

BAHRAIN

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

Saudi, Alkhalifa dictators are incapable of change; they must go

Whether by design or default the ruling family in Bahrain has taken the wrong path in dealing with the most popular Revolution since they occupied the land over two centuries ago. The systematic repression over the past six years has ensured that reconciliation between the natives (Shia and Sunni Muslims) and the ruling occupiers is impossible whatever efforts are spent to facilitate a harmonious relation. The more this gang represses the more enmity is created with the natives and the fiercer the opposition to any reconciliation. When the majority of the population is treated as underdogs with their religion abused on daily basis, their youth persecuted, jailed, tortured and deprived of their nationality and their religious leadership is targeted in most vicious and humiliating way, then any attempt to talk of "dialogue", "reform" or "national reconciliation" become meaningless. Those supporting the regime are doing dis-service to their own people and participating in the repression and all forms of crimes against humanity. Being a large country like UK does not absolve her of the certain natural consequences. Crimes against humanity do not go away with time; they remain to haunt the perpetrators and will catch up with them one day. The UK is aware of how the victims of bad policies and decisions had pursued their rights years after they were aggrieved and the UK was forced to apologise and pay compensations. Today, UK is led by dwarf politicians that are incapable of leading this great country in the direction of prosperity and strength. Instead they have succumbed to the attractions of financial bribes from most reactionary regimes that have groomed and financed fanaticism and terrorism. It remains for the British people to raise their awareness and stop these unethical practices to end corruption and moral decadence.

The situation in Bahrain has reached a point of no-return. Despite the policies of deception adopted by the Alkhalifa dictators, there is a near-unanimous verdict that the regime had failed in its efforts to silence the native Bahrainis. There are almost daily reports, articles and statements condemning the hereditary dictatorship and its figures to the extent that visits by their senior figures often become embarrassment to their hosts. Apart from UK no other gov-

ernment is ready to embrace these vicious torturers who have escalated their crimes against humanity in recent months. Anyone who tweets anti-regime remarks will be jailed and abused. Human rights activists have been banned from traveling abroad to attend meetings, sessions of the UN Human Rights Council or lobby for the salvation of their countrymen. Senior figures of the opposition are behind bars some of whom have already spent six years behind bars. Last month Amnesty International (AI) published a damning report to mark the fifth anniversary of the Bissiouini report that condemned the dictators of "systematic torture" and called for the immediate and unconditional release of thousands of prisoners whose only crime was expressing anti-regime stands. The report was the result of work made by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Investigation (BICI) into the Alkhalifa regime's crimes in the two months of March and April 2011. This is only a small fraction of the crimes committed over the past 15 years by the present tyrant who became ruler after his father's death in 1999. The AI's report is a serious condemnation not only of the regime's policies against native Bahrainis but of the British policies that continue to offer unequivocal support to the murderous Alkhalifa gang. Those policies are seen as giving moral and material support to the torturous dictators and have not benefited the people. If anything they have contributed to prop up dictatorship, viciousness and criminal behavior. AI's report calls for an immediate change of UK policies that are seen as misguided, misplaced and inhumane. It is a unique indictment of the situation in the Gulf, as epitomized by the Bahrain's dictators.

The AI's report is supported by other stands, reports and statements from other sources, including the United States. Despite the election of Donald Trump as the new US president, it is widely expected that Washington had been distancing itself from those murderous monarchies especially Saudis and Alkhalifa. Their failures on almost all fronts of combat has disappointed their backers in the West who had invested heavily in politi-

