

BAHRAIN

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

Murderous attack on Sheikh Isa's home will lead to Alkhalifa downfall

The unwarranted aggression by regime's forces on the house of Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim will definitely lead to the opposite results intended by the regime. Instead of breaking the will of the people it will re-ignite the desire for fundamental political change in the country. When the Saudi-backed Alkhalifa mercenary forces attacked the people camped at the Pearl Roundabout, the one month old Revolution was re-invigorated. The first few days following the barbaric aggression were difficult for the people to absorb the full extent of the counter-revolution plan and were shocked to realise that the Alkhalifa had decided to wage a decisive war against the country and its people. But soon afterwards, they were able to regain their composure and start afresh in their quest to achieve the transformation. Six years have passed since the Revolution started. In those intervening years, untold crimes were committed by the regime and its allies. Saudi petro-dollars became instrumental in recruiting tens of thousands of mercenaries from different countries, yet the regime never felt confident to face the popular challenge on its own. Today, it depends on six foreign armies to remain in power; Saudi, Emirati, Pakistani, Jordanian, American and British.

Prior to the criminal attack on Sheikh Qassim's house, the situation had reached desperation for a tribe that had never secured the approval of the majority native Baharna population. In the last Universal Periodic Review in April, there was a unanimous verdict against the Alkhalifa hereditary dictatorship. Almost all UN experts and bodies, as well as international NGOs gave thumbs down to the Alkhalifa. Their bleak human rights record placed it among the worst abusers of human rights in the world. In addition to Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, IFEX, Article 19, ranking organisations like Freedom House, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), PEN international and others gave Bahrain the lowest ever rankings on public freedoms. However, the regime benefited from few things. First the enormous petro-dollar wealth of the Saudis that enabled them to buy off foreign support. The second is the Western economic, political and moral decline that made it susceptible to corruption, cronyism and immorality. The third is the absence of strong powers in the Middle

East. Egypt, Syria and Iraq were subdued by terrorism and outside intervention. The fourth is the diminishing role of the United Nations and its bodies especially those working for human rights and democracy.

While all Arab Spring revolutions were either defeated, co-opted or transformed into terrorism and extremism, the Bahraini Revolution has remained faithful to its aims and means. It has maintained its peaceful nature, comprehensive demands, rejection of terrorism or sectarianism and the ability to reproduce generation of revolutionaries. The regime's policies of aggression, violence, torture, discrimination and tribalism helped the activists to maintain their existence on the streets. No day has passed without several protests taking place in various towns and villages. The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights has produced weekly statistics of protests, arrests and kangaroo trials. They show a consistent pattern of activism paralleled by official repression and oppression. This has been one of the main sources of motivation to the disenfranchised youth who have seen their lives deteriorating from bad to worse. Martyrs continued to fall. Since the beginning of the year, the dictator has escalated his criminality to unprecedented levels. He ordered his mercenaries to kill and maim native Bahrainis at will. Collective punishment meant that whole communities were punished mercilessly. People of Duraz were subjected to a blockade reminiscent only of that imposed on the people of Gaza in Palestine.

Sheikh Isa Qassim's steadfastness and refusal to give in to the regime's demand of surrender made him a special target for the regime's brutality. Other high ranking activists like Nabeel Rajab, Ibrahim Sharif, Sheikh Ali Salman were targeted and given lengthy jail sentences. These are the prominent leaders of the revolution after the detention of the group commonly known as Bahrain 13 in 2011. It is clear that the Revolution is capable of reproducing and making new field leaders as the crisis deepens.

