

# BAHRAIN

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

## **The world cup opens old wounds in Bahrain as athletes persecuted**

The ongoing competitions among the world's nations in the "World Cup" in Qatar is a serious reminder of the central role of sports in the human activities. Without it illness, misery and stagnation would rule the human life. This is not a new phenomenon but has accompanied the human race almost from the beginning. Sports have developed from the primitive forms of competition such as running, archery or jumping to the present day highly sophisticated and regulated activities. The World Cup is an embodiment of the human desire to be on the move, exercise and compete with others. The social dimension is as significant as the sports side. Today, the international tournaments have become deeply entrenched and regulated. Countries who took serious interest in sports have been able to compete in Qatar and beat their rivals. Bahrain could have been one of these countries, given the activism of its people and their enthusiasm for sports. The regime's policies have been unfriendly to sports. Some of the leading figures in the country's football team were arrested, tortured and dismissed from the National League. Athletes like Alaa Hubail and his brother, Mohammed were among those detained and abused. Hassan Essa of Al Malikiya Club, Tariq Al Farsani, weight lifter, Fu'ad Abdul Wahid, table tennis players, and Anwar Makki, a football player were ill-treated. When Fifa threatened the khalifis they released some of them. The number of the athletes who had been detained and tortured reached 75 including Hamad Al Fahad who was given a life sentence.

For an Arab or Muslim country to host this event has been an old dream due to several factors including the cost, the Western prejudice, the lack of unity among the Arabs and Muslims and the retarded standards of sportsmanship. Now that Qatar has become the first among those countries to host the event, the hope is that a new spirit of hope and awareness will spread in the region. The economic developments have not always been accompanied by deeper awareness of the need for physical activities in order to combat modern day ailments. Heart problems, obesity and mental health issues are among such ailments. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has persistently called for promoting physical

activism among all ages in order to combat disease. Yet some regimes have been hesitant to allow physical activities among certain groups of the society.

The political prisoners are the worst affected by this hesitation especially in countries under the rule of dictatorship. Denying the right for daily exercise and out-of-cell movement is the first casualty of this mentality. There are many examples to illustrate the weaponization of the prisoners rights by the rulers of Bahrain, for example. Over the years the issue of allowing the political prisoners to spend adequate times outside their cells has been highly politicised by the khalifi dictators. When the prisoners protest their ill-treatment, lack of medical care, inadequate food and family contacts and visits are the first to be affected. Prison officials are instructed by the royal court to use these rights as weapons to subdue the prisoners. They are sometimes kept in their cells for weeks without being allowed their daily outing in the open air. Individuals and groups have often been transferred to solitary confinement and banned from going outside.

These policies have led to serious illnesses and deaths. Diseases also spread within the confined spaces of the jails. Young people who were arrested ten years ago are not in their late twenties and thirties with various ailments. Several people developed serious illnesses like cancer and died. Others are battling with back and knee problems. Some youths now suffer heart problems. Skin diseases are rampant among the native Bahraini political prisoners. Leisure times outside the cells are subjected to change and are often cut short as punishment to the detainees. Walking aids are also denied to unable people Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace had to plea for months for the ferrules of his crutches. He has been kept to his own fate within his cell, unable to mix with others or practice any exercise. As a result his health has been steadily deteriorating. Since he was moved from the notorious Jau prison to the Kanoo Centre he has been held almost incommunicado. There are not other detainees at this place apart from Mr Hassan Mushaima who is being punished for his adamant refusal to remain silent in the face of atrocities by the regime. Before

the Revolution, Dr Al Singace and hundreds others were rounded up and jailed for over six months for speaking out against the regime since the abrogation by the dictator of the country's constitution in February 2002.

The khalifi dictators have gone as far as denying the prisoners of their right to hospitalisation, cancelled medical appointments at short notices, ignored the pleas by those crying out for help as their pains intensified. Tooth aches are often ignored until they become untreatable and have to be removed. In addition to the immediate negative impact on the general health of the patients, this policy contributed to the lack of exercise among the detainees, with incalculable consequences. The boasting by the khalifis of promoting sports among the public thus becomes hollow claims. The policies must be consistent in order to be effective. They must also be universal and all-encompassing. Since the number of Bahraini political prisoners in the past decade exceeded 20,000, their sad experiences with lack of exercise has left many of them in some ailment. They stand as a reminder to the world of the evil use of sports as a weapon against adversaries. It is generally accepted that food, drink, medicine and other necessary means of healthy life may not be used as weapons. But it is clear that the rulers of Bahrain have opted to absolve themselves of the need to promote healthy lifestyle among the political prisoners. This has unfortunately led to a physical and mental diseases among those Bahrainis whose humanity did not allow them to remain indifferent to the plight of their people.

