

BAHRAIN

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

Bahrainis look forward to an end of religious & political persecution

Political and religious persecution by the khalifi regime in Bahrain have characterized the past century and are continuing at alarming paces. Attempts to curtail the excesses of the regime have not produced tangible results. If any, the excesses have escalated to the extent that the native population continues to live in constant fear. This is facilitated by the overall trend of persecution in the region. Instead of taming those dictators, leaders of the "free world" have ignored the calls to make a stand in support of political change. As long as human rights violations are not linked to dictatorship in the minds of the world's leaders improvement in the realm of human rights cannot be achieved. Dictators cannot be human rights protectors. Despots cannot be transformed into democrats. These are facts that the Western leaders accept in certain countries and situations and reject in others. Dictators like Saddam Hussain and Mo'ammarr Gaddafi were seen as un-reformable. Yet Gaddafi was embraced by the UK at some stage despite the killing in 1984 of PC Ivonne Fletcher by his agents. Saddam Hussain was notorious for his human rights abuses, but was supported by the West when he waged war on Iran.

So how can human rights become of substance and cease to be public relations exercise. It will be a human disaster if the rulers of the "freed world" really believe that dictatorship can be trusted with protecting the rights of their citizens the forefront of which are the public freedoms of speech, assembly and protest. But this is exactly what some European governments claim, to the dismay of the victims of state oppressive policies. The question here is: Did President Biden, the leader of the "free world" really believe that he could influence the Saudi rulers when he visited the country in July? Did he think that its Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman (MBS), who had been implicated by the CIA itself in the gruesome murder of Jamal Khashoggi could be transformed for a killer to a protector of human rights? Any answer to this question is troubling. The fact is that Mr Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia has emboldened its leaders especially MBS. The visit came three months only after 81 people were executed by the Saudi regime in one day. Since the visit,

MBS has become more wild in his approach to human rights. At least seven under-aged citizens have been put on the death row on trump up charges. Last month the Saudi judiciary sentenced a female activist to 34 years in jail for tweeting in support of women rights. She was initially given six-year jail sentence, but when she appealed the sentence was increased to 34 years. Is this what President Biden had anticipated when he visited Riyadh.

The problem is the Saudis have always had leverage on other GCC rulers and large influence on the political issues. The rulers of Bahrain felt free to attack Bahraini citizens and rob them of their basic rights. Here are two areas of disturbing developments in the past month:

First is the religious persecution of the native majority Bahamah population. They form the bulk of the population and haven systematically denied their basic rights. Even on issues of identity and citizenship they were targeted mercilessly. Many have been stripped of their Bahraini citizenship, many were exiled including the most senior religious and political figure, Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim. The most recent season of Ashura witnessed an escalation of religious persecution. Orators, lamenters and interrogated and warned of harsh consequences if they allowed political slogans or ideas to proliferate during the processions. Many preparations for the season, including banners and flags were removed in provocative ways. Religious visits to the holy shrines in Iraq and Iran have been banned. Anyone caught on his way to either of the two countries would be stopped and possibly persecuted. Last month new forms were produced for filling by those intending to visit the holy shrines. It is a new form of censorship and persecution that deny the people the right to visit their holy shrines. The officially curricula has been cleansed of any reference to the religious teachings of the native Shia Muslim majority. The regime also banned GCC citizens from visiting Bahrain during Ashoora. Those who had already arrived were swiftly expelled. It was seen as a clear attack on the religion of the masses who were forced to see their guests expelled from their country. This religious persecution is among

the clearest examples of hate. It is an evil that must be eradicated.

Second is the ongoing abuse and imprisonment of thousands of native Bahrainis who are punished by the Alkhalifa political machine that plunders the people's wealth. There are more than 1000 political prisoners, many of whom have been behind bars since March 2011. The people's NGOs and activists have been lobbying the world human rights bodies and rulers and urging them to make a stand. The khalifis have hitherto refused to allow foreign bodies to inspect the prisons or talk to the hundreds who had spent a good chunk of their lives in jails on the basis of false confessions. Families of the political detainees have been lining up the main roads in towns and villages for more than one year, calling for the release of their beloved children. But the khalifis have failed to acknowledge the need to free the political prisoners. These victims have sacrificed their freedom, attracted debilitating diseases such MS (Tuber Sclerosis) and many have lost their sight because of police brutality. The case of the political prisoners is pressing on the activists who had hoped they would be released by the regime as a PR stunt. Instead, they were left behind as the regime sought to exact a political price for their release. To the political leadership this is unacceptable. They insist on political transformation immediately and unconditionally.