cal and military terms to maintain the status quo in this most troubled region. Yet the performance of both the Saudis and Alkhalifa on issues of war and peace is so poor that Washington and London started to worry about one possible outcome of the war; criminal prosecution of Saudi commanders and their backers for their ever-increasing war crimes. The two Western capitals are filled with fear and anxiety that they would be implicated in the Saudi war crimes at a time when the West is seriously looking for credible leadership. With Trump elections, the Brexit and the rise of the far right in Europe the future of the world appears uncertain. The Middle East is so badly managed that it has become hotbed for extremism, terrorism, and more dangerously despotism. Coupled with dwindling oil revenues these factors are likely to culminate in pushing the region to a new state of anarchy; a development that will also affect Europe and America. This is not what serious politicians want to happen. The report by Amnesty International about Bahrain and its focus on the role of the UK government to prop up the dictatorship must serve as a reminder that circumstances change; deception does not last; national interest is not served by supporting dictators especially those known for grooming and financing terrorism and that the pains of the victims of these vicious regimes cannot be hidden forever. It is not in UK's interest to be seen linked in negative ways with those who administer torture as a policy and refuse to adapt their system to international norms of open society and representative governments. It is clear that the UK is passing through difficult political and economic times following the Brexit decision by the people. It is also clear that the new leaders do not possess strong characters to enable them to make a difference in world politics but are merrily care takers of old policies. The world needs leaders with vision who are loyal to their principles, lovers of democracy and motivated by high human considerations. Only then the world will be a safer place for human habitation. Currently this planet is ruled by opportunists, terrorists, despots and thieves. The hope is that the AI's report would motivate British politicians to change course.

Saudis must stop war on Yemen; Alkhalifa damned by AI's report

A 94 page report by Amnesty International (AI) this week has lambasted UK's government for its unequivocal support of the vicious Alkhalifa regime. It says: British ministers have acted like over-excited cheerleaders for Bahrain's woefully inadequate human rights reforms, The damning report was issued ahead of a visit next month by Theresa May on the sidelines of the annual GCC summit. "Ministers ought to be confronting the awkward reality that the institutions set up in Bahrain with UK support "are seriously flawed and widely seen as a PR exercises", Amnesty said. The report, based on 90 interviews with Bahraini human rights activists, said it is "utterly disingenuous" of the British government to pretend it is delivering substantial human rights reform in Bahrain. There is controversy over the value and independence of two UK-supported human rights institutions. Britain also has longstanding military links with Bahrain and is establishing a new military base in the kingdom.

Amnesty International has described new "legal" proceedings against a prominent Bahraini human rights lawyer as "very alarming". The fresh charges against Mohammed Al Tajer – which include insulting a legal body, misusing the phone, and inciting sectarian hatred- come amid a much broader campaign targeting HR advocates in Bahrain. The regime relied on Tweets to make its case, using Al

Tajer's references to the siege of Diraz and the regime's obstruction of Friday prayers. Another human rights activist, Hussain Radhi, has also been charged for tweets disliked by Alkhalifa. Today human rights activist, Ibtisam Al Sayegh responded to a summons by the notorious CID headquarters and charged with promoting hatred of the regime, destabilising it and threatening social peace.

The persecution of natives has continued unabated. In the week 14-20th November the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights documented at least 18 arbitrary detentions among the native Baharna citizens. There were at least 20 protests in 12 towns and villages. Masked men of Alkhalifa Death Squads arrested two children: Hassan Ibrahim and Abdullah Mohammad, in a raid on their home in Ras Rumman. Regime's courts issued a new sentence on Ahmad AlArab to take his total jail to 150 years. He was under 16 when he was arrested three years ago. Human Rights Watch has launched a campaign for the release of Abdul Hadi AlKhwaja. It cited the recommendation by BICI commission which called for "the release of all individuals convicted solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly." Yet he is still in jail.

An Early Motion at the UK's House of Commons has been sponsored by Roger Siff, MP calling for release of Bahraini women detainees: It said: That this House

expresses its concern about the August 2016 arrest of Ghada Jamsheer, a prominent Bahraini women's rights and pro-democracy activist, on charges related to her exercising freedom of expression and making criticisms online of the government of Bahrain. It further said that it "is concerned about the ongoing targeting of human rights defenders in general, through arbitrary arrest, long-term prison sentencing without trial and torture; views the increasing targeting of the family members, including children, of human rights defenders as a fear tactic to deter political dissent. The EDM turned attention to UK's role and "calls for scrutiny of the British police's role in training Bahrain's security forces, who have indiscriminately deployed crowd control weapons to quell demonstrations, including among women and children; further calls on the government of Bahrain to advance the hearing of Ghada Jamsheer, as her health is currently deteriorating in Isa Town Women's Prison; calls for her trial to be accessible to her lawyers, international media and non-governmental organisations; calls for the release of other human rights defenders who have been arbitrarily arrested while exercising their rights to free speech and assembly in Bahrain; and urges the government of Bahrain to accept the right of citizens to peacefully express dissent and cease persecuting activists.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
23rd November 2016

