised the slogan "Down with Hamad". The meeting was a photo-opportunity for the regime to present to the outside world how the khalifis embrace the majority Shia Muslims. But this image is totally obliterated by the local and international reports that document large scale abuses by the ruling to inflict maximum wounds on the natives. Last month the US State Department issued its annual report on Bahrain. It was so damning that the regime ordered its mouthpieces to condemn it and address the American Ambassador to clarify his position having been groomed by the khalifis for long. The lengthy document confirmed what other human rights bodies have been saying about Bahrain and how it had become a graveyard for human rights. The regime has been attempting to woo the US by normalising its relations with Israel. While this step was welcomed and must have been encouraged by the White House, nonetheless it failed to hide the other grim realities in the country with its absolute hereditary dictatorship with the huge baggage of abuse, discrimination and ill-treatment of native citizens.

The khalifi regime has been planning to prepare the ground for more effective policies of deception revolving around their political agenda, the flag of which is the election of a powerless parliament later in the year. They want to turn the event into a political finale in order to achieve praise from its foreign defenders. The natives have dismissed this as a ploy by a hereditary dictatorship that has never agreed on power-sharing. Their aim is to weaken the opposition by splitting it into conformists and opponents, present a pseudo form of democracy and parliamentary process while keeping more than 1400 political prisoners behind bars. The people who revolted in 2011 wanted a regime change to end decades of political stagnation and enable the people to restart their lives afresh under a political system and government of their own choice. They will continue their struggle without respite until that objective is achieved and implemented.

Bahraini prisoners denied medical care, Saudi detainees ill-treated

The situation inside Bahrain's prisons is deteriorating as the lack of proper sanitation and medical care have become pandemic. Native Bahraini youth, Mohammad Abdul Amir has been transferred from his cell to hospital after his health had deteriorated sharply. He has been suffering several ailments and asking for treatment but his calls were not heeded until he reached the verge of death. He gets attacks of severe headache that make him cry out. Last week he suffered a serious attack that almost killed him. Fellow prisoners protested angrily until the prison officials relented and took Mohammad to the hospital. His condition is unstable. Another young political prisoner, Ali Ma'tooq is suffering serious chronic migraine. Since his detention his disease developed to epilepsy. When he called his family recently, he told them that he often stops breathing when he sleeps and his colour turns blue. His family is extremely worried about his health as prison officials continue to refuse to treat him or take him to hospital. On 21st April, young native Bahraini political prisoner, Mohammad Fou'ad Al Iskafi was subjected to horrific torture at the hands of one of the prison guards. His father is calling for his protection and an investigation into the recent bout of torture inflicted on his son. Inmates at Bloc 21 of the notorious Jau prison were attacked and beaten last week for asking to exercise their right to observe their religious rituals. When they defied the ban the attack happened. Some of them have been punished and denied their outdoor exercise and banned from communicating with their families. Young native Bahraini youth, Jassim Mohammad Isa, from Al Jufair town has been arrested and taken to an unknown place. No justification was given for his deten-

tion, as is the case with the native Bahrainis who are detained by the khalifis. He has not been allowed to see a lawyer and fear of torture is growing.

Civicus, the international human rights NGO with its headquarters in Johannesburg, has launched a petition for signature calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Abdu Hadi Al-Khawaja who has been in jail for over 11 years. It said: Eleven years ago, human rights defender, AbdulHadi Abdulla Hubail al-Khawaja was violently arrested and unfairly sentenced to life at Jau prison in Bahrain for his role in organizing peaceful protests to defend the realization of human rights and political reform for Bahrainis. Since his arrest and detention, Al-Khawaja has reportedly been ill-treated and severely tortured physically, psychologically and sexually. In addition, he has suffered multiple fractures to his jaw and has undergone multiple surgeries but still suffers from chronic pain and requires additional intervention as he has not healed properly. In 2012, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considered that al-Khawaja's arrest was unjust, yet Al-Khawaja remains imprisoned, isolated from his family and denied adequate healthcare. These abuses are infringements on his human rights and should be condemned.