It is the hope of many that this transformation happens in the not too far a future. The country needs to live in peace with itself and its people. The region needs stability that can only happen when the inhabitants of the member countries live in harmony with the rulers. This appear to be almost impossible especially as the regimes sought alliances with the enemies of the Arab and Muslim Ummah. This has become a factor of complication that many not benefit the regime itself. The exit from the prolonged crisis is not easy for the regime. The people think it is possible now that the links between the natives and the khalifis have all but severed. The hope is that the total separation will not take long to materialize. That eventuality is now more likely than ever.

More Bahrainis forcibly disappeared; Saudi children sentenced to death

Fears are growing for the life of the Bahraini political prisoner Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace who has been on hunger strike for more than one year. Since his case became prominent after completing 400 days of hunger strike last week, he has been experiencing intimidation and harassment by the guards at Kanoo Center where he has been held for over one year in what amounts to solitary confinement. Late at night, officers insist on entering his room when the lights are off, interrupting his sleep. The head of guards who stormed his cell three nights ago were heavily armed. It is feared that the royal court may have given the orders to liquidate him. Friends of the regime are alerted to this possible eventuality with the hope that they would stop the dictator from assassinating any native Bahraini political prisoner.

The religious persecution of the native majority population took a sharp turn this month as people marked Ashoora. Regime forces removed Hussaini banners and flags at several towns including Saar, Aali, Al-Zahra City, Malikiya and Al Hourah. They also intimidated the people through their intensive security presence at entrances of towns and profiling many.

Two more Bahrainis were arrested on Thursday 18th August after being ordered to appear for questioning at the Criminal Investigation Directorate. Hamid Ahmed and Qassim Hassan were detained for a week 'pending further investigation'.

The family of political prisoner, Ahmad Sayed Ali have called on the khalifi regime to provide medical treatment for his chronic abdominal illness and high temperature. Ahmad Al Sheikh is a young native Bahraini from the town of Nuwaidrat. This week he was stunned when the Dry Dock prison officials told him that he would be

remanded in custody for sixty days. Few days earlier he was given sentenced to one week in custody by a "judge". Another victim of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) has been admitted to hospital a few days after his "release" from jail. Hassan Abdulla Habib was diagnosed with MS and released last Friday. His condition worsened and was transferred to hospital. After being forcibly disappeared by khalifi jailers for 12 days, Mohammad Jum'a Al Khor called his family for few seconds only before the phone was cut off. He was pleading for his life before the phone was cut off. His worried mother said: "His call has killed me." He accused one of the torturers of gross human rights violations.

It is feared that at least 15 political prisoners are being forcibly disappeared. On Monday their families called for clarification from the regime about the fate of their children, to allow them to contact their relatives and allow family visits in order to know the circumstances of their sudden disappearance.

It has been confirmed that cruel sentences were passed by Saudi courts on three brothers for participating in peaceful protests in Qatif ten years ago. Sayed Sadiq Taher Al Shamimi, 35 years, his brother, Sayed Hadi, 30 years and Sayed Reda 15 years were handed these draconian sentences

The storm following the sentencing of woman activist, Salma al-Shehab has continued. The United States has raised "significant concerns" with Saudi Arabia over a 34-year prison sentence imposed on women's rights activist Salma al-Shehab, the State Department said on Monday. "We have raised our significant concerns with Saudi authorities," State Department spokesman Ned Price said of the sentence given to the Saudi woman for following

and retweeting dissidents and activists on Twitter. "We have made the point to them that freedom of expression is a universal human right to which all people are entitled," Price said, adding that it should "never be criminalized or punished." The University of Leeds where Salma has been studying tweeted: "We are deeply concerned to learn of the recent development in Salma's case and are seeking advice on whether there is anything we can do to support her. Our thoughts remain with Salma, her family, and her friends among our close-knit community." A court in Riyadh has sentenced Sheikh Saleh Al-Talib, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, to 10 years in prison, after overturning the previous acquittal.