The above facts may help explain why the Bahraini team has not been achieving much on international level. The situation has remained as grim as ever and the athletes continue to endure more abuse, ill-treatment and detention. Their policy of subjugation had subdued the cream of the society and created an atmosphere of fear instead of peace and hope. This is unlikely to change without political change. The khalifis have lost the chance to make up for their past crimes and the only thing on their mind is the survival of their antiquated tribal hereditary political in an era of openness and freedom.

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## Prince Andrew courts Bahrain's dictators, Saudis execute 17 people

Yesterday two members of Mr Hassan Mushaima's family were arrested while protesting outside the Kanoo Centre where Mr Mushaima has been held in solitary confinement for over one year. They were calling for his release. After 12 years of incarceration the family decided to take his case to the street hoping to put enough pressures on his jailers to release him. He is 74 years old and is suffering from various ailments including cancer. They stood on the road side carrying his picture with slogans calling for his release. The royal court ordered the attack on the participants. They arrested Mohammed Hassan Mushaima and his cousin Hussain Al Ashoori. After abuse and intimidation Mohammed was released but Hussain was severely tortured by four officers. Fearing of media and political backlash for their crime they reversed the story and charged the victim with "assaulting" one of the torturers. He remains behind bars.

FrontLine Defenders, an organization campaigning for the defence of human rights activists said it was deeply concerned by a series of new criminal charges being tabled against leading human rights activist Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja. The charges appear to be a direct reprisal against him for speaking out in prison. His daughter, Maryam tweeted: "My father is yet again facing multiple charges for the exact same reasons - that he insists on speaking up in the face of injustice." These are linked to his protests against conditions in Jau Prison and range from criticizing Israel to breaking a plastic chair.

Prince Andrew has visited Bahrain in secret amid claims he is eyeing an unofficial role as intermediary between the West and Gulf states in the energy crisis. The Duke flew out last week on the private jet of a billionaire Swiss contact to be pampered in all-expenses-paid luxury provided by

friends in the Bahrain Royal Family, according to The Sun. Sayed Ahmed Al Wadaei, Director Of Advocacy at Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), said the prince's relationship with the ruling family was "toxic and shameful". He said: "For several years, he visited the country and met with Bahrain's police force, despite their record of violence, extreme interrogation tactics, and use of torture.

Political prisoners at Bloc 7 of Jau Prison have continued their protests against the attacks and abuse meted against religious scholars, senior political figures and other detainees. Sheikh Abdul Hadi Al Mokhowdar was recently abused by the khalifi torturers. For over a year political prisoner Ali Aqeel has been complaining of medical negligence. He is in severe pain in his eye and ear. He also has persistent headache. Another detainee, Ali Al Banna has spelled out the medical negligence he has suffered. He said that a scheduled heart operation was cancelled in the last minute. No alternative date for the operation has been given.

Saudi authorities have continued their executions unabated. A U.N. human rights office spokesperson said that 17 men had been executed in Saudi Arabia since November 10 for drug and contraband offences, calling the executions "deeply regrettable". Those killed were from Syria, Pakistan, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, spokesperson Elizabeth Throssell told a Geneva press briefing. That brings the total number of executions this year to 144, she said. Reprive, the international body campaigning against the death penalty said that the kingdom had exploited the World Cup event to carry out a horrifying execution spree. It further called for Hussein Abo al-Kheir's release who was tortured into making a false confession. Several others are undergoing this horrible treatment.

Detained Saudi activist Essa al-Nukhaifi has been forcibly disappeared since 15 October, when he announced that he was going on hunger strike in protest against his continued detention despite serving his full sentence. His family members have not been allowed any contact with him or received news about his fate. Another Saudi political prisoner, Sheikh Khalid Al Rashid has not been released despite completing his 15-year prison sentence two years ago. Instead, he was re-tried and given a new 23-year jail sentence. When he appealed, the sentence was raised to 25 years to make the total 40 years.

