

BAHRAIN

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

Revolution anniversary: The struggle for freedom continues

Fourteen years ago the Bahraini Revolution erupted to challenge the khalifi regime that had ruled the country since 1783. The tribal rule had gradually become one of the most vicious dictatorships in the region. The ruler assumes absolute powers, sending scores to the gallows for opposing his tribal rule. Many uprisings had happened in the past by the natives who never accepted the khalifi domination. All were repressed mercilessly often with the help of outside powers. The British had defended the tribal rule for two centuries and are still poised to defend it at all costs. They would have done some justice to themselves and the human race if they exercised some pressure on the regime to reform itself and become less repressive. But this never happened. Instead the dictator had always found real support from the American and British forces stationed in the country. This state of affairs is not sustainable. Oppression cannot become the norm in today's society; it defies logic, political survival or morality.

When the Arab people staged their protests 14 years ago they were aspiring to achieve a real change in their countries that would lead to democracy and respect of human rights. They did not expect the West to take such a hostile attitude towards the issue of democratic transformation in the Arab world. It has always been the case that the West views this as a red line.

There is a widely-held Western belief that democratisation would lead to policy shift that does not favour Israeli occupation. Elected regimes will be obliged to take the people's mood and attitudes into account. The Arab people have always supported the Palestinians in their struggle against the Israeli occupation. But un-elected dictators depend on the West for their survival and have therefore to embrace the Western policies in the Middle East. These policies support Israel and are not friendly towards the Palestinians. Over four years ago the khalifi dictator took serious steps to please the West. It decided to abandon the Palestinian cause and establish relations with the occupiers of Palestine. This is the price it had to pay to secure its position in an environment that is hostile to dictatorship. Hamad Al Khalifa now thinks that his position is secured. Israel was in-

strumental in standing against the Arab Spring to ensure that democracy may not be established in the region. Almost all the Arab Spring revolutions were thwarted by the counter-Revolution forces. The Bahraini regime felt secure enough to undertake embolden stands such as the abandoning of the Palestinian cause and continuing its internal repression.

It is now clear that all Arab Revolutions were targeted by the counter-Revolution forces. Yet the general situation in the Arab countries has remained tense. The recent overthrow of the Assad's regime in Syria is significant and is being watched by the outside powers. It may be argued that the regime was brought down because it was not liked by the West which has always been hostile to what is termed "the axis of resistance" which includes Syria, Iran and other political groups. The Israelis had attacked almost all of these elements. Syria was totally de-militarised during the brief "revolution" in December. Iran was also attacked along with Hezbollah and Hamas. The Israelis want to obliterate those who are opposed to the occupation. The new regime in Syria now clearly says that it does not want to act against Israel, even after the occupation of vast areas in the Golan Heights.

The change in Syria cannot be dissociated from the inevitability that all dictatorial regimes will have their wings clipped by the rising people's power. There is a limit to the Western support of dictators. At the end those dictators will be governed by the natural law that dictators cannot remain forever and that the people's wrath will eventually catch up with them. The Bahraini regime may have survived the first punch by the people's revolution 14 years ago, but it has not secured the trust of the people. If it did, it would have freed the leaders of the people who have languished in its jails for 14 years. It would also have ceased the ongoing political detentions. Under-aged children have been detained in recent weeks. Some of them have been charged with "serious" offences such as attending peaceful marches and rallies. Targeting children is not a winning tactic. It can only lead to more protests and further accusations of human rights violations.

