

BAHRAIN

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

The New Year in Bahrain: Hard struggle to achieve liberation

As the people of Bahrain welcomed the New Year, having ended a year with serious political troubles, their hopes were tamed by the outrageous policies of the khalifi regime. These policies, both internal and foreign are viewed by the people as catastrophic and are designed only to safeguard the political survival of a hated regime. These feelings are expressed daily by the people as they participate in anti-regime protests in various parts of the country. There were several serious failures of its policies that motivated the people to continue their strife. In addition to the large number of political prisoners whose rights are non-existent, the new khalifi-Israeli relations and alliance is causing deep anger among the people. This is in addition to the ongoing campaign of detentions and arrests of young Bahraini activists for trivial reasons and the associated anger of the families.

December has always been a month of political and security escalation by the regime. Last month was no different. The people marked two important anniversaries; that of the Martyrs Day on 17th December and the demise of Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri on 18th of the month. Both have been marked over the past 25 years with protests, demonstrations and various other forms of civil resistance. Demonstrations were held throughout the country to mark the 17th anniversary of the death of Sheikh Al Jamri, who led the popular uprising of the nineties. He was detained by the regime for five years, abused and humiliated. But he remained steadfast. When the regime imposed its constitution in 2002, Sheikh Al Jamri uttered his famous phrase: This is not the constitution or parliament that we fought for. That was enough to bring the dictator's political programme to a halt and end the khalifi dream of co-opting the native Bahraini people. As a result of the people's actions many people were held, thus adding more complications to an already muddled situation.

Then came the regime's pact with the Zionist regime. While the people escalated their anti-Israeli stands and activities, the khalifis rushed to normalise the relations with this entity that had been rejected by the Arab people and governments. That single act qualified the regime to be accused of betrayal of the central Arab cause;

that of Palestine. People poured into the Bahraini streets chanting anti-regime slogans and calling for an immediate and unconditional repeal of the khalifi-Israeli agreement. Instead of heeding the calls, the dictator went ahead with participating in another military pact. For the past two months shipping in the Bab Al Mandab Straits were seriously disrupted as the Yemenis rushed to support the people of Gaza who have been under constant Israeli bombardment. Several Israeli ships were attacked with missiles in an open Yemeni policy targeting the Israeli interests. The daily bombardment of the people of Gaza had incensed the Arab people, but the Yemeni people resorted to military action against the Israeli ships. Most shipping lanes remained safe, except the Israeli ships. It was a blatant act that angered the West, especially America. In December Washington proposed the forming of a special marine coalition. Ten countries initially signed up, most European countries.

Bahrain was the only Arab country to join the Alliance. The decision by the khalifi dictator to join the anti-Yemen bloc angered the native Bahraini people. They viewed the decision an ill-advised decision that would place the country in the firing line of the Yemenis. The people's stand is based on several facts: The first is that it exposed the country to Yemeni retaliation that could prove disastrous. Bahrain is no match to the Yemenis who withstood more than eight years of a military onslaught by an alliance of 14 countries including the US, UK and Saudi Arabia. Bahraini forces were defeated and at least one F-16 military aircraft was destroyed. The second is that no other Arab countries has joined the "Red Sea Alliance". Even Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates refused to join. The khalifi decision to join is seen as a ploy to get more Western support to the fledgling regime which is rejected by the people of Bahrain. Third, the new military alliance has failed to make headway. Despite the American pressure, those European countries that joined have announced they were withdrawing. It was dead even before it started. It was a failure from the start. Bahrainis are aware of this and have mocked the regime of its ill-fated decision. Cartoons were drawn to belittle the khalifi

dictators while political statements by the withdrawing members have proven the proposed project as a failure from the start. The khalifi dictator was incensed by the negative remarks especially by Bahraini commentators.