The US State Department has decided that Saudi Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), cannot be sued while head of government. This decision highlights the Biden administration's failure to seek accountability for MBS's role in the brutal murder of American journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. On November 17, the State Department filed a statement of interest that "recognizes and allows the immunity of Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman as a sitting head of government of a foreign state." The statement was submitted in a civil case filed in October 2020 by both Hatice Cengiz, Khashoggi's fiancée, and Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), against MBS and more than 20 other alleged coconspirators, seeking to hold them liable for Khashoggi's murder. US intelligence in February 2021 revealed that MBS approved Khashoggi's murder. Biden's campaign promise to make Saudi authorities "pay the price" for Khashoggi's heinous murder has not been met. MBS will read US policy as a "green light" to continue committing abuses at home and abroad while enjoying generous US support.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
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## After khalifi election fiasco, protests continue, two executed by Saudis

The past week was dominated by the regime-controlled elections in Bahrain which, in the past, had been futile. The majority of the native Bahrainis boycotted the ballot boxes knowing that under the khalifi absolute dictatorship the elections would not lead to an elected government. Neither the prime minister nor any of the ministers are elected in this process. What would come out of this process is a chamber which has no power of initiating legislations, the right to question the ministers or monitor the prime minister. The "royal" court will appoint the government and would force the "elected" half of the consultative council (40 elected and 40 appointed) to rubber-stamp its laws and decisions. This chamber would also be considered a partner in the normalization of relations with the occupiers of Palestine. The whole election process is flawed and has no resemblance to the democratic processes in other countries. Last week British

MPs issued an Early Day Motion (EDM 553) condemning those elections and calling for the release of the political prisoners including those on death row, the ending of the khalifi tight grip on power and an end for the "political exclusion".

Both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International had issued statements condemning the khalifi elections. The vast majority of the natives decided to boycott this futile show exercise and have thus denied the dictator and his son the pleasure of boasting of their "democracy" to the outside world. It was a fiasco of the regime's own making and is unlikely to impact the normal course of anti-regime activism that has plagued the country since the 14th February Revolution 2011.

Yesterday political detainee and religious scholar Sheikh Abdul Hadi Al Mokhowdar started hunger strike to protest ill-treatment. He was abused by one of the prison torturers. This jailer performed the

duties of the judge and the executioner and passed his own verdict on this highly-respected scholar who has been behind bars for almost 12 years. He called him a "criminal", a term that is abusive and totally inappropriate to be said about a pious and highly moral religious figure. People who shared cells with him at the khalifi torture centres spoke highly of Sheikh Al Mokhowdar as a scholar, teacher and moral person.

Meanwhile, Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace has completed 485 days on hunger strike and his health is deteriorating. He lost much of his weight and is suffering various ailments and loneliness in his solitary confinement. For more than a year both himself and Mr Hassan Mushaima have been kept at Kanoo health clinic which is not attended by anyone else. The two senior opposition figures have not met since their transfer from Jau Prison although they are at the same prison facility.

## EDM by MPs reject Bahrain elections, Saudis issue more death sentences

The international and internal disgust at the khalifi pseudo-elections has rendered them null and void. In addition to the massive boycott of those elections by the Bahraini people, UK Members of Parliament have tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) damning this futile and meaningless exercise. It is a timely move to unmask the reality of the dictators who are using pseudo-democracy as a weapon against the people. The EDM considers them “sham elections” and renews calls for the immediate and unconditional release of native Bahraini political prisoner. It “contends that Bahrain’s parliament lacks the legislative power to effectively scrutinise government Ministers or officials; fears that Bahrain’s elections will lack legitimacy and make a mockery of democratic principles, calls upon Bahrain to release opposition leaders, all political prisoners and death row inmates highlighted in the recent report by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy and Human Rights Watch ahead of elections; and calls on the Government not to recognize the outcome of these elections and to urge Bahrain to release all opposition figures immediately and unconditionally and repeal its repressive political isolation law.”

In a serious blow to the khalifi regime, the Human Rights Council (HRC) has issued 257 recommendations by 82 countries participating in the discussion on the Universal Periodic Review of Bahrain’s human rights. These recommendations are for the Government of Bahrain to implement to improve its dismal record on human rights. Despite the total mobilization of all available resources to deceive the HRC and the world, they were

damned even by their own friends. In addition to the US delegation, both Kuwait and Oman have urged the khalifis to take steps to improve their records. The khalifis must now raise the white flag as their efforts on the human rights fronts have failed to deceive the world. The Bahraini opposition believes a fundamental political change is necessary to guarantee respect of human rights. Both the Pope and the HRC are now demanding the repeal of the capital punishment, the release of political prisoners, an end to the institutionalised discrimination and the protection of the general freedoms especially free speech, the rights of assembly and protest.

