

BAHRAIN

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

Regional developments threaten survival of GCC oligarchies

The local and regional developments of the past few weeks point to the downscaling of the significance of the counter revolution forces led by Saudi Arabia. Their overzealous ambitions in Yemen are facing serious resistance and their war machine performances have become an embarrassment to their own allies. On the internal fronts, the onslaught on public liberties is escalating but has failed to make headway. The overall direction of the political flagship of the Bahraini people is clearly pointing to an eventual victory by the people. The intensification by the regime of its repression; sentencing more people to death and life imprisonment, revocation of citizenship, targeting women and children with harsh detention practices and continuing their sectarian policies are signs of Alkhalifa desperation. They have now reached a point of no return with the native majority, and act with this fact in mind. The same is happening with the native Bahrainis (Shia and Sunni Muslims). They have taken a historic decision to end the troubled relations with the tribal regime after decades of struggle have shown it is beyond reform. Human experiences have proven that dictatorships cannot be transformed into democracies. Antiquated tribal regimes cannot establish modern statehood. The reversals of fortunes of those monarchies have unfolded clearly in recent months. First came the relentless efforts by the Saudi-led alliance to capture the port of Hodeida and achieve a moral victory after forty months of reversals and defeats. Their media has been mobilised to provide moral support to the fledgling morale of their armed forces, allies and their own people. The propaganda machines, including prominent news agencies have waged unprecedented campaign of distortion, deception and falsified news to the point that they were ridiculed by their own people. The Yemenis are fending off Saudi-led aggression, bare-footed, lightly unarmed and poorly fed. Yet they have broken the will of the aggressors, exterminating large numbers of invaders and taking hundreds of prisoners. This is one of the miracles of warfare. Several large countries including USA and UK attacked those Yemenis from land, air and sea using most advanced technologies. But they have failed to dislodge the defenders of their own country. Reputable news agencies like Reuters repeated the false news that the aggressors had con-

quered the small Hodeida airport. To date the airport has remained firmly in the hands of the Yemenis.

Then came the international campaign against the Saudis and Alkhalifa for their gross violations of human rights especially against women. The Saudis attempted to silence these criticisms by allowing women to drive for the first time. Their supporters in Washington and London hailed this as great achievement and clear sign of "reform". This is pure deception. Women, like men continue to suffer immensely at the hands of those dictators. Last month scores of women were detained by the Saudis. The Alkhalifa also rounded female activists and subjected them to most horrific treatment. The Western powers have shown unexplained reluctance to take principled stands and call on the regime to stop the humiliating treatment of Bahraini women, some of whom are being subjected to sexual abuse and rape. Despite the shameful policies of USA and UK that have remained loyal to those criminal regimes, the European Parliament issued a strong resolution last month calling for the release of the political leaders of the Bahraini people and human rights activists. Nabeel Rajab, Sheikh Ali Salman, Hassan Mushaima, Abdul Wahab Hussain and others have become symbols of resistance despite their ongoing ordeals at Alkhalifa torture dungeons. The EP's resolution has regenerated the hope that the cries for help by the Bahraini prisoners are echoing in Brussels, Geneva Washington and London although the politicians intentionally close their ears.

As for the Bahrainis, their case is clear; their objectives are fair and their struggle is justified. They have taken the decision to change the political structure in their country rejecting any attempt to dampen these demands. They are no longer calling for dialogue with the dictators except on how to facilitate a real transition to democracy. They reject any talk of "power-sharing" with those who have committed heinous crimes against the people and have shown no remorse. Last month Bahrain's dictator issued two decrees. The first is to ban members of the dissolved political societies from standing for "elections" to the Alkhalifa pseudo-parliament. This is a clear indica-

tion of the divorce with the people, which is not a bad idea at all. The second is banning political prisoners and members of those societies from taking active roles in Non-Governmental institutions. Both decrees reflect the depth of the enmity between the ruling tribe and the native majority population. Both decrees are positive from the perspective of the revolutionary forces whose aims include real transformation to democracy, ending the Alkhalifa black reign of terror and challenging any attempt to normalise links with those dictators.