On 22nd a prominent opposition figure Fadhel Abbas was denied entry into Egypt. He was detained for six hours at Cairo airport. During that time, he had his cell phone, luggage and even his belt confiscated. In 2105 he was imprisoned by the khalifis for condemning the Saudi-Emirati-khalifi war on Yemen. He spent three years behind bars for condemning the war.

The veteran Saudi human rights activist Essa al-Nukhaifi has been on hunger strike in Al-Ha'ir Prison since 17 April 2022. He

is protesting the prison administration's vindictive delays over letting him out to complete some banking transactions in relation to his salary and ID card renewal. Al-Nukhaifi's family have failed to receive his salary for two months because his ID card has expired, so this deliberate foot-dragging is causing his wife and children unnecessary hardship. Since his arrest, Saudi cleric and reformer Salman Al Odah has been denied his basic rights and treated in degrading ways; being deprived of sleep and having food thrown to him in bags. The Public Prosecution called for the death penalty for Salman Al Odah who was tried on 37 spurious counts including "incitement against the rulers". His health has seriously deteriorated in detention. He may meet the same fate of Dr Abdullah Al Hamid who died in prison two years ago. SANAD, a Saudi human rights NGO, has confirmed that a Saudi activist and dissident residing in Sana'a, Yemen, Majed Al-Asmari, disappeared few days ago. Nothing is known about his whereabouts.

On 18th April Human Rights Watch and Mwatana for Human Rights determined that three unlawful attacks conducted in Yemen by the Saudi- and UAE-led coalition in late January 2022 resulted in the deaths of at least 80 civilians. (HRW) including three children, and 156 injuries, including two children. Following one of the strikes, where it appears to have used a Raytheon-made laser-guided missile kit on a detention facility in Saada, the Saudi and UAE-led coalition conducted an investigation that stated that the attack was on a military facility. However Mwatana for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch found no evidence to support that claim.

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27th April 2022

Bahraini political prisoners abused, Saudis detain senior judges

The families of native Bahraini political prisoners are becoming extremely worried about the well-being of their sons especially when their phone or visual calls are cut off abruptly. Yesterday the family of Mohammad Al Singace expressed deep fear for his life when his visual call was suddenly ended. When they called the prison officials they were told that he was transferred to the clinic because of his sudden collapse. Also the family of his cousin, Abd Ali AlSingace became worried when he appeared during the call, drawn out, weak and disoriented. When they asked the torture officials about his health they were told he was suffering kidney problems. Fears are also deepening for the life of Dr Abdul AlSingace as he continues his hunger strike for the tenth month running. He is demanding that the manuscript of his literary book confiscated by the khalifi torturers be handed to his family. PEN International has included Dr Abdul Jalil AlSingace in a list of 11 writers worldwide

who are serving life imprisonment for their opinion.

Native Bahraini political prisoner, Mansoor Khalaf has been transferred to solitary confinement for the second time during the month of Ramadan. Despite his deteriorating medical condition he was kept in chains for three days. Since the beginning of Ramadan political prisoner, Yousuf Hussain who is severely diabetic has had his daily pills delayed for over two hours. This means that he and others with the same conditions have to delay the breaking of their fast for that period. They are then forced to eat their meal after it has become cold. Other detainees at Bloc 4 at Jau prison are experiencing the same ill-treatment. Yesterday under-aged political prisoners at the notorious Dry Dock jail began hunger strike after the khalifi torturers refused to acknowledge several demands. Among these demands is to implement the articles contained in the laws regulating the detention of children especially Law No 4/2021.