On Thursday 3rd November, Pope Francis urged Bahrain authorities on to renounce the death penalty and ensure basic human rights are guaranteed for all citizens as he arrived in Bahrain that has been accused by rights groups of systematic discrimination against the majority of the people. His main speech in the presence of the dictator and his son was a serious blow to their prestige. With Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa by his side, the Pope also urged the Arab Gulf nation to ensure “safe and dignified” working conditions for its immigrant laborers, who have long faced abuse and exploitation in the island’s construction, oil extraction and domestic service industries.

On the eve of the Pope’s visit four more native Bahrainis from Karbabad Town were detained: Ali Saeed Jassim, Mohammad Rashid Ahmad, Mohammad Jaffar Abdulla and Sayed Adnan Majid Al Khabbaz. Two native Bahrainis have also been detained recently. Hussein Ali Matar and Hassan Fadel Al-Bahar joined a growing list of individuals detained by Manama’s security services during the latest

round of raids. Prison authorities at the notorious Jau Prison (Bloc 20) have punished three protesters with solitary confinement. They participated with other inmates in a protest against the dire health conditions, ill-treatment and rising prices of phone calls.

Saudi Arabia has imprisoned one of its royals for 30 years for phone conversations he had as a student in Boston, according to court documents obtained by the Associated Press. The FBI says Saudi Arabia is spying on and striking out at Saudis on U.S. soil. The victim is identified as Ahmed Al Daghaam. Saudi authorities plan to execute eight teenagers from the kingdom’s Shia-populated Qatif region in Eastern Province. They named the teenagers as Abdullah al-Howaiti, Abdullah al-Derazi, Ali al-Sabiti, Hasan Zaki al-Faraj, Jalal Al Labad, Mahdi al-Mohsen, Jawad Qariris and Yousef al-Manasif. The activists have mounted a campaign under the Arabic hashtag “Stop the Slaughter” to demand the abolition of death penalties handed down to minors. The activists pointed out that the General Prosecutor’s Office has sentenced Manasif, and at least five others, including a teenager named Sajjad Al Yassin, to death for apostasy – abandoning their Muslim faith, according to trial documents

The 20-year-old son of exiled Saudi activist, Abdulhakim al-Dukhail has been arrested from his class at the university. Abdulhakim’s father, the former deputy finance minister Abdulaziz al-Dukhail, was recently detained for more than a year over a tweet marking the death of a prominent reformer. Abdulhakim campaigned for his father’s release from exile – and now has to do the same for his son.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
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Last week the khalifi regimes said that hackers had targeted government websites amid the regime’s election. The Interior Ministry did not identify the websites targeted, but the country’s state-run Bahrain News Agency could not be reached online. Screenshots taken by internet users showed a picture after the hack claiming it was carried out by a previously unknown account called Al-Toufan, or “The Flood” in Arabic. Social media accounts associated with Al-Toufan said the group targeted the parliament’s website “due to the persecution carried out by the Bahraini authorities, and in implementation of the popular will to boycott the sham elections.”

On 10th November Saudi authorities executed two Pakistani nationals for alleged drug-related crimes, the first such executions since the Human Rights Commission announced a moratorium on the use of the death penalty for drug-related

crimes in January 2021. The two victims were executed after a highly-flawed trial.

This week Abdullah Jelani (30), a Saudi citizen, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and a travel ban for ten years by the Specialized Criminal Court in (SCC). This is the latest case of a rights activist being sentenced to a long-term prison sentence over social media posts on issues such as unemployment, freedom of speech, and women’s rights. UK-based human rights group ALQST stated that despite Jelani’s peaceful activism he was sen-

tenced last month by the SCC which focuses on terrorism cases. He graduated from West Chester University of Pennsylvania, USA and had been vocal on Twitter through an anonymous account. He was arrested in May 2021 on his return to Saudi Arabia from US. On 13th November the wife of Mohammad Fahd Al Qahtani tweeted that her jailed husband had not contacted her for three weeks. She said this is the longest period without contact since he had been detained ten years ago. Her contacts with the prison officials

did not establish the reason for denying him the right to speak to his wife.

Yesterday Indonesian activists and human rights campaigners took to the streets to protest against the visit by Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) for the G20 summit in Bali. MBS is not welcome in #G20Indonesia they chanted.

**Bahrain Freedom Movement**  
16th November 2022



## Bahrain: Leading rights defender faces fresh charges over prison pro-

*Charges against Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja, linked to his protests against conditions in Jau Prison, range from insulting Israel to breaking a plastic chair*

16 November 2022

One of Bahrain's most prominent human rights defenders who is already serving a life sentence faces a series of fresh charges over his protests from prison, his family and rights groups have reported.

Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja, 61, who was

imprisoned in 2011 after leading peaceful protests calling for fundamental freedoms in the kingdom, will be tried on Wednesday over the first of at least three new charges.

