

BAHRAIN

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

Saudi mass executions are repugnant, regime must be penalised

The culture of death, doom and hate in the Saudi Arabia and its allies must be brought to an end. In the 21st century humanity needs different approaches to life, how to protect it and enjoy it. This must not be camouflaged by empty gestures or limited initiatives to score points. The world needs a fresh start to limit armed conflicts to which the Anglo-American alliance has always been a party. The human race must be respected; the lives of people must not be ended needlessly whether by wars with weapons of mass destruction or by antiquated regimes that attach no real value to people, their lives or their rights. This discourse at the moment is not in line with the political grains of modern statehood even in the "free world" that has largely ignored the sanctity of life and participated in what in certain cases amounted to genocide. The mentality that leads to these approaches is the same that had led to the destruction of the habitat and the severe challenges to the planet. The climate change is only one aspect of the destructive outcomes of this policy. The recent activism by climate change activists in London serves to highlight the severity of the crisis threatening the human existence, but is not enough to stop the irreversible damage to the environment and the depletion of the ozone layer. Mankind is thus threatened with extinction due to these policies that are the product of greed, indifference and opportunism of politicians.

The execution last month of 37 innocent civilians by the Saudi regime serves a notice to the world that humanity is losing its compassion, love and care. The culture of death that led to those executions is not different from that which had enabled the Saudi-Emirati alliance (supported by Israel) to wage an illegal war on Yemen. It is the contempt for human life, the disdain of civilised behaviour and the enmity to modern values and principles regulating people's lives under democratic systems that have encouraged the killers to kill, the warmongers to wage wars and the bloodsuckers of nations to drain the natural resources at unprecedented rates. The executed victims were beheaded and at least one of them crucified. Yet no real challenge to the Saudis has been mounted by anyone. The crime was treated with cold-blood, refraining even from condemning

the Saudi action. Apart from the international human rights bodies that have reacted to the crime with a salvo of condemnation, Western countries continued to conduct "business as usual" by Western powers.

One of the great barriers to serious international work to safeguard the right to live is the Western reluctance to show support to those who had been persecuted by the Saudis. Financial and political considerations weighed heavily against targeting the Saudis for blame and retribution. Even the "brotherly" words to the Saudis and their allies were considered futile and could lead to more terrorism. While the UN (through the human rights council) may have condemned the criminal act by the Saudis, no solid action was taken to send the message home to the Saudis that business would not be conducted in the normal way until this criminal treatment of the needy and the poor is halted. Only then will the idea of a meaningful debate would find a place.

It is clear that the world is becoming more dangerous to live as extreme forms of terrorism and extremism take hold in many places. The recent attacks in Sri Lanka cannot be totally separated from the rising trends of violence. More than 250 people attending churches and hotels were massacred by people who had been taught not only to hate the other but to kill him. In March 50 Muslim worshippers were mowed down by an armed man whose criminal act appeared to be linked to religion. This is one of the most devastating ironies; to kill in the name of religion. None of God's prophets had promoted killing of the other who does not conform to his religion. On the contrary Abrahamic faiths have generally promoted divine love and mutual recognition. God Almighty does not allow meaningless killings and maiming. This makes the Saudi killings more chilling. How can they relate their actions to God? Those innocent people committed no crime in the eyes of divine or even human laws. To call for political reforms, equal distribution of wealth, upholding the rule of law and pluralism are duties of anyone who wants to live on this planet and spread the word of God.

The Saudis have often resorted to mass killing of opponents. In 1980 63 people were killed because they had been captured when French troops stormed the Holy Shrine encompassing the Ka'ba. They had rebelled against the Saudi monarchy when their leader Juhaiman Al Otaibi called them to do so. They occupied the holy shrine until the Saudis called the French elite forces to clear the Ka'ba. There was wide condemnation of the Saudis for inviting non-Muslims to intervene. In 1989 sixteen Kuwaitis were executed by the Saudis for taking part in a peaceful protest in Mecca. Three years ago the Saudis executed the renowned Shia Muslim scholar, Sheikh Nimr Baqir Al Nimr who had sided with the people of Bahrain when they rose against the Khalifi dictatorship. His execution shocked the Muslim world and gave notice to all that the Saudis would stop at nothing when dealing with their opponents.