Where will these events take the situation? It is worth remembering what happened after the Pearl Roundabout was attacked twice within a month in 2011. The first was on Thursday 17th February

following the killing of two protesters. Two days earlier the youth rushed to the Roundabout and encamped there. The dictator gave the orders to attack them and they were evicted by force that killed some of them. Then they returned after international protestations forced the dictator to acquiesce to the demand that people ought to be allowed to protest. Tens of thousands flocked to the Roundabout and joined the Revolution. In mid March 2011 the Saudis invaded the country and helped the Alkhalifa to wage a second and more bloody attack resulting in the martyrdom of five people. The counter-revolution forces thought they would be able to end the strife. Instead the people re-launched their Revolution under Saudi occupation. It has remained ever since. The attack was instrumental in galvanising public opinion to work relentlessly and sacrifice for change. The situation gradually became more polarised against accepting the hereditary rule of the Alkhalifa clan. People are now openly calling for the downfall of the regime with specific rejection of the dictator. "Down with Hamad" has become a daily slogan for protesters. His images are often drawn on the ground to be stepped over by the people. There appears to be no realistic expectation of co-existence between the native majority Bahrainis and the Alkhalifa tribal rule.

The attack on Sheikh Isa Qassim's house and using force to break up the crowd outside the house with several fatalities can only lead to more polarisation and rejection of the tribal rule. The people's hatred of the regime has become so much entrenched that no power on earth can change that. It is thus out of concern for the security and stability of the region that world powers join hands against this tribal regime and enable the people to determine their destiny and choose their government. This will secure the interest of all; including the West. The US and UK governments must not remain on the wrong side of history by supporting dictators, despots and child killers. They need to rise up to the real challenges of change. They are well-advised to abandon Alkhalifa and ditch their murderous regime which is now doomed. This time Bahrainis will not be tricked into accepting half solutions that had landed them in more troubles in the past. They want full political change.

Trump's unholy Saudi visit encouraged Alkhalifa to kill 7 Bahrainis

The world has been shocked to see how the president of the strongest country in the world turned himself into a laughing stock as he made several U-turns in the policies he had declared during the election campaign. His visit to Saudi Arabia, meeting with many heads of Arab and Muslim states and making amateurish statements about those dictators has disappointed the world and sent shock waves in the Arab societies which have been aspiring to achieve democracy and respect of human rights. The two days visit uncovered unbalanced president whose main aim is to secure huge arms sales regardless of their bloody consequences to the world. There had been expectation that Mr Trump would rise to the challenges of the Yemen War waged by the Saudis and the suffering of the people of Arabia and Bahrain under the most extreme forms of dictatorships and extremist ideas. Instead, Mr Trump lavished the Saudis with praise and promises of support. The president has ignored the grief of thousands of American families who are still agonising as a result of 9/11 atrocities. He ignored the Jasta Law which is the strongest American stand affirming the links between the Saudi state and the 9/11 bombers. 15 of the 19 of them were Saudi nationals.

One of the most dramatic consequences of Trump's newly-declared support of Saudis and Alkhalifa has been the blood-letting in Bahrain by its dictator who has had private meeting with Mr Trump four days ago. Yesterday the Alkhalifa tribal regime waged one of its most lethal aggressions on the natives. The town of Duraz was targeted by waves of mercenary forces aiming to capture the most significant personality in the country; Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim. At least seven young men were martyred by police bullets in-

cluding Mohammad Kadem Zain Eddine, 39 Mohammad Al Sari and Hussain Al Banna. Several others remain in critical condition. More than 200 were injured and 300 arrested. The dictator has ordered his mostly masked mercenaries to spare no force to end the peaceful gathering around the house of Sheikh Qassim, the supreme religious and political leader of the native majority population. The elderly cleric has been under virtual house arrest for almost a year. On 20th June 2016 his nationality was revoked before trial. Alkhalifa tyrant was emboldened by the most shameful US and UK policy of blind support of these tribal chiefs. The attack on Duraz heralded a new bloody era imposed by the terrorist Alkhalifa regime. The people's spontaneous reaction was to stage marches and protests calling for the end of Alkhalifa black era. More attacks were waged against peaceful protesters in Bani Jamra, Karzakan, Sitra, Jufair, Al Dair and elsewhere. At least one person was killed by regime's forces yesterday at the town of Juffair.

