

BAHRAIN

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Successive defeats will end the era of Saudi and Alkhalifa tyranny

The Gulf region is probably reaching the endgame. With internal conflicts at unprecedented levels the scene is set for more conflicts, less reforms and deeper feelings of injustice. The regime of Bahrain has always hoped for good luck to save it from the people's wrath. It has been dependent on foreign powers to defend its existence against the will of the people. Living outside the popular legitimacy has weakened the regime so much that it sought help from foreign mercenaries. But there is a limit to how much those mercenaries can defend a corrupt regime that is corrupt to the core. It is a known fact that when the people revolted on 14th February 2011 calling for regime change the ruling tribal dictator almost collapsed. Within a month his allies intervened to re-instate his regime. The Saudis invaded Bahrain and helped to crush the Revolution. The Alkhalifa regime proved to be unable to stand up the challenge of a peaceful popular uprising. If it were not for the Saudi and Emirati troops it would have certainly collapsed. Yet the dictator did not feel safe. It went on to import more mercenaries from Pakistan and Jordan. This is in addition to the American base on the island. As the people's revolt continued the tribal regime volunteered to build a marine base for UK which was opened three years ago.

The Gulf politics have since witnessed dramatic changes. Iran had been presented as the "main culprit" in supporting the opposition. The relations were severed and the flights suspended. The Revolution continued unabated. Two months ago, however, the Saudis dragged the Gulf region to another political crisis. This time the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has become a battlefield. The Frustrated by the lack of fortunes in Syria, Iraq or Bahrain the Saudis decided to open a new front with Qatar, a GCC member. They thought it would be an easily winnable battle. But the Saudis soon realised that they had swallowed more than they could stomach. Despite support from both United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Alkhalifa regime the Saudis failed to dislodge the Qataris or force them into submission. They rejected the 13 demands presented by the three countries (plus Egypt). The Saudis were prevented by their Anglo-American allies from waging war on Qatar. The West feared another escalation that would implicate them in igniting

regional conflicts. With no horizon for a quick fix, the Saudis had to drink the poison of gradual easing of tension in the region. For years they had conspired against Iraq and sent thousands of terrorists to bomb that country and wage sectarian war. Now that Iraq has been able to defeat ISIS in several areas and are adamant on removing them from Iraq, the Saudis were forced to "seek forgiveness" from that embattled country. They sent back their ambassador and are seeking to use Iraq against Iran.

With the pilgrimage season in sight the Saudis pleaded with the Iranians to return their pilgrims. Now they are talking of a rapprochement with Tehran who had all along been accused of blasphemy. Any reconciliation will be on the terms of conditions laid down by Tehran. In the event of full diplomatic relations being restored, Alkhalifa will face a dire situation. They became too arrogant and targeted Iran with abuse, accusation and extreme forms of religious enmity. Now that the Saudis have decided to amend their relations with Iran, the Alkhalifa will have to swallow the poison and beg Iran for forgiveness. To prepare for this eventuality, they, once again, joined the Saudis in targeting Qatar. They even accused the opposition of links to the rulers of Qatar. It was one of those fairy tales that have no chance of materialisation. The Qataris reacted mildly. They reopened the Al Jazeera screens to some members of the Bahraini opposition. This is now becoming a source of extreme anger both to the Saudis and the Bahraini regime. The four country alliance headed by the Saudis is now struggling to decide their next steps as the Qataris continue to reject their demands. The Alkhalifa have thus found themselves in a corner.

The popular revolt by Bahrainis has continued unabated. The recent escalation of repression by the regime's brutal forces has confirmed the desperation of the regime. Despite the recent crackdown against anyone who dares criticise the regime the people have remained resilient. They have remained faithful to their original demands; achieving fundamental political change in the country. The attack on human rights activists and the reinvigoration of the hated National Security Agency (NSA) have not dampened, in

any sense, the people's desire to continue the struggle to the end. The more the regime escalates repression, the more defiant the people become. The regime has lost the trust of even its own allies. The US and UK are now under immense pressure to change their policies towards the Alkhalifa. When the State Department called for the release of human rights activist, Ibtisam Al Sayegh the dictator was stunned. He thought that he had an open check from America to abuse, torture and intimidate the people. He had been emboldened by Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia in May to carry out more blatant attacks on the people especially human rights activists. His torturers were boasting to victims like Ibtisam Al Sayegh, Ibrahim Sarhan and Nabeel Rajab that the Americans had granted them full support. But the steadfastness of the victims caused massive blows to their morale.