As a consequence, the khalifi regime has become irrational in dealing with the dissenting voices and negative remarks. Instead of attempting to placate the criticism with rational arguments and political approach, it, once again, resorted to its old policies of revenge from those who criticised the decision. A prominent liberal thinker and activist, Ibrahim Sharif was swiftly detained after he published one tweet, condemning the khalifi decision to join the military alliance. The arrest has shocked many observers and the people made it clear that they would not abandon their colleague to his fate. More protests were thus held as an international campaign to save Ibrahim Sharif from the khalifi executioners. The regime would not hesitate to escalate the revenge from this national figure who is respected both inside and outside the country. He did not commit a crime punishable by law. He only expressed his opinion in a civilised way, in line with what thousands of Bahrainis believe. The human rights bodies inside and outside the country have condemned the khalifi dictator for his repressive policies and lack of wisdom or modern political thought.

Bahrain has thus welcomed the New Year in a shroud of sadness and sorrow as the people become more illusioned with their vicious dictators who could not see eye-to-eye with the people they are ruling. The supporters of the regime in both Washington and London are both illusioned. How could the khalifis get out of their mind in such horrible way? Why did they decide to go against the will of most of the Arab leaders? They will soon find that their adventure is a serious failure that could not be sustained in the long run. The Bahrainis will continue their struggle until the values of democracy, self-determination and free choice are protected. Without this, the political and polarised views in this small country are likely to cause political and ideological strife that could spill over to the neighbouring countries.

Revolt in Bahrain's juvenile prison, concerns for 3 Saudis on death row

The khalifi security forces have detained native Bahraini Mahdi Sadiq Al Nayem from Muharraq in unexplained circumstances. He was transferred to the Dry Dock Prison. His detention has been extended by 30 days for supporting Palestine. Another Bahraini youth, Yousuf Ahmed, was also detained. On 20th December regime's courts issued a six-month prison sentence against political prisoner, Hussain, Jawad Al Juffairi, 16 (from Sitra). He was detained on 15th December and accused of opposing the khalifi dictatorship. Another Bahraini youth, Reda Al Uraibi was also given six months jail sentence.

The revenge policies by the khalifi regime have intensified with detention and abuse of young natives. On 20th December Mohammed Abbas (from Aali Town) was arrested as he crossed the causeway to Saudi Arabia. Then they extended his detention for seven more days. Political prisoner, Sayed Mohammed Majed Adnan Nasser Hashim, 19 (from BuQuwwa Town) was arrested on 22nd August in a raid on his home by regime's militia. On 24th December his detention was extended by 30 more days. On 26th December the regime's prosecutors extended the detention of three native Bahrainis. Mohammed Hani Mohammed, 2 (from Al Zahra city), Hussain Abd Ali Marhoon, 18 (from Malikiyah) and Hussain Al Jaziri, 19 (from Sitra). They were given 15 more days in detention for supporting Palestine. On 26th December the regime's prosecutors extended the detention of Mohammed Abdul Hadi Al Sakran (from Samaheej Town) for another 15 days for supporting Palestine and taking part in a pro-Palestine protest near the Bahrain International airport. On 20th December regime's courts extended the detention of two native Bahraini political prisoners by 60 days. Ahmed Khalifa Al Basri, 17 and Mohammed Yousuf Al Tamer, 16, from Sitra had been arrested on trumped up charges.

More than 200 prominent nationals have signed a petition calling on the dictator to release the prominent nationalist figure Ibrahim Sharif. He was detained more than a week ago for criticising khalifi decision to join the Red Sea Alliance against the people of Yemen. On 22nd December a protest was held at Adliya District of Manama calling for khalifi withdrawal from the notorious alliance and the release of Mr Sharif. Six national political societies have also signed a statement calling for his release. International human rights bodies have condemned his arrest. Human Rights First issued a damning statement about the case.

Eight jailed Bahraini opposition and religious leaders condemned their country's inclusion in a US-led Red Sea naval coalition and called on Manama to sever ties with Israel. A joint statement signed by the prisoners of conscience, including Sheikh Ali Salman, Hassan Mushaima, Abdul Wahab Hussain, Abdul Jalil Al Singace and Abdulhadi Al-Khawajah, describes the recently assembled multinational coalition as an attempt by "America to protect Israeli shipping lines." It added: "We call on the [Manama] regime to heed the demands of the Bahraini people from all factions and withdraw from this coalition, sever relations with the Zionist entity, and close [the Israeli] embassy in Bahrain," reads the statement from the Bahraini political prisoners. The statement also calls for the release of a fellow opposition figure, Ibrahim Sharif.