On its 14th anniversary the Bahraini Revolution appears to have defied all expectations by remaining a powerful source of instability to the tribal rulers. This is despite several facts. The first is the military intervention by the Saudi and Emirati forces one month after the Revolution had erupted. Both armies failed to subdue the Revolution, and, instead, led to country-wide revulsion and anger that has continued until now. The regime became indebted to those foreign armies for its survival and has pain heavily with its sovereignty. The second is the failure of the Western powers which had all along supported the khalifi dictatorship. These powers, mainly USA and UK, stand accused of white-washing the khalifi black dictatorship and the abandonment of the pro-democracy activists. They have not yet refrained from their support of one of the most horrific regimes in the Middle East. The fourth is that the people's Revolution has not subsided over the years. On the contrary, it has grown in size and the general outlook for a future all-out revolution is well-placed. Protests have continued on daily basis to demand an end to the khalifi dictatorship, the drafting of a new constitution and the transformation of the government from a dictatorship to a democracy. There are only limited options for both the government of Bahrain and the opposition. Both have limitations on their ability to manoeuvre, compromise or embrace the total obliteration of the other side. Bahrainis have long dreamt of a new system of government based on modern notions such as pluralism, power-sharing and popular consensus. They have rejected tribal dictatorship that consolidated the power in the hands of the few "sheikhs" who act with impunity and believe in power by inheritance. The present dictator has been the worst among the khalifi rulers in living memory. His hands are stained with the blood of hundreds of Bahrainis. He was instrumental in the demolition of 40 mosques and religious buildings. He is still residing over a regime that punishes people for their opinion and jails thousands, including children, for expressing their views openly and demanding a democratic transformation. It is time for him to go.

Escalation of detentions in Bahrain and executions in Saudi Arabia

On 27th January regime's courts sentenced four native Bahrainis from Sanabis town to three months in jail. Ali Reda Jaffar, 17, Sayed Ahmad Al Falla, 16 Mohammed Moosa, 16 and Reda Marhoon, 17 were convicted of taking part in a peaceful protest. On 2nd December the court had imposed a two-month jail sentence on the first three of the group. The sudden jump in the detention of under-aged boys indicate the lack of passion and mercy in the hearts of the ruler and his clique. At no time did they seriously take the public grievances seriously. Instead of listening to the people and introducing serious political reforms, the regime is intent on persecuting Bahrainis.

The pace of political arrests has escalated since the beginning of the New Year. The latest arrests include: Abdulla Hussain and Hussain Ahmed from Sanabis town, Hussain Al Qaidoom from Sqayya town, Salman Abdul Razzaq and his brother Mohammed from Maqaba town, Ali Reda, Ali Ahmed and Ahmed Abdul Latif. They were all summoned by the CID and detained. Regime forces have also arrested native Bahraini youth Ibrahim Adel Ibrahim (from Al Ma'aamir town) after he was given a three months prison sentence. He was accused of taking part in a peaceful protest calling for political rights.

Political prisoner Ali Dawood has been transferred to an isolation cell following an argument with one of the prison guards at Jau Prison. This is part of a pattern used by the regime to increase the psychological pressure on the political activists in total disregard to their rights.

On Monday 27th January regime's court adjourned the trial of a political prisoner as a means of intensifying the pressure on native Bahrainis. Jassim Mohammed Salem

(from Abu Quwwa town) was detained after being summoned by the CID on 13th October 2024. He was accused of taking part in a peaceful protest calling for political rights. His new trial will be on 3rd February.

On Thursday 23rd January the detention of two political prisoners was extended. Hassan Jaffar Masood and Abdulla Al Mo'athen (from Samheej town) had their detention extended by two more weeks. They were arrested on 17th January.

The regime's officers at Bloc 5 of Jau Prison have punished the political detainees for performing their religious duties. When they went out to the courtyard for their daily outing on Monday they sat together to mourn the martyrdom of the 7th Shia Muslims, Imam Musa ibn Jaffar who died of poison in 183 AH (12th August 799AD). They were handcuffed as they did their religious duty. They remained standing with their hands in chains as they performed the rituals. When they returned to their cells 45 minutes later, they were told that they would not be allowed to contact their families or go out to the courtyard as a punishment.

The suffering of the political prisoners has been spiralling as more restrictions are imposed in four of the prison blocs. Political prisoners concentrated in four buildings (1, 2, 3, and 5) of the notorious Jau Prison continue to endure harsh conditions. They face increasing harassment during their daily outing and stiff retributions when they perform their religious duties. Some prisoners were transferred to isolation cells. Health conditions are also deteriorating. Skin diseases are spreading as health care is becoming more restricted. Prisoners were allowed to purchase some

items (milk, dates, soap, and shampoo) from the canteen (prison store) for the first time since the strike ended. The canteen prices are sky-high.