Yesterday Amnesty International (AI) issued an Urgent Action about the criminal attack on Duraz. It said: "Today's disturbing developments again show the consequences of rampant impunity enjoyed by the security forces. There must be a prompt, independent investigation and those responsible for unlawful killing and other arbitrary or abusive force must be prosecuted. The authorities must rein in the security forces, order that they strictly comply with international standards on police use of force, and ensure the right to peaceful protest is protected," said Samah Hadid, Director of Campaigns, Middle East at Amnesty International"

On 17th May the New York Times published an article by Nabeel Rajab titled "Don't profit from abuses by Bahrain". He

said: "My detention has entered its 11th month. My health has declined. I'm recovering from a painful surgical procedure, yet the authorities have made every part of my detention as difficult as possible. My lawyers have been obstructed from providing me the best possible defence. But what I have endured is a small fraction of what the people of Yemen have suffered, largely because of the military intervention of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and their allies. He ended saying: For my part, I will not stand idly by. I urge Americans not to do so, either. They must call for an end to the Trump administration's support for my country's misdeeds at home and abroad.

On 11 May, the Bahrain High Court of Appeal upheld the death sentence imposed against Maher Abbas Ahmed. His case will now go before the Court of Cassation. Maher Abbas Ahmed will be at imminent risk of execution if the sentence is upheld again. Amnesty International has called on people to write to the authorities: Expressing grave concern that Maher Abbas Ahmad's death sentence was upheld again; Urging the King of Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa, to immediately commute the death sentence imposed on Maher Abbas Ahmad and establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty; Calling on the authorities to conduct an investigation into the allegations of torture made by Maher Abbas Ahmad and his co-defendants; and Acknowledging the Bahraini government's responsibility to protect the public and bring to justice those who commit crimes, but insisting that this should always be in accordance with international law and Bahrain's human rights obligations.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
24th May 2017

Saudi war led to Cholera outbreak, UK Royals urged to sever Alkhalifa

As the world community continues to ignore the Saudi aggression on Yemen, an immediate crisis resulting from this war is the spread of serious diseases. A cholera outbreak has rapidly spread in Yemen, killing 115 people in two weeks in the impoverished country where hospitals badly damaged by more than two years of war can barely cope. Patients with cholera symptoms have flooded the run-down medical facilities, as international relief agencies warned of a catastrophic humanitarian situation and urged citizens to exercise hygiene precautions. "We now are facing a serious outbreak of cholera," said Dominik Stillhart, the director of operations at the International Committee of the Red Cross on 14th May. Citing figures compiled by the Yemeni health ministry, Stillhart said 115 people had died of cholera between April 27 and 14th May. More than 8,500 suspected cases of the waterborne disease were reported in the same period in 14 governorates across Yemen, Stillhart

said. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) expressed fears that health authorities alone will not be able to deal with the outbreak. "MSF calls on international organisations to scale up their assistance urgently to limit the spread of the outbreak," it said in a statement

Over the past week, the Saudi regime has sent its tanks and armoured vehicles to the Eastern Province town of Awwamiyah, killing people and destroying property. It is unprovoked aggression that has claimed at least five people. The district of AIMusawwara bore the brunt of the attack with serious damage to buildings and people. The town is now completely encircled and fears are growing of a final push to obliterate it and force its inhabitants to flee. This is part of the demographic engineering being carried out by the Saudi ruling family in its attempt to change the human and cultural history of that region which sets on large oil reserves. Among the victims are: Ali Abdul Aziz Abu Abdullah, Ali Aqaqa and Jawad AlDagher.

