

BEYOND TRIBALISM

BAHRAIN

FREEDOM MOVEMENT

[STATEMENTS
1994 TO 2001]

Bahrain: Sheikh Al-Jamri on Hunger Strike

pro-democracy leader, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri since 15 April started a hunger strike on 1 June following the treatment and detention by the Bahraini authorities. When he was admitted to the military hospital suffering deteriorated health conditions, Sheikh Al-Jamri suffered

Bahrain: Torturing People to Death

The body of Saeed Al Iskafy was handed to his family, which was difficult to identify it, and had to spend a considerable amount of time and recognition; signs of burns were abundant, marks of signs of beating and bruises due to the use of sharp objects. Only 10 days after he was caught that he died within



مركز أرشيف البحرين
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BEYOND TRIBALISM

Over the past three decades the political developments in Bahrain have been highlighted by weekly statements and press releases published by the Bahrain Freedom Movement. For the past half a century the country has been in a state of political turmoil as people hoped to build a modern statehood following the British withdrawal in 1971 from all the countries East of Suez. But the colonial legacy did not help them to achieve that. Instead, the al-Khalifa tribe dominated the political scene and imposed one of the darkest eras in the history of the islands. Apart from a brief flirtation with democracy in the first half of the seventies, the country has been under a virtual hereditary dictatorship. New prisons were built and successive generations were repressed. The seventies and the eighties were marred by the absence of any political representation.

The Khalifa rulers made extensive use of British colonial officers who were brought into the country by the British. Ian Henderson epitomised this trend. Among the first victims of this policy are Saeed Al Uwainati and Mohammed Gholoom BuCheeri who were tortured to death in the seventies. In the eighties the cruelty of the British-protected tribal khalifa rule led to more deaths. Jamil Al Ali died in May 1980, followed by Karim Al Habshi, Sheikh Jamal Al Usfoor, Radhi Mahdi Ibrahim, Mohammed Hassan Madan and Dr Isma'il Al Alawi.

Since the eruption of the popular uprising in December 1994 the human rights situation in the country has deteriorated sharply. On the first day of the uprising on 17th December of that year two young native Bahrainis lost their lives. Hani Khamis and Hani Al Wasti were shot dead with live ammunition as they joined marches in Jid Hafs and Sananbis towns. The uprising that lasted five years claimed the lives of at least 40 martyrs. Torture became systematic while a culture of impunity helped to protect the torturers and killers. Political executions added urgency to the demands for regime change. Peaceful activist, Isa Qambar was executed in June 1996 despite international efforts to save him. The situation gradually became more serious as the links between the people and the Khalifa family gradually diminished. The opposition inside and outside the country intensified its anti-regime campaign through its statements, press releases, seminars, protests and interaction with the international political and human rights bodies.

The opposition refused to be intimidated by the torture and killings. Activists inside and outside the country continued to inform the international media and human rights bodies of the serious deterioration of human rights. International reports published in the nineties documented the human rights abuses.

This publication is a compilation of statements by the Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM) between 1994 and 2001. These statements and press releases aimed to inform the world about the events in the country. Many statements were lost and could not be found anywhere, while others were found in very poor condition due to the inadequate archiving system. Bahrain Archive Center

has made a significant effort to gather these statements from various sources. All statements have been digitized, and advanced technology and artificial intelligence were utilized to extract text from paper statements.

This compilation is a documentation of the events in Bahrain in the 1990s which will provide an insight into the political dynamics that will eventually shape the future of the country. The status quo may seem impregnable, but the thrust of the political movement in Bahrain has developed so much that change is inevitable. The regime has missed several opportunities to link up with the people, relying on the foreign help provided by some Western and regional powers. This help may have provided the regime with respite but it cannot secure its survival forever.

This compilation provides some details of the political developments and will highlight the regime's attempts to present false pretensions. But it will also document the suffering of the natives of the land as they were subjected to horrific treatment at the hands of the ruling family. The present ruler and his sons are the present culprits whose blood-stained hands stand out as the most vicious in the region. The human rights abuses will provide the international community and NGOs with an insight into the dynamics of a dysfunctional regime whose only means of dealing with its foes are repression, torture, murder and execution. The hope is that this will provide a real service to those seeking to discover the truth in Bahrain, the researchers who aim to provide scholarly studies and those who want to know the reality to enable them to formulate their policies towards the country, the people and the regime.

Bahrain: Several Killed and Hundreds Tortured

6/Oct/1994

A new popular petition in Bahrain is the latest effort by the opposition inside the country to bring about a change in the stagnant political situation. Since August 1975, when the Amir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa issued a decree suspending certain articles of the 1973 constitution and dissolving the elected National Assembly, the country has plunged into a state of political instability. For two decades, all forms of opposition have been engaged in activities aimed at the restoration of a degree of constitutional framework in the country. Two years ago, a petition demanding the return to the Constitution was signed by hundreds of personalities representing all trends and sections of Bahrain's society. The Amir responded by threatening the expulsion or imprisonment of the figureheads of the democratic movement.

The situation in the country has remained bleak, but the call for a more civilized government persisted, and a new petition has now been prepared. This time, however, it is expected that thousands of citizens will sign it before it is handed to the Amir. Besides the call for the restoration of the Constitution, the new petition also calls for the return of the Bahrain exiles, the solving of the unemployment problem and giving the women a full role in the democratic process. Government's regulations banned women from participating in the 1973 election leading to the dissolved Assembly.

The sponsors of the new petition include Islamists (both Sunni and Shia) and secularists. It is an indication of the extent of popular unease which is a direct result of the continued refusal by the government for any political reform. It remain to be seen what response will the Amir give to this popular demand at a time of serious local and regional tensions.

Bahrain: Several Killed and Hundreds Tortured

28/Dec/1994

It is now confirmed that four people have been killed and buried. There are four to eight people believed to have been killed as well, but their bodies are not released by the Bahraini authorities.

On 17 December, the security forces using live ammunitions shot two people dead in Sanabis and Jedhafs, 3 miles west of the capital, Manama. They were: (1) Hani Abbas Khamis, 23 years old, Sanabis. A university student in his final academic year. (2) Hani Ahmed Al-Wasti, 22 years old, Jedhafs, an employee at the Ministry of Health who was preparing for marriage in few days. (3) Haji Mirza Ali Abdul-Redha, 65 years old man from Al-Qadam village. He was killed after police stormed Al-Musharraf Mosque in Jidhafs on 20 December. (4) A young person whose faced-down body was dragged by police until he died. It is believed that 4 to 8 other people have been murdered but their bodies are yet to be released from Salmanya Hospital, which now incorporates an 'excluded area' for those injured during the uprising. Family visits are strictly forbidden.

There are many people in critical conditions. One of them had an operation to remove 50 splinters from his body. Amongst the injured are Badir Habib Jumaa, 21 years old from Sanabis (suffering from two bullet wounds in the chest abdomen), Riyadh Ashoor, 29 year old from Sanabis is still in intensive care unit, Mansoor Abdul Redha, 18 years old from Bani-Jamra (suffering from a bullet wound in his knee), Hussain Al-Nashaba, 21 years old from Nuaim (hit by a bullet in the back), Sadeq Khamis, 24 years old from Sanabis (shot in his shoulder), Hussain Ramadhan, 15 years old boy, was hit by two bullets in the chest on 19 December in Sanabis.

On 18 December, Mrs. Zainab Al-Rashed - from Daih - was hit in the eye by bullet fragment when she resisted the dawn-raiders before they arrested and detained her son. Her eye has now been removed by doctors. Another lady from Jedhafs is also in hospital suffering from bullets wounds. Hussain Abdulla from Dair is lying in hospital suffering from sever wounds; Ali Mohammed Ismael, 52 years old man from Bani Jamra had three broken ribs caused by police beating. Dr. Habib Trait and his Irish wife (also a medical doctor) were sacked from their posts at the Military Hospital because they treated injured people at their home. The authorities ordered all doctors to report names of people requesting treatment from bullet wounds. The police used special types of bullets that explode in the body spreading glass-type sharp particles. Also many children have suffocated from smothering-type of tear gas. Mass arrests are taking place everywhere.

On 23 December, dawn raids on Sitra resulted in 40 people detained, some of them wives and sisters taken hostages to force their relatives to give themselves up. The authorities ordered the municipality workers not to collect rubbish in Sitra. A group of people volunteered to clear the mounting refuse, but were arrested. In Ras Romman the same thing was happening. Mr. Majid Milad's wife was arrested until her husband gave himself up. Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Ekri (56 years old) was also arrested. He had spent 5 years in jail during the Eighties and the "Times" newspaper of 11 January 1983 sponsored him as a "Prisoner of Conscience" The last thing the GCC heads of states expected whilst attending their annual summit in Manama, was to smell tear gas. But they did. Moreover, they witnessed the Bahraini capital and nearby areas engulfed in fire as pro-

democracy demonstrators were being shot at by security forces. On 20 and 21 December, demonstrations spread to Bahrain University campuses (both at Sukhair and Madinat Isa) as well as in Sanabis, Manama and villages along the northwestern Budayaa Highway of Bahrain. Around 300 university students were picketing everyday and classes are suspended. Many people were injured and reports speak of many victims on the streets and in hospitals around the country.

On 22 December, demonstrations continued in Dair (in Muharraq island) and in several villages in the central and south-western areas of Bahrain.

On 13 December, Sheikh Ali Salman (whose arrest on 5 December sparked-off the uprising) was brought before the civil court. Fifteen lawyers volunteered to defend him, amongst them are Ahmed Al-Shamlan, Mohammed Ahmed, Salman Seyadi, Abdulla Hashem, Abdul Shaheed Khalaf, Hasan Badawi, Jalila Al-Hullaibi, Layla Al-Mahari and others. The judge could not prove any charge against Sheikh Salman, given the strength of the defense and decided to postpone the trial till 20 December.

On 20 December, Sheikh Ali Salman was not present at the court room. But the public prosecutor read a ministerial order announcing that Sheikh Salman is now detained under the provisions of the State Security Law. Sixty lawyers have consequently demanded that Sheikh Salman must receive an independent medical examination to verify reports that he has been either tortured or killed (since he has not attended the second hearing on 20 December).

On 25 December, the civil court was presented with interior ministry papers declaring that three hundred (300) prisoners are

now detained under the provision of the State Security Law. The latter empowers the interior minister to order the administrative detention of any person for up to 3 years without trial. It is worth noting that it was this law that caused the dissolving of the National Assembly, when all deputies refused to pass the law. Under Bahrain's constitution, no document can become law unless both the National Assembly and the Amir (head of state) approve the draft. The number of prisoners was reported last by AFP (on 22 December) to be more than 1600 people. The whereabouts of many people are not known, whether in hospitals, detention centres or in hiding. It is reported that the prisoners are held in concentration camps purposefully constructed with barbed wires inside the Qala'a Fort in Manama. A recently released detainee reported that all forms of torture are being used to force the detainees to sign pre-prepared papers containing false confessions. He identified two people whose figures were deformed due to torture: Hussain Al-Tattan and Jaffer Al-Sayyah.

On 20 December, seventy members of the Bahrain community in London picketed in front of the Bahrain Embassy protesting against the killings and oppression in their country. The "Independent" newspaper quoted eye-witnesses comparing Bahrain with the Palestinian Intifada. Eye witnesses in the capital, Manama, said they heard bursts of automatic weapon fire on 20 December, reported the "Independent" of 21 December.

A statement was issued on 17 December by Bahraini notables condemning the actions of the government and calling for the immediate release of Sheikh Ali Salman and other prisoners. The statement affirmed the aims of the demonstrators by calling for the return of parliamentary life, allowing freedom of press

and expression, releasing all political prisoners, stopping the violation of civil rights, especially the right to travel and return back home. Among the signatories on the statement are Sheikh Suleiman Al-Madani (the meeting took place in his residence at Jedhafs), Sheikh Ahmed Al-Asfoor, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, and many others.

In Sanabis, Daih and Jedhafs clashes between demonstrators and police continued until the early hours of Monday morning, 19 December. The National Bank of Bahrain offices in Jedhafs were damaged by police miss-fire. The University of Bahrain is currently the scene of clashes as students gathered to mourn one of them, Hani Abbas Khamis, who was killed on 17 December. Funerals were held in many parts of the country, with speeches condemning both the ruling family, Al-Khalifa, and the British security chief, Ian Henderson. Clashes were erupting wherever these funerals had been held. The authorities cut off public utilities (water and electricity) to critical areas. Armoured fighting vehicles are deployed around Samaheej, Dair, Jedhafs, Sanabis, Daih, Demestan, Karzakkan, Shahrakkan, Toobli, Mussalla, Sehla, Abo-Saibaa, Shakhoora, Al Qadam, Mukshaa, Duraz and Bani Jamra. Latest areas of protests include: Sanad, Aali, Boori, Barbar, Hamaleh and Qurrayah. Road checkpoints are now common along major roads.

Chronology of events started as follows:

The Bahrain's security forces started their crackdown on pro-democracy movement on 5 December, and have unleashed an oppressive campaign to divert attention from a petition being submitted to the Amir (ruler of Bahrain) demanding for the suspended constitution and the parliament dissolved since 1975 to be re-activated. What enraged the authorities is the fact

that the petition, the second in two years, has been sponsored by all sections and political tendencies in Bahrain including, for the first time, a female university professor, Dr. Moneera Fakhroo, representing women rights. This comprehensive political action has ridiculed the government's attempts to drive a wedge between the various religious and national groupings. The fourteen sponsors of the petition represent the Shia and Sunni communities, secularists, liberals and Islamists. Such a nation-wide consensus has not been seen since the fifties, and this explains the government's ferocious clamp-down on the pro-democracy movement.

On 5 December, at 2.00 am, the security forces carried out a dawn-raid on the residence of Sheikh Ali Salman in Bilad-al-Qadeem (5 kilometers southwest of Manama). This signaled the start of the latest crackdown. Scores of youth were arrested in similar dawn-raids. On Monday morning, crowds started to assemble in a mosque in front of the residence of Sheikh Salman. Similar gatherings took place in other mosques including the grand Khawajah Mosque in the capital Manama, where Sheikh Salman leads the daily prayers. Between Tuesday and Friday 6-9 December, security forces were deployed around mosques and other areas in the country. Hundreds of people were arrested and are undergoing interrogation and torture. The demonstrations by now have spread to major mosques in the country. On Saturday 10 December, a delegation of four people arranged for a meeting with the prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, but were turned away. On 12 December the delegation then met the minister of interior, Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, who turned down their plea to release Sheikh Ali Salman and other prisoners.

On 13 December, armed security forces attacked the demonstrations in Bilad-al-Qadeem and Makharqah district of Manama. Barrages of tear gas and rubber bullets rained down on the peaceful gatherings. In Manama, the demonstrators broke away and spread in the old market (souk). Confrontations followed with many injuries and damage to properties. From Wednesday 14 December onwards, demonstrations erupted all over the country. In Sitra (the oil island), men, women and children demonstrated continuously. The security forces blocked all the roads and used helicopters to fire rubber bullets. In Duraz, northwest of Bahrain, similar demonstrations took place all days and nights. Then, the marches spread to Bani-Jamra, Qadam, Barbar, Abo-Saibaa, Massala, Karrana, Bilad-al-Qadeem, Sitra, Manama, Muharraq, Hidd, Dair, Karzakkan, Demestan, Jidd-al-Haj, Ras-Romman, Sanabis and other areas.

Security forces blocked the main Budayya Highway on Friday 16 December, while their helicopters continued raining rubber bullets and tear gas on northwestern villages extending from Jidhafs to Duraz. Hundreds of people were arrested on the spot and during dawn-raids all over the country. A state of emergency was implemented. The reserve military forces were called up and columns of military vehicles marched from Saudi Arabia across the bridge linking the two countries.

The town and villages of Sitra island were besieged and a major security crack-down resulted in scores of arrests. Fire and smoke together with tear gas were visible from far distances in many parts of the country. As the Amir celebrated his 33rd enthronement day on 16 December, a complete black-out on news was imposed. News-agencies were prevented from reporting the events. The correspondents of international news-

agencies informed the telephone callers that they could not do anything and directed them to phone their offices in Dubai. However, the news spread all over the world.

The demands raised by demonstrators were clearly stated in pamphlets and speeches. These include:

(1) Releasing Sheikh Ali Salman and all the others detained since the start of the uprising on 5 December. (2) Formation of an independent commission to investigate who ordered and started shooting and killing demonstrators and punishing them (3) Return of constitutional life and fixing a date for legislative elections (4) Releasing all political prisoners, who were in jail before the uprising (5) Allowing the return of political exiles without any pre-conditions (6) Abolishing the State Security Law of 1974 (7) Expelling the British officer, Ian Henderson, who has masterminded the oppressive campaigns for the last thirty years.

Bahrain: Constitutionalism Versus Despotism

10/Apr/1995

As the conference on oil is inaugurated in London today, another conference is in progress four thousand miles away. In Bahrain, many distinguished guests are attending the Third Annual Conference on the Economies of the Middle East. However, that gathering has proved very costly indeed in human terms to the Bahraini people. Ten days prior to its inauguration the British officer, Ian Henderson, ordered a massive crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in the country. Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, 60, a former member of Parliament and a former judge, was put under house arrest, together with 19 members of his family including infants. Scores of women and school girls were arrested. In order to entertain the guests of the conference, the people of Bahrain had to endure unprecedented cruelty.

For the last four months our country has been going through one of its most serious crisis this century. The people and the government have been locked up in political confrontations which have resulted in several deaths and many injuries. The essence of the conflict is the disagreement between the two sides on how the country should be governed, and what role, if any, should be given to the people. Although the problem of popular participation is no longer an issue in many parts of the world, the Al Khalifa government of Bahrain has insisted on its monopoly of power to the extent that they have shown readiness to detain, torture and even kill citizens demanding a share in the political process.

Twenty years ago, the Amir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa issued a decree suspending the country's Constitution, in particular, those articles dealing with people's liberties and parliamentary process. The people reacted angrily and, over the following two decades, they engaged themselves

in relentless struggle to force the government to observe its moral as well as its national and international obligations vis-s-vis the issue of moving towards a more representative regime. People's attempts were to no avail. The Al Khalifa tribal regime resorted to the most brutal practices to annihilate the pro-democracy movement. Repression was the main tool used by the government to contain the situation. People were tortured to death in prison cells, citizens were banished against all international norms and conventions, and civil liberties were curtailed.

In the summer of 1992, a group of veteran politicians sponsored a petition calling on the Amir to reinstate the Constitution. In addition to the six main sponsors, three hundred citizens mainly professionals and technocrats signed it before being submitted to the Amir. It was mild in both form and content. They were snubbed and audaciously informed that their attempts were futile. Two years later, the same group sponsored a similar petition and decided that it be put to the people at large for signatures. Up to 25, 000 people signed the petition. In order to forestall the process, the government arrested one of the main advocates of the popular petition, Sheikh Ali Salman. The incident was enough to spark country-wide protests that culminated in the death of at least nine citizens by police fire or under torture, the detention of more than 2000 people, and the forcible exile of at least fourteen people.

Up to 1000 citizens are forced to reside outside the country and none of them is allowed back. The popular anger was also fuelled by the economic disarray which dominated the scene in the aftermath of the second Gulf war. Today Bahrain is in turmoil with protests and demonstrations erupting in various

parts of the country on regular basis. On the one hand the government is adamant in its rejection of the demands of the people which revolve around the restoration of the Constitution. The people, on the other hand, have suddenly realised their potential and are struggling against the continued dictatorship. Our people thus appeal to freedom-loving people like yourself to intervene on their behalf in any capacity to lift the suffering of our nation.

We are not power-hungry, and have limited our demands to the most basic ones. Calling for the restoration of an existent, albeit suspended, constitution is an indication of the extent of our people's tolerance. It is the brutality of the regime that is hindering any progress towards democracy and respect of human rights, the two prerequisites of any stable society. It is beyond comprehension that pro-democracy activists be abandoned at a time when the whole world is turning towards pluralism and away from dictatorships. Short-term interests must not hinder a responsible stand in support of our people in their just struggle to attain their dignity and demand for the restoration of the country's constitution.

British Delegation To Bahrain

23/May/1995

On 27th May, a group of British personalities will be in Bahrain attending a half-day seminar on the ways to foster good relations between the Shura “Consultative” Councils in the Gulf and the British Parliament. Two Members of Parliament will make the trip to the Gulf island to address the seminar. They are William Powell, MP, and Lady Olga Maitland, MP, both Conservatives. The British delegation will also include Lord Kennet and Mr. John Bulloch. The seminar is jointly organised by the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies, chaired by Omar Al Hassan, and the Centre of Studies and Research, whose president, Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, is the son of the Crown Prince of Bahrain. Mr. Powell was also in Bahrain earlier in the year at the head of a delegation consisting of four MPs. The nature of that visit was not revealed, but both have come at a time of a popular movement in Bahrain demanding a degree of democratic rights.

For the last six months, Bahrain has been the scene of major disturbances by disenchanting citizens calling for the restoration of the country’s Constitution suspended by the Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, twenty years ago. The country has been under emergency laws since the parliament was dissolved in August 1975. The Inter-Parliamentary Union expelled Bahrain from its membership in 1976, and the situation has been going from bad to worse. The people of Bahrain have, over the last two decades, sacrificed immensely in their struggle to demand the restoration of the Constitution. An era of terror reigned over the country with people arbitrarily detained, tortured to death and banished. The government has all along refused to initiate any dialogue with the people, and the Special Intelligence Service, SIS, headed by the British officer, Ian Henderson, maintained

a tight grip on the situation. Human Rights violations were widely reported by credible organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Article 19 and Third World Review. The ongoing uprising is a result of repression, human rights violation and despotism by the Al Khalifa ruling family.

Baroness Chalker of Wallasy promised the House of Lords on 15th May that she would convey to the Government of Bahrain that Her Majesty's Government wishes her to initiate a dialogue with the opposition and allow a visit by Amnesty International to Bahrain. It remains to be seen whether the Bahraini Government complies with these wishes.

It is extremely dangerous to link in any way the consultative council of Bahrain to the British parliament. Whilst the latter represents the wishes of the majority of the British people and whose members are freely elected, the Bahrain's Consultative Council was wholly appointed by the Amir after the people had submitted a petition on 15th November 1992 requesting the Amir to reinstate the Constitution. The Council has no legislative power. When the people's plea was ignored, they prepared another petition which was signed by up to 25,000 people. The government preempted its submission by arresting senior members of the pro-democracy movement, a step that was to prove disastrous. The result was a major uprising that has claimed the life of at least fourteen young people, the arrest of more than 3000 men, women and children and the banishment of scores of citizens.

It is our hope that the delegation which is going to Bahrain this week does not give the impression of condoning the repressive policies of Ian Henderson, the despotism of the Al Khalifa ruling tribe, the human rights violations by the SIS, the

continuation of the state of emergency, the suspension of the constitution or the refusal of dialogue by the government. We also hope that the noble values of democracy and freedom be sustained and respected in Britain and elsewhere. The policy of violence and terror enforced by the Al Khalifa regime must be deplored, and the democratic aspirations of the Bahraini people deserve to be endorsed and encouraged.

Stop Using Weapons of Death in Ashoura

31/May/1995

There is a growing concern among the people and the government of Ba what could happen in the next two weeks in the country. It is now six months: popular uprising was started by the people who are demanding the restore Constitution. On 2nd June 1995, the people of Bahrain will start the anni commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (Ashoura) who died 1300 This event is of great significance to our people since it exemplifies the heroic reformer, Imam Hussain, against a tyrant, Yazid. In the event, 72 of the Imam' including his sons and brothers were slaughtered.

The events of the past six months are bound to be reflected in the religious : which are protected by the country's constitution. The people are likely to exc right of freedom of expression in these processions in a peaceful man absence of any forum for the free expression of opinion, such occasions often a convenient alternative. With the situation in Bahrain as tense as it is now, § banners calling for the restoration of the Constitution and the release prisoners are most likely to be raised. The security apparatus, which is run b officer, Ian Henderson, may continue its policy of repression, as it demonstrate past six months. At least fifteen young men were slaughtered by Henderson the people demonstrated for their casue.

We like to make it clear that whilst our people continue to demand the restol Constitution in a peaceful way, the government of the Al Khalifa may per violent policies, and deploy weapons of death against innocent civilians. We the right of our people to express their views in a peaceful manner in acco international norms and conventions and the Bahraini Constitution. We also I any violent reaction by Henderson's men against peaceful demonstrate unjustified and inhumane.

We are aware of certain governments who have supported Henderson's policies by justifying the use of force against innocent It is our duty to call on everyone to be vigilant in these circumstances to policies of murder, repression and human rights violation. Whilst we § people's peaceful approach to their demands, we deplore any use of force Khalifa tribal regime, and call on other governments to refrain from supporting indiscriminate killings, mass arrests especially of women and children an detainees. The use of live ammunition against innocent civilians could not be to peace and tranquillity in Bahrain. If anything, the use of lethal W Henderson's men has only exacerbated the situation and caused misery € among the people of Bahrain. The return to a constitutional regime is the only) the present crisis.

Bahrain: Dr. Moneera Fakhroo Threatened

4/Jun/1995

Last month a group of Bahraini leading women submitted a petition to the Amir of Bahrain stating that “ We were alarmed as Bahraini citizens by the recent escalation of incidents and the use of the language of violence instead of the language of dialogue... The continuation and spread of violence will touch everyone sooner or later.

Experiences of other nations have proved that violence is a vicious circle that generates resentment, deepens hatred and entrenches violence and in the end we will all be losers and our beloved country will be inflicted with wounds that will not heal for a long time... We were also alarmed as citizens and mothers by the practices of the security and anti-riot force towards the citizens who dwell in the villages; practices which ranged from insults and severe beatings of young men, women and children to killing defenceless demonstrators including pupils and university students with bullets.. We present to Your Highness this statement requesting your Highness’ personal intervention to break the circle of violence and open the door to dialogue... which may be achieved through the following means:

1. Ceasing the use of bullets to disperse demonstrators, illegal forced entries and mass arrests.
2. Dealing with detainees according to the rule of law with all that entails of guarantees to the detainees during periods of investigation and trial while expediting the presentation of the defendants to trial, releasing immediately the remaining detainees and repatriating the exiles.
3. Creating employment opportunities for all citizens, securing the minimum requirements for their livelihood and finding an effective solution for the increase in the foreign labour force.
4. Opening the door to a national dialogue with the aim of reaching the appropriate solution.
5. Reactivating the Constitution of the State of Bahrain and calling for elections to the National Assembly and

allowing public liberties and freedom of speech.

6. Including Bahraini women in political decision making and utilizing their creative energies in all spheres to serve our country Bahrain”

The petition was signed by a group calling itself “Bahrain’s Citizens and Mothers” that included: (1) Aziza Hamad Al-Bassam, Programme Producer, Bahrain Broadcasting. (2) Dr. Khawlah Mohammed Matar, Journalist. (3) Dr. Moneera Ahmed Fakhro, University Professor. (4) Ayisha Khalifa Matar, Director, Modern Handicraft Industries. (5) Dr. Fadheela Taher Al-Mahroos Pediatrician. (6) Jaleela Sayed Ahmed, Lawyer. (7) Wedad Mohammed Al-Masqati, Lawyer. (8) Fawziya Al-Sitri, Employee. (9) Dr. Sabeka Mohammed Al-Najjar, Employee; (10) Sawsen Ibrahim Al-Khayat, Employee. (11) Hussah Al-Khumairi, Director of Continuous Education. (12) Mariyam Abdullah Fakhro, Employee. (13) Khadijah Ali Masoud, Employee. (14) Sheikha Mubarak Hamad, Employee. (15) Nadia Al-Masqati, Accountant. (16) Farida Ghoulam Ismael, Employee. (17) Koukab Abdullah Abu-Idris, Employee. (18) Radhia Khalil Ibrahim, Teacher; (19) Muna Abbas Mansoor, Employee; (20) Leila Ali, Employee.

Last week Dr. Fadheela Al-Mahroos was sacked after refusing to remove her name from the signatures. Few days later, she was reinstated to salvage the situation after international media covered the news. Several other signatories have been threatened in a similar way. On Saturday 3rd of June, the president of the University of Bahrain summoned Dr. Muneera Fakhro and threatened her that unless she withdraws her name from the petition by the next day, she would lose her job.

This type of response falsifies the claims of the government that they are engaging themselves in a dialogue with the opposition and shows the extent of dictatorship and ruthlessness.

Mass Processions Declare People's Demands

11/Jun/1995

The tenth and eleventh days of the first month of the Islamic calendar (Muharram) are celebrated every year in Bahrain to mark the martyrdom of the grandson of Prophet Mohammed. This year the security forces attempted to halt the processions or at least prevent villagers from attending the procession in Manama and stop the demonstrators from raising political demands. To this end the security forces encircled Manama with armoured vehicles and filled the streets with paramilitary forces.

What happen in Manama on 10 June must have conveyed the strength of the pro-democracy movement to the government. The procession emerging from Ma'am (i.e. religious association) Ibn-Salloom numbered more that ten thousand alone. Combined with other associations, the number of participants was more than three folds of the normal number every year. The processions continued until after midnight with slogans raised calling for the freeing of Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri and the return of parliamentary democracy. Thousands of leaflets and photographs of Sheikh Al-Jamri were distributed.

Larger gatherings and processions took to the streets of Dah on 11 June. More that 50 thousands people raised banners and slogans demanding the freeing of Sheikh Al-Jamri, all political prisoners and the restoration of the constitution. The security forces kept their distance as warned by the people who declared their readiness to confront them if they (the security forces) dared to interrupt the processions. The people of every town and village raised photographs of the martyrs who were killed by security forces in their areas.

At the end of the processions, the participants declared a new phase in the struggle for democracy will be initiated in the coming weeks to call for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, especially Sheikh Al-Jamri and the restoration of constitutional rule. This response proves that the people are not afraid of the security forces anymore. The killing, mass jailing and ruthlessness have strengthened the will of the people of Bahrain as they march for their freedom and rule of constitutional law.

Bahrain: Pro-democracy Petition

16/Jun/1995

On the basis of our responsibility for the motherland, its people, stability, security and sovereignty, call for (as we did in previous occasions) the reactivating of the constitution that was ratified by the Constituent Assembly (which comprised the representatives of the people) and as had been approved by His Highness the Amir in December 1973. The approval of the latter initiated a modern Arab-Islamic and independent state based on democratic system and popular authority. The constitution laid down the principles for all citizens to participate in the running of public affairs and guaranteed their political rights.

For all the above, we stress the urgency of restoring democracy to the country by reactivating the constitution and parliament through peaceful and open means. By this, the national unity will be preserved and viable solutions will be worked out for all our problems and it will be possible to preserve the achievements of both the people and the government.

We look forward for and call on all honourable citizens with all their affiliations and sects to work together in solidarity for this noble cause.

Signed by: *Mohammed Jaber Al-Sabah, Ahmed Isa Al-Shamlan, Rashid Hasan Al-Thawadi, Mohammed Al-Sayed Yousif, Mohammed Abdul Rahman Al-Thekair, Abdulla Abdul Rahaman Jasim, Dr. Monira Ahmad Fakhroo, Dr. Khawla Matar, Abdul Wahab Hasan Amin, Sabeeka Al-Najjar, Farid Ramadhan, Fawzeya Mohammed Al-Sanadi, Hasan Ahmad Bedaiwi, Hasan Ahmad Bedaiwi, Ahmad Mansoor Ali, Ibrahim Sharif Al-Sayed Abdul Rahim, Mohsin Hamid Marhoon, Mahmood Ali Hafedh, Abdull Majid, Sanad Ali Al-Hammad, Omran Abbas Salman, Rashid Hamad Al-Jar, Ibrahim Ahmad Isa, Salwa Mohammed Jabir, Ghassan Al-Shehabi, Abdul Rahman Ahmad Othman, Yousif Al-Hamdan, Aziza Hamad Al-Bassam, Mohammed Al-Halwachi, Abdulla Seyadi, Khadija Ali Saeed, Aisha Matar (and 250 other leading activists).*

Bahrain Hunger Strike

19/Jun/1995

Pro-Democracy advocate Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri started a hunger strike on June 1st, following his ill-treatment and detention by the Bahraini authorities. On June 7th, he was admitted to the military hospital suffering from a deteriorated health condition. Sheikh Al-Jamri suffered three heart attacks since the start of his detention on April 15th.

The ordeal of Sheikh Al-Jamri started on April 1st, when he and nineteen members of his family were put under house arrest. Then, the security forces killed two of his neighbours and evicted the surrounding houses from their residents. On April 15th, he was taken away to solitary confinement in Safra military camp. Few days ago, it was reported that he had been transferred to the Dry Dock area in the town of Hidd.

Sheikh Al-Jamri was a member of the dissolved parliament and is one of the main sponsors of the two pro-democracy petitions of 1992 and 1994 calling on the Amir (ruler) of Bahrain to restore the constitution and the parliament. The security forces targeted Sheikh Al-Jamri to retaliate against his staunch democratic opposition since 1975.

Sheikh Al-Jamri is Admitted to the Hospital for the Fifth Time

24/Jun/1995

The leading pro-democracy campaigner, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, has been admitted to hospital last Thursday, 22 June. This is the fifth times that he suffers from heart problems due to the bad detention conditions since his arrest on 15 April. The military hospital has been cordoned off to prevent visitors from approaching the place.

Sheikh Al-Jamri, 58 years old, is one of the leading figures sponsoring the petition signed by 25,000 citizens calling on the Amir to restore the parliament and constitution. He was also the leading member of parliament in 1975 who opposed the imposition of the State Security Law. The failure of the government to pass the law resulted in the dissolution of the parliament on 26 August 1975.

The resent days witnessed several unexpected manoeuvres by the security forces. On 20 June, the armoured vehicles besieging the villages were removed. On the same day, prisoners of the uprising received less harsh treatment. A trial was concluded haphazardly with one person receiving a life sentence (25 years) and several others were sentenced to seven years imprisonment. The official press did not report the trial or the sentences fearing from public response.

At the same time, a military court sentenced a 22 years old person, Mr. Hassan Abdulla, for two years imprisonment. Mr. Abdulla was accused of participating in a peaceful demonstration at the Medical Science College on 2 April, following the imposition of house arrest on Sheikh Al-Jamri (which took place between 1-15 April). Mr. Abdulla studied at the college as a sponsored student of the Ministry of Defence.

III Sheikh Al-Jamri is Admitted to the Hospital
for the Fifth Time

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Sheikh Al-Jamri

25/Jun/1995

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Bahrain: Cosmetic Cabinet Changes

26/Jun/1995

Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, submitted his second resignation since independence to his brother, the Amir of Bahrain, on 25 June 1995. The cabinet was formed in 1972 following the election of the Constituent Assembly, when the Al-Khalifa assumed all the "sovereign" ministries since the first day.

In addition to the post of prime minister, the ruling family controls the defence, foreign affairs, interior and justice ministries. Then, the defence minister was the heir apparent, who relinquished his position in the eighties and installed one of his men (also a member of the ruling family) in his place. This change took place in order to minimise face to face contacts and conflicts between the two powerful wings of the ruling family (ie the prime minister and heir apparent). Since then, the prime minister consolidated his position by making his son as minister of communication. The other "sovereign" ministers remained unchanged.

The first time the cabinet resigned was on 25 August 1975, when the government failed to win approval of the elected National Assembly to pass the State Security Law which empowers the interior minister to detain political suspects for three years without trial. The same cabinet re-assumed its role on 26 August 1975 upon the dissolution of the parliament. Then, the resignation was to dissolve the parliament.

This time the resignation was to consolidate the Al-Khalifa in their sovereign ministries and remove those who either did not agree with the crackdown and suppression of the Bahraini people (like Dr. Ali Fakhroo, Dr. Husain Al-Baharna and Mr. Habib Qassim) or failed to do their job in defending the

oppression (like Tariq Al-Moayyad. Non of the Al-Khalifa ministers were changed. This is because they believe they are infallible, above criticism and immune from change. Out of sixteen ministers in the “new-old” cabinet, seven are members of the ruling family controlling all key ministries. While an official stated to Reuters that the four sacked minister should not expect to remain in their positions for life, no word was uttered about members of the Al-Khalifa, most of them being there for more than 20 years (since 1972). Last week (20 June), a group of people were sentenced to life and long term imprisonment to serve as a reminder that the ruling family has no intention of yielding to public pressure.

On the other hand, important ministries were handed over to special types of people. The education ministry was given to Abdul Aziz Al-Fadhel, who was brought from the ministry of defence. The information ministry was given to the right hand of the prime minister, Mohammed Al-Mutawwa.

All the above indicate that the ruling Al-Khalifa family has not changed their policy or attitude towards the people of Bahrain. It is worth noting that the grand father of the ruling family, Ahmad Al-Khalifa, is officially named as the “conqueror”. meaning he conquered Bahrain in 1782 and managed to succumb its inhabitants. The conquered people of Bahrain, according to the Al-Khlaifa philosophy, must not dare to consider themselves equals to the masters, or dare to call for better treatment in the name of natural and civilian rights.

Bahrain: Life Sentence for a pro-democracy activist

29/Jun/1995

On June 20th, a member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family presiding over the State Security Court passed life and long term imprisonment sentences on a group of Bahrainis accused of participating in pro-democracy demonstrations. The court accused the group of clashing with the police. The court failed to prove that any one of the group participated in the clashes that led to the death of a policeman. Nevertheless, the following were sentenced haphazardly:

1. Hasan Ahmad Hasan Mohammed Marzooq, 29 years old, worker, life imprisonment (25 years).
2. Jaafer Salman Hasan Taqqi, 37 years (father of seven children), technician, seven years.
3. Mohammed Hasan Ahmad Abdulla Abbas, 22 years, unemployed, seven years.
4. Husain Mansoor Ahmad Khudhair, 22 years, unemployed, seven years.
5. Qassim Ali Hasan, 19 years, university student, three years imprisonment.
6. Abdul Khaliq Isa Hasan Abdulla, university student, three years.
7. Abbas Abd Ali Al-Amar, 23 years, carpenter, three years.
8. Abdul Shahid Abd Ali Mohammed Hasan, 22 years, worker, three years.
9. Jaafer Salman Abdul Muhsin Al Toug, 26 years, university student, three years.
10. Ali Mohammed Ali Marhoon, 18 years, student, one year.
11. Ahmad Redha Ahmad Ali Khudhair, 18 years, student, one year.
12. Habib Ali Hasan, 15 years, student, one year.

The court was presided by Abdul Rahman bin Jabir Al-Khalifa who refused to listen to lawyers defending the accused. The lawyers put a case to prove that none of the defendants was involved in the clashes that led to the death of a Pakistani policeman.

However, the court decided that the above sentences must be passed to serve as a reminder of the tough stance against pro-democracy movement.

Bahrain: Renewal of Pro-Democracy Protests

30/Jun/1995

Last night witnessed an upsurge in anti-government activities in Sanabis, Duraz and Sitra. Protests commenced in the evening and lasted until the early hours of the morning. The deafening sounds of gas-cylinders' explosions were heard throughout the night. The protesters called for the release of the thousands of political prisoners and restoration of the country's constitution. The riot police (made of British and Pakistani personnel) deployed tear gas and rubber bullets.

The announcement of a new government with the same old faces controlling key ministries was coupled with a rare televised speech by the prime minister. In his address the prime minister made the same mistake he made last March. Then, the prime minister agitated the people of Bahrain by hinting that the calm of that month was due to his security forces' resolve and measure against pro-democracy activists. He also underestimated the strength of pro-democracy tide sweeping the country. This time, he did the same mistake. His appearance on TV and outline of the government's priorities for defence and internal security was understood by the people of Bahrain as a start of a new crackdown. The people of Bahrain responded in the past few days by staging protests in the areas that suffered the worst of the atrocities committed by the foreign-staffed security forces.

Bahrain: Death Sentence Passed by State Security Court

4/Jul/1995

Today, 4th of July 1995, the Bahrain State Security Court passed the death sentence on a young person. Two other defendants were given life sentences, two others received 10 years sentence and five persons were sentenced to 5 years imprisonment, The group was arrested in mid March after the eruption of events following the ransacking of Nuweidrat village by the British-officered security forces.

The State Security Court is presided by a member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family, Jabir bin Abdul Rahman Al-Khalifa, and is governed by the unconstitutional State Security Law. Under the latter a person has no right of appeal.

Lawyers were not allowed to defend the accused and had no access to enable proper defence. All the defendants suffered severe torture and ill-treatment. The names of the sentenced are believed to be: Isa Ahmad Hasan Oambar (27 years old, carpenter), Mohammed Ali Hassan (20 years, worker), Younis Sale Mosa (22 years, worker), Ishaq Hasan Yousif Marhoon (20 years, carpenter), Hamza Majid Habib Al-Shaikh Yousif (24 years, fisherman), Ahmad Mosa Sale Mohammed (27 years, worker), Mansoor Saleh Maki Ali (20 year, worker), Hussain Mohammed Abdul Wahab Hussain (22 years, worker), Abbas Jasim Abdul Hussain Makki (27 years, driver).

Bahrain: Death Penalty by Decree

5/Jul/1995

The sentencing of nine young men yesterday by a Bahraini court to terms ranging from execution to two years imprisonment has shocked the country and led to heightened emotions among the people.

The court which was presided over by a member of the Al Khalifa family passed the death sentence on Mr. Isa Ahmad Hassan Qambar, 27, for his alleged part in the killing of an off-duty officer in March. Two others; -Mohammad Ali Hassan Khatam, 20, and Mansoor Saleh Makki Ali, 20, were sentenced to life imprisonment. Two were sentenced to ten years; Younis Sale Musa Al Sanini, 22, and Ishaq Hassan Youse Marhoon, 20. A sentence of five years imprisonment was passed on Hussain Sale Mousa Al Sanini, Ahmad Musa Al Sanini, 27, Hamza Majid Habib Al Sheikh Yousef, 24, and Hussain Mohammad Abdul Wahab Hassan, 22. In order to prove impartiality, the court acquitted two others ;Jassim Abdul Hussain Maki, 27, and Abbas Mohammad Ibrahim Al Mu'allem.

The charge against the defendants was never proven. The prosecution based its charge on the sole confessions of the defendants extracted under severe torture. Their families were never allowed to see them since they were detained. They were held incommunicado for the past four months, and were denied access to lawyers of their own choice. In previous cases those who had been acquitted by the State Security Court were not released. For example, Abdul Jabbar Ibrahim Al Durazi was discharged by the State Security Court on 30th April but is still being detained. This is due to the extensive torture he had been subjected to during his detention, and the government's determination not to let him go out of prison with any sign of torture.

These latest trials have indicated the willingness of the Al Khalifa tribe to go to any length to subjugate the Bahraini people. More than thirteen people were killed by government's troops over the last seven months and the international outcry against the use of force against peaceful demonstrators has forced the government to change tactics and is now resorting to the exploitation of judiciary to implement its policies. The aim is to frighten the people by passing severe sentences including the death penalty. But it seems the people are now beyond fear, and no amount of terror on the part of the Al Khalifa will deter the people of Bahrain from pursuing the aim of restoring the Constitution.

The most likely outcome of this policy is more popular anger and determination to attain the parliamentary life. All evidence available suggest that the policeman who was killed had been involved with others in personal disputes and that the killing was an act of revenge by one or more of the group. The absence of impartial court procedures and the prevention of proper legal representation mean that justice will remain absent from the courts which are presided over by members of the Al Khalifa.

The people of Bahrain will view the execution of Mr. Ahmad Hassan Qambar, if carried out, an act of mass-killing in line with the shoot-to-kill policy of the security system under the command of Ian Henderson. Many young Bahraini men were killed by security forces simply because they expressed their viewpoint in peaceful demonstrations. Those trigger-happy executioners must be brought to justice for unlawful killing of our youth. Failing to do that can only lead to further violence and bloodshed by security forces who will feel free to use any amount of force they think appropriate.

The execution of Mr. Qambar, if carried out, will mark the beginning of a new era in the relationship between the Al Khalifa and the people of Bahrain. Wisdom dictates that the government refrains from killing the people of Bahrain under any pretext.

Bahrain: Death Sentence

7/Jul/1995

A young person was sentenced to death. Two other defendants were given life sentences, two others received 10 years sentence and five persons were sentenced to 5 years imprisonment.

The group was arrested in mid March after the eruption of events following the ransacking of Nuweidrat village by the British-officered security forces. The State Security Court is presided by a member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family, Jabir bin Abdul Rahman Al-Khalifa, and is governed by the unconstitutional State Security Law.

Under the latter a person has no right of appeal. Lawvers were not allowed to defend the accused and had no access to enable proper defense. All the defendants suffered severe torture and ill-treatment. The names of the sentenced are believed to be: Isa Ahmad Hasan Qambar (27 years old, carpenter), Mohammed Ali Hassan (20 years, worker), Younis Saleh Mosa (22 y ears, worker), Ishaq Hasan Yousif Maroon (20 years, carpenter), Hamza Majid Habib Al-Shaikh Yousif (24 years, fisherman), Ahmad Mosa Saleh Mohammed (27 years, worker), Mansoor Saleh Maki Ali (20 year, worker), Hussain Mohammed Abdul Wahab Hussain (22 years, worker), Abbas Jasim Abdul Hussain Makki (27 years, driver).

Bahrain: Death Under Torture

8/Jul/1995

The fourteenth martyr of the pro-democracy uprising died today 8 July 1995 at the military hospital of Bahrain. Saeed Abdul Rasool Al-Askafi, 18 years old, from Sanabis village (4 kilometres west of the capital Manama) was arrested a week ago. His torture started after a brief interrogation. Mr. Al-Askafi's health condition deteriorated after prolonged sleepless nights. He was prevented from using lavatory and was suspended from his knees and wrists (chicken-type suspension) while receiving lashes on his naked body.

The notorious Adel Flaifel was quoted as saying that he and his colleagues are charged with wiping out Bahraini youth whom he described as "insects" This killing comes after the passing of death sentence on another innocent Bahraini youth, Mr. Isa Ahmad Hasan Qambar, on 4 July.

We call on all those concerned with human rights and civil liberties to raise their voices in support of the people of Bahrain at this critical stage of struggle for democracy.

Bahrain: Death Under Torture

10/Jul/1995

The killing in detention of Saeed Al -Eskafy on July 8th, came four days after the sentencing of another person to death by an unfair court presided by a member of the ruling AlKhalifa family. Mr. Al-Eskafy body was delivered on July 8th. It transpired that Mr. Al-Eskafy's parent house was raided by police last week. Saeed was not present then, but his father advised him to go to the intelligence department to see what was the problem.

The young person was tortured severely upon his arrival to the intelligence department. His disfigured body was handed to the military hospital. The latter phoned the family on Saturday to let them know that their son had died due to the injuries he suffered during detention.

Consequently, many places erupted with anger. Sitra, Nuaim, Sanabis, Daih, Abo Saibaa, Karzakan, Adhari and other places witness mass demonstrations. The riot police was deployed and live ammunition was used in Sanabis. As a result several people were injured, amongst them Nazha Seyed Abdulla and Ali Abdulla Nasser.

Last night, columns of fire were witnessed in several key areas such the Diplomatic Area and Adleya district of Manama. This morning, police with machine guns are patrolling the strategic districts of Manama. However, the people of Bahrain have considered the threatening message of the prime minister two weeks ago (after cosmetic changes in the cabinet) as a clear sign that the ruling family is intending to continue its violent policies against the pro-democracy movement.

Bahrain: Security Forces Atrocities Reaches Another Peak

13/Jul/1995

Last night witnessed an escalation in the popular uprising against the despotic tribal rule and its oppressive British-officered security forces. The youth in Sanabis, Nuaim, Sitra, Karzakan, Dair, Dah and Bilad-al-Qadeem clashed with the security forces when the later attacked the general public during ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of Saeed Al-Eskafi (15 years old) who was killed under torture on 8 July.

The security forces inhumanely attacked the houses and ransacked many houses. An elderly person from Jidhafs, Haji Khalil Ibrahim (63 years old) was beaten in front of his family. Later he was arrested together with three of his sons. One of the sons was released later. It is worth noting that one of the sons of Haji Khalil Ibrahim, Abdul Jail, is in jail since 1988.