Bahraini activists gathered to mark nine years since the arrest of the country's opposition leader Sheikh Ali Salman and to call for his release. He was arrested on 24th December 2014. The gathering was also used to show support for the Palestinians in Gaza.

On Sunday 24th December the young inmates at the Dry Dock prison started a protest to call for improvement of their well-being. They went on hunger strike calling for better treatment, improved food quality, allowing them to get clothes from their families and allowing better family visits. They are also calling for general repairs in the prison buildings, including the water heating system especially in winter.

Serious concerns are growing for the lives of three Saudi nationals falsely accused and condemned to death by the regime courts. On 23rd January 2023 Saudi Arabia's Specialised Criminal Court of Appeal (SCC) upheld death sentences against three members of the Huwaitat tribe. Shadi Ibrahim and Atallah al-Huwaiti in relation to their peaceful opposition to forces evictions and residents displacement for the state-led Neom megacity project. This ruling is subject to appeal in the Supreme Court: if the Supreme Court also upholds their sentences the three men will be at risk of imminent execution.

There has been a significant development in the Belgian court case related to crimes against humanity committed by Saudi officials against Human Rights Defenders, including Loujain al-Hathloul. The Brussels's court of appeal has decided to make a referral to the European Union Court of Justice (CJEU) procedure. In the Court of Justice, each case is assigned 1 judge (the "judge-rapporteur") and 1 advocate general. Cases are processed in 2 stages: Written stage. The parties give written statements to the Court - and observations can also be submitted by national authorities, EU institutions and sometimes private individuals.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
27th December 2023

Bahrain's Martyrs Day marked, Saudi woman forcibly disappeared

The khalifi dictatorship has arrested Ibrahim Sharif, the outspoken national political figure for opposing the khalifi participation in the new military alliance to defend Israel. Mr Sharif tweeted against this alliance in line with the national mood that supports Palestine and condemns the Zionist aggression on the Palestinians. As the pro-Palestine protests continue in various parts of Bahrain the regime's forces have also escalated their repression and detentions. On 15th December three native Bahraini youths were arrested after a peaceful protest in Sitra had been attacked. Mohammed Yousuf Al Tamer, 17, Hussain Jawad, 16 and Ahmed Khalifa Al Basri, 17 were snatched by the khalifi jailers. On 18th December native youth, Mohammed Abdul Hassan from Al-Ne'aim was detained in a raid on his home in the town of Saar. He had been sentenced for five years in absentia for his political views. At least four youths were also arrested in the town of Duraz. The 17-year-old grandson of Bah-

rain's highest Shiite religious authority Sheikh Isa Qassim had his detention extended by at least 30 days. Mahdi Nasser Ahmad was arrested for taking part in pro-Palestine protests and has been in jail since November 2. Two days later, the khalifi prosecutors extended the detention of Murtaदा Rassel Al Samahiji, 18, from Malikiya town for 15 more days.

The Martyrs Day of Bahrain (17th December) was marked with passion. People took part in countrywide protests calling for an end to the policy of impunity that has protected the killers of the Bahraini youths for the past half a century. Pictures of the martyrs were held by protesters amid calls for a fundamental political change that will lead to upholding justice and punish killers and torturers. Demonstrations were held in Sanabis, Adliya, AIDair, Duraz and other places. On Thursday 14th December the Bahraini opposition in UK held a seminar and Press Conference which was addressed by MPs and activists. The significance of

the Martyrs Day was highlighted. On Friday night (15th December) Bahraini activists held a vigil outside the khalifi embassy in Belgravia, holding candles and banners with the names and pictures of some of the martyrs.