Saudis humiliated to stop Yemen war, Charles's visit led to more abuse

There is a near-unanimous verdict that the Saudis have been defeated in Yemen and that their massive war crimes could lead to prosecution of some members of the royal family at international tribunals. Yesterday the US Secretary of State, John Kerry announced that the Saudi-led aggressors and the Yemeni fighters led by Yemen's Ansarullah Movement have agreed to a temporary cessation of hostilities starting on November 17, and to work towards installing a national unity government. According to the UN the war has killed at least 10,000 people, wounded more than 35,000 and displaced at least three million since March 2015. The Saudis have dropped the former president Hadi from any future political settlement. This is a humiliating defeat to the Saudis, Alkhalifa and others who waged illegal war on peaceful Yemen, destroying the country, its people, property and heritage. Their aim was to "re-instate president Hadi".

The visit to Riyadh and Manama by Prince Charles has brought UK to international disrepute as the human rights bodies expressed outrage at the way the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain continue to adopt extreme forms of torture and unlawful killing to silence their

opponents. The Saudis have long been accused of grooming and financing extremism, sectarianism and terrorism. The Alkhalifa have one of the bleakest records of human rights especially after they were proven by their own investigation commission (BICI) of administering "systematic torture". Charles opened the first British naval base since its withdrawal from East of Suez in 1971. The UK conservative government under Cameron, and now Teresa May has supported the Alkhalifa, trained their interrogators who hide their crimes and taught its police how to throttle protesters.

In the week 7-13th November the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) documented at least 18 arbitrary arrests. It also documented 27 marches in 21 towns and villages, several of them were attacked by regime's mercenary forces. Nineteen people were sentenced to a total of 241 years for their anti-regime activities.

One of the most outrageous acts by Alkhalifa regime has been the decision to persecute Ibrahim Sharif, a liberal Sunni activists and former Secretary General of Wa'ad Society, for speaking to the Associated Press. During Charles's visit, Sharif gave an interview to a US news agency in which he suggested that Charles's day-

long tour of the island kingdom could "whitewash" an ongoing crackdown on dissent. Two days' later, he was detained and charged with "inciting hatred" against the rulers. The charge carries a possible three-year jail sentence. Elizabeth Trudeau, the US state department's director of press relations, stated that "no one anywhere should be prosecuted or imprisoned for engaging in freedom expression, even when that expression is critical. Any charges against Sharif on that basis, should be dropped."

In recent months the embattled Alkhalifa illegitimate regime has intensified its use of two methods: summoning people for interrogation and banning activists from travel. , The regime's interrogators who often adopt torture to extract "confessions" have escalated their summoning of people for trivial matters. On Sunday 13th November Zainab Mohammad, wife of death row prisoner, Mohammad Ramadan was summoned and interrogated for taking part in "illegal" assembly. Also, Khalil Marzooq of AlWefaq and Nidal AlSalman of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights were also interrogated. Miss AlSalman is now charged with "illegal gathering".

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Trump's win rattles GCC sheikhs, Charles's Bahrain trip "a travesty"

The Gulf monarchies have been shaken to the core by the election of Donald Trump as the 45th US president of the US. They have invested heavily in Hilary Clinton's election campaign but they have lost their bids. Alkhalifa alone were said to have invested \$32 million, swindled from the hungry Bahrainis. They were hoping a Clinton victory would add to their political fortunes. The Saudis have been particularly incensed by Trump's victory especially in light of the JASTA law which incriminates members of the ruling family in the 9/11 atrocities. Implementation of the law could expose further collusion in terrorism by some Gulf dictatorial regimes. Although the US foreign policy may not fundamentally change, the fall-outs of the presidential change could herald a new era in which the Saudis and Alkhalifa may lose their favours with Washington. It is rumoured that the Saudis had offered more than \$10 billion to pay around \$3 million to each of the victims of 9/11 to stop court cases against the ruling family.