The Saudi authorities have announced the execution of seven citizens in Mecca, accused of drug trafficking. The victims are: Mabkhoot bin Mubarak AlSay'ari, Mabkhoot bin Abdulla Al Say'ari, Mane' bin Hamad AlYami, Mohammed bin Mohammed Al Ma'roof AlSay'ari, Qayed bin Abdulla AlKarbi, Mohammed bin Murbarak AlSay'ari and Salem bin Qad'aan AlSay'ari were accused of drug trafficking. They were sentenced to death and were beheaded on Sunday 26th January. Another person was beheaded in Assir Province.

Woman activist Manahel al-Otaibi is being held incommunicado in her cell, raising fears that she may be subjected to further abuse. For the last 30 days, the fitness instructor has been held in isolation. This a clear violation of the Convention Against Torture which Saudi Arabia had ratified. Several activists and NGOs have called for her immediate release.

Human rights activists have called on the Saudi authorities to release the religious leaders who have languished in jail for eight years. This follows the release this week of religious preacher Bader Al Mashari who has spent more than one year behind bars. He was arrested in July 2023 for unknown reasons. He is among those who had criticised the liberal policies on moral issues of Mohammed bin Salman which are linked to his ambitious plans including the Neom project and his 2030 vision.

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29th January 2025

Widespread arrests in Bahrain, Saudis continue executions

On Monday 20th January three native Bahrainis from Samaheej town were detained. Ali Yousuf Ahmed, Ali Reda and Ahmed Abdul Latif were summoned by the CID to appear at Sitra police station. They were kept in custody for one week, which could be extended. On Friday 17th January regime forces arrested Bahraini youth Hussain Al Qaidoom (from the town of Sqayya) while he was walking in his town, Sanabis. He was remanded in custody for seven days. The alleged crime? Taking part in a peaceful rally.

Four political prisoners are continuing their hunger strike at the Dry Dock prison. Hussain Al Samaheji, Sayed Qassim Sayed Ali Al Alawi, Ali Abd Ali Al Baqqali and Ahmed Abdul Hussain Shahin are protesting their illegal detention and demanding a speedy trial in order to pursue their academic studies. Their sugar levels have dropped sharply. On Monday 20th January Sayed Hashim Ali Hashim Al Alawi from Ghuraifa town was detained. In

2019 he was sentenced to three years in jail. As soon as he entered the court hall to appeal the sentence, he was detained and denied the right of appeal.

The health of political prisoner Sayed Daher Habib Mohammed Isa has deteriorated in the past few days. The Enzymes in his liver have risen to dangerous levels. The doctors who examined him said that his condition is serious and that there is serious infection in his liver which indicate serious disease that demands immediate treatment. Political prisoner Abbas Nooh Al Saeed has been suffering severe pain in his stomach. Last week he was diagnosed with a rare infection. He has been waiting for his turn for treatment. He is serving a total of 48 years imposed on him after his arrest on 22nd March 2017. The health of former political prisoner, Mohammed Al Daqqaq (from the town of Karbabad) who was released last Thursday 16th January has deteriorated rapidly. Since his arrest on 7th January he has been in hospital due to

low blood level. Despite his severe illness he was dragged from his hospital bed only to be returned to hospital.

The Jau prison management, in liaison with government hospitals have conducted medical tests for 50 political prisoners at Jau. The tests have revealed that more than 90 percent suffer from various illnesses, mostly linked to lack of vitamins and minerals due to the shortage of food. Many suffer from skin diseases. Only five were found to be free from disease. Regime forces have intensified their ill treatment of the political prisoners at Jau prison. Five of them: Hussain Ali Mahdi, Zuhair Ibrahim, Salman Isa, Maher Al Khabbaz and Moosa Abdulla have been banned from contacting their families. They were also denied their daily outing to the open court yard. This is a punishment for the prisoners who protest their ill treatment and denial of basic needs. On the same day two other youths from Samaheej were arrested. Detectives in