As the struggle in Bahrain continues, the dictatorial regimes in the Gulf are fledgling. They are locked in internal feuding among themselves to the extent that diplomatic relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain no longer exist. The GCC has been fragmented form within as a result of those regimes. There are fears that if the current Saudi-led attack on Hodeida succeeds, the next target will be Qatar. Also Oman and Kuwait are fearful of attacks by the Saudi-Emirati-Israeli alliance. If UAE emerges victorious in the battle of Hodeida (which is unlikely given the big casualties they have so far incurred in their recent attempts to conquer the port, then both Oman and Qatar could become target for their aggression. The internal feuding among GCC member states can only lead to stronger desires to receive Western assistance in any future military conflict. Both Washington and London will benefit from extended internal GCC feuding. The Alkhalifa of Bahrain have linked their survival to that of the Saudi-Emirati unholy alliance. But the outcome of this is not guaranteed at all. The reversals at the Yemen's front are annoying the Saudis and their allies. This will reflect itself on the balance of power in the region between the people and the regimes. The delay in implementing serious reforms that give the power back to the people is a strategic mistake that will undoubtedly reduce the chances of survival of those antiquated political entities. The end game is thus not guaranteed by those regimes despite the enormous support from Washington and London. For the people the end game is clear; real transformation to democracy whatever it takes. They have a sacred cause and will continue to pursue it. Their enemies are morally and politi-

Saudi-led alliance blacklisted by UN, Bahrainis persecuted by Alkhalifa

The United Nations has added the Saudi-led alliance waging war on Yemen to the list of countries violating children rights in areas of conflict. The report considered the alliance responsible for hitting 600 children 370 of whom were killed. The total number of children who have been killed by the Saudi and Emirati aggressors over the past 40 months is much higher. According to Human Rights Watch 87 percent of the attacks by the unholy alliance have been illegal, hitting civilian targets. Out of about 500,000 sorties, 435,000 constitute war crimes.

Under the title "Saudi Arabia: Do not execute protesters" Reprieve has called on the Saudi dictators to stop killing innocent people for their activism. It said: 18 young people could be beheaded at any time for the 'crime' of protesting against the Saudi government. Some were sentenced to death for attending protests when they were children. All were brutally tortured into confessing. Saudi Arabia claims to be reforming under its Vision 2030 programme, but these executions could come at any time. Reprieve has asked people to "urge Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to commute their death sentences". It also urged people to sign a petition to stop eminent executions of innocent people.

Following the outburst of international anger against UAE forces for torturing Yemeni prisoners, some victims have been released. But the anger has continued especially as the invaders insist on throttling the Yemenis by cutting off all outside aid to millions of starving and sick Yemenis. The Guantanamo-style prison facilities hold hundreds of Yemenis opposed to the invasion and occupation of their country. Calls are rising for an immediate ceasefire

and withdrawal of the invaders.

The Saudi regime has come under intense criticism for detaining human rights activists. The world's NGOs are united in their condemnation despite the regime's attempts to claim credit for allowing Saudi women to drive. This token gesture is ridiculed as scores of women activist remain behind bars. Among them are: Loujain Al-Hathloul, a well-known women's rights defender on social media who was arrested on 15 May; Dr. Eman Al-Nafjan, founder and author of the Saudiwoman's Weblog, who had previously protested the driving ban; Aziza Al-Yousef, a prominent campaigner for women's rights; Dr. Ibrahim Al-Modaimegh, a lawyer and human rights defender; writer Mohammad Al-Rabea; Abdulaziz Al-Mesha'al, businessman and board member of a women's rights NGO; and Ibrahim Fahad Al-Nafjan.

On Monday 25th June regime's court sentenced Bahraini woman activist, Najah Ahmad Yousuf Al Sheikh to three years in jail for anti-regime stands. She sustained horrific forms of torture, sexually assaulted and abused by the officers of the National Security Agency (NSA). She has been in detention since April 2017 for tweeting against holding the Formula 1 race in Bahrain. Another man was also given three years for the same offence. The regime failed to produce any criminalising evidence that could stand at a court of law.