The people of Bahrain were outraged when the Saudis killed the 37 innocent people. They are aware that some of those victims had supported them in their hour of need and that it was time to pay back. Protests erupted in several areas of the country expressing outrage at the way those innocent victims had been ill-treated and beheaded. There are now enormous pressures on Iraq to stop harnessing the Saudis who have betrayed the causes of the Muslims and committed grave crimes by killing those innocent souls. The statement by HojjatullIslam Moqtada Al Sadr recently calling for the rulers of Syria, Yemen and Bahrain to abdicate unnerved the Khalifis and Saudis beyond imagination. They attacked him ferociously that the Iraqi government was forced to ask for an apology from them. It is thus unlikely that the relations between Iraq and the Saudi-Khalifi dictatorships will survive long. The Saudis have adopted provocative regional policies that are likely to cause further cracks even within the Gulf Cooperation Council. Bahrainis will continue to watch the situation and insist on regime change in Manama as a means of stabilising the region and taming the excesses of its dictators. Bahraini people will not be fooled this time by superficial steps. The change they want must be

37 Saudis beheaded, some crucified, Bahrainis brutalised by Khalifis

Yesterday the world received another massive shock from Saudi Arabia. Six months after decapitating Jamal Khashoggi, the notorious House of Saud has committed another mass murder. With the whim of the pen 37 innocent Saudi nationals were beheaded, some of them crucified. Thirty two of the victims are Shia Muslims from the Eastern Province who had taken part in peaceful protests several years ago. Two days ago the death sentences of 14 of them were upheld by Saudi court. They are: Hussein al-Rabi', Abdullah al-Tureif, Hussein al-Mosallem, Mohamed al-Naser, Mustafa al-Darwish, Fadel Labbad, Sa'id al-Sakafi, Salman al-Qureish, Mujtaba al-Suweyket, Munir al-Adam, Abdullah al-Asreeh, Ahmad al-Darwish, Abdulaziz al-Sahwi and Ahmad al-Rab'i. They were transferred from Dammam in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province to the capital, Riyadh on 15 July 2017 without prior notice. Court documents show that the 14 men told the court they were subjected to prolonged pre-trial detention and had been tortured and otherwise ill-treated during their interrogation to extract their "confessions". However the judge failed to order investigations into their allegations. The court based its decision on these forced "confessions".

Human Rights Watch described the punishment as "grotesque," and said: "Today's mass execution of mostly Shia citizens is a day we have feared for several years. The punishments are especially grotesque when they result from a flawed justice system that ignores torture allegations," said Adam Coogler, Middle East researcher at HRW. Amnesty International called the execution "a chilling demonstration of the Saudi Arabian authorities callous disregard for human

life." It added: "It is also yet another gruesome indication of how the death penalty is being used as a political tool to crush dissent from within the country's Shia minority," said Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty International's Middle East Research Director.

The Saudi regime has undertaken a renewed wave of arrests. The human-rights organization ALQST reported that between April 4 and 9, the regime detained at least 10 rights activists and writers, in the latest crackdown on civil society.

There has been worldwide condemnation of revocation of citizenship of native Bahrainis by the Khalifi occupiers. The recent decision to revoke the citizenship of 138 natives shocked the world especially that some of them are juveniles; none of them had committed any real crime except participating in peaceful anti-regime protests. The UN High Commissioner of Human Rights expressed extreme outrage as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch unreservedly condemned the regime and asked its backers to stop its excessive criminal activity. Thus when Khalifi dictator, Hamad, decided to re-instate the nationality of 551 native Bahrainis he received no praise anywhere. Instead Amnesty International said: It shouldn't have happened in the first place, and called on the dictator to "restore nationality to other ~450; provide redress to those reinstated; repeal denaturalization laws." The criminal activity of the regime has earned it unprecedented condemnation despite the British attempts to shield it. The dictator is now under intense pressure to swallow his pride and concede defeat in his attempts to crush the native Bahraini population.

There are fears for the lives of three natives from the town of Abu Saiba. They

had been abducted ten days ago and taken to the notorious CID torture centre. Nothing has been heard of them since. Two other citizens from the Sunni Muslim community were also detained. Ibrahim Al Sheikh, a journalist and Mohammad Khalid, former member of regime's "parliament" were seized and remanded in custody for one week. Both were accused of "spreading false news".