The fortunes of the Gulf dictators are dwindling. This is a fact. With the defeat of terrorism in Iraq and Syria, the rising worldwide awareness of the Saudi illegitimate war on Yemen and the failure of those dictators to change, the scene has thus been set for fundamental changes in balance of power. The forces of counter revolution which had dominated the scene in 2011 are on the run. The Saudi-Israeli alliance is being challenged inside Palestine as well as in other Arab countries. Those forces did not undertake any serious step to reform their political systems in order to silence their opponents. The policies of the Saudis and their allies over the past six years did nothing to dampen the anger of the masses which are denied the benefits of the booming oil prices. The dictators have missed the opportunity to defuse the situation. The next phase of conflict between the people and those dictators is likely to be the conclusive. Our countries have suffered for generations and deserve a respite. The successive reverses suffered by the counter revolution forces led by the Saudis have dramatically changed the political landscape. A bright dawn awaits our people as the dictators are doomed. The signs are there beginning with the internal fragmentation of the GCC, the Saudi and Alkhalifa defeat in Yemen, Iraq and Syria and the world public awareness of those facts. Change will happen; tyranny will end.

Saudi crimes in Yemen highlighted, as Alkhalifa intensify war on Bahrain

The Saudi-led military coalition conducting airstrikes in Yemen committed "grave violations" of human rights against children last year, killing 502, injuring 838, according to a draft report by the U.N. Secretary General António Guterres. "The killing and maiming of children remained the most prevalent violation" of children's rights in Yemen, according to the 41-page draft report obtained by Foreign Policy. "In the reporting period, attacks carried out by air were the cause of over half of all child casualties, with at least 349 children killed and 333 children injured." The chief author of the confidential draft report, Virginia Gamba, the U.N. chief's special representative for children abused in war time, informed top U.N. officials Monday, that she intends to recommend the Saudi-led coalition be added to a list of countries and entities that kill and maim children, according to a well-placed source. The decision will have to be taken by Guterres, who will make the final report public later this month.

The authors of a letter published in The Lancet last week said that Britain and the US have played "a crucial role" in creating conditions conducive to the catastrophic spread of cholera in Yemen. An analysis by the researchers at London's Queen Mary University, found that eight of ten of Yemen's cholera deaths occur in rebel-controlled areas. Combining the latest data from the World Health Organisation and mapping that on the ground, the three researchers found the cholera outbreak was disproportionately affecting areas controlled by Houthi rebels. "Both sides have been accused of disregarding the wellbeing of civilians and breaching international humanitarian law. But the government and Saudi-led coalition that supports it command far greater resources," wrote researchers Jonathan Ken-

edy, Andrew Harmer and David McCoy. "As a result, Houthi-controlled areas have been disproportionately affected by the conflict, which has created conditions conducive to the spread of cholera."

The first woman to be tried by Saudi rulers for her political activities has been transferred to Riyadh for trial. Na'eema Al Matrood, 43, from the town of Sayhat in the Eastern Province was first arrested on 23rd February 2016, released after two days and re-arrested on 16th April. She has since been subjected to intensive interrogation, physical and psychological abuse and charged with a long list of "crimes" including undermining the regime, calling for the release of political prisoners, participating in anti-regime protests and criticising Saudi military intervention in Bahrain. Another woman from the Eastern Province is facing similar charges. Israa Al Ghamgham was arrested in December 2015 with her husband, Musa Al Hashem, when their home had been raided at the town of Al-Jesh in the Eastern Province. Both women face the prospect of beheading and crucifixion by the Saudi regime.