After banning members of the political societies from standing for elections to the dictator's "parliament" Bahrain's tyrant has now also banned them from standing for any office with the civil society organisations. Alkhalifa "democracy" dictates that the dictator is the source of all legislations; anyone who does not conform is punished.

The country is holding its breath and praying for the health of the most prominent religious and political leader. Sheikh Isa Qassim, 80, was taken to hospital on Sunday night after suffering hip and leg problems that are making it difficult for him to walk. Qassim could be deported at any time after authorities stripped his citizenship in June 2016 over false accusations by Alkhalifa occupiers who are cracking down on all dissent on the Shiite-majority island, imprisoning or forcing politicians and activists into exile.

In the past few days Bahrain's dictator has become a laughing stock in the financial markets as the national currency (Bahraini Dinar) lost grounds against the dollar to hit 17 year-low. Also the servicing of the country's debts have reached record high as the dictator continued his lavish lifestyle, high spending on PR companies and buying off mercenaries at every level; from torturers, riot police journalists and politicians including some British MPs. The cost of insuring Bahrain's debt against default for five years jumped 170 basis points on Monday, the most since records began in 2008, to 609. That's the highest among emerging-market peers after Lebanon. Two months ago the regime had claimed that the largest oil reserve in the world had been discovered in the country. How could the two contradictory events be reconciled? While the down trend of the Bahraini Dinar is a fact, the earlier claim was a dream by a morally and financially bankrupt hereditary dictatorship. He is now waiting for another bailout by Saudis and Emiratis in return for handing them sovereignty over Bahrain.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
27th June 2018

Saudis, Emiratis commit more war crimes, EP condemns Alkhalifa abuses

International calls have been made to stop the ongoing onslaught by the Saudi and Emirati Death machines that have unleashed unrestrained terror on the Yemeni city of Hodeida. The latest aggression that has continued over the past ten days escalated after the failure of the UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths to secure an agreement from the Yemenis to surrender the city to the aggressors. Their bombing of Hodeida airport has reduced it to rubble. It was one of the most outrageous war crimes in modern history. The airport has no military facilities and is not used by Houthis. The city itself has sustained massive destruction and civilians were forced to flee. The deafening silence by the international community has been heavily criticised by almost all international NGOs. The revenge raids by the Saudi and Emirati superior air forces have failed to dislodge the Yemenis defending their country against this foreign aggression. There is widespread belief that if they were allowed to defeat the Yemenis their next target would be the state of Qatar. Both Oman and Ku-

wait are observing with indignation the unfolding situation. Both have refused to support the criminal aggression by the two regimes.

In his opening speech (and the last of his tenure as the High Commissioner for Human Rights) at the 38th session of the Human Rights Council Zeid bin Ra'ad Al Hussain lambasted Bahrain's regime for its dismal record on human rights. He said: Unconditional access to Bahrain continues to be refused to my Office and the Special Procedures, amid continued crackdowns on civil society and additional legislation which further restricts the people's fundamental rights. I encourage the Kingdom to reverse these profoundly damaging trends and to facilitate effective engagement with the international human rights mechanisms. My Office stands ready to provide technical and legal expertise. He also mentioned Bahrain as one of the 40 States that have received no visit by a Special Rapporteur over the past five years, despite requests. It is also one of the 15 States that have more than five pending visits.

On 14th June, the European Parliament adopted, with an overwhelming majority, a strongly-worded [resolution](#) condemning Bahrain's regime for human rights violations. The resolution took a broader view on the ongoing crackdown on human rights and democracy in Bahrain. It regrets that the regime had offered the minimum guarantees to ensure free and fair elections. It noted further restriction of space for debate and liberties, including through the closure of the only independent newspaper, *al Wasat*, and the dissolution of the opposition political societies *al-Wefaq* and *Wa'ad*. Most recently, on June 11, the authorities adopted an [amendment](#) banning most members of the political opposition from seeking election. The European parliamentarians also condemned the Bahraini practice of [stripping citizenship](#) as a tool of repression. They noted that this measure disproportionately affected the Shia Muslim majority of the country. The regime propaganda tools attacked the EP in the worst possible phrases.