Under the heading: "Britain's cash and Bahrain's firing squads; 5 things we have learned", Reprieve, the UK-based organisation that opposes death penalty and torture, issued a statement highlighting the UK-Bahrain relations. The article outlined several criminal abuses carried out by the Alkhalifa dictatorship. It said: Amid these abuses, there are worrying signs that Britain is helping to prop up Bahrain's death penalty system. Here are five things we know so far. 1: Britain has spent £5 million assisting the system that made these executions possible. 2: The three men executed were categorically failed by UK-trained institutions. 3: Britain can no longer claim to be promoting human rights in Bahrain. 4: The British government has repeatedly glossed over evidence of human rights abuses linked to the bodies it is training. 5: More executions are imminent and the British government is yet to act

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UN criticises Saudi HR record; UK urged to stop defending Alkha-

Saudi Arabia has been accused of using anti-terror laws to suppress free expression and failing to carry out independent inquiries into its Yemen bombing campaign in a hard-hitting report published on 4th May by the UN special rapporteur on human rights. The report follows a five-day visit by Ben Emmerson QC on behalf of the UN to Riyadh, where Saudi officials refused to grant the rapporteur access to prisoners the UN believes are being wrongly held under anti-terror laws. He also said he had heard repeated stories of wrongful arrest, misuse of court procedures, cases of torture to extract confessions and clear cases of miscarriages of justice in recent beheadings. Emmerson also called specifically for the release of 10 named Saudis who he said had been arbitrarily arrested, largely because they had expressed criticism of aspects of the kingdom. Despite this bleak HR record, the US is trying to push through multi-billion dollar arms sales contracts with Saudi Arabia before President Trump's forthcoming kingdom visit. More than \$1bn worth of munitions including armour-piercing Penetrator Warheads and Paveway laser-guided bombs made by Raytheon are among the contracts being negotiated. The Obama administration had suspended the planned Raytheon sale because of concerns over civilian casualties in the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen. In past few days Awwamiyah Town in Eastern Province has been targeted by Saudi forces attempting to alter the demographic composition of the province. Citizens homes and cars were hit and destroyed.

In the week 1st to 7th May the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights has documented at least 73 protests in 29 towns and villages. At least 11 of these protests were attacked by regime's mercenary forces using

chemical and tear gases and shotguns causing injuries to at least three native citizens. There were several arrests including one woman. Eighteen people were brought to Alkhalifa courts which sentenced them to a total of 121 years. One of them was given life sentence. A senior member of AlWefaq Society has been remanded in custody for 30 days after his arrest. Nazar Al Qari was arrested on 5th May and his house thoroughly searched. He had been jailed and tortured in the nineties. At one stage he took refuge at the British Embassy in Manama which subsequently forced him out and into the hands of the regime's torturers. The regime has started implementing one of its most draconian rules; trying civilians by military courts. After eight months of forced disappearance, young native Fadhel Sayed Abbas was yesterday brought to a military court. He has endured incalculable torture throughout. Yesterday Amnesty International issued a Press Release condemning this step: "This is a shameful move by the authorities designed to strike fear in the heart of the population. It is also a serious blow for justice in Bahrain. Military trials in Bahrain are flagrantly unfair. And trying civilians before military courts is contrary to international standards," said Samah Hadid, Director of Campaigns at Amnesty International's Beirut regional office. "The decision to transfer Fadhel Sayed Abbas Hasan Radhi to the military court must immediately be quashed. He must be given immediate access to proper legal representation, informed of the charges against him, and tried in a civilian court, according to international fair trial standards."

On 4th May The Associated Press joined with other news organizations in signing a letter to Bahrain's dictator, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, calling on him to instruct his government to allow journalists to freely

operate in the country. After describing the dire situation and the ill-treatment of journalists, the letter said: "These recent actions have had a chilling effect on the media's ability to cover Bahrain at a time when the country faces a growing set of challenges. The apparently coordinated action against journalists working for international news agencies suggests that Bahrain—which prides itself as being a business friendly, reform-minded beacon of openness and tolerance—aims to block independent news and images from reaching the wider world. The letter said: "We collectively call on you to instruct your government to allow journalists to freely operate in Bahrain and to give foreign media organizations equal access to the country." It was signed by: Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Agence France-Presse (AFP), The Associated Press (AP), France 24, International Press Institute (IPI), Monte Carlo Doualiya and Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Bahrain has barred German ARD reporter Robert Kempe from entering the country to attend the FIFA Congress. He had been critical of Alkhalifa candidate for FIFA presidency who was crushed by his competitor, the present president. Revenge is an Alkhalifa art used against critics.