The security forces have re-imposed a paramilitary siege on Dair, Sanabis, Daih and Sitra. The residents of these places are not allowed to move freely in their areas between 7.30 pm till the morning of every day. More than 40 people were arrested in Sanabis last night. Those known to be arrested include: Haji Abbas Mansoor Traif (60 years old), his son Fathi Abbas Traif (20 years), Ali Abdul Hussain Al-Mout (20 years), Fadhel Ali Ahmad Al-Salatneh, Hussain Ahmad Ali (23 years), Taha Abdulla Radhi (23 years), Ali Mansoor Ashor, Ali Al-Mulla, Hussain Abdulla, Abdulla Ibrahim Al-Jabal (26 years), Abdulla Isa Traif, Hussain Ahmad Al-Mokhoder (20 years), Fadhel Abdul Hasan Al-Shawoosh (15 years), Hassan Hamid Al-Sheikh (20 years).

A lady from Dair was injured yesterday by a rubber bullet. Fatheya Seyed Saeed is pregnant and the bullet could threaten the baby she is carrying. Few days ago, another lady in her twenties (Nazhah Seyed Abdulla) was hit by a bullet in the shoulder.

Bahrain: Security Forces' Atrocities

14/Jul/1995

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Bahrain: Torturing People to Death

14/Jul/1995

When the body of Saeed Al Iskafi was handed to his family last Saturday (8th July 1995), they realised it was difficult to identify it, and had to spend a considerable time in this process. The body was mutilated beyond recognition; signs of burns were abundant, marks indicating electric shocks were visible, as well as signs of beating and bruises due to the use of sharp instruments. The ordeal of the young boy who was only 16 years old, was such that he died within hours of his arrest two days earlier. The extent of injury he had sustained caused an outrage among the people who felt powerless to prevent the British officer, Ian Henderson from carrying on his unholy duty of subjugating the people of Bahrain with every means of terror at his disposal.

However, the ordeal of the Al Iskafi family did not end here. They were prevented from carrying out the ritual of organising a decent funeral for the martyr. The security forces had surrounded the area and ordered a secret burial of the victim. But no sooner had the people heard of the news of the extra-judicial killing than they did rush to the Sanabis area to take part in the funeral procession. At the end it turned out to be a massive procession with participants expressing outrage and raising slogans calling for the restoration of the Constitution and the release of the prisoners.

Two days later, the people ended the traditional rituals and went to visit the grave of the martyr. Again they were attacked by riot police, this time with live ammunition. The mourners were gunned down mercilessly, and it is estimated that more than 50.. people were injured. Some have lost limbs, others lost they eyes. The mayhem served to highlight the perils the present regime of Bahrain presents to the people of Bahrain.

For twenty years the people have been calling for the restoration of the country's Constitution, but their calls have always been unheeded. In the process, thousands of people were jailed, tortured, killed, exiled or banished. The people decided to bring home to the government the fact that repression is not the answer to the ills of the country. They initiated a process of petitioning the Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Sal-man Al Khalifa, on the issue of the Constitution, but he was in no mood to compromise on his refusal to grant the people their demands. He was propped up by the British pseudo-colonial officer, Ian Henderson who undertook to put his experience in Kenya and Rhodesia to the service of the Al Khalifa of Bahrain. And when the people started their present uprising last December, they were repressed in the most brutal way.

Thousands were detained and subjected to all forms of torture. Men, women and children were taken into the Chambers of Terror designed by Henderson to extract confessions. The sophistication of the terror machine created by this Scottish torture expert is such that no prisoner would be released as long as he had any physical sign of torture. Even if the State Security Court acquitted a person, he would still be held until his wounds had healed. For example, Abdul Jabbar Ibrahim, from Duraz village, was acquitted on 30th April, but has not yet been released because of the torture marks he has.

The people of Bahrain are appealing to those with a clear human conscience to take action that could lead to the lifting of their suffrage. They are continuing their struggle to obtain the restoration of the country's Constitution, the release of the prisoners, the repeal of the notorious State Security Law, and the return of the exiles. They are likely to face more repression

as they strive to improve the political situation in the country. It is a perfectly legitimate behaviour to protest in the streets and demand the restoration of the Rule of Law, but it is not acceptable from a government to employ all its means to suppress the aspirations of its own people. The use of live ammunition against innocent civilians and peaceful demonstrators is a cowardly act that could only be carried out by despots and dictators. It is our hope that a positive response from the freedom-loving people may force the tribal regime of the Al Khalifa to rethink its policies towards the people of Bahrain. There is a determination amongst the people to continue their peaceful protests until the Constitution is restored. Your support in this process is crucial, and you may help by writing to the Government of Bahrain to protest against its policies of repression and demand the restoration of the country's Constitution.

Bahrain: Two Boys Sentenced to 10 Years

19/Jul/1995

The Bahrain State Security Court sentenced two boys aged 14 to ten years of imprisonment on 9 July 1995. Mohammed Ali Mohammed Ali Al-Ekri (grandson of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Ekri, who is also in detention) and Seyed Hussain Al-Alawi were both arrested last April. They suffered from physical and sexual abuses.

Mr. Al-Ekri was released in May and his family thought that his ordeal had ended. However, the teenager was summoned again last month by the chief torturer Adel Flaifel, who informed his family that they may see their son when he is 24 years old. It is worth noting that Mr. Al-Ekri's father (Ali Al-Ekri) spent seven years in jail between 1983 and 1990.

Bahrain: Renewal of clashes

29/Jul/1995

Clashes between Bahraini youth and security forces erupted yesterday in several places around the country. The intensity of events in Bani Jamra and Abo Saiba'a lasted until the early hours of the morning. Propane gas cylinders were exploded throughout the night.

The public opinion in Bahrain is now surging towards another wave of clashes with the security forces. Popular leaders have spoken about the end of July by which the government should start releasing leading personalities and embark on a settlement.

The security forces have instead committed more atrocities. On 8 July, they sexually abused and tortured a 16 years boy, Saeed Al-Eskafy. His father, Mr. Abdul Rasool Al-Eskafy wrote to the Interior Ministry demanding that those who sexually abused and tortured his son to death be put on trial. Dozens of people were injured in their eyes by the random firing of the security forces.

Few days later, the State Security Court sentenced two boys aged 14 years old, Mr. Mohammed Ali Mohammed Ali Al-Ekri and Sayed Hussain Al-Alawi to ten years old. Mr. Al-Ekri has testified that he had been sexually abused.

Bahrain: Arrest Of Sheikh Ali Ashor

1/Aug/1995

Another pro-democracy leader was added to the jailed leading personalities yesterday. Sheikh Ali Ashor, from Bilad-al-Qadeem was arrested on 31 July after several months of continuous interrogation by the notorious intelligence officer Adel Flaifel. Last week, he was prevented from delivering sermons in the grand Al-Sadiq Mosque of Manama.

Sheikh Ali Ashor led the prayer last Friday but did not deliver any speech. However, the security authorities stormed his residence in the early hours of the morning and took him to unknown detention place.

Yesterday witnessed many clashes between the security forces and residents of Bani Jamra. A new wave of arrests are taking place in many parts of the country. In Tubli, many houses were stormed last nights and scores of youth disappeared

The uprising is liable for further escalation after the refusal of the government to show any signs of compromise. The government has made it clear that it does not intend to listen to calls from community leaders who have been urging the authorities for the release of leading personalities from detention and the start of a process of change aimed at restoring constitutional law in the country.

Bahrain: Leading pro-democracy woman sacked

6/Aug/1995

Miss Hessa Al-Khumeri, head of the Continuing Education (a department of the Ministry of Education) was sacked from her senior position after refusing to remove her name from a petition submitted last April to the Amir of Bahrain. The petition called on the Amir to order a stop to the human rights violations committed by the security forces and to restore the country's constitution.

When the ministerial changes took place last June, the Ministry of Education was handed over to a military man, Mr. Abdul Aziz Al-Fadhel, a clear sign of the tough attitude the authorities intend to implement in this field.

Several other women were harassed in the same way, including Professor Monira Fakhroo of the University of Bahrain. The latter is still under threat of losing her job.

Bahrain: Clashes with Security Forces

9/Aug/1995

Clashes between the residents of Sitra (the oil island of Bahrain) have been raging for the past few days. The renewal of clashes came after the failure of the ruling family (Al-Khalifa) to show any positive response to the pro-democracy movement that has been demanding the restoration of the parliament and constitution, both of which were suspended in August 1975.

Mass arrests are taking place in Sitra and other areas of Bahrain, such as Abo Saba'a, Duraz and Bani Jamra. The security forces have re-imposed paramilitary siege on the northern, western rural areas as well as Sitra island.

The recent sacking of Ms Hessa Al-Khumeiri is aggravating the situation further. She was the head of Continuing Education at the Ministry of Education. Her removal from the senior post came as a result of her sponsoring of a women's petition (submitted last April) calling on the Amir to order a stop to violations of human rights and to restore the Constitution of the country.

Twenty nine persons were sentenced to 3 and 5 years of imprisonment on 13 July accused of participation in pro-democracy protests. These are some of eighty other people who are being tried before the State Security Court. Under the provisions of the State Security Law, defendants have no right of appeal.

This month of August marks the twentieth anniversary of the dissolution of parliament and events are expected to escalate further.

Security forces use rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators

17/Aug/1995

The security forces attacked about a thousand people who gathered in Sanabis to commemorate the 40th day of the martyrdom of Saeed Al-Eskafy, the 16 year old who was sexually abused and tortured to death during detention.

The mourners gathered in Sanabis and many speeches were delivered calling for the punishment of the torturers. Security forces sealed off the roads from Qufool to Sanabis and encircled the mourners. Then, tear gas, rubber bullets and steel pellets rained on the gathering. Several injuries were reported and many women were seen falling on the streets. Clashes continued after the dispersion of gathering while the residents burnt rubber tyres to counter the effect of tear gas.

On the other hand, the security forces continued its attack on pro-democracy activists. On 12 August, Aziz Hamad Al-Bassam was sacked from her position as a programme editor with Radio Bahrain. Recently, Ms Hessa Al-Khumeiri was sacked from her position as head of continuing education at the Ministry of Education. Professor Moneera Fakhroo is being threatened with dismissal from Bahrain University. The three (together with more than three hundred women) had signed a petition calling on the Amir to restore the country's constitution and put an end to human rights abuses by security forces.

Bahrain: The Government Fails to Divert Attention from Core Issues

17/Aug/1995

The official Gulf News Agency reported that the Amir (ruler) of Bahrain decided to “pardon” some 150 persons illegally detained for their parts in the pro-democracy movement. This is the third time the Bahraini authorities claim the release of detainees.

In each case, less than half of the reported number are actually released. Some of those released are picked-up few days before the announcement to make an impression. For example, Mr Abdul-Hussain AJ-Mutghawwi was detained three days before the announcement of yesterday. However, his two sons, Osama and Yasir, are still in detention.

While the official announcement is released to the media, many arrests were taking place simultaneously. In addition to this, the security forces were flexing their muscles against unarmed civilians in Dura. Yesterday, several teenagers were harassed and forced to write slogans on the wall while being filmed by the security forces. Three of these teenagers were Mahdi Abbas Al-Rayyis, Hamdi Abdul Jalil Al-Gherbal and Dhia Ahmad Al-Gherbal.

The Bahraini authorities found that the policy of using live ammunition and brutal suppression is loosing its effect. The youth of Bahrain started going out in the streets and clashes have been going on since the start of the month. Slogans on the walls warned the authorities of continued and escalated struggle for the constitutional rights of the people of Bahrain. The authorities are also trying to divert attention from human rights abuses being investigated this month by international human rights organisations including the UN sub-committee on human rights in Geneva.

The opposition forces inside and outside Bahrain are planning programmes for commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the dissolution of the parliament and suspension of key articles of the constitution. On 20 August (4.30 pm), a march will take place in London between Edgware Road and Hyde Park. On 24 August (11.00 am) a press conference chaired by Lord Avebury will be held at 1 Abbey Gardens, Westminster, and a seminar in Arabic will take place in Kufa Gallery at Bayswater on 26 August (6.30 pm). A media pack has been prepared by the Bahrain Freedom Movement illustrating the violations of Bahrain's constitution by the authorities. Similar activities are expected to take place in other countries.

Bahrain: 20 Years of terror as the constitution remains suspended

20/Aug/1995

This demonstration has one main aim; to highlight the plight of the people of Bahrain twenty years after the notorious decree by the Amir of Bahrain ending the brief parliamentary experience. Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, acting on advice from the British officer, Ian Henderson, acted swiftly to suspend the Constitution and dissolve the National Assembly barely 18 months after the first parliamentary elections in the country. The decision followed the failure of the government of Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Amir's brother, to get the parliament's approval to approve a draconian law, commonly known as the State Security Law. The proposal gave the minister of the Interior, the authority to order the administrative detention of any person suspected of involvement in anti-government activities for up to three years without charge.

There was a unanimous rejection of the proposal, a step that led the unholy decree by the Amir to halt the parliamentary process. Over the last two decades, Bahrain has passed through one of its bleakest periods under the State Security Law which was put into full action immediately after the dissolution of the National Assembly. The result has been horrendous.

More than 30 people have been killed either under torture or by police guns (including 14 killed since last December), Thousands have been detained, some of whom have spent more than 14 years in jail. Torture has been exercised at a large scale, and international organizations issued numerous reports on Bahrain. More than one thousand Bahrainis were either exiled or refused entry to the country.

The government has failed to heed calls for political reforms, and the Amir has rebuffed all attempts to submit petitions

signed by the people requesting him to restore the Constitution. The people reacted in outrage as the Al Khalifa regime started arresting the pro-Constitution activists starting with the arrest on 5th December 1994 of the young cleric, Sheikh Ali Salman. Over the past nine months, Bahrain has witnessed the most serious popular uprising in the country in its recent history. The aim is clear; the restoration of the Constitution, the release of political prisoners, the repeal of the State Security Law and allowing the unconditional return of political exiles.

This demonstration is in support of the Bahraini people's demands and you are requested to express your support for their just struggle to attain a degree of democracy and respect of human rights. Your positive stands merit the commandment of our people, and will be a service to noble values of mankind.

Opposition plans open-ended campaign for the Constitution

21/Aug/1995

As the 20th anniversary of the suspension of Bahrain's Constitution approaches, the temperature of the political situation in the country increases, and the anxieties grow bigger. On 26th August 1975, the Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, issued a decree suspending some articles of the Constitution and dissolving the National Assembly. For twenty years, the people of Bahrain have been engaged in relentless campaigns to get the Constitution reinstated.

They were suppressed by the full force of the notorious State Security Law, whose rejection by the National Assembly resulted in the dissolution of the first and last elected legislature body.

In the context of the continuing endeavour to achieve a degree of freedom, the people decided to take their peaceful struggle a step further by engaging in street demonstrations and protests beginning last December. Once again, the government's response has been marked by repression and the use of unlimited force to end the strife. Over the last eight months, at least 14 people have been killed, some under torture; others by police guns. Acting on orders from the British officer, Ian Henderson, the security forces unleashed a reign of terror unparalleled except by the actions of the most repressive regimes in the world. Thousands of men, women and children were rounded up in random attacks on the most basic civil liberties. Lethal weapons were employed against unarmed peaceful protesters. Some were even forcibly exiled from the country.

The Bahraini opposition, inside and outside the country, is planning a series of peaceful actions to mark the 20th anniversary

including street protests, press conferences and a media campaign to highlight the political crisis in the country.

There is a total agreement among the people of Bahrain that there is no way out of the crisis except through the reinstatement of the Constitution, the release of prisoners, the repeal of the State Security Law and allowing the unconditional return of Bahraini exiles.

Enclosures:

- Bahrain's Constitution
- Copies of people's petitions to the Amir
- The State Security Law
- A coloured booklet on the uprising
- A historical background
- Selected media coverage
- Original colour photographs similar to those in the booklet are also available on request.

Large demonstration in London demanding rights of Bahrainis

21/Aug/1995

Hundreds of Bahrainis marched through the streets of London yesterday demanding the restoration of the country's constitution, putting an end to human rights violations and allowing forcibly-exiled citizens to return back home. The demonstration, the first of its kind, started from the Central Mosque in Regents Park, through Edgware Road and ended at Marble Arch, near the Hyde Park Speakers' Corner. The demonstrators chanted slogans in both Arabic and English. Thousands of leaflets and books were distributed showing photographs of tortured and killed victims. Many were horrified to know that these things are happening in Bahrain and that British personnel are in charge of the suppression campaign.

On the other hands, the authorities have release several leaders of the opposition last week. The release was part of a deal struck with jailed opposition leaders in which it was agreed that the government would release the scores of people together with six leading activists. These are to be followed on 7 September by the release of Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain together with 150 people. And on 30 September, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri would be released together with 500-600 people. In return, the leaders would calm down the situation so that a dialogue is initiated to resolve three main issues: the restoration of the constitution, the return of forcible exiles and the release of those sentenced as a result of the uprising.

A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated that "the Movement respects the decision taken by opposition leaders who have suffered immensely under detention. We also abide by the concluded decisions on the hope that the government would also abide by the agreement".

However, the spokesman added that “the history of the ruling Al-Khalifa family and their slide-back on the Constitution in 1975 support our scepticism. We hope that the Amir will agree to receive the pro-democracy petition calling on him to restore the Constitution”. The spokesman referred to the sacking of Miss Aziza Hamad Al-Bassam from her senior position in Radio Bahrain stating that “this is yet another proof of the bad intentions of the government”. Miss Al-Bassam is one of the sponsors of last April women’s petition submitted to the Amir calling on him to restore the Constitution and to put an end to violations of human rights. Recently, Ms Husa Al-Khumeiri lost her job as director of continuing education with the ministry of education for the same reason. Professor Monira Fakhroo of Bahrain University is awaiting the same fate following repeated threats by the ministry of education because of her sponsoring of pro-democracy demands.

The opposition is marking the twentieth anniversary of the dissolution of the parliament and suspension of key articles of the Constitution by several activities. In addition to the demonstration of yesterday, a news conference will be held on Thursday 24 August (11.00 am) at the British House of Parliament (1 Abbey Gardens, Westminster). The press conference will be chaired by Lord Avebury, Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group. On the same day, Mr. Ala’a Al-Yousuf of the Bahrain Freedom Movement will hold a press conference in Washington DC at the National Press Club (9.00 am). On 26 August (6.30 pm), the Bahraini Opposition will hold a seminar on Bahrain in Kufa Gallery, Bayswater, London.

Opposition groups address London Press Conference

24/Aug/1995

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the suspension of the Constitution in their country, the Bahraini opposition groups held a press conference this morning at the House of Commons in Central London. The meeting which was chaired by Lord Avebury, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, was also addressed by representatives of the four opposition groups in Bahrain, together with a former member of the dissolved National Assembly. It started at 11.00 am and ended at 12. 15 British Summer Time.

Lord Avebury started the Press Conference by reminding the audience that it was being held on the 20th anniversary of the suspension of the Constitution and the dissolution of the National Assembly and with this year's uprising. He said a petition signed by 25,000 people calling on the Amir to restore the Constitution has not yet been received by the Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, but, he said, there are signs that the government may now be willing to talk to the opposition. He cautioned against over-optimism and said: "we have to wait and see whether the government is serious about dialogue" Lord Avebury said that the Parliamentary Human Rights Group is composed of about 100 members of all the main parties in Britain, and its main objective is to press the Foreign Office on issues of human rights in other countries.

"Unfortunately", he said, "some ministers have recently acted as a go-between acted as a postman transmitting the views of the Bahraini government without commenting on them" Lord Avebury then introduced the panel. Dr . Abdul Hadi Khalaf,

a former member of the National Assembly and a lecturer at Lunde University in Sweden, gave a historical background of the parliamentary experiment which started in 1972.

He said that as early as 1914, the British administration in Bahrain had deported Bahrainis seeking legislative councils, to India. He thinks the crisis of the Al Khalifa government in Bahrain started in 1972 when they initiated a process of reform leading to the creation of a constitution. "We realised that the Bahraini people were able to work, debate and collectively act to improve their welfare and run their country. That fact was considered a threat by the Al Khalifa ruling family". He further added: "The hawks amongst the Al Khalifa acted swiftly to bring that experiment to an abrupt end in 1975. They sought to silence people using the oil revenues created by the oil boom but that was short-lived".

Mr. AbdulNabiAlEkri, speaking on behalf of the Coordination Committee of both the Popular Front and the National Liberation Front in Bahrain, referred to the reign of terror unleashed by Ian Henderson in the last thirty years. "Henderson is the real authority" he said. "There is repression, harassment and human rights abuses at a large scale. The situation erupted at the end of last year". He elaborated further by saying that out of an indigenous population of 350,000, up to 10,000 people have been imprisoned over the last twenty years". He said the people of Bahrain are educated and are unlikely to be silenced by the use of terror.

Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Radhi, representing the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, took the issue of the Constitution and emphasised his movement's demand that the constitution needs to be reformed and modernised, and that the present constitution is outdated.

Finally, Dr. Mansoor Al Jamri, of the Bahrain Freedom Movement, highlighted the recent developments in the country and referred to the deal between the government and the jailed leaders of the uprising. According to the deal, five clerics and 150 detainees were to be released on 16th August, Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain, one of the six sponsors of the popular petition and another 150 detainees will be released on 7th September, and at the end of September Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, the main figure in both the uprising and the petition, will be released with 500-600 detainees. Dr. Al Jamri emphasised that it was a step forward but emphasised that the issue of the restoration of the Constitution must be discussed with the six sponsors of the petition, and that national consensus must be preserved. Although BFM is closely linked to the uprising and its leaders, Dr. Al Jamri said that there was not way the movement would debate the issue of the constitution outside the national consensus.

In his concluding remarks,, Lord Avebury referred to the stand of the British Foreign Office, which he said, has been defensive with regards to the situation in Bahrain. Unlike its

position vis-a-vis other countries, the FCO has shielded the Al Khalifa of Bahrain in a way that that is both shameful and unprincipled, according to Lord Avebury. The press conference was attended by journalists from leading news agencies, TV and Radio stations. The role of Bahraini women was highlighted by the panel and Henderson's role was the talk of the day.

Regime's fiasco at a speco BBC Radio programme on Bahrain

28/Aug/1995

The editor-in-chief of the government-owned Al-Ayam newspaper, Mr. Nabeel Al-Hamar, withdrew from a live radio interview yesterday citing the participation of Sheikh Ali Salman, one of the leaders of the constitutional movement, as his reason for withdrawing. The interview was an integral part of a highly-regarded radio program presented by Mr. Hafez, Al-Merazi and broadcast by the Arab American Radio Network marking the twentieth anniversary of the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of several articles of the constitution Mr. Al-Hamar had accepted the invitation to represent the official view on the program and confront any member of the opposition. However soon after the distinguished presenter made his introductory remarks Mr. Al-Hamar decided that he could not engage in a debate with any member of the opposition in exile.

His ignominious withdrawal proved the falsehood of the government's claims that it tolerates debate within the country. The contradiction in the government's position was immediately obvious and the first caller commented that such a dialogue could not take place inside the country if the government jails and deports the leaders of the opposition.

The presenter was deeply shocked when Mr. Al-Hamar rudely hung up on him while he was trying to persuade him to remain on the program. The presenter expressed his astonishment at this attitude especially coming from a fellow journalist. He noted that Mr. Al-Hamar may not have fully appreciated the implications of the restrictions on access to foreign media imposed by the Ministry of Information last April when he initially agreed to be interviewed.

This is the second time that a government official or spokesman withdraws from interviews with a member of the opposition also participating. So far, the government and its spokesmen have studiously avoided answering questions on the constitutional and human rights crisis in Bahrain. In the remainder of the interview Sheikh Ali Salman explained that the main demand in the popular petition of October 1994 was the implementation of the constitution and the restoration of parliamentary life.

He indicated that the Consultative Council appointed in 1992 has been totally rejected by the people of Bahrain who insist on their right to elect their own representatives to legislate and hold the government accountable. In response to questions, Sheikh Ali Salman indicated that 14 people have been killed by the security forces who used live ammunition and torture. He reaffirmed that a key demand is the extension of the right to vote and be elected to women and expressed his sincere hopes that the government would participate in a dialogue with the opposition to find a peaceful solution to this crisis.

BFM: a profile of a movement for change

Aug/1995

Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM) is concerned with promoting representative political participation and respect of human rights in Bahrain.

BFM is a mass movement founded in 1982 bringing together political activists, intellectuals and professionals, amongst others, from diverse sections of Bahrain society. The movement takes its roots from the parliamentary experiment that existed in the period between 1972 and 1975. Following the dissolution of the elected parliament and suspension of key articles of the constitutions by the Amir (ruler) of Bahrain, pro-democracy activists went underground. BFM reflects the aspirations of Bahraini pro-democracy tendency and shares the vision of reviving the rule of constitutional law. The movement is an integral part of the popular and general pro-democracy trend in Bahrain. It strikes a balanced line of thought and action that integrates Islamic values with pluralism.

BFM believes that a Bahrain ruled by constitutional law, as existed in the early seventies, is the most secure route for stability in the country. This in turn can guarantee the interests of the State of Bahrain as well as respecting regional and international frameworks of relationships.

Bahrain can only prosper through the continued diversification of the economy. Growth of business and development of market economy require a stable political environment. This, we believe, can only be achieved through the respect of the will of the people of Bahrain and their rights as specified by the constitution of the country.

BFM aims at freeing the people of Bahrain from repression and lack of civil liberties. A key objective is the restoration of

the parliament based on the constitution which was enacted in 1973. BFM believes that the constitution represents the national consensus and the will of the citizens of Bahrain. Civil liberties, freedom of speech and assembly and the principles enshrined in the United Nation Universal Declaration on Human Rights as well as Islamic values are regarded as ideals by the BFM.

The Bahrain Freedom Movement believes that attaining its principled goals shall be through peaceful means. BFM adopts civilized ways for settling disputes and conflicts.

Predicaments of Bahraini family returning home

1/Sep/1995

Mr. Mohammed Salman Mohammed Jawad, his wife and children returned from forcible exile in Syria to Bahrain on 29 August. At Bahrain International Airport, the family suffered a humiliating reception in line with the Al-Khalifa government policy. After hours of interrogation, the whole family was deported to Abu Dhabi the next day. The authorities at Abu Dhabi Airport refused to allow them to enter the country and returned them back to Bahrain. The Bahrain intelligence officers received them at Bahrain Airport again and re-deported the family to Syria. Arriving at Damascus on 31 August, they found themselves in greater difficulty as the Syrian authorities held them for questioning about the shuttling between countries. The policy of forcibly exiling citizens is a unique feature of the oppressive authorities of Bahrain.

The type of participation of Bahrain in the UN Conference on Woman in China is indicative of the mentality of the ruling Al-Khalifa family. The “non-governmental” delegation is composed of four women, all of them carry the same surname, that of Al-Khalifa. Hence, Hayya Ali Abdulla Al-Khalifa, Maryam Hamad Al-Khalifa, Aisha Abdulla Al-Khalifa and Nora Mubarak Al-Khalifa have gone to China in the name of the Bahraini women. This type of representation is totally rejected by the people of Bahrain who have witnessed the persecution of pro-democracy women since the start of the pro-democracy uprising last December. When 310 leading women from all sections of the society submitted a petition to the Amir last March/April calling on him to restore the constitution of the country, they were intimidated and threatened of grave consequences. Two of them, Hussa Al-Khumeiri (Head of Continuing Education with the Ministry of Education) and Aziza Al-Bassam (senior

programme writer with Radio Bahrain) were recently dismissed from their work as a result of the petition. To protest against all these violations the Bahraini women sent their own delegation to the UN Conference headed by Professor Moneera Fakhroo, one of the leading sponsors of the pro-democracy petition.

Bahrain: Hesitant Government Ridicules Itself

7/Sep/1995

Tens of thousands poured into the streets of Nuweidrat, the home village of the leading pro-democracy leader Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain, who was detained last March, in anticipation of his release today together with 150 people as part of a deal with the jailed leaders of the opposition. People from all over the country gathered peacefully, but the vast number of them caused a huge traffic jam and people had to walk miles for the reception part. The authorities hesitated in it compliance with the agreement and released false news stating that no deal was struck with the leaders of the opposition in an attempt to divert attention.

At 2.15 pm, several leaders who had been released on 16 August as part of the deal were called for a lengthy meeting at the Ministry of the Interior. During the meeting the security authorities expressed their unease at the mass gatherings and reception part for Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain. At the end of the meeting the authorities stated that they will release Mr. Hussain tomorrow, Friday 8 September at a no specified time and that the 150 people will be released in batches starting Saturday 9 September.

Two of the leaders went back to the gatherings and informed them about the outcome of the lengthy meeting. The crowds replied with slogans warning the government of the grave consequences if they slide back and refuse to release Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain as scheduled.

Bahrain: Release of Abdul Wahab Hussain

8/Sep/1995

Despite the denial of the Bahraini Information Minister that there exists an agreement between the jailed opposition leaders and the government, Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain has been released today just before 7.00 pm (Bahrain local time). The release is part of the agreement to free 150 people together with Mr. Hussain on 7 September.

Yesterday more than 12 thousands people gathered in Nuweidrat to celebrate the releasing of Mr. Hussain. This has angered the security authorities who met with opposition leaders for seven hours in an attempt to defuse the situation. The opposition leaders threatened to withdraw from the agreement unless Mr Hussain is released. At the end of the meeting the government demanded that the gathering must disperse before the release of Mr. Hussain the next day (i.e. today). The vast number of people were informed later last night at around 9.00 pm about the conclusions but the response was denunciation and rejection of such demand.

Today, crowds started gathering in a much larger number reaching 20 thousands people. The security authorities delayed the release until the evening at around 7.00 pm. However, at around 6.00 pm the security forces attacked parts of the crowds by tear gas and rubber bullets. It later transpired that this attack was a revenge one against the people who defied all government's threats and proved that the will of the people is stronger than the suppression of the oppressors.

As part of the agreement, around 600 people are scheduled to be released on 30 September together with the leading opposition leader Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri.

Bahrain: Security forces enflame the situation

8/Sep/1995

The release of Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain yesterday (8 September) was celebrated by the people of Bahrain as a sign of a new era of reconciliation. The release was supposed to have taken place the preceding day together with 150 people as per an agreement reached with the jailed opposition leaders last August. However, the security forces reversed their decision protesting about the mass gathering of around 12 thousands people to welcome Mr. Hussain in Nuweidrat on 7 September. The situation became highly charged and the security authorities had to release Mr. Hussain the next day. By then, more than 20 thousands people assembled to celebrate the eventual release of Mr. Hussain. To vent their anger, the security forces mounted a hit-and-run attack utilizing tear gas and rubber bullets. Several people were injured yesterday.

Today, a length meeting was held between opposition leaders (including the jailed leader Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri) and the Interior Ministry. During the meeting, the Interior Minister expressed the anger of the security authorities at the mass receptions and gatherings while the opposition stated that the government's official line is contradictory to the spirit of the agreement. The Information Ministry continued to deny that there exists an agreement and that those released were "pardoned" to be given a chance to "return to the right path". This deadlock was followed by a sudden deployment of anti-riot police and return of para-military patrols in a show of force. These forces started intimidating the public in an attempt to provoke the situation and provide an excuse for a slide back by the government. The Interior Minister also informed the opposition leaders that the 150 people who were supposed to have been released on 7 September as well as the 500-600

people (including Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri) who were scheduled for release on 30 September will not be released.

The people of Bahrain, having reached thus far, well understand that their rights can not be granted freely and the struggle for freedom and democracy will continue despite all aggressive and suppressive measures the government may take.

Bahrain: Resumption of reconciliation talks

12/Sep/1995

At a meeting yesterday (11 September) attended by opposition leaders (including the jailed Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri) and representatives of the government, it was agreed to resume the reconciliation talks and proceed forward with the release of detainees as scheduled. As a result some fifty people were released today to be followed by a hundred more prisoners in the following days. This is in line with the deal that had been agreed previously.

Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri and about 600 people would still be released by the end of September. Amongst the agreed points was the acceptance by both parties that the aim of this initial stage would be to establish stability and security. Thence forward, political dialogue will take place with the Amir, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, with the ultimate aim of restoring the constitution within the framework of national consensus.

On the other hand the spokesperson for the Bahrain Freedom Movement said that the statements made by the prime minister to the national press on 11 September in which he accused the opposition as being foreign-inspired are not conducive to the spirit of national reconciliation. He added that the political struggle to attain democracy through the reinstatement of the National assembly would continue utilizing all possible peaceful means.

Inside Bahrain, the freed leaders of the opposition are conducting one of the greatest mass political dialogue in the country involving the public and all tendencies in the country. On 10 September, two seminars were organised. The first was in Nuweidrat, the home village of Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain.

The seminar was attended by thousands of people and amongst those addressing the gathering was a former member of the dissolved National Assembly, Mr. Mohammed Jaber Sabah, speaking on behalf of the liberal tendency. Mr. Sabah offered whole-hearted and united support of the active internal opposition groups for the reconciliation talks and pledged to continue raising the banner of constitutionalism in Bahrain. The second seminar was held at Karbabad, 4 km west of Manama, with more than 3000 people gathering to listen to the recently-freed leaders. Mr. Hasan Mushaima'a re-asserted the demands of the opposition that political dialogue must be made in the open with an agreed timetable. Only by doing so that the achieved stability of the country may last longer.

Bahrain: Opposition strategy remains the same

16/Sep/1995

The strategy of the Bahraini opposition is undergoing a critical review in view of the reconciliation talks that started to take effect in mid August. This is the first time in the history of Bahrain that the government yields to public opinion and accepts the fact of life that opposition is an integral part of today's politics. The government of Bahrain has not yet confirmed the existence of dialogue, a point of disagreement with the opposition. In a recent round of talks, the government side stated that what is happening is a new phenomenon and the political system has yet to adapt.

On 15 September, the London-based Saudi paper Al-Hayat quoted "diplomatic and political sources in Bahrain" and referred to the importance of the "current dialogue amongst most of the Bahraini sections of society". This is probably the first time the government attempts to adapt to modern politics. The paper also referred to statements made by the prime minister regarding plans for "increasing the scope of the consultative assembly .. and establishing local councils". These statements are aimed at pre-empting the next phase of dialogue. As agreed between the government and opposition leaders, that after the end of the first phase of talks, political dialogue will then take place with the Amir. The first phase lasts until the end of September and should see the end of street clashes in return for releasing a thousand detainees. Later on, the sentenced political prisoners numbering about 200 people should be freed and those forcibly exiled numbering about a thousand people should be allowed back home.

However, the government continues to violate human rights. For example, a score of youth who have lived in Bahrain since their birth while retaining their Saudi passports have been

deported to Saudi Arabia after their release. A teenager by the name Khalil Ibrahim Al-Hanoon, who was borne in Bahrain and has since lived with his Saudi father and Bahraini mother in Karzakkan (west of Bahrain), has been deported and his family has not been able to know his fate.

Political dialogue has always been the aim of the Bahraini opposition. The 1994 petition was sponsored by leading personalities representing virtually all sections and tendencies in Bahrain's society. Furthermore, the petition was circulated amongst the public and some 25,000 people signed their names calling on the Amir to restore the country's constitution and parliament, both were suspended in 1975 by the Amir himself. The national consensus manifested by the petition is one of the greatest achievements of the Bahraini opposition. The strength of the internal public opinion has forced the government to re-think its approach regarding popular participation in the day-to-day running of the country.

That's why the recently freed opposition leaders have taken the brave step of directly involving the public in the formulation of policies and positions. Details of reconciliation talks are publicly transmitted via public seminars with critical analyses and questioning taking place between the opposition leaders and members of the public. This is being the healthiest approach and the surest way to achieve the aims of the people of Bahrain.

These aims remain as stated in the historic petition that called for the restoration of constitutional politics and an end to arbitrary and absolute practices.

Bahrain: The Opposition intensifies its peaceful activities

20/Sep/1995

The opposition organized a press conference in Paris (Hotel Lutetia) this morning (20 September) attended by media and human rights organizations. Mr. Abdul Nabi Al-Ekri outlined how the Bahraini government is resisting the pro-democracy trend in the country and the determination of the opposition to achieve its legitimate aims by depending on the constitution and national consensus. The popular support for the submission of the 1994 historic petition signed by 25,000 people was evident throughout the episodes of struggle. "The government is attempting to deflect internal and external opinions from the core issue: that of restoring the parliament and constitution", Mr. Al-Ekri said.

On the recent agreement between five jailed leaders and the government, Mr. Al-Ekri stated that the opposition is astonished at the behaviour of the Bahraini officials who refuse to admit the fact that a dialogue was initiated. "If anything, it shows the nature of absolute rule that refuses to recognize the existence of a second opinion". At the end of the conference Mr. Al-Ekri was interviewed by the BBC, Radio Paris International and Monte Carlo. Abdul Nabi Al-Ekri is a member of the coordinating committee for the Popular Front and the National Front of Bahrain.

On the hand, the London Arabic daily, Al-Quds Al-Arabi, published an article yesterday (19 September) written by Professor Monira Fakhroo of Bahrain University. Professor Fakhroo is one of the leading personalities who sponsored the pro-democracy petition as well as the women's petition that was submitted five months ago to the Amir. As a result of the latter two leading women were dismissed from their senior position.

The two are Ms. Hessa Al-Khumeiri and Ms. Aziza Al-Bassam. Professor Fakhroo is also under threat of dismissal.

Professor Fakhroo stated that “it is obvious that the attitude of the government is not to yield to the pressures of the petitions which demand the return to parliamentary life. Further, it gives no indication of its willingness to even negotiate on the issue. On the contrary, its responses were suppression of disturbances with brutal force, dispersal of demonstrations, detentions, control of key points around trouble areas, the presence of police controls with the school grounds and university campuses, and the refusal to receive delegates and their petitions. It is noteworthy that the authorities acted in the same old fashioned way as it did during the previous uprisings by not acknowledging the existence of any opposition” Professor Monira Fakhroo has just returned from Beijing where she represented the non-governmental women’s organizations of Bahrain. She encountered four ladies from the ruling family who claimed to represent all Bahraini women despite the fact that they were part of the official delegation.

Young Bahraini woman placed in solitary confinement

21/Sep/1995

The Bahraini authorities are refusing to release a 17 years old girl detained last April on charges of participating in pro-democracy protests. Ms. Hayat Al-Qamar, from Duraz village, is believed to be in solitary confinement since her arrest several months ago. A recently released detainee stated that the name Hayat was heard in the corridors of the torture chambers. The authorities had earlier promised to release Hayat but declined to do so for unknown reasons.

This in itself has raised doubts as to the reasons behind keeping her and whether there is anything the authorities are attempting to hide.

On the other hand, the militarization of the Education sector was strengthened further yesterday (20 September) by the appointment of an unknown military man, Mohammed Al-Ghatam as rector of Bahrain University. Al-Ghatam was brought from the Ministry of Defence to head the University of Bahrain ahead of the new session (starting this month) to make sure that the iron fist policy is firmly implemented against the university students who staged massive pro-democracy marches in the past months. The university campuses are encircled by military units, something resisted by all university staff and students. The militarization of the university came after the appointment of another unknown military man, Mr. Abdul Aziz Al-Fadhel as Minister of Education last June.

Bahrain: The Government provokes the situation

9/Oct/1995

By the end of September, the Bahraini authorities should have released about one thousand political detainees to pave the way for political dialogue with the pro-democracy opposition. Instead, many hundreds remain in detention while security forces step up their violations of human rights. On 30 September, the military man recently installed as president of the Bahrain University dismissed Dr. Monira Fakhroo from her position as assistant professor of sociology. The reason for dismissal was an academic paper submitted by Dr. Fakhroo to a conference in Italy last July under the theme: Gulf 2000.

This grave violation of freedom of expression was made possible by the militarisation of the Education sector who military men were appointed as Minister of Education, President of Bahrain University as well as heads of other schools.

On 3 October, another military man appointed as headmaster of Nuaim Secondary School ordered the detention of 20 students after the breakout of a students' demonstration demanding the release of those who were supposed to have been released by end of September. One student remains in jail after dismissal from school. Other students have been staging daily strikes demanding his release.

A seminar that was to take place in A'ali village on 3 October was cancelled by the Interior Ministry. The seminar was to be addressed by recently freed pro-democracy leaders as well as Dr. Abdul Latif Al- Mahmood. This sparked-off a street protest the next day by residents of A'all. The Interior Ministry objected to the participation of a leading Sunni opponent at a Shia gathering in order to preserve its not-anymore effective policy of "divide and rule".

On 5 October, a mass demonstration took to the streets of Dura demanding the release of those who should have been released last September and protesting against the resumption of political trials of three groups.

The recently released pro- democracy leader, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jammri addressed a mass gathering in Duraz on 0 October and stated the following: “We all know that stability is fundamental for the prosperity of our dear country, but security and calm do not happen by a miracle. We need stability and security and this can only be achieved through the elimination of the roots causing trouble. The people have abided by the request for calming the situation despite all the difficulties. Would it not be better for the respected government to speed-up the implementation of its promises to end the crises?” would like to point out that the denial of the existence of dialogue by the information Minister is perplexing. Civilized and modern governments take pride in conducting dialogue for resolving conflicts because this prevents violent means. The denial of the Information minister has provoked the people and created obstacles in the way to and the crisis.

The delay in releasing detainees has no rationale. We agreed that all detainees must be released by the end of September but this has not happened. Would it not be better for the respected government to restore calm by releasing the rest of detainees? I advice the officials to implement the provisions of the agreement so that the trust between the government and the people may be restored. The cancellation of the seminar that was supposed to have been held in A’ali is a mistake. Such a seminar is a very important activity bonding both communities of Bahrain. When a leading Sunni scholar addresses a Shia gathering, and vice versa, the unity of the people and security of the country can be fully assured.

Bahrain: Announcement for General Strike

20/Oct/1995

Sheikh Al-Jamri Declares Hunger Strike Three weeks since the end of September have proved the ill-intentions of the Bahraini government. While failing to comply with their promises that all political detainees (those who are not convicted) will be released by the end of September, there are still some 500 people remaining in detention centres.

Moreover, the government has refused to acknowledge the existence of reconciliation talks and exacerbated the situation by putting more people on trial, dismissing leading pro-democracy activists, refusing entry to those returning home, and allowing the government-controlled press to publish articles inciting hatred amongst the society.

As a result, the leading pro-democracy activists who were released recently after holding talks with government's officials declared hunger strike in front of tens of thousands of people who attended Friday prayers in the grand mosques all around the country.

Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri declared the following today (20 October) at 1.00 pm in the Al-Sadik Grand Mosque in Duraz: "We declare that we will go on hunger strike and peaceful pickets starting from Monday 23 October in protest against the violation (by the government) of the agreement to release all detainees. We declare our demands that all political detainees must be released, that the government officially recognise the existence of reconciliation talks, that the government agrees to preparations for initiating political dialogue with the political leadership for discussing the reinstatement of the parliament, the release of all remaining political prisoners and the return of forcible exiles. We also call on all those participating in the protest to adhere to peaceful means"

Half an hour later, the security forces were deployed in massive numbers around all areas which were the scenes of street protests. Alongside the Budayya Highway, where Sheikh Al-Jamri lives, dozens of lorries packed with security forces were seen at entries and exits of residential areas.

Sheikh Al-Jamri Declares Hunger Strike

22/Oct/1995

As has been announce last Friday, Monday morning, 23 October, will be the start of the hunger strike by pro-democracy leaders in Bahrain. A meeting on 22 October at the Ministry of the Interior failed to resolve the main issue and the government has refused to comply with its earlier promises.

On 20 October, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, the pro-democracy leader recently released from jail, declared, that he and other leaders of the uprising will go on hunger strike starting Monday 23 October. The following announcement was made by Sheikh Al-Jamri before tens of thousands of people who attended the Friday prayer at Al-Sadik Mosque in Duraz (the same statement was also read in major mosques all around the country)

“O’ Great Peaceful People: Our beloved country, Bahrain, went through a major crisis that was characterized by violence exchanged between the government and the people, resulting in the shedding of sacred blood. Cautious calm returned to the country as a result of the initiative (to start dialogue with the government) which was supported by all sincere political forces, both inside and outside the country.

The people have shown their peaceful nature and have confirmed their natural tendency for serious dialogue between the people and the government, which started inside the jail. To demonstrate their support for an enlightened future, the people staged happy celebrations and complete calm was about to be established, had not it for the government failing to comply with the agreed timetable for releasing all the detainees. The situation was further exacerbated by the resumption of political trial of 22 teenagers, who had been released earlier.

This has created a sweeping wave of dissatisfaction amongst the public and in the schools. Political detainees started a hunger strike protesting against their continued detention, which created unease amongst their families. All people have come to understand the action of the government as a political manoeuvre to bypass the aim of the dialogue initiative and to hinder any progress towards the submission of political demands. Popular political forces, inside and outside, reacted by radicalizing their positions.

The group of the initiative has reflected all this to officials at the Ministry of the Interior and requested them to take decisive actions concerning the release of all political detainees and the stopping of political trials as have been agreed earlier, to prevent further deterioration in the situation. The security leadership in the Ministry of Interior promised to come back on Wednesday (18 October). No reply was received on Wednesday or Thursday. All that was relayed was that a meeting will take place on Sunday 22 October without defining the nature of this meeting. The group of the initiative has been left with no choice but to respond to their religious, national and historical responsibilities that require them to stand on a definitive and wise position to control matters, and be able to progress serious dialogue for the benefit of development and reforms of the country, so that the general public do not fragment into uncontrolled actions.

As a result, the group of the initiative, based on their legal-religious duties have decided to initiate picket and hunger strike starting from Monday 23 October 1995. Such action will continue until the satisfaction of the following demands:

The release of all political detainees and the immediate

stoppage of all political trials. Allowing those people who were prevented from entering the country to return back home. The official recognition of the dialogue that started between the opposition and the government. The putting in place of provisions for political dialogue to tackle the following: those convicted during the last months political exiles parliament. Finally, we would like to direct the attention of the people to the following:

The absolute necessity for staying calm and not going out in marches or practicing any violence under the theme of solidarity with the hunger strikers. We reaffirm that any such acts are against our will and they could back-fire on our noble peaceful and constitutional causes. The participation in solidarity with the hunger strikers is not open for every one, unless otherwise authorized. There will be an official spokesman for the hunger strikers, who will be available for the latest on the strike.

Signed by (the group of the initiative): *Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, Hassan Ali Mushaimaa, Abdul Wahab Hussain Ali, Ibrahim Al-Sayed Adnan Al-Alawi, Hassan Ali Sultan, Hussain Ali Al-Daihi.*

Bahrain: Sheikh Al-Jamri Transferred to Hospital

25/Oct/1995

On the third of the hunger strike, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri's health condition deteriorated and had to be transferred to hospital at around 6.30 pm (Wednesday 25 October). Along with Sheikh Al-Jamri, Seed Ibrahim Adan was also transferred, in this case for the third time since yesterday. The health condition of the other five is also deteriorating. At the time of transfer, seven thousands people were gathering in front of Al-Jamri's home in Bani Jamra, north-west of Bahrain.

The University Students are to join with a one-day hunger strike tomorrow morning and will be based in Zain al-Abedin Mosque, located in front of Al-Jamri's home. Other religious scholars started joining, while people in Dair, Duraz, Sitra, and other villages joined the strike at their local mosques. These strikes typically last for a day, and are becoming new phenomena in the struggle for human rights and democracy in Bahrain.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Faisal Al-Zeerah (member of the all-appointed and powerless Consultative Council) visited the seven pro-democracy leaders and requested an end to the strike. He informed that the visit was his own initiative.

The pro-democracy leaders requested him to take the statement to the political leadership and get an answer. Later in the day, Dr. Al-Zeerah, contacted the group to say that he was prepared to mediate after the end of the strike. This was not found satisfactory and hence the strike continued.

While this is going on the government was conducting a sweeping security campaign arresting many people. Ten students from Sheikh Abdulla School in Isa Town were arrested following a peaceful gathering in solidarity with the hunger strike. Other schools, Al-Jabreyah, Nuaim, Duraz, Jedhafs,

Ahmad Al-Omran, etc., witnessed similar protests.