The Bahraini National Initiative Against Normalisation issued a statement condemning the dubious alliances that are created to serve the interests of the Zionist enemy. The campaign is led by the political and civil society institutions. The statement called for Bahrain not to become part of such alliances which places national interests at risk. It came after the visit by the American secretary of state, Lloyd Austin, to Bahrain to prop up support for a new alliance that was shunned by other Gulf and Arab states. It aims at protecting the Israeli ships sailing in the Red Sea through Bab Al Mandab Straits. Recently some cargo ships ferrying goods to Israel were targeted by the Yemenis who support the Palestinians.

More pro-Palestine Bahrainis detained, FCDO concerned about Saudi HR

The International Day of Human Rights on 10th December was marked by Bahrainis in several ways. Protests were held, statements issued and discussions were undertaken. Bahrainis have special affinity to this day as their suffering continues under the khalifi hereditary dictatorship and their rights systematically violated. They are also preparing for the Martyrs Day on 17th December with protests and calls for regime change. They view the ruling khalifi family as responsible for the killing of more than 200 natives through various means: torture, execution and the use of live ammunition against peaceful protesters. The political prisoners have declared a programme of activities in their cells for one full week to commemorate the martyrs (10-17th December). It includes art works, poetry and intellectual speeches. Following the recent verdict of the European Court in the case of Ali Al Shuwaikh (who had been handed by the Dutch government in October 2018) the khalifi authorities have placed him in political isolation. He has also been deprived of the brief daily outing in the sun and banned from calling his family. The court has imposed a fine of 50,000 Euros on The Dutch government to be paid to Al-Shuwaikh for being unlawfully handed to Bahrain where he was severely tortured and is now serving a life sentence. The Court accused the Dutch authorities of carelessness when they took the decision and did not conduct proper due diligence.

On Monday 11th December four natives were detained by the khalifi forces: Mohammed Hassan Saleh, Mohammed

Sadiq Al-Fardan, Hassan Mohammed Atiya and Abdullah Hassan Abu Hameed. On Thursday 7th December regime forces arrested native Bahraini youth, Hussain Abdul Zahra (from Daih) after he had been summoned for interrogation. On Tuesday 12th December, Bahraini youth Wahab Nasser Wahab (from Al-Malikiyah town) was arrested on the Bahrain-Saudi causeway. On Sunday 10th December native Bahraini youth, Mohammed Amir Al Hubaishi (from Al Zahra city) was detained after he was summoned for interrogation.

Two other Bahraini youths were also detained for undisclosed reasons. Hussein Abdel-Zahra and Muhammad Amir Al-Hubaishi were taken into custody after being summoned for questioning.

On Monday 11th December regime prosecutors extended the detention of three Bahrainis for 15 more days: Hussain Abd Ali Marhoon, Mohammed Hadi Abu Naseeb and Hussain Al Jaziri. They were detained on 17th November. Mahdi Nasser Ahmed Nasser has also had his detention extended by 30 more days for taking part in a pro-Palestine protest in Sanabis town. He had been arrested on 2nd November.

Imprisoned Bahraini opposition leader's health has been steadily deteriorating, warn family and activists. Hassan Mushaima, 75, has been told he has kidney damage and may need dialysis soon, but authorities won't disclose further details about the extent of damage to his kidneys. Political prisoner Ayyoub Adel Ahmed has been suffering various ailments for some time but has not received real treatment. He urinates blood with severe stomach pains. When he was eventually taken to the hospital he was admitted to the acute unit for 21

days. But the delay led to kidney failure and other complications.

In an open letter, 16 human rights organisations have made an urgent plea to Bahraini authorities to release opposition leader Hassan Mushaima. Detained since 2011, he requires urgent medical treatment. The letter said: As Mr. Mushaima's health deteriorates, it is now more imperative that he be released immediately and unconditionally. In the meantime, he should be provided with adequate medical treatment. Among the signatories are: Amnesty International, Article 19 and CIVICUS.