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Stop Saudi-led aggression on vital port, free Bahraini women prisoners

As international pressure continues to mount on the Saudi and Emirati regimes not to wage another illegitimate attack on the Yemeni port of Hodeida, the Saudi-led forces have committed another war crime. At approximately 5:40 am on Monday 11 June, an airstrike hit a newly constructed MSF (Doctors Without Borders) cholera treatment centre (CTC) in Abs, Yemen. It serves a population of more than 1 million people. Markings on the roof of the compound clearly identified the CTC as a healthcare facility. MSF has temporarily frozen its activities in Abs. João Martins, MSF's Head of Mission in Yemen said the attack "shows complete disrespect for medical facilities and patients. Whether intentional or a result of negligence, it is totally unacceptable. The compound was clearly marked as a health facility and its coordinates were shared with the SELC". Despite loud calls from the United Nations (UN) and the European Parliament (EP) to release all the Saudi human rights defenders detained in a recent crackdown that began on 15 May 2018, Saudi regime has arrested two more women's rights defenders over the past few days, bringing the number of those arrested close to 20. Other women's rights defenders have been placed under travel ban. On 6th June 2018, journalist and woman human rights defender Nouf Abdulaziz was arrested in a raid on her home, and taken to an unknown location where she has been held incommunicado. She writes for many publications and was a newspaper editor and a television producer. Then came the arrest of Mayya Al-Zahrani after she had published a letter that had been prepared by the first detainee to be published if she was arrested.

On 11th June Bahrain's dictator enacted a

law banning members of dissolved political parties, felons and convicts who later had received royal pardons from standing as candidates for elections. The decision effectively blocks Bahrain's opposition from taking part in the elections for Alkhalifa powerless council, likely to take place in November. His decision was announced by the state-run Bahrain News Agency. Revolutionary groups used the decision to urge the banned political societies to join in the peaceful street protests to bring down the tribal dictatorship. They considered the ban a "blessing in disguise" as it will prevent internal feuding among the opposition should any of them decides to participate in the regime's political show. Regime's Death Squads have escalated attacks on native citizens. On Monday 11th June they snatched photo journalist, Hassan Qambar and took him to unknown place. He has been on the run for six years and sentenced for 120 years because of his work that exposed regime's brutality. Another native citizen was also snatched by masked members of the Death Squads in a dawn raid on his home in the early hours of Monday. The house of Ali Al Adham was surrounded by armoured vehicles during the raid causing fear and anger among the natives.

Also the families of the two women who were arrested four weeks ago are getting increasingly worried for their safety. Zakiya AlBarbouri and Fatima Dawood from Nuwaidrat town are considered "disappeared" as no contact with them has been allowed. Women prisoners have often been subjected to inhumane treatment and torture including rape and other forms of sexual harassment. Liberal Democrat peer, Lord Scriven, has asked the UK government if they knew which branch of Alkhalifa security agencies had detained the two women

who have since been "disappeared". The UK government has justified the killing of five native Bahrainis by Alkhalifa occupiers last year on the ground that they were participating in an "illegal gathering". This is the language of Alkhalifa killers; British people would not identify with them.

To the dismay of Bahrain's dictator, Nabeel Rajab has been granted an international award. The announcement was made by the French officials who said: With the unanimity of its 163 members of its Council, the City of Paris and its Mayor, Mrs Anne Hidalgo, have awarded a Citizenship of Honour to Mr. Nabil Rajab who is presently jailed by the absolutist regime of Bahrain, after having suffered numerous sequences of torture since 10 years of episodic arrests and releases" The Citizenship of Honour is the highest and rarest honour awarded by the capital of France as it has only been awarded to 18 persons (and two moral persons) in 18 years including Nelson Mandela.

Also the European Parliament has called for the release of Mr Rajab. In a statement on 5th June it said: The European Union reiterates its unconditional support to the work undertaken by human rights defenders such as Mr Rajab. Freedom of opinion and expression are essential features of any democratic system and need to be upheld. The European Union continues to call on the Bahraini government to grant Mr Rajab's release, including on humanitarian grounds given the reported deterioration of his health. Once again, the European Union expects all parties in Bahrain to engage in a genuine dialogue with a view to relaunching a process of national reconciliation in a peaceful and constructive manner.