The State Security Court continued its sessions unabated. Mr. Mahdi Sahwan was acquitted. Sheikh Fadhel Jaafar Rashid Hammad and four of his brothers and relatives were released on bail after paying 500 dinars (\$1000) each. Several others appeared before the State Security Court and had their sessions adjourned. The Spokesperson for the Hunger Strike, Mr. Abdul Wahab Husain, may be contacted on (973) 462232, 451775 or 692249.

Bahrain: Ten of thousands of people gather in solidarity

26/Oct/1995

Sheikh Hussain AI-Daihi was transferred to the American Hospital of Bahrain at around 8.30 pm after the deterioration of his health as a result of four days on hunger strike.

Forty thousands people surged toward the home of Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri in Bani Jamra, north-west of Bahrain, to declare their solidarity with the pro-democracy leaders who started their hunger strike on Monday 23 October. At around 8.00 pm, both Budaya and Abo-Subh main roads linking the northern region of Bahrain to Manama were jammed by traffic stretching back to Jedhafs and Sanabis, west of Manama.

Today, many senior religious leaders issued statements in support of the hunger strike. Seyed Alawi AI-Ghoreifi stated “Emanating from our religious duty, we advise the respected government to honour its agreement with the group of the initiative to exit this crisis. We also stress that the only way out is through serious dialogue on both security and political issues”. Similar statements were made by Sheikh Abdul Hussain AI-Setri and Seyed Jawad AI-Wedal. All three come from the highest level of religious circles.

A statement for the residents of Manama stated “You (pro-democracy leaders) were and remain for the restoration of the constitution and National Assembly and stood with your sincerity for the unity of the nation and worked for the public interests”. Thousands of people from Sitra raised a banner carrying a statement written in blood “This is our manifesto of loyalty”.

As the mid-night approached thousand upon thousands of people were chanting slogans such as “With our souls and blood

we defend you, O’Jamri’, “Al-Jamri does not compromise, He stands for our rights”, “We are not saboteurs, we demand the Constitution” “We demand the return of Sheikh Ali Salman”.

Tomorrow, a statement will be issued by the pro-democracy leaders in hunger strike and is planned to be read in three major places, Al-Sadek Mosque in Duraz, Al-Sadek Mosque in Manama and Nuweidrat Mosque. The spokesman for the strike, Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain can be contacted on (973) 692249, 462232, 451775.

Bahrain: Pro-Democracy Leaders Continue Their Strike

27/Oct/1995

A statement by the pro-democracy leaders on strike since Monday 23 October, declared the intention of Sheikh. Abdul Amir Al-Jamri and other six leaders to continue their hunger strike further. The statement was read on their behalf in three major mosques. Al-Sedek Mosque in Duraz, Al-Sadek Mosque in Manama and Nuiweidrat Mosque in Nuiweidrat.

The government has not responded to the demands raised for releasing all political detainees, halting political trials, allowing citizens to return home and accepting to discuss the restoration of the dissolved parliament. Earlier today, a lengthy meeting was held between the pro-democracy leaders in hunger strike and Dr. Faisal Al-Zeera, member of the powerless and all-appointed Consultative Council. Dr. al-Zeerah has been conducting (several meetings with government's officials on his own initiative. The meeting failed to resolve the basic issue of the failure of the government to comply with its promises made in August for calming down the situation. Senior religious leaders continued to voice their support. Sheikh Isa Qassim declared his support for the hunger strike and called on the government to respond positively.

A group of Bahraini engineers announced that they will hold a picket in Zain al-Abidin-Mosque. in Bani Jana, tomorrow, Saturday at 4.30 pm. At 7.00 pm. they will be joined by a group of Bahraini teachers to demonstrate the wider appeal of the hunger strike on all tendencies and section of Bahrain Society. Last night 40,000 people marched around the house of Sheikh Al-Jamri chanting slogans in support of demos demands. Many spent the night around that area. (The Spokesman for the Hunger Strike, Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain can be contacted on

(973692249, +62232, 451775))

On the other hand, the British Ambassador met with the Interior Minister in the past few days, to register HM Government's concern about the dismissal of Dr. Monira Fakhroo from the University of Bahrain as a result of her pro-democracy activities. Dr. Fakhroo attended a conference in Italy last July and later participated in the UN Women Conference in Beijing. Both actions resulted in her dismissal from the University.

Bahrain: Sheikh Al-Jamri invites the government to initiate reforms

17/Nov/1995

Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, the leading opposition figure delivered, today 17 November 1995, a statement in Al-Sadek mosque in Duraz, north-west of Bahrain, re-affirming the demands of the opposition. He called upon the government to initiate the process for political reforms. In his statement he said: "Alongside the changes taking place in the region, we find ourselves committed to clarifying several issues to remove any misunderstanding. Some ill-intentioned newspapers attempted to mix issues in a desperate trick to damage the reputation of the people's movement that is seeking political reforms and calling for legitimate demands. These newspapers can never win because:

Firstly, the trend of the people is indigenous and has nothing to do with external involvement. The trend is a result of the political situation and the accumulative problems resulting from it. The trend seeks public interests and aspires for effective involvement in a sound decision making process.

Secondly, The trend is a grass-root one and is open to all. It is not a partisan agenda. All sincere activists working for the good of the nation, whether Sunnis or Shia, Islamists or patriots, are involved without any significance to tribalism or sectarianism. The concerns and wishes of all tendencies are the same and all are united in their aims and means as have been stated in the Petitions of 1992 and 1994.

Thirdly, the trend adopts peaceful means and rejects resorting to violence, extremism or terrorism. All activities are aimed at achieving the just demands by serious and fruitful dialogue. The people responded positively and established calm since the first day of our initiative (mid-August). They will continue

to preserve stability because their trend is peaceful and seeks reform. The government can assist the people by reviewing and achieving these demands.

Fourth, the aims of this trend are moderate and objective. The trend does not aim to topple the regime or de-stabilize it. Indeed, it aims for security and stability and aims at the re-activation of the constitution, restoration of the parliament, the release of all political prisoners and return of exiles.

The trend of the people is not a naive one. The people understand and are aware that some of the aims can be achieved instantly and some require time for preparing necessary provisions. The question raised is: Do these aims represent extremism or terrorism? The answer must be No. This is the real picture of the nation's trend. Why don't we see and positive response from the respected government? Is this because of the false coverage of some ill-intentioned newspapers? Why is the government creating more barriers with the people? We have stated once and again that we are prepared for dialogue and we demanded it. Up until when will the doors remain shut?

Up until when will the deployment of riot police continue? Why do these police units stop a bus of students and beat them? We witness sound political moves in the countries of the region aimed at development and stability. In one country we witnessed the removal of state-control on media and a promise for local council elections; in another we witnessed the abolition of state security law, and in a third country an amnesty for all political prisoners and exiles was declared.

These types of actions are bound to enrich the trust between

peoples and governments, and these actions consolidate the sincere efforts aimed at developing the countries. We have a hope that the Amir would issue an amnesty for all prisoners without distinction, allow exiles to return home, officially open the door of dialogue and hence reach the stage for achieving political demands, the most important of which is the parliament”

The tens of thousands of people who attended the gathering in Duraz raised slogans at the end of the statement confirming their peaceful and legitimate demands. The statement was also read in other major mosques in the country.

The past few days witnessed a range of governmental provocative measures as part of attempts to intimidate the opposition. While the Bahraini people continued their normal lives, the security forces were charged with intimidating the public. For example on 12 November, a bus taking students to schools was stopped by the riot police near Qadam area. The students were savagely attacked and beaten with electronic batons by the security forces for no obvious reason. Similarly, these police units, have been going around the houses after midnight and disturbing the public. At several occasions, they were seen banging and damaging the front doors of opposition activists. Eight students from Karzakan village were arrested on 13 November and remain in detention.

Bahrain: The Appeal

Court Approves the Death Sentence

27/Nov/1995

In a move bound to enflame the political situation in Bahrain, the Supreme Court of Appeal approved, today 27 November, the death sentence passed on Isa Ahmad Hassan Cambar, 27 years old. The court heard from the lawyers standing for the defendants that the verdicts passed on the group accused of causing the death of Sergeant Said are out of proportion, bearing in mind that in that period about a dozen citizens were killed by security forces. The circumstances of the event does not indicate that it was premeditated and that when clashes occurred with security forces firing live ammunition against crowds of people, then something like what happened was bound to happen.

The court also confirmed the life sentence against the second defendant, Mohammad Ali Hassan Khatam, 20 years old. The rest of the group were sentenced as follows: Mansoor Salah Makki, 25 years old, five years sentence (reduced from life sentence), Younis Salah Mosa Al-Sanini, 22 years old, five years sentence (reduced from 10 years), Eshaq Hassan Yousif Marhoon, 20 years old. Acquitted (was 10 years sentence), Hussain Salan Mosa Al-Sanini, 20 years old. Acquitted (was 5 years sentence) Ahmad Mosa Al-Sanini, 27 years old, 5 years sentence (was the same), Hamza Majid Habib Al-Sheikh, 24 years old five years (was the same), Hussain Mohammed Abdul Wahab Hassan, 22 years old, acquitted (was five years). A tenth person was also acquitted.

The security forces attacked groups of students of the University of Bahrain (Isa Town), who had gathered after hearing the news. Also, it was noticed that an alert declared

some time ago was intensified. Last night many people attending the major mosques were people gathered to declare their solidarity with the group appearing in court today reported skirmishes taking place all around and the situation may deteriorate further.

Bahrain: Cycle of violence hits the Diplomat Hotel

11/Feb/1996

The vicious cycle of violence ignited by the Bahraini security forces reached the luxurious Diplomat Hotel in the heart of the capital, Manama. The Associated Press reported today (11 February) that *the explosion occurred in the street outside the hotel in downtown Manama”.

This is the second such incident in a month. On 17 January a bomb exploded in a ground-floor toilet at the Royal Meridien Hotel. The security forces intended to drag the peaceful political situation into limited violence to justify one of the worst crackdown campaigns ever to be implemented in the history of the country.

A spokesperson for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated “Violence has been condemned by all leading opposition figures inside and outside the country. The government exacerbated the situation by attacking mosques and detaining more than 2000 people. The government played with fire and unfortunate developments were bound to happen. We firmly believe in peaceful solutions for the political crisis in Bahrain and urge the government to behave rationally by ending arbitrary forms of governing and by restoring constitutional law to the country”

Bahrain: More support for the Bahrain people as political crisis deepens further

14/Feb/1996

Fifteen Swedish MPs and representatives of political parties wrote to the Amir of Bahrain urging him to restore democracy in Bahrain. This plea comes at a time when many international human rights organizations expressed their concern at the atrocities committed by the Bahraini security forces. The anti-torture Geneva-based SOS organization issued a statement condemning the detention and ill-treatment of members of the opposition.

The political crisis in Bahrain is being deepened by irrational government's behaviour. On 12 February, the crown prince visited the administrative command centre of the US Navy's Fifth-Fleet which moved ashore three years ago from the USS La Salle, to beg for support. from the US for the aggressive policies against the peaceful people of Bahrain. Similarly, the ruling Al-Khalifa family begged the Kuwaitis to send some pro-government Kuwaiti MPs to Bahrain for countering the effect of the eight Kuwaiti MPs and more than ninety Kuwaiti activists who sent a letter to the Amir of Bahrain requesting him to listen to the demands of restoring the elected parliament. Ten MPs visited Bahrain on 13 February claiming they were a delegation of Kuwaiti parliament. The leading Kuwaiti pro-democracy veteran and MP. Mr. Abdulla Al-Nibari, stated to Reuters that "There was no delegation assigned by the assembly...May be the colleagues were visiting (Bahrain) in their personal capacity."

On 12 February at 2.30 am three lorries packed with riot police armed with live ammunition raided the village of Jannosan, located on the Budaya Highway. After a sweeping operation, several people were snatched from their beds and four whom were.

|||| Bahrain: More support for the Bahrain people as political crisis deepens further.

Known to be Hassan Abdul Aziz Jawad, 48 years old, Ebrahim Abdul Aziz Abdul Rasool, 32, Mahdi *Yousif Abdul Rasool, 22 and Khalaf Jaffar. Check points were established near major mosques in the past few days to prevent people from gathering for Ramadan prayers. On 13 February- Sheikh Aziz mosque (in Sehla) was encircled and those attempting to attend for prayers were subjected to inhumane treatment. On the same day, people praying in Nuwaidrat-mosque were attacked by riot police while performing their prayers. Many were arrested. Similarly, Seyed Hashim mosque in Tobli was encircled by riot police to prevent people from attending.

Opposition groups, including the Bahrain Freedom Movement have called on the people of Bahrain to declare their rejection of government's atrocities on the three days of Eid (and of Ramadan). Celebrations are expected to be cancelled with a call for a boycott to traders who support the suppression campaign. Statements were also issued urging general public to refrain from buying non-essential goods.

On 13 February, Robert Fisk of the UK Independent newspaper started a series of articles on Bahrain. The first article surveyed the nature of the pro-democracy opposition and the brutal response of the government.

Bahrain: Inhumane attacks by security forces

20/Feb/1996

The Bahrain security forces continued its crackdown on the peaceful opposition demanding the restoration of the dissolved parliament and release of political prisoners. On Saturday 17 February at dawn (around 1.30 am) units belong to riot police raided Jannosan for the second time in a week. Nine teenagers were arrested: Isa Abdullnabi, 19 years old, Salāh Ahmed Nafea, 15, Jassim Ahmed Nafee, 13, Hussain Ahmed Nafea, 11 (the three are brothers), Ali Hassan Jawad, 16, together with his brother Husain Hassan Jawad, 14, Hussain Maki Abdullhussain: 14, Husain Mirza Hamza, 15 Sadiq Mirza Hamza, 12.

In the first attack that took place on 13 February at 8.30 pm the same units of riot police arrested Amer Ali Fardan, 17, Ahmad Abdulla, 15, and six other teenagers.

Last Tuesday (13 February) security forces clashed with demonstrators in Nuweidrat following an attack on a mosque in which many worshippers were arrested.

On Tuesday night (13 February) Balloons were seen in the air in several places carrying slogans denouncing the oppressive campaign being conducted by the security forces and raising the opposition demands.

Haji Ahmed Salloom, the person in-charge of Mattam Bin-Salloom (religious gathering place) was summoned by the intelligence department last Thursday

(15 February) and questioned about the popularity of the gathering place, The security officer also demanded that he hands over Jaffer Al-Durazi and Saleh- Al-Durazi, both of whom had already been arrested two months ago. This is yet another proof of the arbitrary nature of the crackdown.

Also on Thursday night (15 February) around 7.00 pm local time, security forces encircled Makharga district of Manama and attacked the people in Momin mosque, Khawaja mosque and Mattam Al-Qassab. Several arrests were made during these attacks, including Redha Al Makhlook from Manama, Sayed Jameel and Sayed Dheya Al-Alawi, Hussain Al-Jamri, and a person by the name Maher. A cold-store belonging to Sayed Alawi Abu Ghaeb was raided by security forces after the arrest of Sayed Jameel who shares it with Abu Ghaeb Abd al Ahmed Mansoor Al Halwachi (Manama) was summoned by the intelligence department together with his father for an unknown reason.

Opposition groups have called on the people of Bahrain to protest against the inhumane attacks and imprisonment of more than 2000 people by not celebrating the Eid (marking the end of Ramadan).

A call from Bahrain's children on the International Women Day (WE WANT OUR MOTHERS)

7/Mar/1996

As the world prepares itself to celebrate the International Women Day on 8th March, the situation of women in Bahrain is causing concern to human rights activists. Instead of taking steps to improve the welfare of women and their political rights, the Al Khalifa government of Bahrain, has embarked on policies that dehumanise women, deprive them of their rights and subject them to humiliation, torture and abuse. International human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International are in possession of abundant evidence of the maltreatment of Bahraini women in this Gulf island state.

The detention of women for political reasons is tantamount to torture according to the new conventions adopted by the United Nations after the Beijing conference. However, the government of Bahrain has violated the sanctity of women through unlawful detention, torture and human rights abuses. Six young women have been held in incommunicado detention since last Thursday morning when they were summoned by the men of Mr. Ian Henderson, the British officer in charge of Bahrain's security service. None of them was released and many reports have suggested that they are being subjected to various forms of physical and psychological torture.

At 2.00 am of Thursday 29th February 1996, riot police, made up largely of foreign mercenaries, surrounded the houses of those targeted for arrest, handing them summons to appear at 8.00 am in the morning. They never came back. They left their children behind, and nothing has been heard of them since then. Mona Habib (Al Jamri), 32, has three children whose father, Mohammad Jamil Al Jamri has been in jail since 1988. Zahra Salman Helal, 32, has four children whose father, Ahmad

Mahdi Salman, was detained in January 1995, and nothing has been heard of him ever since. She was arrested last year for two months, during which she was tortured. Her sister, Iman, 24, is also detained. She has two children. Nazi Karimi, 32, is among the detainees, and was also arrested last year for six weeks. Huda Al Jallawi, 38, has four children, and is being held with the rest in incommunicado detention. A young woman, Zahra Abd Ali, 19, had been detained one day earlier.

The arrest of the six women has infuriated the people and many voices are calling for their immediate and unconditional release. Lawyers say they have not been allowed to see any of them and fear is mounting for their safety especially in light of previous experiences when some women vanished without trace for months after their abduction by Henderson's men. One young woman, Hayat Al Qamar, spent five months last year in chains without being allowed to wash up or change her clothes even once. We call upon everyone with human conscience to deplore this act of savagery against Bahraini women, call for their immediate release, and demand an immediate stop to the gross violations of human rights at the hands of mercenaries led by Ian Henderson. The children of these women call upon you to speak out against repression and for justice and civilised behaviour in Bahrain which is being governed by medieval dynastic tyranny. You may express your views by writing directly to the ruler, prime minister or the minister of the interior through the Embassy of Bahrain. You may also alert human rights organisations and local press on this issue. Please send us a copy of any correspondence you may make in this respect. Your support of the women of Bahrain is a clear expression of your humane feelings and defence of justice, human rights and civilised behaviour.

Bahrain: BBC Radio 4 exposes the atrocities and lies of the Bahraini government

12/Mar/1996

In a 40-minute news analysis (File on 4) on 12 March 1996 at 7.20 pm GMT. BBC Radio 4 broadcast the voices of a demonstration as it took place in Doha last week with slogans of youth chanting "We are not saboteurs, we demand the restoration of constitution". Julian O'Halloran and his team interviewed citizens who had their houses ransacked and sons snatched as part of collective punishment schemes conducted by the Bahrain security forces.

The father of martyr Saeed Al-Eskafi was interviewed and a moving description was given on how his son's body was drilled, ironed, and tortured until death. The Foreign Minister was also interviewed. The latter reiterated that the opposition is linked to "fundamentalism" and refused to answer if an investigation has been carried out to discipline those officers responsible for the death of Saeed Al-Eskafi.

David Mellor, ex-British Heritage Secretary, who is now working for the Bahrain government confessed that he had never spoken to ordinary people of Bahrain yet he finds it in his interest to defend the government. Radio 4 team said that they toured the worst affected villages and residential areas in Bahrain. Not once ever they came across a radical slogan, nor they ever witnessed any anti-British or anti-American feelings. All wall-writings demanded the restoration of Bahrain parliament.

Professor Fred Halliday stated that if the ruling family persists in its attempts to crush the moderate movement then a more radical one will emerge to seek the overthrow of the government. Mr. Jassim Murad, member of the dissolved

IIII Bahrain: BBC Radio 4 exposes the atrocities and lies of the Bahraini government

parliament and a senior business person said that while his Sri-Lankan servant enjoys democratic rights and votes for her representatives in Sri-Lanka, he has no say in his own country.

The programme, available on cassettes from the BFM, is a major blow to the present visit by the crown prince and foreign minister. The latter demanded in his interview that Britain should expel the Bahraini opponents. The interviewer asked: Why did you deport them in the first place from Bahrain? The foreign minister found it very hard to understand that in free societies there is no place for his type of back-ward mentality which is trying to turn the clock backward.

Bahrain: Midnight murder by Henderson

27/Mar/1996

When Is Ahmad Hassan Qambar, 28, was led to the gallows in the early hours of yesterday, he was yet another victim of the law of the jungle imposed on our people by the Al Khalifa, and executed by the colonial officer, Ian Henderson. Qambar was killed in cold blood and his body dumped in one of the graveyards of Bahrain to become one more martyr for the noble cause of our people. To add salt to the injury, his family has been denied access to his grave, if there was one. Tens of young men have now been liquidated by the blood-thirsty rulers of this tiny Gulf island, and the killing spree is still on. The troops, largely made of Baluchis and Batans are poised to commit further killings, and the rulers are in no mood to listen to international human rights organisations which have been calling for an end to the kangaroo courts and the inhumane treatment of detainees. When the judge is the plaintiff, the defendant has no chance of winning. In the courts which are always presided over by one of the Al Khalifa sheikhs, the people of Bahrain are always the losers. Under medieval rules, the sheikh is there to be obeyed by the servants: he is always right: he is the wise man: the owner of everything, the one not to be opposed. He knows what is right for the people, and they are wrong to suggest they have equal knowledge of their own needs. This mentality is driving our country to ruins, as the world watches carelessly.

Isa Qambar has been in detention for a year during which he was kept under the most inhumane conditions. He was chained; both hands tied to the feet in a cell unsuitable for animals let alone human beings. Qambar was unjustly accused of taking part in the killing of a policeman during a demonstration calling for democracy and human rights. After months of waiting, he was summarily sentenced to death by one of the sheikhs in a

trial that has been condemned by human rights organisations, including Amnesty International. After his execution yesterday morning, his family was told their son was dead. The whole country erupted in anger with large demonstrations spreading throughout in a show of sorrow and anger. The veteran British colonial officer, Ian Henderson, ordered an all-out attack on mourners, many of whom were beaten up, tens arrested and scores injured. The peaceful protests will continue until the Al Khalifa acknowledge the rights of the people.

For more than fifteen months, Bahrain has been plagued by civil unrest in which the government used lethal weapons to kill and maim demonstrators. The victims include Aqeel Al Saffar, who was one year old when he died last year as a result of police brutality. Saeed Al Eskafy was tortured and sexually assaulted before his death last July. There are more than three thousand detainees including women and children.

Whole families are now in jail for voicing their support for the demands which include the reinstatement of the constitution. Torture is the order of the day, and terror is the most widely used weapon against the people. Henderson's men would attack homes in the early hours of each day to snatch school boys, often as young as seven, from their beds, beat them up in front of their parents, and drag them into police vehicles.

Nothing would then be heard of them. The agony of our people knows no bounds, but they have decided to pursue their goals until the constitutional law is reinstated.

Here we are protesting the killing in the middle of the night of an innocent man by a regime whose records in human rights abuses are abundant. As a human being, you are requested

to express your solidarity with the people of Bahrain in their struggle to attain democracy constitutional rights and freedom.

The cold-blooded killing of Isa Qambar is an affront to civilised people and must be condemned. Henderson's atrocities in Bahrain must be curtailed, and police state must not be tolerated in today's world. Dynastic rulers must either reform or go, and the people of Bahrain deserve to have their 1975 constitution reinstated. Their struggle is just and your support is crucial.

Bahrain: Peaceful civil resistance defies government's crackdown

31/Mar/1996

The Bahraini opposition consolidated its peaceful and civil resistance following the execution of Isa Qambar and widespread arrests of women and children. In Sitra, men, women and children marched on 30 March at 7.00 pm and clashed with security forces. Similarly in Is Town demonstrators clashed with riot police and scores were arrested. On 27 March several children were hit by rubber bullets in Sitra including Mohammed Redha Abdelhussain Ali, 11 years old, and Hassan Makki, 11. Seven women were arrested in Shakhora: Zainab Saeed, 19, Nadeya Isa Ali Hassan, 16, Sakina Abdali, 24, Aminah Isa, 20, Aneesa Isa, 23, Reqeya Isa, 23, and Mona Um-Qassim, 30. Other women were also arrested from different areas: Khadija Ahmad Ali, 16, Najah Saeed Sat together with her sisters Kaltham, Regeya and Mahdeya, Shahraban Ali Nasser, 55, Sawsan Ali Salman, 20, Khatoon Saeed, 16, and her sister Rabab, 19, Fatima Seyed Jaffer, 19, and her sister Masoma, 15, Zainab Seyed Falah, 16, Kaltham Seyed Adan, 16, Kholod Jawad Ali, 16, and Radheya Ahmad Ali, 40.

On 29 March, security forces ransacked the village of Abo-Gowa, smashing properties, stealing jewellery, beating men, women and children on the spot. In Jufair and Ghureifa districts of Manama, as well as in Arad (Muharraq) demonstrations took to the streets for the first time since the start of the uprising. Duraz is put under siege from 4.00 pm onwards to prevent the daily demonstrations from reaching the main highway. Similar sieges are implemented on Nuweidrat, Karzakkan and other places. On 7 April, three persons are to appear before the State Security Court: Hussain Al-Mahoozi, Ibrahim Al Barbari, and Abdulamir Jaffer.

The government is attempting to cover-up the bad environment it created for foreign investors. Everyday, newspapers report high profits and shares dealing in the market. In fact the market is suffering. In the Gold Market alone, between 10-12 shops are planning to close down. In Sheikh Abdulla Road, shops rents have come down to 200-250 dinars per month (around \$600) but businessmen are reluctant to start new businesses.

The Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad visited Riyadh on 30 March and met with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, following Prince Abdulla statement on the need for reconciliation in Bahrain. The Al-Khalifa ruling family has refused all calls for calming down the situation.

Following the refusal of the government of Bahrain to accept an initiative by Lord Avebury to calm down the situation, a press conference has been organized in the British Parliament by the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group for the 4th of April at 1.00 pm (Palace of Westminster, Committee Room 4B). A major report on Bahrain by the Group will be launched in the press conference as well as a letter addressed to the world's nations and signed by 10,000 Bahraini citizens explaining the crisis in Bahrain.

Bahrain: The Constitution must be the basis of any solution

2/Apr/1996

As the struggle to achieve a moderate set of demands in Bahrain continues, so does the harsh reaction by the government of the Al Khalifa. It is now clear that this tribal rule is ready to go to any length of repression and human rights abuses ignoring the tenets of international rules and conventions to combat the rising tide for change in the country. As the opposition from, all sectors of society becomes more entrenched, the regime spares no effort in countering the demands at the forefront of which is the reinstatement of the country's 1973 constitution.

The security service, headed by the notorious British colonial officer, Ian Henderson, carries out its daily functions of arrests, summary trials, torture and collective punishment. No other country in the Gulf has ever witnessed what is happening in Bahrain. Towns and villages are routinely ransacked and its inhabitants intimidated, beaten up, arrested and humiliated. Whole families are now in jail including women and children. Hostage taking has become routine. Many women are in detention for weeks in an attempt to blackmail their relatives to stop their peaceful activities. Bahraini youth have sought shelter in neighbouring countries which are becoming more sensitive to their presence on their soil. The judiciary system has long been brought to a standstill. Only the State Security Court is active in passing harsh sentences against powerless defendants in one or two settings. Its verdicts are final and no appeal is allowed.

It is in this environment that the people of Bahrain are pressing their demands for the constitution. The bravery of young men and women in the face of severe intimidation by the riot and security police which are largely made up of foreigners, ensures that the movement will eventually achieve its demands. The

rivalry between the prime minister and his nephew, the crown prince, is reflecting itself in their competition to employ harsher measures against the people.

Today, crack units from the army are positioned everywhere to deter demonstrators. This intimidation has led to isolated incidents of violence, a development that has worried the opposition as well as foreign powers. These powers, especially the United States and Britain have, apparently, approved of the methods of torture, collective punishment and total abandonment of any respect of human rights. In its latest report, the US State Department has detailed the extent of human rights violations in Bahrain. However, it has failed to lobby the Government of Bahrain to improve its human rights records. This has encouraged the Al Khalifa to continue their onslaught on the people unabated. Whether they will succeed or not is a different matter. The opposition is of the view that the popular movement this time will attain its goals. The hope is that this will be achieved in a peaceful way. However, the repressive measures employed by Mr. Henderson is gradually pushing the situation towards violence. The opposition has condemned the use of violence from any source especially that which has become a policy of the government.

The popular movement, whose leadership is in jail including Sheikh Al Jamri and Mr. Al Shamlan, is there to stay until the goals are achieved. The harsher the measures that are employed by the Al Khalifa, the more determined the people are in to achieve their main goal, the reinstatement of the constitution. There is a unanimity amongst the opposition that nothing short of this will be acceptable. The experience of the last two decades,

which has been reinforced by the performance of the Al Khalifa in the last sixteen months, has proved that there can be no coexistence between the people of Bahrain and the Al Khalifa regime outside the bounds of the constitution. The two sides had signed a political contract after Bahrain's independence in 1971. That is the only binding agreement between them. The people have respected that contract, the Al Khalifa have failed their commitment. The result is the dangerous situation that is prevailing in the country today. The international community has a duty to force the guilty party to abide by that contract. Failing to do so will only exacerbate the situation. The movement will continue employing all peaceful methods to achieve this goal, and will eventually succeed.

Bahrain: Teenage girls tortured and sentenced to prison terms

9/Apr/1996

The unconstitutional State Security Court sentenced two teenage girls to six months and one year prison sentences. Safeya Yonis All Darwish, 16 years old from Karzakkan village and studies at Hamad Town Secondary School was sentenced to six months prison term, while Nawal All Ebadi, 18, also from Karzakkan but studies at Sar Secondary School was sentenced to one year prison term. They were detained after eruption of students' protests following the unlawful execution of Isa Qambar on 26 March, Scores of girls were arrested and tortured. Those released revealed that they had all their cloths stripped down by police women and later video-taped. They had also been threatened to allow security men to rape them. These forms of torture are creating a highly charged atmosphere in Bahrain.

The opposition called for an inquiry into these matters and that those responsible be punished Security forces have re-started ransacking mosques in the past few days. In Bani Jamra alone, three mosques were attacked and turned upside down by security forces. Similar attack took place in Jed-All, Tobli and other places.

Persons in-charge of mosques have been summoned and threatened of arrest In a desperate attempt to empty mosques from attendants. The Justice Ministry list drafting a decree for establishing a Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in an attempt to clamp down on mosques and preachers. The decree' is intended to transfer the current clamp down from interior ministry to justice ministry Religious scholars have denounced these attempts Many young persons in detention are given the choice of staying in jail or leaving Bahrain. Some have chosen

to exit detention by accepting to leave Bahrain to neighbouring Gulf countries. Several Gulf countries started arresting Bahrainis for no reason. The following were arrested in Dubai on 4 April: Shakir Al-Fardan, Mohammed Sanad, Ahmad Al-Mahozi, Mahdi Abbas as well as Several others. In Abo-Dhabi, Mr. Yaquob Yousif Al-Sori was detained because security men could not find his brother Jamil when raiding their house on 28 March. The family was told that the Bahraini authorities ordered the arrest of Jamil, but no explanation was given for taking another brother as a hostage.

Another Bahraini entering one of the airports in UAE was informed by a security officer that the Bahraini government is seeking to arrest him. Many of these people have been forced out of their country by the Bahraini security forces in the first place.

The human rights group “Liberty for the Muslim World” issued a statement on 8 April denouncing violence in Bahrain and called on the government of Bahrain end the use of force and to respect human rights. It also called on all sides to resort to peaceful means. The latter is fully supported by the Bahrain Freedom Movement which campaigns for peaceful restoration of constitutional law in Bahrain.

Bahrain: The Financial Times exposes the Al-Khalifa family

13/Apr/1996

In a leading and lengthy commentary entitled “Democracy out of reach” the Financial Times of 12 April (page 17) stated that the ruling family “took a step into the unknown” when on 26 March it decided to execute Isa Qambar. The article by David Gardner vividly describes how the ruling family is mounting its attacks on pro-democracy movement by attempting to link it to “fundamentalist” extremism. I quotes diplomats saying that the pro-democracy movement is “as far from fundamentalism as you could ever want. this is a community movement not a religious movement’: The article also quotes a Sunni businessman who said “We want a parliament Either it is now, in five, 10 or 15 years’ time. But the later he [the Emir] leaves it, the more likely it is he’ll have to go”. The article represents a blow to the ruling family which has been trying to convince the outside world that the ancient-style of tribal feudalism is the best for. Bahrain.

On 11 April, hundreds of women staged a protest in Sanabis Cemetery and raised slogans denouncing the security forces’ indecent assaults on women. The women also declared that there is no turning back on the original demand of restoring the elected parliament. The preceding night (10 April) witnessed an attack on Sanabis and several people were arrested including Han Abdulla Khamis, 22, and Seyed Jassim Isa, 23. Another attack on Duraz resulted in the arrest of Jawad Nasr Ahamd Al-Qallaf, 18, and Sami Fardan, 18. In Arad the following people were arrested: Abbas Mirza Ali, 16, Hussain, Ali Radhi, 16, Isa Ali Radhi, 14, Anwar Mohammed Ahmed Al-Saghir, 19, Anwar Sale Ibrahim Saleh, 22, Abdul-Hakim Jaffer Al-Sabea, 25, Ibrahim Jaffer Al-Jabal, 17, Ahmad Ali Mohammed Al-Motawa;19, Abdulzahra Mohammed Yousif, 24, Ishaq Abdul-

Hadi Al-Motawa, 19, Abdulshahid Ahmad Al-Najjar, 23, Abdulshahid Abbas Al-Markhi, 21, Abdulaziz Abdulhussain Rashid, 21, Ali Isa Mohammed Al-Sabea, 27, and Hassan Ali Hassan Folath, 22.

On 9 April, the following girls were arrested: Ahlam Abdulaziz Salman Al-Hindi, 16 (from Tobli) and Zainal Abdulhuissain Khatem, 17 (from Karzakkan). Schools in Jedhafs witnessed clashes between teenage students and security forces. On 10

April, the interior ministry announced it arrested three people and accused them of causing the fire in the Sheraton trade complex on 7 April. The three are known to be Zuhair Jawad Al-Algarni, 27, Yasir Omran, 20 and Jalai, 19. All three come from Manama. On 6 April two young persons: Ali Yousif Hassan and Mohammed Jaffer Mansoor were sentenced to three years imprisonment. One person had his car confiscated by a kangaroo-court order.

The Kuwait authorities arrested a Bahraini cleric, Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Ansari who was heading to Mecca for performing pilgrimage (hajj). Nothing is known about his whereabouts. Last week, the Saudi authorities prevented a leading Bahraini religious scholar, Seyed Abdulla Al-Ghoreifi from performing haji and returned him to Damascus. Seyed Al-Ghoreifi was forcibly exiled from Bahrain to Syria three years ago. The Jordanian authorities also arrested two Bahrainis who were heading to perform hajj. Fuad Al-Mobarak and Hassan Salman Al-Asfoor were returned to Syria after two days of interrogation and intimidation.

Bahrain: Sheikh Al-Nachas and Mahdi Rabea put on trial

14/Apr/1996

The State Security Courts will hold sessions today, 14 April, for the cases of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas, 48 year blind cleric, and Mandi Rabea, 34, journalist.

Sheikh Al-Nachas from Bilad al-Qadim is known for his outspoken criticism of the wrong-doings of the government and had been arrested several times in the past. His trial will exacerbate the situation and protests are bound to increase as a result of this unjust trial. Mahdi Rabea, a journalist, from Duraz, known for his pro-democracy views was arrested late last year and has been accused of writing articles critical of the government. The trial of Mr. Rabea is a show of muscle by the ruling family against journalists who dare to write about events in Bahrain with views different from the official line. The opposition has called on human rights organizations to intervene and to urge the Bahraini authorities to stop these unfair trials.

Religious authorities issued an edict “fatwa” forbidding any dealings or transaction with the government’s body being established under the name of “Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs”. The fatwa forbids praying behind any person appointed by this council, and forbids taking part or dealing with it in any way that interferes with religious duties. The fatwa is now widely circulated and the ruling family will not be allowed to get away with disturbing the affairs of the community. Heads of religious associations were summoned by the Awqaf (religious trust) department last week. In the meeting, the newly appointed head of Awqaf, read instructions and orders for banning any religious scholar not approved by the government to lead religious activities. The meeting was a failure and the continuous peaceful resistance of the Bahraini people will ensure that these

measures find no way for implementation. Peaceful protests are being planned by the public and it is expected that these will surge on the day of Eid al Adha (28 April). On 12 April the grand mosque at Qafool (Manama) was besieged by security forces and six people were arrested to prevent normal gathering for prayers.

On 11 April, Mr. Majid Ali Mohammed Ali, 23, from Bilad al-Qadim was arrested. Other arrests include: Kamel Abedin, 31, (10 April in Zenj). Mosa Al-Abbar, 35, Ahmad Al-Sharakhat, 19, Hussain Ali Al-Najar, 21, Isa Ali Hassan 28 (all from Sanabis).

Human rights violations in Bahrain have been raised by several organizations at the UN Commission on Human Rights annual meeting being held in Geneva. France-Liberates, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation for Human Rights, Amnesty international and SOS Torture called on the Bahraini authorities to stop ill-treating children, women and activists calling for restoration of parliament and constitutional law

Bahrain: Demonstrations in Sanabis and Duraz, protests planned

21/Apr/1996

Around 150-200 people staged a demonstration at 5.00 pm (3.00 GMT) in Sanabis yesterday 20 April. The demonstrators raised posters demanding the restoration of elected parliament and raised large photos of Mr. Saeed Al-Asbool, the nationalist figure who was arrested last week. Also, the demonstrators raised the photo of Hassan Taher who was killed last March in mysterious circumstances. The demonstration reached the main Budaya Highway carrying large placards saying "We Want Parliament" and "Where is Democracy?" Fifteen minutes later, the foreign-staffed security forces arrived in three packed lorries and six jeeps and started attacking demonstrators with tear gas and rubber bullets. The area was sealed-off until 7.00 pm.

On 19 April, a demonstration in Duraz confronted the security forces which tried to prevent the youths from reaching the main Budaya Highway. Security forces conducted dawn raids in Bilad al-Qadim and the following are known to have been snatched. Khalil Ibrahim Al-Haiki, 35, Husain Yousif Al-Sabba'a 18, Abdali Abbas Mansoor Al-Sateeh, 21.

Several distinguished people from Muharrag were tricked and forced to attend a ceremony attended by the prime minister and shown on TV on 19 April. One of the community respected personalities (Haji Ali Mohammed Al-Aradi) refused to attend. Hence on evening of 19 April the security forces ransacked his house in Arad and arrested his two sons Fadhel, 25, and Yonis, 23. Others arrested from Arad were Abbas Salman Al-Aradi, 17, Sami Hussain Al-Sabea, 20, Bassam Khalil Al-Hayyan, 17

The government is attempting to break the will of the people by tricking several personalities into attending ceremonies

that are attended by senior members of the ruling Al-Khalifa family and later put on TV. These are classical methods used by Al-Khalifa for the past decades. As the Economist stated in its quarterly report that it is unlikely that the Al-Khalifa will come up with any imaginative policies to tackle the opposition demands.

Amongst those known to have been sentenced after summary trials last week are: Hussain Ahmad Al-Mahozi, 23 years old (sentenced to five years imprisonment), Ibrahim Al-Barbari, 23 (three years imprisonment), Abdul Amir Jaffer, 27 (two years imprisonment).

These atrocities are not preventing the peaceful people of Bahrain from marching forward for the attainment of their legitimate rights. A week of peaceful protests is planned to start on 28 April (Eid Al-Adha) and lasts until 4 May (40th day after the political-execution of Isa Qambar).

Bahrain: Al-Shamlan must be freed, more NGOs condemn Al-Khalifa

23/Apr/1996

The leading opposition figure Mr. Ahmad Al-Shamlan appeared before the State Security Court for the second time on 21 April. The State Security Court came under international pressure from many quarters in the past months. The case of Al-Shamlan is the case of all the people of Bahrain and the way he has been treated has brought outrage against the ruling: Al-Khalifa family. The court was adjourned until next month. Lawyers demanded his release. The court agreed to release him on bail until then, however, the intelligence department is yet to release him.

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of People delivered a strong intervention toady (22 April) at the UN Commission on Human Rights Under Item 20 (Rights of the Child), the non-governmental organization (NGO) stated in its submission “Violations of the right to freedom of expression in Bahrain are currently so serious that they stretch to the abuse of the rights of children. Not only have the violent methods used by the security police to break up peaceful demonstrations in favour of democracy frequently caused fatal injuries, but also children as young as seven have been arbitrarily arrested in connection with such demonstrations. Over one hundred minors have been arrested in 1996, and very few of these have been released, oven on bail; youths have been given sentences ranging from six months to life imprisonment during collective trails.

They are frequently taken into custody as hostages, if their eider relatives who are being sought cannot be found. A US Department of the State report, published this month, refers to the death of a boy only ten years old, and to the death of a fifteen

year-old in police custody. Other reliable?

sources record that evidence of sexual abuse and torture was found on the body of at least one youth who died in custody. We would remind the Commission that these arrests and this treatment are in breach of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Bahrain is a state party. Furthermore this use of innocent people, especially children, as pawns is deplorable”.

Bahrain: Institutionalizing martial law will not derail the opposition

27/Apr/1996

In 1992 a group of 300 professionals and distinguished people coming from all walks of life and representing all sections of Bahrain society combined their efforts and submitted a petition calling for the restoration of the dissolved parliament. The ruling Al-Khalifa family was stunned since its rule depended on the divisive policies of segregating the Bahraini society and colliding one against the other. The next blow was in 1994 when the broadly based opposition launched a campaign to collect signatures from the public reinforcing the call for a return to constitutional law. The ruling family lost its nerves and started arresting and dismissing those personalities leading the campaign. In response to these measures, mass demonstrations took to the streets calling for the release of those arrested.

However, instead of rationally tackling the crisis, the ruling family unleashed crackdown campaigns killing many people and arresting thousands. Between April and September 1995, reconciliation talks were conducted with jailed leaders. When the jailed leaders, spearheaded by Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, were released, calm was established within days. This created a jealousy amongst the ruling family. The friction between the various wings resulted in sacrificing the stability of Bahrain for a showdown with the opposition.

From the beginning the ruling family adopted a strategy to stamp the opposition of belonging to a certain sect (Shia). By doing so, the ruling family thought of enticing the West by implying an Iranian involvement (something which the government failed to prove and convince any independent observer). From there, the strategy aimed at creating some violence to accuse the opposition of extremism. All these could

not provide a victory for the ruling family. Next, came the ideas of institutionalizing the unofficial martial law now in place in all uprising areas. Senior members of the ruling family have been talking about “breaking the heads of the Shia” and inflicting the maximum damage on this community so that the opposition is derailed from its broadly-based constitutional approach.

The creation of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs is aimed at removing the religious rights of the Shia community which it enjoyed for 1400 years. By doing so the rulers hope to create an internal conflict and divert attention from the core issue. The core issue is that the ruling family is governing Bahrain without any constitutional basis and without legitimacy in violation of the post-independence constitution.

The opposition has called for a week of peaceful protests starting on Eid al-Adha (28 April) and lasting until the 40th day commemoration of the wronged Isa Qambar who was executed after an unfair trial on 26 March. These and other protests confirm that the gap between the ruling family and the people of Bahrain is widening and that there is no exit for the political crisis other than going back to the only legal framework for the political system, which is the 1973 constitution.

Bahrain: The “Week of Civil Resistance” confirms that there is no compromise on constitutional demands

30/Apr/1996

The week of protest and mourning started on the night preceding Eid Al-Adlia (28 April) with peaceful processions taking to the streets in Sitra, Nuweidrat, Dair, Sanabis, Duraz, and Bani Jamra. The general public avoided normal celebrations marking Eid Al-Adha in protest against the continued detention of opposition leaders together with more than 2000 people who are calling for the peaceful reinstatement of the parliament which was dissolved by the Amir in 1975.

Security forces attacked the peaceful gatherings and established check points in uprising areas. Along Budaya Highway, paramilitary troops took positions. In Bani Jamra, many male members of families (found during the attack) were arrested. For example, the security forces attacked and arrested Ali Hussain Mohammed Abdul-Rasool, 42, together with his son Hussain, 15, his brothers Abdul Hussain, 37. Habib, 27, and five young nephews and relatives. In the first and second day no less than 150 people were arrested during attacks on residential areas.

The people exchanged condolences and visited the families and graves of the martyrs who were killed by the security forces: The latter imposed a virtual curfew on most uprising areas to prevent public gatherings. Clashes during the last two nights were sporadic and loud sounds of exploding gas-cylinder were heard throughout. Graffiti on the walls declared a week of protest stating “No Eid (feast) while Al-Jamri, is away” They (government) establish an Islamic Council while detaining our women and children”, “No compromise on parliamentary demand”, etc. Markets were affected by the low number of buyers and even Al-Ayam published an article saying traders in Manama were complaining about low sales.

The broadly-based opposition is determined not to allow the ruling Al-Khalifa family to destabilise the security of Bahrain and the Gulf by continuing these oppressive measures. The leading opposition figure and ex-MP, Mr. Mohammed Jaber Sabah, appealed to the ruling family to restore the constitution and parliament for the sake of the stability of Bahrain and the Gulf. In his article, published in AJ-Quds on 27 April, Mr. Sabah said that the democratic forces are united in seeking a peaceful solution and in standing against violence and counter violence. A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated that “the call of Mr. Sabah represents the policy of the opposition and we hope that the ruling family adopts a courageous approach for exiting the crisis. This can only be achieved through dialogue with members of the Committee for Popular Petition, which is responsible for the petition signed by 25,000 citizens calling for the restoration of parliament and constitution”. The US newspaper “Christian Science Monitor” wrote last week saying: “So far, the emir has not listened to domestic or international voices, including some members of the United States Congress and 45 British members of Parliament”. It added “If the US (Administration) doesn’t support democracy and human rights in Bahrain, it will be exposed to charges of hypocrisy”

Bahrain: Clashes Mark-up in residential areas

9/May/1996

Clashes Were simultaneously taking place in several places on 8 May. Residents in Karzakkan went out in solidarity with the family of the martyr Fadhil Abbas Marhoon who was killed and buried by security forces. His family was contacted after the completion of burial “This anti-religion is another flagrant abuse of human rights. People faced the security forces bravely in defense of their rights to hold funeral for the martyr. Riot police established their mobile check-points at the entrances of the village.

The residents of Sanabis, Daih and Jedliafs went out in mass demonstrations after 8.00 pm on 8 May denouncing the atrocities of the foreign-led and foreign-staffed security forces. They also called for the restoration of the elected parliament and release of thousands of political prisoners. Soon after, units of riot police encircles the area. blocked the main Budaya Highway and started firing live ammunition Columns of fire spread during the lashes and clashes continued till mid-night.

Parlier in the day helicopters continued to fly at low- levels while many senior Officers, including Mr. Ian Henderson were at the scene of a 2-story house in Sanabis that was demolished by a mysterious explosion on 7 May. The three Victims Were Salman Al-Taitoon, 28 years old, his wife Fadeela and 3- ear old soon Ali. Four others were injured. The building houses a small restaurant and the three Indian workers had not opened the restaurant on this day. The explosion seem as to have occurred at the ground flour which caused the collapse of the building. The couple were asleep at the time of the explosion (4.20 pm local tine).

Residents of ‘Sitra were shocked to see units of riot police deployed without a reason On 7 May. These units- started beating people haphazardly in what is non becoming a routine collective punishment exercise

The following people had been arrested. From Dair: Abass Abdulla, 18, Murad Ahmed Al-Baboor, 17, and his brother Mamdoh, 14, Shehab Bader. 13. Amar Ahmed Owan, 13, Fadhel Abass Ibrahim, 21, Adel Hassan Ali 29, Mohammed Hassan Al-Naham 25, Khalil Ibrahim, 13. From Arad: Abdali Hassan Al-Nass, 30. his brother Habeeb, 25, Mohammed Abdulreda, 12. Dhia Jassim Ali, 15, Hussain Abdullah Mohammed, 12, Hassan Ali Al-Mottawa, 12, Muslem Mohammed Hani. 25. Mahdi Jaffar Al-Jabel, 25, Hussain Habib Idress, 16, Hussain Jaffar Mohammed, 20, Abdulla Abbas Jassim Ali 16. From Ras-Roman: Yousif Abdul Hameed Al-boustah, 18, and Husain Hubail Khalaf, 24. Younis Jaffer Hubail. 16. From Manama: Saleh Radhi Hassan, 37.