Saudi Arabia has resumed sentencing teenagers to death for protesting against the regime, despite promising earlier to end the practice. Human rights monitors have recorded seven cases in which the death penalty has been sought, handed down or confirmed on appeal for crimes by minors. On July 31 a young man called Jalal al-Labbad was convicted and sentenced to death on a range of charges including demonstrating. He was 21 when he was arrested, in 2017, but was accused of having attended demonstrations and funeral protests years beforehand. On August 8 the specialised criminal appeals court upheld a death sentence against Abdullah al-Derazi, who was 19 when he was arrested in 2014. He was accused of participating in demonstrations, marches, funerals for victims, distributing water during the demonstrations. Prosecutors are demanding the death penalty for five other young men on trial for similar offences.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
24th August 2022

15 NGOs call for AlSingace release, cruel sentence of Saudi woman

On 10th August regime's forces snatched native Bahraini youth Ahmad Makki AlHuda. They raided his house, ransacked it, scattered its contents and confiscated some items including his books. The attack lasted three hours. No justification has been given for the criminal raid. After many hours he called his family and only said: "I am at the CID, I need clothes." In the early hours of the following day, another youth, Ahmad Ali Shaikh was snatched in a similar way. His family only knew of his arrest in the afternoon when he called them briefly. Before the phone call they thought he had been at work. Both are from Nuwaidrat.

On 11th August political prisoner, Salman Ali Hassan Salman started hunger strike to protest his ill-treatment at the hands of the prison officials who had denied him his basic rights including the right to have reasonable clothing. Under-aged prisoner, Ali Isa Abdul-IthnaAshar from Duraz has been forcibly disappeared for some time.

Two weeks ago he was attacked by the jailers at the Dry Dock prison. He was sprayed with pepper and taken to unknown destination.

The officials at the notorious Jau Prison have banned the political prisoners at Rooms 1 to 4 of Bloc 21 from their daily outing for four days. Thus they will not see daylight or breath fresh air. This is in retaliation for their protest against the 45 minutes that they are allowed to leave their cells and see the sun and calling for a longer period outside the fence.

On 13th August 15 organisations including Human Rights Watch said in a letter to the king of Bahrain that he should free Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, an academic imprisoned since 2011. Al-Singace, 60, has been on a long-term hunger strike and has post-polio syndrome and numerous other health conditions. He is being denied adequate medical care, his family said. "It is outrageous that Bahraini authorities are apparently denying Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace the

medical care he urgently needs, in addition to his deeply unjust 12 years of imprisonment and life sentence after a manifestly unfair trial," said Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "The Bahraini government should immediately allow al-Singace to receive essential medical care and restore the dignity he rightly deserves."

On 9th August Saudi Arabia has sentenced women's rights defender Salma al-Shehab to 34 years in prison - the longest jail term ever handed to a peaceful activist. This follows Biden's recent meeting with MBS, which rights campaigners warned would embolden the regime to step up repression. The sentence was passed by the Specialised Criminal Court of Appeal. Salma, a mother of two, was born in 1988 and is conducting a PhD research. Many young women were detained around the same time as Salma al-Shehab, mostly because of social media posts. She was initially given a six years sentence but increased on

UN calls on Khalifis to free HRDs, On Saudis not to execute two Bahrainis

The UN Human Rights Committee has called on Bahraini authorities to release human rights defenders Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Abduljalil Al-Singace and Najj Fateel, all imprisoned for their human rights work. It is the second UN treaty body to raise their case insisting that they be freed.

An audio message from behind the bars has called for serious intervention to save native Bahraini political prisoners from the khalifi cruelty and violence. Ahmad Jaffar has urged human rights bodies to exercise more pressure to help the persecuted natives describing the conditions of the jail as extremely dire. Another political prisoner has been infected with Tuberculosis (TB) and was released from his torture cell to face a bleak future. Murtada Mohammad was systematically denied proper medical treatment until his condition worsened. He was eventually released to join the community of TB sufferers whose numbers are increasing. A young Bahraini native has been arrested after being summoned for interrogation, Sayed Sadiq Sayed Haidar committed no offence punishable by law. Another man has been summoned for interrogation. Munir Mushaima, brother of unlawfully executed man, Sami Mushaima from Sanabis town has been contacted by the torturers and asked to "visit" them for

interrogation.

The criminal deception of the khalifis has been exposed this week. When the native political prisoners complained of being denied the right to exercise their religious rituals they were allowed to hang few black banners about Imam Hussain. Then the regime's human rights GANGO was dispatched to report about the "wonderful" rights of the political prisoners. No sooner had the GANGO left than did the prison officers remove those banners. Many prisoners were denied their rights and were punished for observing some rituals. The mother of prisoner of conscience, Sadiq Marhoon has confirmed that her son who is serving a life sentence had suffered nervous breakdown and other ailments. The regime escalated its persecution of the majority population in the past two weeks. Many heads of congregation halls, lamenters and orators were summoned to receive threats and intimidation. To make the situation worse, the khalifis expelled Shia lamenters who had come to Bahrain to share the experience with the natives. It was one of the most outrageous moves by the khalifi occupiers. Several Kuwaiti and Saudi guests were shamefully ordered to leave the country within 24 hours of their arrival. Among them was Mohammad Al Hujairat, a well-known lamenter. The religious persecution includes banning natives

from visiting sacred shrines in Iraq and Iran. This week several families were prevented from making the journey.