Bahrain Freedom Movement

13th June 2018

Most senior popular leader hospitalised

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Supporters of a prominent Shiite cleric in Bahrain who has lost his citizenship and is under house arrest say he has been taken to a local hospital.

Sheikh Isa Qassim was taken to the hospital on Sunday night after suffering hip and leg problems that are making it difficult for him to walk.

Qassim could be deported at any time after authorities stripped his citizenship in June 2016 over accusations that he fueled extremism and laundered money. His supporters deny the allegations.

Bahrain's Sunni rulers are cracking down on all dissent on the Shiite-majority island, imprisoning or forcing politicians and activists into exile.

Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet.

The majority Shia Muslim population are persecuted by Alkhalifa regime and have been calling for a fundamental change in the political landscape to allow a system based on "one man one vote".



Dictator enacts law banning candidates from elections

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Bahrain's king has enacted a law banning members of banned political parties, felons and convicts who later had received royal pardons from standing as candidates for elections.

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's decision Monday effectively blocks Bahrain's opposition from taking part in parliamentary elections likely to take place in November. His decision was announced by the state-run Bahrain News Agency.

Opposition political parties have been disbanded by court order in Bahrain, part of a wide-ranging crackdown on dissent in the island kingdom off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

Bahrain's parliament, stacked with government loyalists, earlier passed the law enacted by the king.

Activists have been imprisoned and forced into exile as part of the crackdown. Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet and a British naval base.

European Parliament Calls For Sanctions Against Bahrain

Eldar Mamedov, JUNE 15, 2018

On June 14, the European Parliament has adopted, with an overwhelming majority, a strongly worded resolution condemning Bahrain for human rights violations.

The immediate trigger for the resolution was the sentencing of Nabeel Rajab, a prominent Bahraini activist, to five years in prison for his criticisms of the kingdom's human rights record. Remarkably, one of the accusations was "insulting a neighboring country," in reference to Rajab's tweets criticizing Saudi Arabia for its atrocious war in Yemen. This is an alarming example of how the repressive hand of the Saudi state reaches to other countries' domestic political spheres. It is also a much underreported one, overshadowed by all the hype about Iran's real or alleged meddling in the region.

The resolution took a broader view on the ongoing crackdown on human rights and democracy in Bahrain. It regrets that with the approach of the general elections planned for October 2018, the authorities have offered none of the minimum guarantees to ensure free and fair elections. On the contrary, as noted by the International Federation for Human Rights, an advocacy group, the last months have been marked by a further restriction of space for debate and liberties, including through the closure of the only independent newspaper, *al Wasat*, and the dissolution of the opposition political societies *al-Wefaq* and *al-Wa'ad*. Most recently, on June 11, the authorities adopted an amendment banning most members of the political opposition from seeking election.

The European parliamentarians also condemned the Bahraini practice of stripping citizenship as a tool of repression. They noted that this measure disproportionately affected the Shia majority of the country. This statement is particularly welcome given that it's not just Wahhabis who are demonizing Shias but even now a spokesman for the Israeli Defence Force.

Given the gravity of the situation, the MEPs decided that words were not enough and the time has come for real action. That's why they called, for the first time, for sanctions against human rights violators in Bahrain. They also demanded that EU member states halt all transfers of weapons, surveillance, and intelligence equipment that can be used by Bahrain for its ongoing repression.

Yet the adoption of this resolution was more like a parliamentary thriller than a smooth process. The politics of the action says a lot about the stakes involved for authoritarian Persian Gulf regimes when it comes to pushing their narratives and polishing their international image.

Once the political factions of the European Parliament agreed on the joint motion, it turned out that two key blocs—the European People's Party (EPP), the

largest, centre-right bloc in the EP, and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), a group to the right involving British Tories and more unsavory forces such as Poland's Law and Justice Party and the Islamophobic Danish People's Party—reached a backroom deal on a separate text. That text, reflecting ECR more than EPP views, offered only the vaguest of concerns over Nabeel Rajab's sentencing, while praising Bahrain for its "religious tolerance, moderation and cultural diversity." It also stressed that Bahrain is "a key ally of the EU in the Arabian Gulf" and that the stability of this "Arabian Gulf" (!) is of strategic interest to NATO. The text also duly attached "great importance to non-interference in Bahrain's internal affairs by forces seeking to subvert the stability and security of the Kingdom," in an obvious reference to Iran. In fact, Iran was mentioned explicitly in this context in the individual ECR motion, and was removed only in the EPP/ECR joint one.