Bahrain: More summary trials, government blamed for the explosion

10/May/1996

Last march, the ruling family issued an unconstitutional decree transferring more than eighty offenses that used to be tried before the ordinary criminal courts to the State Security Court. The creation of the latter in 1974 was the reason behind the dissolution of the parliament in 1975. According to Bahrain constitution any decree issued without the consent of the parliament is illegal.

The State Security Court has now been enlarged to four departments located inside jails and other fortified locations. Prisoners are brought before the courts and half an hour later each would receive an arbitrary sentence without being able to defend oneself. On 8 May, the illegal court jailed 11 people for one to five years for anti-government protests. The State Security Court, whose rulings cannot be appealed, sentenced four men for one year each and ordered them to pay 500 dinars (\$1.300) each. Six others received three years each and one received five years. Contrary to the plans of the ruling family, Bahraini youth are being hardened by these injustices and more unrest is expected.

On 8 May, official newspapers stated that the explosion at a house in Sanabis (7 May) that demolished 3-levels house and killed a father, a mother and their son as well as injuring four others was caused by the family while handling explosives. The story changed a day later and the ministry of interior stated “the lab tests conducted confirmed that the explosion that took place at a house in the Sanabis area . was caused by a strong gas leak near a heat spark”. People are now casting doubts about these stories. There are many indications that the intelligence department wanted to bomb the restaurant in the ground floor

and blame the opposition. This would inflict pain and damage on an uprising area and the security forces would use the opportunity to implement another crackdown on Sanabis. It seems that explosives they planted was so huge that the whole building collapsed. The three members of the family were asleep at the time and their death was caused by being under the wreckage.

The change of story by the government is also linked to Ashora (due to start on 18 May and lasts until 27 May) when Shia of Bahrain march on the streets commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed. The security forces are planning for an encounter for this occasion with the aim of inflicting the maximum damage on the Shia community. The aim of the government has been to derail the pro-democracy campaign and paint an image of sectarianism. This policy is now back-firing and the ruling family will end-up the loser from the encounters.

A spokesperson for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated that “the aims of the movement remains the sane, primarily the restoration of the parliament and release of political prisoners. The movement stands by the national consensus and constitutional framework despite all the governmental divisive policies.”

Bahrain: Security forces kill another person

13/May/1996

A young mentally-disabled person was killed by security forces during clashes in Daih last week. Abdul Amir Hassan Rustum, 26 years, was captured by the security forces and was beaten to death. The intelligence department telephoned the family. of the victim on 11 May and informed them about his death. These atrocities are breaching all limits and the general feeling is that the ruling family has nothing to offer but death, misery and instability to the country.

Residents of Duraz staged a protest on the night of 12 May. On 11 May, at night, residents of Sanabis went out in a demonstration denouncing the government and accusing the security forces of blowing-up and killing Salman Al-Taitoon and his family. Following the clashes, columns of smoke covered the area and loud explosions were heard. Similarly in Dah, residents took to the street on 10 May and clashed with security forces. On 8 May, security forces besieged a mosque in Karzakkan and severely beaten the religious scholar, Sheikh Khalil, together with whoever was captured in the mosque. Karzakkan continues to witness clashes with the security forces who are attempting to prevent the family of the Fadhil Abbas Marhoon (killed on 6 May) from holding funeral rituals in the Hooraa Cemetery where he had been buried without their presence or permission.

The following were known to have been arrested. From Sar: Seyed Hussain Mahfoodh, 20, Seyed Hassan Saleh, 18, Hussain Mohammed Saeed, 19, Yahya Abdul/Rasool, 19, Idris Abdul Rasool, 22, Mohammed Jaffer, Moslem Jaffer, 21, Sayed Ghazi Albdul Nabi, 24, Seyed Ali Salman, 20, Seyed Jaffer Salman, 27, Yonis Mansoor, Seyed Fadhil Ahmad, 15 (He was not at home and a police search is in place). From Bani Jamra: Mahmood Jaffer Ahmad, 18, Ali Ahmad Al- Tureifi, 21, Hussain Abdulla

Al-Serh. Five persons from Kawara and Tobli. From Manama: Hussain Huwaida.

The State Security Court will hold a session on Wednesday 15 May for trying Mohammed Sahwan (Sanabis) and Jaber Al Shula (Manama) accused of causing the death of a policeman in December, 1994 (at the start of the uprising). Similarly; the group of people wrongly accused of setting the fire in Zayton Restaurant in Sitra (where seven Bangladeshi died) are to appear for the second time before the unconstitutional court. Defence lawyers were prevented from defending the cases or call witnesses. The Al-Khalifa family are planning for another cycle of escalation which would result in the deepening of the crisis.

The government's plan for dividing the country into four provinces, appointing 15 muktars (mayors) for each, and appointing security officers as administrators has been condemned by the opposition. The Bahrain Freedom Movement together with the Popular Front and the National Front in Bahrain issued a joint statement on 13 May denouncing the hidden agenda behind changing the structure of Bahrain society outside the constitutional process and without popular representation.

Bahrain: British companies exported torture equipment to Al-Khalifa

14/May/1996

The Guardian newspaper (G2 supplement page iv) revealed on 13 May 1997 that British companies exported torture equipment to the Al-Khalifa government in Bahrain. The newspaper said “in 1990 a torture chamber given the alias “The House of Fun” was exported by a British company and installed by the Bahraini police special branch in Dubai..... Provided they are not assembled in Britain beforehand, current UK export controls allow such pieces of hardware to be exported. Even when British companies do act illegally, there is an apparent lack of willingness to prosecute an industry which helps the UK’s balance of trade deficit. The UK, along with France, Germany and the USA have all signed the UN Convention on Human Rights, but they all still breach the convention in the name of profit”.

The article entitled “Taught then tortured” was dedicated to a Bahraini student who graduated from Cardiff University and is now adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. The article said “On March 6. Sayyid was arrested at his home during a dawn raid by the national authorities and taken him to the al-Qal’a compound in al-Manama, where Amnesty International reports indicate he has undergone interrogation and beating from Bahrain’s intelligence officials”...”But the (British) government was far from willing to work towards the protection of the rights of these people when they return to regimes that are not as liberal as our own. For Sayyid Jalal Sharaf and his family, the recent change in government may have come too late. But how will Robin Cook deal with the export of the technology of torture to countries with such records on human rights violations?

Sayyid Jalal Sharaf and his friends at Cardiff are still waiting for an answer”.

Reuters reported on 13 May that a former U.S. navy frigate which was donated to Bahrain has started its journey from the port of Charleston in the United States to the Gulf Arab state and is due to arrive in July, U.S. officials said. “The frigate Sabha began its journey on Monday. It will arrive here in mid-July,” an official said. U.S. officials said the former US\$ Jack Williams, Bahrain’s first frigate and worth around \$56 million, was “a gif”... “Bahrain has paid around \$35 million for now equipment for the frigate and training of its crew in the United States”.

The US Government had donated excess defence equipment including a Hawk air defence battery and the HAG-7 Perry-class frigate. The US Navy also negotiated the swap of Bahrain’s 12 F-SE/F fighters for excess F-16N fighters. The Amnesty International report “Tuman Rights & US Security Assistance - 1996” stated that Bahrain would receive from the US “International Military Education & Training” (IMFT) aid worth \$150,000 in 1997. On 28 October 1991, Bahrain and the US signed a 10-year military agreement allowing for US access to Bahraini bases, pre-positioning of fighters and joint exercises. In June 1995, the US Navy established a new Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain. ‘The opposition shares the concern stated by Amnesty which called on US Congress “to amend the foreign aid appropriations bills” to dictatorships that might use these gifts for internal repression.

Bahrain: Mothers jailed, sham trials continue

16/May/1996

Three mother who were arrested on 4 May in Ekr village have. disappeared in the jails of the ruling family and no one has been able to see or contact them. A 30-year old mother by the name Nama was arrested together wither her baby. The baby was released later and had to be admitted to hospital Two other mothers were also arrested with Najma. Zainab Al-Mukhtar, 40 year old, and Rabab Dhaif, 55 years old. The intimidation of women is an alien practice that is being continuously used by the ruling Al-Khalifa family as part of their desperate attempt to break the will of the Bahraini people.

Recent arrests in Sitra include Abdul Nabi Abdul Wahab Rabea, 55 years old, together with his sons Ali, 14, and Mirza, 20. Also, three brother (relatives of Mr Rabea) have disappeared since 28 April: isa Ahmad Abdul Wahab Rabea, 25, together with younger brothers; Falah and Sadiq. The female members of the house were left with several children and are living in fear as they continue to receive daily threats from a member of the intelligence department that they would be burned while asleep in one of the nights.

Two religious scholars, were reported to have been subjected to severe torture and brought before the unconstitutional state security court. Sheikh Mohammed Al-Rayash and Sheikh Abbas Hubail Al-Setri were arrested six months ago as part of the inhumane crackdown on the opposition. Sham trail continued this week and the sessions of the court were shrouded with secrecy. Since, 26 March, these courts have been passing arbitrary sentences that can not be appealed against the innocent people of Bahrain as a form of revenge rather than implementation of justice. Lawyers are not allowed to freely defend their clients and the courts hold their sessions inside the jails.

On 13 May, a group of youth were sentenced after unfair trial as follows: four were jailed for five years and two for two years. Two others received 12-month suspended sentences.

Al-Ayyam (14 and 15 May) attempted to deflect attention by questioning the martyrdom of Abdul Amir Hasan Rustum on 9 May. On 8 May, the youth in Daih clashed with members of the intelligence department who were disturbing the peace of the residents. These were defeated and had to call reinforcements. When more foreign troops arrived to the scene they could find only Mr. Rustum. He had been severely beaten and returned home after 2.00 am with extreme exhaustion. The next morning he died suffering from the effect of the beating.

Opposition figure, Mr. Hussain Mosa, held a press conference in Paris on 15 May and condemned the government for adopting violence instead of dialogue against the opposition. He called on the ruling family to positively respond to the call for democratic reforms and save the country from disastrous conclusions.

Bahrain: BBC TV Jammed, clashes resume

19/May/1996

The BBC World TV broadcast of a film showing how security forces savagely attack civilians and break demonstrations was jammed by the Ministry of Information in Bahrain. Bahrain TV interrupted the BBC transmission on 16 May at 7.05 pm GMT. BBC second broadcast on 18 May (midday) was also jammed by the Bahraini authorities which are desperately attempting to prevent the spreading of news about the pro-democracy uprising. However, people managed to bypass the official ban and video-cassettes were made and distributed by those who managed to watch and record the film. This is another blow for the dictatorial feudal regime and another victory for the people of Bahrain.

On Friday, 17 May, security forces attacked and deployed rubber bullets in Bilad al-Qadim. Other areas were also attacked including Zenj, Khamis, Sehla Maamir, Tobli, Karanah, Karabad, Duraz, Karzakkan and other areas as part of the oppressive campaign against the religious premises (mattams). At least 21 people were arrested from Bilad Al-Qadim alone. Two people were severely beaten by police in public: Abdul Jaleel Saeed Ahmed Al-Noaimi and Mohammed Radhi Al-Noaimi. The security forces also attacked footballers in Bilad al-Qadim and haphazardly arrested the following players: Maytham Mohammed Al-Eskafi, 18, Murtadha Sale Al-Eskafi, 16, Ali Abdullah Abdul Wahab Al-Eskafi. 16. Huasin Ahmed Ali Ebrahim. 16. Later at 8.00 pm. riot police attacked "Al-Takya Mattam" and severely beaten the preacher (Sayed Abdullah) and many people in the audience including Ghazi Al-Haddad and his brother Ramzi. The latter were arrested and the Mattam was closed.

The religious premises (Mattams) in Sehla were also ransacked and their contents destroyed. In Duraz, the security forces turned themselves into painters and spent most of their times trying to paint over the slogans written on the walls. The interior minister summoned heads of major mattams in Manama: Mansoor Rajab, Ibrahim Mansoor, Fuad Al Haji, Sayed Hussain Alawi, and Haji Ahmed Saloom. The meeting ended with the latter declaring that they will not succumb to any pressure and will go ahead with the processions as usual.

The Arabic month of Muharram starts on Sunday 19 May, where the first ten days are marked by religious processions commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed. The Al-Khalifa family is attempting to confiscate the religious rights of the Shia community which it enjoyed for more than 1300 years. This is yet another fatal mistake being committed by the ruling family which has failed to grasp the culture and aspirations of all sections of Bahrain society. A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated “it would be wiser for the security forces to think more than once before attempting to attack the religious processions”.

Bahrain Clashes continue, new British officers recruited

20/May/1996

On the occasion of Ashora, two senior leading Bahraini religious figures, Seyed Jawad Al-Wedaei and Seyed Alawi Al-Ghoreifi, issued a statement to the nation calling on them to unite all their activities and show solidarity with each in the face of the threats against the Shia community in the wake of the continued attacks by security forces. Clashes continued for the third day yesterday (19 May) between the foreign-staffed security forces and unarmed citizens in uprising areas. Bilad al-Qadim suffered the worst atrocities and many youth are being picked up on a daily basis. Riot police attacked the mosques and mattams in a desperate attempt to implement the new policy of confiscating the religious rights of the Shia community. Youth and security forces clashed near "Mattam al-Jeshi". Tear gas, rubber bullets and cylindrical batons (5"x1.5" sizing) were deployed by riot police. They also stormed "Mattam Haji Mansoor Al-Sateeh", clashed with the audience and arrested Seyed Alawi Seyed Makki, 35 (disabled, one leg is short and cannot bend). Radhi Abbas Mansour Al-Sateeh, 18; Habib, Jawad Ashoor Al-Satrawi, 17, Jassim Mahdi. Mansour Jassim, 17, and Abdul Nabi Ali Al-Sabba'a, 33.

The trial of Mohammed Sahwan and Jaber Al Shula has been delayed till 30 May. Both were arrested in December 1994 and nothing has been heard from them since then. Eight other people were brought before the unconstitutional state security court accused of setting a fire in a restaurant in Sitra that resulted in the death of seven Bangladeshi brothers. The eight who denied the charges are Ali Ahmad Al-Asfoor, Yousif Hussain Abdul-Baqi, Ahmad Khalil Al-Kattab, Khalil Ibrahim Khamis Qamber, Khamis Qamber, Abdullah Ibrahim Khamis, Mohammed

Redha Al-Attar and Abdul-Aziz Hussain Abdul-Baqi. Three other citizens may receive unfair sentences this week accused of setting a building ablaze. They are Ali Mohammed Ai-Hadi, Ali Ibrahim Ismail and Samir Ahmad AI-Sheikh.

Five persons who were acquitted by the ordinary criminal court last February, had been kept in detention and will now be brought before the state security court. The latter was empowered on 20 March to rule on any case referred to it by the intelligence department. The five are all from Ekr village: Hamid Isa Sahlan; 22, Hussain Isa, 21, Abdul-Shahid isa, 19, Ali Hassan, 21, and Monir Hassan, 18.

The unconstitutional courts are presided by members of the ruling family who set sentence on the basis of hatred rather than for the implementation of justice. Early in the century, such practices by members of the ruling family ignited several conflicts that de-stabilized the country. Similarly, the present trials are primary exacerbating factors that will continue to de-stabilize the situation.

Sources close to the government indicated that Mr. Ian Henderson, the British officer in-charge of the security apparatus has recently recruited 150 more British officers to work for him. Mr. Henderson and his deputy, Mr. Bryan, are nearing their retirement ages and such recruiting is indicative of how deep the crisis in Bahrain is. The opposition believes that these officers will only add to the complication of the political situation, but will not defeat the just demands of the people, primarily the restoration of constitutional law to the country.

Bahrain: Tense situation is likely to flare-up

20/May/1996

Bahrain is passing through its most critical period, yet, in its modern history. A deadlock between the opposition and the ruling family is now degenerating into daily clashes. On 22 May, the crown prince's military units staged military manoeuvres with UAE troops in a show of forces against the unarmed people of Bahrain. On the other hand, the interior ministry, which belongs to the prime minister, (arch-rival of the crown prince) has been conducting daily attacks on residential areas as part of the collective punishment policy.

Both wings of the ruling family are scoring points against each other by the extent they can inflict damages against the peaceful people of Bahrain. The ruling family is attempting to turn the clock backward to pre-1923 when their members enslaved sections of Bahrain society and used judiciary as a form of keeping those sections under bondage conditions. Hence, on 22 May, the unconstitutional state security court brought the numbers of those sentenced haphazardly to 53 people during two months. The said court sentenced three people to 10 years imprisonment and imposed a record fine of about \$ 1.1 million. The victims are: Ahmed Kadhem Al-Huda 28, Ali Ibrahim Ali Ahmed Ismael, 25, and Samir Ahmed Ali Al-Sheikh, 26.

The following people appeared before the state security court on 20 May: Ali Abdul Wahid, Shafiq Hussain, Amar Abdul Hussain Al Mutagawi, Ammad Seyed Jaffer, Hamdi Abdul Jalil Al-Garbal, Ali Al Hamran, Mahdi Sheikh Abbas Al-Rayyes. The next session is believed to be on 29 May. Also, on 29 May, the following people who were arrested in December 1994 will be brought before the court accused of clashing with police on 16 December 1994, when one policeman died: Mohamed Sahwan, Seyed Ali Sharaf, Mirza Abdulla Ramadhan, Ali Yousef Zayid,

Abdul Jalil Mohamed Jaffer Mossa, Jaber Al-Shu'la Jaffer Abbas Eid, Seyed Hani Hussain, Yousif Ahmed Manssor Al-Buri. This case was closed last year when the killing was found to be accidental as a result of the police jeep reversing and knocking the policeman, whose name is believed to be Mohammed Aref.

The original number of people arrested were 65 and the remaining group was waiting for its release as a result of the findings. Those people known to have been arrested in the past few days include: Jamil Jaffer, 25 (from Jufair), Seyed Hussain Seyed Isa (after delivering a speech in Karranah), Ahmed Hussain Al-Satrawi, Mohammed Al Quidoom, Abdul-Jalil Al.Asfoor, 40 (an Omani Businessman living in Bahrain), Sheikh Abbas Al-Samaheji (clergyman), as well as many others.

Religious processions (for the month of Muharram) started earlier than usual challenging the ruling family which stated that it wanted to confiscate the religious rights of the community. As a form of solidarity with the families of martyrs and with those in jail, the people of Bahrain decided not to provide food for the occasion. The first 12 days of Moharram of every year are commemorated by processions and by distributing food to the public. This year thousands of cattle were unsold and had to be re-exported to neighbouring countries.

Amnesty International issued two reports, one from the US and one from the UK, The US * report quoted by UPI stated that "US taxpayers should never pay for political killings, torture or the unjust imprisonment of those struggling to exercise the basic human rights taken for granted in the United States". In a 70-page report titled "Human Rights and US. Security Assistance," AI reviewed the situation in many countries including Bahrain.

||| Bahrain: Tense situation is likely to flare-up

TheUK report mentioned Bahrain and stated that doctors and nurses have been persecuted worldwide to cover up medical evidence of torture to government opponents.

Bahrain: Ashora processions defy threats of the ruling family

29/May/1996

Thousands of Bahrainis marched on the streets of Manama and other principal towns and villages as has been the case for centuries defying threats by the ruling family which declared that it wanted to confiscate the religious rights of the Bahraini community. Day and night, the crackdown continued with more innocent people taken hostages and others thrown in the overly crowded jails of Bahrain. The newly built jails in Safra as well as those jails in Jaw and other parts of the country are full of Bahrainis from all walks of life and from all ages. The foreign-staffed security forces fired live ammunition and rubber bullets in Bani Jamra at the start of the ten-day processions, injuring Hussain Mohammed Ali Ahmad Fateel, 15 years old, Kumail Jaffer At Ahmad Fateel, 15. Both teenagers are in jail and their families have not been allowed to visit them. Other teenagers arrested from the same area include: Asaad Ali Hussain Saad, 16, Jasim Mohammed Taher, 16, Hassan Yousif Ahmad, 16, Yasin Abdul-Wahid Yousif Idris, 15. In Markh village, one woman was injured by steel-pellet bullets and two other women suffered suffocation from inhaling a smothering tear gas. All three were taken to hospital.

Five armoured vehicles besieged the processions in Manama. More vehicles were stationed near Sanabis, Jedhafs and Dah to prevent people from reaching the areas where grand processions take place: A bus was stopped on 28 May at the entrance of Dair and all youths were arrested. The youths (from Dair and Samhin) were returning home after participating in Karbabad processions. Check-points were established in many outlets surrounding Manama and other major towns and villages. The processions exhibited the strongest attendance in memory time.

For example “Mattam Bin-Salloom” of Manama reached 3-4 km long with 30-40 thousands participants. Riot police attacked participants in Bilad al-Qadim but failed to intimidate the community, as more and more people pored in.

Unity between processions has been a unique feature in all places in Bahrain, further angering the ruling family, which has desperately attempted to divide the community. Divide-and-rule is a corner-stone in the practice of the ruling family for the last 200 years, setting various sections of the society against each other. However, today there is a clear polarization between those who support dictatorship (for whatever reason) and those who oppose dictatorship.

Today, 29 May, there are several trials of innocent people by the four unconstitutional state security court, which are headed by members of the ruling family. One of the trials is Sheikh Abdul Hadi Mukhodher, from Sanabis. The latter was one of the main signatories appearing on the first page of the 1992 petition calling for restoration of parliament. He was also a strong campaigners for the 1994 popular petition.

Sultan Qaboos of Oman stated to Al-Hayat newspaper on 28 May that “A person must advise his brother. I believe that the government of Bahrain understands its affairs and it will overcome the crisis because it is an internal crisis. The solution must be internal”. This is the latest statement by an Arab leader falsifying the government’s claims of a foreign-inspired movement.

Bahrain: Alleged conspiracy used as a cover for consolidating tribal dictatorship

3/June/1996

The Bahraini authorities have decided to announce the uncovering of a conspiracy backed by a foreign country against the ruling family. Last week, the information ministry and Bahraini embassies' officials have mobilised their contacts urging journalists from all over the world to attend Bahrain for an important announcement. Mohammed Al-Motawwa, the information minister, wasted no time today, 3 June 1996, to claim that "29 Bahrainis" have confessed that they were going to "topple" the ruling family and establish an "Iranian-style regime".

The broadly-based opposition in Bahrain has been campaigning for the peaceful restoration of the elected parliament in accordance with the constitution of the country. The government used the language of force and has mishandled the crisis by fostering a culture of violence. The government strategy has always been a desperate attempt to de-rail the constitutional movement by inviting violence to the scene.

A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated "the constitutional movement is passing through its most critical period. This alleged conspiracy is the last game to be played by the ruling family. There is no running away from accountability in accordance with the constitution, and the ruling family will realise that the Bahraini public is much more advanced than the tribal mentality that depends on the use of force. The pro-democracy movement doesn't need arms and doesn't need foreign backing for achieving the legitimate aims of the people of Bahrain"

Bahrain: No compromise on the constitution

4/Jun/1996

The big show organised by Bahrain's minister of information, ended yesterday after what he thought was the most spectacular performance of his career. However, the situation has remained business as usual. The main demands of the people are unlikely to be affected by the propaganda scoop of the Al Khalifa, and the opposition has reaffirmed its stand; no compromise on the constitutional demands. There is also a total rejection of the government's claim that there had ever been a plot to overthrow the Al Khalifa tribal rule. For eighteen months now, the opposition have insisted on the three main demands; the reinstatement of the constitution, the release of political prisoners and the return of the exiles. There is no room to manoeuvre in regards to these legitimate demands. Whether they suit the taste of the Al Khlifas or not is immaterial since the people of Bahrain aspire to live decently without having to fear the emergency laws imposed since 1975.

Journalists who attended yesterday's press conference, prepared few weeks ago were disappointed by the logic of Mr. Mohammed Al Mutawwa, whose career has been compromised by his failure to influence either public or international opinion on the issue of the demands of the opposition. All journalists who had visited Bahrain prior to yesterday's stage-managed play had seen for themselves the state of affairs in the country and it did not take much convincing to make them write what they had published which was overwhelmingly supportive of the people's demands. The claim of by the government that Mr. Henderson had uncovered a plot by the "military wing of Hezbollah" was not taken seriously by observers who had heard such claims at least four times in the last fifteen years. The "first plot to overthrow the government" was in 1981 when hundreds

of young men were arrested and seventy three of whom were subsequently jailed for periods between seven years and life imprisonment. Some of them, including Sayyed Jaffar Al Alawi, are still in jail fifteen years after their arrest. In 1984 the “second plot to overthrow the government was “uncovered” and hundreds were arrested. Eighteen of them were jailed for seven and ten years. Two years later, eleven people belonging to a leftist group were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment after they “plotted to overthrow the government”.

In 1988,, the “forth plot to overthrow the government” was foiled and tens of people were arrested, and one of them, Mohammed Jamil Al Jamri, the eldest son of Sheikh Al Jamri, is still in jail. In the eighties Henderson used the most horrific means of torture, leading to the death of at least six people; Jamil Al Ali, Karim Al Hibshi, Mohammed Hassan Madan, Sheikh Jamal Al Asfoor, Radhi Mahdi Ibrahim and Dr. Ismail Al Alawi. Up to 1000 citizens were deported and hundreds were prevented from entering the country upon their return from trips abroad.

It is in these circumstances that the present crisis may be viewed. The people of Bahrain have always been repressed by the Al Khalifa and their calls for political reforms have never been heeded.

After Kuwait reinstated its constitution, 300 Bahrainis signed a petition calling on the Amir to reinstate the constitution, but he ignored it. Instead he formed the Consultative Council which has no constitutional validity. In 1994 the famous petition calling for the reinstatement of the constitution and the granting of political rights for women was signed by 25,000 people.

The failure of the government to accede to people's demands resulted in the flare-up of the situation in December 1994 leading to the ongoing popular uprising. The government realised it had been cornered by the legitimate demands of the people, and left no stone unturned in its search for a way out. The crisis in Bahrain is being made worse by the tribal mentality of an outdated regime which seeks to blame others for problems of his own making. There is a grave concern for the detainees who have been deprived of the most basic right as human beings, and are being subjected to severe forms of torture. The opposition believes it is time for the government to reinstate the constitution and save the country from these crisis. Failing to do that will only aggravate the situation and lead to further tension.

Bahrain: Reinstating the Constitution will spare the Government further coup attempts

6/Jun/1996

The theatrical show organised by the Government of Bahrain yesterday ended with no tangible results in favour of its cause. The world has been disgusted by the scene of people of dignity reading out incriminating “confessions”. In the words of one western diplomat yesterday: “only dictators and rulers devoid of legitimacy resort to this old-fashioned practice”. Many of those who saw the televised episode realised immediately that the whole episode was stage-managed but with a bad taste. The times when the shepherd led his herd to houses of slaughter were thought to have gone, but that is not the case in Bahrain. The government had claimed to have foiled a coup attempt by a group of young some of whom had studied at the seminary in Qom. Eight people were paraded unceremoniously Infront of TV screens to tell the Bahraini people about their plans to stage an armed rebellion. They were reading a text phrased in the most incriminating language apparently written by the foreign advisors to the Government of Bahrain.

This is the sixth alleged “coup attempt” since the suspension of the Constitution by the Amir in 1975. In that year, the first of the attempts allegedly took place. The government claimed to have discovered a cache of arms which came from Aden to assist a leftist group to stage the coup. In 1981, 84, 86 and 88 coup attempts were allegedly made by various groups and a campaign of terror was unleashed by Ian Henderson against the “conspirators” in each case. Many Bahraini young men were tortured to death and thousands more were either detained or expelled. When the present crisis started following the signing of the famous petition in 1994, the regime did not hesitate to use lethal methods to extract information.

In the last eighteen months more than twenty citizens were either killed by police bullets or tortured to death by Henderson's men. When the Al Khalifa realised they had lost the political war against the people of Bahrain, they produced their traditional ploy to justify their repression and human rights violation of the people.

What made the latest episode more absurd is the attempt by the regime to show that almost all Shia religious and political figures were part of the plot to unseat the government. Yesterday's alleged "confessions" went too far and was therefore discredited even by circles close to the Al Khalifa. One of the alleged "ringleaders" of the coup attempt, Sheikh Ali Al Motaghawwi, was made to read a statement claiming that two figures of the opposition, Dr. Mansoor Al Jamri and Dr. Saeed Al Shehabi, had been approached by the group but refused to be involved and promised to support it.

Both have strongly denied this claim. They said they have never heard of the existence of Hezbollah of Bahrain, and were never approached by anyone claiming to represent it. They emphasised their commitment to the constitutional movement and have worked with the Bahrain Freedom Moment for the last fourteen years. The objectives of the movement whose members are mostly professional and intellectual Bahrainis in exile and at home, are: the reinstatement of the Constitution, the release of political prisoners and the return of the exiles. To this end they have campaigned openly and repeated their request that the government starts dialogue with the sponsors of the popular opposition. They did not feel they needed to work clandestinely and have always advocated peaceful methods to achieve these goals. They denied that they had ever advocated,

assisted or encouraged violence. The movement has always condemned violence from any source especially that of the government. They believe the only way out of the crisis is for the government to lift the emergency laws, respect human rights, uphold the rule of law, stop intimidating the people, and initiate dialogue with the opposition. They expressed their right of freedom of expression and conducted their activities within the rules of law, and will always exercise their legal rights when they are subjected to a smearing campaign from anyone.

Bahrain: Protests re-surface in uprising areas, government's campaign falters

15/Jun/1996

Uprising areas of Bahrain witnessed fresh protests on the night of 14 June, on the 40th day commemoration of the martyrdom of Fadhil Abbas Maroon who was shot dead by the foreign-staffed security forces in Karzakkan. Fadhil was buried by police who prevented his family from even attending the preparation for burial, which is forbidden in Islam. Protesters in Sar, Markh, Barbar, Bani Jamra and Duraz raised slogan denouncing the government's attempt to camouflage its oppression by claiming the uncovering of a fictitious coup attempt. Units of riot police were deployed in uprising areas in anticipation of further protests.

Some awkward and conflicting messages are being disseminated by government's circles reflecting the nervousness of those running the campaign against the people of Bahrain: Some of these messages imply that "if the Shia are prepared to sacrifice some hundreds of them as scape goats then the "government may slow-down its onslaught against the community". Some persons were also allowed to say statements on TV and in public implying this direction, which seems to be a contingency plan for the expected failure of the government in the present war of nerves.

An all-out campaign of misinformation against the opposition is being waged in the media. Some government's spokesmen are being mobilized by the government to spread rumours and lies about members of the opposition who are sim forced-exile: A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement stated that These are libelous statements without any foundation.

We understand the difficulties the government has put itself in and such a dirty campaign can only back-fire as did everything the government desperately attempted.”

The Economist of London (15 June) published a sarcastic report on the claim of the ruling family that it discovered a coup attempt saying: “On June 3rd they openly accused Iran of financing a plot by an armed group -Hizballah Bahrain, they called it- and they later produced confessions from six of the (officially) 50-plus detainees to prove it. On June 12th they announced the arrest of the alleged mastermind, a Sanabis shopkeeper. And the eight guns he is said to have smuggled in? These, said local media, came from - well, in fact, Saudi Arabia. Which does not prove they were not bought with Iranian gold. Whatever the truth -guns and gold alike rest on the confessions of people held in the caring hands of Bahrain's police- Sanabis is paying for it. It was the scene of demonstrations earlier this year. The mosque later had its windows smashed, and was daubed with slogan -”Centre of Pimps” runs one- by the police, most of who, say villagers, are recruits from Pakistan and India. The damage goes beyond glass and insults.....”

Bahrain: Arbitrary arrests and sentencing fuel more protests

18/Jun/1996

The ruling family has re-started a campaign for arresting women. Several ladies were arrested on 17 June including Zahra Ali Isa. Women are being tortured in front of men to force the victimized people to succumb to the feudal dictatorship.

The identity of the person who was buried by security forces in Hooraa Cemetery on 11 June is believed to be the 12-years Mahmood Abdul-Latif Hussain. The security forces have besieged the cemetery to prevent people from uncovering the latest crime.

Thirteen Bahrainis were arbitrarily sentenced by the unconstitutional state security court on 17. June in what is becoming a routine form of punishment: for the Shia community which is being victimized to satisfy some political circles. Mohammed Sahwan, who had been in jail since December 1994 was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment: Another person how had also been in jail since the early days of the uprising, Mr. Abdul Hadi Al-Mokhoder was sentenced to ,10 years imprisonment. The name of the latter is on the top list of signatories of the (first) 1992 Petition which called on the Amir to restore the rule of constitutional law to Bahrain. There was no case against Al-Mokhoder, but the ruling family now feels comfortable going on sentencing people arbitrarily. Seven others were jailed for three to five years. Five young person, including three teenagers, were sentenced to one to six years in prison and fined \$5,000 each.

Protests continued in main uprising areas, such as Daih and Sanabis where riot police have besieged the areas and conducted a sweeping operation arresting more innocent people.

An attack on the village of Mamir resulted in the arrest of Abdulla Ahmad Hussain, 22, Abdul Hakim Ali Ibrahim, 18, Hussain Ali Makki, 16, Ismail Ibrahim, 111, Ali Redha Ibrahim Isa, 23, Zuhair Hassan Isa, 16, Adel Ibrahim, 15, Jaffer Hussain, Ahmad Isa, 15, Ahmad Makki Moqdad, 20, Younis Mahdi Ahmad, 19, Jassim Ali Yaqoub,-18, Mohamed Abbas Hammad, 17, Jaffer Hussain Isa, 17, Bader Abdul Hassan Isa, 12, Mohammed Ahmad Abdul. Hassan, 11, Ali Ahmad, 16 Jaffer Ahmad, 19, Qassim, 14, Abdulaziz, 18, Helal, 16, Ali Ahmad Abdul Wahab, 16, Abdul Wahab Armad Abdul Wahab, 22, Jaffer Mohammed Abdul Wahab, 15, Yousif Mohammed Abdul Wahab. Similar arrests were made in Demestan, Bani Jamra, Nabih Saleh, Duraz, Karbabad and Aali.

The Associated Press reported that “A bomb-laden car exploded outside a downtown hotel Monday (17 June, 8.30 pm and an anonymous caller said the blast • was intended to pressure authorities to release political prisoners. There were no casualties and the only damage was to the car that was carrying the bomb and a nearby vehicle, police said. The blast took place outside the six-story Bahrain International Hotel, frequented by foreigners and locals alike, and near the Standard Chartered Bank”. Reuters said “One of the owners of the Saudi-licensed car said it was damaged by a blast while it was parked but nobody was injured. The Nissan vehicle was parked near a branch of the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, the Standard Chartered Bank and the Gulf Pearl ‘Hotel’

Bahrain: Victimization of the Shia Community for political expediency

20/Jun/1996

The victimization of the Shia. Community has intensified since the announcement of the ruling family that it discovered a fictitious plot to overthrow it from power. Such fictitious claims were made for attracting the support of Western powers who are experiencing Political difficulties with Iran. On the other hand, the ruling family was cornered in the past 18 months and could not explain to the whole world the rationale behind its repressive measures. The ruling family has failed even to obtain the support of their reactionary forces in the country. Hence the idea of a coup attempt by the Shia, Community linked with names (Iran, Hizbullah, etc.) that frighten the West and provide an opportunity for those whose interests are linked to the continuation of oppression to come out in the open.

However, the fictions of the government polarized the situation into two : camps, a tiny minority which is linked to dictatorship and a vast majority of the population seeking a better life with dignity as specified in the constitution of the country. The information minister, Mohammad Al-Molawwa, telephoned leading personalities and families of Bahrain and offered to advise on their behalf in local papers free of charge to declare their denunciation of the opposition. He failed miserably and those businessmen who were scared into doing so are now facing an angry population that decided to boycott their goods and products, such as soft drinks, tissues, dairy products and other consumer goods.

Before 1923, the ruling family used to depend on death squads called *Fedaweya” which used to attack innocent people refusing to succumb for the arbitrary wishes of the local Al-Khalifa sheikhs. The modern “Fedaweya” have now-been

mobilized against the people of Bahrain in the media, in state security courts, in government, -on the streets as riot police and in jail as torturers. These modern groups of “Fedaweya” are becoming the joke of the day as they attempt to turn the clock backward and as they go on thinking that the fictions about coup attempts will enable them to enslave the people of Bahrain.

Moreover, the free people of the world have come to the support of the people of Bahrain. For example two British MPs and three distinguished journalists appeared in a press conference in the UK Parliament on 13 June falsifying the government’s claims and arguing for the case of democracy in Bahrain. On 10 June, 25 European MPs wrote to the Amir of Bahrain stating: “It is a matter of deep concern to us that there are reportedly still 2,500 people imprisoned without charge, who were detained in connection with the demonstration in December 1994, supporting the restoration of the constitution. It is profoundly unsatisfactory that more than twenty years have passed since the constitution was suspended and never restored, following the dissolution of the Bahraini National Assembly on 26th August 1975”.

ICRC denies agreement to visit prisons

27/Jun/1996

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has denied that it had signed an agreement with the Government of Bahrain permitting it to enter the country and monitor the situation in the prisons. The denial came after Mr. Jeremy Hanley, the British minister of state for foreign affairs, was quoted by the BBC Arabic Service Tuesday as saying that such an agreement had existed. The presenter of the programme, Ann Richardson, asked the minister, who has just conclude an official visit to Bahrain whether the issue of the violation of human rights as reported by Amnesty International, had been discussed with the authorities. Mr. Hanley was quoted as saying in reply: "I have directed the attention of the officials in Bahrain that we had received numerous letters, and questions were presented in the parliament on the issue of human rights in Bahrain. We discussed these issues in general terms and I felt satisfied with the progress achieved in these fields, especially the important agreement which has been signed with the International Committee of the Red Cross allowing her access to Bahrain". The ICRC has denied an agreement has been signed although discussion has been underway for almost a year. Mr. Stocklin for the ICRC office in Geneva, said that there are three conditions that the ICRC insists on when dealing with any country, including Bahrain. These are: the ICRC must be given access to ALL prisoners, that the visits are repeatable, and that the meetings with the prisoners are held in private (i.e. not in the presence of governmental officials).

A spokesman for the Bahrain Freedom Movement observed that the Government of Bahrain has resorted to lying and deception on the issue of human rights violations.

Last year Douglas Hurd, the British foreign secretary was told that Amnesty International (AI) had been invited to Bahrain. No such invitation had ever been given to AI. Bahraini officials held preliminary discussions with the ICRC last year and when they heard the conditions of the ICRC they decided to freeze the negotiations. However, they continued referring to the issue now and again hoping they would be able to deceive the others about their real intentions. In 1994, prior to the uprising they gave permission to Lord Avebury, the chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, to visit Bahrain and see prisoners, but three days before the date of the visit (14th November 1994), he was asked to postpone the visit.

On the other hand, the State Security Court yesterday passed harsh prison sentences against eight innocent detainees ranging from seven years to life, in connection with the sound explosions at the Meridian and Diplomat hotels, and BMMI. Abdulla Naser Al Tawq was given life sentence for a crime he had not committed.

It is worth noting that the sixth defendant in yesterday's "trial", Mulla Abbas Hubail was one of those accused of belonging to Hezbollah, the theatrical play created by the Al Khalifa earlier this month. He was shown on TV "confessing" his links with the alleged plot to overthrow the government, but in court his main charge was "aiding and abetting the bombing of the Meridian Hotel, Diplomat Hotel and BMMI". He denied the charge but the Al Khalifa judge read out the sentence that had come from "higher authorities". The verdicts came after one session at the State Security Court.

All defendants were victimised to save the faltering reputation of Ian Henderson who has failed to contain the uprising.

Meanwhile, tension is high all over the country in anticipation of the verdict against the seven defendants falsely accused of starting a fire at a restaurant in Sitra that allegedly killed seven Bengladishis. They have denied any responsibility. Last night several fires were seen in Sanabis, Nuwaidrat and Waqif market near Hamad Town.

Bahrain: The ruling family courts pass more arbitrary sentences

1/Oct/1996

Continuing their revenge against the people of Bahrain, members of the ruling family continued their savagery by passing arbitrary sentences on 15 citizens, the government-controlled press stated today. 1 October. The arbitrary sentencing has been extensively used as a means of punishing Bahrainis seeking political reforms.

The State Security Court was established in 1975 following the dissolution of the elected National Assembly. Last March it was widened to three courts and given extra-ordinary powers to pass arbitrary sentences. The first court is presided by a member of the ruling family, Sheikh Abdul Rahman bin Jaber Al-Khalifa. Two Egyptian judges sit alongside him. Ali Mansoor and Mohammed Ra'afet Mostafa Barghash. The second court is presided by an Egyptian: Mohammed Hamdi. Two judges sit alongside him, a Sudanese and a Bahraini: Mahmood Al-Salimi and Omar Khalaf-Allah. The third court is presided by a member of the ruling family: Sheikh Khalifa bin Rashid Al-Khalifa. Two judges sit alongside him.

Mosa'ad Ramadan Al-Saei and Abdulla Bader (Egyptian). These individuals are the least just and independent people in the universe. They are more than biased in all their rulings (which can not be appealed) and they are full hate to Bahrainis. They are the materialization of an inferiority complex that is inherent within the ruling establishment that avoids any interaction with the citizens of the country other than adversary relationship.

While thousands of detainees suffer under the hands of torturers, the Amir opened the session of the so-called Shura council, made up of hand-picked recruits with the sole aim of

justifying dictatorship. The pro-constitution movement and the popular uprising are the facts of life in today's Bahrain and no matter what the government does, the people are not prepared to march backward. The struggle for restoration of democracy is there to continue until full realization of the just aims.

The foreign minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, met with his Iranian counterpart in New York on 27 September. This is the first high level meeting since the ruling family claimed it discovered an Iranian-backed plot to overthrow its rule. A spokesman for the BFM stated "the intelligence department invented a plot against the ruling family and attempted to involve outside factors in Bahrain's internal problems in a desperate bid to neutralize the Sunni community and to attract support for its oppression from the United States. This policy failed miserably and the security forces are finding it hard to handle the popular uprising which intensified in the past weeks. The pro-democracy movement is based on two pillars, the 1973 Constitution and the national consensus as represented by the 1994 popular petition."

Bahrain: Local and regional conflicts worsened

6/Oct/1996

Events continue to escalate in Bahrain with sporadic clashes reported in principal areas. On 4 and 5 October, columns of fire and loud explosions were reported in a foul (near Al-Sadiq mosque), Abo-Saiha'a, Kawara, Tobli, Sitra, Sanbis and A'ali. The government is imposing a black-out on all these clashes and resorted to various measures to ensure its version of events is not challenged, including the harassment of correspondents working for international news agencies.

'The person in-charge of the Al-Sadiq mosque in Qafool (Manama) was summoned for seven day in the past two weeks. Every day he received threats from the ill-mannered intelligence officers who forced him to submit his resignation at the end of the interrogation. A-Sadiq mosque is the fourth religious place to be closed down by the security forces. A spokesperson for the BIM stated "it is very surprising that the foreign minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, criticised Israel last week regarding Al-Quds grand mosque when his government has attacked mosques in Bahrain, damaged their contents, sprayed their internal walls with bullets and smashed the holy Quran while attacking these mosques. These violations of holly places are grave crimes committed by a government whose officials carry Muslim names.

The people of Bahrain continue to be inspired by the Kuwaiti parliamentary experiment and are following the elections in Kuwait with great interests. The government-controlled press attempted to stain the image of the Kuwaitis, by claiming that elections may result in selecting "non-suitable" people. Bahrain's image, under the present type of rule, has plummeted with many associating Bahrain with such corrupt practices as prostitution and dictatorship. The government has been importing batches

of ladies from all over the world to practice prostitution in the name of tourism. A satirical Kuwaiti play entitled “Flect Om-Ali” depicts this governmentally-created image of Bahrain when a sarcastic actor (candidate) promised “those youth who elect me will be awarded free weekend-trips to Bahrain!”. A western diplomat told Reuters that other Gulf rulers “are uncomfortable with the whole political culture in Kuwait. It does not have a parallel anywhere else and they see the parliament as an implicit threat”. A Middle East expert also said to Reuters “the issue has an immediate sharpness for Bahrainis”. Bahrain was angered in February when eight prominent Kuwaiti MI’s wrote to its ruler, Sheikh Isa bin Sulman al-Khalifa, asking him to revive the parliament, Reuters commented.

Mohammed Al-Mutawwa, the information minister added to the controversy over the decision of the prime minister to boycott the next GCC Summit in Doha by saying to Gulf News Agency (GNA) “Bahrain would refrain from attending the Doha summit, but would not boycott the GCC activities. He added that refraining from attending the Doha summit comes as a clear message that Bahrain refuses to attend because of Qatar’s unfriendly stances towards Bahrain, as was evident on more than one occasion”. Diplomats believe that the position taken by the prime minister is directed more against Saudi Arabia than Qatar. This is because more criticism is being directed at the way the A-Khalifa family is exacerbating internal and regional conflicts. In 1993, the prime minister sent a birth-day message to Saddam Hussain as a punishment to the Kuwaitis when the latter attempted to offer an advise for “better ways of governing.

Bahrain: Civil resistance defies tribal dictatorship

12/Oct/1996

The citizens of Bahrain continued their defiance of tribal dictatorship by resisting all attempts to impose alien and backward political structures. A member of the time-wasting Shura Council opened the gates of his house last week to receive people in Tobli. The response was angry demonstration that forced him and his sponsors out of the area. A popular poster is being circulated amongst the people showing the picture of the 40 appointed individuals with the caption "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.

On 11 October, a large fire was seen in Daih, with smoke covering a wide area. Two other fires were seen Jedhafs and virtually all villages stretching from Sunabis to Bani Jamra witnessed protest actions. In Bani Jamra, a mass demonstration took to the street demanding the release of the detained leader, Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri. In Duraz, loud explosions of gas cylinders were heard around 8.30 pm local time. Riot police used live ammunition against the demonstrators.

The demonstrations were sparked off by the news of the ill-treatment Sheikh al-Jamri is receiving under the hands of his jailers. Since his detention last January, he had been allowed to see his family only once. Lawyers have been prevented from seeing him. The detention of pro-democracy leaders who called for the restoration of the elected parliament is exacerbating the volatile political situation.

The following weeks are expected to witness more protests marking the first anniversary of the historic hunger strike last year by the pro-democracy leaders that lasted 10 days between 23 October and 1 November. On 1 November, Bahrain witnessed the largest audience in its history when around 80,000 people

gathered in Bani Jamra for listening to the declaration of the hunger strikers. The hunger strike was staged in protest at the government's slide-back on the understanding established following reconciliation talks between interior ministry officials and jailed opposition figures. Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues restored calm to the country in return for the promised release of political detainees. The interior ministry released only half the number and re-initiated political trials of youngsters and consistently attacked schools and gatherings all over the country. Last week some schools witnessed renewed student actions, In Salmanya Boys School, for example, slogans were raised demanding an end to police brutality and restoration of democracy. The military officer put in-charge of the ministry of education ordered direct police deployment against teenagers. He also issued an order to dismiss any primary school pupil (first to third year) whose absence reaches 10%, and for those in the fourth to sixth years to be dismissed if their absence reaches 5%. This order is aimed at pre-empting the anger over the dismissal of about 40 pupils since last year's eruption of students demonstrations.

Bahrain: Students action and protests continue

14/Oct/1996

The political crisis continues to deepen with the insistence of the ruling Al-Khalifa family to impose alien and dictatorial structures against the Bahraini civil society. On 14 October, students at Isa Town Girl School demonstrated against the savage policies of the military officer in -charge of the ministry of education.

The officer had dismissed scores of young children for Bahrain's schools as part of the collective punishment programmes being implemented against the citizens of the country. On 13 October, the residents of Kazakkan clashed with the security forces which besieged the areas and established check point. On 14 October, they attacked several house for the routine ransacking and carrying out of arbitrary arrests.