On 1st November Human Rights Watch (HRW) slammed a "well-funded" clamp-down on Gulf Arab rights activists and urged the six monarchies to implement "much-needed reforms" instead of jailing peaceful critics. HRW made its latest call for GCC reform as it launched an interactive website with the profiles of 140 prominent Gulf activists who have been arrested, tried and sentenced for voicing their opinions online over the past six years. They include Nabeel Rajab, who is on trial on charges of spreading false information and posting online insults, and Saudi activist Waleed Abulkhair who is serving a 15-year jail sentence.

Prince Charles visit to Bahrain has been marred with controversy and accusations

of appeasing dictators and torturers at the expense of basic values of human rights and decency. Amnesty International and more than 20 other NGOs urged Charles to raise the cases of the religious leaders and human rights activists especially Nabeel Rajab. He was also urged to visit Sheikh Isa Qassim who has been under siege for the past four months at the Town of Duraz. But the prince failed to rise up to the human challenge and spent his visit dining and wining with Alkhalifa vicious "systematic torturers". Prince Charles is set to formally open the newly established British base in Bahrain. According to his official web page, the visit will mark the 200th anniversary of the "first agreement between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Kingdom which established formal relations between both countries and has led to enduring diplomatic, political, military and economic ties". The Royal Navy base cost Bahrain about 30 million pounds, and will host up to 600 British military personnel.

Yesterday Bahrain Watch announced the launch of its new website, #200MoreStories, which casts a critical eye on British-Bahrain relations. The website is a response to the British Council's competition #200Stories, that was launched on 17 April this year. The competition asks people to commemorate their favourite British/Bahrain memories in "celebration of the 200th anniversary of the historic 'friendship'". The British Council extended the deadline to August 4th, but hasn't published any story to date. Using a combination of archival research and non-fictional personal narratives, including stories from expats, Bahrainis, and academics, #200MoreStories provides insights into the far-ranging and brutal complexities of the colonial and postcolonial relationship, from

segregation to torture. Sometimes, the personal tales simply reflect insightful cultural episodes expose cultural or social tensions.

In the week 31st October to 6th November The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights has documented at least 9 arbitrary arrests. Twenty nine native Bahrainis were sentenced to a total of 196 years for their anti-regime activities. They were fined about \$3 million. There were 36 marches in towns and villages, some of which were viciously attacked by mercenary forces. Once again the case of Sheikh Ali Salman has been adjourned until 4th December. His sentence had been quashed by the regime's court of cassation which ordered a retrial. A famous artist and singer has been banned from travelling to Morocco. Meanwhile travel ban has continued. Yesterday Mohammad Jawad was not allowed to leave the country. The order came from the royal court which is managed by the most sectarian Alkhalifa official. Dr Munthir AlKhour was also banned from travel. Two prisoners are on hunger strike to protest repressive measures against inmates. Hussain, the son of prominent leader, Abdul Wahab Hussain, has started his hunger strike to protest lack of proper medical care for his acute back pain due to ill-treatment. Sheikh Mirza Al Mahroos is protesting against lack of rights of prisoners. His elderly mother, outside prison, has joined his hunger strike.

Calls have been made for the release of Ghada Jamsheer, a liberal Sunni female activist, who had been targeted for harsh revenge from head of royal court. On 7th November Amnesty International has issued Urgent Action calling for her immediate and unconditional release.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
9th November 2016

MPs table EDM calling for an end to persecution of Bahraini women

On 15th November Labour MP, Gosiff Roger, tabled an Early Day Motion to call on the Government of Bahrain to release Ghada Jamsheer and stop persecuting other human rights and political activists. This in response to the rising repression by the dictator Hamad Alkhalifa and an attempt to tame the UK Government's unequivocal support to the hereditary dictatorship in Bahrain. There is deep anger at the way the recent Conservative Governments have snubbed the calls for political reforms in the Gulf region, especially in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The two ruling tribes are engaged in destructive and illegal war on the people of Yemen, killing more than 12,000 people in 20 months of aggression. 21 MPs have signed the EDM till the writing of this news piece. It is hoped that this EDM and other forms of lobbying and activism would lead to change of heart of Teresa May.