So, on the day of the vote there were two motions tabled: the critical one by a coalition of progressive forces led by social democrats and a much more lenient one tabled by EPP/ECR.

International human rights groups mobilized to reach out especially to the EPP members to vote for the social-democrat-led motion. The Bahraini embassy, meanwhile, sent a letter to the MEPs calling on them to vote for the EPP/ECR text. Rather brazenly, it called the social democratic text "filled with inaccuracies, which do not reflect the real situation in Bahrain or an understanding of the security challenges in the region." The EPP/ECR text, by contrast, was praised for "understanding the security/regional concerns." The emphasis on security/region is a clear indication that the Bahraini authorities are keen to use Iran's alleged interference as a way to deflect a conversation on human rights.

The EPP/ECR motion was voted on first, and rejected with 285 voting in favor and 339 against. The social-democrat-led resolution was then adopted by 479 votes to 97. This overwhelming support resulted from civil society pressure shaming the EPP into voting for it, leaving only the ECR and the extreme right voting against.

That the Bahraini regime lobbied heavily to sway the vote confirms once again that it is not enough for the authoritarian regimes in the Gulf to enjoy security and trade relationships with the West. They also care about their international image, and they want to be liked and accepted.

The fear of exposure of the real situation is what led Bahrain to twice refuse to accept a visit of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on human rights (DROI). Indeed, Bahrainis proved to be more intransigent than their Saudi neighbors who did host a DROI delegation in November 2017. Instead, Manama prefers to shower hospitality on assorted MEPs from the informal "friendship group," which has no offi-

cial status yet is used to gain a valuable foothold in the EP. Rather extravagantly, Bahrain also hosted a bureau meeting of the ECR in March 2018, which explains this group's willingness to push for Bahrain's agenda.

Yet, it's not the friendship groups or individual political factions that determine the official position of the European Parliament. It is the resolution adopted on June 14, which sends a clear, unequivocal political message of disapproval of the actions of the Bahraini regime.

Saudis, Emirates commit war crimes, *Cont from Page 2*

In Paris, the honorary citizenship granted to Nabeel Rajab by the city's municipality was yesterday handed to Sheikh Mitham Al Salman on behalf of the jailed human rights activist. A ceremony was held on Monday 18th June and was attended by officials and employees of the municipality. It was a great moment for native Bahrainis who have been vindicated in their struggle to achieve freedom, democracy and human rights. Several Bahraini strugglers were granted similar awards. Abdul Hadi AlKhawaja and his two daughters, Zainab and Maryam were granted prestigious awards by Freedom House. Poet Ayat AlQor-mozi who had been detained and abused in 2011 was awarded the Student Peace Prize by Norway in 2015.

The process of normalisation of relations with Israeli occupation forces by Alkhalifa regime continues with the invitation of an Israeli delegation to attend a meeting in Manama for UNESCO's International Heritage Committee. This comes few weeks after the ruling tribe had sent a team to occupied Palestine to take part in a cycling competition. Israel is seen as one of the main providers of security assistance to the embattled dictatorship which is fighting a losing battle with the Bahraini native majority population. Today one official from regime's circles said Alkhalifa would be the first to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

The regime is committing a new crime against humanity by using medicine as a weapon against opponents. Mr Hassan Mushaima has been denied much needed medicines and medical care for his cancer treatment for four months. He has also been denied family visits as well as books, pens or paper. Other members of the leadership group like Dr Abdul Jalil Al Singace, Abdul Wahab Hussain and Sheikh Mohammad Habib Al Miqdad are also deprived of their medicines and medical care despite their ill health. Other prisoners are subjected to repeated sessions of torture for teaching other inmates.

Bahrain Freedom Movement