On 12 October, at night, the residents of Tobli staged further protests against the aggression of the foreign security forces which fired tear gas and rubber bullets inside the houses. The citizens burnt many tyres to diffuse the effect of the smothering gas. Many houses are still empty as the residents could not go back with the residuals of tear gas still emitting. In Sanabis, the security forces attacked the houses and arbitrarily arrested 12 citizens. In the small village of Jannossan, the undisciplined forces attacked the houses and arbitrarily arrested several children including Hussain Hassan Jawad, 13 years old, Mohammed Saeed Abdul Aziz, 15, and Ahmad Abdul Nabi, 14, bringing the total number of those detained from the village to 34.

The intelligence department has appointed a Pakistani informer for the control of the grand Al-Sadiq mosque in Qafool (Manama). The elderly person, Mr. Abdulla Al-Ebrik, who was

in-charge of the mosque was detained and harassed for seven days prior to his forced resignation. This insult is exacerbating the situation and the people of Bahrain are not prepared to allow the intelligence department to abuse the holy places.

The worsening political situation has forced many companies to re-locate to stable countries. The latest company to move its main offices to Dubai is British Airways. It is also reported that Banque Indosuez has relocated its offices.

Bahrain is unfortunate to have a tribal dictatorship that does not care about the interests of the nation and instead continues to deepen the political crisis by launching more attacks against the citizens of the country and by ignoring all the peaceful moves undertaken by the opposition to restore the rule of constitutional law. All the aggressive and unconstitutional policies of the government of the ruling family (half of the cabinet carry the surname of Al-Khalifa) are back-firing and the people of Bahrain are determined to continue their struggle until the achievement of their natural and civil rights as prescribed by the constitution of the country.

Bahrain: Business units leave the country, protests escalate

18/Oct/1996

On 17 October, load explosions were heard in the Duraz area at around 9.00 pm local time, while protests in Bani Jamra continued with many columns of fire spreading in the northwest of the country. In Sanabis, police attacked a peaceful demonstration at 7:30 pm in the evening. Riot policemen were seen beating and arresting three children aged between 10-14 years on Budaya highway.

Bahrain suffered a set back this week as a result of the government's arrogance that left no choice for business but to leave the country. Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC) and British Airways decided to move to Dubai. Banque Indosuez had dismissed the 35 employees and closed down. There are also news that Bank of America might be considering closing down its off-shore banking unit.

The Al-Khalifa government had opted for a show-down with the pro-constitution campaigners hoping that the movement would be crushed by October. The ruling family also managed to extract monetary donations from other Gulf States on the promise that it will be able to crush the democratic aspirations of the people. To achieve its unholy aims, the ruling family created fictions of coup-attempts and attempted to frighten the Bahraini Sunni community by claiming that the Shia wanted to impose their government by force. The prime minister met with senior Sunni personalities and took the personal responsibility of spreading fear. The security forces implemented collective punishment programmes against Shia residential areas, on the belief that the victimization of the Shia will not be opposed by the US and regional powers for obvious reasons. This false policy was adopted vigorously by the ruling family but at the

end all hopes were dashed, as the pro-constitution and broadly-based movement continued its campaign. On the other hand, the popular uprising continued defying and resisting the sieges and atrocities of the foreign-staffed security forces. Having failed in all its plans, the ruling family turned to blaming Qatar and stirring regional troubles. This is annoying other Gulf countries which are now casting doubts about its credibility and ability to govern. In the past few days, explosion of gas cylinders continued to be heard, students protests spread in schools and it is expected that protests will escalate further in response to the government's policy of intimidation.

The intelligence department is failing to grasp the depth of frustration amongst the victimized community and instead is conducting smear and rumours campaign that is back-firing. For example they spread a rumour last week saying that the three innocent people sentenced to death by members of the ruling family, who preside over security courts, have been executed. Protests erupted instantaneously in Sitra. However, the non-intelligent department telephoned the families of the accused and allowed them to visit their sons to temporarily calm down the situation.

The opposition believes that there is no outlet to the current crisis as long as the ruling family continues to deal with Bahrain as if it were a private property and as long as it continues to violate the constitution of the country that was ratified by the Amir and the elected National Assembly in 1973. This backward approach is incompatible with the civil and cosmopolitan society of Bahrain that believes in pluralism and the rule of constitutional law.

Bahrain: Civil resistance and international condemnations

31/Oct/1996

The call for student strike was widely observed in schools around the country with most schools reported to be vacant. The military officer installed as minister of education ordered the Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) and other schools to hang posters stating that students reported absent on 30 October will face disciplinary actions. Following the strike by BTI students, the two lecturers (Dr. Mirza Ali and Mr. Ali Al-Jabal) who had been arrested few days ago were freed. Both lecturers bore signs of torture and faced a humiliating treatment. Clashes were reported near Bilad al-Qadim School. Riot police deployed rubber bullets and tear gas damaging several private cars during the action.

The residential areas observed another call for commemorating the first anniversary of the hunger strike staged by Sheik Al-Jamri and his colleagues. At around 7.00 pm (30 October), shops started closing down and families switched-off their homes' lights. Riot police were deployed all around the country with a stronger presence in Manama, the capital. Columns of fire were seen and gas-cylinders explosions were heard in Bani Jamra, Duraz, Dah, Sanabis, Bori and Dair, amongst others. Lorries packed with riot police encircled Nabih Sale Island, the scene of recent clashes.

The Chairman of the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group raised the case of Bahrain in the British House of Lords on 29 October. Lord Avebury stated 'The UN working group on arbitrary detention was considering a visit to Bahrain but has had to defer the project because of lack of money.

The International Red Cross was also meant to be going there in October, according to the Minister, Mr. Jeremy Hanley, who was in Bahrain earlier this year, but it (ICRC) says that it has not yet received an invitation. One would like to know what other UN centre work has had to be postponed or cancelled and whether our own Government are pressing for improvements of the funding arrangements". Lord Avebury also raised the case of the three persons sentenced to death by the State Security Court stating 'Would you please intercede with the Amir on behalf of these three young men? The court of cassation decided on Sunday that it had no power to review the sentences, and the three could be executed at any moment. Many people in Bahrain believe that the men are innocent, and although the Foreign Secretary referred to "confessions" these were retracted by the accused when the case came to court, and it is also believed that they were extracted under duress while the men were in custody. If they are executed, it will further strain the relations between the ruling family and the people". On the other hand, Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal stating that "Al has received information indicating that their trial by the State Security Court fell far short of international standards for fair trial. Although the State Security Court does not allow for appeal, under Bahraini law death sentences by ordinary courts are automatically referred to the Court of Cassation.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had earlier adopted Decision No 23/1996 concerning Bahrain. Concluding a three-page report, the Working Group stated "The detention of Shaikh Abd al-Amir Mansour al-Jamri, Shaikh Hassan Sultan, Shaikh Hussain el-Deihi, Shaikh Ali bin Ahmed al-Jedhafi, Shaikh Ali Ashour, Seyyed Ibrahim Adnan al-Alawi, Hassan

Meshma'a, Salah Abdulla Ahmed al-Khawaja and Abdel Wahab Hussein is declared to be arbitrary being in contravention of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and falling within Category III of the principles applicable in the consideration of cases submitted to the working group.

The Bahrain Uprising: Two Years Old

4/Dec/1996

The ruling Al-Khalifa tribe is attempting to divert attention from the internal political crisis by mounting a media war against Qatar. Puppets of the government in the press were ordered to write editorials and articles in an attempt to change the core issue that concerns the people of Bahrain namely, the demands for the restoration of constitutional law in the country.

The ruling family, all of a sudden, invited the public to visit Hawar, virtually, free of charge. They have also announced that sports tournament will be organized in Hawar. The crown prince and the prime minister have been quarrelling amongst themselves for the private ownership of the islands. Um-Na'san, Jedda and Um-Subban have been occupied by the Amir, the prime minister and their younger brother, respectively. The Crown prince rushed and built a palace for himself in the main island of Hawar, at the same time the prime minister had expressed his intention to name the islands after himself.

The people of Bahrain, nonetheless, have their own issues to worry about. The period 5-20 of December will be commemorated by the people of Bahrain. It will two years since the ruling family decided to shoot and kill the citizens of the country.

Two years ago the ruling Al-Khalifa family ventured into the unknown when it decided to attack a wide section of Bahrain's population in an attempt to prevent the submission of the popular petition that was signed by 25,000 citizens calling on the Amir to restore the parliament and constitution. The chronology of the main events are as follows:

October 1994: A popular petition sponsored by all tendencies

and sections of Bahrain society is circulated for signing by the public. Some 25,000 names endorse the petition. The ruling Al-Khalifa family refuses to receive the Committee for Popular Petition.

5 December 1994: The security forces singled out Sheikh Ali Salman and arrest him in a dawn raid. Scores of youth were also arrested, thus provoking the first street demonstration to go out on the streets to demand the release of Sheikh Ali Salman and other activists. The ruling family ordered its security forces to attack the Shia population only, so that a sectarian image may be created with the hope of gaining the sympathy of the Western powers. The assumption is that the Al-Khalifa will be attempting to link the Shia population to outside influences, namely Iran. And because of the bad US-Iran relations continues to be the feature of regional politics, the Al-Khalifa thought that this would be a golden opportunity for them to derail the peaceful, constitutional and broadly-based movement. They miscalculated when the uprising dragged on more than they ever judged.

17 December 1994: The security forces kill the first two martyrs of the uprising, Hani Abbas Khamis and Hani Ahmad Al-Wasti, during their attack on Sanabis.

20 December 1994: A third martyr, Haji Mirza Ali Abdul-Redha, falls during an attack by the foreign forces on a mosque in Jedhafs.

15 January 1995: Three religious scholars, Sheikh Ali Salman (whose detention on 5 December sparked off the protests), Sheikh Hamza Al-Deiri and Seyed Haider Al-Setri, were forcibly exiled. They reached Britain two days later. The Al-Khalifa foreign minister flew to London to request their

re-exiling from Britain. He was rebuffed and his hate-based mentality was condemned by the British media.

1 March 1995: Major demonstrations at the end of Ramadan. Eid celebrations cancelled

1 April 1995: Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri, member of the dissolved parliament and member of the Committee for Popular Petition, was put under house arrest.

15 April 1995: Sheikh Al-Jamri was detained.

1 June 1995: The first ministerial changes since independence result in the removal of ministers who are not members of the Al-Khalifa ruling family.

25 September 1995: The release of Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues following an understanding reached with the interior ministry to calm down the situation in return for ending the attacks of security forces and opening the way for political dialogue. Public celebrations take place and street protests end.

23 October 1995: Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues start a 10-day hunger strike in Bani Jamra protesting at the violations of the interior ministry of the understanding reached earlier.

1 November 1995: More than 80,000 people gathered around the house of Sheikh Al-Jamri to listen to the declaration of the hunger strikers. This was the biggest gathering in the history of Bahrain.

November/December 1995: The Al-Khalifa threatens to declare martial law and many military manoeuvres were conducted, including experimenting with deploying the army around residential areas.

21 January 1996: Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues together with at least 2 thousand people were rounded-up. Street protests re-surface after a halt of several months.

7 February 1996: The arrest the lawyer Ahmad Al-Shamlan following the issuance of a statement by the Committee for Popular Petition denouncing the arrest of Sheikh Al-Jamri on 3 February. Mr. Al-Shamlan remained in detention for more than 2 months. He was later released so that the strategy of the ruling family stays the same, namely attacking and detaining Shia persons only. Since Mr. Al-Shamlan is a Sunni, he was released later without any charges.

14 March 1996: Mysterious death of seven Bangladeshi persons in a restaurant in Sitra. The opposition cast many doubts as to the real cause of death since five of the seven people worked for the riot police and their bodies suffered no burns. Furthermore, the ruling family buried the bodies without allowing any inspection by Bangladeshi embassy officials. The Bangladeshi embassy protested.

20 March 1996: The Amir issued two dictatorial decrees widening the powers of the State Security Court, thus creating four courts, empowering members of the ruling family to pass arbitrarily sentences that cannot be appealed on any case the police wish to refer to them.

26 March 1996: The Amir and his brother the prime minister order the execution of Isa Qambar accused of causing the death of a police man a year ago.

5 May 1996: Protests surge in most places on the 40th day anniversary of the execution of Isa Qambar.

6 May 1996: A special unit belonging to the army demolished a house in Sanabis killing a father, a mother and their son. Salman Al-Taitoon, his wife Fadhila Al-Motgawwi and their son Ali all were killed instantly. The house was demolished by special devices that brought down the house without creating any fire. The house rubble was cleared by the security forces in a record 48 hours (while all those places that caught fire remain without clearance for months). The ruling family had earlier warned that unless protests stop, they will “wipe-out villages”. Many editorials in Al-Ayyam and Akhbar Al-Khalij stated this warning.

1 June 1996: The ruling family announced that it discovered an Iranian-backed plot to topple the regime and six persons were forced to appear on TV to read prepared statements.

1 July 1996: A state security court passed death sentences against three innocent citizens accusing them of causing the death of the seven Bangladeshi persons on 14 March.

15 August 1996: the 25th anniversary of independence was ignored by the ruling family, but the opposition celebrates the occasion.

1 October 1996: the prime minister recruits 40 persons for the powerless Shura Council and re-affirms his intentions to divide Bahrain into four security zones.

October 1996: Protests in all uprising areas resurface and surge to their peak towards the end of the month.

15 November 1996: The Amir refuses to meet with the representatives of the Committee for Popular Petition. Four

representatives requested a meeting to submit the historic petition. Instead, the head of prime minister office telephoned the representatives and threatened them that they will not return home if they attempt to visit the palace of the Amir.

Since 5 December 1994:

- 29 citizens were killed or tortured to death by the security forces.
- 9 expatriates died during the events.
- 4 security men died during clashes.
- More than 250 people (since 4 December 1994) arbitrarily sentenced with fines reaching millions of dollars.
- Scores of citizens have been disabled.
- Hundreds have been injured.
- Scores dismissed from their jobs.
- Scores forcibly-exiled from their homeland.
- More than 5,000 people were detained.
- For the first time women have been arrested and some of them were stripped naked during interrogation.
- Prisoners, especially children have been indecently assaulted (sexually abused) during detention.
- Education sector has been militarized. Military men were put in charge of the education ministry, the university of Bahrain and other key posts. Racism, tribalism and sectarianism have been vigorously implemented in all governmental key appointments.

Bahrain: Political trials deepen the crisis

5/Mar/1997

The state security courts, presided by members of the Al-Khalifa family, adjourned their sessions until 10 and 14 March. The Al-Khalifa judges divided their 59 victims to seven groups accusing them of plotting to topple the tribal government. Reuters reported that verdicts are expected within this month. The opposition believes that these are politically-motivated trials which lack all basic elements of justice as prescribed by the Bahraini constitution and b international conventions. All those sentenced by these courts are considered to be arbitrarily arrested citizens, in lines with the definitions and standards of the United Nation Human Rights Centre.

Whatever, the Al-Khalifa judges choose to pass, the crisis in Bahrain is there to stay and deepen, as the gap between the ruler and the ruled continue to be driven by hate and oppression. The ruling wing of Al-Khalifa family knows that it lacks legitimacy since it abolished the constitution and the parliament in 1975. The torturing and sentencing of citizens in kangaroo courts will ensure that Bahrainis continue their national struggle until the achievement of human and constitutional rights.

The foreign security forces attacked mosques in Markh and Bani Jamra on 3 March (night) smashing book cases that contained copies of the holy Quran. Abo-Ali mosque near Sanabis was also stormed and ransacked. In Dair, the security forces attacked and arbitrarily arrested several people from the street. Similarly in Duraz, Sanabis, Karzakkan and Sitra, the foreign forces arrested many people in an attempt to frighten the citizens from going out on the street.

Several loud explosions were heard in residential areas. On 2 March, two explosions were reported in the capital, Manama: one near the National Bank of Bahrain in Nuaim and one near

Sheikh Abdulla Road.

On the other hand the foreign forces started sending letters to many citizens warning them against participating in anti-government protests or attending mosque gatherings. The coming days are expected to witness more protests as the majority of people believe that the political system has no purpose other than continuous enmity to the nation. The first anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar is also due on 26 March and the people are frustrated that the killers of their sons and daughters (such as Khalid Al-Wazzan and Adel Flaifel) do not stand trial to receive similar sentences.

The ruling wing has given up all its pride and succumbed to Qatar by dropping all its demands for withdrawing the case of Hawar from the Hague in return for nothing. It also recognized the need, at last, to open up embassies in both countries. The choice was made to spare all efforts for oppressing the Bahraini people.

Bahrain: Gloomy political and economical outlook

8/Mar/1997

A gloomy outlook is prevailing in the country as Bahrainis prepare themselves for the predetermined political sentences to be spelled out by the unfair security courts. The defence lawyers are going through a mountain of allegations by the prosecutor general who accused 59 citizens of plotting to topple the government by force and install an “Islamic Republic loyal to Iran”. The lawyers were referred to the evidences of the prosecutor general which are no more than “confessions extracted from the defendants under custody”. The claim that these 59 people have planned to bring down the government is unbelievable even for the simplest mind. The contradictions in the extracted confessions as well as Bahrain’s situation as looked at from strategic, political, economical and social angles falsify the government’s claims on all counts.

It is, however, a political decision by the government which is controlled by the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family for derailing the peaceful constitutional movement that aims for no more than the reinstatement of the dissolved parliament of 1975. The abuses of the foreign-staffed security forces and the malpractice of the unconstitutional security courts are presently targeting one section of the society for political expediency. All Bahrainis are in danger of being victimized today or tomorrow if these atrocities are allowed to continue.

The Economist (8 March (1997) wrote on Bahrain saying “This week Bahrain’s State Security Court began the closed-door trial of 59 people who were arrested last June. Soon after their arrest, half a dozen of the accused were paraded on television where they “confessed” to having been recruited by Iran, and trained by Hizbullah in Lebanon, in order to overthrow the Bahraini regime.

Iran denied this, as it would. But doubts about the unsavoury parade were reinforced by contradictions in the testimony - and by the Bahrain security services' known propensity to turn to torture. Political protest in Bahrain has its origin in a petition, signed by 25,000 people and presented to the emir more than two years ago, asking for a return to the democracy that the island had briefly experienced in the mid-1970s. The regime responded by deporting the ringleaders. Western powers looked on benignly: Bahrain is the regional headquarters of America's Fifth Fleet. But protest and repression intensified, leading to violence on both sides..."

The British magazine *Private Eye* (7 March) wrote "Lord Avebury was rather surprised to hear that the Prince of Wales was planning a goodwill visit to Bahrain. Avebury himself had been invited to Bahrain in 1994 but his invitation was abruptly rescinded without explanation. In league with human rights groups all over the world, Avebury and his group have campaigned against the awful dictatorship in Bahrain".

Moody, the international credit rating agency published its Outlook on 7 March stating "Bahrain's limited resource base reduces the government's ability to reverse chronic fiscal and current account deficits, and promote economic growth and job creation. These constraints, along with the political risk posed by the sectarian division in the country, make Moody's Bal rating appropriate". This is sad for the country which could have been rated to a better level had the government behaved rationally towards the civilized demands of the nation.

Bahrain: A “Dead Iranian Man” is accused of “running” a military wing

9/Mar/1997

The biggest lie to be made by the security services of Bahrain is being exposed. The 81 people chosen by the interior ministry for victimization have been accused of membership of a military wing of a ‘Hizbollah’. The buzz-words used by the ruling establishment were carefully selected to woo the US and the West into supporting the oppression of Bahrainis.

The presumed involvement of the two top persons Ali Al-Motgawi and Jasim Al-Khayyat hinges on a meeting held on 10 June 1995 that was chaired by an “Iranian intelligence officer” named Mohammed Redha Al-Sadiq. It is now documented beyond any doubt that the said person died on 9 July 1994, one year before the meeting that established the military training and operations. Moreover, the said person is a religious man and poet (some of his work is published) and his death was reported by the local papers in Iran. He was non-existent to be able to lead any military operation. Another person Fakhri Rashid, was accused of holding meetings in a flat he rented a long time after the said meetings took place.

This explains why the government decided to take a low profile position and prevent any detailed reporting of the “biggest political trial” in the history of the nation. Reuters reported on 9 March that the trial of 81 people accused of involvement in an alleged Iranian-backed plot to topple Bahrain’s government entered its second week and lawyers said on Sunday some verdicts could be passed next week. “The State Security Court is continuing to try the suspects. There is a possibility the court would pass some verdicts next week,” one defence lawyer told Reuters. The lawyers said 59 suspects were appearing in court and the rest were being tried in absentia”. The opposition

believes the time has come for the nation to say its word and put an end to the victimization of a large section of the society. There is no escape for the ruling establishment but to restore the rule of constitutional law.

The distribution of power amongst senior members of the ruling family was formalized on 6 March by the reformation of the “High Defence Council” that now includes the prime minister, the crown prince, the foreign minister, the interior minister, the defence minister, the finance minister, the information minister, the head of National Guard and deputy of chief of defence force. Only two of the members are not from the Al-Khalifa family, the finance and information minister. Both are close to the prime minister.

It has been reported that the health of the jailed poet Ali Hassan Yousif, 40, has deteriorated after a month of ill-treatment in his solitary confinement. He is now suffering from urinary infection, a common illness caused by the various forms of torture during detention. Abdull Amir Jaffer Isa from Sanabis has completed his two years sentence only to be told that unless he pays an arbitrary fine of 17,000 dinars (\$45,390) or else he would not be released from jail. This was never imposed by the security court, but the officer arbitrarily imposed the fine. Isa Hassan Madan, 22, detained in July 1995. His family raised his case in a civil court that found him not guilty on 19 February 1997. However, the security officers refused to release him.

Sheikh Saeed Al-Salatnah, 32, was arrested in Saudi Arabia 3 weeks ago and it is believed that he had been handed over to the torturers in Bahrain. The religious man was forcibly-exiled

from Bahrain two times in 1995, once to the UAE and the second time to Syria. His wife and three daughters are in Syria and have not heard about him since his disappearance. Before his arrest, the person was under medical treatment as a result of the earlier detentions. One of the torture methods used against him was forcing him to drink large amounts of water and then beating him on the stomach and sexual parts which resulted in multiple types of continues illnesses.

More people are known to have been arrested in the past few days. Nabil Abdul Aziz, 23, (Ras-Romman), Jaffer Al-Salatnah from Nuaim, Seyed Jalal Al-Alawi, 30, (Duraz), Seyyed Mohammed Al-Ghoreifi, Nuaim (was released but his uncle was summoned in his place), Sheikh Ali Al-Tavyar (detained for three days). From Qurayya: Jasim Ahmad, 20, Ali Hassan Yousif, 18, Jaffer Mohammed 16, Shakir Moslem, 16, Fadhil Ali Mahfood, 10, Ahmad Nazar, 14. The following children from Duraz were arrested, tortured and later released: Yasin Yousif, 11, Hussain Hassan, 11 and Abbas Isa, 11. From Daih: Jaffer Makki, 45, Hassan Jaffer, 19, Hussain Ahmad, 18. From Muqsha’a: Abdulla Abdul-Rasool Ibrahim, 17, and his brother Ali, 19, Abdulla Jassim Mohammed, 19, Redha Jaffer Al-Mawali, 20, Ibrahim Abdulla Al-Mawali, 21. From Aali: Mohammed Hassan, 20, Abdulla Makki, 36. From Sitra: Mohsin Ibrahim Habib, 14, Yaquob Swar, 29 and his brother Fuad, 26, Mohammed Najib Ahmad al-Sheikh, 20.

On 6 March, a sound-explosion was reported near “Bahrain Phoenicia Hotel”. The past days have witnessed similar types of events, but the authorities were keen to enforce the iron-curtain and display a fictitious calm.

More than 300 Arab political personalities signed a petition that was submitted to the Amir stating “We are concerned that the continuation of the political crisis in Bahrain is dragging on for more than two years while your government refuses to meet with the Committee for Popular Petition”. The signers called on the Amir to realize realities, to adopt modern ways of governing and to reinstate the dissolved parliament.

The opposition is concerned that the situation may deteriorate further as senior members of the ruling establishment continue their iron-fist policy against the people who are seeking the restoration of their constitutional rights. The first anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar is due on 26 March. This occasion is a reminder that the killers of sons and daughters of Bahrainis are still at large. There is no trust in the judiciary system and there is no way the people will accept to be treated in a backward way. The opposition has called for continuing the civil resistance by switching-off the lights on the nights of 25, 26 and 27 March, to declare the rejection of outdated practices of a regime which is attempting to reverse the clock backward and to take Bahrain to a medieval era.

Bahrain: Tense environment prevails in the country

13/Mar/1997

Sheikh Hussain Al-Saem, 28, a religious scholar arrested last month following the deliverance of a speech calling for the release of jailed leaders and citizens, has been transferred to hospital suffering from the routine torture and ill-treatment. On the other hand, the 60-year old Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Ekri was re-arrested on 9 March following a speech he delivered in Ain al-Dar village, in which he called for the release of political prisoners and return of forcible exiles.

The justice minister (a senior member of the Al-Khalifa family) summoned the lawyers defending the 81 Bahrainis in the biggest political trial in the history of the country. In the meeting, the justice minister threatened the lawyers that they will be punished if they ever speak to a journalist or a member of the public about the unfair proceedings of the state security court. The ruling Al-Khalifa family is attempting to victimize the citizens by accusing them of forming a “military wing for toppling” the regime. These claims are being refuted by defence lawyers in a series of secret sessions. The lawyers know that the ruling family has already decided the sentences up-front.

The story told by the ruling family is full of incompatibilities and lies. However, the people of Bahrain expect no justice or fairness from a family that has always used these practices to coverup its dictatorship. The security court adjourned the sessions until Saturday, 15 March. The mood in the country is sombre and is certainly far away from the claims of the government-controlled press. The market condition is static and confidence in the future is dwindling despite the fact that the papers keep on repeating the same news about new investment for the planned industrial area in Hidd.

Everyday, the same news is repeated confirming that the new language used by the prime minister is nothing more than a whitewash.

The Bahrain Freedom Movement, Popular Front in Bahrain and the National Liberation Front of Bahrain issued a joint statement on 11 March stating “Recently, the ruling family adopted two opposite policies. One that settles down dispute with Qatar and another that enflames its relations with the people. They went ahead with their false allegations that “Iran/ Hizbollah/etc” are behind the events in Bahrain. The latter approach was chosen as the preferred option over the ending of the crisis by entering into dialogue with the Committee for Popular Petition which represents the constitutional movement and all sections of the society. These moves came at the same time of the reformation of the High Defence Council, which consolidated the power of the prime minister on the expense of that of the crown prince. While we welcome the rapprochement between the two sisterly countries, we see a critical need for solving the problems that exist between the ruling family and the people’.

John Gunnell, Labour MP in the British Parliament wrote a letter to the Amir on 6 March protesting against the arrest of the 40-year old poet and writer Ali Hassan Yousif. Mr. Gunnell said “I would appreciate it if you could give me some clarification of the legal basis for his arrest’.

Bahrain: Tribal courts will never frighten the nation

16/Mar/1997

The State Security Court, presided by members of the Al-Khalifa family, resumed on 15 March the trial of 81 victims accused of “plotting to overthrow the regime and to install an Iranian-backed republic!”. The lawyers were threatened that they would be punished if they release any news to the outside world. Lawyers are shocked by the extent of incompatibility of claims, dates, places, names and presumed plans presented by the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family to convict their victims. The trial is meant to gain the support of the US by “forcibly involving Iran” and is meant to “frighten” the people who are demanding the restoration of the rule of constitutional law.

The hate-based regime will be disappointed as the people of Bahrain will never yield to the terror of the security courts and foreign forces. The islands of Bahrain are for Bahrainis to live on with peace and justice and those who dream of up-rooting the nation and replacing it with imported foreign forces will be doomed.

On Friday noon (14 March), the foreign forces surrounded al-Sadiq Mosque in Qafool in an attempt to prevent people from praying. On Friday night (14 March), the residents of Daih went out on the streets and clashed with some members of the security forces. The latter deployed trained police-dogs to intimidate the citizens. On the same night and starting from 7.30 pm, the residents of Bilad al-Qadim switched-off the lights and closed all shops in preparation for the coming period. Three persons are known to have been arrested the next morning: Ageel Eid, 25, Abdul Hadi Al-Sammak, 32, Mahmood Ma-Shallah, 26. The three were brought back by the foreign forces to the area and dumped in the middle of the road on the evening of 15 March. The three were unable to walk as a result of the torture

they had been subjected to.

The coming days are expected to witness more civil resistance activities to mark the anniversary of the martyrdom of Isa Oambar who was murdered last year on 26 March following an unfair trial by the ruling family. The people are demanding that the torturers and killers of more than 30 citizens be put on trial to receive similar sentences.

A female student from Sanabis, Arafat Abbas Radhi, 21, was expelled from the university last week in line with the discriminatory policy being implemented by the military officer Mohammed Jasim Al-Ghatam. The following are known to have been arrested in the past few days. From Sanabis: Hussain Abdulla Ahmad Khamis, 29, and his brother Vasir, 20, Ageel Ali Ahmad Yousif, 22, Ali Abdul Hussain, 24. From Bori: Jaffer Abdulla Isa Ali, 17, Abbas Mohammed Isa Ali, 17, Seyed Zuhair Mahmood Mohammed, 16, Seyed Hussain Adnan, 16, Abbas Abdul Aziz. Al-Farasani, 12 (bringing the total of detainees from this village to 34). The house of Abdul Hussain Al-Mutgawwi in Duraz was stormed by the foreign forces. Abdul Hussain is in jail with his two sons Yasir and Ammar. The foreign forces were looking for his third son Osama. From Dair: Mohammed Ali Abdulla Al-Ashiri, 21, Seyed Mohammed Adan, 19, Jawad Abdulla Rashid, 22. From Sitra-Qerya.

Bahrain: Gambling with the lives of citizens is a dangerous game

17/Mar/1997

Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim, the leading religious scholar and member of both the Constituent and the dissolved National Assemblies, issued a statement on 16 March 1997 warning the government of the grave consequences emanating from the policy of victimizing the citizens of Bahrain through the passing of political sentences. He said “the killing (in its various and pre-determined forms) by the government of Bahrain has reached extravagance. The government is legitimizing for itself the shedding of blood... These days the State Security Court is threatening to pass death and life sentences against a large number of people.

It based its evidence on incompatible confessions that are full of lies and which have been extracted under torture... I advise the government to reflect before passing the sentences and before taking these decisions... For the government must know that threatening to kill means ... that it has called upon the believers to put-on their coffin-cloths in preparedness for the defence of honour... To God we refer and upon Him we depend, for He is the Protector of those without protection” The government press stated on 16 March that the state security court adjourned its sessions until 19 March. “The ruling wing of Al-Khalifa is playing games by behaving as if it is in a state of war with the natives.

The passing of the political sentence in this bizarre and inhuman way can only plunge the country into further unrest. The Al-Khalifa family is assuming that, as long as it forcibly involves the name of Iran while oppressing the nation, that it can get away with murder and medieval-oppression. May be there are some political circles which favour this type of governing for short-sighted interests, but at stake are lives and

future of a nation. The broadly-based opposition has called for no more than a restoration of the parliament, only to be faced with bullets, arbitrary arrests, torture and unfair political trials.

The opposition has called for switching-off the lightning on the evenings of 25, 26 and 27 March to commemorate the first anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar. The people demand that the torturers and killers of more than 30 citizens be brought before fair trials for receiving their sentences. The people reject the practices of the tribal hate-based regime that runs the country in a direction that harms the interests and the future of the nation.

Bahrain: Victimization policy is back-firing

18/Mar/1997

The ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family failed to respond to the urgent appeal issued by Amnesty International on 17 March, calling for a halt to the unfair trails of 81 citizens.

One of the victims, Sami Bu Hamad, exposed the marks of torture on his body in the last session. Sami spoke heroically about the extent of torture exercised against the accused to force them to sign the pre-prepared confessions. The lawyers exposed the gross incompatibilities in the dates, places and names of people mentioned in the supposed confessions. The “Iranian intelligence officer” that organized the training, Mohammed Redha AI-Sadiq, was dead one year before doing so !

It is now clear to the people of Bahrain that the repercussion from the sentencing of the accused in such a way will serve the ruling family nothing other than planting the seeds of further unrest for a long period to come. Bahrain is for all the people of Bahrain to live in peace and harmony, and no section of the community will stay calm if it is to be victimized for political expediency.

On 17 March, at night, check points were established near Al-Hid prison where more than 450 teenagers and youths are being tortured and ill-treated. About a hundred riot police were put on high alert around the area of the prison. News have been coming out that the prisoners are protesting against the notorious torturer Nader Al-Dowsari, who prevented the reading of Quran in the cells and who stripped many teenagers naked and tied them to showers of water during the nights.

The child Zuhair Mahdi, 9 years old, who had been tortured severely by police was forced out of Salamanya Hospital few days ago, in order to put an end to the large number of daily visitors.

Zuhair (from Dai) is now suffering from the loss of hearing in the right ear and a continuous headache. The ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family is practicing these atrocities while assuming that they will not be reprimanded by any international authority as long as its victims come from the Shia community. The ruling wing has used every opportunity to forcibly plug-in such names as “Hizbollah, Iran, etc...” to win the support of the US administration for its oppression.

Some of the recently arrested persons include: Hassan Isa, 21, from Karranah; Aqil Ali Hassan, 23, and Yousif Oman Jassim, 18, both from Hoorah; Hani Mohammed Al-Fardan, 21, from Karzakkan; Mohammed Abdul Aziz, 19, from Isa Town.

Wall writing has intensified despite the efforts of the foreign forces to paint over the pro-democracy slogans. Slogans are everywhere defying the security forces and calling for switching-off the lighting on 25, 26 and 27 March to commemorate the first anniversary of the political murder of Is Qambar. The people are demanding that the killers and torturers of their sons and daughter be put on trial. The slogans on the walls also confirmed that civil resistance will continue to defy the tribal security courts and their jails until the restoration of constitutional law and parliament.

Bahrain: Tribal judges pass sentences in secret trials

21/Mar/1997

The security courts, presided by members of the ruling Al-Khalifa family, continued their war against Bahrainis. The 81 victims accused of attempting a “fictitious” coup-attempt are still going through their ordeal under the tribal judges.

At the same time, other groups of citizens (different from the 81) are being rushed into the tribal courts to receive arbitrary sentences. On 17 March, seven citizens received sentences ranging from six to 20 years.

Similarly, on 17 March, an elderly person from Daih, Ibrahim Helal, 65 years old, was sentenced to six months. The respected gentleman was detained last year for ten days and both his house and shop were raided by the foreign forces. The latter stole six thousand dinars (around \$16,000) during their raids. Members of the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa are assuming that they can get away with these crimes as long as their victims come from the indigenous Shia community.

Security helicopters flew over Jedhafs on 20 March following reports of protest activities in the area. Loud gas cylinder explosions were also heard in Sitra. On 19 March, at around 2.00 pm, the Traffic Directorate building near Aali, was evacuated and fire brigades were deployed following the discovery of two sound-bombs inside building.

Clashes in the Hidd Prison continued until 19 March. On 17 March, at night, check points around the prison were established when hundreds of detainees staged an uprising inside the jail protesting against the worsening conditions. Columns of fire were seen in Arad on 18 March and the main road leading to Arad, Hid and Galali was closed by police from all sides for

more than an hour while two security helicopters were flying low above the houses.

A 20-year-old person, Nader Abdul Aziz Kadhim, had his car turned-over by a police car that chased him on the highway behind Adhari on 18 March. The person is lying in hospital suffering from bleeding in the head.

On 16 March, a group of security men surrounded a shop in Aail and then set it ablaze at around 2.00 am. Similarly on 19 March, in Jed-Ali, a shop was burned by the security forces and when the residents called in the fire brigade, the latter refused to extinguish the fire. The people believe that the security forces are committing these arsons so that their agents in the media can claim that they are combating saboteurs.

Bahrain: International support for the people of Bahrain

22/Mar/1997

Hundreds of citizens marched on 21 March through the streets of al-Qafool demanding an end to the unfair trial of 81 Bahrainis. The protesters chanted “There is no such party (Hizbollah), release the prisoners”. The citizens encountered the foreign forces near Al-Zahra mosque towards the end of the march. In Karbabad, the citizens went out in a similar demonstration demanding an end to the terror of the foreign forces.

More arrests were reported. Seyed Adman Khadim Hasan Al-Sadadi, 35, was arrested at 7.30 pm (19 March) as he went out of Jammala Mosque. A group of foreign forces snatched him, forced him into a car and drove away towards Al-Khamis police station.. It is worth noting that his younger brother, Abbas, 21, had been arrested over a year ago without any charges. Two brothers from Iskan-Aali were also arrested: Ahmad Dawood Salman, 19, and his underage brother, Salman, 14.

The trials of 81 citizens accused of being led by a physically-dead Iranian (Mohammed Redha Al-Sadiq) continued on 22 March. The opposition believes that the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family has gambled with the lives of the people to derail the peaceful constitutional movement.

Mr. Stan Newens, Member of the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs and Human Rights Committees, issued an appeal on 20 March expressing his “deep concern at news received from Amnesty International concerning the trials of eighty one people, twenty two of them in their absence, by the State Security Court. .. Denial of access and facilities to the defence, the secret conduct of the trial, allegations of intimidation and torture and an apparent reliance on “confessions”, allegedly

extracted under duress ,are at variance with all internationally accepted norms of justice and can only give rise to the gravest concern on the part of international public opinion”. Mr. Newens urged the Amir “to abandon both the present and any future proceedings employing the discredited mechanism of the State Security Court, the use of which does nothing to enhance the reputation of our country abroad.

Mr. Salem Azzam, Secretary General of the Islamic Council in the UK issued a similar appeal on 19 March urging the Amir “to have them (the 81 persons| tried in civil court with proper legal support for the accused. This is a basic human right of ever citizen. If this is mot possible, the defendants to be released immediately. The World Ahl Ul-Bayt Islamic League issued a statement on 20 March advising the government of Bahrain to behave in a civilized manner and to stop victimizing a large section of Bahrain society for political expediency. The statement said “the present trials are without any value. The trials must be open, just and must be attended by neutral observers... Let’s adopt dialogue for solving problems.. If the present subjugation doesn’t stop them the Shia community are entitled to honourably defend themselves against such gross oppression.

The UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group will be holding a “Press Conference” under the theme “Bahrain: The volatile situation and the unfair trials”. The conference will be held on Wednesday 26 March, at 12.00 pm, in the British Parliament (*Annex to the House of Commons, Westminster, Committee Room 2 @ 1 Abbey Gardens, London SW1*).

Bahrain: There is no future for hate-based political system

25/Mar/1997

Nineteen people were known to have been arrested last Friday (21 March) following the demonstration in al-Qafool that called for an end to victimization policy and the release of political prisoners. Most were subjected to sever forms of physical torture before their release two days later. The torturer in this case is a person by the name Isa Al-Qattan.

Some of those arrested in the past few days include three brothers from Karranah: Mohsin Ibrahim, 20, Ali Ibrahim, 17, and Mohammed Ibrahim, 16. Ali and Mohammed had since been released but Mohsin remained in the hands of torturers. In Aali, security men raided the house of Abd Ali Hasan Al-Aali on 19 March, ransacked its contents, and stole valuables. Others arrested include: Hamid Juma Traif, 28, Syed Majid Darwish, 24, Saeed Abdul Nabi AJ-Kaddad, 20, and Khalil Ibrahim Al-Kaddad, 15, Salman Ali Mosa, 22, Ali Ahmad Matrook, 23.

On 23 March, the residents of Mark switch-off lighting to declare their rejection of the atrocities of the foreign forces. The next day (24 March), the mercenary forces attacked the Shamali (northern) mosque and ransacked it contents.

Concern is mounting about the health of the 60-year-old cleric, Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al-Ekri who was arrested earlier in the month following the delivering of a speech demanding a halt to the terror of the security forces and the release of political prisoners. Mahdi Sahwan, one of the political prisoners, has been transierred to hospital on 22 March.

The first anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar is due on Wednesday 26March, and the people are determined to show their disapproval of the oppressors who selectively

chose a certain section of Bahrain society for victimization. The ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family used force to derail the peaceful movement that called for the restoration of the parliament. The Al-Khalifa claimed that an organization by the name “Hizbollah” with the support of “Iran” had a grand design to uproot their rule.

The “spicy” names were carefully packaged to appease some political quarters (specifically the US), at the expense of the suffering of the nation. The opposition believes that the national consensus defined the aspiration of the nation, and this consensus (1992 and 1994 petitions) revealed that the overwhelming majority seek the restoration of constitutional rights of the citizens. If the Al-Khalifa cannot identify with these aspirations and if they insist on forcibly linking the constitutional movement to “foreign quarters, then it is the ruling wing which is going to lose. Bahrainis cannot accept a political set-up based on hate, aggression, and total dependence on mercenaries.

On the Bahrain crisis, the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group, will hold a press conference on Wednesday, 26 March, at 12.00 pm .

(Venue: Committee Room 2, 1Abbey Gardens, Westminster, London SW1).

Bahrain: Anniversary of Isa Qambar commemorated

26/Mar/1997

Responding to the call by the opposition, lights were switched-off on 25 March starting from 7.00 pm around the country with virtually total darkness in all uprising areas. Horns of cars were sounded declaring the start of the 3-day protests to commemorate the first anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar. The people are demanding that the torturers and killers of their sons and daughters be put on trial.

Students at the university of Bahrain were surrounded by security forces to prevent any movement. Students at the Bahrain Training Institute marched and raised the pro-democracy demands. Many schools around the country witnessed similar actions with the student's raising placards and slogans demanding an end to the terror of the foreign forces and a halt of political trials. Shops alongside Budaya and other highways, as well as those in uprising towns and villages, were closed down. Loud explosions and columns of fire were also seen in many places.

The Hoorah Cemetery in Manama was besieged starting from 24 March to prevent people from gathering around the graves of the martyrs who had been forcibly buried by the foreign forces over the past two years. The mercenary forces were seen around the graves of Isa Qambar, Hassan Taher, Fadhil Abbas Marhoon and Ali Taher. There are fears that the graves may have been desecrated. Check points were established by the foreign forces in critical locations.

The uprising inside Hidd (Dry Dock) prison came to an end on 23 March following the removal of two torturers (Nader Al-Dowseri and Isa Al-Mahmeed) from the administration of the prison.

The uprising started last week when the torturer Isa Al-Mahmeed ill-treated and tortured the prisoner Hassan Al-Jufeiri (who is held in solitary confinement) in front of all other prisoners. This led to the outbreak of the uprising by the prisoners. A meeting was held between a representative of the interior ministry (Duaij Al-Khalifa) and a representative of the prisoners (Ali Al-Ashiri) during which it was agreed to end the uprising after the removal from the prison of the two notorious torturers.

The State Security Court (presided by a member of the Al-Khalifa family) is scheduled to hold a session on 26 March in connection with the group of 81 citizens whom the Al-Khalifa accused of attempting “to topple” the government. The ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family is assuming that it can get away with creating fictitious stories, and then passing unjust sentences via unconstitutional courts, as long as it concentrates its oppression against a certain section of Bahrain society. This, the opposition believes, is a doomed dream of a medieval political system.

Bahrain: Al-Khalifa judges pass arbitrary sentences

26/Mar/1997

On the first anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar, members of the al-Khalifa family entered into another political adventure by arbitrarily sentencing 20 citizens to long period of imprisonment, thus widening that the gap between them and the nation further. Some of the sentences are known to be as follows:

- 1 *Sheikh Ali al-Mutggawwi, 15 years and a fine of 7000 dinar (\$18,690)*
- 2 *Sheikh Jasim Al-Khayyat, 12 years and a fine of 5000 dinar (\$13,350)*
- 3 *Ahmad Al-Magabi, 8 years*
- 4 *Khalil Al-Hayki, 8 years*
- 5 *Jaffer Sahwan, 5 years*
- 6 *Ghazi Al-Abed, 5 years*
- 7 *Syed Hussain, 5 years*
- 8 *Sami Bu Hamad, 3 years*
- 9 *Fakhri Rashid, 3 years*
- 10 *Ali Abdul Amir Al-Nashaba, 5 or 8 years (not yet clear)*

Ten others were sentenced to periods between 3 and 8 years. Other victims are expected to receive further arbitrary sentences next Saturday, 29 March. The Al-Khalifa judges and their courts are unconstitutional and violate the Bahraini constitution as well as international conventions. The people of Bahrain receive one message after the other that the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family does not identify with the society and aims for nothing in life other than spreading pain and suffering amongst the nation.

The civil resistance will continue as long as there exists a prisoner in the Al-Khalifa jails who has been sentenced by the unconstitutional court. The future of Bahrain will be shaped by the Bahrainis who sacrificed for a civilized life. The present hate-driven political system has no bright future in Bahrain.

**Press Conference in London on
the Crisis in Bahrain: Pre-Trial and Trial
Procedure are Invalid Political Prisoners Must Be Freed**

26/Mar/1997

The UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group (PHRG) held a press conference in the British Parliament on 26 March to draw the attention to the unfair trials in Bahrain.

Lord Avebury, the Chairman of the PHRG stated “the sentencing today coincides with the first anniversary of the execution of Isa Qambar, the case which Amnesty International considered to contravene the UN Conventions, since the court based its judgment on confessions extracted under torture. The judicial system is widely condemned as unjust. The [UK] Foreign Office is not uttering a word of criticism when it comes to Bahrain.

The State Security Court that passed sentences is presided by a member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family. This is meant to intimidate the population, whose political leaders, like Sheikh Al-Jamri, have been jailed. Such a treatment has created spontaneous disorder with loud explosions and unrest reported on daily basis. Britain must play an active and constructive role. The responsible minister does not see a need for change, while at the same time calls for pluralism and democracy in other countries. In the case of Nigeria, Nigerian ministers have been prevented from visiting Europe and an embargo was imposed on the supply of military equipment. While at the same time we receive the Bahraini crown prince to discuss possible sales of arms. . There is a lobby [defending the Bahraini government] in the [British] parliament comprising of MPs such as William Powell, David Mellor and Oglia Maiteland. These will be called by their constituent to answer for the reasons behind supporting a regime that negates everything that we stand for”.

Hanya Al-Mufti of Amnesty International said “For many years, we have been saying that we regard the trials in Bahrain as unfair. Yet, the trials are still continuing and there seems to be no change in practice and process. What should be mentioned is that, long before an accused person reaches the court, his rights have already been violated.

The person is firstly arrested without a warrant and put in incommunicado detention without any access to family, lawyers or medical doctors. Interrogation and torture during the first days and weeks continue until the accused accepts to confess before an investigating judge. Then comes the referral to the State Security Court (SSC). The lawyer will not have had access to the accused up until the short time before the start of the first session. In between the sessions, the lawyer is not allowed to meet with his defendant.

During the trials, the procedure is totally unacceptable. For example there is a decree issued in 1976 that allows the SSC to avoid compliance with the penal code. The latter code in itself is sub-standard and not complying with even those minimum provisions makes the process worse. Hence, the SSC does not allow for cross-examining of witnesses or the accused. Instead, the SC accepts written confessions as admissible evidence against the accused. Confessions constitute the basis for passing sentences. In some cases, when the accused had refused to write confessions, a police officer may submit a statement saying this and that, and such a practice would be accepted as admissible evidence.

Once a sentence is passed there is no appeal. In the case of a

death sentence the court of cassation ruled it has no jurisdiction over the SSC. For someone to be sentenced to death without having the right of appeal is completely against UN conventions. This is because even under the best system, there is a risk of error. We have gone on record to appeal to the government to halt the trials. The present trial of 81 (22 in absentia) resembles all the misgivings. They were arrested, tortured and were forced to appear before TV to confess against themselves. We understand that two of them were threatened that if they did not appear on TV, they risked having their female relatives raped. The practice of showing people on TV for public spectacle takes away the presumption of innocence, which is a basic right.

We appealed to the government but received no reply. It is expected that more will be sentenced on 29 March. The entire pre-trial and trial process is flawed. We call for the re-trial of those sentenced before a court that complies with the constitution of Bahrain and with international standards. If the government of Bahrain says that their trials are fair then they should have no objection to the presence of Amnesty International observers during the sessions. In the last two years no less than 300 people have been unfairly sentenced and there are at present between 1000-1500 political prisoners”.

The Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) distributed a statement in the Press Conference saying “News agencies revealed that the Bahraini authorities sentenced 15 people accused of involvement in an alleged plot to topple the government to prison terms ranging from three to 15 years and 11 acquitted. Two defendants were also fined 7,000 and 5,000 dinars respectively.

Two other suspects received eight years in prison, one suspect received seven years, eight got five years and two three years. The last two were also fined 500 dinars each. The trial of 81 suspects (22 of them in absentia) began on 1 March. The security courts do not allow for the right of appeal and the procedures contravene the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We understand that 20 lawyers were summoned and warned against divulging information about the trials. However, the AOHR is aware of the fact the accused are sentenced on the bases of confessions, allegedly extracted under torture. We call on the government of Bahrain to halt any further trials and to resort to dialogue for resolving the political crisis and for establishing civil peace”.

Bahrain: More victims sentenced by Al-Khalifa judges

29/Mar/1997

The State Security Court presided by a member of the Al-Khalifa family passed harsh sentences against 33 citizens. Twenty victims have been sentenced today to jail terms of up to seven years. Twelve others were acquitted. Twenty-two more are expected to be tried in absentia. The ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa created a fiction of a coup attempt, desperately hoping to get rid of the demands for the restoration of the parliament.

Over the past two years, the Al-Khalifa rulers have waged a violent campaign against the citizens to deter them from demanding political reforms. A large section of Bahrain's society has been targeted for severe repression in the campaign being carried out by foreign mercenaries on the behalf of the ruling family. The foreign mercenaries intensified their attacks against the Bahrainis. In Zinj, a suburban district of Manama, two children, Sayed Hussain Hamid, 8 years old, and his brother, Sayed Mohammed, 9, were arrested on 27 March, beaten in public until they fainted and then released. Similarly, in Bilad al-Qadim, children were tortured in public including Sayed Sale Jaffer Abdulla, 12. In Karbabad (28 March), the foreign forces attacked the local mosque with rubber bullets and tear gas at the end of Friday prayers. In Momin grand mosque of Manama, the citizens were besieged by the mercenary forces. The citizens raised the pro-democracy demands and denounced the oppression against of the nation.

A woman demonstration on 28 March (evening) was attacked with rubber bullets and tear gas. The Gold Market closed down on the evening of 27 March in solidarity with the victims of the oppression. In Barbar (26 March), a women demonstration in mid-day was attacked by the security forces. Later in the

evening the youths went out in another demonstration defying the foreign forces. In Sitra, the security forces attacked private cars and properties and sprayed them with live bullets. A mini-bus belonging to the Al-Jesr Transport Establishment was damaged by the live bullets. When the owner contacted the traffic police, the latter registered the case against an “unknown party”.

In Dah, the following were known to have been arrested in the last few days: Mohammed Hassan Kadhem, 29, Hussain Abd Ali Abdulla, 20, Shawki Hassan Kadhem, 21. In Karzakkan, the security forces tortured Habib Ibrahim Mahdi, Ali Hassan Ashoor and Hussain Ali Hassan in public, as part of the new policy. In Bani Jamra five persons were randomly arrested: Sadiq Mohammed Hassan Fatil, 25, Hussain Jaffer Mohammed Hassan, 17, Abdul Qadir Abdul Karim Hussain, 17, Abbas Mohammed Ahmad Al-Ghanmi and Ahmad Salman Hasan Fatil, 15. Gas cylinder explosion were heard in most places including Manama, the capital. Columns of fire and clashes were also reported.

In Kuwait, several Bahrainis were arrested on 26 March at 10.30 pm (local time). An armed group attacked two flats in Hawally area and arrested the Bahraini citizens: Adel Al-Haiky, Ali Al-Haiky, Husain Al-Haiky (three brothers), Mohamed Mirza, Jail Al-Shaikh, Shaikh A. Nabi Sitrawy, Mohamed Al-Haiky, Is Al-Haiky and Rashid Abdulla Jassim. During the attack, the police had damaged every thing in the flats such as TV, video, refrigerator, etc. Earlier on, two other Bahrainis were reported to have been detained (Sayed Hussain and Naser). No one knows why these Bahrainis were arrested. The Kuwaiti government had in the past handed over Bahrainis working in Kuwait to the Bahraini government.

Bahrain: The opposition seeks a dialogue-based solution and warns against excesses by the regime

31/Mar/1997

Stability (regional and local) is being upset by the behaviour of the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa. Over the past two years, members of the ruling wing have attempted to sow the seeds of discontent in the region by creating troubles with the neighbouring state of Qatar, an attempt that soon rebounded and became an embarrassment to their troubled regime. Under pressure from almost every corner of the Gulf, the Al Khalifa had to retreat from their anti-Qatar rhetoric and apologise to them for their misconduct. Last February, at the Dorchester Hotel in central London, the Crown Prince of Bahrain and the foreign minister met with the Qatari foreign minister and made a U-turn in their stands. After extending their apologies for the maltreatment of their Qatari captives four months ago, they were forced to agree to the Qatari demand that the border dispute should be left to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for settlement.

The withdrawal of the border dispute case from the ICJ was their main condition to attend the GCC summit in Doha last December. As the Qataris dragged their feet the Al-Khalifa boycotted the summit thereby creating a precedence in the history of the Gulf alliance. As their case began to falter, they had to rescind their demand and agree to what the Qataris have all along put forward as conditions for normalising the relations. As is always the case, despots often end up bending to their foes without gaining anything of significance.

The Al Khalifa's antagonistic approach to their neighbours continued unabated. Instead of siding with their Kuwaiti cousins who had always supported them financially and politically, they have recently decided to offer moral support to

Saddam Hussain. Last month a delegation from the appointed-Consultative Council called on In Sina hospital in down town Baghdad and conveyed the prime minister's best wishes to Uday, Saddam's eldest son who had been wounded in a gun shoot-out last year. An earlier delegation led by a brother of the foreign minister, and a member of the Al Khalifa led a trade delegation to Baghdad, much to the annoyance of the Kuwaitis. As early as 1992, just over a year after the liberation of Kuwait, the prime minister sent a congratulatory message to Saddam Hussain on his fiftieth birthday. The Al-Khalifa demanded more from the Kuwaitis, including the carrying out of crackdowns against Bahrainis living in Kuwait. On 26 March, 11 Bahrainis were arrested in Kuwait and accused of possessing anti-regime pamphlets.

Last November, the Al-Khalifa rebuffed their Saudi financiers and rejected an eleventh hour plea by Prince Sultan who had flown to Manama as he sought to use his good offices with the Al Khalifa to persuade them to attend the Doha summit.

This troublesome ruling elite is now severing almost all civilized links with the people of Bahrain. Instead of reconciling with the people they continued their policy of alienating the natives of the country by adopting every repressive measure possible against them. The latest war waged by the regime is manifested by the numerous dismissals of lecturers and students, some of whom were high calibre university lecturers. In addition to those who had already been dismissed by the military head of Bahrain University, Mohammed Jassim Al Ghatam, a long list of Bahrain lecturers and staff has been prepared, and those destined for dismissal have already been approached and asked

to submit their resignation or accept early retirement. None of these has accepted “the offer” and some of them has indicated that he/she would wait until officially dismissed by the military authorities of the University. The choice these intellectuals are given is not very generous; either submit your resignation or wait for Henderson’s men to decide your fate. This is what happened with Dr. Zahra Al Zira, who was forced to submit her resignation under the threat that she would be handed over to Ian Henderson. This British torturer is attempting to plant fear in every corner of Bahrain for his readiness to inflict unlimited suffering on people who disobey his orders.

For over a quarter of a century since the British withdrawal from the Gulf, it has become clear that the security of the region is at stake, sometimes due to outside threats, but often due to inter-tribe feuding. The Al Khalifa have a long record of hostile policies towards the people of Bahrain. The trial of more than eighty citizens was yet another indication of the tension in the country which is likely to erupt in more serious confrontations between the civilised nation and the barbaric mercenaries hired by the tribal rule of Al Khalifa. They have failed to provide security to the people, and to themselves. They have failed to honour their commitment to the country’s constitution and have jailed, tortured, killed or exiled thousands of citizens in their endeavour to crush the constitutional uprising. The people, on the other hand, have persistently, called for dialogue as the only avenue to stability and tranquillity. Members of the ruling wing of the Al Khalifas have been intransigent throughout the crisis, whilst the opposition has all along extended their hands to the regime requesting dialogue in order to save the country from a bleak future.

The opposition, so far, has succeeded in keeping the emotions of the public under check, but it may not be a long time before feelings run high with the possibility of the situation getting out of control. The people of Bahrain have been patient enough and it is dangerous to stretch that patience to the limit. In March, a leading opposition figure, Sheikh Isa Qassim issued a statement warning the government that if any of those put on trial was sentenced to death, then the population would respond by “putting-on the coffin-cloths in preparedness for the defence of honour”. On 28 March, Qassim tabled an initiative for the government for the establishment of national security. In this initiative, Qassim said “the security of the ruler and the rules can only be jointly established. As a pre-requisite, the government should release all prisoners (those sentenced by the unconstitutional security courts and those held in detention without trial)”. This basic step will restore calm and thenceforward, peaceful dialogue can start for the restoration of civil rights.

It is therefore incumbent on those with good relations with the Al Khalifa to use their good offices to persuade the regime to start dialogue with the peaceful opposition before the momentum for a peaceful outcome of the crisis is lost. It is clear from the Oatar episode that the Al Khalifa are prone to pressure from outside, and a similar pressure must be brought to bear on those holding the key to the solution of the crisis.

They must be told that they have only two choices; to develop or to disappear.

Bahrain: International concern about human rights violations

2/Apr/1997

The siege imposed on Hooraa Cemetery which lasted several days starting on 24 March, ended with a new crime committed by the foreign forces. The later have desecrated the graves of three martyrs who had been forcibly buried last year without the presence of their relatives. Bahrain witnessed a week of protests on the anniversary of the political murder of Isa Qambar and in protest against the political trials that were concluded on 26 and 29 March. Twenty-three persons (out of 59) were “acquitted” but had not been released by the interior ministry: On 28 March. 10 pm. a strong sound bomb was reported in the vicinity of Plaza Hotel in Manama. A similar vent was reported in Sheikh Abdulla Road. On 31 March. 2.00 am (at dawn) an explosions was reported in the Exhibition Road, Manama. near the Middle East Laundry.

On 31 March, students in Isa Town Secondary School marched inside the school and raised the pro-democracy demands. The following persons were known to have been arrested in Aali on 27 March: Hussain Mohmmaed Abdul Nabi al-Shoghil, 15. Hussain Abdul Hussain Al-Shoghil. 14. Saced Habib Al-Shoghil. 15. Mohammed Habib. 15. Badr Ali Ahmad. 15 From Iskan-Aali: Sved Ahmad Baqir Mohsin Al-Ghorcifi, 18. Raod Al-Rasrommani, 20, Monir Makki Abdulla. I%. On 30 March. the following were arrested. From Nuweidrat: Abbas Ali Khatem. 29. Ali Al-Sheikh Jasim. 22, Isa Khatem, 28. From Mark: Sami Ahmad Dhaif. 23. Fadhil Ahmad Ali, 23. From Hamad Town. Mahommd Abbas Ali Al-Sabca, 15. Following the ending of the uprising in the Dry Dock concentration camp, the interior minister ordered the transfer of 35 prisoners to solitary confinement. Some 450-600 youths are in the camp.

In Geneva, the annual sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights (made up of 53 governmental representatives and attended/addressed by specialist rapporteurs as well as non-governmental organizations) are continuing with the case of Bahrain being raised by several international human rights organizations. The US-based Human Rights Watch's submission on Bahrain stated " Bahrain's human rights situation has deteriorated markedly over the past five years, and especially since the outbreak of civil unrest in December 1994.

There is a pattern of arbitrary and prolonged detention without charge or access to lawyers, abusive treatment of detainees, including cases of torture, and State Security Court trials that violate minimal international due process standards. And, in violation of international law and its own Constitution, Bahrain continues to forcibly expel from the country and prevent the return of citizens who have expressed unwelcome political views. This is carried out summarily and without recourse to an judicial or administrative procedure. More than 500 Bahrainis are currently living in forced exile, some for nearly two decades. Bahrain's majority Shi'as are disproportionately represented among the victims of many of these abuses. They are also subject to a pattern of discrimination in public employment and access to education. All Bahrainis, however, are routinely denied the rights to freedom of expression and access to information, freedom of association and assembly, and the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Numerous professionals have been fired from their jobs and blacklisted from other employment for refusing to withdraw their names from petitions to the

Amir advocating restoration of the parliament, free elections, and release of prisoners held for their political beliefs. Eight prominent Bahraini religious and community leaders have been held without charge or trial since January 1996, most of them incommunicado. Human Rights Watch urges the Commission on Human Rights to express concern publicly about Bahrain's repressive practices, and to urge an end to the illegal and unusual practice of expelling its own citizens for their suspected political views or activities.

We also urge the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of opinion and expression to investigate conditions in Bahrain and report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session".

Bahrain: UN Working Groups express their concern on abuses of human rights

5/Apr/1997

Members of the Kuwaiti intelligence department raided a flat of some Bahraini citizens in the Khaitan area (Kuwait) on 4 April at around 1.00 am and ransacked its contents. The Bahraini community in Kuwait is being subjected to intimidation and threats via telephone calls made by the Kuwaiti interior ministry. This unacceptable behaviour comes following the various visits made by senior members of the Al-Khalifa family to Iraq in the past months. It is feared that defenceless Bahrainis may be used for political bargaining.

Bahrainis have been driven from their motherland by the Al-Khalifa, and many have gone to Kuwait after its liberation in 1991, to work in a predominantly low-grade employment. The Bahrainis stood with the Kuwaiti people during their struggle against occupation, and what the Kuwaiti government is doing now is contrary to Arab, Islamic and humanitarian principles.

Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal on 2 April expressing concern about the arrest of 11 Bahraini nationals and requesting urgent clarification of the exact reasons for their arrest and the legal basis of their continued detention. The Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights also issued a direct appeal on 2 April calling for the release of Bahrainis. The Kuwaiti Al-Talea newspaper stated on 3 April that the arrest of Bahrainis is unconstitutional, since the security agreement [with other Gulf countries] was rejected by the Kuwaiti parliament. The newspaper said that the possession of pamphlets is natural bearing in mind the boiling situation in Bahrain.

The 53rd sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva were presented by reports of the UN Working

Groups. The Group on Torture presented seven cases of concern in Bahrain, the first concerning the death under torture of the 16-year-old Saeed Al-Eskafi. ‘The Special Rapporteur on Arbitrary Detention adopted six decisions concerning Bahrain, which means that the government will come under increasing monitoring by the international body. The Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers stated in his report to the UN Commission “the trials before the State Security Court violate article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights owing to the apparent lack of due process in the court. The Special Rapporteur will continue to monitor further developments concerning the use of the State Security Court by the State of Bahrain”.

The Al-Khalifa delegation to the sessions claimed that Bahrainis were aiming “to overthrow the regime by force”. The shameless delegation attempted to confuse the issue by using the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) as an alibi. The visits of ICRC have never stopped the tribal government from arbitrary detention, torture or abuse of court system, which are the subjects of concern to the UN Working Groups in this case. More condemnations are expected in the coming days, concerning the abuse of children, women and citizen rights.

Bahrain: Young women in the hands of torturers

6/Apr/1997

The mercenary forces arrested several women on 26 March during their attacks on Bahraini families in Sitra. The security officers, who are trained to consider the natives as enemies, have no principles to abide with when they capture the citizens. Noreyya Ahmad Al-Tamor, 21, Layla Abdul Nabi Rabea, 16, Amal Ahmad Rabea, 19, Maryam Ahmad Ali Balwayye, 20, and Ahlam Seyyed Mahdi Hassan Al-Setri, 19, were snatched from a house in Sitra-Qeryya and nothing has been heard about them since then. The Al-Khalifa ruling wing has waged a campaign of violence against the nation in a desperate attempt to silence demands for civil rights.

The Paris-based Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and Democracy in the Arabian Peninsula sent a letter to the Kuwaiti Ambassador in France expressing concerns in view of the fact that Bahrainis were in the past handed over to the torturers in Bahrain. The Committee asked the Kuwaiti Ambassador to assure that the 11 Bahraini citizens would be safe and that they would be freed without delay. The Committee went on to say “the Al-Khalifa government has once again put [Bahrain] on the world list of shame. On 26 March, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has informed the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva that Bahrain was included on the list of world countries where torture is repeatedly exerted on citizens”.

The latest Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Quarterly Report (ISSN 1351-8682) stated in the introduction of the 14-page coverage “The risk of political instability in Bahrain over the next two years is high. The government appears unwilling to accommodate the London-based mainstream opposition group, the Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM), which is calling for the reinstatement of a partially elected parliament dissolved by

Sheikh Isa in 1975... Whatever hope the BFM may once have had of convincing the government to negotiate a settlement is now likely to have disappeared. There is consequently a risk that the movement will be radicalized by pressure from below. All signs point to a further hardening of government attitudes towards the opposition, at least from a political point of view. Sheik Isa, for instance, has formed a National Guard similar to that of Saudi Arabia, led by one of his sons, Mohammed, to fill the gap between the police and army, and protect the ruling family.. It is suggested in some quarters that the government's hard-line approach is part of a sophisticated long-term strategy to affirm control now and negotiate from a position of strength later. However, the regime's willingness to bargain at a later stage must be in doubt, in view of the economic stake in retaining control and peer pressure from other Gulf Arab ruling families which face similar challenges to their legitimacy..

A new book entitled "Bahrain, the Drive for Democracy" has been authored by Professor Konstantin Matveev from Moscow University (ISBN 0-9521814-1-X). The 154-page (A5 size) book covered the historical development of Bahrain society and assessed the driving, as well as, the opposing forces towards the issues of democratization and civil rights. The author enquires "How long will confrontation continue? Will the Government make concessions? What is the future of the state?"

Bahrain: Procession raise pro-democracy demands

8/Apr/1997

Families of four young women, Layla Abdul Nabi Rabea, 16, Amal Ahmad Rabea, 19, Maryam Ahmad Ali Balwayye, 20, and Ahlam Seyyed Mahdi Hassan Al-Setri, 19, arrested on 26 March, were told that their daughters are expected to appear before the State Security Court, presided by a member of the Al-Khalifa family, next Saturday, 12 April.

In Manama, thousands of citizens took to the streets in traditional processions amid tight security measures and check points around the capital. The citizens raised placards of pro-democracy demands and martyrs' photographs. The mercenary forces were seen removing the photographs from the main streets at the end of the procession.

Arrests continued in many places. Amongst those arrested were Ali Hassan Al-Basri, 23 from Sitra-Qerya, Shaikh Ebrahim Ali Nasser, 25 from Sitra-Kharjeyya, Hussain Ali Ahmad Al-Mulla from Aali. Ali Abdul Karim, 27, Hussain Salman, 21, and Jamil, 20, all three are from Mahooz.

In Geneva, The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) raised the case of Bahrain during the 53rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights. The ICJ said "On 10 March 1996, the jurisdiction of the State Security Courts was reportedly extended in Bahrain to offences which were previously handled by the regular criminal courts, such as arson and assault on public servants. There is no presumption of innocence of those tried before these courts. They hold sessions in camera. They fail to investigate allegations of torture. The defendants are denied the right to counsel. Their decisions courts are not subject to any appeal. Hundreds of persons remain under preventative detention without court review".

Lord Avebury, the Chairman of the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group sent a letter to the Kuwaiti Ambassador in London, Mr. Khalid Al-Duwaisan. The letter, dated 6 April, stated: “ We learned of the arrest of 11 Bahrainis in Kuwait on 28 March, and we have noted the statement by the Interior Ministry which was broadcast on Kuwait Satellite Channel TV at 1800 on 30 March 1997, in which the director of public relations at the Ministry, Col Badr Salih Mohammed, said that the security forces arrested a group of people in an apartment, the previous Wednesday evening 26 March 1997, for carrying out acts against the laws which might harm the security of the country. The statement did not mention any specific acts said to have been committed by these men, but the newspaper Al-Watan of March 31 reported that they had distributed illegal literature and gathered donations without permission. The literature was said to be hostile to Bahrain and detrimental to Kuwait-Bahrain relations... Could you please let me know whether the men have actually been charged, and if so under what provisions of the Kuwaiti penal code? Have they been allowed to see lawyers of their choice?

Bahrain: International NGOs voice their support for the people of Bahrain

12/Apr/1997

The Kuwaiti authorities is still holding six Bahrainis despite all the protests from human rights activists and parliamentarians. The remaining six persons are Ali Al-Haiki, Adel Al-Haiki, Hussain Al-Haiki, Mohammed Al-Haiki, Mohammed Mirza and Sayed Hussain Al-Saaf. The security forces attacked another flat on the night of 10 April in the Salmiya area of Kuwait but arrested no one. Those released are living in fear and have suffered immensely as a result of the ill-treatment in the Kuwaiti jails. The Bahraini community are treated as enemies by the Bahraini government and this is the reason why the Kuwaiti security officers continue to attack members of the oppressed community. Seyed Hussain Al-Qallaf, Kuwaiti MP, resigned from the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, whose president refused a request for a meeting to discuss the arrest of the oppressed Bahrainis. Another Kuwaiti MP, Adnan Abdul-Samad said to Reuters “if they were charged with real charges they should face Kuwaiti law on Kuwaiti soil”. He said extraditing them to Bahrain or a third country would violate Kuwaiti laws. Samad criticized the Interior Ministry for failing to give a detailed statement on the charges and the detainees.

In Geneva, the 53rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights witnessed more interventions from non-governmental organizations demanding an end to human rights abuses in Bahrain. The International Federation for Human Rights, the International Commission of Jurists, SOS Torture and the African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters (CAPSDH) urged the UN Commission to seriously concern itself with the violations of human rights in Bahrain. CAPSDH stated on 9 April “The Bahraini authorities persist in not facing

the amplitude of the needs of their people, or to concern themselves with the Bahraini peoples' desires to have the democratic constitution, which was abolished in 1975, restored. Hence, any dialogue between the authorities and the people has died. In place of such dialogue, the Bahraini authorities have chosen the option of oppression..... In order to solve its problem, Bahrain has simply adopted a slogan saying that the repression is justified because the regime is under threat from some quite fictitious foreign-backed organization aiming to overthrow the political establishment by force. As is well-known, such an allegation has not been proven and remains a simple fantasy used to avoid facing the real problems resulting from a lack of democracy...A concrete step must be taken to call upon the government of Bahrain to stop the repression and release the detainees and to enter into a dialogue with the people”.

In a desperate attempt to confuse matters, the British head of Bahrain security, Ian Henderson together with his undisciplined mercenaries, wrote and distributed a threat to the US troops in the Gulf. The spurious pamphlets were signed in the name of “Hizbollah-Bahrain!!”. The Bahraini opposition is very clear in its objectives, and has “no vacancy” for Henderson to write and distribute fictitious statements. Compass news agency reported that “a spokesman from U.S. Central Command said the Navy’s moves [warning Americans to be vigilant] were not related to Bahrain’s domestic unrest’.

Bahrain: NGOs call for an end to repression

15/Apr/1997

The 53rd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights continues in Geneva with more support for the people of Bahrain from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) presented its intervention on 14 April calling on the international community to intervene and put an end to human rights violations by the government of Bahrain. The OMCT had earlier urged the Bahraini authorities “to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of all detained children and all others detained, and order their immediate release; to guarantee an impartial and exhaustive enquiry into the facts concerning any human rights violations; to identify those responsible and bring them to trial; to ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with national [constitutional laws and international standards]”. The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) said in its intervention “In Bahrain .. 1500 persons are now being arbitrarily detained; 300 of them were arrested in 1997. Torture and ill-treatments of detainees are systematic, including for women and children... The civil population is frequently targeted, when villages are sieged, houses searched, inhabitants beaten, and their belongings robbed. The Muslim Shia majority is increasingly submitted to a sectarian and discriminatory policy. Hundreds of Bahrainis live in exile. The verdicts of the State Security Court can not be appealed before a higher tribunal and the evidence on which these verdicts are pronounced are often based on confessions...”

In Bahrain, the four young women arrested by the foreign forces on 26 March were released on 13 April after payment of BD 500 (\$1,335) fines. Another lady, Zainab Mohammed Habib from Iskan-Aali was arrested and released. She is being

summoned for further ill-treatment. Some of the recently arrested include four persons from Mahooz: Hussain Salman, 17, Ali Abdul Karim, 26, Ali Hassan Ali Al-Saba'a, 26 and Jamil, 20. From Tobli: Karim Yousif Mardhi, 35, and his brother Abul-Elah. From Karbabd: Seyed Ibrahim Nasser. Iskan-Aali: Hussain Ali Elaiwi, Ammar Abdul-Samea, 19. From Sitra: Redha Jaffer Hammad, 19, Ali Hassan al-Basri, 23, Ibrahim Ali Nasser.

The situation in the country is continuing to stagnate with the media attempting to inject baseless optimism by continuing to speak about "bonanzas for business". The foreign minister stated to Asharq Al-Awsat on 10 April that "the situation is very normal, as you can see. In fact we are experiencing a major improvement at the economic level, and there is a series of major new projects". In fact the slackness in commercial activities and reduction in the demand for goods and services are open secrets. The official gazette continues to publish names of companies going bankrupt, or reducing operations, capital and number of shareholders. The recently announced two-year budget forecast a deficit of BD150m (\$400m) based on an estimated total income of BD1,245 m (\$3,324 m) for the years 1997-

1998. The opposition attributes these failures to the tribal policy which prevents the citizens from effectively contributing to economic success. The ruling tribe wastes the national resources on importing troops for repressing the nation.

Bahrain: Three “Assembly Halls” closed down by security forces

17/Apr/1997

The foreign mercenaries employed by the Al-Khalifa family attacked three main assembly halls (matams) and closed them down. On 15 April, “Matam Bin-Salloom” of Manama was closed down and its gates were sealed with red-wax. When the administrators of the assembly hall contacted the interior ministry, they were told that the closure was ordered by “higher authorities”. Similarly, the foreign forces closed down “Matam Bin-Khamis” and the “Women Matam” of Sanabis on 16 April, utilizing the same red-wax method. The closure of these places is in line with the hate-based policies adopted by the Al-Khalifa family against the natives of Bahrain.

Many had been arrested in Sanabis at the time of closing the assembly halls. Those known (include many children) were: Hani Eid, 20, Redha Abbas Radhi, 15, Ali Makki, 25, Fadhil Al-Alwani, 18, Hassan Ali Jawad, 18, Hani Salman Mirza, 17, Hani Habib Radhi, 19, Ghazi Al-Qalaawi, 20, Hassan Al-Qalaawi, 18, Majid Masood Al- Watani, 20, Hani Abbas Al-Shawoosh, 15, Mohammed Abdul Nabi Al-Kaddad, 22, Auwn Fuad Al-Modawweb, 14, Hesham Yousif Al-Qaydoom, 18, Mohammed Jaffer Al-Mowt, 17, Jawad Abbs, 18, Khalid Faisal, Isam, and others. One of the persons who was in al-Khamis Police Station described a horrific scene stating “a large group of youths were handcuffed and lined-up. Then, some officers started urinating on the youths. Other officers were emptying cans of “bear” on the youths. Another group of riot police were hurling insults in a “broken” Arabic language”.

In the past few days the following were also arrested. From Sitra-Wadyan: Hassan Ali Jassim, 9 years old child, Abbas Salman, 9, two children of Abdulla Al- Wannah, Jaffer Saeed

Zuhair, 13, Ahmad Najji Abdulla, 13. From Maamir: Zakarya Hussain Abdul-Mohsin, 22. From Samahi: Miathem Yousif Ali, 16, Maitham Abdulla Khalil, 15, Ali Hasan Kharfosh, 18, Hussain Al-Haddad, 16, Hussain Yousif Ali, 18, Hussain Isa Al-Dakheel, 25, Abdulla Mohammed Hassan, 26, Taib Mohammed Hassan, 24. From Qarya village (west of Bahrain): Ahmad Ali Ahmad, 15, Hussain Mohammed Ashor, 14, Mohammed Maatooq Ali, 14 (his mother was beaten by an officer when she resisted the arrest), Seyed Hadi Mohammed Hasan, 14, Seyed Mahmood Ali Adan, 14, and his brother Agil, 13, Seyed Habib Fakir Hasan, 13, Ali Ahmad Abdulla, 13.

It was revealed that the poet Ali Hassan Yousif had been released on 15 April after payment of an arbitrary fine of BD300 (\$800). Another poet has been in jail for the past 6 weeks, Abdul Karim Yousif Mardi, 35, together with his brother Abdul-Elah, from Tobli were accused of disseminating poetry critical of the government.

In the neighbouring Gulf State of Qatar, Reuters reported on 16 April that “All Qataris - including women - above age 18 will be allowed to vote in the country’s first-ever municipal elections expected early next year according to a new draft law”. In the mean time, Bahrainis who enjoyed local election in 1920s and parliamentary elections in 1970s are promised by the Al-Khalifa with importation of more foreign mercenaries for the repression of the citizens.

Bahrain: Children as young as “SIX” are arrested

20/Apr/1997

The occasion of Eid Al-Adha marked another day of civil resistance for the citizens of the country who are struggling for their basic rights in the face of a feudal dictatorship and its mercenary forces. On Friday 18 April, the residents of Sanabis marched through the streets denouncing the attacks of foreign forces against the two main assembly halls. Both Matam Bin Khamis and the Women Matam were closed down by the mercenary forces and sealed with red-wax. Columns of fire from burnt tyres and loud gas-cylinder explosions continued to be seen and heard through out the past few days. Several fires were seen along side King Faisal Highway, Sehla and Budaya Highways.

Eid prayers were performed in principal mosques followed by the chanting of pro-democracy slogans and the denunciation of the arson campaign conducted by the mercenary forces on behalf of the Al-Khalifa ruling family. The security forces attacked many places and continued their atrocities against the nation. In Ain-Adari play-ground, the foreign mercenaries arrested three children on 17 April: Hasan Seyed Nasser, 10 years old, Ammar Al-Qassab, 12, and Seyed Hussain Redha, SIX years old. Witnesses saw the riot police beating the children as they drove them away in a jeep.

The closure of a principal assembly hall in Manama (Matam Bin-Salloom) has come to prove a point the people always believed in. The head of the matam (assembly hall), Mr. Ahmad Bin-Salloom was forcibly appointed by the prime minister last October to become a member of the powerless Shura Council. The appointment was aimed at breaking the morale of the people and force them to abandon congregating at this matam. Nothing has changed and the citizens continued performing

their traditional processions while raising pro-democracy demands. Hence, the revenge against the matam and its closure, and above all the intimidation of a Shura Council member.

Mr. Abdul Rahman Al-Nuaimi, the Secretary-General of the Popular Front in Bahrain wrote an article in Al-Quds newspaper (19 April edition), stating “Friends and officials in the GCC countries were urged to intervene with the ruling Al-Khalifa family to convince them that it is better to adapt to a changing environment.... The wise persons amongst the ruling family ought to take charge and not to let matters reach the worst. The citizens have not aimed at harming the ruling family, while at the same time, scores of citizens have martyred and thousands had been detained. It must be clear that the popular movement cannot be crushed by sheer force and the only solution must be dialogue”. Another leading opposition figure, Sheikh Isa Ahmad Qassim, member of both the Constituent and National Assemblies issued a statement on 18 April saying “The old and the young, the men and women, the intellectuals and others, who remain in jail have not staged an armed struggle. They have shouldered their responsibilities for raising legitimate demands calling for basic rights that exist in all human societies. Had the government positively responded, Bahrain would have been saved the troubles it continues to go through. The people are stronger than all the State’s violence, and their demands are basic and necessary, neither optional nor extravagant. To think that the people would retreat is unwise and unfruitful”.

Bahrain: A wounded girl forced out of hospital

22/Apr/1997

A girl who was hit by rubber bullets in her arm on 16 April was forced out of Salmanya Hospital on 19 April by the security forces. Kefayah Seed Jaffer, 22, from Bilad al-Qadim, has been denied proper treatment by the interior ministry which is run by foreign mercenaries.

On 21 April, three students, who had been arrested the preceding day, were brought to Al-Sehla School by riot police. The three |Yasin Salman Yousif (from Qadam), 16, Ali Mansoor Ali (from Hajar), 16, and Ahmad Ali Mushaima (from Northern Sehla), 15| were ordered by police to write political slogans on the schools walls while being filmed. They were then taken away for more ill-treatment in the torture chambers.

More children and youths were arbitrarily detained as follows. From Sitra: Tariq Salman Dhraboh, 9, Abdulla Ali Jassim, 9, Hussain Ahmad Ali, 14, Mohammed Hassan Fateel, 14, Abdul Shahid Abbas, 15, Mohsin Ibrahim, 15, Mohammed Abdulla. From Sanabis: Talal Ahmad Al-Tarif, 22, Zuhair Abdulla Hasan Radhi, 20, Shawki Saleh, 27. From Daih; Abdul Hadi Hasan Al-Jaseel, 15, Mahmood Naser Mushaimaa, 13, Ali Abdulla Saad, 12, Yousif Abdul Hussain, 12, Husain Mushaimaa, 15, Ghazi Hasan Mushaimaa, 17, Seyed Ahmad Al-Falleh, 18, and Hussain Abdul Wahhab, 18. From Samahij: Ali Hasan Ali, 17, Hussain Al-Haddad, 15.

Fifty-three European personalities and members of human rights organizations submitted a petition to the Kuwaiti authorities on 21 April denouncing the arrest and intimidation of Bahraini citizens working in Kuwait. The petition stated that “these Bahrainis, like hundreds others, are either forcible exiles, or ordinary people driven out of their country for economic or

political reasons”. The petitioners urged the Kuwaiti authorities to release these prisoners in the same as the Kuwaitis are asking for their prisoners to be released from Iraqi prisons. The Kuwaiti government ought not to repeat the same mistake of supporting dictators only to pay heavy prices later on, in the same as happened when it financed a dictator who then invaded its country.

A press conference on the political crisis in Bahrain will be held in Paris on 29 April, 8.30 am, at Café FOUQUET’S, 99 avenue des Champs-Elysees, Paris 8, Metro: George V. The conference will be addressed by civil rights activists and will cover the latest events and violations of human rights in Bahrain.

Bahrain: Unholy alliance against the Bahraini community in Kuwait

24/Apr/1997

When a government hears that some of its citizens have been arrested or harmed in another country, the normal response is for that government to intervene with the foreign government to relieve the situation. In Bahrain, it is the other way round. When the Kuwaiti interior ministry announced few weeks ago that it arrested some Bahrainis, the foreign minister (a very senior member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family) could not control his happy feelings in an interview with the Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat (dated 10 April). It may be difficult for non-Bahrainis to understand such happy feelings, but for Bahrainis, this is well-understood. The fact of the matter is that the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa considers the natives of the country as “natural” and “traditional” enemies. Bahrainis are left to their own devices to defend themselves against the hate-based policies inside and outside their homeland.

While the Al-Khalifa express their happiness about the suffering of Bahrainis in Kuwait, a group of Bahraini lawyers volunteered to defend their fellow-citizens in Kuwait. The BBC Arabic Service quoted a well-known Bahraini lawyer (Mr. Abdulla Hashim) on 23 April regarding the case of the remaining seven Bahrainis in Kuwaiti jails. “The seven Bahraini met with Mr. Abdulla Hashim who confirmed that the accused denied any connection with an organization by the name Hizbollah-Gulf and that the one accusation against them is the distribution of pamphlets. Mr. Hashim clarified that he is coordinating with Kuwaiti lawyers defending the Bahraini citizens.”

The Kuwaiti authorities are continuing their harassment of Bahrainis in Kuwait. The intelligence department is raiding scores of flats every now and then and is intimidating members

of the community through abusive phone-calls. Around 600 Bahrainis who were given unskilled jobs in petrol stations and their pay included low grade residential facilities by the Kuwaiti contractor (by the name Daboos) were told that they will be kicked-out of the flats and that they had to look for some-where else to live. This and other similar actions are highlighting the fact that the unholy alliance (between the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa and the Kuwaiti intelligence department) is targeting the Bahriani community with the aims of creating the maximum distress.

Inside Bahrain, the foreign mercenaries continued their atrocities against the citizens. The blind cleric, Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas, was re-arrested on 23 April. He had recently spent one year in detention. The following persons were also arrested: Maitham Abdulla Khalil, 18, Mortadha Mohammed Isa Matar (from Dair), 19, Abbas Ibrahim Shemloh (Tobli) , 25.

From Karzakkan: Habib Ali Masan Mahdi, 21, Jaffer Mohammed Hassan, 22, Yonis Abdul Nabi Hassan, 19.

In a highly revealing statement an official stated to Reuters on 22 April that “If [the arrested\are young, their parents are summoned to pledge that they will not repeat their acts of sabotage. Police them free them. This under no circumstances could be considered arrest? This twisted definition of arrest is aimed at hiding the names of those detained and tortured, so that the ICRC does not investigate their cases.

Bahrain: Discriminatory attacks against small business units

26/Apr/1997

The mercenary forces repressing the nation on behalf of the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family besieged several principal towns and villages on Thursday (24 April) and Friday (25 April) and established check points at entrance of Sanabis, Daih, Duraz, Bani Jamra, A'ali, Karzakkan, Sitra and other areas. Protests continued in response to the aggression of the mercenaries on mosques and assembly halls. The Al-Khalifa shut down four assembly halls (matams) last week: Matam Bin-Salloom, Matam Bin-Khamis, Sanabis Women Matam and Bori Matam.

On 22 April, the foreign forces raided the house of Ali Makki in Salamabad, ransacked the contents of the house and arrested his daughter, Manal Ali Makki, 20, and his son Hussain Ali Makki, 19. Manal was released on 23 April but summoned on 24 April, and remained in detention. Concern is mounting because the mercenary officers are empowered by the Al-Khalifa to torture Bahrainis in any form desired. It is also believed that two ladies from Manama were detained in the recent wave of arrests. In Bilad al-Qadim, the residents went out in a demonstration on 25 April, that reached the main highway. The citizens demanded the release of the cleric Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas who was re-arrested few days ago. He had just been released from a one-year detention. The security forces who raided the house of Al-Nachas stole cash and valuables during their ransacking of the house.

In another form of repression, the security forces raided small business units and closed some of them down. A printing and stationery shop located near Al-Mehza'a Road in Manama and owned by a person named Saeed, was attacked on 23 April.

The security forces stole all equipment (recently installed) and closed down the business. On the same day, in Duraz, the foreign mercenaries attacked a book-shop owned by Hussain Ali Salman, 40 year old. Similarly, all equipment were stole, the bookshop ruined, and the owner arrested. The Oriental Press in Manama was also raided and many tooling's, templates were compensated. Several other small business offices were reportedly raided and their owners intimidated last week, as part of the hate-based policies.

A delegation from the Bahraini opposition met with members of the European Parliament and presented the case of Bahrain. Members of the human rights committee representing the main blocks (Right, Left, Liberals and Green) voiced their support for the people of Bahrain and expressed astonishment that the Bahraini government had failed to respond to the European Parliament Resolution (ref: B4-208/95/RC,B4-276/95/RC1) passed on 15 February 1995, which demanded, amongst others, that “the Government of Bahrain declares its commitment to the restoration of the constitution and to holding free and fair general elections, and to abolish the State Security Law and other articles of laws restricting liberties and human rights’

A press conference on the political crisis in Bahrain will be held in Paris on 29 April, 8.30 am, at Café FOUQUET'S, 99 avenue des Champs-Elysees, Paris 8, Metro: George V.

Bahrain: Resumption of political trials and contravention of UN obligations

27/Apr/1997

The State Security Court, presided by Khalifa bin Rashid AJ-Khalifa, a member of the ruling family, resumed its illegal operations on 26 April with the trial of the following six teenagers: Nader Ibrahim Ahmad, 17, his brother Faisal, 16; Hassan Ahmad Mansoor, 17, and his brother Basim, 16. Mohsin Ahmad Ali, 16 and Seyed Mohammed Abbas, 16. These teenagers have spent one-year in administrative detention and had suffered from ill-treatment and torture. The six teenagers are all from Jabalat-Habshi, 5 km west of the capital Manama. The brothers Hassan and Basim are sons of Ahmad Mansoor, an opposition figure, who himself was arrested a year ago. He is one of the known campaigners for the Popular Petition of 1994.

The distinguished lawyer, Mr. Ahmad Al-Shamlan, defended the case of the six teenagers before the court saying that bringing persons under the age of 18 contravenes Article I of the UN “Conventions on the Rights of the Child”. Since the signing the Convention in 1992, the government of Bahrain has refused to comply with the UN requirements for the submission of periodic reports on the rights of the child in Bahrain. The “Committee on the Rights of the Child” of the Geneva-based UN Centre for Human Rights starts monitoring the implementation after the submission of such reports. The opposition has called on the UN specialist committees to intervene and put an end to the irresponsible behaviour of a member State.

As the political trials resume, more citizens are being ill-treated in the torture chambers of Al-Khalifa. Manal Ali Ahmad and her sister Fatima were arrested last week together with their brother Hussain. Manal and Fatima have been released on 26 April. Manal was suspended (chicken-(y)pe suspension) and

was beaten by the torturer Adel Flaifel.

On 20 April, two other sisters from Zen were also arrested: Sawsan Hasan Abu-Alaish, 19, and Jannat Hassan Abu-Alaish, 18. They were released after several days of ill-treatment. In Aali, a person, Abdul Redha Habib, was arrested on 25 April, beaten in public, taken for more beating in prison and then released on the same day. From Sitra the following were arrested: Hasan Ali, 24, arrested from his work in a company located in Mina Salman. Mahdi Abdali, 23, who works in Awalco (in Mina Salman industrial area) and Seyed Adnan. The names of these people are not officially registered so that the Red Cross (ICRC) may not ask about them.

In Sitra, the foreign riot police initiated a programme for intimidating the citizens of the country. They started emptying rubbish bins on the streets. Then, they stop people passing by and order them to clean the debris.

On Friday 25 April, several principal mosques (Khawajah, Momin, Sadiq of Qatool, Sadig of Duraz, and Karbabad) were surrounded by riot police who began inspecting the identity (CPR) cards in a new form of intimidation. The citizens defied the mercenaries and chanted the pro-democracy slogans calling for an end to the campaign of terror and violence mounted by these foreigners against the nation.

Bahrain: Opposition delegation meets French journalists in Paris

30/Apr/1997

On 29 April, a delegation of Bahraini opposition comprising of Abdul-Nabi Al-Ekri and Mansoor Al-Jamri, met with journalists specialising in Middle Eastern affairs and presented the case of the struggle for human rights and democracy in Bahrain. The discussion started with a briefing covering the important issues of the Bahraini struggle and was then followed by an in-depth questions and answers session.

The delegation highlighted the roots of the pro-democracy movement and the complexities pertaining to the particular aspects of the Bahraini society. Modern forces of the Bahraini civil society initiated a peaceful process in the 1930s demanding a fair and representative political structure. Bahrain, then under the control of British Advisor Charles Belegrove (1926-1956), witnessed cross-sectional and broadly based movements. Each time, the movement was crushed under a fictitious pretext. The struggle culminated in the formation of the Constituent and National Assemblies in the early seventies, only to be thwarted by the ruling Al-Khalifa family in 1975. The ruling family discovered that it could not face-up to the modern challenges for administering the state. It is worth-noting that in the 1950s, Egypt (Under Nasser) was blamed for backing the home-grown internal movements, in 1970s, it was the turn of South Yemen for the blame, and since the early 1980s, the Al-Khalifa found a prize-winner for receiving the blame: Iran. Whatever external influences might be claimed, the vast majority of Bahrainis have demonstrated their independent nature. The Al-Khalifa, on the other hand, never stopped importing foreign mercenaries to repress citizens.

The composition of the Bahraini society (Shia and Sunni) has been used with maximum irresponsibility by the Al-Khalifa government. For historical reason, the Al-Khalifa treated the Shia indigenous population as traditional enemies, thus barring them from virtually all sensitive positions in the State. They also forced the Shia out of their land in search of low-grade work in the Gulf, only to hunt them later on with extreme hatred. This happens while more than 100,000 foreigners enjoy staying and working in Bahrain. This is a complex psychological and historical issue that added a twist in the events. It is not surprising, therefore, to witness an uncompromising attitude from the ruling Al-Khalifa family. Bahrainis have long bypassed such medieval segregation that are based on tribal, ethnic and sectarian coloration, and have strove to maintain the national consensus that brought all types of today's cosmopolitan Bahrainis to harmoniously and peacefully coexist and live together.

Last March, the Al-Khalifa blamed a group of 36 youngsters of membership of a “fancy-named” Hizbollah organisation and of masterminding a coup-attempt. This desperate attempt failed to re-direct attention from a single fact: Bahrainis are more civilised, aspiring to live in a pluralist, constitutional set-up, and are more responsible than those claiming to run the state. A point in case, is the way the Al-Khalifa exhibited happiness that Bahraini (Shia) workers in Kuwait are being persecuted by the Kuwaiti intelligence department. Yet, at the same time, Bahraini (Sunni) lawyers travelled to Kuwait and assumed their national responsibility for defending their fellow-citizens.

Bahrain: International protests against Henderson's violation of human rights; Combating State Terrorism

1/May/1997

A question that is often asked is whether time is on the side of the Constitutional Movement in Bahrain especially as it became clear that the despotic tribal regime is adamant on pursuing its repressive policies towards the people. The past thirty months, however, have demonstrated the resilience of the people of Bahrain in the face of the onslaughts by the regime on the whole society. 'The Al Khalifa have pursued the policy of exterminating the opposition beyond the boundaries of the land. The authorities in Kuwait have been trapped by Ian Henderson, the notorious torturer who had misinformed them about the Bahrainis living in Kuwait. He sought to implicate these innocent people in grand plots against not only the Al Khalifa but the whole Gulf. No sooner had these Bahrainis been arrested than did the ministry of information of Bahrain pass its verdict incriminating them.

The Kuwaitis having felt their dilemma, took every possible step to safeguard their image which was greatly tarnished by this foolish act. Observers have concluded that the arrest of the Bahrainis and their subsequent mistreatment and torture have compromised the case of the missing Kuwaitis in Iraq. Many international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) reacted angrily and charged the state security authorities in Kuwait of doing to the Bahrainis what they consistently accused Iraq of doing to their own compatriots. The Kuwaiti lawyer championing the cause of defending the innocent Bahrainis, Khalid Al Shatti, repeated his conviction that the Bahrainis were innocent, and the case was a no-win one for the authorities.

The feelings of the people of Bahrain have become very much against the actions of the Kuwaiti authorities. and have

demanded the immediate release of the victims. There are many indications that the Kuwaiti authorities have succumbed to the pressure coming from the direction of Bahrain to clamp down on the exiles. The Al Khalifa have, in the past, gone as far as asking the Kuwaiti government not to pay Bahraini labourers higher wages than they have been paid in Bahrain. They have also conspired against Bahraini exiles elsewhere and the case of the Bahrainis who were arrested by the British authorities in 1990 confirmed beyond doubt Henderson's conspiracies against Bahraini citizens outside his reach.

The case of the Bahraini exiles in Kuwait gathered momentum last month when it was projected in Geneva where thousands of NGO's were attending the United Nations Commission for Human Rights. Amongst the most repressive regimes in the world, the Al Khalifa stood out clearly. Many NGO's included the case of human rights violations in Bahrain in their interventions and demanded an immediate UN action against the Al Khalifa regime. Petitions were signed and handed over to Kuwait's representatives in Geneva, and letters were sent to the Amir of Kuwait expressing disgust at the bad treatment of Bahraini exiles. The Kuwaitis were in pain to realise how the image of their country has been tarnished by the unwise move against the people of Bahrain. Intellectuals and MPs expressed their dislike of the government actions against the Bahrainis, and human rights activists felt embarrassed by the episode.

The Bahraini opposition have, however, viewed a regional dimension, something that did not happen in the past. The situation in Bahrain has become the talk of the day especially as Kuwaiti members of parliament raised the issue with regards

to the handling of the Bahraini case. In other Gulf states, the people became more aware of the oppression of Bahrainis at the hands of the Al Khalifa who did not enjoy public support whether inside the country or outside it. This came at a time when the movement entered a stage of stronger actions by the people, whilst the regime feels being upstaged by the opposition.