Early day motion 675

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN BAHRAIN

Date tabled: 15.11.2016

Primary sponsor: Godsiff, Roger

Sponsors:

That this House expresses its concern about the August 2016 arrest of Ghada Jamsheer, a prominent Bahraini women's rights and pro-democracy activist, on charges related to her exercising freedom of expression and making criticisms online of the government of Bahrain; recognises the ongoing judicial harassment Ghada Jamsheer has faced as a result of her fight for codified personal status laws in Bahrain to protect women in family court matters; notes that Bahraini law perpetuates gender-based discrimination and inequality, including the exclusion of Shia women from codified family law; is concerned about the ongoing targeting of human rights defenders in general, through arbitrary arrest, long-

term prison sentencing without trial and torture; views the increasing targeting of the family members, including children, of human rights defenders as a fear tactic to deter political dissent; calls for scrutiny of the British police's role in training Bahrain's security forces, who have indiscriminately deployed crowd control weapons to quell demonstrations, including among women and children; further calls on the government of Bahrain to advance the hearing of Ghada Jamsheer, as her health is currently deteriorating in Isa Town Women's Prison; calls for her trial to be accessible to her lawyers, international media and non-governmental organisations; calls for the release of other human rights defenders who have been arbitrarily arrested while exercising their rights to free speech and assembly in Bahrain; and urges the government of Bahrain to accept the right of citizens to peacefully express dissent and cease persecuting activists.

Amnesty: UK 'utterly disingenuous' about human rights in Bahrain

Report ahead of visit by Theresa May says ministers act as 'overexcited cheerleaders' for 'woefully inadequate' reforms

British ministers have acted like overexcited cheerleaders for Bahrain's woefully inadequate human rights reforms, Amnesty International has said, ahead of an expected visit next month by Theresa May on the sidelines of the annual Gulf Cooperation Council summit. Ministers ought to be confronting the awkward reality that the institutions set up in Bahrain with UK support "are seriously flawed and widely seen as a PR exercises", Amnesty said. The report, based on 90 interviews with Bahraini human rights activists, said it is "utterly disingenuous" of the British government to pretend it is delivering substantial human rights reform in Bahrain.

There is controversy over the value and independence of two UK-supported human rights institutions. Britain also has longstanding military links with Bahrain and is establishing a new military base in the kingdom. The Foreign Office said the two institutions show the government in Manama is willing to respond to western pressure. The bodies, the ombudsman of the ministry of interior and the special investigations unit within the public prosecution, were established in 2012 following a fierce crackdown by the Bahraini government on protests the previous year.

The then foreign secretary Philip Hammond said Bahrain had been making significant reform, telling the House of Commons it was "a country which is travelling in the right direction". However, Amnesty said the special investigations unit has failed to take prompt action to protect detainees from torture, investigate their allegations effectively or ensure their access to medical care.

It pointed out that although it was obvious Hussain Jawad, a prominent Bahraini human rights activist, was at risk of torture following his arrest in February 2015, the ombudsman's office "failed to carry out a prompt visit to check the conditions of his detention".

Jawad later said he was blindfolded, beaten with his hands cuffed behind his back and threatened with sexual abuse in order to extract a confession.

Amnesty also said the ombudsman's

office delayed an investigation for two years into the torture allegations of Mohamed Ramadhan, an airport security guard sentenced to death after being convicted of involvement in a bomb attack, despite receiving information from his family and an international NGO.

The special investigations unit has prosecuted 93 members of the security forces, but only 15 low-ranking officials have been convicted, Amnesty noted. No senior officers or officials who oversaw the serious human rights violations during the 2011 uprising have faced prosecution.

Out of nearly 200 cases Amnesty has recorded since the uprising, fewer than 45 have been referred to trial. The organisation pointed out that neither human rights body has gained the public's trust, partly as a result of a perceived lack of independence and impartiality.