The Alkhalifa regime's indifference to the values of human rights has become a serious threat to the natives of Bahrain. Instead of heeding the calls by the US Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to halt persecution of the native Shia Muslim population, the dictator has implemented harsher measures. More scholars are being detained and abused. On 19th August, Sayed Mohyi Al Mash'al, a senior religious figure was detained at the airport and remanded in custody for one week. He is accused of the same charge levelled against native Bahrainis who protest against the occupation of their country "inciting the hatred of the regime". The Alkhalifa dictator has ordered the detention of journalist Nazeera Saeed for exposing her torture the world.

She had been detained, tortured and abused for her coverage of the pro-democracy movement. She identified her torturer and made a legal complaint. The regime sought revenge. She was charged with working without license with Radio France 24. Two days ago she was asked to pay a ransom of 1000 Bahraini Dinars (over \$2500). As she was on a trip to her workplace in France, Alkhalifa issued a warrant for her arrest. This is the state of freedom of expression in today's Bahrain, the special ally of UK. Young native, Hussain Dhaif, is riddled with acute sickle cells disease. He has been languishing in Alkhalifa torture chambers since his abduction several years ago by masked members of their death squads. His condition is deteriorating, and his family has been pleading for proper medical treatment, but the request has been denied. Several inmates has have lost their lives as a direct result of medical neglect.

In a sign of desperation, the regime has tightened the noose on the leaders of Bahrain's Revolution. For the past six months they have been denied family visits and proper medication. Since they staged a strike in their cells last February to protest the inhumane treatment by prison officers those visits have been curtailed. Hassan Mushaima, Abdul Wahab Hussain, Sheikh Abdul Jalil Al Miqdad, Sheikh Mohammad Habib Al Miqdad, Sheikh Saeed Si Noori, Sheikh Abdul Hadi Al Mokhowdar, Sheikh Mirza Al Mahroos, Dr Abdul Jalil AlSingace, Abdul Hadi Al Khawaja, Mohammad Isma'il, Mohammad Jawad Parweez and Sheikh Ali Salman are being subjected to most severe psychological punishment for insisting on fundamental political change to replace the tribal dictatorship.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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US report highlights persecution of Shia Muslims by Saudis, Alkhalifa

The annual report on Religious Freedom issued by the US State Department yesterday confirmed the dire situation in both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The regimes of both countries are curtailing the religious freedom of the majority natives (in Bahrain) and the non-Wahhabi communities (in Saudi Arabia) at an alarming rate. Secretary of State, James Tillerson called on Alkhalifa dictatorship to end its discrimination against the Shia community and stop targeting and discriminating against them: "In Bahrain the government continue to question, detain and arrest Shiite clerics, community members and opposition politicians." He further stated "Members of the Shia community there continue to report ongoing discrimination in government employment, education, and the justice system," adding that "Bahrain must stop discriminating against the Shia communities". He urged Saudi Arabia to embrace greater degrees of religious freedom for all of its citizens. On 24th May, three UN experts urged the

Saudis to immediately stop demolition of cultural heritage and historic homes.

However Saudi destruction of civilian areas in the Eastern Province has continued. In the district of AlMusawwarah, Saudi forces have so far destroyed 488 buildings, six mosques and eight other religious (Hussaini) halls. They also obliterated the AlNimr religious school and the mortuary of the town. Many other buildings were destroyed in adjacent areas. Human Rights Watch has done its own satellite analysis without relying on images circulating on social media, said Adam Coogole, a Middle East researcher for Human Rights Watch. That analysis shows widespread destruction in the Musawara neighbourhood. Video and photographic evidence gathered by Human Rights Watch also documents the destruction caused by fighting, specifically, the ordinance shot by Saudi security forces on buildings in the neighbourhood, Coogole said. "Residents have told me that essentially the entire main street, which was essentially all businesses, is pretty much

destroyed, most of those businesses are heavily damaged by the fighting".

The Saudi regime has been angered by the screening last night of a documentary titled: Kidnapped! Saudi Arabia's Missing Princes. It sheds light on the abduction of three members of the House of Saud who called for reform in the authoritarian Kingdom. The film suggests that all three were abducted on European soil and returned to Riyadh in a systematic attempt by the Saudi authorities to silence high-profile defectors.