Mr. Henderson has disastrously failed in his plan to squeeze the pro-democracy movement and the constitutionalists and he must be feeling the pinch as he prepares to pack and go leaving behind one of the worst chapters in the history of the region in regards to human rights and political openness. 'The people of Bahrain will be glad to see him go, whilst the Al Khalifa feel their they are indebted to him. But every one has now realised that the old British colonial officer-turned torturer has lost touch with the reality and his way of thinking does not match the prevailing circumstances. The case of Bahraini prisoners has gone disastrously wrong for him and the Kuwaiti authorities are counting their losses in the domain of public image and their struggle to achieve the freedom of their citizens missing since the Gulf war.

On the other hand, the constitutional movement is gathering pace, with more sectors of the society, antagonised by the Al Khalifa take more positive stands vis-a-vis the movement.

The sudden upsurge in the arrests of women and children is a pointer to the state of despair of the regime which is engulfed by a state of fear, confusion and disorientation. It has failed to present a policy that satisfied its friends, blundered the many opportunities for dialogue leading to a peaceful and

face-saving exit from the quagmire. The policy of heavy-handedness in dealing with unarmed demonstrators has only led to further complications with sections of the society which have, hitherto, stood on the sidelines, feeling compelled to join the constitutionalists. Mercenaries in the local press could not match the abilities and sophistication of the opposition which comprises of almost every political and ideological conviction in Bahrain.

There is widespread popular conviction that the people would not submit to the foreign forces which act as occupiers employing every possible means of repression against the citizens. Last month witnessed an increase in the attacks on the people, and children as young as six years were arrested and tortured. Women were among the detainees, including school and university students. There has been a public outcry following these crimes, and the coming weeks are likely to witness an increase in people's protests. The resolve of the people is as strong as ever, and the only way to create peace, stability and prosperity of the country is through the ballot box, rather than bullets, in accordance with the constitution.

Bahrain: Institutionalized discrimination by Al-Khalifa

3/May/1997

Day by day, the inhuman and hate-based policies and practices of the outdated tribal-feudal dictatorship imposed on the civilized nation of Bahrain reveal further ugly pictures. The ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family is violating all national and international norms by continuing to deny the citizens all their basic rights. The tribal political system is attacking the indigenous population with extreme hatred. The Al-Khalifa closed down four religious assembly halls (matams) last months and sealed their gates with red-wax. No rule has ever attempted such intimidation in the history of the nation. Even the Portuguese (known for their use of shear force) did not treat the indigenous population in such a manner when they invaded Bahrain in the sixteenth century. Today there are several religious teaching schools that were closed down in the Eighties and stand as a proof that this regime has no intention of respecting any norm. The Islamic Enlightenment Society, for example (with three visible buildings at the entrance of Duraz village on the Budaya Highway) was closed down in 1984 and sealed with red-wax. The ruined building are sharp reminders of the type of the hatred the ruling Al-Khalifa family possesses. Similarly, a library in Aali and a religious teaching school in Tobli remain closed down and sealed with red wax for more than a decade, further highlighting the policy of institutionalized discrimination against the indigenous population.

The opposition has records of names of students who were refused entry to the University of Bahrain, despite the fact they scored pass rates (in the secondary schools) between 85-95%. The military officer installed by the ruling family declared in September 1996 that he authorized a selection criterion based

on “other factors”. All those who had been refused entry come from the Shia indigenous population. Moreover, the opposition has documented more than 170 names of students who were expelled from the university and schools.

The recent reorganization of administration of the state witnessed more discrimination of the crudest form. Out of a cabinet of 18 persons, 9 are from the Al-Khalifa. Out of 26 ministries and semi-ministries, 14 are from the Al-Khalifa. Out of 420 top officials, 17% are from Al-Khalifa, occupying all sensitive posts; 60% come from the tribal and Sunni sections of the population; and 23% come from the Shia section of the society, occupying service-positions that have no strategic importance. A complete or virtual (virtual means one or two low-key person might be present amongst 10 or 20 top officials) wipe-out of the Shia is visible in several areas such as Interior, Defence, Statistics Organization, Sports Organization, Universities of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf, Development and Industry, Justice, Central Bank, Civil Service Bureau, Education., Pension Fund & Social Insurance, etc. A similar wipe-out was implemented in relation to strategic industries. These policies are similar to earlier ones implemented in the early Eighties. They were the policies that contributed to the eruption of events in the Nineties. The newly adopted policies will ensure that the struggle for justice and democracy can never cease. Bahrainis have before them the apartheid regime of South Africa which was not saved by all such policies.

Bahrain: A torturer is killed by an officer

5/May/1997

One of the notorious torturers, Khalil al-Sa'ati was killed by a police officer, today 5 May, at 11.00 am, local time. Khalil Al-Sa'ati works in the qudeibia Police Station under the command of Abdul Salam Al-Ansari, another notorious officer. Al-Sa'ati was the person who attacked female students in Manama Secondary School in 1995, and was one of the main persons used for the attacks on mosques and assembly halls. He had tortured scores of people and this explains the way the news of his death was received by the people. A spokesman for the interior ministry stated to Reuters that Al-Sa'ati was "shot dead on Monday in a dispute with another military man..

During the last few days, the security forces continued their attacks against the citizens of the country. From Samahij the following were arrested: Shawki Ahmad Mohammed, 22, Basim Eid, 22, Abdulla Ali Sabt, 20, Abdulla Hasan Masood, 19. From Aali: Ahmad Ali Hassan, 21, and his brother Talib, 17, Abdul Redha Habib, 18, Seyed Ahmad Seyed Mahfood, 27, Hussain Abdul Nabi, 20, Mohammed Ali Hassan, 14 (Child). From Sehla:

Yasin Jaffer Abdul Karim, 16. From Markoban: Jaffer Al-Safi and his brother Adil (both are brothers of one of the martyrs, Hussain Al-Safi, who was killed by the security forces).

The Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights (FID H), issued a report on the "Human Rights Situation in Bahrain - 1996". The report detailed context of the violation in relations to the country's constitution, the legal background and international law. The report summarized the violations of human rights through extrajudicial killing, torture, collective punishment, arbitrary detention, unfair trials, abuse of women

and children, forcible exiles, discrimination (against the indigenous Shia community), lack of freedom of expression, interference in academic institutions, denial of citizenship, political interference in employment, etc.

The report called on the Western countries to uphold the principles of human rights, especially following the recent move by the ruling family to equip its recently established “National Guard”. A delegation from the Al-Khalifa family visited Britain last February to negotiate the purchasing of arms for future use against the Bahraini people who are demanding the restoration of the rule of constitutional law.

It was announced in Bahrain that Omar Al-Hassan, who runs an office in London in support of the Al-Khalifa dictatorship is in Bahrain for receiving more funds for his inhuman work. With him this time is Saleh Al-Tayyar, who heads an office in Paris.

Omar Al-Hassan was dismissed from the Arab League and was a staunch supporter of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussain.

Bahrain: Kuwaiti personalities demand an end to human rights violation

8/May/1997

More than 30 Kuwaiti personalities forwarded an open letter to the speaker and members of the Kuwaiti parliament calling on them to intervene and put an end to the violations of human rights committed by the Kuwaiti state security department. The Kuwaiti dignitaries cited the case of the Bahraini citizens who were detained and harassed by the stated security department as a signal that the old mentality has not disappeared. It is worth noting that the Kuwaiti justice minister visited Bahrain on 5 May in relation to the case of the Bahraini citizens unlawfully detained in Kuwait.

Few days after the departure of the Amir for a private visit, the crown prince, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa moved swiftly to consolidate his position against his uncle, the prime minister. The crown prince issued three “Amiri Orders” on 5 May appointing three persons for filling senior positions in the “Ruling Family Council (RFC)”. Mohammed Hamad Abdulla Ibrahim Al-Khalifa was appointed as Director General of the RFC with the rank of a “minister”, Hemood Khalifa Mohamed Abdulla Al-Khalifa was appointed as deputy to the Director General with the rank of “under-secretary” and Abdulla Khalifa Salman Al-Khalifa as member. The RFC was established in the period between the Constituent Assembly and the National Assembly in 1973. The FC’s creation was aimed at unifying the ruling Al-Khlaifa family in the face of the newly established National Assembly and to prevent any move from some enlightened al-Khalifa members (one of whom became a member of the parliament) to integrate the Al-Khalifa family within the Bahraini society as normal citizens. The RFC maintains the balance between the various factions, distributes

the monetary and land “free” allocations amongst the Al-Khalifa family, and represents any Al-Khalifa member in courts or in any dispute with citizens or residents of Bahrain.

On the other hand the crown prince received (on 5 May) the commander of the Special Operations of the Jordanian armed forces, Prince Abdulla bin Hussain. Last November, the Jordanian commander attended a tactical exercise conducted jointly with the Bahrain Defence Force that come under the crown prince. After that visit, the crown prince formed the “National Guard”. The National Guard was formed for countering the powers of the prime minister who controls all the security forces. The crown prince also met with a French Defence Ministry official to negotiate the purchase of military equipment for the so-called “National Guard”. Last February, the crown prince and foreign minister met with British Defence Ministry officials for a similar negotiation. The victory of the Labour Party in the UK was not well received by the Al-Khalifa family who will attempt to use the leverage of purchasing arms for political manoeuvring.

On 7 May, the interior ministry summoned the heads of the assembly halls that were shut down by the security forces few weeks ago. The assembly halls were opened later in the day as the Al-Khalifa realized that they will lose more by these closures. The meeting with he heads of the matams (assembly halls) was conducted by Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, the undersecretary of the interior ministry.

Bahrain: Lawyer arrested, clashes reported

10/May/1997

The distinguished lawyer Abdul Shahid Khalaf was detained for three days starting 5 May. The Al-Khalifa's foreign mercenaries confiscated the personal computer as well as other belongings from the lawyer's offices and residence. The highly respected lawyer had received many threats from the interior ministry because of his skilful defence of the victims brought before the Al-Khalifa's State Security Court. The threats received from the intelligence department were implemented in line with the new forms of abuses. The Al-Khalifa are not registering the names of political detainees so that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) does not include the detained persons in its assessments. For example, the poet Ali Hasan Yousif who was detained earlier in the year because of his poems, was registered as a "criminal" detainee. The intelligence department has informed the distinguished lawyer that his case will be camouflaged by a fictitious non-political excuse, and thereby, fulfil its wicked intentions for revenge.

The outrageous attacks on lawyers is not new to the Al-Khalifa. The distinguished lawyer Ahmad Al-Shamlin was arrested last year and accused of criminal offences. Indeed, the Al-Khalifa representatives at the UN responded to the enquiries of the UN Commission on Human Rights saying that the distinguished national figure (Ahmad Al-Shamlin) was arrested for "criminal offences". Abdul Shahid Khalaf was summoned several times in the past two years and threatened of grave consequences if he doesn't stop defending the political prisoners and if he does not stop speaking to foreign news agencies about the unfair political trials. A British intelligence officer was seen leading the attacks against the properties of Mr. Khalaf.

On the first days of Ashura (the 10 days at the start of the new Islamic year) clashes erupted (8 and 9 May) in Bilad al-Qadim, Markh, Sitra, Nuaim Ras-Romman and Karanah. The foreign mercenaries, repressing the citizens on behalf of the Al-Khalifa family, attacked the residents in these places during the traditional preparations for Ashura. One person from Bilad al-Qadim was injured in the face by a rubber bullet. Nine children who fell down because of the intensive tear gas were arrested and taken to the Al-Khamis Police Station. Many arrests were also reported across the country.

The days of Ashura this year coincide with the anniversaries of several martyrs. Nidhal Al Nashaba, 18, was shot dead on 4 May 1995. Mohammed Shehab Al-Fardan, 10, was killed in mysterious circumstances on 25 May 1995. Mohmood Abdul Latif, 12, was tortured to death on 12 May 1996. Abdul-Amir Rustom, 36, was beaten to death by the security forces on 7 May 1996. Fadhil Abbas Marhoon was shot dead by the special unit of the so-called Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) on 6 May 1996. Salman Al-Taitoon, together with his wife and son, were killed on 6 May 1996 by the same special unit. Salman's house was demolished with explosives following the threats made by Al-Khalifa in local press that they would demolish houses and wipe-out villages if the uprising doesn't cease. The defence minister was also quoted that his army was ready to intervene to "crush" the uprising in a period of less than two days.

Bahrain: Children are brought before an Al-Khalifa court

13/May/1997

The State Security Court presided by a member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family dragged more Bahraini children on Saturday 10 May. Six persons (all from Jabalt Habshi) aged between 16-19 were brought back for a second session. Their defence lawyer, Mr. Ahmad Al-Shamlan had protested that the detention of persons under 18 for more than a year and then forcing them before a security court contravene the obligations which Bahrain had made to the UN when it signed the Convention for the Rights of the Child in 1992. The Al-Khalifa government refuses to submit any periodic report on the rights of the child hoping for an escape from international monitoring. The al-Khalifa are assuming that as long as they only torture the children and members of the Shia community, they can get away with their crimes. All correspondence made by the representatives of the Al-Khalifa to the outside world emphasis, directly and indirectly, this hate-based policy.

Similarly, on 10 May, the same “judge” vented his hatred against ten Bahrainis aged between 15 and 23 accused of participating in the popular protests. All the accused in both cases denied the allegation of committing any arson. These youths had been picked up as part of the collective punishment policy.

In Kuwait, two more Bahrainis (Abdul Nabi Al-Asfoor and Adel Al-Hayki) were released on bail of \$660 (KD 200). There are four persons remaining in administrative detention. More than 30 Kuwaiti personalities protested on 7 May against these violations and requested that the Kuwaiti parliament intervenes to end human rights abuses. Dr. Abdulla Sahar, university professor, told ARP “We as a group believe in democracy and

human rights, and have expressed our concern about the arrests”. Khalid Al-Shatti, the defence lawyer said that the case has no legal grounds and is politically driven. While the Kuwaitis sacrifices young Bahrainis, the Al-Khalifa crown prince met with an Iraqi official, Ahmad Tayes Abdulla, on 11 May to improve “bilateral relations”. The Iraqi official stated that he “hoped that other Arab countries would follow the example of Bahrain’

Following their attacks on assembly halls (matams), the foreign security forces arrested Hajji Abbas Fadhil and Ali Al Wannan, who head “Mattam Hajji Abbass” in Manama. Both were released a day later on 12 May. The intelligence department demanded that the pro-democracy slogans stop. The heads of assembly halls have all the way explained to the foreign forces that the traditional processions will march through the streets in any way or form and slogans are bound to be raised. Sheikh Isa Qassim, member of both the Constituent and National Assemblies issued a statement on 11 May asserting that the traditional processions of Ashora are inherent rights of the people. assim reminded that Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri has only been detained because he manifested a voice of freedom.

Bahrain: Processions defy the undisciplined foreign forces

15/May/1997

Traditional processions of Ashora (in commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed) marched through towns and villages amid provocative security measures imposed by the security forces. On 14 May, at 3.00 pm the foreign forces attacked Nuweidrat with tear gas and rubber bullets. The undisciplined riot police smashed private properties and arrested scores of citizens. Several people were injured and some have been taken to hospital for medical treatment. In Sar and Ain al- Dar, the security forces unashamedly attacked and ransacked the local assembly halls. The residents condemned the outrageous aggression and went in larger numbers than is normal.

“Matam Bin Salloom” and “Matam Haii Abbas” witnessed intensive presence with more than one kilometres- long processions raising the pro-democracy demands. Similarly, other principal matams (assembly halls) witnessed gathering of huge numbers, in defiance of the foreign forces that are unable to understand the culture and tradition of a large section of Bahrain society.

The foreign forces besieged the capital in an attempt to prevent people from pouring into the capital for the procession. Nevertheless, the strength of will of the people was unbeatable. Armoured vehicles were seen around “Matam Bin Salloom” and Sahari Hotel. The traditional procession are being targeted by the security forces that fear any gathering in Bahrain.

Few days ago, two heads of “Matam Haji Abbas” were detained for one day. The heads of all principal assembly halls met in the Religious Trust (Awgaf) Department and spoke to

the interior ministry stating that ‘if the security forces arrest any head of matam, then all will resign “. The undersecretary of the interior ministry said that he will “order Abdul Salam Al-Ansari (chief of Manama Police) to stop arresting heads of matams”. It is astonishing to see how the ruling family that claims to be “well-established” fails to comprehend the basics of governing Bahrain. Procession are permitted by the constitution of Bahrain that was ratified by both the representatives Al-Khalifa and the people.

Political detainees in al-Khamis prison started a hunger strike last week protesting against over-crowding and lack of family-visits. The Al-Khalifa ruling family are treating the Shia population with hatred similar to the way Nazis treated sections of German society before the Second World War.

The Al-Khalifa rulers have irresponsibly played the sectarian card on the hope that they can win the battle against the pro-democracy movement. The opposition believes that this ill-practice will back-fire in the same way as other policies back-fired. Recently, the US Embassy warned Americans to avoid public gatherings. The Al-Khalifa were upset for this decision, but it was the Al-Khalifa’s fictitious claims about Bahrainis that resulted in such decisions.

Bahrain: Mass processions declare “No solution without the constitution”

19/May/1997

Tens of thousands of men, women and children of all ages marched through the streets of towns and villages across the country on the occasion of Ashora chanting traditional and pro-democracy slogans as well as raising placards and banners carrying images of the imprisoned and exiled opposition leaders. Manama, Sanabis, Daih, Bilad al-Qadim, Karbad, Iskan-Aa’li and other major centres of congregations, witnessed some of the highest concentrations of participants. Thousands of pictures for the martyrs of the 30-month old uprising were distributed as well as leaflets calling on the ruling Al-Khalifa family to stop importing and deploying foreign forces against the nation. Slogans such as “Parliament is the only solution”, “Release Sheikh Al-Jamri”, , “Stop killing, arson and torture”. “We will never be defeated”, etc. were painted on the walls in front of the foreign riot-police that were positioned in many locations around the areas of mass processions.

Scores of youths leading the procession continued to be summoned to receive threats that they would be detained if they participated in the chanting. None of these threats work anymore, as the people have been hardened by the events and have grown accustomed to dealing with a governing establishment that treats the citizens as enemies. In the past two week, the following were arrested. From Abo-Saiba: Khalil Abdulla Salman, 32, Abbas Ali Radhi, 26, Ali Abdulla Al-Khabaz, 26. From Manama: Abdul Adhim Rajab, Ali Al-Qassab.

From Karzakkan: Yousif Hassan Al-Shakhori, 13 (child), Mohammed Redha Ahmad Eid, 30, Haider Ali, 25, Hussain Mohammed Khatem, 18. Zenj: Ahmad Al-Sha’abani.

Sanabis:Hussain Ramadhan, 17 (his father was taken hostage to force him to hand himself. Both were later released). Daih: Ahmad Khalil Al-Sayyad, 19 (now released), Sayed Yousif Al-Mahroos, 33, Sadiq Abdul Aziz., 23.

The gatherings of Ashora represent some of the last remaining group-activities that run against the dictatorial policy of the ruling Al-Khalifa family. The ruling family has managed to destroy many features of popularly- and voluntarily-based functions. Clubs, cultural associations, discussion groupings, and virtually all other forms of civil society have either been dismantled or monopolized. An added factor in the case of Ashora is the fact that the ruling family has always considered the Shia indigenous population as its natural enemy. In September 1953, a member of the ruling family led an attack against a procession in Manama and that incident led to more serious ones until the formation in 1954 of the joint Sunni-Shia “High Executive Committee” that united the nation against dictatorship.

Lord Avebury raised the issue of Bahrain in the British House of Lords on 10 May, stating “will the Foreign Office, as part of its new dispensation, seek to persuade the ruler [of Bahrain] to free the leaders of the constitutional movement who are detained without trial and engage in dialogue with them? That would be a big shift in policy .. So it is a good test of the Government’s intentions to see whether they will now speak to the Emir of Bahrain”.

Bahrain: Another Citizen Killed by the Foreign Forces

20/May/1997

The latest martyr in Bahrain is Bashir Abdulla Ahmad Fadhil, about 20 years old, from Daih. He was buried today 20 May 1997..

On 18 May, the foreign forces imported by the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family, waged an aggressive attack against the residents of Daih. They attacked the main assembly hall (Matam) and destroyed its contents. Then, they attacked one of the main mosques and started beating the people inside. Bashir Abdulla Ahmad Fadhil was one of those severely injured. He was transferred to hospital and died a short time later.

The opposition calls on the international community to intervene and put an end to the abuses of human rights by an irresponsible medieval ruling establishment that fails to identify with international conventions and that continues to treat the citizens of Bahrain as enemies.

For the past thirty months, the people of Bahrain have been calling for the restoration of the rule of constitutional law and parliament. The Al Khalifa's foreign forces have killed and tortured to death more than 30 citizens. Thousands have been detained and scores had been forcibly-exiled.

Bahrain: A women injured in the eye, others taken as hostages

22/May/1997

Women were injured and arrested in the past few days. In Nuweidrat, the security forces attacked a congregation during Ashora processions and injuring Khadija Ibrahim Hussain in the eye. Another lady (daughter of Ali Mansoor) was also injured. Khadija, hit by a rubber bullet in the eye, might have lost her eye forever. On 20 May, the foreign forces arrested Jamila Salman (whose husband is in jail) from Daih together with Salman Al-Haddad and his wife (Om-Majid). The two ladies were released a day later but are still being summoned for intimidation and for exerting pressure on their jailed husbands. Three women from A'ali were also arrested.

The following were known to have been arrested in Nuweidrat: Mosa Jaffer Ahmad, 27, and his three brothers Abdulla, 24, Ahmad, 25 and Sadiq, 20. Also arrested were: Sadiq Hassan, 29, Khalil Ibrahim Rabea, 28, Husain Ali Abdul Wahab, 22, and his brothers Jabir, 21 and Jasim, 28. From Arad: Abdulla Ali Mola Radhi, 17, Hasan Dawood Salman, 14, Mohamed Ali Hassan, 16. From Manama: Seyyed Ahmad Al-Yousuf, 17 (now released).

The arrest of members of the family are part of the collective punishment policy adopted by the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa.

The youths held in the Dry Dock prison-camp (Hidd) were attacked by prison officers on 18 May and many prisoners were separated for further torturing. The clash occurred when prisoners demanded a permission for holding a ceremony to commemorate Ashora occasion.

On 21 May, some stores in Tobli were set on fire by arsonists while a bigger fire was reported in Jedhafs on 20 May that

destroyed a large storage designated for timber and mechanical equipment. The opposition denounces all forms of arsons and blames these irresponsible acts on the foreign mercenaries who have been committing these arsons in an attempt to stain the peaceful opposition. The arsonists aim to create divisions amongst the people. For example, the house (in Barbar) of Mr. Abdul Rahman Fakhro (brother of the national figure Dr. Monira Fakhro) was burnt three times in order to punish Dr. Fakhro for her views.

The son of the prime minister (also Transportation Minister), Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa, was sent to London on 20 May to meet with the new British Minister responsible for the Middle East, Mr. Derek Fatchet. The Al-Khalifa government is worried about the foreign policy of the new Labour administration in the UK that has declared its intention for supporting the cause of human rights in the world.

Bahrain: Al-Khalifa's mercenaries attack and harass citizens

26/May/1997

Injuries from the atrocious attack against the residents of Nuweidrat on 14 May indicate the extent of hatred of those who authorized the foreign forces for such attacks. The mercenaries, who were led by an officer named Abdulla Al-Zayed, started their aggression by ransacking the local assembly hall (matam). Then, they encircled the area and started beating the citizens in an arbitrary manner. By the evening, they deployed rubber bullets and tear gas. A 17-year old girl, Khadija Ibrahim Hussein lost one of her eyes when a rubber bullet hit her in the critical position.

The wife of All Derbas was beaten by the mercenaries until exhaustion. Another lady by the name Nariis was hit in the chest by a bullet. An elderly person, Ali Matar was hit by bullet in the back. Abdul Nabi Ahmad Hussain, 55, was hit in the leg. The wife of Abdulla Zaid, 55, was arrested when she resisted the attack on her house. Following these injuries, the mercenaries toured the area damaging cars' windows and private properties. Three mosques were also ransacked. Seyed Jalal Mostafa al-Kamil, from Jedhafs, was arbitrarily arrested last week on his way back from Manama. A group of foreign forces stopped him and ordered him to kiss their shoes.

As the dignified citizens refused to do so, the foreigners tortured him on the spot and left him bleeding on the road. He was taken to hospital for emergency treatment and is still suffering from the injuries. These shameless attacks form an integral part of the policy adopted by the ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa.

On 21 May, the son of the Amir, Mohamed bin Isa, who was appointed as head of the so-called National Guard, was shown

on TV with a group of his mercenaries attacking residential buildings. Up until 1923, the Al-Khalifa used to depend on death squads called "Fedawwva". These were disbanded following the uprising of 1922 that brought down the old regime and the present Al-Khalifa members are re-introducing into Bahrain similar death squads.

Kuwaiti students who participated in an activity at the University of Bahrain last week, were prevented from raising the pictures of Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq. The Kuwaitis were also prevented from distributing anything to other students. The Al-Khalifa are not happy with the Kuwaitis, and are demanding that the Kuwaitis should hand over Bahrainis arrested in Kuwait for political activities. In the past day, members of the Al-Khalifa have met with Iraqi officials, and gave statements in support of Iraq.

The following citizens are known to have been arrested in the past days. From Bilad al-Qadim: Jihad Ali Mahdi, 30, Seyed Abdulla Hassan, 19, Nadir Al-Kufi, 18, Jaffer Ahmad Al-Qaydoom, 12. From Nuweidrat: Abdul Redha Al-Moa'lim, 20, Mohammed Al-Moa'lim. From Sitra: Hisham Jamal Al-Asfoor, 20, Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Khamis, Nadir Yousif Al-Dolabi, 23, Sadiq Al-Dolabi, 26, Osama Ali Hassan, 18, Mohsin Mal-Allah, 17, Mohamed Ibrahim. Ma'amir: Abul Amir Abbas Maroon, 19. From A'ali: 3 ladies are still in jail, Mohammed Hamza. An Al-Khalifa's representative responded recently to an international human rights organization saying that these are not considered "arrests" and that there is no central register for those arrested. By now, the world has come to know the deception adopted and the medieval establishment that insists.

In Britain, a debate in the House of Commons (Parliament) is scheduled for June 3d for discussing the new Labour Government policy towards the situation in Bahrain. Members of the British Parliament have raised the issues of human rights violation, lack of democracy and the role of the British officers (such as Ian Henderson) in repressing the Bahraini nation.

Bahrain: A Word From London Could Make the Difference

29/May/1997

What did take place in the unscheduled meeting between Derek Fatchett, the British Minister for Middle East affairs, and Bahrain's minister of transport at the Foreign Office barely two weeks after Mr. Fatchett took up his duty? The diplomatic protocols may prevent the announcement of the details of that meeting but the indications are that the Bahraini emissary tried unsuccessfully to convince his host that human rights in Bahrain were among the best in the world. After all the "traditions" have always been a convenient tool to use in defending the decisions by the rulers of the region to violate human rights and prevent any form of democracy. The Bahraini "guest" who is also prime minister's son must have been at pains to explain the reasons behind his family's refusal to reinstall the country's constitution arguing that "traditions" prevented the return to the democratic practice briefly experienced in Bahrain in the early seventies.

Mr. Fatchett would have most probably pointed to his "guest" that he had been following the situation in Bahrain for the previous (well have months and that he could not be convinced that everything he had heard was false. He had, earlier, given a pledge to take up the case of human rights violations in Bahrain, an undertaking that left the Al Khalifa family speechless. He had also disowned Ian Henderson arguing that the notorious torture did not represent the British Government and therefore, the British Government was not responsible for his actions. He is the chief engineer and the head of a secret service which is responsible for the death of an average of one person a month over the past thirty months, if., since the flare-up of the Constitutional Uprising. The victims died under torture, by police bullets or by execution.

The dilemma facing the people of Bahrain is the reluctance of the western governments to support democratic movements in the Gulf. ^ veteran political opponent to the Al Khalifa regime in Bahrain spoke recently of the dismay and disappointment at the American stand with regards to the democratic movement in Bahrain. It was pointed out that the American Ambassador in Bahrain had met pro-democracy activists and implicitly supported the demand for the reinstatement of the 1973 constitution. The activist added angrily that once the popular petition of 1994 was prepared and the situation flared up the Ambassador and his staff had re-positioned themselves in line with their stand in Iraq when they abandoned the Shia of southern Iraq when the latter revolted against Saddam Hussain's rule. The then American President, George Bush, had encouraged the Iraqi people to rise up against the regime but once they did that he retracted allowing the Iraqi army and air force to suppress the movement.

Today the British Government is well-placed to exert pressure on the Al Khalifa government making use of their good offices with them and inducing them into some reforms leading to the reinstatement of the Constitution. The Al Khalifa are weaker than being able to offer any serious resistance to outside pressure especially if it comes from a powerful country such as Britain. Their total submission to Qatar on the issue of the disputed islands of I Hawar Carlier in the year indicates the lack of political will in the face of serious challenges from outside. All their apparent strong-will when they took their foolish decision to boycott the GCC summit in Doha, they were brought to their knees at the Dorchester in London last

February, where they expressed their apologies for their earlier misbehaviour.

The Al Khalifa can not be viewed as a government. In reality there is no more than a ruling wing inside the Al-Khalifa which hires mercenaries to use against the people of the land. The ruling wings seem to feel insecure. Unenlightened members of the Al-Khalifa have never come to terms with their locking of being an outsider, despite the fact that present day Bahrain is cosmopolitan. This feeling of alienation may explain their adamant refusal to establish the rule of constitutional law in the country. 'They could not establish harmony with the Bahraini people and their treatment of the inhabitants of the islands has always been hostile. They isolated themselves in a separate residential area, they are governed by a "Ruling Family Council" that treats every member of Al-Khalifa as a corporate member with no independent citizenship identity. Any citizens that may differ with an Al-Khalifa member faces the corporate response of the Ruling Family Council, even if the difference is related to a minor commercial dispute.

The ruling wing does not bust citizens, whether Sunni or Shia. They hired mercenaries to form the core of the riot police. The senior staff of the security apparatus is directed by the British officer Ian Henderson and the newly-established National Guards was formed from imported Bedouins who have no knowledge of what and where Bahrain is.

No Bahraini, be it a Shia or Sunni, is accepted in the senior or serologic ranks of these forces. These mercenaries have performed atrocities against the people of Bahrain. This

behaviour does not confirm a sound relationship between the ruler and the ruled. It will be a long time before the wounds created by this policy are healed especially as the number of victims of terror mounts.

The opposition believes that there is no way forward except through dialogue leading to the reinstatement of the constitution. The friends of the Al-Khalifa may take up the task of “persuading” their long standing ally of the futility of their heavy-handed policies, bearing in mind the moderate demands that could have ever be made by an opposition anywhere in the world. The Labour Government in Britain is well-placed to take up this foreign policy challenge and to send strong signals to Bahrain that it favoured an immediate return to the 1973 constitution. The alternative is to let the situation drill with unhappy consequences for the present and the future. A strong word from London could make the difference, and till the balance in favour of a new situation marked by constitutional rule and respect of human rights.

Bahrain: Racist policies implemented by the Al-Khalifa

1/May/1997

News from Manama (Qala'a) Prison revealed that the leading opposition figure Mr. Abdul Wahab Hussain had been transferred to the military hospital for performing an operation on his nose which was injured during the earlier days of detention as a result of torture. Before the operation, the doctors assessed his condition and found that Mr. Hussain had developed Hepatitis infection in detention. The development of such sickness is related to the bad conditions of the prison where Bahrainis are treated like enemies by the security service. The interior ministry refused to allow Mr. Hussain to be treated in the hospital and returned him to the notorious Qala'a prison.

A delegation from the Arab Labour Union (ALU) left Bahrain on 28 May after failing to achieve any of the intended targets of the visit. The ALU had submitted an official complaint to the Arab Labour Organization against the detention and exiling of unionists in Bahrain as well as complaining against the banning of labour unions in Bahrain. The constitution of the country allows for the establishment of unions, but the government wants to replace unions with powerless workers committees. The ALU delegation, headed by Hassan Jammam, was not allowed to meet with the interior minister as had been promised. Labour polices in Bahrain are politicized in line with the semi-official sectarian policy of the Al-Khalifa government. Unemployment amongst the Shia community is politically driven. There are some 36,000-40,000 unemployed.

According to official figures (see Asharq Al-Awsat of 8 May 1997) the total workforce in 1996 was 268,900. Only 39.3% of these were nationals (ie 101,800 citizens are in the labour market). Many influential members of the ruling Al-Khalifa

family are involved in the importation of cheap labour from the Indian sub-continent. Most of these labourers are imported on a “Free-Visa” arrangement, whereby the “enslaved” labourer is dumped in the labour market for chasing any job opportunity. The importer (agent) charges a percentage of whatever income the labourer earns. According to government figures, an average of 80 Free Visa labourers are imported every day in the country (2400 per month, 28,800 per year) from the Sub-Indian Continent to work in all types of activities. According to the same official figures, 7% of the private sector work-force (ie 2479 persons) earn salaries less than 100 dinars per month (\$267 month). There are 9 Bahraini citizens whose salaries are less than 50 dinars/month. The percentage of national labour has fallen from 43% in 1981 to 39.3% in 1996.

On the hand, it has been revealed that a large number of Bahraini Shia who were born outside Bahrain had their passports confiscated. Many of these are members of the indigenous Bahranah community but for one reason or another were born outside Bahrain. The Shia community is being targeted by the ruling Al-Khalifa family for discrimination in all walks of life. This racist policy takes place at a time when the Al Khalif are importing thousands of mercenaries, awarding them free citizenship and employing them in the death squads being created by the crown prince under the name of “National Guard”.

Bahrain: Sanabis attacked, many injured

2/Jun/1997

The security forces attacked a traditional procession in Sanabis on 1 June injuring scores of people. The residents marched peacefully inside Sanabis when the security forces mounted their attack deploying tear gas and rubber bullets. Eye witnesses spoke of many people of all ages falling on the ground. Scores were arrested on the spot. The residents responded to the aggressive attack by throwing stones at the mercenary forces. All roads leading to Sanabis, 4 km west of the capital Manama, were blocked by security check points stretching from the traffic lights leading to Qafool in one direction to Abul-Karim Roundabout on the other side of the town. The situation remained tense for the rest of the night.

The leading opposition figure and member of both the Constituent and National Assemblies, Sheikh Isa Qassim issued an important statement on 1 June saying “The aims of both the people and the government in Bahrain must be made clear so that a decision may be taken whether to reconcile the situation or to escalate dissent. The people aim for good citizenship with all its responsibilities and rights, and such citizenship is compatible with Islamic belief, values and principles... All the demands are aimed at the pursuit of dignified life and brotherly coexistence amongst all sections of the society for a bright and progressive future. What does the government want? If it wanted security and stability, independence and development, then these are what the people also want. If it wanted to degrade and enslave the nation, to repress and oppress, to break heads, so that a condition of defeat and submission of the people is achieved... then let be know that this will be impossible to achieve. We never accept such an aim from the government and the people will never succumb.”

The Bahrain Freedom Movement, Popular Front in Bahrain and the National Liberation Front issued a joint statement on 31 May stating: “The ruling family is attempting to divert attention from the demands of the constitutional movement by imagining a fictitious environment of economic gains and by talking about “breakthrough-solution” for the border dispute with Qatar. While we hope that the government succeed in solving the dispute with Qatar, we also hope that the ruling family starts to wake-up to the inevitable changes taking place in today’s world. Elections and democracy are sweeping the world and are reaching the Gulf. We believe that there is no real exit to the crisis except through the establishment of serious dialogue with the Committee for Popular Petition (CPP). We are committed in our constitutional approach that is bound by national unity and consensus and we call upon all sections of the society to mobilize their peaceful activities for the democratic future of Bahrain, as outlined in the popular petition that was signed by 25,000 citizens.”

The British House of Common will be debating the relations between the UK and Bahrain on 3 June. Several British MPs have sided with the people of Bahrain. Both the prime minister and the crown prince sent their sons to London last week in the wake of the sweeping victory of the Labour Party. The new UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, has said that human rights and democracy will be integral to his policy.

Bahrain: One person killed by security forces; Sanabis besieged

6/Jun/1997

Another martyr fell today, 6 June 1997. Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Abdulla, 27 years old, was beaten by the security forces that attacked the residents of Sanabis on 1 June. During that attack, the security forces deployed rubber bullets and tear gas before storming houses and damaging at least 50 private cars as part of the collective punishment policy adopted by the ruling Al-Khalifa family against the indigenous population.

Mr. Abdulla was beaten severely by the forcing forces and had been in a critical condition since June 1st.

When the residents of Sanabis received the body of their latest martyr today, the security forces had already been deployed around Sanahis imposing a medical siege. The tense situation is visible for all people coming near the strategic area of Sanabis, west of the capital Manama.

A state of high alerts is also evident around the Qalt_a in Manama, the fort which houses the headquarters for all key offices of the interior ministry including a prison and a detention centre. The fort (Qala_a) also houses the residence of Mr. Ian Henderson, the British head of Bahrain security whose case is being raised by the British members of parliament.

The Al-Khalifa government has been saying that all those tortured or beaten to death by its mercenary forces have died of heart attacks or other normal causes.

The opposition calls on human rights organisations, especially, the Working Groups of the UN Human Rights Centre, to initiate

IIII Bahrain: One person killed by security forces; Sanabis besieged

an investigation aimed at stopping the killing and torture of Bahrainis by the security forces.

Bahrain: Security forces attack citizens in Sanabis and Dah

8/Jun/1997

Clashes erupted in Sanabis and Daih on 8 June. The aggressive attack by the security forces was mounted by 15 jeeps and two lorries. At first, the attacking forces moved one jeep inside the residential area to fire rubber bullets and tear gas on a crowd of people who gathered around the grave of Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Abdulla, killed by the security forces on 6 June. When the citizens responded to the firing jeep and chased it to the main entrances, the attack by the foreign forces started. The 15 jeeps and two lorries unloaded their personnel, tear gas and rubber bullets. The areas around Sanabis and Daik was besieged.

A government spokesperson stated to Reuters that “The (killed) man was arrested on June 1 and was freed on June 3. He later died in hospital from a blood disease”. Another spokesman said to Reuters in a later news release that “The man has died of natural causes”!! In fact Mr. Abdulla was beaten to exhaustion on 1 June, taken to prison by the security forces. They then transferred him to the military hospital as he was dying. On 3 June they moved him to Salmanya Hospital under guard until his death on 6 June.

On Friday and Saturday (6-7 June) columns of tire and loud sounds of exploded cooking gas cylinders were seen and heard in Bilad al-Qadim, Sanahis, Dah, Arad, Sitra and other places. In Bilad al-Qadim, the security forces attacked the house of Jawad al-Bani and started beating the women who had been in a social gathering. Then, Jawad al-Bani, 33, was himself taken to detention centre for torture. The security forces prevented (on 7 June) a programme by the students of the University of Bahrain in commemoration of the latest martyr. On 6 June, in Nuaim’s main Lulu Road, tyres and garbage were set on fire

during protest activities.

The start of June heralded a new phase in the relationship between the ruling family and the people, when a known torturer, Abdul-Azie bin Attiyatulla Al-Khalita was appointed as the governor of Manama. Bahrain administration is being divided into four regions. All security governors will report to the interior minister. All affairs concerning each region must then pass through the governor whose remit includes “maintaining security and ensuring loyalty”. The governors are expected to head a sub-council of 15 mukhtars (chosen individuals). The government also wants to control the mosques and assembly halls of the Shia indigenous community. They started appointing and paying salaries to selected non-qualified persons to lead prayers in mosques. Religious authorities have declared that any person receiving orders or money from the government is “religiously unqualified” and will be boycotted. The opposition condemned the scheme as a further attempt to consolidate the backward and alien tribal rituals on Bahraini society.

The Bahraini opposition condemned the attempt on the life of the distinguished Kuwaiti MP, Mr. Abdulla Al-Nibari who is now in hospital. The reactionary forces are attempting to create confusion by resorting to violence in the same as the security forces in Bahrain resort to violence for derailing the political process.

Bahrain: Mass demonstration in Sanabis, and clashes on the main highway

10/Jun/1997

Clashes continued for the second day around the principal residential area of Sanabis.

The 9th of June marks the third day of the martyrdom of Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Abdulla, who was beaten to death by the security forces. The mass gathering ended the commemoration by marching to the grave of the martyr and from there to the main highway. 'The demonstration led by citizens (men and women) of all ages demanded that those responsible for the killing of Mr. Abdulla to be put on trial.

The foreign forces recruited by the Al-Khalifa family for the repression of the nation mounted an aggressive attack deploying 4"-size rubber bullets, steel-pellets bullets and tear gas. Scores of people were injured including at least one person hit in the eye by a rubber bullet. A 70-years old man was amongst those clashing with the security forces signifying the depth of the feeling amongst the citizens who are being intimidated, harassed, detained, tortured and killed for no reason other than calling for their basic rights. The security forces stormed scores of houses, arrested many people arbitrarily and damaged many private cars as part of the collective punishment programme.

In other areas of Bahrain, such as Sitra, Barbar, Dair, Nuaim, Kareakkan, and other places, the citizens commemorated the martyrdom of Mr. Abdulla. Columns of fire and sounds of explosions were reported in many place. In Bilad al-Qadim, the residents put-on coffin-cloths and went out on the street challenging the bullets of the mercenaries.

Members of indigenous population in Bahrain are being subjected to a racist policy by the ruling Al-Khalita family.

‘The latter has packed its detention centres and camps with members of the Shia community of all ages. The Al-Khalifa ruling wing is assuming that its atrocities will not be opposed by the major and regional powers as long as the victims come from the Shia community. The Al-Khalifa are implementing their worst policies against the Shia religious centres and mosques. The indigenous community had never experienced such an oppression, not even under the Portuguese invasion in the sixteenth century. Religious scholars are being arrested and tortured for refusing to abandon their traditional religious practices.

Tens of thousands of Bedouins are being imported into Bahrain and are being given citizenship, while members of the indigenous population are being forcibly exiled and many are having their passports confiscated. As the world moves toward a pluralist and multi-cultural societies that are free from hatred, the ruling family is intent on continuing its hate-based policies unabated. The opposition condemns all discriminatory policies and calls on the international community to intervene and put an end to these ill-practices that contravene the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Bahrain: Collective punishment against the indigenous population must be stopped

10/Jun/1997

Citizens cross the country vowed that they will never buckle under the oppression of Al-Khalifa. People of Sanabis received thousands of citizens for commemorating the martyrdom of Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Abdulla, who was killed by the security forces on

6 June, six days after his arrest. The riot police attacked Sanabis and destroyed private properties in line with the policy of collective punishment. Rubber bullets (4" long) made in the State of Pennsylvania (USA) were heavily deployed. Two ladies known as Om-Sadiq and Om-Khalil were injured.

Many houses were stormed and ransacked. The following owners of house had their properties damaged: Seyed Abdulla al-Abd, Al-Tabbal (the son Mohammed al-Tabbal is one of those critically injured), Seyed Sale Darwish (the wife was beaten severely inside her room), Mr. Sengais, Saeed Al-Sharakhat, Seyed Mohsin Darwish, al-Barbari, Jawad al-Mokhoder (the 80-years wife was beaten and is now being treated in hospital), Hussain al-Mayyet, Hassan Al-Qallaf, Mr. Al-Habbash, Marzooq Al-Jabal, Khalil and Hamid al-Jabal, Mirza Al-Oreibi, Mr. Al-Adham, Dr.Mohsin Traif's father, Ahmad Abdul Mohsin, Ibrahim Ashor, the house of the martyr Abdul Zahra Ibrahim Abdulla, Molla Salman (17 youths had took refuge and all were beaten until bleeding, then taken prisoners, one of them is known to be Naser Hasan Zain-al-Din. Damaging private cars is another collective punishment practice. The following persons had their cars smashed: Jawad Khamis, Abdul Wahid Mushaima'a, Abdul Hussain al Eskafi, Jasim Abdul Hussain Al Eskafi, Hasan al-Qallaf, Mr. Al-Barbari, Ibrahim Ashor, Hussain Al-Sheikh, Seyed Sale Darwish, and others.

III Bahrain: Collective punishment against the indigenous population must be stopped

A spokesman for the Al-Khalifa government stated to Gulf News Agency that the security authorities “took the necessary measures to disperse this gathering and restore calm and order in the area”. The al-Khalifa assume that they can get away with their collective punishment policy against the indigenous population. This assumption is based on their belief that the important political powers will not oppose the repression of Shia communities.

In other places the situation flared up. The security forces attacked the residents of Ghoreifa in Manama and arrested 35 youths. Columns of fire were reported in the nearby Om-al-Hasam area. In Markh, the security forces attacked the residents and ransacked several houses. Dair witnessed similar clashes and most uprising areas experienced confrontations with the foreign forces.

A 16-page study authored by Professor L. Bahry entitled “the Opposition in Bahrain” in the US journal “Middle East Policy”, Volume V, ISSN 1061-1924, May 1997, concluded “The protest movement in Bahrain is in its third year and shows considerably staying power”, adding the government is “facing a large scale popular movement with a high degree of organization”.

Bahrain: Al-Khalifa accuse the nation of “lacking affiliation” and threatens air strikes

11/Jun/1997

An unprecedented fascist remark by a spokesman for the Al-Khalifa's interior ministry broadcast by the Gulf News Agency on 9 June stated “There have been security violations in the Sanabis area following rioting by a group of people there. They damaged public and private property and showed a lack of awareness, patriotism and affiliation with this dear homeland’. This statement is one of the most indicative ones of the nature of the ruling family in Bahrain.

Not only do they depend on foreign mercenaries for repression of the nation, not only did they exclude themselves from the society in a separate residential area, not only do they regard Bahrain as nothing more than an “acquired-by-force” property, not only that they never identified with the culture and traditions of the civil society in Bahrain that is regarded to be one of the most advanced in many respects, not only that they had shown little respect for the constitution which they co-signed with representatives of the nation, etc, now that we hear statement accusing Bahrainis of “lacking” utilisation. Yes, Bahrainis lack affiliation to the mercenaries of Al-Khalifa, but Bahrain and Bahrainis were, are and will always be inseparable.

Another statement attributed to the Amir carried the same notion. A group of Sanabis elders went to the Trust (Awqaf) Department on 10 June to document the ransacking of musques and assembly halls (matams) following the attacks of Al-Khalita mercenary forces. The head of Shia Waqf, Mr. Ahmad Mansoor Al-A'ali said “the sheikhs of Al-Khalifa are angry with us (Shia) and the Amir is threatening to authorize air strikes against Sanabis. So do not expect me to be able to do anything about damaging mosques or matams”.

This policy of revenge and hate was evident in the Jamala district of Sanabis, where the foreign forces destroyed televisions, refrigerators, garages, cars, furniture, poured water on beds, beaten entire families inside their house, and destroyed what ever they came across.

In 1995, the head of the crown prince office, Khalid bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa exchanged Bedouin poems with another person (Ahmad bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa). The exchanged poems carried explicit insults of extremely bad-taste together with pledges to use brutal force against the community. Such a bad language is common practice amongst such individuals who have never behaved properly.

The opposition calls on the international community to pay attention to the racism in Bahrain. Such racist and fascist remarks have fuelled and will continue to fuel unrest in Bahrain as the ruling wing of Al-Khalifa fails to identify with the people of the country and continues to misbehave assuming that the international community would not condemn the victimization and repression of the indigenous population.

Bahrain: Houses made uninhabitable by the Al-Khalita

13/Jun/1997

The security forces continued their aggression against residential areas, while mysterious fires were reported in many areas of Bahrain. On 12 June, several residents in Bilad al-Qadim were injured by rubber bullets when the mercenary forces attacked a traditional congregation in “Matam Ansar-al-Hussain” assembly hall. Scores of citizens were detained. ‘The security forces also started a siege on 12 June around Sanabis and it is expected that the siege will continue on Friday 13 June. Another aggression by the foreign forces is expected. Many houses in Sanabis have been made uninhabitable following the aggressive attacks in the past few days.