Bahraini children dragged to torture cells, pleas to release Saudi HRDs

Yesterday, under-aged Bahraini youth Hussain Ali Hassan Mahdi, 15 (from Karranah town) was dragged by the khalifi security agents from the court hall to prison. Also, regime's forces detained under-aged Bahraini native Aqeel Muslim Abd Ali (from Karranah town). He was summoned by the CID officers who arrested him. On 8th January Mohammed Habib Baddao (from Duraz) was arrested after he had been summoned by the CID. He was among those who were freed on Eid Al Fitr by a royal decree. Regime's prosecutors have ordered the detention of young native Aqeel Al Majed, 15, and the adjournment of his case until 25th January.

In a new slap to justice, the khalifi regime yesterday issued a five-year prison sentence against Sheikh Hussain Al Daihi, the Deputy Secretary General of Al Wefaq Society. He has been in exile for more than ten years. The regime's action came in response to Al Daihi's tweet in which he called for the trial of "those who ban the Friday prayers!" The khalifi dictator has thus committed two crimes; banning the Friday prayers and persecuting those who oppose the ban.

On 3rd January regime's forces arrested two young Bahrainis: Abdulla Hassan Al Saari (from Aaali town) and Jassim Abdulla Jassim Al Sanadi (from Sitra). Both are former political prisoners. Al Saari spent seven years behind bars after his arrest on 6th May 2013. Al Sanadi had spent ten full years in jail after his arrest on 15th February 2012.

Bahraini political prisoners are now facing institutionalised medical negligence that has caused them enormous problems. On 12th January, Sayed Dhaher Habib collapsed after his condition had deteriorated. He had suffered serious skin disease, prescribed some medicines but none was pro-

vided to him and his pleas for proper treatment were ignored.

On Monday 13th January three under-aged children were given a six-months prison sentences for taking part in a peaceful protest. Abbas Muslim Abd Ali, 17, Ali Hussain Nasser Al Matrook, 15 and Abdul Aziz Hussain Jaffar Al Hamadi, 15, were arrested in August and September. The three are from Karranah town. Meanwhile, the trial of three other Bahrainis was adjourned until 19th January. Sadeq Hassan Marhoon, Mohammed Jassim Marhoon and Abdulla Hassan were arrested in September and October after taking part in a peaceful protest. On Sunday 12th regime's court passed a five-year prison sentence on Mahmood Hassan Isa Al Hamar (from the town of Dair). He was arrested on 11th November upon his arrival from Iran.

Political prisoner, Abdulla Jaffar Mohammed Al Mughanni, 35 from Al Ekr town, is suffering severe back pain. Last week he pleaded with the prison officials to transfer him to hospital, but they did not respond immediately. Three days later he was taken to a hospital where he was given pain killers only. He had developed a slip disc as a result of the torture sessions that started immediately after his arrest on 11th November 2015.

Five political prisoners have started hunger strike calling for better treatment, immediate trial and release. They are held on administrative detention without real evidence of any criminal activity. Hussain Al Samahiji, Sayed Qassim Sayed Ali Al Alawi, Sajjad Al Ujaimi, Ali Abd Ali Al Baqqali and Ahmed Abdul Hussain Shahin were arrested four months ago.

A political prisoner has asked for an urgent attention to his serious medical complaints after several appointments were cancelled as he became frail. For the past week he has

been vomiting blood and is extremely worried about his medical condition. Abdul Aziz Abdul Reda Al Saqqai said in a statement this week: "I have spent 14 years in jail and my medical condition is deteriorating." His doctor prescribed some medicine for him, but they were not provided. For the past week he has been vomiting blood.

The prison authorities have banned the political detainees at Jua prison from exercising their religious freedom and rights. Last Friday they wanted to hold a session to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Mohammed Al Jawad (the ninth Imam of the Shia Muslim faith). They were told to expect severe punishment if they did.