Despite numerous calls by those children and their families the regime's torturers have refused to heed the calls. In early April, inmates at Bahrain's Jau prison crowded into the corridors to protest. They were angry about the lack of medical treatment and fearing for their lives after the death of another inmate. Their sit-in at Bloc 13 lasted 10 days, and spread to other blocs in Jau, an infamous prison complex in the south of the kingdom. Inmates say authorities regularly delay or deny vital medical care to prisoners – especially prisoners of conscience. The concern has grown since late March when Covid-19 began to tear through the prison system. Prisoners and rights groups say that the authorities failed to prevent the outbreak and have denied some inmates their choice of vaccine.

Recently, the Saudi Crown Prince, Muhammad bin Salman, ordered extensive arrests of judges, some of whom are loyalists, and those who issued sentences

Calls to release Bahrain HRDs, Turkey criticised on Khashoggi killers

The Dublin-based human rights NGO, Front Line Defenders has called for the release of Abdul-Hadi AlKhawaja to Ireland on medical grounds". They based their call on the expert opinion of Prof. Damian McCormack, BSc, Mch, FRCS (Orth.). Al-Khawaja is a former employee who is serving a life sentence in Bahrain for his role in the peaceful pro-democracy uprising of 2011. Amnesty International said his conviction was based on a confession made under duress, and no evidence was presented showing he had used or advocated violence during the protests. In 2012, then-minister for foreign affairs Eamon Gilmore criticised the upholding of the life sentence, saying his initial trial did not meet international standards. Mr Al-Khawaja has received numerous awards for his human rights work. UN experts have raised concerns over the "deteriorating" health of a Bahraini academic on hunger strike. Abduljalil Al-Singace, director and spokesperson of the Human Rights Bureau of the Haq Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy, has been in jail since 2011, when he was sentenced to life in prison on false charges, together with other prominent figures. According to a communication sent by three special rapporteurs to the Bahraini government, his health has severely worsened during his hunger strike, entering its 10th month. "We wish to urgently renew and underscore our serious concerns relating to the health of Mr Singace and the confiscation of his research materials, and express fresh concern as to the alleged suspension of his video calls with his family," wrote the rapporteurs. "In expressing these concerns, we wish to reiterate our strong belief, as previously communicated to your Excellency's Government, that the sentence under which

Mr Singace remains detained is based solely on his legitimate, peaceful advocacy for the respect and protection of human rights in Bahrain."

The family of native Bahraini political prisoner Abdul Aziz Abdul Redha Isa, who had been sentenced to life in prison has called on the khalifi jailers to take immediate action regarding their son's deteriorating health condition. He has been suffering from severe pain in the lower abdomen for two months but has received no proper treatment.

A political prisoner has started hunger strike at the notorious Jau Prison. Mansoor Khalaf has stopped eating food or taking medicine in protest at the ill-treatment he has been receiving at the hands of the khalifi torturers and his transfer to solitary confinement. Another political prisoner, Hussain Al-Sahlawi whose deteriorating health has been repeatedly reported is still complaining of lack of medical care. He has continuously called for treatment but to no avail. In addition to several ailments, he was riddled with coronavirus that has turned into long Covid.

On the eleventh anniversary of the torture to death of several Bahraini detainees the human rights world has reacted angrily to the policy of impunity that the regime has adopted to protect the torturers. On 11th April, the family of Karim Fakhrawi remembered their shocking experience with his mutilated body days after he had been detained by the khalifi torturers earlier that month in 2011. So were the families of Zakariya al-Ashiri and Ali Saqr who succumbed to their horrific torture wounds on 9th April. They were followed by Hassan Jassim Makki whose body was abused by the torturers. After 11 years the fact remains that dictators cannot be reformed.

Saudi Arabia is sending Uyghur woman

Hadiche and her 13-year old daughter to Riyadh, where they'd be deported to China, and where they will face torture and arbitrary detention. They are the wife and daughter of Nurmemet Rozi who will also be deported. Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch said: "Deporting these people to places where they would face arbitrary detention, torture, or worse, risks further tarnishing Saudi Arabia's global human rights image."