The people's anger at the regime has deepened further as it continued to implement repressive policies. Despite the ruthless suppression, Bahrainis have continued their protests in various places over the past week. Last Thursday 18th April there was a protest in Manama against normalising relations with "Israel" while Palestinian land remains under occupation. There were other protests at the towns of Abu Saiba, Shakhoura and Bilad Al Qadeem. They were attacked by regime's forces and waves of arrest followed.

Meanwhile the news from Bahrain's prisons are alarming. In addition to the lack of medical care, the absence of hygiene has led to a serious outbreak of skin diseases. Cancer has been rampant as the prison environment deteriorated further and regime's attention to its obligation under international law slipped away. The senior detainees like Hassan Mushaima and Abdul Wahab Hussain have been denied their urgently-needed medicines and doctor consultation. Mr Mushaima now suffers bouts of high temperature and sweat. His cancer condition has remained undetermined due to lack of care. Khalifi dictator appears to be adopting a policy of "slow and painful death" towards the detained leaders of the people.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
24th April 2019

Trump vetoes resolution on arming Saudis, nationality of Bahrainis revoked

There has been an angry reaction to Trump's veto of a resolution passed by Congress to end U.S. military assistance in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen. Yesterday's veto — the second in Trump's presidency — was expected, and Congress lacks the votes to override it. But passing the never-before-used war powers resolution was viewed as a milestone for lawmakers, who have shown a renewed willingness to assert their war-making authority after letting it atrophy for decades under presidents from both parties. Congress has grown uneasy with Trump's close relationship with Saudi Arabia as he tries to further isolate Iran, a regional rival. Many lawmakers also criticized the president for not condemning Saudi Arabia for the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi who lived in the US and had written critically about the Saudi household. Last week Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Rights Watch UK joined a fresh legal challenge

to the UK's continuing arms exports to Saudi Arabia. The three organisations are intervening in a case brought by Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) at the Court of Appeal in London seeking to challenge the legality of the UK Government's decision to issue licences for arms exports to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen, despite the risk of the weapons being used for serious violations of international humanitarian law in the conflict. The case was originally heard by the High Court in February 2017, with CAAT arguing that arms transfers to Saudi Arabia should be halted because of the clear risk that the weapons supplied would be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen. However, the court dismissed CAAT's case, that the UK was entitled to continue arms exports to Saudis. Yesterday, the Washington Post titled its editorial "Saudi Arabia's reckless prince fuels yet another civil war". It said: What prompted Mr. Hifter

to conclude he should seek military victory rather than compromise? ... His offensive has been egged on and materially supported by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. These Arab governments and Russia have deliberately sabotaged an international effort that had the support of the European Union, the African Union and the United States, in addition to U.N. Secretary General António Guterres. The editorial concluded: "Mr. Trump often complains of U.S. clients who accept Washington's aid and protection, only to take advantage of its fecklessness. Should he care to look, he could find an excellent example of that unfolding in Libya." Yesterday the human rights world was shaken to the core when UK-backed Khalifi torturers announced that they had revoked the nationality of 138 native Bahrainis. The court sentenced 69 of the group to life in prison. 70 were sentenced to between three years and 10 years imprisonment.

UN human rights chief deeply concerned by mass terrorism convictions in

GENEVA (18 April 2019) – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Thursday expressed alarm at a court decision in Bahrain that revoked the nationalities of 138 people after a mass trial. There are serious concerns that the court proceedings failed to comply with international fair trial



standards, with a large number of the accused reportedly tried in absentia.

On 16 April, the High Criminal Court in Bahrain sentenced the 139 men to between three years and life in prison in addition to hefty fines up to 100,000 BHD (265,000 USD). The nationalities of all but one of those convicted were also revoked, bringing to about 980 the number of Bahrainis who have now reportedly had their nationality stripped since 2012. According to information received, 17 of those convicted are believed to be minors between the ages of 15 and 17. The vast majority of the minors who were convicted are currently imprisoned.