As the world community continues to ignore the plight of native Bahraini human rights activist, Mrs Ibtisam Al Sayegh, she staged hunger strike yesterday, in protest at the various forms of torture and abuse the regime's torturers administer on her. In the past few days sick women inmates were transferred to cells near to her own. Some of them suffer from contagious diseases such as TB and other lung ailments. She also complains that her food is often stolen

Continued on Page 4

Saudis kill citizens & throttle Yemen, Bahrainis to mark Independence Day

On 3rd August, Saudi forces committed another crime, killing one citizen and injuring several others. Hajji Mohammad Al Ruhaiman received a direct hit by a live bullet about 100 metres away from the Awwamiyah town's post centre. He was among a group of 40 people being transferred outside the town to avoid the ongoing shelling by regime's criminal forces. This brings the number of martyrs to 25 since the regime initiated its war on Awwamiyah on 10th May as part of its policy of genocide directed against the native Shia Muslim population residing mainly in the oil-rich Eastern Province. Yesterday a Saudi court sentenced a prominent Shia Muslim scholar to a lengthy jail sentence for his political views. Sheikh Hussain Al Radhi was given 13 years for protesting against the execution of Sheikh Nimr Al Nimr. He has been in detention for more than one year. On 3rd August the editorial of New York Times was titled: "An Ally Is Set to Execute Critics. Will Mr. Trump Be Silent?" It said: Mujtaba al-Sweikat was a bright 17-year-old student on his way to visit Western Michigan University when he was arrested at King Fahd Airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2012. Since then, Mr. Sweikat has been in Saudi custody, subjected to torture, including beatings so severe his shoulder was broken, in order to extract confessions that sealed his fate: condemned to death, likely by beheading. The human rights group Reprieve, 116 Western Michigan University faculty and staff members and the American Federation of Teachers are calling on President Trump to intervene with King Salman on behalf of Mr. Sweikat and the other men. The article concluded: "Mr. Trump could take advantage of his new friendship with

the Saudis and make an immediate appeal to King Salman to halt these horrific executions."

As the situation in Yemen deteriorated further with the Cholera epidemic spreading, the country director of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said that Jet fuel deliveries to the rebel-held capital of Sanaa had been blocked by Riyadh. Auke Lootsma, UNDP's country director, told reporters via a video link from the city on Tuesday: "We have difficulties obtaining permission from the coalition and from the government of Yemen to transport this jet fuel to Sanaa to facilitate these flights." Around 70 per cent of the 27-million strong population is now reliant on some form of humanitarian aid. A total of 14.5 million people don't have regular access to clean water and 7.3 million live on the brink of famine. Less than half of the country's medical centres are still functional.

On 6th August, masked members of Alkhalifa Death Squads snatched Ali Makki Marhoun and took him to secret torture dungeons. Days earlier, his brother, Hassan, had also been detained. From Karzakan Town, four members of the family of martyr Fadhel Abbas were detained: Hassan Makki Abbas Marhoun, his brother Ali, his sister Zainab and her husband Amin Habib Mansi. Two other young men were detained in a raid on their home. Mohammad Atiyya Mohammad and his brother, Hassan were snatched by regime's brutal mercenaries. There are at least four native Bahraini women languishing behind bars for protesting against the tribal dictatorship.

On 7th August Nabeel Rajab's trial was convened only to be postponed until 9th September. In the proceedings it be-

came clear that Alkhalifa revenge was the only motive for his detention. The regime's prosecutors could not produce credible evidence that constitutes a criminal activity by Mr Rajab. The trial was held two days after 13 international NGOs signed a letter expressing disgust at UK's FCO for remaining silent on Mr Rajab's continued detention. It said: "It is appalling that while the FCO recognises the brave work of human rights defenders worldwide, it has turned a blind eye to the human rights abuses in Bahrain, including the reprisals against Mr. Rajab." They raise the FCO's Human Rights and Democracy Report, published last month, which applauds the work of human rights defenders globally and state that silence on Rajab's case contradicts policies to support human rights defenders. The letter was signed by Article 19, English PEN, FIDH, Front Line Defenders, Index on Censorship, the Jimmy Wales Foundation, PEN International, Reporters Without Borders and World Organisation Against Torture, alongside the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, Gulf Centre for Human Rights and European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights. The letter was also signed by Sue Willman, Director of Deighton Pierce Glynn and Julie Ward MEP.