Saudi human rights bodies have called for the release of activists who were detained recently. For the last 30 days, fitness instructor Manahel al-Otaibi has been held incommunicado, in a clear violation of the Convention Against Torture which Saudi Arabia had ratified. Calls have been made for her immediate and unconditional release. Also, activist and UK-based political refugee Salman AlKhalidi was arrested on 1 January in Iraq and extradited to Kuwait. Human rights activists have called for UK's urgent intervention with the Kuwaiti authorities and to provide him consular assistance.

A young man from Qatif (in Eastern Arabia) has languished in the khalifi jails since August without charge or trial. Ayman Al Iblis (of a Saudi father and a Bahraini mother from Samahij) was among the mass releases on Eid Al Fitr after spending 11 years behind bars. He was arrested after a few months of his release because he did not have the Bahraini nationality. The khalifi regime wanted to deport him to Saudi Arabia. But the Saudis did want him because he did not have Saudi documents. He remains in a limbo.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
15th January 2025

plain clothes snatched Hassan Jaffar Masood while he was driving his car at Al Ekr town. They also detained Abdulla Yousuf Al Mo'athen near his father's house in Samaheej town.

The Saudi authorities started the New Year with a spate of executions. The first was carried out on Saturday 18th January. A Shia Muslim citizen, Abdulla Al Salim from the Eastern Province was beheaded on trumped up charges. He was falsely accused of terrorist acts including possessing firearms and explosives and that he had received training outside the country. Last year the number of executions reached 330. On 16th January two people were also beheaded. Subhi Sayed Moosa, an Egyptian and Mohammed Hussain Adam, a Sudanese were both killed after being charged with committing murders. A third person, Dakhilullah Al Ruwaili, a Saudi national, was also beheaded for dealing with Amphetamines drug tablets. Newcastle United Fans Against Saudi Sportswashing have been highlighting

human rights abuses carried out by the Saudi dictatorship, which owns 80% of our club for 3 years. They have protested at matches, have a website and produced 4 fanzines in support of Saudi citizens imprisoned by the regime using the club to divert attention away from their many crimes and abuses. At the moment activists at the club are highlighting the cases of Salma al-Shehab and Manahel al-Otaibi, Saudi women imprisoned and abused, simply for using social media to advocate for women's rights. They also publicised the cases of Saudi men condemned to death when they were minors. In the past they exposed the behind-the-scenes collaboration of Newcastle City Council with the Saudi state owners of the club. The regime has spent £500 million on sports washing in Newcastle.

A previous council leader even asked the Saudi state to finance school meals in Newcastle. Recently the

North East Mayor visited Saudi Arabia with Keir Starmer where the PM invited the person who ordered the murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi to a football match!

Bahrain Freedom Movement
22nd January 2025



Human Rights Watch 2024 report on Bahrain

Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa granted amnesties to over 2,500 prisoners in 2024, including to more than 800 prisoners held unjustly for political participation and peaceful free expression. Yet, human rights defenders and political leaders, including Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Hassan Mushaima, Dr. Abduljalil al-Singace, and Sheikh Ali Salman, have all remained arbitrarily detained. Furthermore, the Bahraini government has not commuted the death sentences of the 26 individuals who remain on death row.

Closure of Political Space, Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly Bahraini elections are neither free nor fair, and authorities systematically exclude and repress opposition voices. The Bahraini government has continued imposing restrictions on free expression, association, and assembly, in violation of Bahrain's international human rights obligations.

Members of Bahrain's political opposition are still imprisoned for their roles in the 2011 pro-democracy protests, as well as for political activism in recent years. They have faced brutal treatment from Bahraini authorities, including torture and denial of medical care. Human Rights Watch, along with several other human rights organizations, addressed a joint letter on May 30, 2024, to the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council, calling states' delegates to take a proactive stance and call on the Bahraini government to immediately and unconditionally release all individuals imprisoned solely for exercising their human rights.

Bahrain's "political isolation laws," introduced in 2018, barred former members of the country's opposition parties from running for parliament or sitting on boards of governors of civil society organizations. These laws also target former prisoners, including those detained due to their political work. Those affected by these laws also routinely experience delays and denials when applying for "Good Conduct Certificates," which Bahraini citizens and residents need in order to apply for employment, university admission, or even to join a sports or social club.