Andy Slaughter, Labour MP asked the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what representations he has made to his Saudi counterpart on the death sentences passed on Abdullah al-Derazi. The reply came in a written format saying: Saudi Arabia remains a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Human Rights Priority Country, in part because of the continued use of the death penalty. We continue to monitor the cases of the young men, including Abdullah al-Derazi, who allegedly committed their crimes as minors and are at risk of execution. The Minister for the Middle East and Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon regularly raises these cases, including Abdullah al-Derazi with the Saudi authorities as a priority.

The health condition of the Saudi cleric Sheikh Saleh Al-Shami has deteriorated again. The prison administration is refusing to transfer him to the hospital for the necessary treatment and has also prevented him from receiving family visits.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
12th December 2023

Bahraini political prisoner Ayoub Adel Ahmed had to spend 21 days in intensive care because the authorities of the notorious Jau Prison had delayed his access to desperately needed medical treatment. According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, the 31-year-old was urinating blood and suffering from severe abdominal pain when he requested treatment. Prison authorities ignored his appeals for two days. When he was finally taken to the hospital, he came close to developing kidney failure and other health complications.

Human rights observers have continued their interests in Bahrain. Niku Jafarnia, Yemen and Bahrain researcher at Human Rights Watch tweeted: Bahraini authorities continue to hold human rights defender Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, as well as Hassan Mushaima, a 75-year-old who has been held since 2011 for his political activism, despite alarming worsening health. Both should be released immediately. Amnesty Bahrain also tweeted: Bahrain denied Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja proper healthcare for most of 2023, canceling

medical appointments or making him wait for hours inside an unventilated truck partition to attend. With proper care he might have avoided medical emergencies, including this one.

Bahraini political prisoner Muhammad Al-Singace has been on hunger strike for the last three months and is suffering from dangerously low blood sugar. In November, he was taken to the Jau Prison clinic following a sharp drop in blood pressure and diabetes complications. The activist, who spent the last decade in prison on false charges is demanding a retrial and an investigation of his torture. Political prisoner Jassim Khalil Al-Saffar has also launched hunger strike to protest the denial of medical treatment. Al-Saffar, who suffers from a chronic skin disease and other health complications is denied proper treatment.

Seven years ago, Saudi Arabia's authorities arrested human rights activist Essa al-Nukheifi for his peaceful human rights work. His six-year sentence expired more than one year ago. Yet, instead of being released,

he has been forcibly disappeared since 15 October 2022.

Yesterday The European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESOHR) raised the case of the disappeared Saudi woman, Aisa Al Nejaibani. She had criticised the role of the care homes in the country. Since July 2019 Al Nejaibani has been banned from leaving the Orphan House in Qassem, arrested and disappeared. Her case has exposed the false pretensions of the Saudi regime about empowering women.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
20th December 2023



Urgent medical care needed for Mushaima

In an open letter, 16 human rights organisations have made an urgent plea to Bahraini authorities to release opposition leader Hassan Mushaima. Detained since 2011, he requires urgent medical treatment.

We, the undersigned, are writing to you urgently regarding Mr. Hassan Mushaima, a 75-year-old Bahraini political activist who is imprisoned for exercising his right to freedom of association and expression. Mr. Mushaima is currently serving a life sentence in Bahrain and his family fears that he is nearing end-stage kidney failure. He requires urgent medical treatment that he is currently not receiving, despite being held at Kanoo Health Center, a medical facility. Additionally, Mr. Mushaima has been denied access to his medical records after he learned that he has severe kidney damage. In light of the serious threat to Mr. Mushaima's health and wellbeing, we respectfully urge you to secure his immediate and unconditional release, and, in the meantime, ensure he receives proper medical care and access to his medical records.

Serious health decline

On 30 November 2023, Mr. Mushaima's doctor, working for the Ministry of Health at Kanoo Health Center, indicated that his kidneys are significantly damaged and that he might soon need dialysis. According to his family, when Mr. Mushaima insisted on knowing the details of the damage, the doctor told him that they could not disclose this information without permission from the Interior Ministry.

His family is highly concerned about his declining health and the lack of information he has been provided about his diagnosis and health crisis.