Sarah Leah Whitson, the Director of Middle East and North Africa division at Human Rights Watch has tweeted on the strong links between the Saudis and Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of former US president, Donald Trump. She said: Leak of key documents reveal that the board of Saudi sovereign fund rejected investment in Kushner's project - at \$2b Saudi makes up the bulk of 2.5 money raised. She added: Before Giving Billions to Jared Kushner, Saudi Investment Fund Had Big Doubts. Weeks before it committed \$2 billion to Mr. Kushner's firm, Public Investment Fund officials questioned the justification for taking such a big risk.

On 7 April 2022, a Turkish court issued a ruling to suspend the trial of 26 people accused over the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and transfer the case to Saudi Arabia. The sudden decision led to an outburst of anger and disappointment among those who were seeking justice for the victim. The judge told the court: "We decided to halt and hand over the case to Saudi Arabia." Milena Buyum, of Amnesty International, tweeted: "Appalling and clearly political decision." His fiancée Hatice Cengiz vowed to "continue to fight. Whoever gives up has given up. I will continue."

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13th April 2022

against detainees and opinion activists. Among the detained judges are: Abdullah bin Khaled al-Luhaidan (the son of the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the judge in the General Court of First Instance), Abdulaziz bin Madawi Al Jaber (recently promoted to appeal in the Specialized Criminal Court), Fahd bin Abdullah Al-Saghir, Talal bin Abdullah Al-Humaidan (who are members of the Court of Appeal), Nasser Al-Harbi, Khalid bin Awaid Al-Qahtani, and Muhammad bin Misfer Al-Ghamdi. The last three are members of the Supreme Court of Saudi Arabia. Earlier, the Saudi authorities arrested many activists, politicians and human rights defenders. As well as a large number of preachers headed by Sheikh Salman Al-Awdah and Awad Al-Qarni. A number of public figures and thinkers are among the detainees.

Saudi political prisoner, Hasan Zaki al-Faraj is facing "Ta'zir" death penalty on several charges, allegedly committed when he was a minor at 14 of age. From

the moment of his arrest Al-Faraj was severely tortured, by beating and electric shocks. To this day, he still suffers from that torture and has been forced to sign confessions.

A newly-released report says that the British government is providing more than a dozen repressive regimes around the world with wiretaps, spyware and other telecommunications interception equipment they could use to spy on dissidents, public records show. Despite rules saying the UK should not export security goods to countries that might



use them for internal repression, ministers have signed off more than £75m in such exports over the past five years to states rated "not free" by the NGO Freedom House. The 17 countries include China, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, as well as the United Arab Emirates, which was the biggest recipient of licences totaling £11.5m alone since 2015. Human rights groups said the UK was developing a reputation for not conducting proper checks on who it sold arms to, while Labour called on the government to show it is working to prove that it is complying with its own rules against arming dictators.

Last week an ethnic Uyghur woman held in Saudi Arabia told AFP she feared being deported to China within hours, after authorities told her to prepare to board a flight. Buheliqiemu Abula and her 13-year-old daughter have been in custody in Saudi Arabia since being detained in Mecca earlier this month.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th April 2022

11 years after the Bahrain uprising its bloody crackdown has only worsened against the Shia majority

Fidel Castro once said, "A revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past."

Mohammed Khaku, 20 April 2020

These words could not ring truer in Pakistan, but also in Bahrain, Palestine and Yemen.

Since 2011 the crisis in Bahrain has seldom made the headlines, thus allowing the Al Khalifa monarchy to crack down on the dissent or opposition to monarchy.

The silence of the Biden and European countries is disturbing to the Bahrainis who oppose the crackdown, but watch the world condemn Putin, without a mention of Bahrain.

Al Khalifa regime in Bahrain is very oppressive with Shiite majority who have been discriminated and marginalized. They are denied government jobs nor can become active members of armed forces or police.

