

Political Crisis in Bahrain: Major Protests Following Arrest of Opposition Movement Leader

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The Secretary General of Al Wefaq Society was arrested on Monday 29th December and remained in custody for one week. He had been summoned by the Alkhalifa torturers and questioned for two days before the dictator decided to exact revenge from him by detaining him for one week. Sheikh Salman is known for his soft language and tone, and has steered Al Wefaq within the Alkhalifa laws. But the tyrant has been enraged by the decision of the political societies led by Al Wefaq to boycott the regime's hollow elections in November. It was a strong slap on his face because it showed the lack of popular support or legitimacy to his rule. The Alkhalifa and their Saudi and British backers had hoped that those elections would provide a plausible exit from the political crisis that has engulfed the country since the eruption of the 14th February Revolution.

There have been angry reactions to the decision to detain Sheikh Ali Salman. The European Union called for respecting the rule of law with Sheikh Salman while the UN human Rights Commission has called for his immediate and unconditional release. It said in a statement: We are seriously concerned at the arrest of Sheikh Ali Salman, the leader of Bahrain's main opposition movement, Al Wefaq, as well as the continuing harassment and imprisonment of individuals exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and expression in the country. It further added: We urge the Government of Bahrain to immediately release Sheikh Salman, as well as all other persons convicted or detained for merely exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

The Saudi king, Abdulla ibn Abdul Aziz, 91, has been transferred to hospital suffering from undisclosed ailment. The world is watching the internal situation of the ageing kingdom whose Al Saud leaders have not only failed to reform their political system but have acted decisively against the Arab Spring and caused it to collapse. Two Saudi women are being tried for driving their cars, which is against the Saudi laws. Women driving is treated with similar severity as terrorism.

Inside the country, there has been marked escalation of protests by the people who were angered by the continued policy of revenge and the illegal use of the state's apparatus against the native Bahrainis. Shotguns were used extensively and several serious injuries were reported. Protests engulfed most of the towns and villages inhabited by the native Baharna who have been mercilessly targeted by the Alkhalifa tribal regime since occupying the islands in 1783. The British have always defended them against people's revolts.

On Monday 29th December, Maitham Al Salatneh from Sanabis was detained and taken to

the torture chambers of the CID. A 12- years old child was abducted by masked members of Death Squads. Hani Ma'tooq Al Sanadi was snatched from Markoban area of Sitra. Hussain Mohammed Ali and Sayed Salman Mahdi were arrested after their homes were raided in Buri at dawn on Friday 26th December. Mohammad Abdul Karim Al Khatam was abducted from the Bahrain-Saudi causeway on 26th December. Yesterday Hussain Shakir was detained in a raid on his house in Manama. Two brothers from Manama were also detained in the same way yesterday: Firas Al Hawwaj and his brother, Hussain.

On Monday 29th December Alkhalifa court sentenced two native Bahrainis to death and handed a third a life sentence on charges related to alleged killing of a mercenary. Mohammad Ramadhan and Hussain Ali Moosa have now joined a long list of native Bahrainis on the death row after Alkhalifa dictators decided to exterminate the native Baharna inhabitants. Seven others were sentenced to jail terms. Six were given life in jail: Hassan Al Sanabsi, Waheeb Abdulla, Hakkem Al Ashiri, Mustafa Ahmad, Mohammad Yousuf Hassan and Mohammad Ahmad Abdulla. The seventh person, Isa Abdulla Rabi' was sentenced to six years behind bars. Today ten young men from Aali Town were sentenced to five years imprisonment for taking part in anti-regime protests. Two other people were also given jail terms. Sayed Hussain Sayed Abbas has been given seven years and Qassim Hassan three years. Several young men from Duraz Town were given ten years jail terms for allegedly taking part in burning police car carrying mercenaries who attacked the town. Yesterday five native Bahrainis from Tubli Town were sentenced to two years jail for taking part in peaceful anti-regime protests.

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