UK MPs and rights groups have reacted with dismay over the use of a secretive £1bn government aid and security fund to pay for a Royal Marines band to play in Bahrain for the Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday, despite the country's dire human rights record. Funds from the conflict, stability and security fund (CSSF), which is aimed at tackling conflicts and building stability overseas, were used to send the Royal Marines band to Bahrain in April 2016 at a cost of £25,000 to the taxpayer.

Bahrain Freedom Movement,
10th May 2017

Bahrain journalist found guilty of reporting without license

A Bahrain court fined a prominent journalist 1,000 dinars (\$2,650) on Thursday for reporting in the kingdom without official permission, her lawyer said, after a trial seen by rights groups as an example of diminishing press freedom.

Nazeeha Saeed, an award-winning Bahrain correspondent for France 24 and the Arabic-language Monte Carlo Doualiya radio, was accused of working as a journalist without a permit, after authorities did not renew her accreditation in June 2016.

Her lawyer Hameed al-Mulla said Saeed, who had worked as an accredited correspondent for 12 years, would appeal against the verdict of the lower criminal court. Mulla has argued that Saeed had applied for the annual renewal of her permit before its expiry.

French public radio broadcaster France Médias Monde (FMM) and Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) had urged the Gulf Arab country's authorities

to abandon their prosecution of Saeed and allow her to continue her work as a reporter.

When prosecutors first outlined the charge against her last year, RSF accused Bahrain of hounding and harassing Saeed. Bahrain has replied that it is simply applying the laws regulating the accreditation of international journalists.

Sherif Mansour, the Middle East and North Africa program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists, said Thursday's ruling had in effect silenced one of the most prominent reporters covering Bahrain for international media.

"The conviction, and recent targeting of journalists, have had a chilling effect on the media's abil-

ity to cover Bahrain and aims to block independent news and images from reaching the wider world," he said in a statement.

Civil liberties monitors point to freedom of expression as a right increasingly constrained in Gulf Arab states.

RSF, which ranks Bahrain 164 on a list of the worst countries for press freedom in 2017, with Eritrea bottom on 180, says 14 journalists and bloggers are currently detained.

Home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, Bahrain has carried out a crackdown on opposition political activity and dissent since a 2011 uprising by demonstrators from the Shi'ite Muslim majority seeking a greater role in government.



UN envoy criticizes abuses following visit

Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism apparatus targets rights activists

Human Rights Watch 29 May 2017
A United Nations official who recently visited Saudi Arabia has criticized the country's use of its terrorism tribunal and counterterrorism law to unjustly prosecute human rights defenders, writers, and peaceful critics, Human Rights Watch said today. Ben Emmerson, the UN special rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism, issued his statement on May 4, 2017, following a visit to the country from April 30 to May 4. "King Salman should immediately pardon and release anyone imprisoned merely for peacefully expressing their opinions," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "In combating terrorism within its borders, Saudi Arabia should engage with rights activists and offer them a seat at the table rather than a bed in a prison cell."

Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism law and a series of related decrees are used to criminalize a wide range of acts as "terrorism", including intending to "insult the reputation of the state," "harm public order," or "calling for atheist thought."

Emmerson said that Saudi authorities denied him access to people jailed under the counterterrorism law and expressed concern regarding Saudi Arabia's "unacceptably broad definition of terrorism." He also called on Saudi Arabia to set up "a new independent mechanism to re-examine all cases where people had been jailed for exercising their rights of free speech, thought, conscience, religion or opinion, and of peaceful assembly or association."