Bahrainis will mark the Independence Day on 14th August in their own style, calling for an end to Alkhalifa reign of terror and reminding UK of its obligation to protect human rights. This is the 46th anniversary of the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971. There will be activities inside and outside the country.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
9th August 2017

UN: Create International Inquiry into Yemen Abuses

(Geneva) – The United Nations Human Rights Council should create an independent, international inquiry into abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen, Human Rights Watch and 56 other national, regional, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) said today in a letter to council member countries.

Parties to the conflict continue to commit serious violations and abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law, the organizations said. Yemen is home to the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with at least 7 million people on the brink of famine and hundreds of thousands suffering from cholera. The Yemeni government and the Saudi-led coalition supporting it have failed to impartially and transparently investi-

gate alleged abuses by their forces.

"What was a steady drumbeat of support for an international inquiry into Yemen abuses has become a crescendo," said John Fisher, Geneva director at Human Rights Watch. "Human Rights Council member countries should live up to their own mandate, heed these calls, and put in place a

body to begin chipping away at the impunity that has been a central facet of Yemen's war."

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the head of OCHA, the UN's lead humanitarian agency, and the Security Council's Panel of Experts on Yemen have also called for an international inquiry into

Yemen abuses. They have been joined in the call by dozens of Yemeni organizations from areas under the control of both Houthis-Saleh forces and of the Yemeni government.

Since March 2015, the UN human rights office has specifically verified that at least 5,110 civilians have been killed and 8,719 wounded during the conflict, but believes "[t]he overall number is probably much higher."

Continued on Page 4



UK and US play 'crucial role' in creating conditions for spread of cholera in Yemen, say researchers

Britain and the US have played “a crucial role” in creating conditions conducive to the catastrophic spread of cholera in Yemen, according to authors of a letter published in *The Lancet*.

An analysis by the researchers at London's Queen Mary University, found that eight of ten of Yemen's cholera deaths occur in rebel-controlled areas. Combining the latest data from the World Health Organisation and mapping that on to areas under government and rebel control, the three researchers found the cholera outbreak was disproportionately affecting areas controlled by Houthi rebels.

The rebels are the target on a two-year military campaign by a Saudi Arabia-led coalition that has received logistical and political support from the UK and the US. British companies have continued to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia despite growing concern about civilian casualties.

“Both sides have been accused of disregarding the wellbeing of civilians and breaching international humanitarian law. But the government and Saudi-led coalition that supports it command far greater resources,” wrote researchers Jonathan Kennedy, Andrew Harmer and David McCoy.

“As a result, Houthi-controlled areas have been disproportionately affected by the conflict, which has created conditions conducive to the spread of cholera.”

They added: “Saudi-led airstrikes have destroyed vital infrastructure, including hospitals and public water systems, hit civilian areas, and displaced people into crowded and insanitary conditions. A Saudi-enforced blockade of imports has caused shortages of, among other things, food, medical supplies, fuel and chlorine, and restricted humanitarian access.”

Mr Kennedy said in an additional statement: “Saudi Arabia is an ally of the UK and USA. American and British companies supply Saudi Arabia with huge amounts of military equipment and their armed forces provide logistical support and intelligence. “This backing has made the Saudi-led airstrikes and blockade possible, and therefore the UK and USA have played a crucial role in creating conditions conducive to the spread of cholera.”

In June, Unicef and the WHO released a statement saying that Yemen was “facing the worst cholera outbreak in the world”. Earlier this week, the WHO said more than half a million people in Yemen had been infected with cholera since the epidemic broke out in April, as the country struggled to cope with 5,000 new cases a

day.