“The UN Human Rights Office has long urged Bahrain to bring its overly broad counter-terrorism and counter-extremism legislation in line with its international human rights obligations. Tuesday’s convictions give rise to serious concerns about the application of the law, particularly through a mass trial that reportedly lacked the procedural safeguards necessary to ensure a fair trial,” High Commissioner Bachelet said.

“Deprivation of nationality must not be arbitrary, especially on discriminatory

grounds such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality or social origins, property, birth or other status. Arbitrary deprivation of nationality places the individuals concerned and their family members in a situation of increased vulnerability to human rights violations.”

Revocation of nationality can have serious consequences for the human rights of the individuals concerned and their families in all aspects of their daily lives, including the denial of the right to health, education and freedom of movement. Under international law, revocation of nationality is prohibited if it does not serve a legitimate aim or is disproportionate.

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: “everyone has the right to a nationality” and “no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality.”

Various UN human rights mechanisms have repeatedly called on Bahrain to take specific steps to amend its counter-terrorism legislation, and to ensure that citizenship is not revoked except in accordance with international standards and under independent judicial review.

The High Commissioner also expressed concerns at reports of torture or other ill-treatment against some of those convicted. She urged the authorities to take immediate steps to prevent such violations, and to ensure that allegations of torture are fully investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

Tortured and beheaded; calamity of Qatifi youth

The Kingdom has executed more than 100 people in the first four months of 2019, and is on track to execute more than 300 this year.

Salman Qureish was arrested shortly after his 18th birthday, accused of crimes that took place when he was a juvenile. He was denied basic legal rights and sentenced to death in a mass trial, despite repeated interventions on his behalf by the United Nations.

Many of the others executed were also tortured into signing confessions. Munir al-

Adam was beaten so badly he lost the hearing in one ear. Abbas al-Hassan was beaten while blindfolded, forced to stand in stress positions for hours and deprived of sleep.

Abdulkarim al-Hawaj was charged with participating in demonstrations, incitement via social media and preparing banners with anti-state slogans.

He was beaten, tortured with electricity and chained with his hands above his head until he ‘confessed’ to terrorism offences.

Mujtaba al-Sweikat was arrested at King Fahd International Airport, on his way to begin his studies at Western



Michigan University. He was

severely beaten all over his body, including the soles of his feet, and convicted on the basis of a confession extracted through torture.

Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, D-Dearborn, expressed her concern over the killing. “The violent killing of Mutjaba al-Sweikat is disturbing,” she said in a statement. “Mutjaba had a bright future ahead of him and Michigan was prepared to welcome him as a student. Instead, he faced inhumane torture and pain ulti-

Close to 100 Bahrainis were fined roughly \$265,000 each. The group was labeled as “Hezbollah Bahrain.” The Khalifi authoritarian hereditary rule has distorted the facts in order to attract Western sympathy. The use of “Hezbollah” and “Revolutionary Guards” is intended to justify the crackdown as the two names have been smeared by Donald Trump. These outrageous lies are used to justify the severe crackdown on anti-regime activists. Amnesty International said Tuesday’s verdict “makes a mockery of justice” and “demonstrates how Bahrain’s authorities are increasingly relying on revocation of nationality as a tool for repression.” In another recent mass trial in February, 167 people were convicted, primarily for participation in a non-violent sit-in, said Amnesty. In May of last year, 115 people were stripped of their citizenship following a single trial with the sentences upheld on appeal. Lynn Maalouf, Middle East Research Director at Amnesty International said: “Today’s trial makes a

mockery of justice and confirms an alarming pattern of convictions after unfair mass trials in Bahrain. She added: “This trial also demonstrates how Bahrain’s authorities are increasingly relying on revocation of nationality as a tool for repression – around 900 people have now been stripped of their citizenship since 2012. Maalouf further added: “Arbitrarily stripping people of their citizenship and rendering citizens stateless are blatant violations of international law. Bahrain’s authorities must immediately stop relying on these unlawful measures as punishment.” Meanwhile illegal attacks on homes of native Bahrainis have continued. On 11th April, a house at the town of Samaheej was raided by ISIS-style men and two youths were detained. Ahmad Oun and his brother, Abbas were taken by members of Khalifi torture apparatus to Samaheej police station, then to the prosecutor’s office before being dumped at the notorious Dry Dock prison. On Thursday 11th April, native Bahraini woman activist, Hadeer Abadi was remanded in custody by Khalifi court for thirty days.