In his statement, Emmerson urged Saudi officials to limit the legal definition of terrorism to "acts or threats of violence that are committed for religious, political or ideological motives, and that are aimed at putting the public or section of the public in fear or to coerce a government or international organization to take or refrain from taking any action." Since 2014, Saudi authorities have tried nearly all peaceful dissidents facing broad, catch-all charges in the Specialized Criminal Court, which the authorities set up in 2008 to investigate terrorism-related crimes.

Human Rights Watch research has found that the court often convicts suspects on charges that are not recognizable crimes. Some speech-related charges have resulted in prison sentences of between 10 and 15 years.



Saudi activists and dissidents currently serving long prison terms based solely on their peaceful activism include Waleed Abu al-Khair, Mohammed al-Qahtani, Abdullah al-Hamid, Fadhil al-Manasif, Sulaiman al-Rashoodi, Abdulkareem al-Khodr, Fowzan al-Harbi, Saleh al-Ashwan, Abdulrahman al-Hamid, Zuhair Kutbi, and Alaa Brinji.

In other cases Human Rights Watch analyzed, the court convicted defendants solely on confessions that the defendants later retracted in court, saying that they

only confessed under torture and duress. Some of these cases resulted in the death penalty.

On January 2, 2016, Saudi Arabia carried out a mass execution of 47 men for "terrorism offenses." Forty-three were associated with Al-Qaeda attacks in the 2000s, and four were Shia allegedly involved in protest-related crimes in 2011 and 2012. It was Saudi Arabia's largest mass execution since 1980. Among those executed was Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, a prominent Shia cleric sentenced to death in 2014 after the Specialized Criminal Court convicted him on a host of vague charges, apparently based largely on his peaceful criticism of Saudi officials.



Saudi war led to Cholera; *Continued from Page 2*

On 12th May Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action titled: "Forcibly disappeared Bahraini faces military trial". It said: Fadhel Sayed Abbas Hasan Radhi's case has been transferred to a military court. Neither his family nor lawyer has been informed of the charges. Fadhel Sayed has been subjected to enforced disappearance since September 2016, and since then remains at risk of torture and other ill treatment. AI urged people to write to Alkhalifa regime; Urging the Bahraini authorities to immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of Fadhel Sayed Abbas Hasan Radhi as well as the legal basis for his detention and provide him with prompt and regular access to his family, lawyer and any medical attention and ensure that he is protected from torture; Urging the Bahraini authorities to charge Fadhel Sayed Abbas Hasan Radhi with a recognizable criminal offense, or release him; If he is charged with a recognizable criminal offense, urging them to transfer his case to a civilian court that complies with international fair trial standards, excluding evidence obtained under torture and not resorting to death penalty. Alkhalifa tribal regime has rounded up scores of family members related to Bahraini activists abroad following their protests against dictator, Hamad bin Isa Alkhalifa. They were arrested, intimidated and threat-

ened with severe reprisals if their relatives continued their peaceful protests against the Alkhalifa dictatorship. On 14th May several Bahraini exiles staged a protest at Windsor Horse Show calling on UK government to stop supporting him. Some activists managed to raise a banner with that slogan inside the race course, facing the Queen and her Alkhalifa guest. Bahrain's dictator attended the event on 14th May and was granted a seat next to Her Majesty. On 12th May Index on Censorship had issued a statement titled: "The Royal Windsor Horse Show should sever ties with the Kingdom of Bahrain". It said that five rights groups had sent letters to Buckingham Palace, event organisers HPower Group and principal partner Land Rover. The human rights groups stated: "The Royal Windsor Horse Show and the monarchy risk reputational damage by maintaining close relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain and its head of state, and the continued association only serves to undermine the work of human rights organisations such as ours who are seeking a peaceful and reformative cessation of human rights abuses in Bahrain."

Bahrain Freedom Movement
17th May 2017