No independent media have operated in Bahrain since the Information Affairs Ministry suspended Al Wasat, the country's only independent newspaper, in 2017. Foreign journalists rarely have access to Bahrain, and international rights groups, including Human Rights Watch, have routinely been denied access.

Prison Conditions

After the death of Hussein Khalil Ibrahim in Bahrain's Jau prison on March 25, 2024, prisoners started a strike to protest abysmal conditions and demand more access to healthcare services. Authorities responded harshly, depriving prison-

ers of breakfast and dinner, and cutting off air-conditioning, exposing prisoners to extreme heat at a time when temperatures exceeded 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit). While prison authorities have negotiated with protesting prisoners and addressed abuse against them in some cases, many prisoners still do not have access to electricity, and prison authorities continue to deny detainees adequate access to healthcare according to BIRD.

Children's Rights

Bahraini authorities continued detaining children under 18 and subjecting them to ill-treatment in detention due to their participation in public protests. Between March and September 2024, Human Rights Watch interviewed several children who were previously exposed to torture and ill-treatment in detention and during interrogation. Some children reported difficulties continuing their education in prison or accessing medical services. Authorities in Bahrain have sentenced children to up to 40 years detention, in addition to fines for charges of protesting and disturbing public security, and burning cars and setting fires, among other charges.

As of December 15, 2023, authorities in Bahrain had arrested and harassed at least 25 children for their participation in pro-Palestine protests throughout the country, according to Human Rights Watch and Americans for Democracy and Human

Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) research.

The Rights of Women and Girls

Women are required to obey their husbands and not leave home without a "legitimate excuse," under Bahrain's Unified 2017 Family Law. Women and girls can lose their rights to spousal maintenance (nafaqa) from their husbands if deemed disobedient or recalcitrant by a court. Bahraini family law (article 20) allows marriage of girls at age of 16 and even before if they got the permission of a Sharia court.

A woman also cannot act as her child's guardian, even if her child's father has passed away or following a divorce in which a court orders that her child reside primarily with her. The 1963 Citizenship Act prohibits women and girls from passing on their nationality to their children if they have a non-Bahraini father. Women face difficulty obtaining passports for their children, particularly when the child's father is abroad.

In February, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) published findings that included concern about the "shrinking space for women human rights defenders and reports of reprisals against them, including intimidation, harassment, threats, physical abuse, sexual violence, travel bans, and arbitrary detention."

Newcastle United challenges Saudi sportswashing

Newcastle United Fans Against Saudi Sportswashing have been highlighting human rights abuses carried out by the Saudi dictatorship, which owns 80% of our club for 3 years.

We have protested at matches, have a website and produced 4 fanzines in support of Saudi citizens imprisoned by the regime using our club to divert attention away from their many crimes and abuses.

At the moment we are highlighting the cases of Salma al-Shehab and Manahel al-Otaibi, Saudi women imprisoned and abused, simply for using social media to advocate for women's rights.

We've publicised the cases of Saudi men condemned to death when they were minors.

We have also given a platform to Saudi LGBT+ activists who face terrible persecution.

Tyneside MPs, Newcastle City councillors and NUFC fan groups all committed to 'keep talking about human rights' pre-takeover - unfortunately, apart from a few honourable exceptions this has not happened. THIS IS WHY THE WORK OF NUFCFAS is so vital.

In the past we have exposed the behind the scenes collaboration of Newcastle City Council with the Saudi state owners of the club. A previous council leader even asked the Saudi state to finance school meals in Newcastle. Recently the North East Mayor visited Saudi Arabia with Keir Starmer where the PM invited the person who ordered the murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi to a football match! It is not known if the North East Mayor or Keir Starmer mentioned human rights abuses to Mohammed bin Salman.

The regime has spent £500 million on sports washing in Newcastle NUFCFAS is made up of ordinary fans. Please donate to help us campaign in support of the victims of the owners of our club