The United Nations has warned Saudi Arabia for the second time in six months that enforcing the death penalty on two Bahraini men who were tortured and forced to make confessions could constitute arbitrary execution. In a June letter sent to Saudi Arabian authorities, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions said the kingdom should halt "any possible steps towards the execution" of Jaafar Mohammad Sultan and Sadeq Majeed Thamer, who were convicted of terrorism-related charges which rights groups say were trumped up. Instead, Saudi authorities should fully investigate allegations that the men, who are both Shia, were tortured "to ensure that they are retried in conformity with international law and standards", says the letter, which was only made public this week.

A young man has been forcibly disappeared for three months. Abdullah Al-Daribi has not been heard of since May 2022, after he was summoned to the Presidency of State Security office in Riyadh for unknown reasons. Saudi Appeal court has raised the unlawful prison sentence on Sheikh Ibrahim Al Nasser to 15 years.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
10th August 2020

appeal. There are credible reports that other Saudis recently also had court sentences dramatically increased when they attempted appeals.

Saudi Arabia has executed 120 people in the first six months of 2022, according to a rights organization, nearly double the number put to death in all of last year despite its promises to reduce capital punishment. As early as 2018, Saudi Arabia's de facto leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, spoke of curtailing the death penalty, one of a string of public promises made by him to silence opposition to his jumping the queue to the top. After a major drop in 2020, 65 people were put to death in 2021; then in just the first six months of this year, the number of executions nearly doubled. By June, the numbers for this year had exceeded those of 2020 and 2021 combined, according to a statement from the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR) sent to media Aug. 9. "If Saudi Arabia continues to execute people at the same pace during the second half of 2022, they will reach an unprecedented number of executions, exceeding the record high of 186 executions in 2019," the report stated.

Reprieve is leading a campaign against the use of sports to

whitewash Saudi regime's crimes. Under the title: Mohammed bin Salman: Keep your blood-stained hands off sports it said: "Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is trying to use sports to distract the world from his human rights abuses. Saudi Arabia's rulers think they can buy a new reputation as leaders of a progressive Government – not an authoritarian regime that tortures and executes its critics for standing up for human rights. So far, the world is letting them do it. This is sportswashing. We all love sports. But when bank-rolling sporting events helps a regime that executes child defendants to launder its reputation, we must ask ourselves:

how did we allow this to happen and how can we stop it now? Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), controlled by the Crown Prince, has bought Newcastle FC, created the LIV golf series, established a partnership with WWE, staged F1 races, and is now, despite his human rights record, looking to host a Women's Tennis Association tour event. We can't let Mohammed bin Salman get away with this. He has blood on his hands and those hands need to stay off the sports we love.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
17th August 2022
(info@vob.org, www.vob.org)



Letter to Bahrain King: Free 400-day hunger striker Dr Al-Singace

King of Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa,

Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

13 August 2022

Your Majesties,

We, the undersigned, are writing to you concerning Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, an academic, activist and blogger imprisoned in Bahrain whose health is declining rapidly. We respectfully urge you to secure Al-Singace's immediate and unconditional release, and in the meantime, ensure he receives proper medical care, is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that his academic work is transferred to his family.

Abduljalil Al-Singace, 60, is serving a life sentence for his role in peaceful protests calling for democratic reform in Bahrain in 2011. He has been imprisoned for almost 12 years solely for exercising his human rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Al-Singace has been on hunger strike since 8 July 2021 and has now exceeded 400 days without solid food. We are deeply concerned by the current state of his health as his blood sugar has reached an extremely low level. We are especially concerned that in flagrant disregard of his physicians' orders, the delivery of multiple essential prescribed medicines has either been delayed or denied, including pills necessary for his nervous system and bodily functions, and eye drops.

Al-Singace suffers from post-polio syndrome and multiple other health problems, including severe intermittent headaches, a prostate problem, arthritis in his shoulder joint, tremors, numbness, and diminished eyesight. In January 2022, his neurologist requested a CT scan, but the authorities have reportedly refused the request to have the procedure performed at the Salmaniya Medical Complex, run by the Health Ministry. Instead, the authorities insist that the test be conducted at the King Hamad Military Hospital. But he does not believe that he would receive adequate and timely healthcare at King Hamad Military Hospital, given that he has yet to be informed of the result of an MRI scan of his shoulder taken there in October 2021. This delay amounts to a deliberate failure to provide healthcare in line with Bahrain's obligations under international law. Given his fragility and pre-existing health problems, this denial of healthcare puts his life at risk and may lead to irreversible damage. Therefore, we call on the government to immediately provide him with adequate healthcare.