Bahrain Freedom Movement
17th April 2019

Why is Bahrain revoking nationality of its citizens?

By Saad Hassan

When thinking of terrorism, Bahrain has barely been in the international spotlight. When it comes to the number of people killed by terrorists, the tiny archipelago in the Persian Gulf is safer than Sweden and the United States, according to the Global Terrorism Index of Sydney-based Institute of Economics and Peace.

Yet, terrorism or the fear of it is something the Bahraini state has repeatedly used over the years to revoke citizenship of its own people. This week, a court stripped 138 people of their nationality and sentenced them to jail terms ranging from three years to life imprisonment. They were accused of planning to blow up state installations, including oil facilities, and working for Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"The government uses the banner of terrorism to justify the crackdown against dissidents," Sayed Ahmed AlWadaei, the director of advocacy at UK-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, told TRT World.

"It's a political tool and they use terrorism to give it a legal cover."

Al Wadaei was a Bahraini national, but his citizenship was revoked four years ago along with 71 others for taking part in protests against the government.

Bahrain also saw massive demonstration in 2011 when millions of people took to streets in Arab countries, demanding rights and political reforms.

But Bahraini rulers, with the help of forces from neighbouring Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, quickly put down the protests.

Flushing out discontent

Since 2012, Bahrain has stripped 990 people of their nationality, making them stateless and leaving them without any rights such as getting treatment at public hospitals, says AlWadaei.

This year alone 180 people have been made stateless this way.

While most of them are in jail, the government has expelled some of these people to Iraq and Lebanon.

Human rights organisations say Bahraini authorities have come to rely on revocation of nationality as a preferred tool of political repression.

They have also criticised the intransparent nature of court trials as the accused lack access to lawyers and are often subjected to forced confessions.

The "trial makes a mockery of justice and confirms an alarming pattern of convictions after unfair mass trials in Bahrain," says Amnesty International's Mid-

dle East Research Director Lynn Maalouf.

Those who have been targeted include activists, journalists, and politicians.

This denaturalization has adverse effect on families of the people made stateless.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights, an NGO, has documented more than a dozen cases where babies born to such individuals have faced difficulty in getting citizenship.

"My daughter was born in November 2017

as a stateless child without any fault of hers," says AlWadaei. Under the Bahraini law, a child becomes a national only if the father is a citizen.

Families of these men are also socially ostracized and face difficulty when it comes to renting a house or opening a bank account.

Stateless people living in other countries such as the UK often have to wait years to receive nationality.



British troops train Bahraini dictator's bodyguards

Morning Star 16 april

THE British army is training a Gulf dictator's bodyguards, the Morning Star can reveal.

Seven "red caps" from the Royal Military Police (RMP) were photographed in Bahrain on Sunday with King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, the country's ruler.

They were flanked by Bahraini women soldiers from the king's elite Royal Guard unit. Another snap shows a red cap in a hi-vis vest supervising Royal Guards as they fire live ammunition on a shooting range.

The pictures were published by the state-run Bahrain News Agency.

The bodyguard work is routine for the RMP, which has a close protection unit that specialises in escorting VIPs.

However, human rights activists are alarmed that British soldiers are helping to protect Bahrain's unelected rulers. They say that this shows just how closely this country is linked to repression in the Gulf.

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy

(Bird) advocacy associate Lily Chamberlain said the training was "incredibly concerning."

She added: "These photographs demonstrate that the British government continues to place its lucrative Gulf alliances above respect for human rights."

The Royal Guard unit is run by the king's son Prince Nasser, whom Bird accuses of involvement in human rights abuses. He denies the allegations.

Ms Chamberlain said: "Prince Nasser, who had his diplomatic immunity revoked by the British High Court in 2014, has been repeatedly accused of personally participating in the torture of Bahraini citizens in 2011.

"He has regularly boasted on social media about his participation in the Saudi-led war on Yemen, whose indiscriminate bombing of schools and hospitals has killed tens of thousands of civilians."

The Ministry of Defence has been approached for comment.