Both are viewed as being too close to the interior ministry and other government institutions, and having failed to keep families and victims adequately informed of progress in their investigations.

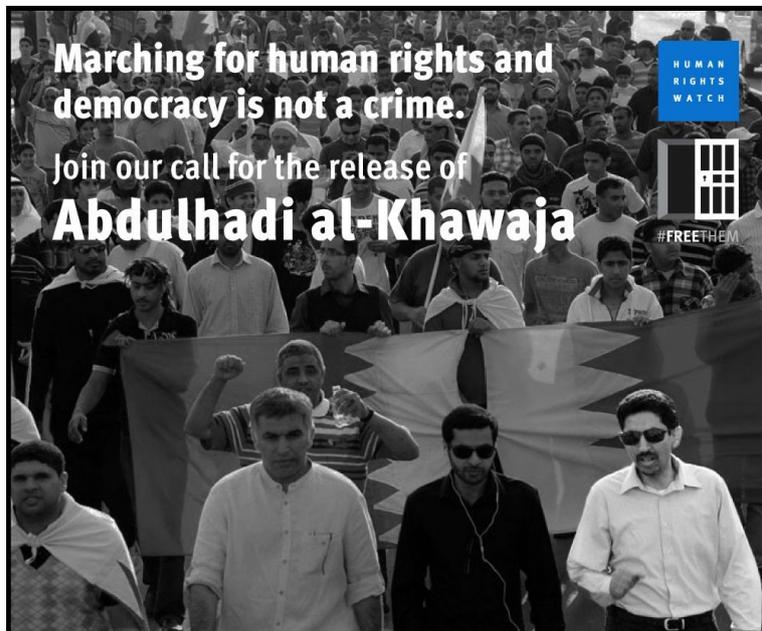
In the most widely known case, Nabeel Rajab is facing up to 15 years in prison for free speech offences that include writing an article critical of the government in the New York Times.

Amnesty International UK's head of policy and government affairs, Allan Hogarth, said: "It was a welcome move when Bahrain set up these two bodies back in 2012, but it's utterly disingenuous of the UK government to pretend they're delivering substantial human rights reform in Bahrain.

"Instead of acting as overexcited cheerleaders for Bahrain's woefully inadequate reforms, UK ministers ought to be confronting the awkward reality that these UK-backed institutions are seriously flawed and widely seen as a PR tool of the Bahraini government."

Amnesty said authorities have placed severe restrictions on the right of Bahrainis to participate in demonstrations and other forms of peaceful assembly. There is an indefinite ban on all public demonstrations in the capital.

The security forces regularly disperse unauthorised protests, which mostly occur in Shia villages when protesters demand the release of political prisoners, sometimes using excessive force including teargas and



Saudis humiliated to stop Yemen war, *Continued from Page 2*

Last week several people were prevented from leaving the country. After being stopped at the airport last week, Radhi AlMosawi, the Secretary General of Wa'ad Society, was summoned by the torture apparatus where he was interrogated, intimidated and threatened. The head of the Nursing Society, Ibrahim AlDemstani, has also been summoned to appear today at the notorious prosecution. No reasons were given. He was imprisoned and tortured for three years for taking part in anti-regime protests. He is now denied necessary medication for his several ailments.

As hundreds of human rights organisations and activists continue to call for Nabeel Rajab's immediate and unconditional release Bahrain's tyrant has appointed a notorious torturer to look into his account to discover who runs it while

Mr Rajab is behind bars. Yesterday he protested during a court appearance at this appointment arguing that the "expert" will serve as judge, jury and prosecutor at the same time. His case was adjourned until 15th December. It is clear that Alkhalifa has no choice but to release Mr Rajab.

The world's attention has been drawn by human rights bodies to the fate of migrant workers in the Gulf after several fatal events involving those communities. Last Thursday Indian worker Mohanan Poomthottathil (51) committed suicide in Manama. Few days ago Asian domestic worker in Kuwait sets herself on fire after months of not getting paid. Moroccan female domestic workers in Saudi Arabia have called for rescue in online videos, saying they are being tortured

Bahrain Freedom Movement
16th November 2016