Al-Khawaja has told his family that each of the charges is linked to his protests over conditions in Jau Prison where he has been held for nearly 12 years.

The hearing on Wednesday will focus on charges that Al-Khawaja allegedly broke a plastic chair a year ago when he was denied the right to call his daughters from prison.

"My father is yet again facing multiple charges for the exact same reasons - that he insists on speaking up in the face of injustice," Al-Khawaja's daughter, Maryam Al-Khawaja, said on Wednesday.

The new legal cases come, she said, at a time when there have been fresh calls internationally for the immediate release of her father, including as a result of health issues he has after he was tortured by security forces in 2011.

"The Bahrain regime responds by doubling down on and worsening their reprisals rather than heeding the calls for his release," she said.

The charges include incitement to overthrow the government and insulting a foreign country - Israel - after he chanted against Bahrain's normalisation deal.

Al-Khawaja told his family that he anticipates a fourth charge to be levelled at him related to his protest over the assault against Sheikh Abduljalil al-Miqdad, a leading Shia cleric who is also imprisoned, in September.

The Bahraini embassy in London did not immediately respond to MEE's request for comment.

'Dangerous precedent'

Rights groups say they believe the charges are an attempt to intimidate Al-Khawaja and other prisoners who speak up from jail.

"Bahraini authorities are using this slew of new charges against Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja to punish and silence him for speaking out against his unjust imprisonment," said Joey Shea, Middle East and North Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Sayed Ahmed Al Wadaei, director at the UK-based Bahraini Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), said the charges set a dangerous precedent.

"Bahrain's allies in the US and UK must publicly condemn this judicial harassment, call for the charges to be dropped and for Al-Khawaja's immediate and unconditional release," he said.

Al-Khawaja is scheduled to go to court next week on charges that he insulted Israel. Observers say it would be the first time an inmate has faced a court hearing in Bahrain over a peaceful protest in prison since the kingdom normalised relations with Israel in 2020.

## Prince Andrew 'makes secret visit to Middle East

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Prince Andrew has visited Bahrain in secret amid claims he is eyeing an unofficial role as intermediary between the West and Gulf states in the energy crisis, it's been reported. Picture: Alamy

By Chris Samuel

Prince Andrew has visited Bahrain in secret amid claims he is eyeing an unofficial role as intermediary between the West and Gulf states in the energy crisis.

The Duke, reportedly flew out last week on the private jet of a billionaire Swiss contact to be pampered in all-expenses-paid luxury provided by friends in the Bahrain Royal Family, according to The Sun.

It was reported recently that the disgraced Duke has been eyeing up a return to public life through a trade role, though as he not a working royal any longer, the reason for the trip was not recorded in the Court Circular.

Sources have claimed Andrew "fancies his chances" of reprising his previous role as a government special representative for international trade and investment, and that he believes he could attempt to persuade Saudi Arabia to increase production of oil. Others said that the prince was on holiday as a "privately-funded" guest of honour, and there are also claims that the 62-year-old sees the Middle East region as a safe haven, and somewhere he could settle.

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Andrew quit the trade role over his links to paedophile Jeffrey Epstein, 66, through whom he met sex trafficking victim Virginia Giuffre.

The Duke had been accused of sexually abusing her but they reached a rumoured £10million out-of-court settlement in February.

The father-of-two has been a regular visitor to the Kingdom and it's known he's a fan of its championship-standard course, The Royal Golf Club.

An insider said of the royal's latest trip: "Prince Andrew no longer has a wide circle of friends but Royal Families do have a habit of sticking together.

"He's been close to the Bahraini Royal Family for many years and has always enjoyed his trips to Bahrain.

"There are people there who have been loyal to the Queen's son and have deep pockets."

Sayed Ahmed Al Wadaei, Director Of Advocacy at Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD), said the prince's relationship with the ruling family was "toxic and shameful".

He said: "For several years, he visited the country and met with Bahrain's police force, despite their record of violence, extreme interrogation tactics, and use of torture.

"Prince Andrew has also been pictured laughing with King Hamad in the same year he ratified the execution of three political prisoners whose confession was forced through torture.

"When Andrew's relationship with Epstein came to light, the first place he considered fleeing to in order to hide from public embarrassment was Bahrain.

"This reflects how deep his disgraceful relationship is with Bahrain's corrupt dictatorship."

A source said: "If Andrew is not wanted in the UK then he can have a home and new life in Bahrain."

Spokesmen for the Prince Andrew and King Charles did not want to comment.