Since the normalization of relations with Israel, Bahrain has become a leading center for reconnaissance and spying activities against Iran and resistance groups from Palestine to Yemen.

Bahrain has the worst human rights record where hundreds of prisoners languish in the country's dungeons, and subjected to horrifying torture.

According to human rights organization thousands of dissidents are sexually harassed, houses being raided, and Shia religious monuments are being demolished. Al Khalifa has created an apartheid state similar to the Zionist State of Israel.

In light of the condemning reports by numerous Human Rights organizations, the State Department's resumption of six billions worth military assistance for a tiny Island is absurd and ludicrous.

Resuming the arm sales of lethal weapons which are used against the demonstrators is counterproductive and a misuse of America's influence to bring positive change to the human rights situation in Bahrain.

The only demand of the Bahraini protesters is to free political prisoner, have free and fair elections. However, US remain silent because Bahrain is home to the largest US Naval base for the Fifth Fleet.

The U.S. prides itself as a government that supports democracy all over the world. Yet the U.S. is silent toward Al Khalifa regime which conducts brutal crackdown against the peaceful demonstrators.

U.S. policymakers have wasted no time in imposing severe sanctions against Russia for the intervention in Ukraine, however no lawmaker is calling for sanctions against Bahrain.

U.S. government has been turning a blind eye to the unjustifiable abuses committed in Bahrain, and continuing to sell weapons to Bahrain.

Bahrain has been ruled by the al-Khalifa dynasty since 1783. Bahrain is an outright dictatorship and oppressive regime. It must go!

If the presence of the Fifth Fleet is the reason for the administration's silence, it is a weak one.

The United States was quick to dump Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt despite the fact that Egypt was much more important to America & Israel than Bahrain.

The most prudent foreign policy would be condemnation of the monarchy of Al Khalifa for its human rights abuses, freezing Bahraini assets, travel bans of Bahraini officials, and to facilitate the free elections.

US can regain the credibility in Middle East and Arab world with enforcing these reasonable measures.

Dismantling U.S Fifth Fleet Naval Base at Juffair in Bahrain:

The US maintains an empire of military bases globally – about 800 of them in 70 countries with Pentagon budget of over \$800 billion.

U.S. bases overseas are not about national defense per se. They are an insurance policy for the dictatorial regimes and Arab monarchies.

Fifth Fleet naval bases is a financial burden on U.S. economy. While Pentagon nor



Congress provides reliable estimates to the public regarding the cost.

However, according to Rand Corporation, it cost over \$40,000 per year to station a single member of the military.

For fiscal year 2015, the Pentagon's Overseas Cost Summary (OCS) estimated the total cost of all overseas bases, facilities, and personnel stationed abroad is about

\$19.6 billion.

The United States is arguably the most secured nation with nuclear power. No nation in the world credibly threatens to attack or invade the United States.

Yet, why does US has 800 bases globally?

To subsidize the Military Industrial Complex. (MIC).

Studies after studies have shown that closing overseas military bases and cutting Pentagon budget would have minimal negative impact on our nation's readiness or ability to efficiently respond to emerging threats,

However, it would have a tremendous impact on the environment, the economy and global relations where many countries view US as a threat to their government for interfering in their political affairs.

It's time for the Fifth Fleet to be dismantled and reduce U.S. presences in the Middle East because Bahrain is neither stable nor secure.

Moreover, the American values are to engage in democratic reforms and elections than with the tyrants who terrorize their citizens.

The Fifth Fleet naval base provides legitimacy for the Al Khalifah dynasty, and

only prolongs their hold on power. A Bahraini opposition group has denounced the presence of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, which must be closed.

The problem today is not with the Iranian nuclear program, but rather with Iran's geopolitical stand against imperialism, Zionism and Arab bigotry, as well as its unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

Bahrain's most prominent cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim has said that drawing up a new constitution and having the election is the only way out of the political crisis.