Al-Singace's hunger strike is in response to the prison authorities' confiscation of his book on Bahraini dialects of Arabic

that he spent four years researching and writing by hand.

On 18 July 2021, the authorities transferred him from Jau prison to the Kanoo Medical Centre, where he continues to be held. The same month, the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Ombudsman declared that his book could not be turned over to his family until a "legal decision" about its contents was made. In November 2021, a legal decision clarified the apolitical nature of the book, but government authorities have yet to return the book to his family. In March 2022, an Ombudsman representative visited Al-Singace, made baseless allegations about the book's content and asked him to edit and resubmit the book for the authorities to review.

In July 2022, the UN Human Rights Committee repeated its call to the government of Bahrain to release Al-Singace along with other unjustly imprisoned human rights defenders including Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Najji Fateel. Today, on 13

principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent, and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. We also call on you to ensure that his work is immediately handed over to his family.

Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)

Amnesty International

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

CIVICUS

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)

English PEN

European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR)

Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)

Human Rights Watch

Freedom House

PEN International

Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)

Scholars at Risk

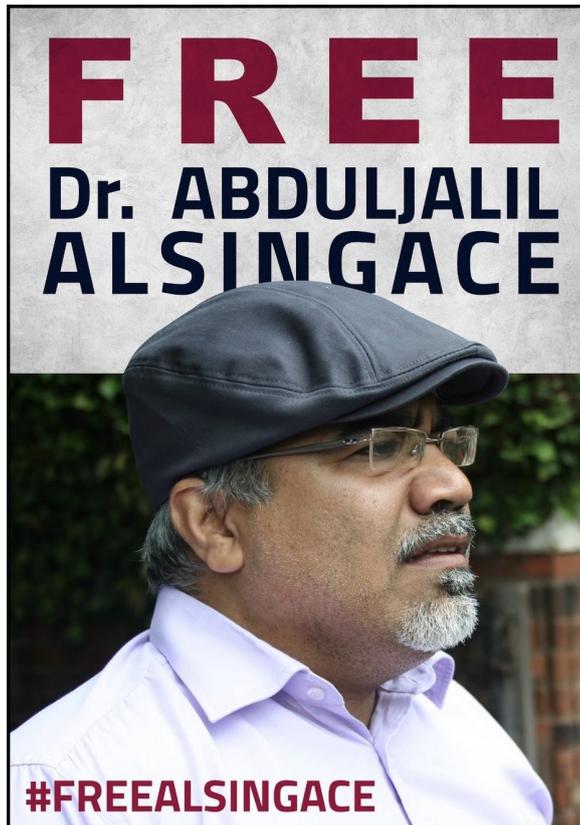
Background

Upon his return from London with his family, Dr. Al-Singace was arrested at the Bahrain International Airport on 13 August 2010. A detailed account of his torture allegations can be found in a report by Human Rights Watch published on 1 September 2010, which states:

"Al-Singace, who had spent the previous 15 days in incommunicado detention, told al-Buainain of having been handcuffed and blindfolded the entire time. Al-Singace said that his captors beat him on his fingers with a hard instrument, slapped him around, and pulled and twisted his nipples and ears with tongs."

When the Arab spring erupted in Bahrain, government authorities released Al-Singace on 24 February 2011. However, he was soon rearrested 21 days later, on 17 March 2011. Since then, Al-Singace has remained in arbitrary detention.

In November 2011, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry documented in a report that the police subjected Dr. Al-Singace to nightly beatings for two months while they held him in solitary confinement. The commission said that the authorities targeted his disability by confiscating his crutches, making him "stand on one leg for prolonged periods" and by pushing his crutch "into his genitals." The commission also found that the authorities "threatened him with rape and made sexually explicit comments about his wife and his daughter."



August, Al-Singace marks 12 years since his initial arrest in 2010. He was subsequently unjustly re-imprisoned after a brief hiatus of 21 days in early 2011 and was re-arrested on 17 March 2011 during the uprising. Today also marks the 401st day of Al-Singace's hunger strike.

We call upon you to release Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace immediately and unconditionally. We also urge you to ensure he receives his medication without delay and has access to adequate healthcare, in compliance with medical ethics, including the