This concern is heightened by the fact that Mr. Mushaima also has multiple chronic medical conditions, including gout, diabetes, and fluctuating blood pressure. Despite these serious medical conditions, he has faced systematic medical negligence during detention

and authorities have prevented him from accessing adequate treatment for years.

Most recently, he was forced to wait for months to be seen by a nephrologist, was denied access to a dentist for tooth pain, and was also denied treatment for hearing loss in his right ear. He has also not been referred to a neurologist to check tremors in his hands. Mr. Mushaima is in remission from lymphoma cancer, but over the last two years, prison authorities have denied him access to the regular cancer screenings and other specialized medical care that he requires.

Alarming, on 15 November 2023, Mr. Mushaima's diabetes medications were changed due to the adverse effects on his kidneys, and his new medications are causing him to have unstable blood sugar levels, according to his doctor. In a telephone call on 6 December 2023, Mr. Mushaima told the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy that despite his unstable blood sugar levels, he has not been provided with an insulin pump or another medical device to regulate his insulin levels. Mr. Mushaima and his family are deeply concerned about his worsening health as a result of authorities' denial of needed medical care.

Mr. Mushaima was imprisoned solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and he should never have been behind bars. As Mr. Mushaima's health deteriorates, it is now more imperative that he be released immediately and unconditionally. In the meantime, he should be provided with adequate medical treatment.

Sincerely,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
Amnesty International

ARTICLE 19

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)

CIVICUS

Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)

European Centre for human rights and Democracy (ECDHR)

FairSquare

Freedom House
Human Rights First
Human Rights Watch

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)

REDRESS

The Freedom Initiative

The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights

Bahrain detains an opposition figure

The Gulf kingdom of Bahrain has detained a prominent opposition figure who criticized the government for joining an international maritime task force set up to deter attacks on ships by Yemen's Houthi militia. Ebrahim Sharif, a leftist activist and a former leader of Bahrain's National Democratic Action Society, an opposition party disbanded by the government, was detained on Wednesday, his lawyer said.

His arrest came amid simmering discontent in Bahrain over the authoritarian government's diplomatic ties with Israel, established in 2020 in an American-brokered deal called the Abraham Accords. His detainment also underscored the challenges that American-allied Arab rulers have been facing as they continue to deal with widespread anger toward Israel and the United States.

The Houthis, an Iran-backed militia that rules much of northern Yemen, say their recent missile and drone attacks on ships in the Red Sea are an attempt to force Israel to end its bombardment of Gaza and allow the free flow of food and medical aid into the enclave. Their attacks have pushed shipping companies to reroute their vessels away from the Red Sea, a key choke point for global trade.

Some of the ships they targeted have no clear connection to Israel, and they have caused limited damage. The militia's campaign has nonetheless increased its popularity around the region.

Mr. Sharif's arrest stemmed from social media posts in which he wrote that Bahrain's "unelected government" had made its decision "without any consideration for the stance of the Bahraini people," according to his lawyer, Sami Sayadi.

"It's shameful for our foreign policy and our stances toward war and peace and international alliances to be tied to what America wants," Mr. Sharif said. He expressed gratitude to "our brothers in Yemen."

The country, where a Sunni Muslim royal family rules over a majority-Shiite population, crushed an Arab Spring uprising in 2011 with the help of neighboring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Sharif has been jailed multiple times, including from 2011 to 2015.

Soon after Bahrain's participation in the task force was announced, Bahrainis called for a protest to be held on Friday. Al-Wefaq, a leading opposition party officially disbanded by the government, denounced the government's decision, saying it made Bahrain "a direct partner in the shedding of Palestinian blood." Mr. Sharif was detained simply for "exercising his right to freedom of peaceful expression," said Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, advocacy director at the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, a human rights organization based in London. "The U.S. government is directly implicated in his arrest as they choose to partner with an abusive ally," Mr. Alwadaei said. "We urge them to publicly call for his immediate and unconditional release."

— Vivian Nereim reporting from Riyadh,