It said at least 1,975 people have now died from the acute diarrhoeal infection caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water. Last month, the organisation estimated that around half of cases and a quarter of the dead were children under the age of 15.

Last week, a draft UN report accused the Saudi military coalition of killing hundreds of children in Yemen.

The report, which has yet to be made public and could still be changed, said that 51 per cent of all child deaths and injuries in Yemen last year were the result of the Saudi-led military operation. It says the deaths were “unacceptably high”.

Saudi Arabia has insisted it is operating within international law.

Andrew Smith of Campaign Against Arms Trade, which sought to stop the sale of British-made arms to Saudi Arabia, said: “The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is among the worst in the world, and the bombardment is making it even worse. This couldn't have happened without the complicit support of governments like the UK, which have armed and supported Saudi forces every step of the way.”

A spokesman for the UK Foreign Office said: “We call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to avoid any civilian casualties, particularly that of children, and to permit humanitarian access.”

UN report highlight persecution of Shia, *Cont from Page 2*

to force her to eat unhygienic food. She has said that she stood up for the honour, dignity and rights of Bahraini women who are targeted by Alkhalifa dictatorship which believes they are soft targets. Under Alkhalifa tribal traditions, women are marginalised and oppressed. So when a woman stands up against these defunct tribal traditions she often faces the wrath of the angry and cruel revenge of the tribalists. This includes psychological and physical torture and rape. Mrs Al Sayegh has also urged activists and scholars to stand up for the rights of those women who languish at Alkhalifa torture dungeons, considering this a human and religious duty.

Sheikh Hani Al Mullah has been re-arrested and jailed for six more months for supporting Ayatullah Sheikh Isa Qassim. He had been detained last August with others for 15 day. Yesterday he was given the jail sentence for refusing to give up his support of the people's rights and defending the senior cleric.

In the past few days, native Bahrainis marked the Independence Day in their own style of protests, graffiti and social media. On 14th August 1971 Bahrain gained its

Create inquiry into Yemen abuses, *Continued from Page 3*

Since March 2015, the Saudi-led coalition has conducted scores of unlawful airstrikes, some of which may amount to war crimes, and Houthi-Saleh forces have fired weapons indiscriminately into populated areas in cities such as Taizz and Aden, that may also amount to war crimes.

Both sides have harassed, arbitrarily detained, and forcibly disappeared Yemeni activists and other people, with the number of the “missing” growing across Yemen. Both sides have used widely banned weapons that can endanger civilians long after a conflict ends and have impeded the delivery of aid. The Human Rights Council in 2015 and 2016 failed to create an international inquiry into Yemen abuses, instead endorsing processes that have – over the course of two years – failed to provide the impartial, independent, and transparent investigations needed to address the gravity of violations in Yemen. The 57 organizations that signed the letter urged the council to establish an independent, international inquiry with the mandate to establish the facts and circumstances, collect and preserve evidence, and clarify responsibility for alleged violations and abuses with a view to providing accountability in the long-term.

“Council member countries have twice capitulated to pressure from the Saudi-led coalition and failed to take a principled stance in the face of repeated war crimes and the world's worst humanitarian crisis,” Fisher said. “Governments this September should not cave to political pressure, but instead respond in a way that best helps the Yemeni people.”

independence after the UK troops had completed their withdrawal from all areas East of Suez. Alkhalifa tribal regime refuses to recognise it as the National Day despite people's insistence. In the past week there were protests, marches, road blocks, graffiti and tweets by people who want to see their country liberated from the tribal occupiers of Al Saud and Alkhalifa. There were activities in London, Berlin and Washington.

On Monday 14th August, the Opposition Bloc in UK organised a week-long programme culminating in a seminar and Press Briefing at Unite (The Union) headquarters in Central London. Speakers expressed solidarity with the people of Bahrain in their struggle against tribal rule, tribalism and foreign occupation. Of particular interest have been the unanimous calls for the UK government to change its policy of supporting the autocratic Alkhalifa tribal regime and adopt new strategy based on supporting efforts for democratic transformation and respect of human rights.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
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