During their aggression, the mercenaries deployed rubber bullets (4” size) and steel-pellets bullets (100 uff, 3mm size steel pellets in each bullet that spread in the hit body or object). Iman Saeed Al-Manami, 7-year old girl, was hit by a steel-pellets bullet and is now in hospital. Mansour Abdul Nabi l’ardan Al-Jerdabi, 20, was hit in the chest and in the eye by the steel pellets. All Juma had three of his ribs broken. Abdul Amir Darwish, 23, and Jasim Abdul Hussain Al-Eskafi were also hit by steel-pellets bullets.

The ruling wing of Al-Khalifa family is assuming that the UN, US, and other important powers would turn a blind eye to these crimes so long as the victims are from the Shia indigenous community. The indiscriminate use of force against a community practicing its 1400-year old tradition and the destruction of houses are shameful crimes. The opposition calls on the international community to stand against these hate-based policies in line with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Reuters reported on 12 June that six persons will go on trial on Saturday 14 June on charges of possessing “unlawful” leaflets. The six, arrested in April 1996, are Hassan Qassab, Shaker al-Mahouzi, Mirza al-Qatari, Saleh Hassan, Ali Isa Ahmed and Hussain Howaida. Political detainees in Jaw Prison started a hunger strike on 6 June protesting against the ill-treatment of the jailers. On 9 June, the situation in Bahrain was raised again in the British Parliament, this time in the House of Lords. Lord Avebury asked Her Majesty’s Government: “What discussions they have had at ministerial level with Bahrain, and whether their policy of encouraging democracy and human rights extends to Bahrain”. Lord Carter responded: “My Lords, my honourable friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr.

Derek Fatchett, met the Bahraini ambassador on 15th May and the Bahraini minister for Communications and transport on 20th May. Human rights issues were discussed. My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence met the Bahraini undersecretary for defence on 28th May. As my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary made clear on the pursuit of democracy and will put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy. That policy will apply equally in our dealings with Bahrain. We will continue to have regard for the many other aspects of our long-standing relationship”

Bahrain: Clashes and fires proliferate, helicopters deployed

14/Jun/1997

Friday, 13 June, witnessed some of the worst events this year. Following the destruction of houses in Sanabis, the security forces imposed a siege against Sanabis on Thursday 12 June. Reuters reported “four Asians died and a fifth is in critical condition after an arson attack on a shop in the Bahraini capital Manama on Friday, an interior ministry official said. The officials said the four died from smoke inhalation... Friday’s blaze was the latest in a series of fires to hit the island, the Gulf’s main financial and banking centre, this week”. Highlights of the main events are as follows : Bilad al-Qadim was attacked on 12 June.

On Friday, 13 June, the residents challenged the foreign forces by putting-on coffin-cloths and going out on the streets. Security forces attacked private properties and damaged many cars as well as houses as part of the collective punishment programme.

A siege was impose and helicopters were deployed together with sporadic live ammunition. Clashes lasted between 4.00 pm till 11.00 pm (local time). More than 40 persons were taken prisoners including: Ali Al Mahal, 38, Abd Ali Ahmad Marhoon, 33, Makki Hassan Makki, 19, Isa Hassan Makki, 35, Mosa Hassan Makki, 28, (these are the persons in-charge of Matam Ansar-al-Hussain, that was fully ransacked by the security forces who also poured paint on the carpets), Ibrahim Ahmad, Mohmood Mirza, 16, Mirza Hamid Ahmad, 36, Ali Ahmad Al-Mahoozi, 36, Yasir al-Sammak, 25. The following people had their cars damaged: Naser Al-Toblani, Jawad Al-Aali, Sheikh Mahdi Mosa, Hamza Al-Basri, Abdul Hussain Abdul Aal, Seyed Jamil Kadhem, Seyed Hassan Saeed Marzook, Seyed Mohammad Alawi, Seyyed Qassim Hussain Qassim, The following people had their house ransacked and

contents damaged: Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas (his wife was beaten severely), Yasir Al-Sammak, Seyed Saeed Marzoog, and other.

At 3.30pm, a group of foreign forces entered Duraz and started threatening the citizens that they will be punished if a procession starts. At 5.00pm, the citizens had gathered and the security forces started firing rubber bullets and tear gas. Four lorries packed with forces arrived on the scene and clashes intensified with the forces fleeing the area in the face unarmed citizens. Helicopters were then deployed together with sporadic live ammunition. Collective punishment started with the damaging of private cars and ransacking of houses. Budaya Highway was blocked for 2 hours until 7.00pm. Duraz remained under attack until 8.30 pm. Many people were injured and arrested, some of them in critical conditions.

Similar clashes were reported in Sehla, Qadam, Bani Jamra, Sitra and other uprising areas. Lorries packed with troops drove at fast speeds along the roads stretching along the northwest and central regions. Columns of fire and loud sounds of explosions were reported across the country. The opposition believes that the collective punishment policy as well as the heavy-handedness of the security forces stand behind the latest flare-up of events.

Bahrain: The government vows to continue its misguided policies

15/Jun/1997

The situation in Bahrain worsened following the announcement of the government that four Asians died in fire in Manama on 13 June. Unlike the interior ministry which claims that citizens in detention die of heat attacks, the opposition denounces all acts of violence resulting in the death of people, citizens or otherwise. The opposition calls for independent enquiry in all events of violence for establishing the causes and punishing the perpetrators.

The security forces launched several aggressions against the citizens and many people were critically injured, lost their properties or taken prisoners for torturing. At the same time, Al-Ayam semi-official newspaper carried a leading article on 14 June attacking Britain's Minister Derek Fatchett and the Labour MP, George Galloway. Esmat Al-Mosawi, the BBC correspondent in Bahrain quoted an official saying that the government might ban the religious activities of the Shia community. All these pieces of news complete the picture of the strategy adopted by the misguided ruling establishment. The present ruling wing of the Al-Khalifa family does not identify itself with the people, but rather considers itself in a state of virtual war, and for this reason the possibility of rationalizing the situation is not yet materializing.

On 14 June, a loud explosion shocked the Diplomatic Area at around 8.00 am of Manama. News agencies said the explosion was caused by a gas cylinder. Another explosion was reported in Manama around 7.00 pm. Aggression against the residents of Bilad al-Qadim continued on Saturday 14 June, when the foreign forces attacked Matam Al-Jeshi and destroyed its contents. This follows the destruction of contents of Matam

Ansar-al-Hussain on Friday. The continuation of these acts of hatred (which have never happened in Bahrain) means that the ruling family is carelessly tempering with the religious feeling of the people. Earlier on Saturday, interior ministry's team of sweepers with tractors, swept the outskirts of Dura to clear the area from the remnants of the clashes of Friday and hence avoid the filming of the scene by foreign journalists. Similar sweeping was taking places in other areas that witnessed heavy clashes.

Reuters reported on 14 June that a security court convicted six citizens "of possessing unlawful leaflets, but said the men should be set free because they had already spent 14 months in jail, a lawyer said". "The court found them guilty but (found) that the period they had spent in jail was enough," the lawyer told Reuters. The six defendants were also fined 200 dinars (\$531) each, he said. The six Bahrainis • imprisoned since their arrest in April 1996 - are Hassan Qassab, Shaker al-Mahouzi, Mirza al-Qatari, Sale Hassan, Ali Isa Ahmed and Hussain Howaida"

Hani Al-Rayyis, writing in Al-Quds on 14 June, said that "international human rights organization are sceptical about Bahrain because the government refuses to acknowledge the existence of social, economical and political crises. The government is advised to learn from the experiences of other nations and realize that mightier dictatorships vanished when they refused to learn from pitfalls*. A similar sentiment was expressed by the London-based newsletter "Dialogue in its June issue which said "with such increasing interest from international bodies and other governments, the Bahraini Government would be wise to listen and take heed".

Bahrain: Medieval court sentence more citizens

19/Jun/1997

The medieval security court presided by a member of the al-Khalifa sentenced seven citizens on 18 June, for terms up of five and half years. The courts violate all norms known to the civilized world and is used by the Al-Khalifa family as a mechanism for revenge. The court bases its sentences on confession extracted under torture, does not adhere to a due process and does not allow any proper legal defence. All the hundreds of citizens who have been sentenced by this court are considered by human rights organizations as arbitrarily detained and must be released immediately. Their presence in Al-Khalifa jails means that the political crisis is becoming a terminal feature.

Following calls by the leading religious and political figure, citizens have rallied around the victims of the aggressions of the security forces. Many people have had their houses ruined and properties destroyed as part of the collective punishment programme implemented by the Al-Khalifa family against the indigenous population.

The Al-Khalifa assumes that these crimes would not be condemned by the international community so long as the sufferers come from the Shia community. This is also based on a medieval concept which the ruling family believes in.

Believing they are the children of Al-Fateh (the Conqueror) means -in accordance with medieval politics. "a Conqueror may legitimately appropriate lands, shed blood and commit indecency against the conquered nation". This inhuman concept lies at the heart of all the practices of a ruling mentality that attempts to continue with its medieval practice in time and place of advanced humanism.

The funeral of the four guest Indian person was paraded by the government as if the citizens were responsible for such a criminal act. The security forces raided houses, damaged and committed all types of arson against the peaceful nation. The chief arsonists are members of the foreign security forces who are paid • as mercenaries • to commit all types of crimes. Religious and political figures have all denounced violence and called on the ruling family to updates its mentality and attitude to match today's world and hence save Bahrain from disasters.

While the country suffer, the ruling family continues to imagine prosperity. One report • The 1997 UN Human Development- rated Bahrain as the 43rd country in terms life expectancy, education and per capita income according to real gross domestic product (based on 1994 figures). The report does not address lack of fair wealth distribution or the lack of basic rights, which Bahrain, under the Al-Khalita, would rank the worst. Last year, a US Heritage Foundation gave Bahrain one of the freest economies. This of course considers the “freedom” which the ruling family and a tiny parasitic section enjoy. Such “free” practices result in the daily importation of an average of 80 new labourers (2400 per month, 28,800 per year) from the Sub-Indian Continent into Bahrain's job market in return for commissions charged from this new form of slavery. Thirty months on since the start of the uprising and this “free” practice never ceased.

Bahrain: International condemnation; Mass arbitrary detentions

22/Jun/1997

Amnesty International (AI) and Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) issued their annual reports in the past few days with Bahrain's government scoring some of the worst offences and abuse of human rights. AI said that "several hundred people, among them prisoners of conscience were arrested in connection with demonstrations demanding the restoration of democratic rights. Most were held incommunicado for months without charges or trial. At least 150 people (in the past year) received unfair trials before the State Security Court. Torture was widely reported, and an increasing number of women and children were ill-treated. At least one person died in custody, apparently as a result of torture, and four people were reportedly shot or beaten to death by members of the security forces. Three people were sentenced to death and one person was executed, the first execution in nearly 20 years. Bahraini nationals suspected of opposition political activities continued to be banned from entering the country...". The AOHR pointed out that some 500 Bahrainis remained forcibly exiled, while torture and unfair trials before the State Security Court continued.

Unfortunately, the situation continues to look grim. The collective punishment programme, and the vicious cycle of violence caused by aggressions of the security forces against the citizens are further weakening business confidence and worsening recession. A Japanese investment bank (Okasan) and the Gulf Riyadh Bank have closed down. Many permits were offered to foreign institutions up-front, but these businesses have yet to take a decision to come to Bahrain. For the situation to prosper, stability is needed, and such stability can only be achieved through the restoration of constitutional rule.

Many citizens were arbitrarily arrested in the past few days. From Sitra: Abdul Rasool Ali Fardan, Abdul Amir Ali Ashor, the father of Fadhil Seyyed Allawi was taken hostage until the son handed himself to the security forces, Jaffer Ahmad Al Tamr, 23, Seyyed Ahmed Majd.17. Saleh Mahdi Ramadan, 34 and his brother Ahmad, 37, Jaffer Ahmad, 30, Ali mansoor Hamad, 23, Seyyed Jaffer Adnan, 25, Shakir Abdul Husain, Abdul Shahid Abdul karim and his brother Ali and Basil, Hussain Mossa, Sayed Ali Saeed,40, Ali Ibrahim Al-Asfoor, From Karzakkan: Hassan Saleh, 23, Jamil Seyyed Mohammed Radhi, 21, Abdul Jalil Makki,21 ----- hassan Makki Darwish, 27. From Dair: Haji Jaffer Mohammed, 71 (elderly person), together with his son hassan, 28.From Sansbis Sa'asa'a Abdul Karim, 17.Nasir HasanZein,21 Abdul Amir Darwish, 20 (was hit by a bullet in the shoulder, injured and arrested inside his bedroom). From Hamad Town. Kadhim Jaffer Mohammed Isa, 28, Nabil Ali Al-Taitoon,23. From Jedhafs Ghalib Ali Hammad, 16. From Barbar, Hani Hamza Yousif, 24 (Architect). From Dar Kulaib: Jabir Habib Yousif, 35, Mohammed Hussain Haram, 24 and his brother Hussain, 18 Hassan Ahmed Nasir,18, Jassim Salman Jaffer, 17, Sayyed Hussain Abbas Mohsin, 18, Ali Hasan Rashid, 26, Ibrahim hassn Ibrahim, 26, Hasan Isa, 19 Abbas Ramadan, 20, Ali Abdul Hussain Ahmed, 21, his brother Hussain, 20, Nasir Saleh Naisr, 18, Ali Habib Laith, 19, Saeed Abdul Nabi, 18 Fadhil Ali Ahmed, 18 .From Daih, Hussain Abd Ali Hassan, 14, Jaffer Ahmed,15, Hassan Jaffer Al-Rebaa 11, as well as his father.

Bahrain: A UN official conducts a witch-hunt against citizens in Bahrain

29/Jun/1997

A dangerous precedent took place at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office in Manama. A delegation of Bahraini citizens visited the UNDP office in Salamanyah district of Manama on 18 June to submit a letter and a videocassette addressed to the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan. The letter was an official complaint against the atrocities of the security forces committed against the indigenous population. The videocassette contained evidence from the latest attacks against Sanabis and Bilad al-Qadim. The UNDP directed the citizens to the main UN office in Jufair, where the letter and videocassette was later delivered to the designated official. However, the U/N Resident Coordinator (a Sudanese person by the name Faisal Abdul Qadir, 48 years) took upon his shoulder to conduct a witch-hunt for identifying the citizens for handing them over to the security authorities in Bahrain. Mr. Abdul Qadir might also have blocked the transmission of the letter and the videocassette to the UN Secretary General.

He also called the Bahraini security personnel and the latter were spotted conducting searches around the offices of the UN. This is a dangerous move by a UN official with an international diplomatic status. The opposition has called on the U/N Human Rights offices in New York and Geneva to intervene and investigate the alleged wrongdoing of Mr. Abdul Qadir. There are also rumours that the Bahraini authorities have promised Mr. Abdul Qadir a Bahrain citizenship for his special services. A copy of the submitted letter is available from the BFM.

A security court headed by a member of the ruling family sentenced 16 citizens. The unconstitutional court divided the citizens into two groups, 10 and 6. The group of 10 was

sentenced between 1-5 years together with fines ranging from BL 300-800 (\$800-2.136). The group of 6 was sentenced between 2-3 years. The sentences of this court are all considered null and void by the Bahraini constitution as well as by the international human rights organizations.

The opposition calls for the release of all-political prisoners and detainees, especially those sentenced by this feudal court.

On the other hand, the family of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas was prevented from visiting the respected religious scholar. News from the prisons said that his health had deteriorated. The scholar had just been released after a one-year jail sentence, only to be re-detained administratively under the provisions of the State Security Law.

Confidential reports indicate that justice minister has started appointing persons for the religiously rejected “High Council for Islamic Affairs” intended for taking-over religious institutions. A person by the name “Mohammed Bager bin Sheikh Sa’ced Al-Mubarak” is believed to have been appointed for one of the positions. ‘The affected people have already declared a policy of total rejection and boycott.

Sounds of explosions and columns of fire were reported in several places on 28 June, including Duraz and Bilad al-Qadim, as well as near the main Abdul-Karim Roundabout in Jechals region.

Bahrain: DIA correspondent expelled, ICRC visit prisoners

2/Jul/1997

The Bahraini information ministry expelled the German DIA correspondent, Ute Menial, from the country on 1 July. She had covered the news of Bahrain and the Gulf from Manama for three years. The world has now tasted and understood the backwardness and the types of lies fabricated by the information ministry. The latter claimed that the German news agency “apologized”. This is what the official GNA story said; “the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Information received a written apology from the DPA head office in Hamburg”. In fact DIA and Reuters said “The German Noreign Office in Bonn summoned Bahrain’s ambassador so it could express Germany’s disagreement with what it called Bahrain’s ‘harsh reaction’,” DIA said that its correspondent had been expelled for a report she wrote quoting the Bahrain Freedom Movement. The Al-Khalifa representatives never seem to be ashamed of their misbehaviour. Last year Reuter’s correspondent, Abbas Salman, was arrested for reporting the events in Bahrain. In 1984, All correspondents were expelled from Bahrain. Presently, there is only one major news agency operating in Manama, the Associated Press, which is keeping a low profile in reporting the events. The GNA “fiction” continued the story of expelling DIA correspondent by highlighting “Bahrain’s importance and the facilities and atmosphere of freedom of press”!

Thousands of people converged on Bilad al-Qadim to offer their sympathy and condolences for the family of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas who was killed by the security authorities un 29 June. Leading national figures, such as Ali Kabea and Mohammed Jaber Sabah, both members of the Committee for Popular Petition ((‘PP) and members of the dissolved Bahraini

parliament, were amongst the first to visit the family of the martyr. Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal condemning the killing of Sheikh A-Nachas and calling for bringing those responsible to justice. In the first day of martyrdom (29 June), the foreign forces attacked Bilad al-Qadim and arrested scores of people. Sheikh Al-Nachas was forcibly buried in Hooraa Cemetery.

The son of Sheikh Al-Nachas, Abdulla, 19, was in jail when his father martyred. Because of the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) he was released for 3 days. In an interview with the BBC Arabic Service he shocked the nation by describing how his father was ill-treated and denied medical care when he needed it.

Abdulla also said that his father campaigned peacefully for the restoration of the parliament. It is feared that the intelligence department might torture him when he returns to prison and after the departure of the ICRC.

In an interview with the Mideast Mirror of 30 June, the ex-MP, Dr. Abdul Had Khalat said the death of Al-Nachas is an indication of how bad the prisons' conditions are. He also said the root problem is that the Al-Khalifa considers themselves "conquerors" and treat the nation as "conquered people"

News-agencies reported that "several gas cylinders exploded on 1 July (around 4.00 am) in the kitchen of the Demon International Hotel, severely Damaging the building but causing no casualties". Another loud explosion was heard in Manama on 30 June.

Bahrain: Demonstrators march through the capital

3/Jul/1997

Hundreds of people gathered in Hoora Cemetery of Manama to commemorate the 3rd day of martyrdom of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas, who was killed by the interior ministry while in detention. At the end of the commemoration ceremony, hundreds marched through the capital Manama going through the old city centre, stretching from the American Missionary Hospital, into Sheikh Abdulla Road and ending in Nuaim district. Shops closed down as the demonstrators forced their way while the security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets. This demonstration proved that the will of the people is mightier than the mercenary forces imported from all over the world for the purpose of repressing the nation. Several other places witnessed clashes simultaneously, including Bani Jamra, Daih, Sanabis, Qerrayah, and Dura.

In a letter to the BI'M sent by a person who had been with Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas in prison explained "in January 1996, Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas was brought handcuffed and blind-folded, despite the fact that he was blind. He was thrown in a tent that had been constructed in the middle of the Fort, Qal'a. For 17 days, Sheikh Ali remained handcuffed despite his conditions. He was then taken to the medical centre in Oal'a for treatment. 'The head of the doctors, a Dr. Mohammed Ali, sneered at his blindness and said: (You are old and you are a liar, get out from here, there is nothing wrong with you), When the handcuffs were removed, Sheikh Ali started teaching us Quran and never stopped speaking to the guards, advising them to go back to their countries and to stop ill-treating the prisoners. In turn, they handled him roughly beaten, slapped on the face and pushed on the floor and stepped on.'

The Kuwaiti interior minister is in Bahrain following the

failure of the Al-Khalit to extend its form of repression to the Bahraini community in Kuwait. There are still four Bahraini citizens held in Kuwait. There is a mounting pressure from Kuwaiti circles for the release of these wronged people.

It was announced that the IN overall coordinator in Bahrain, Faisal Abdul Qadir, will be the main guest of party to be organized by the information ministry on 6 July. The Bahraini government has promised Abdul Qadir a Bahraini passport in return for his special services. Last week he conducted a witch-hunt against Bahraini citizens who handed a letter of complaint addressed to the UN Secretary General. The opposition has complained to the UN Human Rights Centre that the letter might not reach the UN Secretary General. He will also be responsible for any harm caused to the submitters.

Some of those arrested during the commemoration ceremonies were: Mohammed Abdul Jabar Ibrahim, 20, Adel Abdul Shahid Al-Eskafi, 22, Abdul Wahab Hamid Al-Sha'abani, 30, Abbas Juma Ahmad, 22, Seyyed Ilamza Mostafa Shihah, 27, Tawfiq Abdul Wahab Mohsin Al-Satarwah, Abdul Nabi Ali Ahmad Al-Satarwah, Agil Hassan Al-Sudani and his brother Radhi, Ilasan Ibrahim Al-Asad (injured), Salman Abdulla, 28 (injured), Ahdul Hussain Mirza, 30, his brother Agil, 23, Abdul Jabbar Al-Satfar, 27, Seyyed Hussain Khoder, 16, Saeed Ilasan Al-Basri, 33, Sadiq Abdulla Madan, 15.

Bahrain: Citizens injured in atrocious attacks

6/Jul/1997

Bahrain suffers from the abuses of a governing establishment that does not identify with the nation. On 4 July, the mercenary forces attacked Bilad Al-Qadim deploying tear gas and rubber bullets. They also deployed the sharp-particles bullets that spread large number of painful particles in the body and started beating citizens indiscriminately. The wife of Seyed Bagir Ali had her chin broken by several direct beating on the face. The mercenary forces arrested many people who gathered for a traditional program at “Matam Al Jishi” of Bilad al-Qadim and attached three local mosques and arbitrarily arrested several people including: Sayed Khalil Sayed Majid, Khalil Juma, Ali Juma, Rhadi Al Hawwaj, Shaker Al Hawwaj, Anwar Al Hawwaj (the three are brothers of Sheikh Hamza Al-Hawwaj who was detained over a year and a half ago), Mohammed Jawad Al-Aradi, Amar Mayat, Nasir Al-Dafani, Jaffer Al-Badrani, Hassan Yousif Al-Khal.

On 3 July, clashes in Manama surfaced when riot police besieged the districts of Ras-Romman, Nuaim and Makharga districts of the capital, Manama. In Nuaim, the security forces fired tear gas at mid-night (12.00 am, and early hours of Friday, 4 July). Many residents were arrested and several had been injured. The tense situation continued with further attacks reported around Nuaim and towards Makharga. The local Nuaim police station that contains a detention centre was reported to be full-house with many citizens picked-up from the street arbitrarily.

Similarly in Sitra, the security forces attacked the citizens with rubber and sharp-particles bullets and several people were injured. In Sehla, scores of youths were arrested. In Sanabis, the citizens marched in a mass procession raising the posters of

the jailed leaders and calling for the restoration of parliament as well as bringing those responsible for the killing of people to justice. One person, Mamdoh Awal, 22, is known to be amongst those arrested. In Samahij, the following were arbitrarily arrested on 2 July: Jaffer Abdul Redh Mohammed, 17, his two brothers Hassan, 16, Hussain, 16, Shamsan Abdulla Hassan, 16, Mohammed Ahmad Yousif, 16.

Reuters reported on 6 July that a “power generator blew up at a luxury hotel in the Bahraini capital Manama”. *The fire at the Diplomat Hotel was caused by an electricity generator explosion,” the official said. “The blaze occurred on the 14th floor, but there were no casualties or damage.” One firefighter at the 14-storey hotel said: “The fire was small but the smoke was thick.” Residents and local newspapers said a fire had damaged Moonlight Restaurant near Ramada Hotel in Manama on Friday night, but there was no immediate report of casualties. Another blaze on Friday gutted a sweet factory and damaged a nearby building and several residential rooms occupied by Asian workers in Muharrag, linked to Manama by a three km (two mile) causeway. A third fire destroyed a building also in Muharrag”.

Al-Arab newspaper published a lengthy interview on 4 July with the representative of the Popular Front in Bahrain, Mr. Abdul Nabi Al-Ekri. Al-Ekri said that the “Al-Khalifa are still considering themselves as Conquerors owning a conquered nation.

Bahrain: Collective punishment and ransacking of residential areas

8/Jul/1997

Brutal attacks on Sitra resulted in the injuring of a five-year old child, Mohammed Abdul Adhim, together with his mother, both of whom are now in hospital suffering from wounds caused by the tiring of sharp-particles bullets. ‘The Al-Khalifa rulers have authorized the use of many types of bullets on the assumption that the international community would not condemn the repression of the indigenous population.

The security forces conducting a house-to-house ransacking operation in the villages of Wadyan and Kharjeja of Sitra island. They stormed houses, destroyed properties and led scores of youths to the torture chambers. Clashes and tires spread in Sitra for the past week with daily reports of intensified aggressions by the mercenaries. The foreign forces used the pretext of the suspicious death of a guest worker in a blaze that gutted a cold store on 5 July to ransack shops, destroy cars and storm houses. The collective punishment crackdown continued until Sam of Monday 7 July.

Citizens in Duraz and Bani Jamra clashed with the foreign forces on Saturday 5 July. At 03:30 pm, riot police attacked Duraz and smashed 22 cars as part of the collective punishment programme. When the cars’ owners complained to the police, they were told that these attacks were not “notifiable offences”.

On 6 July, Ali bin Ahmed Al-Shehab and Abdul Razaq Zain al-Din leaders of assembly halls - matams) were summoned by al-Khamis police station and threatened that the assembly halls will be shut down. Also, the minister of justice, summoned senior personalities and threatened them that more mosques and assembly halls will be ransacked and shut down if the citizens

continue calling for political reforms.

Fires, sounds of explosions, and clashes were reported in many places. Security men were deployed around the market in Manama. The capital was the scene of clashes last week when the foreign forces attempted to prevent the citizens from mourning the martyrdom of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas who was killed in detention.

The following people were arrested. From South Schla: Tahir Seyed Ali, 15, Jawad Jatter Mosa, 15, Ahmad Ali Hassan, 15, (both were injured by sharp-particles cluster bullets). In Ma'amir, a group of foreign forces surrounded Mohammed Sarhan, 18 and started beating him on 4 July. Citizens rushed to salvage the citizen, but the mercenaries fired at them and arrested Mohammed Sarhan together with Abdul Nabi Mansoor, 18, who attempted to stop the torture of Mr. Sarhan.

Reuters reported on 7 July that "Chase Manhattan Bank, offshore banking unit (OBU)" decided to close down the Bahrain offices at the end of July and move to London. The worsening situation has also forced the Japanese Okasan International to liquidate the company from 1 July, a bank official told Reuters.

Bahrain: Serious dialogue is the only way for solving the crisis

10/Jul/1997

Sheikh Isa Qassim, the distinguished religious and political figure (member of both the Constituent and National Assemblies) issued a statement on 9 July stating “The initiation of serious dialogue that conforms with the truthful values of justice is a language welcomed by all rational people for solving problems. The people in Bahrain have non-extravagant legitimate demands. The people’s position is solid... The popular reform movement has its representatives who are on the ground and on the forefront: Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri together with his imprisoned colleagues as well as those forcibly exiled. This representation was proven by action, not by words. Negotiations relating to people’s matters are not like business negotiations. They are the manifestation of painful struggle, values and spiritual feelings... The slogans of the reform movement are rights-based. The government must guarantee the deprived rights. The end of the crisis is in the attainment of these rights. The martyrdom of Sheikh Ali Al-Nachas is the responsibility of the government until proven otherwise. I condemn all the fires and sabotage that destroy properties and that cause death. There are agents provoking the situation. Independent investigation are non-existent. We call on the government to put an end by starting to bring to justice all those known persons who caused the death of people starting with the well-known person who caused death under torture”

The siege and collective punishment against the citizens in Sitra continued with further house-to-house raids and ransacking. The 5-year old Mohammed Abdul Al-Adhim and his mother are still suffering from the injuries inflicted on them by the forces. Amongst those known to have been arbitrarily

arrested were: All Abdul Nahi Rahea, Mohammed Yasin, Hamza Abdul Wahab, Abdul Oadir Ahmad Salman Al-Hawi, 27, and his twin brothers Hassan and Hussain, both 15 , Reyadh Hassan Abdul Nabi, 17, Amer Abbas Jassim, 15, Isa Abdulla Isa, 19, and his brothers Raed, 16, and Nader, 18, Seyyed Majid Khalat, 16, Mohammed Salman Al-Sheikh, 20, Sale Fardan Al-Manami, 22, Abbas Ali Abbas Kweyyed, 27.

The house of Mohammed Dhraboh in Nuweidrat was raided and had its contents destroyed. The ignorant forces demanded that Mr. Dhraoh hands over his son, Jasim, who is FIVE-years old. A teacher from Bilad al-Oadim, Sa'eed Abdulla Al Basri (who works in a school in Isa Town) was arrested accused of refusing to identify a student thought to have written slogans on exam papers. The forces had arrested 57 person from Bilad al-Qadim (20 of whom have been transferred to the "Dry Dock-Hidd" prison while the rest are still in al-Khamis prison).

'The former 3,500-ton USS Jack Williams frigate arrived on 9 July in Mina Salman to serve as the island's first warship. The gift's upgrade work cost \$50 million. At the same time the ruling family requested the purchase of 20 1-16 M/B (or 10 1-16 C/D) fighter jets, along with U.S. training and spare parts costing around \$300 million. While the US Congress approval is being processed, the Al-Khalifa are using these equipment as scare-crow. Last month the Amir threatened air strikes against citizens.

Bahrain: Crimes against humanity

12/Jul/1997

The siege and ransacking of Sitra lasted for six days from Friday 4 July to Thursday 11 July). Men, women and children were lined up by security forces in rows and pinched with the sharp knives at the end of the machine guns. Ladies were beaten in front of their relatives with shocking news of manually handling the women as part of the collective punishment scheme. The news from Wadyan and Kharjeya villages of Sitra Island is continuing to shock the nation. Witnesses described how a cluster bullet exploded in the chest of the 5-year old Mohammed Abdul-Adhim, who is now in hospital together with his mother. The interior ministry claimed it had arrested four people. In fact, the number is more than a hundred. The four persons (referred to in the official report) are Khalil Ibrahim Makki, 17, Hamad Salman Al-Aali, 17, Makki Abdulla Makki, 14, and Zakarya Jasim Ahmad, 17. The latter was not in the house, so the security forces took his sister as a hostage until he gave himself up.

So horrific was the news from Sitra that the interior ministry rushed to create a distraction. The evil forces stormed an assembly hall (Matam) in Iskan-Jedhafs and set it on fire at 6.30 am on Friday 11 July. Later in the day, the interior ministry surrounded the area with security forces and some agents working in the local press were ordered to photograph the scene. Witnesses believe that the Al-Khalifa rulers have authorized a dirty campaign. The security forces are setting shops, houses and now, matam on fire, then blaming the fires on the citizens, to be followed by house-to-house raids and ransacking. This vicious episode can only worsen the situation as the people realize that this ruling establishment continues to behave irresponsibly.

The opposition calls on the international human rights

organizations to intervene and to force the establishment of an independent investigation to put an end to the misbehaviour of the foreign security forces and their agents who are attempting to provoke wide-scale violence and arson.

Some of those arrested in the past few days were as follows. From Sitra: Jaffer Hasan Abo-Sara, 24, Mohammed Hasan Abo-Sara, 20, Sadiq Ali Al-Durazi, 19, Ali Abdul Nabi Habib, 18, Hassan Abdul Nabi Mabib, 18, Mansoor Ibrahim al-Attar, 16, Mohammed Yasin Mohammed, 19, Jabir Mohammed Ali, 20, Hamza Ahmad Al-Modhbet, 32, Hasan Ali Al-Jerdabi, 24. From Qerraya: Seyyed Mortadha Shobbar Helal, 28, Seed Abbas Abdulla Ahmad, 19, Seyyed Hashim Husain Mohsin, 17, Seyyed Kadhim Adnan Mohsin, 17, Seyyed Yousif Hasan Yousif, 16, Seyyed Hamid Salih Adnan, 14, Ahmad Abdul Nabi Al-Sari, 15, Seyed Ali Nazar Alawi, 14, and his brother Hassan, 13, Agil Abdul Hassan Abdulla, 21, Jasim Ahmad abdulla, 20, Ahmad Mahdi Mahfoodh, 16, Mohammed Matooq All, 15, Seyyed Mahmood All, 16, and his brother Agil, 14, Abdul Mohsin Isa Abdul Mohsin, Ali Ahmad Abdulla, 14, Jaffer Saeed, 14, Zuhair, 14, Hussain Mohammed Ashor, 14. From Isa Town: Jalal Mansoor, 15, Jabir Ali Redha, 16, Hassan Saleh, 16, Mostafa Ahmad Salman, 16, Fadhil Al-Mahoozi, 18 (he was arrested in Salmanya Hosptial while undergoing a medical testament).

Bahrain: A “Not-very-clever” campaign initiated by Al-Khalifa

14/Jul/1997

The brutality of the Al-Khalifa regime is now being augmented by a campaign of deception, rumours and “not-very-clever” lies. Had there been a wise political leadership, Bahrain would have been saved from the never-ending crisis. The Al-Khalifa adopted a strategy for discrimination and victimisation against the indigenous community. They assumed, as their torturers always stated to the detained citizens, that “as long as the victims come from the Shia community, then the regional and international political powers will turn a blind eye”.

The hate-based policy peaked on 3 June 1996, when the Al-Khalifa claimed that they uncovered a coup-attempt against their rule. Later on, a handful of youths and teenagers were sentenced to jail terms up to 15 years. Then, the public was told that Qatar attempted to destabilise the country and that the Bahrain Defence Force was being prepared for a hundred wars. Later, the heir apparent, who led that campaign, proposed a full unification with Qatar! Qatari leaders told him that such a proposal needed what he fears most: “public referendum”. Nothing has been heard since then. The complex situation got worse when the events re-surfaced with more martyrs falling in detention centres and during demonstrations.

The regime’s advisors feel they had ran out of fictions. Iran’s relations with Saudi Arabia and Egypt are improving and the small State of Bahrain would not be allowed to accuse Iran in the coming period. Hence another trick must be found. Migrant repression and discrimination against the indigenous Shia population is being internationally exposed. The UN, as well as international media, are being presented with documentary evidence of the racist policies. The people are arriving at a solid

reality: that this ruling establishment does not identify with the people of Bahrain and has shown its preparedness to continue hating. It imported thousands of mercenaries, granted them citizenship, armed and deployed them against the citizens.

All the above explain why the ruling establishment initiated its latest ploy. Following the shocking crimes committed against the citizens in Sitra, the security forces burnt a matam (assembly hall) in Iskan-Jedhats on 11 July. Another one, in Muqsha’a, was also set ablaze on 12 July. The Al-Khalifa rulers hope that burning the Shia religious places, and then blaming these on the Shin themselves would help them create internal conflicts. This would also provide them with an excuse to continue their original policy of ransacking mosques and assembly halls, which they have been doing for the past thirty months. To their disappointment, all these acts are “not-very-clever” and hence the people have vowed to continue their civil resistance until the end of semi-apartheid racism from Bahrain.

Bahrain, one of the ancient civil societies, is incompatible with the tribal mentality that discriminates against citizens on the basis of tribalism, ethnicity, sectarianism or nationality. The people of Bahrain, from all strands and social groups, have come together to demand a decent life bounded by a constitutional framework.

Bahrain: The government will not be able to run away from the core issues

11/Nov/1997

Local papers published the names of four teenagers who had been selected by the security forces for receiving the blame for a fire that gutted a building containing car show room (30October). The four youths are Salman Ibrahim Marhoon, 18, Shawki Abdulla Jassim, 17, Hassan Abdul Karim Saleh, 18, and Ali Hassan Al-Shajjar. Mohammed, 10-year old, brother of Ali Hassan Al-Shajjar was amongst those arbitrarily arrested in the past few days from Bilad al-Oadim.

The trial for eight oppositionists announced by the government started on 8 November, and adjourned to 15 November. In an interview with the BBC, Dr. Mansoor Al-Jamri said, “the government has been desperately attempting to divert attention from the core issues of the political crisis. The people of Bahrain have demanded the restoration of the parliament and constitution. We challenge the government to abide by the Constitution of the Country, which demands the formation of a High Judicial Council and the presence of an elected parliament.

He also said “We had never stopped expressing our views publicly since the formation of the BFM in 1982. We will utilize every opportunity to express our views and reflect the demands of the people”.

On 8 November, the security forces attacked Al-Zahra Mosque in Sharakkan and destroyed its library, videocassettes, audiocassettes, windows, gates, Quranic posters, stole the donations box, and turned all contents upside down. This is the fifth time this mosque comes under attack from the security forces. Few nights before this vicious attack, Imam Ali Mosque

in Dar Kulaib was also attacked by security forces that stole a computer and other ancillary equipment.

Graffiti across the country increased with the “Week No. 97?” highlighted every where. The number of week is a record for the period since the re-detention of Sheikh Al-Jamri and his colleagues. Slogans calling for the restoration of parliament and constitution are painted on walls and in strategic locations on highways. The security forces have failed to remove the recurrent writings that reflect the aspirations and demands of the people of Bahrain.

The Egyptian president visited Bahrain on 7 November. In Bahrain he said that the “age when governments can do what ever they like without due consideration for the wishes of the people have gone”. This is a correct statement and hopefully the rulers will understand the message. Mr. Hosni Mubarak also visited Awali Hospital where the Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, is receiving medical treatment after his collapse last month. An Egyptian official said that both sides agreed that participation in the Doha Middle East and North African Economic Conference “depends on progress in the peace process”. Qatar has invited 92 countries and organizations to the regional economic forum, to be held in its capital Doha on November 16-18.

The Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi arrived in Jeddah on 8 November, starting a multi-leg Gulf tour on a mission said to be for “boosting ties amongst neighbours”. After Saudi Arabia, Kharrazi will (travel to the other five Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Bahrainis are entitled to struggle for their rights

11/Nov/1997

State. The great majority added that this should be an Arab State”. This was the concluding sentence of Mr. Winspear Guiscard who briefed the United Nations Security Council on 11 May 1970 about the findings of his exploratory mission to Bahrain. The fifteen nations of the Security Council unanimously accepted and voted for a sovereign and independent State of Bahrain based on the wishes of the people of Bahrain.

Mr. Guicciardi, the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General, toured Bahrain in March 1970 and met with dignitaries and various sections of the society. The will of the people was reflected clearly for an “independent sovereign state”. Bahrain was accepted as a member of the UN after consulting the wishes of the people of Bahrain. This is why the Constitution of Bahrain states in Article(1) that “the system of government in Bahrain is democratic, under which sovereignty lies with the people, the source of all powers.

Sovereignty shall be exercised in the manner specified in this Constitution”. The first article continues to say, “the citizens shall enjoy the right to participate in the public affairs of the State and enjoy political rights, beginning with the right to vote”.

The Constitution of Bahrain is an intrinsic part of the “independent sovereign state”, and the governing rules are above the whims of holders of authority or law-makers. This is also in compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 21 of the UDHR states that the “will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by

secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures”.

The Al-Khalifa ruling family unilaterally dissolved the parliament in 1975 and suspended the important articles of the Constitution which mandate the existence of an elected National Assembly. Since 1975, the Al-Khalifa family resisted all calls for the reinstatement of constitutional rule. By doing so, the “independent sovereign state” had been undermined.

The Bahraini people have suffered immensely from arbitrary governance. The opposition has peacefully campaigned for the rights of the people and for the sovereignty of Bahrain as specified by the Constitution. The ruling establishment used brutal force, torture, extra-judicial killings, forcible exiling, arbitrary detention and sentencing as well as various other means aimed at abolishing the basic freedoms of the nation.

The ruling establishment has adopted policies based on racial, religious and ^discrimination amongst the population. Tens of thousands of people had been imported, awarded citizenship, recruited in security and defence forces, and granted favourable treatment in an attempt to change the demography of the country. The people of Bahrain are entitled to struggle for their rights. The pro-democracy movement is bound by the will of the people on the basis of national consensus. Such consensus is based on pluralist and civil rights concepts commonly enshrined in Islamic values, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of Bahrain.

Bahrain: The Bahraini government buckles under UN pressure; Another victory for the nation

19/Aug/1998

Nine UN Human Right Sub-Commission experts (out of 26) proposed (on 14 August) to condemn the atrocities of the government of Bahrain During the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission session held between 3-28 August. The Bahraini government was made to answer to its broken promises and its continued violations of human rights in Bahrain. Ghazi Al-Quseibi (Foreign Ministry Under-secretary) was flown to Geneva to join the encounter. The Bahraini governmental delegation held several meetings with the UN experts and promised to end violations within a year. However, the UN experts responded by saying that they heard such promises from the Bahraini government for many years, only to find out that the government respects none of its words of honour. The UN experts proceeded with the submission of the condemnation resolution and made it clear to Al-Quseibi that nothing less than a written pledge would be satisfactory.

As a result, the Bahraini government agreed to ratify “Article 20” of the “UN Conventions Against Torture (CAT)”. The government ratified CAT last February but excluded Article 20 of CAT. This article allows the UN body to investigate cases of torture that are submitted by Bahraini citizens directly to the UN without interruption by the Bahraini authorities. This concession was not found sufficient on its own to stop the condemnation, hence the Bahrain government made a further concession by promising to allow the “UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention” to visit the jails in Bahrain and to investigate the cases of those in detention.

These two concessions were deemed enough for the UN experts to withdraw the condemnation resolution. The opposition

believes that the Bahraini government will try everything to bypass all its obligations. The opposition has pointed out that the torturing-to-death of Nooh Al-Nooh on 21 July came after the ratification of CAT. Torture is systematic and is used daily against the citizens of Bahrain.

Despite all the apprehension, the Bahrain people have managed today (19 August) to win the support of the international community. The opposition welcomes the principled position adopted by the 9 UN experts: Mr. Begoa, Mr. Eide, Mr. Mix 'Zamudio, Mr. Diaz Uribe, Mr. Gooneskere, Ms. Ilampson, Mr. Oloka-Onvango, Mr. Pinheiro and Mr. Weissbrodt.

The people of Bahrain will now watch the developments inside the country and it is expected that many cases of torture will be submitted to the UN Committee to start "Direct investigation". It is also hoped that the visit of the "Working Group on Arbitrary Detention" will be comprehensive and repetitive to ensure that the army of torturers recruited by the government is checked and reprimanded.

Last August, the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission issued an historic condemnation resolution (ref. 1997/2 dated 21 August 1997). However, the Bahraini government launched media attacks against the IN and intensified its violations. This year it was made to buckle, at least in words. The actions of the government will from now on be under microscopic examination.

Bahraini Government to put Sheikh Al-Jamri on trial

12/Feb/1999

After more than three years of arbitrary detention, the Bahraini government decided to put Sheikh Abdul Amir Al-Jamri on a political trial. On 9 February 1999, the Government contacted one of the lawyers and ordered him to take up the case of Sheikh Al-Jamri. The Government is intending to conduct a swift and secret trial in an attempt to get rid of national and international calls for releasing Sheikh Al-Jamri. Al-Jamri is a member of the Committee for Popular Petition, ex-judge and a member of the dissolved parliament.

Mr. Abdulla Hashim, the lawyer defending Sheikh Al-Jamri has not been informed about the case. The main drive of the Government has been to label the pro-democracy movement as a Shia one, and hence Mr. Hashim (a Sunni) is intentionally kept out of defending Sheikh Al-Jamri.

Mr. Hashim submitted a petition to the State Security Court on 21 January 1999 stating that “according to the State Security Law Article 5, any administratively held person must be released at the end of the three years”. Contrary to all norms, the Court failed to address the case raised by Mr. Hashim.

The State Security Court considers confessions extracted under torture as admissible evidence. Also, the said court admits confessions made by other detainees in case the person in question refused to write confessions under duress.

Under recently imposed unconstitutional laws, The State Security Court conducts quick trials with some three sessions in camera, each lasting less than an hour.

After such sessions, the judges (two Egyptians under the chairmanship of a member of the ruling Al-Khalifa family)

issue their politically-motivated sentences.

More than ten international organisations have asked to be allowed to send observers.

These include the Geneva-based Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (part of the International Commission of Jurists), the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group, Pen International, the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, the Arab Program for Human Rights Activists, and Interfaith International, amongst others. They also urged the Bahraini Government to respect international conventions as well as the country's constitution.

The Government of Bahrain hopes that its racist policies of targeting the Shia community will enable it to win support from some quarters and thus be able to derail the pro-democracy movement. The opposition believes such a policy will backfire as it did in the old South Africa and hopes that the next Millennium will have no place for despots and racists. The trial of Sheikh Al-Jamri will exacerbate the political crisis in Bahrain and is likely to be a disastrous manoeuvre by the ruling family.

Declaring its neutral stand on the referendum

09/Feb/2001

Human rights activists have welcomed Bahrain's announcement of a general amnesty for political prisoners and detainees held on security charges. Amnesty International said the authorities had now released 289 political prisoners and detainees held in connection with civil unrest that erupted in the mid-1990s. "We welcome the release of political prisoners and detainees in Bahrain," Amnesty said in a statement carried on its website.

"We hope this will be followed by more positive steps, such as the amendment of the country's legislation to bring it into harmony with international human rights standards," it added. Exiles included A Bahraini Interior Ministry statement released on Monday said the amnesty covered 289 people in the Gulf state and 108 exiles who had already requested a par-don.

The announcement came ahead of a referendum on reforms next week, which include the restoration of a partly-elected parliament. The exiled opposition is urging people to vote against the proposals.

Amnesty International has campaigned for years for the repeal of certain laws in Bahrain, including state security legislation dating from 1974. Those benefiting from the amnesty include four prisoners of conscience - Abd al-Wahab Hussain, Sayyid Ibrahim Adnan al-Alawi, Al-Sheikh Hassan Sultan and Hassan Mishima - who have been held without charge or trial for five years.

Royal pardons Amnesty International says more than 1,100 political prisoners and detainees have now been released following par-dons from the Emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Hamad

bin Issa al-Khalifa. He assumed power in 1999, following the death of his father.

Amnesty International says it has re-quested talks with government officials in Bahrain in March. Anti-government unrest erupted in Bahrain in 1994, when members of the island's majority Shi'ite Muslim community pressed for political and economic reforms. Hundreds of Shi'ites were detained in the disturbances, which sub-sided in 1998.



مركز أرشيف البحرين
BAHRAIN ARCHIVE CENTER

BEYOND TRIBALISM

BAHRAIN

FREEDOM MOVEMENT

[STATEMENTS
1994 TO 2001]

This publication is a compilation of statements by the Bahrain Freedom Movement (BFM) between 1994 and 2001. These statements and press releases aimed to inform the world about the events in the country. Many statements were lost and could not be found anywhere, while others were found in very poor condition due to the inadequate archiving system. Bahrain Archive Center has made a significant effort to gather these statements from various sources. All statements have been digitized, and advanced technology and artificial intelligence were utilized to extract text from paper statements.

This compilation is a documentation of the events in Bahrain in the 1990s which will provide an insight into the political dynamics that will eventually shape the future of the country.

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Bahrain: A Life Sentence Passed By the Ruling Family
On 20 June, a member of the ruling Al-Khailifa family presiding over the Security Court passed life and long term imprisonment sentences on Bahrainis accused of participating in pro-democracy demonstrations. The court accused the group of clashing with the police. The court found that some of the group participated in the clashes that led to the deaths of several people. The following were sentenced haphazardly to 29 years of imprisonment.